

Appendix 1 – Good Work Standard Options

Option 1 – implementing an existing model

There are various examples of good work standards, charters and pledges, both in existence and in development locally, nationally and internationally. The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is particularly relevant to our region, in part because it has been developed with regional and pan Northern expert and stakeholder involvement, eg ACAS, Chambers, Universities, and the CIPD.

Membership of the GM Charter requires employers (irrespective of their size or sector) to demonstrate minimum standards across seven characteristics (full details are included at Appendix 2):

- Secure work;
- Flexible work;
- Real living wage;
- Workplace engagement & voice;
- Recruitment practices & progression;
- People management; and
- Health and Wellbeing.

The GM charter has been launched and operational for several months. It is being delivered on behalf of GMCA by an independent Charter Implementation Unit. This is a dedicated resource which is funded for at least three years and is considered a critical success factor by enabling a consistent, rigorous approach to promoting the charter and assessing the suitability of applicants. The unit also provides the necessary capacity to consider a sectoral focus, eg potentially targeting the health and social care sector to address its historic low levels of productivity and pay. To date, the unit has engaged with 230+ employers, of which 115 are signed up as supporters of the Charter, and 22 are full members that collectively account for more than 200,000 employees.

Alignment of the GM charter with other local and national approaches is important to avoid duplication and unhelpful competition. Where other charters or standards exist and which are consistent with the GM charter, there are reciprocal arrangements agreed so that membership of a local charter gives automatic membership of the GM charter, and vice versa. Where local initiatives take the form of business engagement in work and skills support and delivering local economic and social goals, employers joining the GM charter will be linked into this provision. A similar pragmatic and reciprocal approach could be adopted in our region.

Adopting an existing model such as the GM Charter offers the opportunity for rapid implementation of a robust approach, subject to ensuring alignment with local approaches, and putting in place fit for purpose and delivery arrangements.

Option 2 – building on an existing approach

There are reasons why any existing model may need to be further developed and built upon to better fit within the current West Yorkshire context:

- Although not identified as a headline GM good work characteristic, the principles of enabling equality, diversity, and inclusion are understood to be woven into each individual characteristic. In Appendix 1, under the Recruitment standard, for example, the requirement is for selection processes to be designed to eliminate unconscious bias. A possible alternative view is that equality, diversity and inclusion should be treated as a headline characteristic in its own right. There would therefore likely need to be regional discussion and agreement on this point which could re-shape the model to some extent.
- The GM characteristics were developed before the advent of the pandemic and it may therefore be useful to consider changes that respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. GM is undertaking a similar review, which has identified the following potential issues:
 - Employees at greater health risk not being disadvantaged by employers' response;
 - Managers adopting new ways of working to keep teams united while working from home; and
 - Greater focus on mental and physical health of the workforce.

The GM charter requires members to commit to paying the Real Living Wage (currently £9.50 per hour). Ongoing restrictions and economic conditions are likely to place downward pressure on wages and create a challenge in asking West Yorkshire employers to commit to the Real Living Wage. Consideration could be given to relaxing this requirement, at least initially.

Option 3 – a bespoke model

The option of developing an entirely bespoke model which does not adopt - or adapt - an existing approach would have benefits, including:

- Maximising local engagement and buy-in from all sectors and stakeholders; and
- Developing criteria or standards that are fully reflective of local views of what better employment looks like, and therefore likely to prove most effective in the long run.

Option 3 also has potential drawbacks including:

- Compared with adopting (or adapting) an existing model, the increased lead time to launch a bespoke model could be significant. Depending on the various stages of engagement, consultation and evidence gathering required, the development period for a bespoke approach could be between 12 and 18 months, based on the experience of others.

- Subject to Panel views, Options 1 and 2 show that a broadly relevant and robust model that could be adopted (and adapted, as necessary, to fit the current regional context) already exists, and this would also be in line with the Convention for the North and NP11 commitment to progressing a common approach across the North.