

# Edinburgh is now a Living Wage city

During the annual Living Wage Week Edinburgh has been accredited with Living Wage City status. This recognises that the council has set an ambition to double the number of Living Wage accredited businesses to 900 in the next few years.

At present half that number are voluntarily committed to paying the Living Wage – a minimum hourly rate of £9.90 per hour which was just announced on Monday.

The Edinburgh Living Wage Action Group is a collaboration of employers and public sector bodies along with trade unions and business organisations and it has developed the action plan to double the number of businesses who adopt the scheme. This responds to the call from the Edinburgh Poverty Commission to pay a fair wage as one way of getting rid of poverty.

This could mean that up to 40,000 employees in Edinburgh are paid the Living Wage and it is expected that a quarter will receive an immediate pay increase.



Cllr Kate Campbell second from the left is joined by other members of the Living Wage City Action Group

The City of Edinburgh Council's Fair Work Convener and Co-Chair of the Edinburgh Living Wage City Action Group, Councillor Kate Campbell, said: "All partners in the Edinburgh Living Wage City Action Group have put so much work into getting to this point. We are all incredibly proud that we can call our Capital an official Living Wage City. We now need to continue that work so that we sign up 100 new accredited businesses every year for the next five years. That's double the current number of businesses signing up.

"Being an accredited living wage employer is about so much more than paying a Living Wage. It's about embedding a culture of Fair Work and giving staff financial security, showing them that they're truly valued for the contribution they make. And the benefits for employers include being able to keep and attract skilled staff – something many businesses are struggling with right now.

"So, we're asking all businesses and organisations across the

city to join us. Together, we can make our city fairer and make sure everyone shares in our economic recovery.”



Cllr Kate Campbell with Poppy the dog from Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home where the photos were taken

The City of Edinburgh Council’s Fair Work Vice Convener, Councillor Mandy Watt, said: “In-work poverty needs to end – and Edinburgh is taking a welcome step towards that today by becoming a real Living Wage City. Fair pay, fair hours and respect at work should be something that all workers can expect from their job. We’re hoping that a huge number of Edinburgh employers share our ambition and will raise wages to the level of the real Living Wage, which is being announced today. Once that’s done, they can move forward to full accreditation and show everybody that they’re helping to end poverty in our city.”

Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work Richard Lochhead said: “I am pleased to see Edinburgh achieve the significant milestone of becoming a Living Wage City. There is increasing evidence demonstrating the benefits of Fair Work to



both workers and business and by promoting the real Living Wage, the Edinburgh Action Group recognises the importance that fair pay has on the local economy.

“I congratulate the Action Group and all the employers in Edinburgh that have played a part in this important achievement.”

The real Living Wage based on living costs is different to the government’s minimum wage – which is called the National Living Wage – and the latter is based on a percentage of average earnings. In July 2015 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the UK Government would introduce a compulsory ‘national living wage’. It was introduced in April 2016, originally applying for all workers over the age of 25, and, as of April 2021, is currently £8.91 an hour and applies for workers over the age of 23. The rate is due to increase to £9.50 per hour in April 2022.

