Fair Work First Statement

Every day, Dumfries and Galloway Council provides a diverse range of essential services to the communities of Dumfries and Galloway. The quality and effectiveness of these services rely on the commitment and ability of our workforce, who on a daily basis make a difference to the lives of our citizens.

This statement confirms Dumfries and Galloway Council's commitment to ensuring fair working practices are in place to support 'Fair Work First' offering all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect.

Following consultation and engagement with our JTUs insert <<Our Statement has been agreed collectively with our Joint Trade Unions and remains under review>>.

We provide appropriate channels for effective employee voice

- We recognise trade unions across all employee groups and encourage membership (UNISON, UNITE, GMB, EIS, SSTA, VOICE, NASUWT, ALACE).
- We work in partnership with trade unions in key governance and decision-making structures through the Joint Consultative Group, HR/Joint Trade Union Management Meetings, Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT).
- We provide opportunities for engagement with the Chief Executive and trade unions which promotes a culture of openness and transparency.
- We work in partnership with trade unions in negotiation and consultation for local government employees and teachers.
- We have open and constructive dialogue on collective bargaining.
- We promote constructive dialogue and are committed to working jointly with trade unions to address and resolve workplace issues and disputes in a timely manner.
- Trade unions are always informed and consulted during policy development and service reviews.
- We provide facility time to support regular contact between our trade unions and their members and make available, where possible, reasonable facilities necessary for them to carry out their duties efficiently Trade Union Facility Time Reports.
- We have zero tolerance for bullying/and or harassment and we have policies and measures in place to ensure employees can raise concerns in the workplace – Grievance Policy, Fair Treatment at Work Policy and Unacceptable Actions Policy..
- Employees are offered supportive contact with their line manager; employee wellbeing supports and our Wellbeing Champions (Mental Health Policy).
- We procured and commissioned Axiom to deliver our 2023 People Survey to provide a baseline of employee opinions, providing key insights into our workforce. We have communicated the results to our staff and are engaging further with them on the development of a Council-wide action plan arising from the actions. We will continue

to conduct pulse checks twice a year to measure the success of our actions, communicating results and engaging further with our workforce on this journey.

- We deliver staff engagement sessions seeking staff views and input on their employee experience and how this, and their employee voice can be enhanced.
- We have formal and informal employee internal communication through a variety of channels and development discussions with individuals and teams Connect/Engage(intranet), newsletters, posters, and GovDelivery emails.
- Staff focus groups are used to actively engage with employees to get their views and opinions on specific matters.
- Staff Networks provide our workforce with a safe community of support to share experiences with other members, whilst enabling staff to be part of a collective voice which can influence positive change, promote inclusion and challenge discrimination not only in our Council, but within the communities we serve.
- Annual Supportive Workforce Conversations take place providing the workforce an opportunity to engage with Senior Leaders to recognise achievements and efforts, reflecting together on the past 12 months and offering an opportunity to staff to provide feedback resulting in a “you said, we did” action plan.

We invest in workforce development

- Our People Strategy 2021-2026 outlines our ambitions to be a great employer where we can do our jobs well and make a difference of to the people of Dumfries and Galloway. It also sets out our outcomes of how we want to engage, develop and support our workforce outlining key priorities and outcomes.
- Our Council-wide Workforce Plan 2023-2028 recognises our people are our most important assets and sets out our ambition to develop a strength-based culture so that as individuals, teams and services we can work together to thrive and flourish.
- We are key partners in the development of the Health and Social Care Partnership Workforce Plan with NHS statutory, third and independent sector colleagues, carers and volunteers.
- Through staff engagement we have developed our SUPPORT behaviours, through our SUPPORT we will work together so we all thrive and flourish:

Strengthen - our communities.

Understand - our children’s needs.

Protect – our vulnerable people.

Promote – equality and diversity.

Open and transparent – at all times.

Respect – our environment.

Treat – each other with kindness.

- Our Code of Conduct sets out the standards expected from all employees creating a better working environment for all.
- Our health and wellbeing action plan promotes physical, mental, and financial wellbeing of our workforce and have a '*Happy, Healthy and Aspiring Workforce'*.
- We have Wellbeing Champions across our Council and region, who are trained volunteers to offer support and signposting to other employees in times of vulnerability.
- We have launched our "My Learning" platform designed to provide a modern, convenient and efficient way for all colleagues to access a wide range of learning materials and courses.
- Our Services are developing career pathways to support recruitment, retention, and development of our existing workforce.
- Our Leadership Development Framework aims to develop competent leaders capable of managing people and services through organisational change.
- We encourage, support and are committed to provide informal and formal learning and training opportunities for employees at all levels in the Council.
- We aim to embed coaching, mentoring and a strength-based approach into our culture. Our Council is committed to supporting employees into new areas of work in circumstances where they are unable to continue in their current position.
- Our Council is committed to growing our own talent wherever possible developing career pathways and opportunities for formal and informal training to support our staff to fulfil their potential.
- We provide opportunities for people through apprenticeships, traineeships, and graduates.
- Our Placement Plus programme aims to provide paid in-work learning opportunities for people who may be facing barriers to employment in our region.

We do not use zero hours contracts inappropriately

- We are currently in the process of applying for Silver Membership of the national Zero Hours Justice Campaign Accreditation Scheme.
- Casual (supply) contracts are only used when necessary. There is no obligation to offer or accept work.
- Where possible we do not use agency workers to fill longer term vacancies.
- Where possible we will use fixed term contracts rather and casual workers.
- We have clear policies and guidance in place for Casual Workers, Agency Workers and Fixed Term Contracts ensuring effective management of workforce.

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

- We gather and publish data, in our Equality Mainstreaming Report to understand our workforce diversity and pay gap information.
- We use data to understand our pay gap position.

- We protect and promote the mental health and wellbeing of our employees through our mental health and wellbeing action plan. Mental and financial health and wellbeing is an important focus of our Council and we have put in place a range of initiatives to support our workforce.
- Our Equality Outcomes support a number of actions to ensure we continue to understand any perceived barriers to employment with the Council and address these.
- We use the Scottish Joint Council Job Evaluation Scheme for Local Government roles.
- Individuals covered by Scottish National Committee for Teachers (SNCT) conditions of service are paid on SNCT pay scales and promoted posts are job-sized.
- We provide mandatory Equality and Diversity Training to our workforce; only appropriately trained persons are permitted to conduct and participate in the recruitment and selection process.
- An Impact Assessment is undertaken before introducing new policies and procedures and making changes to existing services.
- We are a Disability Confident Employer, encouraging employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions and ensuring disabled people get a fair chance.
- Our Guaranteed Interview Scheme ensures any applicant with a disability meeting the essential criteria for a post and has applied under this scheme is shortlisted for interview.
- We have a reasonable adjustment provision within our Maximising Attendance Policy framework that ensures workplace adjustments are considered and tailored to the employee needs.
- We are an exemplar Carer Positive employer showing our commitment to a working environment where carers are valued and supported.
- We offer a range of policies and guides to support employees including Supporting People through the Menopause, Bereavement Leave, Gambling and Domestic Absence and special leave.
- Support care experienced young people into employment as part of our commitment to "Our Promise".

We commit to paying the Real Living Wage

- We are an accredited Living Wage employer (since 2013).
- Dumfries and Galloway Council consolidated the Scottish Local Government Living Wage rate into pay scales on 1 April 2020 and our lowest point is higher than the national Living Wage.
- The Fair Work criteria is also referenced in our Procurement contracts and award processes, to encourage third-party providers to adopt positive fair work practices. Where relevant and proportionate to do so, this may factor into the tender evaluation process and is subject to monitoring through contract management/service level agreements.

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- Where it is appropriate to do so, fair work criteria shall apply to grants and funding awarded by D&G Council. Payment of at least the Real Living Wage to all employees and the provision of channels for effective employee voice, such as trade union recognition are mandatory elements that are written into our grant agreements. Other elements of fair work practices are encouraged.

We offer flexible and family-friendly working practices

- Our Smarter Working Framework supports a wide variety of work styles across the Council, offering a wide range of options available to the workforce including fixed, flexible, mobile and home working arrangements.
- We offer many employees the opportunity to adopt a Hybrid Workstyle, a mix of working from home and working in a Council location.
- We have a wide range of flexible working and family-friendly policies and provisions including:
  - Annual Leave Purchase Scheme
  - Part-time and term-time working arrangements
  - Hybrid Working
  - Carers Policy
  - Dependants Leave
  - Parental Leave
  - Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave
  - Bereavement Leave
  - Career Break (Teachers)
  - Compassionate and other special leave
  - Flexible Retirement
  - Time off for public duties
  - Time off for Reserves Forces
  - Preventative Medical Examinations

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 and strive to achieve change through agreement.
- Service Review Toolkit clearly outlines the processes and procedures that should be followed when effecting organisational change.
- Our Matching Policy provides a fair and reasonable process from transferring staff from existing posts/structures to new.

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