

Oldham Council – Get Oldham Working

Summary

Oldham Council will continue to run a local campaign which has a number of key elements under the Get Oldham Working programme, which is an initiative to support local residents into sustainable jobs. This includes the Fair Employment Charter whereby the council supports local businesses to achieve key standards (including paying a living wage), offer fair contracts and stability of employment, offer access to training and support, support membership of trade unions, enable and encourage residents to 'do their bit' for the borough and support local people into work. As part of this Oldham Council commits to achieving a number of outcomes, including (but not limited to) working in partnership across sectors to create 500 jobs, create 50 apprenticeships in Oldham Council and 50 with employers, and engaging with 100 new businesses. Government can support this by provide flexibilities around wage incentives and a more flexible to skills acquisition.

Aims

Oldham Council will continue to run a local campaign which has a number of key elements under the Get Oldham Working Umbrella. This includes the Fair Employment Charter whereby we support local businesses to achieve key standards (including Pay a living wage), offer fair contracts and stability of employment, offer access to training and support; support membership of trade unions; enable and encourage employees to 'do their bit' for the borough and support local people into work through Get Oldham Working.

Commitment

We will commit to:

- Create 500 jobs
- Create 50 apprenticeships in Oldham Council and 50 with employers
- Create 25 salaried traineeships.
- Create 150 Work Experience Placements
- Engage with 100 new businesses.
- Ensure 12 schools and 2 FE college's sign up to "Enterprise in Schools" programme and 20 primary schools engage with the "Primary Engineer programme".

We will achieve this by in collaboration with Oldham Business Leadership Group, Colleges, Schools, Business community and third sector, Job Centre Plus, Social Landlords and residents who will help co-design and develop the scheme as part of our commitment to collaborative leadership.

Government support

To achieve this we need some flexibility around providing wage incentives and more flexible approach to skills acquisition, especially re: Employer Ownership style apprenticeships. Government funding should also recognise that funding needs to follow the individual and not a universal service that ignores local activity.

Annex – Oldham’s approach to providing fair employment

Providing fair employment – a co-operative approach

Oldham’s Fair Employment Charter

Building on the success of previous co-operative campaigns such as Fair Energy and Fares Fair, Fair Employment is one of the Council’s latest campaigns to secure a fairer deal for Oldham residents.

The Fair Employment Charter (FEC) reflects our ambition to do more than just reduce the number of unemployed residents in Oldham. We want to create employment opportunities that are fair, ethical, responsible and sustainable. As the largest employer in Oldham, and with a strong emphasis on place leadership, we have a responsibility to positively influence and improve conditions of employment and encourage all of Oldham’s 6,000 businesses, and our own suppliers, to do the same.

Employers who sign up to the Charter pledge to:

- 1. Pay a living wage**
- 2. Offer fair contracts and stability of employment**
- 3. Offer access to training and support**
- 4. Support membership of trade unions**
- 5. Enable and encourage employees to ‘do their bit’ for the borough**
- 6. Support local people into work through Get Oldham Working**

To view the Charter on our website, click [here](#).

Working with businesses and our partners

Securing the support of local businesses is vital to the success of the Charter. Through high profile support, an on-going PR campaign and coverage of the Charter at local events, we’re raising the awareness of the benefits and value of fair and equal employment conditions to business.

The Fair Employment Charter was initially launched at the Oldham Business Awards on 21 March 2014 and was formally launched at an OBLG Business Breakfast on 4 June 2014. This was to promote the Charter to businesses and encourage them to sign up. So far 20 businesses have signed up and the aim is to have 200 by the end of 2015.

Other engagement activity includes:

- Engaging businesses via the OBLG’s Enterprise Fund to support young entrepreneurs and grow existing organisations
- Focusing on the ‘Top 100 Oldham Businesses’ to gain the backing of businesses that are:
 - creating new employment opportunities

- strategically important to the borough
- new businesses with growth potential
- businesses within growth sector
- Using the Council's Business Engagement Programme, which links businesses to a range of support and campaigns, where Councillors and Officers can speak to businesses about supporting the Charter. It is important to note that this would be at a district level as well as a borough-wide level

Working with our suppliers

As the largest organisation in Oldham, we can encourage our suppliers to join us in becoming 'fair employers' through responsible procurement procedures such as the Social Value Procurement Charter. This way we can act responsibly and create a positive impact across our networks.

Through working with businesses, partners and suppliers we will recognise the efforts of local employers and optimise the positive influence the council can exert through procurement and regeneration programmes.

What is Get Oldham Working?

The Get Oldham Working (GOW) Programme was launched in May 2013. Get Oldham Working is our strategic programme to increase skills, employment, business engagement and support opportunities and aims to:

- Provide 2,015 work related opportunities by 2015
- Guarantee that every 18 year old leaving school in 2015 can access continued education, training, apprenticeship or a job

Get Oldham Working has engaged with 300 business in the first 18 months of operation and will engage with at least another 100 during 2015.

And there are signs that our approach is working - since the launch of the campaign we have seen significant reductions in unemployment across Oldham. Over the last 12 months unemployment in Oldham has fallen sharply. In April 2014 the Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count was 4,422 (down from 7,985 in April 2013) – making Oldham the 3rd best performing local authority across Greater Manchester.¹ The Youth Unemployment Rate (i.e. the proportion of 18-24 year olds claiming JSA) was 3.8% in April 2014 (down from 10.7% in April 2013) – making Oldham the best performing local authority across Greater Manchester.² Although the figures are distorted through the introduction of Universal Credit (movement off JSA onto UC), over the last 12 months unemployment in Oldham has fallen due to; more local job opportunities, the impact of

¹ Economic Review (May 2014)

² Economic Review (May 2014)

the Get Oldham Working campaign and the potential impact of tougher sanctions imposed on claimants.