

COVE PARK

Fair Work Policy and Action Plan

Prepared By:
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Policy Commitment

Cove Park aims to improve its working practices and competences to align fully with the objectives of Scottish Government's [Fair Work First Policy](#). We want to contribute to Scottish Government's vision of creating for the people of Scotland by 2026 a world-leading working life.

As a living wage employer certified by the Living Wage Foundation, we offer flexible working and refrain from unfair use of zero-hour contracts. Through this commitment, Cove Park currently fulfils the core objectives of Scottish Government. However, the organisation will seek to make improvements in the areas of workforce development, tackling the gender pay gap, and developing tools to enhance and embed effective voice.

This Policy outlines the areas requiring improvement and our related plan for action. It also provides realistic timeframes for these actions. Cove Park's Fair Work Policy will be updated and reviewed every 6 months by Cove Park's team and approved and renewed annually by our Board of Trustees.

Objectives of The Fair Work Scotland Policy.

Objective 1: Appropriate channels for effective voice, such as trade union recognition

Aim:

To ensure the organisation has a safe environment where 'dialogue and challenge are central to the organisational culture' which ensures that 'workers are treated fairly and equitably.' This aim will 'improve information sharing, problem solving, encourage innovation and can resolve conflict.' This aim can also 'lead to the development of effective HR policy' in relation to pay, annual leave, health and safety, and training.

Cove Park's Current Position:

Cove Park has an 'open-door' policy for all team members. This allows everyone in the team to openly express their ideas, concerns, and opinions. The primary forum for this is our weekly team meeting, which is designed as an opportunity to discuss programme, working practices, team development, concerns, and ideas in an open and safe environment. These initiatives have created a culture of openness, honesty, and constructive dialogue amongst the team. Team members are also welcome to speak to Kerrie MacQueen (Finance & People Manager) or Alexia Holt (Director) privately and at any time if they wish to discuss urgent concerns or personal issues.

Cove Park also conducts regular performance reviews for team members, led by the Director. These reviews give both parties the opportunity to constructively discuss ideas, concerns, or training and development needs.

Our work in this area is underpinned by our Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, Cove Park's Team Handbook (issued with employment contracts and updated annually), including our Code of Conduct and Community Ethics, and our Health & Safety Policies.

To achieve our objectives, actions we implemented the following actions in December 2023:

- A. Confirmed and signpost two in-house representatives, one operational and one senior team member, to ensure all team members feel they can discuss concerns, ideas and challenges in a confidential and constructive manner.
- B. Introduced confidential Workplace Surveys to monitor team member satisfaction and concerns, providing a further channel through which team members can provide feedback in a secure manner and provide quantitative data for the Finance & Operations Manager and Director to review, monitor and act upon.
- C. Appointed one of Cove Park's Trustees as Human Resources Lead, to oversee this Policy and to act as a point of contact.
- D. Reviewed Cove Park's Code of Conduct and shared with all team members.

Objective 2: Investment in workforce development

Aim:

To build a 'more engaged and fulfilled staff' that has 'equal access to training' within an organisation that provides 'opportunities for their staff at all levels', which in turn creates a 'shared responsibility and commitment to lifelong learning.' Organisations should be focused on talent management and staff retention ensuring that 'fair work should be built into the employer's recruitment and retention process.'

Cove Park's Current Position:

Cove Park operates a flexible working policy, which encourages all team members to achieve a meaningful work life balance. Cove Park encourages a hybrid working style, which promotes the benefits of collaboration and social engagement among the team but also offers flexibility for those who wish to work from home from time to time. 80% of Cove Park team members are employed on a part time basis. 50% of the part time team members work at a supervisory or managerial level. The flexible working model ensures that team members with caring responsibilities, or those part time employees with other roles outside their employment at Cove Park, can continue to develop professionally and are not excluded from the labour market due to caring responsibilities either at a later stage in life or when returning from parental leave.

Cove Park has introduced several wellbeing initiatives, which includes 'Wellness Wednesday', when the team and residents on site participate in yoga, team swims, and walks. All members of the team are invited to attend and take part in the hospitality offered to residents, including summer dinners, talks, discussions, and public events.

However, improvements can be made in relation to workforce development including developing practices and policies aimed at increasing equality of opportunity and social mobility within our team, a policy for the provision of childcare, enhancement of training and continuous professional development (CPD) provision, and work to support staff retention.

To achieve our aims, we implemented the following actions in December 2023:

- A. Reviewed and further developed Cove Park's approach to flexible working and working from home, to ensure that team members have equal access to flexible working (when possible) and set parameters and guidelines to ensure that flexible working and home working has a positive impact on both the team and the organisation.
- B. Implement a Provision of Childcare Policy (Ongoing as of April 2026)
- C. To aid workplace retention and staff development Cove Park developed a continuous professional development (CPD) programme and established a training plan for each team member.
- D. Developed and implemented a Social Mobility Policy that ensures Cove Park is working towards diversifying its team and Board of Trustees, specifically focusing on socio-economic barriers within recruitment and its own organisational development structure (Ongoing as of April 2026)

Objective 3: No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts.

Aim:

To provide economic security and working hours stability for all team members, ensuring that contracts that do not guarantee any work to the individual and does not set out a

minimum number of hours are not offered or available to employees within the organisation. In addition, organisation should ensure that they are not dependent on unpaid internships.

Cove Park's Current Position:

Cove Park does not offer zero hours contracts and offers freelance workers contracts which provide benefits offered to non-freelance employees. Cove Park aspires to become a living hours accredited employer (see objective 5)

Within the organisation, freelance workers have the same economic security as employed team members and have equal access to Cove Park's staff development fund, all team training and CPD, including Cove Park's wellbeing initiatives. Freelance workers are provided with contracts which confirm rates of pay, payment dates, their roles and responsibilities, their contact within the organisation and the organisation's Health & Safety, Confidentiality, Harassment, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct and Complaints procedures and policies. Freelance workers also receive the same recruitment, induction and onboarding procedures as employed team members.

Cove Park does not offer unpaid internships.

To develop this objective further the organisation implemented the following on December 2023:

- A. Investigated plans to become an accredited living hours employer.

Objective 4: Action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace:

Aim:

This objective aims to ensure that gender-based discrimination in the workplace is eradicated. Organisation should aim to address the gender pay gap, reduce racial inequality in employment and ensure that disabled people have access to opportunities and employment.

The Scottish government have advised that employers should go above their legal obligations to ensure protection for workers that are in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 prevents discrimination based on 9 protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Cove Park's Current Position:

Cove Park is a women-led organisation with a female to male ratio of 13:3 The lack of gender balance within our own organisation has made it difficult to ascertain our own gender pay gap.

As a women-led organisation, we are acutely aware of the challenges and barriers in place which cause gender discrimination and widen the gender pay gap. We work hard to ensure that barriers faced by primary care givers are alleviated by ensuring that there are suitable opportunities at senior level for team members returning to work after paternal leave, flexible working arrangements, and increased flexibility to accommodate childcare needs during school holidays.

Cove Park also has a robust Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and action plan which sets out the organisation's strategy to tackle inequality and become more diverse and accessible to all.

However, there are significant improvements the organisation could make to improve gender equality including enhanced and equal parental leave and paid carers leave.

To develop this objective further the organisation will undertake the following by December 2026.

- A. Worked with SCVO in 2024/2025 to understand the organisations gender pay gap.
- B. Investigate the possibility of offering enhanced maternity and paternity pay. (Ongoing as of April 2026)
- C. Amended its Sick Leave Policy to ensure carer's leave is covered as part of the organisation's enhanced sick pay scheme.
- D. Investigate plans to increase social mobility and diversity at Cove Park (Ongoing as of 2026)

Objective 5: Payment of the Real Living Wage

Aim:

This objective aims to ensure that all workers are paid fairly for the work that they do and reflects a wage that meets workers everyday needs. The real living wage is currently set at £13.45 per hour in Scotland.

Cove Park's Current Position:

Cove Park is currently an accredited Real Living Wage employer and pays all team members above The Real Living Wage. Cove Park also aspires to become a living hours employer and living pension accredited employer.

A living hours accreditation would ensure that all employees within the organisation have a minimum of 16 contracted hours per week (unless the employee requests otherwise), a contractual right to payment for any cancelled shifts, and 4 weeks' notice of their shift pattern. Cove Park does not offer zero-hour contracts and therefore our team members have a contractual right to payment of shifts if they are requested not to undertake them. However, the majority of the organisation's operational team work on 10 hours a week

contract. A review will be undertaken to assess if any team member currently working on this basis would like to work additional hours.

The living pension accreditation is designed to ensure that all employees are saving at rate for retirement that will enable them to live a 'comfortable retirement'. It is a voluntary target set at 12% combined employee / employer contribution, set in cash terms of £2550.60 per year based on a 12% contribution on a full salary of a worker working 37.5 hours a week on the real living wage. Currently the organisation contributes only the statutory minimum 3% pension contribution to employees which is topped up by employees' contributions of 5%. The pension contribution is only paid to team members after qualifying earnings of £6,240. This means that our lowest earning team members within our operational team do not receive a pension contribution from the organisation.

To meet our objectives the organisation implemented the following in December 2023:

- A. Removed the lower earnings threshold for pensions contributions. All team members are now eligible for 6% employer contributions on the full value of their salary. Team members contributions are also set at 6% (April 2026)
- B. A review of living hours was completed in April 2024 however no team members wished to be contracted to extra hours out with the 10 hours currently contracted.

Objective 6: Meet the Fair Work objectives within our Artistic Programme

Aim:

This objective aims to ensure that the principles outlined in our Fair Work Policy also apply to the artists and freelance practitioners we work with as part of the organisation's Artistic Programme.

Cove Park's Current Position:

Our Awarded Residencies are offered following open calls for applications, to promote equal access to opportunities at Cove Park, no submission fee is charged. Application Guidelines include a detailed EDI statement, expressing our commitment to diversifying our programme and encouraging individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences to apply. We encourage potential applicants to speak to us directly if they have questions regarding the process or need one-to-one support. We have adapted our appointment process to better support those with neurodivergence, and have modified our new website – often the first port of call for those interested in taking part in our programmes – with better functionality and accessibility features. Although we use digital forms and an online application process, we continue to provide printed guidelines if required and accept hard copy applications.

We provide a safe and supportive environment in which everyone involved is treated with dignity, consideration, and respect. This commitment is communicated in all official documents shared with our residents and programme participants, including our EDI Policy, Cove Park Handbook, Team Handbook, Community Ethics, and our Child & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policies. We operate an 'open door' approach, ensuring

residents understand they can communicate concerns or issues directly to any member of the team, and to the Director at any time. Our evaluation process provides a more formal channel for communicating concerns, feedback, and ideas, and a means of sharing this information with the team and our Trustees. Cove Park's Complaints Procedure is included in our Handbook and on our evaluation forms.

We are committed to fair pay for artists and freelancers taking part in our programme. The weekly fee paid in our Awarded Programme rose from £450 in 2022/23 to £550 in 2023/24 and 2024/25 and to £650 in 2025/26 and by inflation thereafter. In addition, we have increased the allowances we pay to meet the costs of travel for all local, national and international artists. Cove Park will also support and meet the costs of visa applications. We pay Scottish Artist Union recommended rates to those leading creative learning workshops or public events. We also provide a materials allowance for those with studio-based practices.

Residents on site are invited to take part in wellbeing initiatives devised and led by our Finance & Operations Manager, and we work hard to create a culture of support which goes beyond the term of the residency itself, offering ongoing professional help when required. We work hard to ensure the residencies and engagement projects we offer – on site and at other venues - meet the expectations of those taking part, providing a supportive and stimulating context in which participants can express and enjoy themselves, be open, and respected.

To meet our objectives the organisation will consider the following by March 2024:

- A. Audit the payment terms of our residencies that are awarded in partnership with other organisations and identify the programmes that are not yet aligning with our £550 per week minimum for 2024/25.
- B. In advance of developing our 2024/25 budget, create a strategy for uplifting any of our existing residency programmes that are not yet at the £550 per week threshold.

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