



<b>Report to:</b>	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
<b>Date:</b>	7 December 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Fair Work Charter</b>
<b>Director:</b>	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director Inclusive Economy, Skills & Culture
<b>Author:</b>	Sarah Bowes, Interim Head of Business

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on implementation of the Mayor of West Yorkshire's Fair Work Charter.
- 1.2 Confirm that the Combined Authority and all five member local authorities have adopted the Charter.
- 1.3 Issue a call to action for the adoption of the Fair Work Charter.

## 2. Information

### Background and Drivers

- 2.1 The Mayor of West Yorkshire pledged to introduce a Charter to recognise the many employers in the region that are committed to Fair Work.
- 2.2 Mission 1 of the West Yorkshire Plan sets out the region's ambition for "a prosperous West Yorkshire – an inclusive economy with well paid jobs". The Mayor's Fair Work Charter is an important part of achieving this mission by ensuring a fair and just economy that works for everyone. It will help to ensure that everyone employed in West Yorkshire

receives the greatest possible employment security, best working conditions, as well as promoting greater employee wellbeing, workforce diversity, social mobility, and so accelerate Inclusive Growth.

2.3 The rationale underpinning the need to increase access to Fair Work includes the following:

- Too many people are working in poor quality jobs.
- Too many people are not paid enough to make ends meet.
- There are big pay gaps between groups of workers.
- Too many people are suffering from poor mental health.
- Too many working age people are not in work.

#### The Charter

2.4 The vision for the Charter is: “to promote a thriving economy where businesses of all sizes and sectors can meet their ambitions and work together to ensure all the diverse people and communities of West Yorkshire contribute to, and benefit from, economic prosperity”.

2.5 The Charter is focused around 5 themes which are summarised below:

#### *Opportunity*

Employers are working towards an economy where all pathways into employment are inclusive, organisations use the best recruitment practices, and all people have access to flexible working arrangements. Employers enrolling onto the Charter are required to confirm below they have taken at least one recognised 1st step in each of the following 3 areas:

- Inclusive pathways into employment and career progression
- Inclusive recruitment practices
- Flexible working arrangements

#### *Security*

Employers are working towards an economy where all organisations go beyond legal minimums to pay staff at least the real Living Wage and maintain working conditions that provide security and dignity to all workers. Employers enrolling onto the Charter are required to confirm below they have taken at least one recognised 1st step in each of the following 3 areas:

- Fair pay and working hours
- Secure contracts and conditions
- Safe working environments

### *Wellbeing*

Employers are working towards an economy where work helps all people to live healthy and happy lives, while contributing to the increased productivity of their employer. Employers enrolling onto the Charter are required to confirm below they have taken at least one recognised 1st step in each of the following 2 areas:

- Fostering good physical and mental health
- Support for wider aspects of wellbeing

### *Employee Voice*

Employers are working towards an economy where all workers are empowered to contribute towards the success of their employer through positive relationships and effective communication. Employers enrolling onto the Charter are required to confirm below they have taken at least one recognised 1st step in each of the following 2 areas:

- Consultation and engagement
- Recognition and support for trade unions, where requested by workers.

### *Fulfilment*

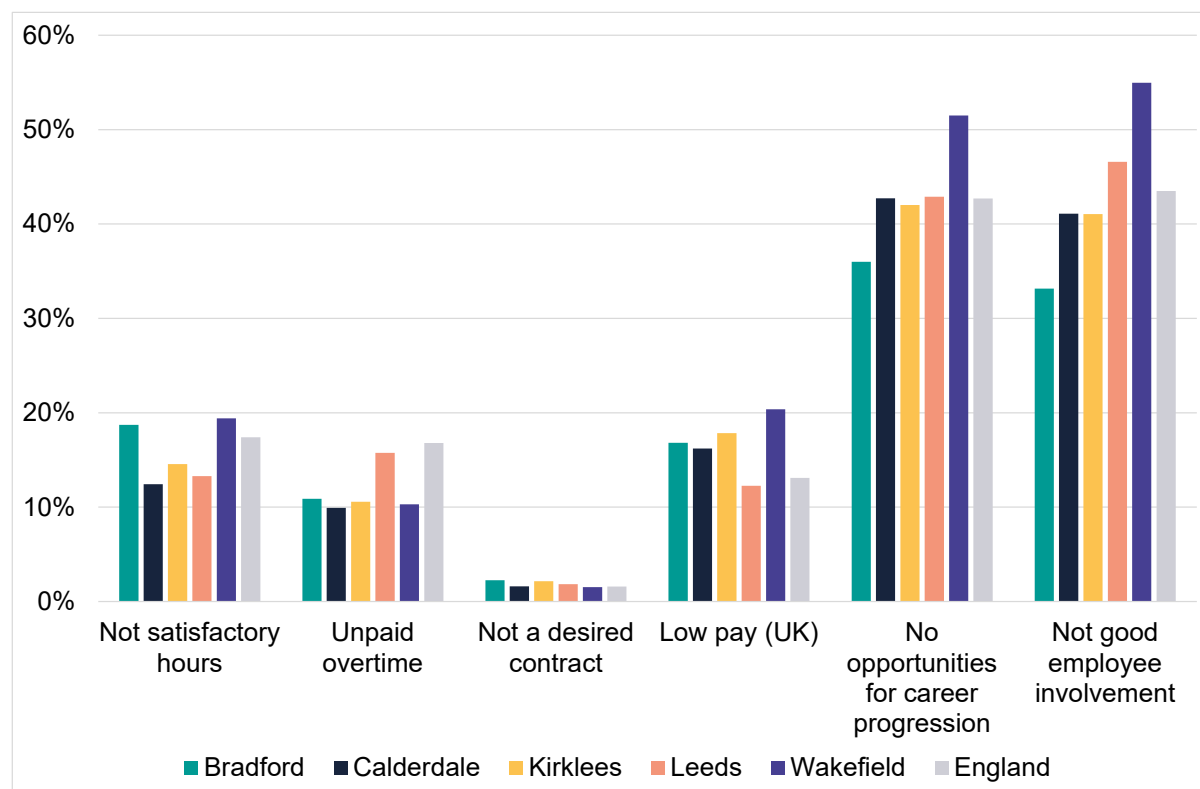
Employers are working towards an economy where work provides all people with the opportunity to learn, develop and meaningfully connect to a purpose that resonates with them. Employers enrolling onto the Charter are required to confirm below they have taken at least one recognised 1st step in each of the following 3 areas:

- Learning and development
- People management
- Supporting communities and good causes

## Current regional picture

- 2.6 Latest figures from ONS show that in West Yorkshire we have relatively small proportions of workers who indicate that they work unsatisfactory hours or work unpaid overtime or have a contract that does not meet their requirements. Much bigger proportions of workers say that their workplace lacks opportunities for career progression and does not offer good employee engagement.

**Figure: Job quality indicators by local authority, January to December 2021**



Source: *Jobs quality indicators in the UK - hours, pay, contracts, opportunities, and involvement: 2021*, Office for National Statistics

## 2.7 Other key points include:

- Female employees and employees aged over 55 are more likely to work satisfactory hours.
- Unpaid overtime working has a higher prevalence among those working in highly paid occupations, and employees aged 35 to 54 years.
- Workers who are disabled, younger, or have lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to be in low pay.
- Men aged 25 to 44 years, employees with an undergraduate degree and those working in the finance and insurance industry are most likely to report good career progression opportunities.
- Employees with higher-level qualifications are more likely to feel involved in decision making in their workplace than those with no qualification. Disabled employees are less likely to report good employee involvement, compared with employees who are not disabled.



- 2.8 The above will be reported on annually via the State of the Region and we will also explore bespoke monitoring approaches that align with each of the themes of the charter.

#### Progress on implementation

- 2.9 The Charter was formally [launched](#) on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in Bradford with a number of early adopters and Leaders sharing the stage to promote the benefits of Fair Work to employers and employees alike.
- 2.10 Forty-three businesses have signed up as early adopters across West Yorkshire (at the time of writing). They are cross sector including manufacturing and food; creative and digital industries; health and medical; education; voluntary, community, social enterprise; Public Sector; Police; Public Transport and wholesale food warehouse and distribution. The delivery partner to support business adoption is now on board and progress in rolling this out across the region will begin.
- 2.11 Businesses can sign up through the [website](#) via a simple registration form which will be sent directly to the delivery partner to follow up. A marketing and communications campaign is under development, to raise awareness and consideration of the Charter and encourage wider adoption. The campaign will include social media activity; digital (online) advertising; radio and podcast advertising; press/ PR stories; video case studies; a dedicated section on the CA webpage with further resources. Promotional assets will have a QR code that can be scanned as an alternative way to access the form. The delivery partner will also be contacting businesses direct through networks, business membership organisations and steering groups etc.
- 2.12 A review point has been built into year 1 to evaluate impact and successes. Learning from this will shape future implementation.

#### Adoption by West Yorkshire Combined Authority

- 2.13 This section of the report outlines how current CA policies and practices measure up against the requirements of the Fair Work Charter and also identifies some areas which require further development.

#### Opportunity

- 2.14 The Combined Authority utilises recruitment channels such as careers fairs, Vercida as an EDI recruitment platform and careers events within communities to reach under-represented groups and provide inclusive pathways into employment. We also advertise our vacancies via Indeed and LinkedIn. The CA is an accredited Disability Confident Level 2 employer as well as Mindful Employer and we have signed the Armed Forces Covenant bronze award. The EDI Performance and Oversight Board monitors relevant accreditations from an EDI perspective. Recruitment practices are inclusive with adverts stating we welcome applications for under represented groups, job share and part time working and have flexible working practices in place. Finally, the application process is anonymised.

- 2.15 The CA offers apprenticeships to attract and develop future talent within the Combined Authority. Within the Learning & Development plans for 2024/25, there is a plan to develop further our mentoring and coaching opportunities. The Solace Emerging Leaders programme has a current cohort to help build our pipeline into leadership roles. There are also plans to introduce a graduate programme to help address under representation.
- 2.16 CA working arrangements offer flexibility to staff in terms of hybrid working, flexi time and we have a number of staff with a range of flexible working arrangements e.g. part time and compressed hours. In January 2024, the CA will move to a more agile way of working to benefit both the organisation and employees and will also be implementing a career break policy.

### Security

- 2.17 All Combined Authority staff (including apprentices) are at least paid the real Living Wage and progress is being made towards becoming a Living Wage Foundation employer. The CA reports on the ethnicity and disability pay gaps and action plans are developed in relation to these with the involvement of staff network groups. The CA also offers secure contracts and conditions with no zero hours contracts and temporary roles only where we have short term requirements.
- 2.18 The Combined Authority offers a working environment which provides accessible, trusted and responsive processes for dealing with employee grievances and disciplinary issues utilising our established processes. Initiatives and campaigns that promote safe working environments are also routinely supported. Recent examples are the Hate Crime event at Leeds Bus Station in October and the Mayor's Just Don't campaign. In addition, the CA recently agreed to adopt the UNISON Anti Racism Charter. A full suite of H&S policies and guidance has been provided as well as a monthly theme and promotion of health and safety topics.
- 2.19 The Combined Authority will be embedding the Fair Work Charter in all tender documentation under the Social Value heading. The CA will also be providing our suppliers with information about the Charter and positively reinforcing its adoption.

### Well-Being

- 2.20 The Combined Authority recognises the value of fostering good physical and mental health for our employees as well as the wider region. Access is provided to Occupational Health services, flu vaccines, Cycle to Work scheme, discounted membership for council leisure centres and an Employee Assistance programme. E-learning modules on mental health awareness, resilience and stress awareness increase employee awareness of how to improve physical and mental health and reduce any stigma. Mental Health First Aiders have been appointed. They have access to peer support training through MIND, as well as a number of wellbeing intranet pages



signposting support for physical, financial and mental health. The CA holds colleague wellbeing events in line with a wellbeing calendar and as an organisation, we promote Active Travel which we promote internally to colleagues e.g. Walk it, Ride it campaign. In September our Inclusivity Champion hosted an online safe space conversation to support staff following events in Israel and Gaza.

- 2.21 In relation to wider aspects of wellbeing the CA signposts information regarding issues such as cost of living support, financial wellbeing workshops, Leeds Credit Union and access to financial advice/support/monthly newsletters from Employee Assistance Programme. The Multiply programme has been delivered to staff to assist with budgeting and financial planning. WYCA staff benefit from a free Corporate MCard.

### Employee Voice

- 2.22 As an organisation, The CA ensures that staff are involved in decision making and managing change. This is achieved by engaging with trade unions and staff networks. Consultation with trade unions is a key part of routine operations - a Management of Change policy is in place and embedded as part of employee relations. All employees objectives are linked back to business plans and managers are encouraged to engage their teams in the business planning process.
- 2.23 The CA has clear and effective mechanisms for responding to the views, ideas and concerns of staff with line management, HR and trade unions being the main mechanisms for this. The Combined Authority has a collective agreement with Unison and regularly engages and consults with the trade unions. A recent example is the refreshed Terms and Conditions which is being rolled out currently. Directors and senior managers meet regularly as a group and this provides a forum for sharing information and raising concerns. Regular staff surveys also provide are also conducted to secure further feedback. Five staff networks are active within the CA and their views are sought regularly. These are Embrace (black, Asian and minority ethnic), PROUD (LGBTQ+), WeCan (disability), Gender Equality Group and Young Employees Network. There are also some support groups e.g. Parents of the Neurodivergent (POD) and menopause support group. There are various methods used to progress the EDI agenda e.g. EDI Directorate advisory groups, Strategic EDI group and EDI Performance & Oversight Board. EDI training was delivered across the organisation in 2023 and online EDI training is mandatory.

### Fulfillment

- 2.24 The Combined Authority provides continuous learning and skills development opportunities for all staff - directorates are asked on an annual basis to identify Learning and Development (L&D) requirements and the performance management process ensures that regular conversations take place regarding learning and skills development needs. L&D opportunities are delivered in a number of ways e.g. lunch and learn sessions, paid training and apprenticeships. L&D Business Partners are in post to drive L&D agenda. The

Combined Authority fully utilises the apprenticeship levy for employing apprentices but also to provide qualifications for existing staff. Training and development activities help to make the organisation more inclusive, for example the EDI training delivered organisation wide. There is a strong EDI focus across the organisation with the establishment of an EDI team and Inclusivity Champion in recent months.

2.25 With regards to leadership and management development, the CA offers workshops on topics such as Attendance Management and Recruitment, health and safety management and have developed toolkits to provide go-to information and documents. The Emerging Leaders (Institute of Leadership & Management Level 5) programme is offered across the Combined Authority. The CA advocates and promotes regular one to one conversations between staff as part of our structured Performance Management annual cycle and managers/supervisors to enable better people management. That these are widely used across the organisation. Workplace Adjustments Passport provides a way for employees to detail any adjustments required and this is shared with managers so that the adjustments can be implemented and the distinctive needs of the employee taken into account. However, the CA also recognises that there is more to do within the area of leadership and management development to upskill our current and future managers and leaders.

2.26 The Combined Authority places great value in supporting communities and good causes. A volunteering policy is in place and this has been used by various staff e.g. Young Employee Network in Dec 2022 at Surplus to Purpose. Teams have used their away days to give back to local communities, for example the Transport Policy & Delivery team volunteered at the West Indian centre in Leeds in October. Two charities have been selected by Employee Engagement panel which the organisation supports in terms of fundraising.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report. However, it is expected that the sign up could positively, indirectly impact of net zero targets.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

4.1 The development of the Charter is driven by the Combined Authority and the Mayor's ambition to deliver a fair and just economic recovery, which is central to promoting Inclusive Growth.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

5.1 The Charter has been designed to drive improvements in ED&I, e.g. in terms of inclusive recruitment practices, and ensuring employees have a voice in the workplace.

### **6. Financial Implications**





6.1 Gainshare funding (£600k) has been previously approved for the development and implementation of the Charter and the requirement for any further resources will need to be considered in the context of the business planning process.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **8. Staffing Implications**

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. External Consultees**

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 That the Board notes the progress made to establish the Mayor's Fair Work Charter, and endorses and supports the proposed next steps.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

There are no appendices.