

Fair Work First

Fair Work First in Scottish Public Procurement asks businesses bidding for a public contract to commit to adopting certain principles. As fair work is central to achieving the Scottish Government's priority for sustainable and inclusive growth, APUC Ltd is committed to advancing and promoting the Fair Work First criteria within its internal operations, particularly in relation to the following:

1. Having appropriate channels for effective employee voice

We formed an Employee Representative and Consultation group in 2022. We facilitate quarterly (as a minimum) meetings with the group which is made up of nominated representative from each workstream within the organisation and both inform, consult and invite any points for discussion and improvement.

We collate feedback directly through the Employee Pulse Survey mechanism.

We have a variety of mechanisms by which employees express their views informally and formally such as: surveys, focus groups at company events, regular 121s with their managers (which are written into our policies), at Performance Review meetings which take place every 4 months, through their Employee Representative and formally through our Grievance procedure or the consultation processes during times of organisational change.

2. Investing in workforce development

We provide learning opportunities for colleagues at all levels both proactively and reactively.

Formal and informal learning is offered and encouraged across the workforce, relating to specific roles as well as wider development – and colleagues are encouraged to attend courses on the APUC Procurement skills programme developed annually for the sector.

Staff are supported to keep their professional qualifications up-to-date and are study support options exist to help staff to obtain professional qualifications.

We have provided and continue to provide Modern Apprenticeships within the organisation, particularly within our Solutions Workstream.

Carbon literacy training is available, and mandatory, for all staff.

3. Not using zero hours contracts inappropriately

Supply and casual contracts are only used when necessary and workers on these contracts are not obliged to accept work when this is offered. We do not use supply and casual contracts to fill longer term vacancies.

Zero hours contracts are used on occasions where an employee would prefer not to commit to regular hours such as a student working during a holiday period to cover an absence in our Business Support team or, more commonly, a retired colleague who wishes to work only part of the year for example, to assist with our accounts work during our financial year-end. We are confident we would be able to credibly explain the exceptional circumstance under which we would use a zero-hours contract.

Our default contract is open-ended with confirmed hours within the normal business day.

4. Taking action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace

We gather data to understand our workforce diversity and pay gap information and report this to the APUC Board at least annually.

As women are still regarded as the primary care giver, their work choices can typically be limited to lower-paid and part-time roles. This is one of the reasons behind our decision to weigh cost of living increases towards those in the lower pay brackets, rather than implementing a blanket percentage increase which provides an advantage to those already earning more.

We offer enhanced maternity, shared parental, paternity and adoption pay and staff are supported to return to work through keeping in touch days, agreed communications throughout leave and return to work inductions.

We have an Employee Wellbeing Policy and Plan which aims to promote a workplace where mental health and wellbeing are meaningfully discussed and which aims to reduce stigma and discrimination of mental health conditions and challenges. A team of [insert number] Mental Health First Aiders is in place and they contribute to the overall Policy and Plan.

5. Providing fair pay for our colleagues

We are a Living Wage employer, accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. All staff are paid at least the Living Wage including our current apprentices.

The Fair Work First criteria are also referenced in our procurement contracts and grant 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.

6. Offering flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment

We support flexible working across the organisation and offer the right to request flexible working from day one of employment. We have options for semi-compressed hours, flexibility around start and end times, part-time work and the majority of staff are able to work from home or remotely (within the scope of our internal guidance on hybrid-working.).

7. Opposing the use of fire and rehire practices

Fire and Rehire practices, or “dismissal and re-engagement” would only ever be used in exceptional circumstances where it was deemed to be an organisational necessity.

[Fair Work First: guidance to support implementation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultations/web_publications/fair-work-first-guidance-to-support-implementation-2022-23.pdf)

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