

RECOGNISED SERVICE PROVIDER CASE STUDY:

FIRST RESPONSE GROUP



At First Response Group (FRG) our mission is 'To provide our customers with the best service and innovation, through supporting our employees and creating a culture of 'inclusion' and 'happiness'.

We understand our value is in our people. We wanted to find a way to show to our teams and the industry that the value of the worker is paramount, and so working with the Living Wage Foundation gives voice to the vision. It enables us to fly a flag for the worker and demonstrate to the workforce, industry and marketplace that we are committed to improving lives through our business practices.

In order to contribute even more to this initiative and to show our full commitment, we have joined the Recognised Service Provider (RSP) Leadership Group which has oversight of the Recognised Service Provider project and network of providers as well as the Living Wage Leeds Action Group which is committed to seeing Leeds become a Living Wage City.



THE PROCESS

We have been working with the Living Wage Foundation since August 2019 with great results. There was initial skepticism about potential client response as pay and charge rates are understandably emotive subjects and we work in a highly competitive marketplace.

However, we have been pleasantly

surprised by the positive reaction. We appreciate that paying a real Living Wage is not something everyone can commit to immediately, however, just opening an honest discussion can start to make a change and we have typically found that those who cannot currently budget for the increased cost, can and generally will, plan a phased implementation.

For too long our industry has suffered with a commoditised view of workers, with contracts being awarded on a price weighted scoring mechanism. Quality assurance and social value are increasing considerations with procurement teams, however, this is all too often still a desktop exercise.

We have found that taking an open and honest approach with our clients regarding pay humanises the service to all stakeholders. What better way is there to ensure quality than a well-motivated and well-trained delivery team? Paying a real Living Wage directly improves the wellbeing and financial wellbeing of the local workforce and increases the contributions that our services make to local circular economies. Is there a better way for our industry to have an impact on social value?

"From improved morale and retention rates to creating a better quality of life for our workforce the positive impact of introducing the Real Living Wage has more than justified the investment we have made."

Simon Alderson – Chief Executive Officer, FRG

THE BENEFITS

Within our first year of becoming a Recognised Service Provider FRG has;

- 53% of contracts committing to a Living Wage, or above
- Increased the rate of pay for hundreds of workers
- Appointed 3 Living Wage Recognised Service Providers to our supply chain
- Increase in our NET Promoter Score by 67%

The biggest difference that we have seen is in employee engagement and retention the difference that a real Living Wage makes to the workers really is evident. In the service industry the main indicator to a worker that they are being rewarded for their capability and valued for the service and dedication they provide is their rate of pay.

“Being paid the real Living Wage means that I don’t rely on overtime to make ends meet, there’s now a little left over at the end of the month for savings or a treat. Any overtime is a bonus”

Security Officer, FRG

“Since we have introduced the Living Wage I have seen staff turnover on key contracts reduce from >10% to <5%. I’m also finding that I am getting applications from candidates in a wider vicinity to the project, and not only are the candidates willing to travel for the positions we have available, but I’m also getting more applications from Officers that are more experienced and better trained because the money is so much better.”

Adam Ward – Operations Manager, FRG.

ANY CHALLENGES?

Becoming a Recognised Service Provider is the innovation. As a movement it is still in its infancy and we need more early adopters to join. As an industry there are approximately 1,150 security guarding companies in the UK, less than 40 are currently Recognised Service Providers (March 2020).

The biggest change we have made is in our communications. We now actively discuss the Living Wage with both our existing and new clients and encourage conversations regarding worker financial welfare. It is showing a shift in the mindset of both the client and employer to look beyond the hourly service charge and consider the services more from a whole life cost and social value perspective.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS?

Well delivered security management enables businesses to operate profitably, ethically, safely and with confidence. We and our workers make this happen, let’s start to celebrate that and reward the workers for the dedication and the discretionary effort they offer that supports our industries.

If you believe that the private security industry is an industry that values workers and should provide opportunities for people to work in a profession with a sense of purpose and achievement, sign up.

<https://www.firstresponsegroup.com/>

