

Unfinished Business

The Quest for a Living Wage



“We have to accept that inequality is
a way of achieving greater
opportunity and prosperity”

Lord Griffiths – Vice Chairman of Goldman Sachs

“Let’s finally make the minimum
wage a living wage. Let’s tie it to the
cost of living so we don't have to
wait another 10 years to see it rise.”

President Barack Obama

“Fair pay means motivated staff who
stay working at Barclays longer.
Improving people’s standard of
living makes business sense.”

Karen Pleva – Barclays Chief of Staff (Global Operations)



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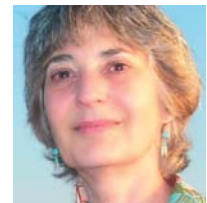
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Foreword

Deborah Littman



A It might seem strange to be campaigning for the living wage in the face of the Coalition's austerity budget and massive programme of public service cuts.

But far from being a time to retreat on low pay, we need a living wage campaign now more than ever. As Helena Kennedy wrote in the forward to FPN's groundbreaking publication *Not Just for the Good Times*,

"The current recession could easily be appropriated to provide a smokescreen for legislators and employers to freeze the lowest wages of those in most need who have played no part in engendering the economic crisis that is hitting them and their families so badly. This would be beyond, folly; it would be commercially dangerous and socially short-sighted."

Encouragingly, a growing number of public and private sector employers are heeding her warning, recognizing that job cuts and low pay will further deepen the recession by taking demand out of the economy. A powerful business case has emerged from the experience of employers who have found, over the past few years that paying a living wage provides real, tangible benefits to their organizations.

Figures compiled by Queen Mary University estimate that over £30m has been added to the pay of low paid workers as a direct result of living wage campaigns in local authorities, universities, hospitals and voluntary organisations as well as a growing and impressive number of high profile private companies. Much more will have been gained through the upward pressure of the living wage on the 'going rate' in low paid sectors.

How did we get here?

When the parties revealed their manifestos prior to the recent election, there was an unseemly battle over who should claim credit for introducing the living wage. David Cameron (wrongly) claimed that the living wage was a Conservative policy brought in by

Mayor Boris Johnson. This was denied by former Labour Mayor Ken Livingstone who reminded Mr. Cameron that it was his administration that introduced the living wage in 2004.

The truth is that when the living wage campaign was launched less than a decade ago by London Citizens, with support from trade unions UNISON and UNITE, no political party or major employer dared go near it, much less claim credit for introducing it. What shifted the political landscape was the slow, painstaking work done in organising low-paid workers seeking a decent living standard. It meant building community support for their campaign and hammering on the doors of employers and politicians over and again, using powerful stories and imaginative actions. Not only did this get across the message that this was the right thing to do, it showed that there was power – diverse, vocal and well organised – behind the demand for a living wage.

The case studies in this report paint a picture of the people and tactics behind a variety of living wage campaigns. While each campaign followed its own trajectory, there are certain principles that have become central to the movement's success.

Making the primary employer responsible

The UK labour market is defined by a high proportion of poorly paid, insecure, low status jobs. Approximately 5.3 million people – over a fifth of all employees in Britain – fall below the low pay threshold, one of the highest rates in Europe. Our economy suffers from significant levels of wage inequality and a culture of households working long hours to meet their basic needs.

A major contributor to this low wage economy is the contracting out of a growing range of services, from cleaning to payroll. Subcontracting allows the primary employer – the school, hospital, local authority or private business – to avoid responsibility for the

welfare of the people doing their work. As Prof Jane Wills put it, “The workers might be down the corridor cleaning the loo or they might be thousands of miles away at the end of a complex supply chain sewing jeans in a factory in a free trade zone, but they no longer feature in the consciousness of the people that benefit from their work”.

Living wage campaigners have demanded that the ‘real employers’ take responsibility for all of those who work for them, whether directly or indirectly.

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Low pay hurts the whole community

Pay that falls below a living wage level not only detracts from the quality of life of individual workers, but has a detrimental effect on the whole community and the public purse. Nearly 60% of the 3 million children living below the poverty line live in households where at least one person is in paid employment. Poor children do less well in school, have reduced life chances and are more likely to be physically or mentally ill.

Tax credits – a vital necessity in the present reality for the one in five adults who do not earn enough to lift their households out of poverty – have been proven to be a wealth distribution mechanism that make a serious contribution towards reducing income inequality and improving social mobility. However, they cost the taxpayer (most of

whom are themselves low and modestly paid workers) as much as £20 billion in 2007/8 and any meaningful, larger scale take up of ethical pay policies such as living wage policies would reduce this burden which could be far greater shared by low paying, major UK employers.

When the adults in the family have to work long hours or do two or three jobs to pay the bills, they are unlikely to have time to spend with their family, much less to help out at their children’s school, join a tenants’ association or participate in community activities.¹ It is easy to see the connection between low pay and greater problems of crime and disorder, wasted skills and an impoverished civil society.

This is especially important as we face the impact of the economic downturn which is directly linked to the failure of wages to keep pace with living costs over the past two decades. Since 1997, the poorest 10% of households have seen their weekly incomes fall by £9 a week once inflation is taken into account. And as real wages have fallen, the gap between what people earn and what they need has increasingly been filled by debt. The amount owed by UK households has tripled in the past decade.



Rock Musician Andrew White from *The Kaiser Chiefs* and MP Colin Burgon campaign for a living wage in Leeds.

Building coalition

If the whole community is damaged by low pay, it stands to reason that the whole community has a stake in securing a living

**It is important that
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Andrew White
The Kaiser Chiefs

wage for the lowest paid workers. Living wage campaigns have been built by wide coalitions of union, faith and community groups. They have found allies amongst politicians, professionals and business leaders convinced by the benefits that a living wage can bring.

Coalitions play an important role in overcoming the fragmentation that has separated different groups of workers — contract workers from in-house staff, migrants from indigenous workers, better paid workers from their lower paid colleagues. It also helps to build links with those who benefit from public services. Too often union gains are portrayed as being at the expense of the public good. Where trade unions can work alongside civil society organisations, they wield much stronger influence.

Working in coalition also brings a different kind of pressure to bear on recalcitrant employers. In 2003 the Trust Board at Homerton Hospital in East London refused to meet the UNISON branch to discuss the pay of staff working for private contractor ISS because the Trust did not directly employ these workers. But when more than 60 people from local churches, schools and mosques, organised under the banner of the East London Communities Organisation asked for a meeting, the Board had no choice but to agree. Instead of the 'usual suspects' addressing the meeting, the workers' case was put forward by Sister Marie Mooney, a nun from a local Catholic Church and hospital Chaplain at the Royal London hospital. She lambasted the Trust for its shabby treatment of the cleaners, and for trying to slither out of their

responsibilities for their welfare. The meeting turned the tide and two years later the cleaners at Homerton and three other hospital trusts were brought onto full NHS terms and conditions.

Conclusion

The living wage campaign has made enormous strides since its inception in 2001. Millions of pounds of additional income are now flowing into the pockets of workers in cities that have adopted living wage policies, and this money is taking thousands of families out of poverty and helping to boost fragile local economies. The campaign has gained strong backers in government, public authorities, business and the City, who have seen the moral and practical benefits of paying a living wage.

Most important, the living wage campaign has helped to forge a powerful, sustainable coalition of community organizations and unions who are willing to put themselves on the line in defence of low paid workers.

As the stories in this booklet illustrate, the living wage is not a luxury in a time of economic downturn, but the key to building a fair, equitable and sustainable recovery.

If you are wondering how to get started on your own living wage campaign, have a look at the toolkit included in this booklet. For help in using the toolkit or in any other aspects of putting together a living wage campaign, contact Deborah Littman or Mark Donne on livingwage@fairpaynetwork.org. ■

NOTES

- 1 Jane Wills, "The living wage", Soundings, date?
- 2 The Impact of Low Pay on UNISON's families, Working Lives Centre for UNISON, 2010, <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Impact%20of%20Low%20Pay%20Report%20April%202010%20final%20v.5.pdf>
- 3 "UK's income gap widest since 60s", *The Guardian*, 8 May, 2009

Deborah Littman is an executive committee member of the Fair Pay Network, a National Officer for UNISON and a Trustee of London Citizens.

Capital Gains: How London blazed a trail



In 2001 The East London Communities Organization TELCO, decided to challenge the growing problem of working poverty. TELCO (now part of London Citizens, covering South and West London as well as East London) is a broad-based coalition of community and faith organizations, schools, trade union branches and student's unions. These grass roots organizations recognised that many of the social problems facing their community could be directly traced back to the poor pay and working conditions of East London workers.

TELCO leaders approached UNISON and suggested a joint campaign. UNISON had a long, proud tradition of campaigning for a statutory minimum wage, set at a level that would provide a living wage. Together the two organisations promoted and embarked upon a living wage campaign aimed at persuading private employers in East London to raise wages to a 'living wage' level and to urge the Greater London Authority and other public authorities to agree to award contracts only to employers paying the 'living wage'.

The first step in the campaign was to determine the level of the living wage. In

2001, the Family Budget Unit, a research unit based at York University, was commissioned by UNISON, working closely with TELCO, to measure essential expenditure incurred by various family units in East London and establish the income needed to support a family with a 'low cost but acceptable' standard of living.³ Despite the conservative assumptions made in these calculations (such as the absence of debt, no special needs and the availability of local authority housing), the research produced a figure of £6.30 an hour as East London's living wage.⁴

Having determined the amount a worker needed to provide an adequate income for themselves and their family, TELCO and UNISON went on to investigate how far workers in the capital were falling below this threshold. A participatory research project was developed which engaged union members, students and TELCO activists in collecting data on pay levels in five low paid sectors. The report, Mapping Low Pay in East London⁵ showed the extent of low pay and poor conditions being experienced by workers employed by private firms in the health service, local government, transport and education. The report uncovered wages as low

as £3.75 an hour, poor working conditions and long hours, as well as minimal sick pay, holiday pension and other benefits.

Armed with this information the Living Wage Campaign entered its third phase. Working as a coalition of community organisations, faith groups and union branches, TELCO organised workers directly effected, mounting campaigns to improve wages and conditions for contracted cleaners in East London hospitals and the corporate Canary Wharf banks.

In June 2002 UNISON members in four East London Trusts, employed by the multinational ISS Mediclean and Medirest (Compass) submitted a joint pay claim seeking parity with NHS staff employed doing similar work. UNISON and community members lobbied Trust boards and the North East London Strategic Health Authority in support of the branches who balloted for (and in one case took) strike action. Ultimately the campaign won an increase in pay levels and a commitment to harmonise pay and conditions of contract staff with the NHS by April 2006. Subsequently The Royal London Hospital brought the contract back in house.

TELCO also won an important victory for contracted staff in the private sector, which has had far-reaching implications for all subsequent living wage negotiations. In one of many high profile actions, TELCO cleaner Abdul Durrant attended the HSBC AGM. Abdul stood and addressed HSBC Chairman Sir John Bond, challenging him to do something about the poor wages and conditions for the cleaning staff who worked in HSBC HQ. This David and Goliath moment proved to be a critical turning point in the campaign.

In Feb 2004, TELCO succeeded in persuading Barclays Bank to accept responsibility for minimum pay and conditions for contractor's staff at its new tower HQ in Canary Wharf. The agreement meant that staff received conditions in line with "socially responsible" minimum standards. Pay for cleaners at Barclays' Canary Wharf offices was raised to £6.00 per hour⁶, alongside provision for pensions, sick leave, and paid bank holidays. Bonuses and training were also included in the deal. A similar agreement, offering a minimum of £6.10, additional holidays, sick pay, training and improved shift patterns was struck with the HSBC bank.

On 4 May 2004, the Living Wage Campaign went London-wide. Nearly 2,000 people from

60 London Citizen's organisations drawn from 12 of London's more disadvantaged boroughs packed Methodist Central Hall in Westminster to present their own agenda to the four main Mayoral candidates. The detail and form of this agenda had been entirely extracted from a year long 'listening campaign' carried out by member organizations of London Citizens (including trade union branches). Meetings were held to allow members to identify key priorities for the incoming Mayor. At the summit of their list of demands was the establishment of a 'living wage for London'. Incumbent Ken Livingstone promised to establish a unit at City Hall which would calculate the hourly 'Living Wage' needed to survive in London on an annual basis; announce and promote this figure and review the contracts of the GLA group accordingly.

The story continues

In 2008 Boris Johnson new mayor made a commitment to maintain and extend the living wage policy started by his predecessor. Johnson announced that organisations funded by the London Development Agency would have to pay the living wage. He also promised to open talks with the hotel and hospitality industry – one of the lowest payers in the capital – about implementing the wage for all London hotel workers before the 2012 Olympics.

The fifth annual report of the GLA Living Wage Unit, A Fairer London was published in June 2009, setting the living wage. While this did not guarantee that all contract workers would be paid the living wage – set at the time at £7.60 – it set a defensible, objective figure for campaigners to aim for and provides powerful model for both public and private employers.

Evidence from GLA Economics research shows that around 1 in 5 employees in London receive less than the London Living Wage. This reflects 15% of full-time and 45% of part time employees in London receiving less than the 2008 figure of £7.45 per hour. Relatively high proportions of this group are outer London residents and workers, and are less well qualified young, black and ethnic minority or disabled employees.

Gains have continued to be made in winning living wage agreements across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

In early June 2010, Mayor Johnson again increased the "London living wage" by 25p to £7.85 an hour. On the same day, he announced that five new significant employers had signed up to pay the rate- Clifford

Chance, Deloitte, Nomura, Prudential and Standard Chartered; adding their names to more than 100 organisations already committed to it, as an ethical pay policy. With the formation and roll out of the Living Wage Foundation by the Citizens UK coalition, further private sector gains are expected to be made, as the foundation contains a strong accreditation element to incentivise and engage the private sector.

The Mayor also wrote directly to major employers in the capital outlining the business case and social benefits of implementing the LLW, including the reduction of poverty, stating: *“This cannot be imposed, particularly in tough economic circumstances, but it’s up to all of us to argue for it.”*

Local authorities

The Greater London Authority has now implemented the London Living Wage throughout the GLA ‘family’, which includes Transport for London, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, London Development Agency, Metropolitan Police Authority and the Metropolitan Police Service.

Ealing Council has introduced a living wage in its school meals contract with Harrison Catering Services. Harrison has signed a new five-year deal worth £3m in annual turnover. As part of the new deal the partners have committed to adopting the London living wage to reward its dedicated staff and offset the high cost of living in the capital. The company becomes one of the first hospitality operators to commit to the London living wage.

Former Ealing Council leader Jason Stacy pledged to renegotiate other contracts with suppliers as they come up. *‘We support the Mayor’s plan to give hardworking Londoners a living wage. This is about making work pay. It is better to see people working and doing something useful and earning a decent wage rather than being dependent on the state through benefits.’*

Lewisham Council has also adopted policies which will see contracts reviewed and brought up to the LLW as they come due and Tower Hamlets has made a commitment at first to bring all agency workers’ wage up to the Living Wage. Borough councils that have recently introduced the policy include Islington, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. Other local authorities considering living wage policies include Camden and Lambeth. There is an active living wage campaign in the City of London

Higher Education

The Queen Mary University Living Wage Campaign started in 2005, bringing together concerned students, staff and academics to campaign on behalf of cleaners working for the contractor KGB. In 2006 management at QMUL made a public commitment to pay contract cleaners the London Living Wage by July 2007 and to bring them back in-house on HE pay and conditions by January 2008.

A campaign at the London School of Economics quickly followed in 2007, ultimately winning an agreement to raise rates for contract cleaners to full living wage levels by 2009. London Citizens helped both the Queen Mary and LSE campaigns, providing support and training to LSE campaigners. Both QM and LSE student unions and the Queen Mary Geography Department joined London Citizens and have continued to be active in other campaigns.

Recent cross-campus campaigns by UNISON branches in the ‘Bloomsbury’ Universities have resulted in living wage victories at SOAS, Birkbeck, Institute for Education, Goldsmiths and School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Further campaigns are underway at Kings College, UCL and Institute of Education.

Students at Magdalene College, Oxford campaigned successfully for college cleaners to be paid the Oxford living wage of £7 an hour.

Private Sector

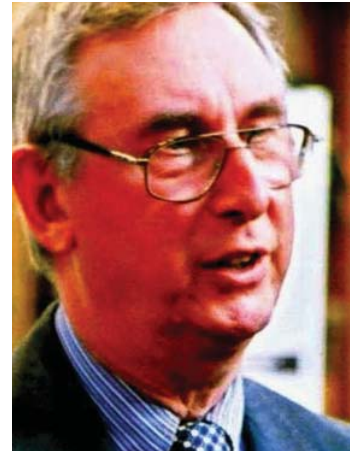
A combined London Citizens and UNITE campaign for cleaners in Canary Wharf and the City of London has continued to win pay rises for cleaners at banks and financial institutions. Most of these companies have implemented the full London Living Wage, with 28 days paid holiday and sick pay. In some cases contract staff have also been offered training and English classes. ■

NOTES

- 3 The Family Budget Unit pioneered the calculation of the Low Cost but Acceptable budget in a 1998 study funded by Zaccheus 2000. See Low Cost but Acceptable: A minimum income standard for the UK: Families with young children. Ed. Parker H. Bristol. Policy Press
- 4 For more information about the London Living Wage campaign see <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/campaign.html>
- 5 http://www.york.ac.uk/res/fbu/documents/mlpinel_sep2001.pdf For further details of the participatory research program, see Appendix 1.
- 6 The National Minimum Wage at the time was £4.50 an hour.
- 7 A Fairer London, http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/living-wage-2009.pdf

Reality on the Ground

Paul Regan



Paul Regan is a Methodist Minister based in Stratford, Newham; is a trustee of the organization London Citizens and also a trustee of the Citizens Organizing Foundation.

1. Were you involved in the initial stages of the Living wage campaign in (place)?

I was involved in summer retreat in the year 2000, when about sixty community leaders from across East London and some from South London got together for a day to discuss what were the major issues affecting families in their institutions. The cost of living kept coming up as a big issue, and particularly the cost of housing. So it was decided to tackle those two areas, and as a result of that the Living Wage Campaign addressed the issue of how people could afford to live in London.

2. Which organizations/groups were involved?

Initial ground work was done by London Citizens and UNISON. They approached the Family Budget Unit at York University to conduct research on what the cost of living in London would be if families were able to meet their basic costs, with no luxuries involved. It was the methodology of the Family Budget Unit that decided the hourly rate. We then adopted that and called it the London Living Wage. This was roughly £1.50 to £2 above the national minimum wage back in 2001.

3. What steps were taken to organize and galvanize support amongst employees?

Through the member institutions of London Citizens we started talking to families that we knew were on low pay and asked them what jobs they were doing and who they were working for, mainly in East London. This initially led us to people who cleaned the hospitals in East London. We decided that the next target was to get our member institutions like churches, mosques and schools supporting these low paid workers.

4. How did other activists become aware of the campaign and get involved?

We suggested to our member institutions that if they were prepared to speak out against low wages for cleaners, we would like them to come with us to meet the Chair of the Hospital trust, to see if between us we could persuade them to recognise the case for a Living Wage. We pursued this hospital by hospital, eventually getting to meet the hospital trustees and highlighting to them that they were paying poverty wages and that the London Living Wage was a fairly calculated, independently, academically researched standard, the paying of which may well benefit their institution.

5. Who organized meetings and what form did these take?

One of the organizers from London Citizens would undertake some power analysis of the targeted institutions and work out who is the chairman of the board and how to get a meeting with that person. Sometimes this was easy and sometimes it could be quite complicated. I was not present in those initial meetings.

6. What was the initial reaction of employers and how were negotiations with employers set up and handled?

In most cases employers would first argue that they did not employ the cleaners. A stock response was always *"We have contracted that out to another agency, therefore it is their business, go and talk to them"*. To which our response always was, actually we have already talked to them and if you pay them more money for the contract they are quite happy to pay their cleaners more. It was important not to allow them to pass the buck.

7. Did you experience resistance from employers, if so how was this overcome?

Yes, clearly as far as employers were concerned, outsourcing their cleaning was seen as a way of saving money. What they had failed to recognize was that as a result of this they were often not receiving a good cleaning service. Once the business case was underlined and to some extent proved, the resistance decreased amongst most employers.

8. Are you aware of any feedback from employers since living wage was implemented? Was this Positive?

Yes, I talked to Price Waterhouse Cooper following on from the campaign to persuade the banking and finance sector in Canary Wharf to pay their staff the London Living Wage. I spoke to the director of Facilities, who has responsibility for forty buildings across the UK, around a year ago. He told me that the paying the Living Wage in London had been so successful that he wanted to roll it out across the whole of the UK, and asked if it was OK to budget for 10% below the London rate, across the rest of the country.

His argument was that the cleaning service improved dramatically following the adoption of the London Living Wage. Staff turnover reduced significantly, allowing for proper training. The number of complaints received was greatly reduced, following renegotiation of the cleaning contract which means cleaning takes place during the day. This allowed for mess to be dealt with more quickly. He suggested that while implementing the Living Wage may have cost them a few more pounds, the quality of service received improved significantly. We asked him if he was prepared to make the business case to other people and he replied unequivocally: *"yes I would be very happy"*.

9. Were there any negative aspects of the feedback?

I do not think so. If the cleaning and low paid proportion of staff is quite small, it is a small



price to pay to get a good service. I think it is going to be more difficult now we are going to try and take on retail companies, including supermarkets, where a big proportion of their employees receive low pay. They are likely to argue that they are unable to afford higher wages, particularly in times of recession, despite the fact they are making billions in profit. For the banks, raising wages of lowest paid was no big deal, however large retail companies may make more of a fuss.

10. Are you aware of any feedback from employees since living wage was implemented?

The overwhelming response is that they feel that they are now being treated with dignity, rather than being treated with disrespect. The London Living Wage standard is not only about the employer paying the new hourly rate, it is also about people receiving paid holiday, paid sick leave, access to trade union membership, access to a pension scheme. For a London Living Wage employer to get an award it must meet all of those criteria. In that situation a family is being treated with much greater respect and therefore employees take more pride in their work, stay with the company longer and receive better training. Overall, the bullying and withholding of wages, which we did encounter in the early days has been countered as a result of the action that we have taken.

11. Were these other aspects of the London Living Wage requirements appreciated as much as the wage increases?

Clearly the wages were very important, because low wages means people having to have two or three jobs, not being able to see their families or enjoy their lives, in many cases. However, organizing the cleaners was very important, allowing them to feel part of a body, join a trade union and learn more of their employment rights. As many of them were migrant workers, with English as a second language, many were uncertain of their legal entitlements in the UK. While the wage was probably the most important part of the campaign, I think the whole package actually worked extremely well for them.

12. Are you involved in plans for expansion of the campaign and how are these being pursued?

We have received a major grant from the City Parochial Trust, of around £600,000 over the next four years; they particularly want us to tackle the private sector, which is something we have already dipped our toes into. This will include the catering and hotel trade and the supermarkets. These employers are making large profits and are outside the scope of the campaign at the moment. The second strand of plans for expansion is that we want more local authorities in London to pay the London Living Wage and put it into their procurement policies. If we manage to achieve that it should create great momentum.

13. In your view, which organizing tactics were most effective in bringing about the LW?

The key strategy is to get to the person who holds the power to make the decision, which is usually the chairman of the board of the company, or the trust. There is often a lot of resistance, because people are often protected from folks who are trying to tell them what they ought to be doing. Therefore we had to use tactics that made life sufficiently uncomfortable for the people in power, encouraging them to give their employees what we saw as fair. It is crucial to devise different tactics for different institutions to get a meeting with the right person

14. What advice would you give to other LW campaigns that are starting up across the UK?

From a broad based community organizing point of view, build up a broad alliance of group of organizations that support the cause, as without this the campaign may fizzle out. With a coalition behind you, what we call a citizens alliance, you have a permanent organization behind you that can keep a campaign going and hold people to account, otherwise institutions may not take the campaign seriously and may ignore you. ■



Railing against Injustice

Eurostar Cleaners force Change

In autumn 2009 RMT cleaning grade members at Eurostar, supported by their Union at national level, took a stand to campaign and organize against unacceptable working conditions and low wages.

RMT members working as cleaners on the Eurostar service had unfortunately been subject to continuous incidences of bullying and harassment, in addition to the use of rather Orwellian finger printing machines, low pay and poor conditions. The decision was taken by the members to campaign for a living wage and dignity at work immediately.

The campaign commenced with a ballot of all members for strike action, which saw 100% of members working for the Carlisle Group on Eurostar vote in favor for industrial action. A universally supported 48-hour strike took place the following week with highly visible, colourful and loud picket lines, and the support of other RMT members from a wide variety of grades. The same week saw the launch of a global campaign in support of the cleaners through website LabourStart, an online international resource for trade unionists.

Eurostar had recently been taken into public ownership and was therefore in effect a

government company. In support of the efforts of the employees, the RMT Parliamentary Group lobbied and met with the Transport Secretary Lord Adonis, and following a lack of progress announced a further 6 days of industrial action. The dispute was taken to the conciliation service ACAS, but due to no meaningful effort being made by the company to resolve the dispute an additional 4 days of industrial action were announced.

Simultaneously, RMT continued its parliamentary work on behalf of the cleaners and former Labour cabinet minister Frank Dobson MP tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons in support of RMT cleaners working on the Eurostar contract at St Pancras International and their fight for pay and workplace justice. A total of 50 Members of Parliament signed the EDM.

In the EDM, Frank Dobson, whose Holborn and St Pancras constituency includes the Eurostar terminal, stated:

“That this House is appalled that workers employed by Carlisle Group on the Eurostar trains contract are on poverty wages which are less than the London Living Wage; is dismayed that these cleaners are denied sick pay and pensions and there are constant complaints of bullying and harassment of staff and victimisation of trade union representatives; is deeply concerned that the Eurostar cleaners have complained that there is a racial undertone to the haranguing of the mainly black and ethnic minority workforce [and] believes these employment abuses are more akin to the Victorian age.....”

Following further negotiations at ACAS, RMT Carlisle members voted by a resounding margin to accept an agreement with Carlisle; an immediate 5.7% increase in basic pay with the London Living Wage used as a benchmark for all future pay settlements. This package marked a major step forward for unionised cleaner members and demonstrated that disputes can be won by well-organised workers, using parliamentary support and well attended good natured, colourful public demonstration as a means of arresting media attention, even in the present economic climate.

The full extent of this victory for the Eurostar cleaners included:

- An increase in the Cleaner’s pay rate from £7 to £7.40 (5.7%) effective from 1st December 2010;
- A further increase to £7.68 from 1st Jan 2011 (9.7% over 13 months);
- An undertaking from Carlisle that the London Living Wage is the bench mark for future pay agreements;
- An agreement on Bullying and Harassment of staff on the contract;
- An agreement on time and attendance which stops the compulsory use of fingerprint scanners;
- Agreement to mitigate the redundancy programme;
- Agreement to discuss pensions and sick pay in 2011. ■

Dreaming beneath the Spires

Making the Oxford living wage a reality

The Oxford Living Wage Campaign was founded in 2004 by campaigning students, initially as an independent/freestanding campaign. The initiative was founded in a similar context to that of the London Living Wage Campaign, as living costs in Oxford were and remain disproportionately high. In time, the campaign has widened to engage and involve local councillors, trade unions, a local reverend and college employers.

From the outset, the student campaigners went to great lengths to involve the low paid workers it was aiming to support. This approach involved spending many months meeting and interviewing cleaners, porters and library staff to establish whether they felt there was a need for a campaign and if so, whether they would wish to be involved. This process quickly exposed low wages, a lack of respect from administrative staff at the University and a lack of availability of English classes as the central and most important issues.

Shortly after being established the campaign affiliated with the Oxford University Student Union. Although not officially affiliated to any political party, the campaign has worked alongside the Oxford University Labour club, as both share many members. The Student Union Labour Club could also provide large numbers for public demonstrations as well as assistance with developing networks amongst University staff and publicizing the campaign. The University and Colleges UNISON branch provided advice and guidance, as well

as the Health branch of UNISON and the TUC in Oxford. Important supporting members of the Oxford campaign were also connected to London Citizens and the Citizens' Organizing Foundation.

In November 2007, the Labour group on the City Council tabled a motion to the Council backed by the Green group but opposed by the Liberal Democrats. The two Conservatives voted differently to one another. Despite the lack of unanimity, the motion was successfully passed and committed the City Council to paying staff a Living Wage of more than £7 per hour by April 2009. Furthermore, the right to at least 20 days holiday per year, and 10 days full sick pay, as well as free access to a trade union is included in the Oxford City Council Living Wage policy. David Hawkins, chairman of Unison's city council branch, said: *"We have won the fight for workers and hopefully the council is going to be one of the main pushers for employers to follow this across the city"*, following the City Council's decision to implement the Oxford Living Wage.

The council set the rate by emulating the London Living Wage methodology and the living wage rates paid in different areas of the UK, and by different companies across the country and decided upon a figure of £7 per hour. Similarly to the process in London, the OLW will increase annually – influenced by cost of living increases negotiated for the national pay scheme for local government. The Council will also review its living wage position in the context of the London Living Wage on a biennial basis, and make

adjustments to pay grades accordingly to ensure it continues to reflect the relative position in Oxford. As of 1st September 2009 the lowest pay point for council employees will be £7.10 per hour.

What has this meant on the ground?

The Council retains a sole agency contract with a local supplier, Champion, for supply of agency staff and the contract is managed by the Strategic Procurement and Shared Services Manager. The Strategic Procurement and Shared Services Manager has instructed Champion to increase rates of pay to ensure all agency staff receive at least £7 per hour. The council motion also proposed 10 full days sick pay for agency workers.

Two university colleges currently pay the accepted figure of £7 per hour to all staff, however both have been unwilling to declare themselves 'Living Wage Employers' through fear of being bound to pay increases. Progress has been made in other colleges such as Hertford, which has agreed to pay its staff £6.66 per hour with a guarantee to increase this to meet targets in the coming years.

Progress however, is not always immediate. Balliol College by way of illustration has been the subject of an ongoing battle since the start of the Oxford campaign, not least because many of the campaign members study there. The campaign has progressed to the stage of having a board assigned to looking into the feasibility of implementation of a Living Wage, with administrative staff and one of the campaign members involved.

There are three main contractors who employ most University staff in Oxford. These companies will be the core focus of the future University Living Wage Campaign. Campaigners are finding the identification of low paid staff and meeting the employers within the University particularly difficult, but activists continue to press the colleges who employ their own low paid staff to pay a living wage. Those that contract out services will be encouraged to select companies that themselves pay a living wage.

The campaign also aims to persuade the two colleges that pay the living wage currently to sign up to being official 'Living Wage Employers' to encourage the rest of the University to follow suit. It is believed, as with many London examples, that once the benefits of paying a living wage are vindicated by some colleges, others will follow suit, in the interest of cost effective facilities management and for the benefit of their employees.

There is also a bigger movement in Oxford to establish an 'Oxford Citizens' along the lines of the coalition campaign in London, being pursued by student activists, trade unionists, London Citizens, the Citizens' Organizing Foundation and the City Council. Funds are currently being raised to hire a part time staff member for this project. Once established, Oxford Citizens should act as a legislating body updating the Living Wage and working to enforce it citywide. ■

Reality on the Ground

Felix Flicker

Felix Flicker is an Oxford University student and has been a member of the Oxford Living Wage campaign since just after it began.

1. Were you involved in the initial stages of the Living wage campaign in Oxford? If not how did you become involved?

An activist named Kieran Hutchinson persuaded students from the Oxford Labour Club to run a stall at the Fresher's fair in my first year, which is what initially attracted my attention. At the outset, things moved fairly slowly as meetings were not very well organized and people were not well informed about the facts supporting the need for a campaign. After about a year, following the arrival of another activist, Liam Taylor, the campaign started to pick up pace, particularly focussing on low paid staff at Balliol College.

The initial approach was to try to deal with all colleges at Oxford University. However, as each college is a very separate entity, we decided that concentrating on individual colleges would be a better strategy. We reasoned that once one or two few colleges accept the merits of paying a living wage, others would be more receptive.

2. Which organizations/groups were involved?

Initially we spoke to the Oxford University and Colleges Unison branch. In one particular meeting they sent two representatives to discuss how we should approach the campaign. They had recently negotiated a pay rise for library staff and suggested that there

was little hope for achieving much more. However, this branch only represented those staff directly employed by the University, including library and administrative staff. Those being paid the very lowest wages were often contracted workers, many of whom were not members of a Trade Union.

We then managed to speak to the Unison Health Branch for Oxford – who offered some different and useful advice for the campaign – and to many low paid members. Through Unison Health branch we started dialogue and work with the TUC in Oxford.

3. What were your first actions in the campaign?

The very first thing we did was try to find out the level of demand for a living wage campaign amongst low paid employees working in the University. We realised that Oxford is a high cost area, but we could not run an effective campaign without the support and involvement of these people. In order to get in contact with the cleaners working there, we obtained opening times for departments and libraries. Many started work at 6am, which was not ideal for us! However we organized groups to head out to meet employees on their way to work. These groups then asked the staff a few questions on how they felt about their jobs and their working conditions. This continued for about a year, and highlighted some key concerns held by the workers.

4. What steps were taken to organize and galvanize support amongst employees?

We continued to meet workers on their way to work, as regularly as possible. Following these informal meetings and input from Stefan Baskerville, a London Citizens activist, we began to develop close links with specific employees, as this tactic had been successful in London. Many of the workers we came into contact with had very limited English, or none at all, which posed a significant obstacle to galvanizing support. However we continued to develop a relationship with the low paid workers and identify the issues they had with their employment.

5. How did other activists become aware of the campaign and get involved?

Initially this was done through OUSU, the student union. Kieran Hutchinson registered us as an OUSU campaign, which provided important publicity throughout the University. This allowed us to do mailing lists easily and included a free Fresher's Fair stall every year, which provided an opportunity to attract new students to the campaign. We also ran talks and events. In particular, one early meeting set up with UNISON got a lot of people involved. Around two years ago a forum for Living Wage campaigns from different colleges at Oxford University was set up, allowing for us to share information on the internet. We also publicize through other campaigns we are involved in within the University.

6. Who organized campaign meetings and what form did these take?

Meetings are usually organized by whoever is leading the campaign at that point in time. This person arranges agendas and memos for meetings etc. In the last year the campaign has divided down to deal with specific colleges, as each have their own contracts and arrangements for the provision of services. As a result of this the main University campaign has effectively become the Balliol College Campaign, but there are other groups including Hertford and Wadham Colleges. Each group has their own principle organizer and different arrangements for meetings and actions.

7. What was the initial reaction of employers and how were negotiations with employers set up and handled?

Two colleges that already pay the Oxford Living Wage of £7 per hour, have resisted accepting the status of 'Living Wage Employers' as they do not want to be bound to future pay rises. Currently Members of individual College Campaigns are meeting with their college Bursars, to discuss the possibility of paying staff the Oxford Living Wage. Many Bursars are not comfortable dealing with students from other colleges.

8. Did you experience resistance from employers, if so how was this overcome?

The Balliol College Campaign is an interesting example. A board assigned to looking into the feasibility of implementing the Oxford Living Wage has been established. However thus far it has achieved little, suggesting it may have been set up to appease the campaign, without addressing the issues. It has been suggested by employees that a senior member of staff, from a college with a strong Living Wage Campaign, gathered various low paid employees together and told them that if the Living Wage was implemented some people would lose their jobs, due to a lack of funds. While there is no proof, such actions would be unjustified, as the college in question has significant funds, as well as being illegal. This is clear resistance and is very concerning.

It appears that many of the colleges are able to pressurize their low paid employees, as each college has a small number of employees, who work fairly closely. For example if staff take sick leave, which tends to happen fairly often, then the college will often demand that other people fill in for them with no extra pay.

9. How do the workers you are campaigning with feel about current pay and conditions?

Pay is the primary concern of most workers we have talked to. People are often concerned by a lack of respect in the workplace, from both employers and other University staff. Views on sick and holiday pay vary from college to college, due to different policies. Many colleges do not provide those forced to cover for other workers with extra pay. However, we consider that implementing Living Wage policies, including sick pay, holiday pay and trade union membership, would go some way to alleviating this problem. Another big issue is the lack of access to cheap English lessons, so as a campaign we have managed to set up free English lessons for University employees, I am coordinating this at the moment.

10. Are you involved in plans for expansion of the campaign and how are these being pursued?

We have been planning the creation of a coalition organization called Oxford Citizens, along the lines of London Citizens, over the past year, with the Town Council. It has been suggested that the Citizens Organizing Foundation could act as an umbrella group supporting various Citizens organizations across the country, hopefully Oxford Citizens will be a part of this. We feel that developing this is vital. Even if we achieve some progress within certain colleges, there is no structure to update standards and build on this progress. A network of powerful local and national organizations and companies supporting the cause may well add permanence to any successes, as in London.

All organizations currently involved are donating towards a fund for a part time member of staff to work on this and gather support in Oxford. We are also keen on the idea of a "Living Wage Employer" award, like in London. This would publicise the campaign and pressurize colleges who are currently resisting.

11. Which organizing tactics have been most effective in the Oxford Living Wage campaign so far?

It is clearly important that you maintain strong links with the staff you are campaigning with, to create an atmosphere of solidarity and make sure you are campaigning for the things they see as most important, in a way they see as right. Therefore meeting and talking to the staff we are campaigning with, whenever is convenient for them is of primary importance. The student union has also provided a useful source of contacts and publicity for our campaign, in terms of student activists.

12. What advice would you give to other LW campaigns that are starting up?

First and foremost, I would recommend establishing the need for a campaign by talking to the workers concerned. This will clarify the main aims of the campaign and create better links between campaigners who are not employees and the staff themselves. We have had a very positive reaction to the provision of free English lessons. Achieving a higher standard of English appears to encourage some staff to take a greater interest in aspects of their employment which may not have been questioned before. Employers have seemingly used a low standard of English amongst employees to their advantage. Free English lessons are our finest achievement so far and were fairly easy to arrange, I would recommend this to any new campaign. ■



Manchester Uniting Momentum building in the north

Manchester City Council recently announced that it would pay directly employed staff a minimum rate of £6.74, simultaneously raising the pay of 800 staff. The figure of £6.74 was set following “extensive discussions” between the city council and the trade unions and a mapping analysis of similar initiatives around the UK.

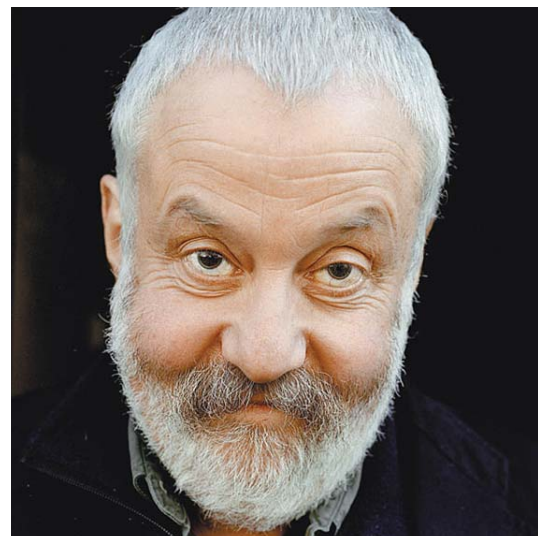
This and related developments were a result of a partnership between the council and Manchester’s joint trade unions and has been hailed as a ‘significant and historic’ development, recognizing the importance of lower paid workers to the development of Manchester as a world class city.

With effect from 1 January 2009, all new starters to the City Council within the Grade 1 salary range will be appointed to SCP 6 (£12,299 per annum). This is equivalent to £6.74 per hour. More than 850 employees have benefitted from the scheme. This effectively removed the two lowest rates of pay previously operated by Manchester City Council. Manchester College – the largest college in the country – has also agreed to implement the Manchester Minimum Wage.

A subsequent Manchester City Council report for resolution recommended that the City Council should hold discussions with other public sector organisations to encourage adoption of the Manchester Minimum Wage. Tony Caffery, Unison Manchester Branch Secretary said *“we look forward to working together, with the city council, to promote the benefits of a ‘Manchester Minimum Wage’ to other employers in our city.”*

It is also recommended that the City Council will hold discussions with other public sector organisations to encourage adoption of the Manchester Minimum Wage.

North West Regional UNISON Labour Link National Committee member, Pat McDonagh, stated that *“by building a more direct and structured relationship with Labour through our link, we are delivering real improvements for UNISON members”*. Councillor Bernard Priest, member for finance, stated his *“hope that the introduction of the Manchester minimum wage will benefit poorer communities as well as help us to attract and retain quality employees.”* ■



Mike Leigh, the Oscar nominated film director, has vowed not to visit Manchester’s Cornerhouse cinema until staff are paid the Manchester minimum wage.

100 not out

The Glasgow Living Wage



Councillor Purcell and colleagues at the launch of the LW initiative.

In March 2009, Glasgow City Council adopted a living wage policy⁸ with a £7 per hour rate that will apply to both directly employed and contracted staff. The Council has also committed to adopting a living wage policy for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and is the first local authority in Scotland to establish a living wage; agreeing to pay all employees a wage that increases the basic salary of the lowest paid council worker by around £1,100 a annum.⁹

The council has also actively taken the initiative to business citywide and to date, 121 businesses have pledged to become living wage employers. These include IT monolith Dell, Glasgow Housing Association, the construction company, Tough Construction and City Building.¹⁰

The Leader of the council Steven Purcell inceptioned and co-promoted the initiative across the city with a varied coalition of interested parties. The early positive response from

employers mirrors the positivity around LW that now exists, particularly with large scale employers who have witnessed positive and rather hard-nosed business assessments from corporations employing hundreds and often thousands of employees.¹¹

Supportive statements on the development are varied. Dr Lesley Sawers, chief executive of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry said:

“SCDI welcomes the collaboration of Glasgow’s business community and the council in securing encouraging levels of support for a living wage policy.”

Hugh Connor, managing director of Tough Construction which employs over 100 people in the city, said:

“Glasgow’s living wage builds confidence, self esteem and loyalty and that brings long-term benefits to both employee and employer.” ■

Glasgow
**living
wage**

NOTES

- 8 www.glasgowlivingwage.co.uk
- 9 <http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/living-wage-campaign-wins-business-backing-1.985778>
- 10 http://www.glasgowlivingwage.co.uk/Glasgow_living_wage_employers/
- 11 http://www.fairpaynetwork.org/?page=case_for_business

Networking in Norfolk

The Norwich Living Wage

In September 2008, a coalition of Labour Party and Green Party councillors secured a motion within Norwich City Council calling for a Living Wage for Norwich workers.

The council has committed itself to a mapping exercise to facilitate engagement with employers, and to research into a living wage figure for Norwich. At the time of publication, an imminent report that includes a proposal to develop a living wage initiative in the city is to be presented to the city council's executive committee.

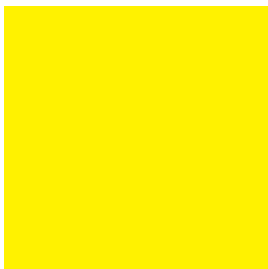
Labour Party Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance has stated:

"We know a number of national businesses are committed to the living wage and we are investigating how we can work with them at the Norwich level to champion and promote the concept of the living wage. The Executive has requested that a "fair wage" is one of the social and environmental areas that should be explored in relation to the service provision procured through the re-let of the Council's contracts."

Green Party Councillor Adrian Ramsay said:

"The idea is that there should be a minimum level of pay, higher than the minimum wage, that is based on what people need to get by [...] I believe the next stage in the process is for a study to be conducted to establish the hourly rate of pay for a Living Wage in Norwich." ■

Political will ... or will not? How the mainstream parties fare



The attitudes of the mainstream political parties to the concept of a living wage – over and above a mandatory national minimum wage which all serious and esteemed poverty agencies agree is insufficient to lift the employee from working poverty – are inconsistent and in flux. It is however perfectly clear that as momentum behind the regional campaigns continues to build, pressure on elected representatives within both local and national government arenas will also increase.

Senior party political individuals and regional parties have often demonstrated flexibility from the national party line on the living wage and the actions of both national leadership and regional parties have also proved somewhat counter-intuitive to what observers might have expected.

London

The lead of former Labour Party Mayor of London Ken Livingstone in making Living Wage a policy reality in the capital has been enthusiastically continued and up-rated by his Conservative Party successor Boris Johnson; a surprise to many, not least those senior figures within his party who oppose living wage

initiatives. By way of illustration, whilst Livingstone was incumbent at City Hall, Conservative AM's voted en bloc against giving London Fire Station cleaners the living wage just two years ago. At that time, Brian Coleman AM stated:

*'Paying London Fire Station cleaners the London Living wage of £7.20, as Val Shawcross has suggested, is just ridiculous.'*⁷²

Incidentally, when asked in the House of Commons to comment on this Conservative opposition, former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair took many of his own MP's by surprise when he stated:

*'It is excellent that London is focused on paying the Living Wage to the cleaners. I very hope much hope if right honourable gentleman [the Leader of the Opposition] can exert a bit of control over his party they can change their decision.'*⁷³

It is clear with reference to London – owing vigorous campaigning by the London Citizens coalition – that living wage matters appear to be permanently grafted onto the electoral agenda, not least because of the scale of the hustings organised by LC during the mayoral campaigns, which are now the largest in the capital and feature living wage asks as a joint top priority.

This is not only morally right but also makes good business sense, contributing to better recruitment and retention of staff, higher productivity, and a more loyal workforce with high morale.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London.

National

The Conservative Party¹⁴

Despite Boris Johnson's lead, the Conservative national picture is far more erratic.

Responding on behalf of the Conservative Party to a question from the Fair Pay Network on attitudes towards the growth of living wage campaigns in early 2009, Jonathan Djanogly MP the Conservative Shadow Minister for "Corporate Governance" said:

*'[...] we don't think the evidence is clear that region-by-region minimum wage rates will necessarily do what they are supposed to do, that is improve matters for people on lower salaries. One concern is that the additional red tape for some small businesses could discourage them from employing anyone at all.'*¹⁵

Despite Mr Djanogly's seniority, this position was clearly contradicted by Conservative leader and now Prime Minister Rt Hon David Cameron MP, who when addressing the Citizens UK general election hustings in May 2010 appeared to support the idea of a living wage, implying that it would be factored into a low pay review (which his administration has now established, though purely looking at the public sector¹⁶) and actually stating that the living wage was "an idea whose time has come"¹⁷.

Regionally too, Conservative representatives have rejected living wage initiatives. Following public pressure from Leeds student unions, trades unions, faith groups and even locally born celebrities such as the rock band *The Kaiser Chiefs* who lobbied the council chambers personally for a living wage development, In April 2008, Conservative councillors – alongside Liberal Democrat councillors – voted against a motion tabled by Labour and Green Party councillors that would introduce a living wage "social clause" in any public procurement contract issued for the provision of public services by Leeds City Council.¹⁸

Curiously, despite voting down the measure, the Conservative Leader of the Council Andrew Carter lamented low pay in a subsequent letter to the Prime Minister, stating that:

'[...] The government's minimum wage is significantly lower than living wage levels estimated for Leeds.'

Leeds City Council went on to approve a greatly diluted motion and eventually published a report into the feasibility of

making Leeds a “living wage city”. It found that by using the GLA Model and applying Leeds data, the figure of a Leeds Living Wage would be £6.86 per hour. It also estimated that set in within the context of a region (Yorkshire and the Humber) where 24,000 workers are known by central government not to be receiving even a minimum wage, around 22% workers in Leeds itself were paid below the “living wage” level.

In direct contrast to the developments in London, Oxford, Preston, Norwich, Manchester and Glasgow, the Leeds Report looked one dimensionally and rather superficially only at costs to the council of any implementation, and took a very narrow and outdated view of inserting social clauses into public procurement contracts by stating that:

“Non-commercial clauses and social objectives are traditionally “out of bounds”; with Councils discouraged from monitoring or assessing input factors like pay.”

And thus, Leeds missed an opportunity to take an ethical lead alongside these other cities.

The Liberal Democrats ¹⁹

Details of the Liberal Democrats approach to living wage policies appear opaque. In keeping with the inside/outside London trend, Liberal Democrat candidate for the 2008 mayoralty Brian Paddick stated that he would:

“Support the London Living Wage to promote better wages for the lowest paid employees and ensure that it is reviewed annually to keep in line with rising costs in the capital.”²⁰

Furthermore, in direct response to an FPN request for a stated position on the living wage, John Thurso MP – Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform – answered with a monosyllabic “yes” to a question of whether the party support such initiatives, but offered no further substantiation.

At the Citizens UK May 2010 general elections hustings, party leader and now Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg was the most obviously hostile of the candidates to the living wage concept, stating to the assembly in contrast to the other party leaders only: *“I agree with you in your aspiration of a true living wage”* adding *“I am not sure it can be compulsory”²¹*.

But as is referenced above, Liberal Democrat councillors in Leeds voted en bloc against the

Leeds Living Wage motion and Liberal Democrat Leader of the Council Richard Brett, told the executive board of the council that low-paid workers were “lucky” to have a job *at all* owing to the current economic conditions, so once again, conflicting patterns can be observed.

Whilst regional posturing by political parties appears to be the norm, the decision of the Liberal Democrat councillors to block the motion was seen as particularly incongruous; not least because Leeds is the UK’s largest centre for business, legal, and financial services outside London, and according to recent Office for National Statistics estimates, the fastest growing city in the UK, so distinction from national party policy would be very visible and questionable.

This combined with the fact that the very active student unions of Leeds University and Leeds Metropolitan University both lobbied for the living wage measure, and that the only non-Labour Party MP in the Leeds area is a Liberal Democrat with a very high proportion of student voters within that constituency, makes the decision even more puzzling.

The Labour Party ²²

Following the first ever implementation of a Living Wage policy by then Labour Mayor of London Ken Livingstone detailed in chapter 1, confusion appeared to reign as to attitudes towards the living wage within the former Labour Cabinet, with some members known to be to arguing against it and unwilling to go beyond the National Minimum Wage, which had of course itself been a highly significant achievement.

Some senior figures and respective advisors were sceptical about the wisdom of further “interference in the market”, despite the success of the minimum wage and the evidence that employers were still exploiting their market power to pay much less than they could afford to people in a weak bargaining position in the bottom part of the labour market

If perhaps the Government also paid too much attention to business lobbyists, it also did not help that the position taken by the Office of Government Commerce, a body set up by the Labour Government, could sometimes be construed as being anti-living wage.

It was left to campaigning organisations like London Citizens to make the case for the

living wage, with the support of a number of trade unions including solid support from UNISON and Unite the Union.

The accepted consensus amongst campaigners is that the Labour Government, having quite rightly congratulated themselves on the successful introduction of the UK's first National Minimum Wage, then took far too long to realise that living wages could have a strong role to play in reducing reliance on tax credits and in-work benefits, as well as its central value in raising people out of poverty.

In the end, only a few Labour politicians picked up the banner, with just one Labour central government ministry, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, actually paying the living wage rate to its staff as a matter of policy. This was a very welcome move, but it was achieved at quite a late stage in the administration.

However, by the time of the 2010 General Election, these Labour voices including senior Cabinet members had succeeded in changing the mind of the party in Government. Labour was ready to take a further step, armed for the first time with a manifesto that promised to get all Whitehall Departments to follow the lead of those who already pay the living wage. (Labour Manifesto 2010, p2.3).

There now seems to be a genuine appetite for the party to go further again, with all five candidates for the September 2010 Labour leadership contest declaring support for the development of a broader living wage in some form on their respective campaign websites.

Given the promise made in the 2010 manifesto and new, emergent unanimity around the living wage issue demonstrated in the leadership campaign, it now seems much more likely that living wage directives and policies will become hard wired into Labour Party thinking.

The Green Party ²³

The Green Party is unique in having consistently supported the living wage, both nationally and locally (most notably and effectively in Oxford, Norwich and Leeds) for some time, and holding the living wage as a key plank of party policy.²⁴ No contradictory positions are recorded. During the 2008 London mayoralty elections, the Green Party candidate stated that:

“Government, local authorities and employers must act; it is in their collective interests to do so. That is why the Green party will continue to support initiatives such as this and Living Wage drives in London and most recently, Oxford.”

Green Party leader and now MP for Brighton Pavilion Caroline Lucas MP campaigned on the living wage throughout the 2010 general election and continues to be a keen voice within parliament and her own constituency²⁵.

Summary

London remains the exception to the rule, with each and every party fully aware that it must support and continue a living wage policy if it to be taken seriously within the capital. Campaigners around the UK should take note: If a political party can be convinced of the undoubted popularity in the public domain for living wage policies and a broad, meaningful on the ground coalition can be assembled, the campaign drive is impossible to ignore.

Nationally, it would appear that within the new coalition government, some sympathetic noises off have been made, whilst other quarters of both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties harbour economic and it must be said, and hard ideological reservations. Very little has been done by successive administrations to promote “best practice” despite the examples set by many corporate monoliths who – notwithstanding the present recession – continue to maintain and publicly promote living wage policies

because they “make business sense”. Only one government department is a living wage employer. The promotion of living wage policies by the outgoing Prime Minister Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP and at least two of the leadership candidates could mark a change in direction of travel in the upper echelons of the labour party which could, in time, mean that the living wage becomes as popular in policy forums and shadow cabinet as it has been at grass-roots level and in Labour local authority chambers for some time.

A great many local Labour Party and Green Party councillors and members have campaigned for and achieved living wage status for their councils.

The Liberal Democrats appear to hold very contradictory views subject to region, whereas the Conservative party overall and taken outside of London appears to be overtly hostile to the living wage. The Green Party remains committed to LW, as a matter of national policy. ■

NOTES

- 12 http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=12331
- 13 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070613/debtext/70613-0003.htm>
- 14 <http://www.conservatives.com/Policy.aspx>
- 15 “Not Just for the Good Times: The New Imperative for Fair Pay”
- 16 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/indreview_willhutton_fairpay.htm
- 17 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8658615.stm
- 18 <http://www.fairpaynetwork.org/index.php?page=leeds>
- 19 http://www.libdems.org.uk/what_we_stand_for.aspx
- 20 http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/41_5343.htm
- 21 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8658615.stm
- 22 http://www.labour.org.uk/labour_policies
- 23 <http://www.greenparty.org.uk/policies/living-wage.html>
- 24 <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/caroline-lucas/2008/10/living-wage-london-poverty>
- 25 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/may/18/interview-caroline-lucas-green-party>

Living Wage Campaigning A toolkit

**We need a living wage in this community...
where do we start?**



**To download the live living wage toolkit please go to:
[www.unison.org.uk/file/Living wage toolkit.doc](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Living%20wage%20toolkit.doc)**

Appendix 1: Resources

Mapping low pay: research questionnaires

Worker Questionnaire

Date of Interview _____ Time of Interview _____

Interviewer _____ Sector _____

Interviewee's Employer (name of company) _____

Interviewee's Workplace _____
(name of organisation where they work eg. Newham General Hospital)

Where is the interview taking place? _____

1. How long have you been doing this job? _____

2. What are your main responsibilities?

3. Did you transfer over from the public sector when this service was contracted out?
Are you covered by TUPE provisions, protecting your terms and conditions of work? Yes No Don't know

(if the person says they don't know, please probe more to find out if they used to work for the public sector organisation directly – if they did, it is likely they are covered by TUPE, but you need to check – this is critical – only tick 'don't know' as a last resort!)

4. How many hours are you contracted to work in a week? _____

5. Do you do overtime as well? And if so, roughly how many hours a week? _____

6. How much do you get paid, without any overtime, bonuses or tax credits, before tax and national insurance are deducted and is this hourly/weekly/two-weekly/monthly? _____

And net, after tax and national insurance are taken away? (and is this hourly/weekly/two-weekly/monthly?) _____

NOTE: if the interviewee is not sure about this information, ask them if they would mind looking it up at home and noting the details down or sending you a wage slip which you can photocopy and return, either can be sent in the stamped address envelope.

7. Do you tend to work overtime, and if so, how much do you do, on average, per week? _____

8. What is the rate for overtime work? (please specify details for different days and conditions if the rate varies eg on Saturdays, Sundays etc) _____

9. Do you get any additional payments, if in London for London Weighting or weekend working for example, if so, please specify? _____

10. Do you have access to a pension scheme? Yes No Don't know

please specify details

11. How many days holidays do you get a year? (including or excluding bank holidays?) _____

12. Do you get sick pay from your employer? Yes No Don't know

please specify details

13. Can you take time off for family emergencies, funerals, hospital appointments and so on without losing annual leave/holiday entitlement? Yes No Don't know

please specify details

14. Do you get any other benefits from your employer? (eg. maternity/paternity leave, compassionate leave) please specify

15. Do you have any other jobs? If so, what and where are they? How many hours do you do? What is the hourly rate of pay?

16. Do you have children living with you at home? Yes No Don't know

If so, how many?

Worker Questionnaire (continued)

17. Do you get working families tax credit? Yes No Don't know

18. What do you feel about your pay and conditions of work?

19. Is there anything further you would like to tell us about your work?

Personal questions

20. Is the interviewee Male Female

21. What is your age?

22. What is your nationality?

23. What is your race?

If you want further information and news about the Living Wage Campaign, please give us your name, address and phone number and we will keep you informed:

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Research for the Living Wage Campaign

Union representative/other contact Questionnaire

Date of Interview _____ Interviewer _____

Person Interviewed _____ Position _____

1. Sector (eg. health, education, transport etc) _____

2. Workplace _____

3. Name of service contracted out (use a different questionnaire for each service – please go through the details of each contract/service one at a time): _____

4. When did this happen? (please give a series of dates if it has been contracted out more than once) _____

5. When is the contract next up for renewal? _____

6. Which companies have been/were awarded the contract? (please put down every company that has won the contract in the past – to match the dates in question 4 and probe to see if the person has any information about these companies; Are they international? Where is the headquarters? Where are the management based? What is their reputation amongst staff and managers etc)

7. How many workers are involved in this area of service delivery? fulltimers part-timers

8. What is the rough gender balance of the workforce? % female % male

9. What is the rough race balance of the workforce? % white % non-white

10. How many of these workers are covered by TUPE protection (% if true numbers are not available)? _____

11. And in what circumstances do the provisions of TUPE apply (is it time limited, dependent on the company etc)? _____

TUPEd workers who used to work for the public sector or another private sector contractor

13. What are the **pay arrangements for those workers who are covered by TUPE?** (those who were transferred over from the public sector to work for the private contractor):

What is their gross pay (before tax and other stoppages)? (is this hourly, weekly, two-weekly or monthly?)

What are their standard hours of work in a week? (please give figures for full time and part time staff separately)

fulltimers part-timers

Can staff work overtime?

yes no

If so, how many extra hours does a worker do on average every week?

What are the hourly rates of pay for overtime? (please note if the rates differ on Saturdays and Sundays, and in any other special circumstances)

If in London, do staff receive London weighting?

yes no

If so, how much is it? (and note if this is the hourly, weekly or monthly rate)

Do staff get any other special bonuses? (for attendance, weekend working, long service?) If so, please specify in full

I Do you have sample pay slips that can be copied for research purposes?

Yes No, but will get some and pass them on No
(Please try and encourage the respondent to help with this!)

Is there any further information we need to know about pay for this group of workers?

Non-TUPEd workers who have been taken on since the contractor took over the service

14. What are the pay arrangements for those workers who are not covered by TUPE and have never been employed directly by the public sector?

What is their gross pay (before tax and other stoppages)? (is this hourly, weekly, two-weekly or monthly?)

What are their standard hours of work in a week? (please give figures for full time and part time staff separately)

fulltimers part-timers

Can staff work overtime?

yes no

If so, how many extra hours does a worker do on average every week?

What are the hourly rates of pay for overtime? (please note if the rates differ on Saturdays and Sundays, and in any other special circumstances)

If in London, do staff receive London weighting?

yes no

If so, how much is it? (and note if this is the hourly, weekly or monthly rate)

Do staff get any other special bonuses? (for attendance, weekend working, long service?) If so, please specify in full

I Do you have sample pay slips that can be copied for research purposes?

Yes No, but will get some and pass them on No
(Please try and encourage the respondent to help with this!)

Is there any further information we need to know about pay for this group of workers?

Carrying out a power analysis

Doing a power analysis is about getting specific – naming names, doing your homework to find out about your own members and activists and the organizations, employers, politicians and journalists that could help or hinder your campaign.

Internally, you want to know:

- Who are the members you want to involve in the campaign?
How much do you know about them?
- How can you strengthen relationships within the branch?
- What relationships do your members have with allies in the community?
- How strong are those relationships?
- How can we build on the ones we have and develop new ones?

In terms of external actors, think about:

- Who could be helpful
- Who could be a barrier?
- Who do we need to win over?
- Who do we need to neutralize?
- What are the interests of those who have the power to give you what you want, and what you need to do for them to get them onside?

The template on the right will help you to work through a power analysis. The criteria listed just examples. Feel free to add others and adapt them to your own campaign.

What are the union's strengths and weaknesses in terms of winning this campaign?
 What are the threats to our success? What opportunities could we take advantage of?
 List them below.

Criteria	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Level of organisation?			
Resources, assets, people?			
Experience, skills?			
Knowledge, data?			
Contacts, community engagement			
Public awareness and support?			
Media coverage?			
Economic impact?			
Political context?			

Best Practice: Recognised Living Wage Employers

PricewaterhouseCoopers	Forum For the Future Ltd
BioRegional	Free Tibet Campaign
Macquarie	Friends Of The Earth
City Parochial Foundation	Groundwork UK
Execution Charitable Trust	Healthy Living Centre
Barclays	Islington Ecology Centre
Westway Development Trust	Jobs Go Public Ltd
KPMG	Kite Clinic Ltd
Greater London Authority	LFEPA
The Big Issue	London 2012
IPPR	LSE
ACEVO	MedicAlert Foundation
Child Poverty Action Group	CAN Mezzanine London Bridge
Queen Mary University of London	Mezzanine-Loman Street
Olympic Delivery Authority	NCVO
Westfield	NHS Trust
ACEVO	Norlington School
565 Europe	R H Evans Architects
Arena BLM	Rainforest Foundation
Argus Media	Renegade Pictures
Aspen Oil	Rengen Energy
Bates Wells Braithwaite	Rethink
Big Issue	Richard Hywelevan Architecture & Design Ltd
Blanco	Safer World
Browns	SD3 Ltd
Business to Business Exhibitions Ltd	St Charles Sixth Form College
Child Poverty Action Group	St Lukes Centre
Children of the Andes	Stanton Williams
Childrens Rights Alliance for England	Tate Catering
Climate Change Group	Thames McGurk Ltd
Clownfish Marketing	Tindelmanor
Connect Public Affairs	Unlimited
CSSA	Waterhouse
Data Foundation	Sustainable Development Capital
Ecologist	Karmaram
The Ethical Property Company Plc	Greenpeace
The Ethical Property Foundation	The Young Foundation
Food Commission	Lifeline Project
Oxford Research Group	IANSA
Peace Direct	Crisis UK
Quiet Revolution	The Bromley by Bow Centre
Department for Children, Schools and Families	

Further information

For more information of guidance, please contact:

livingwage@fairpaynetwork.org

LINKS:

GLA London Living Wage Report 2010:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/business-and-economy/2010-living-wage-london>

London Living Wage Campaign:

<http://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/living-wage-campaign/>

The Minimum Income Standard Calculator

<http://www.minimumincome.org.uk/>

UNISON Living Wage information:

http://www.unison.org.uk/news/news_view.asp?did=6301

PCS Living Wage information:

http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/pcs_comment/index.cfm/id/F4881251-B5E5-46F3-8217D184EBE987DF

GMB Living Wage information:

<http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/PressItems.asp?NodeID=96720>



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