

RUSSELL ANDERSON FOUNDATION



Living Wage Employer Profile



The Russell Anderson Foundation (RAF) has been working with and supporting vulnerable children and their families in recognised socially deprived areas of Aberdeen (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) since 2012 through the provision of football development. They became a registered charity in 2017.

The Foundation runs the Russell Anderson Development School (RADS) and provides children with structured sports and fitness programmes, where they have the opportunity to develop communication, social and life skills, whilst improving their knowledge about the importance of physical activity and nutrition.

The charity takes a holistic approach in helping young people overcome challenges and uses exercise and sport as a tool to engage and guide them away from any negative effects in their lives. The goal of the charity is for every child to feel positive about themselves and their relationship with physical activity.

Over the past 18 months, the charity have been buying and delivering food provisions to numerous families on a weekly basis. In addition to providing food provisions, they are creating a lifestyle support scheme, where families are provided with recipes and ingredients, to allow them to budget properly and to develop healthier lifestyles.

In 2017, RADS was the recipient of a Health and Wellbeing Award from Aberdeen City Council Children and Young People's Service in recognition of their work with local primary schools and have also been shortlisted for several other awards.

Employees are provided with new kit and equipment at regular intervals, helping ensure they can perform at their best. There is funding available for training to help enhance their skills and knowledge, and they can also access the Staff Development Fund.

Although working hours fall in accordance to primary school timetables, there is a good degree of flexibility within those parameters which allows for a better work life balance.

The Process

While exploring the possibility of implementing the real Living Wage, the team at RAF undertook a range of exercises to ensure that paying it would be sustainable. A revised Business Plan was created and cash flow forecasts were made, and the organisation also made the decision to move away from zero-hour contracts.

Graeme Burnett, CEO of the Russell Anderson Foundation told us how pleased they were that the process of becoming an accredited Living Wage employer was straightforward and easy to follow.

"While filling out the online form, the Living Wage Scotland team were on hand to answer any questions. After submitting the form, we were personally contacted by a member of the team to ensure all was in order and that we were comfortable with all aspects of the real Living Wage and accreditation."

Graeme Burnett, CEO

Russell Anderson Foundation Trustees were committed to increasing the salary bands for every employee and as part of this process, the charity became an accredited Living Wage employer in September 2020.

The Benefits

RAF recognise that paying a real Living Wage ultimately benefits both employees and the organisation. The real Living Wage is the only rate based on the cost of living and being able to cover basic needs contributes to a better quality of life by reducing money worries and allowing people choice.

"The Living Wage is a welcome change to my life. Each year the cost of living increases so it helps people like me to get by."

Employee, Russell Anderson Foundation

Fairness is at the heart of what the Living Wage campaign is trying to achieve and why organisations like RAF choose to go further than the government minimum. Becoming an accredited Living Wage employer is an investment in people and also brings business and organisational benefits.

Continuity of personnel is important to the Foundation and the public commitment made to staff through Living Wage accreditation has allowed them to retain highly motivated staff and also allows them to attract the best people when recruiting. Improved retention rates result in financial benefits as recruitment and training costs can be reduced.

Recognising the value of staff and demonstrating a commitment to them is vital, now more than ever, and the benefits are paid back to the employer when morale is high.

Loyalty and goodwill are promoted when people feel respected and recognised and paying a fair wage is a way to show staff that their hard work is valued.

Studies have shown that paying a real Living Wage increases motivation and morale which leads to better relationships within organisations and greater resilience when faced with challenges.

"We have an amazing team of people that really do deserve to be rewarded for their hard work. It is the minimum that every employer should give their employees and we believe it is the first step in rewarding employees for their hard work and efforts."

Graeme Burnett, CEO

Feedback from staff members at RAF has been extremely positive and underlines the impact that the real Living Wage can have on their lives.

"As an employee, earning in excess of the real Living Wage makes me feel valued and motivated to work to the best of my abilities."

"Paying minimum wage and fixed term contracts are very common in our industry. It's so refreshing to work in an environment that values the happiness and welfare of staff. The real Living Wage means that we are paid for doing our challenging work and it affords me a better standard of living outside of work."

Employees, Russell Anderson Foundation

As an organisation who aim to make a positive impact on society, RAF share the same values as the Living Wage movement and believe every person deserves to be treated fairly and valued at work. Paying employees the real Living Wage or above is one way of proving this and contributing towards building a fairer society.

"We share the same values as the Living Wage movement, including respect for the abilities of each individual and the importance of providing support, so that our employees can become empowered to fulfil and hopefully exceed their life goals and aspirations."

Graeme Burnett, CEO

In becoming officially accredited, the Foundation are setting an example to other employers in Aberdeen and the surrounding areas and are publicly demonstrating to current and potential employees that they can expect to be paid fairly which gives people security and stability. This investment in their people is a clear and public signal to employees, stakeholders and the community.

By making the commitment to paying the real Living Wage and having no zero-hour contracts, RAF believe they are helping their people and supporting the wider community by allowing workers to better provide for their families and have a better family life.

"It just shows that RAF genuinely care about the people who work for them and hopefully other companies will follow their example."

Employee, Russell Anderson Foundation



It is estimated that one in five children in Aberdeen are living in poverty, with a large proportion of those in families where at least one parent is working, highlighting the impact of in-work poverty. Graeme and his team hope that RAF's accreditation encourages others in Aberdeen to follow their example and help make it a city where everyone prospers.

"If you can, please go ahead with accreditation. It makes your workers feel valued and respected. It's also great for an organisation's reputation because it is a public demonstration. Hopefully, employers will see the benefits in staff retention and people staying loyal to the organisation. They will also see the tangible benefits earning the real Living Wage can make on workers' lives."

Graeme Burnett, CEO

"If a small charity like RAF can choose to give their employees the real Living Wage, I believe bigger companies should be doing the same. It just shows that RAF genuinely care about the people who work for them and hopefully other companies will follow their example."

Employee, Russell Anderson Foundation

Get in touch and join the real Living Wage movement today:

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