

**CASE STUDY:**

# EVERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Everton is a professional football club from the city of Liverpool. One of the sport's most historic and pioneering clubs, they are 'Founder Members' of the Football League (1888) and Premier League (1992). Everton holds the record for the number of seasons in the top flight (114), winning 15 major trophies in the process. Everton Ladies also boast one of the richest histories in the women's game, currently competing in the FA Women's Super League 1 and having previously won two league titles and two FA Women's Cups. The club employs over 2,000 staff across its permanent, matchday and contracted workforce.

Everton began supporting the Living Wage in April 2015, ensuring that all permanently employed staff were paid at least the UK Living Wage rate. The Club, along with its charitable arm, Everton in the Community, became officially accredited as a Living Wage Employer in October 2016. Everton chose to become accredited as they felt it made good business sense and reflected their reputation as 'The People's Club', looking after those who live and work in the local community.

## THE PROCESS

The decision for Everton to become an accredited Living Wage Employer was the vision of the Club's Deputy Chief Executive, Prof. Denise Barrett-Baxendale, MBE. She worked alongside the Club's People Team (HR), Senior Executive Team and Board of Directors to develop a 'People Strategy', which included ensuring all staff received a 'fair deal' from the accreditation while assessing the financial implications of the decision and its impact across the Club and Charity.

A project team identified suppliers that would be impacted by the decision to accredit, and communicated the Club's intention to do so with them. Clauses were written into renewed or renegotiated contracts to ensure that all staff delivering these services were paid at least the Living Wage. Most supplier staff were uplifted to the Living Wage within eight months of accreditation, and the Living Wage Foundation provided template materials to help the Club complete this task.

Everton communicated its plan to become an accredited Living Wage Employer to its employees at its August 2016 Staff Conference, where Prof. Denise Barrett-Baxendale explained the significance of accreditation and how it fitted into the Club's wider 'People Strategy'.

Externally, Everton was keen to celebrate becoming only the second Premier League club to become accredited (after Chelsea F.C.). A press release led to local and national media coverage of the announcement, and was followed by a photo call at the Club's USM Finch Farm training ground with Living Wage Foundation Director, Katherine Chapman, Prof. Denise Barrett-Baxendale, members of the People Team and England International and vice-captain of the Club, Leighton Baines.

## THE BENEFITS

- Everton were included in The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For 2018, and received an accreditation from Best Companies
- Improved standard of living for employees and their families, particularly matchday staff who have had their wages increased
- Higher disposable income of staff has fed into the local economy, with 75% of all staff (80% of matchday staff) living in the local area
- Improved retention of staff – around 25 staff have been employed on the Living Wage and then moved into other roles to develop their careers within the Club
- Improved reputation and influence as an ethical employer in Merseyside and nationally – the Club sat on the Steering Group for Living Wage Week 2017, hosting an event for local employers and presenting the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority with their Living Wage Employer plaque

*“Being an accredited Living Wage Employer has always been part of our ‘People Strategy’ and we believe it has contributed to our Best Companies accreditation and placing within The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For. One of the focuses of that accreditation is a ‘fair deal’ [for employees] and our score on this criterion has risen dramatically. We also decided to go above and beyond with our apprenticeships by paying a rate that exceeds the National Minimum Wage.”*

**KIM HEALEY**, HEAD OF HR AT  
EVERTON

*“Everton have set themselves a very good standard of earnings to all staff members. As an employee it’s very assuring that staff have a good, reasonable Living Wage rate that’s not the lowest rate of £7.50 per hour, which is set by the government. The Everton pay rise shows support for the staff members and is welcomed by its low paid workers.”*

**WENDY BROWN**, MATCHDAY  
CROWD STEWARD AT EVERTON

## LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE FOR OTHER EMPLOYERS

Challenges that Everton faced when working towards accreditation included communicating its impact with senior colleagues. With the full support of the Board and Senior Executive Team, the People Team worked closely with the Finance Team to budget for additional funds required for payment of the Living Wage.

In addition, the Club worked hard to ensure that all relevant suppliers understood its plans, how they would be affected, and what they needed to do to join in the journey towards Living Wage accreditation for the Club.

*“Accreditation is not an onerous process to go through, especially if you pay your staff [the Living Wage] already. Once you have your milestones organised [for extending the Living Wage to contracted staff], it’s simple; do these things in advance and get the wheels in motion. We believe that accrediting shows our people that we care for them, that we care about doing the right thing, and that’s what we believe the Everton way is.”*

**KIM HEALEY**

Thanks also to Paul Wilford, Reward Manager at Everton, for help in compiling this case study.