



FAIR WORK
CONVENTION



Fair Work in the Hospitality Industry

Fair Work Convention Hospitality
Inquiry 2024
Executive Summary for Workers

Inquiry into Fair Work in the Hospitality Industry

Executive Summary for Hospitality Workers

The Fair Work Convention

The Fair Work Convention brings together employers, trade unions and academic expertise to promote and advocate for fair work across the economy and to advise Scottish Ministers on fair work.

Fair work is work that offers everyone an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect.

It balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers. It generates benefits for individuals, businesses and society.

The Hospitality Inquiry

The Hospitality Inquiry was led by an Inquiry Group made up of hospitality employers, employer bodies, trade unions, hospitality workers and other organisations. The Inquiry was led by employer and union Co-Chairs, and supported by an academic advisor.

The group brought a wealth of expertise and experience to the Inquiry process.

The Inquiry considered fair work in its broadest sense, exploring the experiences of hospitality workers and employers to identify what is working and where improvements in fair work can be made.

Why Hospitality?

Hospitality is important to the Scottish economy and contributes to the quality of local community life across Scotland. Hospitality is a changing and dynamic sector which offers business opportunities, jobs and careers, and makes a significant contribution to economic activity, particularly in remote rural areas. Hospitality also comes with a range of fair work challenges which have been a feature of work in the sector for decades. Improving fair work will create positive outcomes for workers and employers. Investing in fair work now will help employers build strong and resilient businesses for the future.

Hospitality – Overview

The hospitality sector has a younger workforce, a relatively high proportion of ethnic minority workers and migrant workers, a high proportion of part-time workers, and a high number of jobs with a lower skills level. Half of all employees in hospitality work in small businesses employing fewer than 50 people, while over a third work in large businesses employing more than 250 people.

The last few years have been particularly challenging for hospitality with the pandemic requiring the sector to close down or significantly reduce trading. This resulted in high numbers of workers losing their jobs or being placed on furlough. Since the pandemic, workers and businesses have faced a cost crisis, but a need to attract and retain workers has driven a focus on fair work in the industry.



Security

Precarious work and insecurity at work disproportionately impacts certain groups – younger workers, women, disabled workers, non-UK nationals, ethnic minority workers and those with lower educational attainment.

Security at work is fundamental with issues around pay, hours, contracts and basic employment rights, all core elements of workers' experience of work. While improvements have been seen around payment of the Real Living Wage in the hospitality sector, there is more that employers can do to improve security at work.

Evidence suggests that workers in hospitality would value more transparent and predictable hours and many would benefit from clearer information and support to access their basic employment rights.



Respect

The evidence suggests that hospitality workers face a number of issues relating to respect at work. Hospitality workers would benefit from a clearer focus on safe working practices; support for night workers to get home safely; a better balance of working hours, with clear and consistent access to rest days; better relationships with managers, with a focus on eradicating bullying and harassment - particularly racism and sexual harassment; and a clear mechanism to report issues if they arise.

Respect at work is primarily about relationships, cultures, and how well work is run and organised and workers must feel confident that effective employer action will be taken if concerns are reported.



Opportunity

The hospitality industry is relatively diverse and plays an important role in providing routes into work. The important role that hospitality plays in social inclusion and providing work for highly marginalised groups is often overlooked.

Employers should support workers by providing equal access to work, training and progression opportunities, along with tackling pay gaps, and addressing bullying and harassment, including from customers. This could particularly support those from equalities groups (e.g. age, gender, race, etc).



Fulfilment

The hospitality industry continues to struggle with issues around labour shortages, skills shortages and high levels of staff turnover. For workers, changing between hospitality jobs can often be a response to poor practice, particularly bullying and harassment from managers.

The hospitality industry prides itself on its ability to offer career progression but, too often, workers are not supported to undertake training and are unclear about routes through the industry. The treatment and working conditions of managers – particularly around unpaid overtime – is a clear disincentive to career progression for workers.

Relationships with co-workers and customers are often identified by workers as the best thing about working in hospitality but relations with managers are more variable and can have a major determining influence on workers' desire to work in hospitality in the longer term.



Effective Voice

There is a need to strengthen effective voice and empower workers to influence how work is run and organised and to raise issues when they arise. For this to be effective, workers must have faith that they will be treated with respect and they must see their employer respond positively to their views and concerns.

Effective voice is an area of significant weakness for the hospitality industry. Workers must have a voice, and this must be respected and taken seriously, if all other dimensions of fair work (security, respect, opportunity and fulfilment) are to improve.



Rurality

In Scotland, hospitality and tourism play an important role in the economy of remote rural areas. Rural workers face many of the same fair work issues as urban workers but there are significant additional issues related to a lack of housing, transport, childcare and connectivity. Workers in housing that is tied to their jobs face particular fair work pressures.

Improving Fair Work in your Workplace

Voice at Work

- Know your [rights at work](#)
- Ask your employer if they have an Effective Voice Champion, a Fair Work Champion, a staff network or a union representative that you can contact.
- Speak to a union. [Unite Hospitality](#) has been providing support to workers across the hospitality industry.
- As recommended by this Inquiry (Recommendation 2), put yourself forward to be an Effective Voice Champion. Effective Voice Champions should be an elected representative of the workforce who champions fair work amongst workers and supports the workforce to raise any fair work issues.

Respect, Safety and Wellbeing at Work

- Know your rights and responsibilities on [health and safety](#).
- Ask your employer for translated material on health and safety if you need it.
- Raise any health and safety concerns with your employer and participate in any consultations they run with staff on health and safety issues.
- Contact [Environmental Health](#) in your Local Authority or seek advice from a [Trade Union](#) if your employer does not adequately address any health and safety issues you raise.
- Ask your employer if they have an Employee Assistance Programme if you feel you need support with your health at work (including your mental health).
- Ask your employer for their grievance procedure if you need to raise any issues at work, particularly around bullying and harassment.

Further Information

Find out more about the Inquiry into Fair Work in the Hospitality Industry:

- [Link](#) to the full report and additional information.
- [Workers Experiences in Hospitality](#) gathered as part of the Inquiry.

Tools for further action:

- The Fair Work Self-Assessment Tool for Workers designed by the Fair Work Convention allows groups of workers to understand their individual and collective experiences of fair work (to be launched early 2025).
- [My World of Work](#) has some useful information for both employers and workers.
- Find out more about the [Real Living Wage](#).





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