

CASE STUDY: TRAFFORD HOUSING TRUST



staff. Since then, Trafford Housing Trust has played an active role in promoting the Living Wage both regionally and nationally. In July 2018 THT was proud to become the first Housing Association to be accredited as a Living Wage Funder.

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING A LIVING WAGE FUNDER?

Becoming a Living Wage Funder was a simple process. We updated our guidance documents and terms of grant, along with other communication tools to include our commitment to supporting the real Living Wage. We already asked applicants for a breakdown of salary costs, so we now just check that the hourly rate meets the real Living Wage and where they don't we contact the applicant to discuss increasing the proposed salaries (recognising that there may be cases where there are reasons for this not to happen).

We promote the Living Wage through our communications with over 200 organisations a year, including those who apply for grants with us. Through communicating that we support payment of the Living Wage, we increase awareness of accreditation in the sector. We've only had one example where a grantee, an art therapy project, requested funding for a role paid below the Living Wage. We offered to cover the cost of increasing their staff salaries by £1 an hour to meet the real Living Wage and they were pleased to accept.

'By increasing our funding amount towards the management salary, you have helped us to have security and stability within the post and to believe that we can successfully deliver our project which will benefit people from minority groups.'

Trafford Housing Trust (THT)'s vision is to 'strive for a society free from poverty and inequality'. In 2017, THT committed to giving 10% of their operating profits to projects which address poverty and inequality and became one of the largest Housing Association grants programmes in the UK – committing up to £2 million each year to voluntary and community organisations and projects.

They receive around 200 applications a year for projects ranging from £250 to £100,000, funding everything from small groups organizing community events such as activity classes for low income families to longer term projects addressing some of the root causes of poverty.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE LIVING WAGE MOVEMENT?

As a fund committed to alleviating poverty across Trafford, supporting the Living Wage was a logical step for THT to make. The principle of paying people a fair day's pay for a hard day's work to enable them to heat their home, pay their rent, pay for essential items such as food, clothing, household bills, transport, and participate in social and cultural activities is core to THT's vision. We received Living Wage accreditation in 2014, ensuring fair pay for our 520

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THIS PROCESS AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

“We’ve not really had any big challenges. Initially the Social Investment Board were concerned about the wider impact on small VCSE organisations of paying the Real Living Wage. However, our approach is to explore the Living Wage as a recommendation and so far, applicants have responded positively.”

As the first Housing Association to achieve Living Wage Funder status, we would encourage others in the sector who have grants programmes to also consider whether accreditation could be relevant to their programmes. Together, we can make a much greater impact.”

STEVE HUGHES, CHAIR OF TRAFFORD HOUSING TRUST’S SOCIAL INVESTMENT BOARD

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER FUNDERS WHO WANT TO BECOME LIVING WAGE FUNDERS?

As Housing Associations and Funders, it is important that we use the resources we have at our disposal to advocate for and encourage the real Living Wage.

It’s not just for the benefit of the individuals receiving the real Living Wage, but their families, the businesses around them and everyone connected with them.

