THE WISE GROUP CELEBRATES BECOMING THE 845th LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER

Wednesday 12 July, 2017

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The Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative is pleased to announce that the Wise Group has today accredited as the 845th Living Wage employer.

Mr. Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work is visiting Dundee to celebrate the Wise Group becoming the 845th accredited Living Wage employer in Scotland and to highlight the importance of the Living Wage in the Scottish and local economies.

The Wise Group has been transforming lives through social enterprise since 1983. Supporting over 50,000 people a year we make a positive difference to people, communities and society by helping customers gain new skills and employment, reducing re-offending, regenerating communities and tackling fuel poverty. We have a clear understanding of the type of support our customers need and have a proven track record of providing both innovative and high quality services. The Wise Group delivers results by working closely with stakeholders and partners.

The Living Wage commitment confirms that all Wise Group staff receive a minimum hourly wage of £8.45. This rate is significantly higher than the statutory minimum wage for over 25s of £7.50 per hour introduced in April 2017.

The Living Wage is an hourly rate set independently and updated annually. It is calculated according to the real costs of living.

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Mr Keith Brown said:

“The Living Wage is set at £8.45 an hour, so it’s fitting that I’m here to celebrate the Wise Group becoming the 845th accredited Living Wage employer in Scotland. This proven investment in people leads to increased productivity and reduced staff absence, while sending a strong signal about fairness to your organisation’s stakeholders, and I applaud Wise for recognising it’s value.

“As well as setting a great example to other businesses, and in particular other social enterprise’s across Scotland, this achievement marks another positive milestone on our journey towards having 1,000 Living Wage accredited employers by autumn 2017.”

Laurie Russell, Chief Executive of the Wise Group said

‘The Wise Group culture focuses on ensuring that all our staff feel valued and recognised. We have chosen to pay the living wage as an important part of our investment in our people. I believe that other Scottish employers and their employees would also see wider benefits from adopting it’

Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance said

‘The Poverty Alliance congratulates Wise Group for becoming our 845th accredited Living Wage employer in Scotland. There is a long way to go to address in-work poverty for the estimated 467,000 low-paid people in Scotland. Living Wage accreditation celebrates employers like Wise Group that choose to go further than the government minimum, signalling to staff, customers and other companies that Living Wage is part of their core values’

Issued by the Wise Group

For further information contact Chris Seely on 07710 250 189

Notes to Editors

The Wise Group

The Wise Group is one of the UK's leading social enterprises and has been transforming lives since 1983. It makes a positive difference to people, communities and society by helping customers gain new skills and new employment, reducing reoffending, regenerating communities and tackling fuel poverty. For more information visit https://www.thewisegroup.co.uk/ or follow @wisegroup_se

The Living Wage

- The UK Living Wage for outside of London is currently £8.45 per hour. These figures are calculated annually by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission, based on the best available evidence on living standards in London and the UK.
- The accreditation programme in Scotland launched in April 2014. It is an initiative from The Poverty Alliance, in partnership with the Living Wage Foundation, and is funded by the Scottish Government
- Over 25,000 people in Scotland have had a pay rise thanks to the real Living Wage Initiative. For an example of one of them click here: https://youtu.be/MaagH0UPXNo
- More than 820 employers headquartered in Scotland have become accredited. Accreditation is voluntary. In the UK as a whole, there are 3000 accredited employers.
- Accredited real Living Wage employers in Scotland span private, public and third sectors. Prominent accredited employers include SSE, Standard Life, Barr's, and Mackie's. SMEs make up 75% of the total number of employers and one in three local councils accredited. Find out more at www.scottishlivingwage.org/accredited.
- For a list of UK accredited companies visit http://www.livingwage.org.uk/who-pays-the-living-wage?qt-living_wage_schemes=0

467,000 figure of people earning under the real Living Wage is cited in: SPICe, November 2016

What about the Government's national living wage?

In July 2015 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the UK Government would introduce a compulsory 'national living wage'. This new government rate is a new minimum wage rate for staff over 25 years old. It was introduced in April 2016 and the rate is £7.50 per hour as of April 2017. The rate is ***separate*** to the Living Wage rate calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. The government rate is based on median earnings while the Living Wage Foundation rate is calculated according to the cost of living.

The National Minimum Wage (including the 'national living wage')	**The Living Wage**
? The legal minimum an employee can earn in an hour. Employers break the law if they fail to pay this rate	? A voluntary rate that employers commit to pay in order to go above and beyond. The Living Wage Employer Mark is a sign of best practice
? The 'national living wage' rate is set at £7.50 an hour	? The current UK Living Wage is £8.45 an hour. The current London Living Wage is £9.75 an hour
? This will increase each year, with the aim of reaching 60% of the median wage across the country by 2020 (this would mean around £9 an hour but the Low Pay Commission will consider what the market can bear)	? This will increase in line with the cost of living with increases announced in Living Wage Week every year
? Different rates apply depending on the age of the employee. The 'national living wage' is for over 25s	? The Living Wage is the same for all employees over the age of 18

only

? Set by the Low Pay Commission

? Set by the Living Wage Foundation

? Based on an estimation of what the market can bear

? Based on the cost of living

? The rates are the same right across the UK

? There is a separate rate for London to reflect the higher cost of living in the Capital

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