

The REAL Living Wage – Living Wage Week 2019, 11th – 17th November

The UK campaign for a Living Wage started in East London in 2001 where people living in Tower Hamlets, overlooked by Canary Wharf, could see the symbols of wealth, but were not feeling any of the benefits. Similar disparities can be found across the UK, particularly in areas which have lost their traditional industries and the foundations of their economies. Since its inception, and its growth across the UK, the Living Wage Campaign had become one of the most successful popular community movements of our time.



The adoption of the Living Wage employer mark in 2011, through which businesses can display their commitment to social responsibility, has seen the number of accredited businesses grow to around 6,000 Living Wage employers across the UK, with Scotland punching above its weight at 1,600 accredited Living Wage employers.

In 2017, The Living Wage Campaign recognised that growth in the number of accreditations tended to occur in clusters, often following the lead of major employers and significant purchasing organisations like Local Authorities. This led to thinking around the concept of Living Wage Places and Dundee was quick to express support for that concept as it would aid the city's aspirations to be a Living Wage City. Working in close liaison with the Living Wage Campaign, a Living Wage City Action Group was formed comprising representatives of local accredited business, led by the City Council. The Group helped pilot the development of the criteria and specification needed to create a practical, achievable model, and in March 2019, Dundee was declared the UK's first Living Wage City.

At that time, we had 51 accredited businesses headquartered in Dundee, and the target set for the first year of the three year action plan was to lift that number by a dozen, to 63. By November, just nine months into the action plan, Dundee can now boast 79 accredited businesses, well ahead of the target, with more in the pipeline. So the Living Wage Place model has already shown that the Living Wage movement can grow at an accelerated pace when the place-based approach harnesses the enthusiasm and commitment engendered by tapping into the power of place, and getting supporters to work together to encourage others to join them.

Dundee's levels of activity have certainly increased due to the work and enthusiasm of the local Action Group, a fact that is evidenced by the recent announcement that no less than five Dundee based Living Wage businesses and individuals have been nominated for awards in three of the Scottish Living Wage Campaign's six annual award categories –

Living Wage Scotland Newcomer of the Year 2019

Abertay University

Living Wage Scotland Voice of the Year 2019

Alison Henderson, Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce

Ellis Watson, D C Thomson

Living Wage Scotland Outstanding Leadership Award 2019

Dundee Living Wage City Action Group

Xplore Dundee

GOOD LUCK TO ALL CONCERNED!