

# Employer Profile:

## ACE Place

ACE Place Nursery & Out of School Care was established in 2010 by Director Alison Harkin and has since grown into a prominent local business with 63 members of staff looking after 248 children daily, across two separate sites. Over the past ten years, ACE Place has also been recognised for various achievements, from winning “Association of Scottish Businesswomen’s Young Business of the Year” in 2011 to being awarded “Investors In Young People” last year, for their strong commitment to training and employing young people. In fact, all but one of the trainees who have worked at ACE Place over the past ten years, have gone on to secure a full-time position at the nursery on completion of training.

In May of 2019 the nursery also reached an important milestone and became an accredited Living Wage employer. For Alison, becoming a Living Wage employer was important, because it gave her an opportunity to show her appreciation for the hard work that her employees do.

**“Staff have told me that they feel valued. They know that there is no obligation for me to pay the real Living Wage and see the choice to do this as a positive commitment to rewarding their daily efforts.”**

**Alison Harkin, Director**

Alison explained that the nursery’s fees are reviewed annually and where costs rise, so do the fees to parents. Parents are, however, happy to pay these slightly higher fees in order to help maintain the continuity of staffing within the nursery.



**“Parents understood that valuing our staff was important and were happy to pay a little extra.”**

**Alison Harkin, Director**

Becoming accredited also gave the organisation a renewed motivation to look at their total benefits package and they have since decided to increase their childcare subsidy, incentivise access to a credit union and have introduced ACE World to support the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace. Beyond this, ACE Place also offer their staff enhanced pensions, flexible working and access to additional training.

According to Alison, accreditation has also helped with staff retention, which is vital when it comes to the care sector.

**“The cost of looking after and retaining good staff is far outweighed by the cost of advertising for, interviewing, training and supporting new team members for any business.”**

**Alison Harkin, Director**



In addition, it has also been valuable for the business to make reference to their accreditation when recruiting for new staff. For potential employees, being an accredited Living Wage employer puts further weight behind the organisation's Fair Work policies, providing reassurance that wages will be reviewed annually and increased in line with the real Living Wage.

**"Customers notice where there is high staff turnover, and this often negatively impacts on their view of the company."**

**Alison Harkin, Director**

While Alison told us that the accreditation process was straightforward, she did initially find it tricky to maintain appropriate differentials between pay grades for different roles within the company. Despite these early hurdles, the company was able to implement the real Living Wage to all staff "without too much bother" and have been able to enjoy the benefits of accreditation since.



Overall, like Alison, the staff are proud of the achievements of ACE Place and their recent Living Wage accreditation!

**"It gives me a sense of confidence and I am really happy that ACE Place think I'm worth a decent wage and value me."**

**Childcare Worker, ACE Place**

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## Join ACE Place and the real Living Wage movement today

The real Living Wage makes a real and immediate difference to the lives of workers and at the same time, has proven social and business benefits. Living Wage accreditation is widely recognised as a mark of a responsible employer. The accreditation process is straightforward and there is a team of trained accreditation officers who can provide support and guidance. The real Living Wage is calculated annually according to the real cost of living in the UK and London.

### Get in touch

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