



GM LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SUBJECT: GM Good Employment Charter

DATE: 4th August 2020

FROM: Ian MacArthur, Head of the Good Employment Charter Implementation Unit

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out a summary of activities and engagement undertaken and planned by the Charter Implementation Unit since the launch of the Supporters' Network on 22nd July 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The LEP Board is asked to note the report and consider how it can further support and promote the work of the Good Employment Charter.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter is a voluntary membership and assessment scheme that aims to raise employment standards across GM, for all organisations of any size, sector or geography.
- 1.2 The Charter was established recognising that despite its underlying economic strength, there are issues with the quality of work in Greater Manchester. Specifically:
 - Wages not meeting the cost of living
 - Accessibility and flexibility not offered in roles leading to a lack of diversity, and
 - Unstable, low paid work is on the rise
- 1.3 The issues are likely to deepen and become more significant as the GM economy adapts to living with COVID-19 and recovers from its impact. However, it is also becoming increasingly apparent that good employment standards and practice are not only vital for *Building Back Better*, they are also fundamental to strengthening our public health resilience in the face of future 'second waves' or future pandemic threats.

2. GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The Greater Manchester Strategy Implementation Plan included the development of a GM Good Employment Charter in order to help deliver the priorities of 'good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop' and 'a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester'. The Charter was being developed through a process of co-design – involving employers from all sectors, employees, districts and other experts.
- 2.2 Following a process of co-design, and consultation in March 2018 and October 2018, a model was developed for the Charter. This delivered a tiered structure, with an initial tier of Supporters, and then Membership, and then Advocates. This was envisaged to:
 - Engage a wide range of businesses, public service providers and voluntary and community sector organisations, while
 - Encouraging them to meet higher employment standards by progressing up the tiers, learning from best practice, and thereby improve productivity and service quality.
- 2.3 There was strong and widespread support for this approach in the consultation, establishing the Charter as a journey for employers, rather than an assessment at a single point in time.
- 2.4 The agreed Charter Framework sets out seven key characteristics for good employment practice:
 - I. Secure work;

- II. Flexible work;
 - III. Real living wage;
 - IV. Engagement & voice;
 - V. Recruitment;
 - VI. People management;
 - VII. Health & Wellbeing.
- 2.5 Whilst not set out explicitly as a singular characteristic, equality, diversity and inclusion are underpinning values that guide and inform the standards that employers must work towards.
- 2.6 All employers initially engage with the Good Employment Charter as Supporters and commit to improving their employment practice across the seven characteristics. Signing up as a Supporter opens up a network of likeminded employers as well a range of bespoke resources to support employers in developing their policies and practice, including events and webinars.
- 2.7 The Supporters' Network was launched in July 2019.
- 2.8 During the Autumn of 2019 the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter Unit was established (hosted by the Growth Company) and very quickly set-up a pilot group of employers, covering all sectors, scale and geography, to work on the development of membership criteria for the Characteristics.
- 2.9 The work of this pilot group fed into a large working conference attended by a wide range of invited stakeholders in November 2019. Held in the Mechanic's Institute in central Manchester, c.100 delegates attended the 'Setting the Standards' conference working across 16 different workshops to develop practical criteria. The workshops were ably facilitated by senior ACAS staff, with the Universities (Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University) providing rapporteurs for each work stream. The Mayor attended at the end of the day to receive the feedback on the work of the day.
- 2.10 The results of that event led to the development of detailed membership criteria that were launched in January 2020, when the first six Charter Members were announced:
- Back on Track
 - Bruntwood
 - Electricity Northwest
 - Making You Content
 - Oldham College
 - Rawlinson's Knitwear
- 2.11 The final Membership Criteria can be found here:
<https://www.gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk/media/1091/membership-criteria-final-gm-good-employment-charter-jan-2020.pdf>

3 GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER DELIVERY

- 3.1 At the time of the launch of the Supporters' Network (July 2019) some 60 employers had expressed their commitment to sign up as supporters of the Charter. Since then, over 220 employers have engaged with the Implementation Unit seeking further information and wishing to join as Supporters. Over 110 employers have now completed their registration forms and the remainder are being contacted and followed up to ensure they also formally sign up as Supporters. The current scope of employees covered by Charter Supporters is c.200,000
- 3.2 Following on from the Membership launch(January 2020), the Charter Unit has been assessing existing Supporter employers to ensure that they meet the standards for membership and working through an independent technical panel, consisting of experts from ACAS, CIPD, MMU and GMCA, to scrutinize and robustly challenge the employer's suitability to become a member of the charter. Currently 10 employers are being assessed and will be considered for membership by the Charter Advisory Board.
- 3.3 Since September 2019 and prior to COVID-19 'lockdown', the Charter Implementation Unit has arranged monthly Supporters' Network events. These monthly breakfast sessions, running for 1.5 hrs from 08:30 - 10:00, occurred on the second Wednesday of each month. Each event covered a topic related to the seven characteristics of good employment, with expert speakers from aligned organisations or partners of the charter, and first-hand examples from employers.
- 3.4 The purpose of Supporters' Network events is to bring together Supporters from across size, sector and geography and give them an opportunity to network and share good employment best practices. This networking opportunity came through as a key element that employers were interested in from the Charter. Each event then covers a subject related to good employment, with the idea being to educate, engage, and inspire employers, with a focus on easily implementable key takeaways for attendees.
- 3.5 Supporters' Network events see an average attendance of 50 employers, with cross-sector representation from public, private and third. The events thus far have been held in central locations. See table below for event date, topic, blog recap, number of attendees, and venue.

Date	Topic	# Attendees	Location
11 Sep 2019	Mental Health & Wellbeing with MIND Blog recap	60	GM Chamber of Commerce
09 Oct 2019	Modern Slavery in Workplaces and Human Trafficking with Slave-Free Alliance Blog recap	30	Knights plc Office at Two Saint Peter's Square

13 Nov 2019	Real Living Wage with the Living Wage Foundation and GM Living Wage Campaign Blog recap	45	Salford Museum and Art Gallery
11 Dec 2019	Workplace Activity with GreaterSport Blog recap	65	ARUP Office at 3 Piccadilly Place
12 Feb 2020	Recruitment for Youth and Ageing Communities with GMCVO's GMs Hidden Talent and GMCA's GM Ageing Hub Blog recap	55	CityCo Manchester
11 Mar 2020	Employment Law Updates with Acas (No blog recap due to timeliness of employment law information)	55	Huckletree in the Express Building

3.6 As delivering the normal Supporters' Network events through COVID-19 restrictions would not be possible beyond March 2020, the team have moved these events online as webinars using the Livestorm platform. The focus of event topics has been changed to cover characteristics most affected by changes to workplaces because of COVID-19.

Date	Topic	# Registrants	# Attendees
22 Apr 2020	COVID-19 Response and Discussion from the Perspective of Health and Wellbeing with Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daphne Doody (CIPD) • Nicola Ryan (Rowlinson Knitwear) • Geoffrey Leigh Blog recap and recording	115	80
7 May 2020	Building Back Better: How will COVID-19 change employment standards? With Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Burnham (Mayor of GM) • Clive Memmott (GM Chamber of Commerce) • Sam Clark (Acas) Blog Recap and Recording	156	91
21 May 2020	Home Working: Improving WFH from an ergonomic, mental health, and management perspective with Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE • Emma Degg (NWBLT) • Debby Hallett (BASF) Blog Recap and Recording	95	56

04 Jun 2020	Flexible Working: From crisis to opportunity, redesigning the workplace in partnership with Timewise. <u>Blog Recap and Recording</u>	Capacity: 50	38
18 Jun 2020	Equality Matters: Addressing inequalities in the workplace exposed or exacerbated by COVID-19 with Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Amesu (IoD) • John Hacking (GM Living Wage Campaign) • Donald Moore (Rowlinson Knitwear) 	90	57
8 July 2020	People Management: Changing Landscape during and post lockdown with Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginie Ghaznavi, The Growth Company • Tricia Nelson, Ernst & Young UK • Ben Willmott, CIPD 	80	49
23 July 2020	Equality Matters: Disabled People and COVID-19 with Guest Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michele Scattergood, Breakthrough UK • Kate Headley, The Clear Company, • Lee Jefcott, Brabners • James Williams, Lloyds Banking Group 	68	41

3.7 Working with partners of the Charter, TUC, ACAS, GreaterSport, Adecco and others, further webinars are planned for the Autumn on re-opening safely, employee voice as well as other specific equality issues. Shifting these events online has increased attendance and capacity, as webinars are accessible to more Supporters than traditional events, extending the reach. With the success of these webinars, the Unit is planning to incorporate webinars into the mix going forward, in addition to regular events.

4 BUILDING BACK BETTER – FUTURE PRIORITIES AND WORKSTREAMS

4.1 As well as continuing to recruit new supporters and working with them to become full members, through our analysis of pre-COVID-19 employer needs emerging themes sat in three main areas:

- Flexible work – in general, most organisations support this characteristic, but many employers need support to address manage its introduction and implementation
- Developing excellent recruitment and progression opportunities - this is an area that many have recognised as a priority but are struggling to achieve.
- Real living wage – this is an emotive issue as most supporters do pay the RLW but for those that currently don't, it can be a problematic aspiration.

- 4.2 COVID-19 has changed the employment landscape significantly and whilst the thematic priorities identified above have become even more acute in their relevance, it is also clear that subjects relating to health and wellbeing (particularly mental wellbeing), and the development of management and leadership capacity are also top priorities for action.
- 4.3 More generally, COVID-19 has demonstrated the fundamental need to build resilience especially in the foundational economy through more secure and better paid work. and the Charter will now turn to target engagement with key sectors across social care, retail, hospitality etc, to promote the absolute need to place good employment practice at the heart of our progress to economic recovery.