



## **Inverclyde Council and Trades Unions Fair Work First Statement 2023**

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland by applying fair work criteria to grants, other funding and contracts being awarded by and across the public sector, where it is relevant to do so.

Through this approach the Scottish Government is asking employers to adopt fair working practices.

Inverclyde Council's aim is to deliver good quality and fair work through continuous improvement. This will give confidence to the citizens of Inverclyde and those receiving and providing funding through the public sector.

We have progressed, or in some areas, are progressing the Fair Work First criteria below, can evidence our work in this area, and will fully involve and engage with the trade unions on updates on changes made, to review actions and outcomes and identify further improvements for advancing the Fair work First commitments,

Our trade union representatives agree with our commitments in this statement.

### **How Inverclyde Council will specifically advance the Fair Work First criteria:**

#### **1. We have effective channels for effective employee engagement.**

- We have signed a Trade Union Pledge with our recognised Unions and work with them in key governance and decision-making structures including the Joint Budget Group , Trade Union Liaison Group (6 weekly meetings), HSCP Staff Partnership Forum, Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers, Corporate Health & Safety Committee.
- We recognise trade unions across all employee groups for the purpose of collective bargaining and encourage membership.
- We provide facility time to support regular engagement between our trade unions and their members.
- We make available to trade union representatives, wherever possible, reasonable facilities necessary for them to carry out their duties efficiently and communicate effectively with their members.
- We engage in constructive dialogue with our employees and their trade union representatives to address workplace issues and disputes.

- We have formal and informal employee engagement through a variety of communication channels
- Employees are offered supportive contact with their supervisor/ line manager through “Positive Conversations”. The purpose is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees to support relationship building, motivation, performance, engagement and the creation of value for employees
- We have a Dignity & Respect Policy in place to ensure employees can raise concerns in the workplace on issue of bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- We regularly conduct surveys to seek out the views and experiences of our employees on employment and related matters to be a more responsive and supportive employer.
- Trade unions are always informed and consulted during policy development.
- We involve trade union representatives in our working groups and service reviews, and there is Trade Union participation in the Peer Panels which form part of our Recruitment & Selection Process for Directors and Heads of Service.
- We have ACAS Trained Mediators who can be an impartial source of support for employees
- We will provide Trade Union representatives with reasonable facility time to represent members in social care contracts employed by external providers.

## **2. We invest in workforce development**

- The 2023/28 Council Plan sets out our vision for the Council as a whole and the ways in which we hope to improve the lives of, and deliver better outcomes for, the people of Inverclyde. Our Council Plan aligns to and supports the 10 year Alliance Partnership Plan, ensuring that partners work together to create conditions that promote success for all and addresses inequalities.
- Our People & Organisational Development Strategy and Service Workforce Plans outlines the programme of work the council will undertake to deliver our strategic priorities and aims to ensure that our workforce is positive, motivated, and well managed.
- Our Code of Conduct helps set out how all employees are expected to behave at work, creating a better working environment for all.
- The Council provides opportunities for employees to meet both their personal and professional development needs.
- We engage with government-funded programmes to support local employability.
- We are introducing a coaching and mentoring scheme across the Council subsequent to successful participation in a Joint Mentoring scheme with other neighbouring Councils
- The Council recently committed £100k to pay for employees professional course fees
- The Tessello e-learning online portal gives all employees easy access to a wide range of training and development opportunities

- We provide Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships and other opportunities including work placements, for young people
- Formal and informal learning is offered and encouraged across the workforce, relating to specific roles as well as wider development. Employees can book directly on Corporate Courses on Course Booker on intranet.
- We promote an internal employee recognition programme “Pride of Inverclyde Awards” to acknowledge achievements and contributions by individual employees and teams within the Council.
- We provide equality and diversity training.
- We create opportunities for our workforce to learn new skills by promoting secondment opportunities within and outwith Inverclyde Council.
- We regularly update our succession management plans.
- We regularly update our online health and wellbeing hub on intranet which provides support/guidance and links to further sources of support on financial, physical and mental wellbeing. We have an HR Adviser whose focus is mental health & wellbeing and our HR Advisers go on site on rota basis to give advice on a variety of matters including health & wellbeing to those employees who don't have direct access to intranet

### **3. We do not use zero-hours contracts inappropriately**

- We do not use zero-hours contracts within the Council.
- Casual workers are used when necessary on an adhoc basis but workers on these contracts are not obliged to accept work when this is offered.
- We do not use supply and casual contracts to fill longer term vacancies. We have a Temporary Worker Protocol which sets out process for Temporary LGE Appointments and LNCT 04 The Appointment of Teachers on Temporary Contracts

### **4. We take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace**

- We make sure we understand and address perceived barriers to employment with the council. We are currently working on identifying levels of training needs to roll out the National Trauma Training Plan across the local authority as we recognise that trauma informed and responsive practice can only happen in the context of trauma informed and responsive environments, policies, processes and systems.
- We are a Carer Positive employer (Engaged Level), showing our commitment to a working environment where carers are valued and supported
- We use data to understand our workforce diversity and pay gap position.
- We have recently been working towards, and completed submission for Bronze Standard in the Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation programme that addresses violence against women and girls through advancing workplace gender equality including tackling pay gaps.
- We gather and publish data, in our Equality Mainstreaming Report, to understand our workforce diversity and pay gap information.

- We are a Disability Confident Leader, encouraging the employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions as well as encouraging other employers to become Disability Confident.
- In addition to anyone who has or considers themselves to have a disability, the Guaranteed Interview scheme extends to our modern apprentices (for entry level posts). We also ask services to give positive consideration to leaving veterans
- Inverclyde Council adheres to the Equality Act 2010, which includes elements of both medical and social models of Disability, and gives disabled workers, who experience substantial disadvantage, the right to reasonable adjustments. We aim to identify the barriers to disabled people's equal participation in the workplace and to find ways of removing or reducing these barriers by making adjustments to the work environment, policies and procedures in accordance with the principles of the Social Model of Disability.

We have a Reasonable Adjustment provision in our Supporting Attendance Procedure that ensures workplace adjustments for disabled employees are tailored to their specific individual needs.

- We recognise our role as a Corporate Parent, and in acknowledgement of care experienced people requiring ongoing support to help them to achieve their potential we have added 'Care Experienced' as a protected characteristic into our Equalities Impact Assessments. Inverclyde Council proactively seeks out and listens to the voices of care experienced people including through the Proud2Care group.
- We have received the highest level of recognition for our commitment to supporting our armed forces community, the Ministry of Defence's Employer Defence Recognition Scheme Gold Award. We attained the Gold Award for the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in 2017, retained it in 2022, are a signatory to the Armed Force Covenant and support opportunities for serving members of the armed forces and veterans.
- We protect and promote the mental health and wellbeing of all employees through our mental health and wellbeing strategy.
- We took the Pregnancy Loss Pledge and offered Parental Bereavement Leave, committing to support employees through miscarriage at any stage of gestation
- We set out how all employees are expected to behave at work, creating a better working environment for all through our Employee Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy.
- We have a statement on our MyJob Scotland portal that Inverclyde Council is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce and welcomes applications from all members of the community. We encourage applicants from under-represented groups including women, LGBT people, Black and minority ethnic people and disabled people. Setting out our commitments to being an inclusive and supportive employer.

## **5. We commit to paying the Real Living Wage**

- We are an accredited Living Wage employer; this is a clear commitment to pay at least the Living Wage for staff we directly employ and for those who work on our contracts by actively encouraging employers to pay the Living Wage as part of a

package of fair work practice in all relevant contracts. (While Modern Apprentices and Trainee Educational Psychologists are not currently paid this rate we are exploring implementation of this). 2025 note: The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2024 agreed to an increase in Modern Apprentice pay to the Real Living Wage from 1 April 2025. There are currently no Trainee Educational Psychologists employed by Inverclyde Council.

#### **6. We offer flexible and family-friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment**

- We support flexible working across the Council, through our Flexible Working Policy, offering a wide range of flexible working patterns.
- We offer, where practicable, a hybrid workstyle - a blend of working from home and working in a council building.
- We have a wide range of supportive policies and procedures to support our employees and ensure Inverclyde is seen as an Employer of Choice.

#### **7. We oppose the use of fire and rehire practice**

- We only consider effecting change where there is a legitimate organisational need to do so.
- We are committed to working with our trade unions to ensure there is effective consultation and negotiation relating to change.
- We have Service Review Guidance that clearly outlines the processes and procedures that should be followed when effecting organisational change.
- We will only use, dismissal and re-engagement as a last resort after all other processes and full TU consultation has been exhausted
- We strive to achieve change through agreement

#### **8. The Council's Procurement Strategy aims to promote the Fair Work First Outcomes**

- Our Procurement Strategy aims to ensure Fair Work First outcomes are promoted internally and externally and procurement is used to influence and increase positive fair work and socially responsible outcomes which benefit the council area by addressing poverty and inequality.
- We will continue to deliver the Fair Work First action plan through procurement. We will do this by;
  - improving training and awareness for Council staff and bidding organisations;
  - Seeking to apply the Fair Work First criteria to every tender where proportionate and relevant;
  - Adopting and promoting new Fair Work First guidance and other tools which support raising awareness and delivery of best practice;
  - Capturing, monitoring and reporting on the number of contracts awarded that contain fair work first criteria;
  - Our Annual Report, which is reported to Committee and is publicly available includes the following information:

- a) The number of Council regulated contracts awarded during the period that have included a scored Fair Work criterion.
  - b) Number of unique suppliers who have committed to pay the real Living Wage in the delivery of a Council regulated contract awarded during the period.
  - c) Number of unique suppliers who are accredited Living wage employers and were awarded a Council regulated contract during the period
  - d) Number of unique suppliers who have signed up to the Scottish Business Pledge and were awarded a Council regulated contract award during the period
- This will include seeking information from potential service providers and contractors with regards to their approach to Fair Work, taking this into consideration when awarding contracts and procurement with Fair Work providers being preferred. We will expect contractors to recognise Trade Unions and engage in collective bargaining. We will share our approach to Fair Work to providers and ask that they seek to emulate it proportionately and monitor and support this. We will expect providers to comply with a policy of non-use of zero hours contracts.

**December 2023 Agreed Commitment:**



Morna Rae, on behalf of Inverclyde Council



Robin Taggart on behalf of UNISON



Paula McEwan on behalf of EIS



Billy Thomson on behalf of UNITE

