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POVERTY & COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING



Cardiff Council

Cardiff Living Wage City Partnership

Cardiff Council made the commitment to pay the Real Living Wage (RLW) in 2012 and was accredited as a Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Foundation in 2015. In July 2017, the Council's administration set out its commitment for Cardiff to become a Living Wage City in response to rising housing, food and fuel prices and the increased cost of living, particularly with in-work poverty becoming a growing issue within the UK.

A Living Wage City Partnership was created to secure more jobs in the city that pay the RLW and encourage employers to become accredited as Living Wage Employers. The Partnership's membership comprises some of the city's anchor institutions such as the Council; Cardiff & Vale University Health Board; Cardiff University; Wales TUC Cymru; and Capital Law, as well as voluntary sector organisations including Cynnal Cymru (Sustain Wales) – the official accreditation body for the RLW in Wales; Citizens Cymru; Cardiff Third Sector Council; and Cardiff & Vale Credit Union.

The Partnership's Steering Group is further strengthened and supported by the political commitment and leadership of the Council's Leader, as Chair of the Steering Group, and Cabinet Member for Finance who have both driven forward this agenda and challenged other public services and employers in Cardiff to sign up to paying the RLW. This resulted in Cardiff achieving Living Wage City status in November 2019; the only UK capital city to have received this distinction.

The Steering Group developed a three-year action plan with clear targets to be achieved by May 2022. These have not only been met, but have been exceeded ahead of schedule. They included the target of 150 Living Wage Employers being accredited by May 2022, which was

achieved six months in advance in October 2021. As of February 2022, the figure stands at 163. In addition, over 64,000 workers are employed by accredited Living Wage Employers against a target of 48,000, and nearly 8,000 workers have received a pay rise to at least the RLW in Cardiff, exceeding the target of 6,500.

These achievements have also impacted positively on the Cardiff economy as people have more money in their pockets to spend locally. Cardiff University has calculated that an additional £39m has gone into the Cardiff economy due to uplifts in salaries as a result of an employer becoming an accredited Living Wage Employer. This highlights the positive difference that paying the RLW makes to the city.

As well as encouraging all local employers to become accredited, the Council offers financial assistance to Cardiff-based small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) who become accredited employers. The Council will pay a grant of up to £720 to qualifying employers, equal to three years' accreditation fees.

Steering Group partners have also been instrumental in Cardiff becoming home to the first two Living Wage Buildings in Wales – these are buildings with multiple business tenants, all of whom pay the RLW to their employees and on-site contractors. Cardiff University's new 'sbarc|spark' building was accredited as Wales's first Living Wage building in June 2021. sbarc|spark will be home to the world's first Social Science Research Park, where 400 researchers will share their collective expertise to solve societal challenges, and Cardiffinnovations@sbarc, the University's centre for start-ups, spin-outs and partnerships. The other building in the city is home to a number of employers, including Cynnal Cymru's own offices.

Cardiff Council is one of only two accredited Living Wage Councils in Wales and continues to work constructively with city partners to promote the RLW nationally in Wales. Cardiff Living Wage City Steering Group partners have also played a leading role in the establishment of a Living Wage for Wales website (www.livingwage.wales) by the Welsh Government, including providing financial support to help develop the website, which went live in June 2021.

In addition, Steering Group partners have played an active and influential role in calling for the RLW to be expanded into the social care sector in Wales and have lobbied the Welsh Government consistently and effectively on this issue over recent years. This resulted in the announcement by the Welsh Government in December 2021 that an additional £43m will be provided to councils and local health boards to enable the payment of the RLW for social care staff from April 2022. This is a major achievement and reflects the value placed on the people working tirelessly in this sector to support our most vulnerable citizens, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.



sbarc|spark building at Cardiff University – the first Living Wage building in Wales

For further information contact:

John Paxton

Strategy & Development Manager, Commissioning & Procurement – Cardiff Council

JPaxton@cardiff.gov.uk | 029 2087 3713 | www.cardiff.gov.uk