

MAYOR OF LONDON



ACHIEVING THE GOOD WORK STANDARD

A toolkit for London's Adult Education providers

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**Greater London Authority
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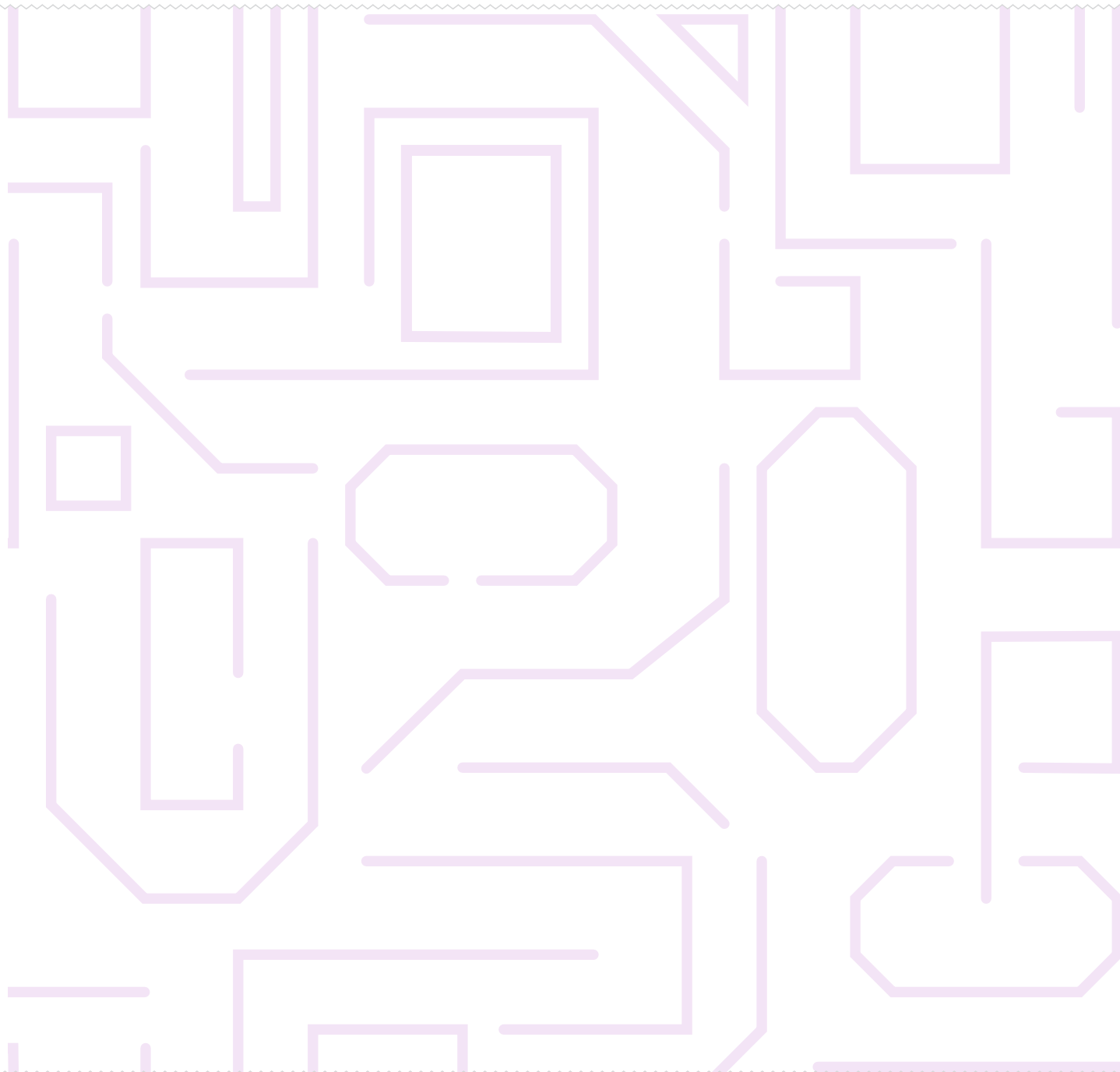
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Copies of this report are available
from www.london.gov.uk

Acknowledgements and contributions

The Adult Education providers 'Achieving
the Good Work Standard' toolkit was
authored by Business In The Community.



Contents



About the toolkit

This toolkit is for Human Resources professionals within adult education providers who would like to learn more about the Good Work Standard (GWS) accreditation process. It should be used as an introductory document, followed with the [Employer Guidance for the Mayor's Good Work Standard](#) which provides a more detailed breakdown of the Good Work Standard criteria.

Introduction

The Mayor's Good Work Standard

The [Mayor's Good Work Standard](#) brings together best employment practice and links to resources and support from across London to help employers improve their organisations. The initiative has been developed in collaboration with London's employers, trade unions, professional

bodies and experts. It sets the benchmark the Mayor wants every London employer to work to achieve. Organisations able to meet the GWS criteria can apply for accreditation and recognition as leading employers from the Mayor.

To find out how many organisations have been recognised as a Good Work Standard employer so far, click [here](#).

The Adult Education Sector

The [Skills Roadmap for London](#) sets out the Mayor's plans to ensure London's skills offer better serves London's communities and enhances London's economy, building on the success of the delegation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Mayor in 2019. The Roadmap ensures that skills provision in London is locally relevant, makes an impact and is accessible. It

recognises that adult education providers form a vital component of London's infrastructure, contributing immensely to the communities that they serve, through the learning that they provide, by serving as local employers and through their supply chains.

The Roadmap has set an expectation for all City Hall funded adult education providers to meet or be working towards the GWS. The Mayor recognises that providers are starting from different positions and have different organisational structures and sizes, and wants to support all providers on this journey. This toolkit, shaped by feedback from the sector, is designed to support adult education providers – in receipt of funding from the AEB which includes Further Education Colleges, Independent Training Providers and Local Authorities – in achieving the GWS.

Benefits to the adult education sector

It's more important than ever for providers to be offering Good Work opportunities, and there are a wide range of benefits to becoming GWS accredited:

LONDON LIVING WAGE



93% of accredited Living Wage businesses report business benefits, including increased recruitment, retention, staff motivation, employee engagement and boosting reputation. You can find out more from the Living Wage Foundation [here](#).

PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH



Research from the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) found that one of the key drivers of productivity growth in the UK is the quality of work to people in low wage sectors. High productivity is the result of good management, inclusivity, employee wellbeing, investment in training and high reward, all of which are covered by the GWS.

IMPACT ON LEARNERS



Learners within adult education providers are likely to be impacted by their provider becoming GWS accredited by accessing a more productive and motivated workforce. Those who are more selective about choosing a provider, especially during a time where values-based and purposeful decision making is becoming more prevalent, may be reassured by the accreditation.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



Boosting job quality across a range of measures can help address recruitment and retention challenges. Providing more flexible working hours and better pay could help your organisation attract workers, motivate, and retain existing employees.

POSITIVE IMPACT IN COMMUNITY



The benefits of 'good work' are felt beyond the individual and have a knock-on effect on the wider community, providing social value.



Reasons to go through the accreditation process

✓ The process is straightforward

Though some resource and time will need to be dedicated to the accreditation process, the process itself is straightforward to complete, and many organisations have already begun implementing many of the criteria as part of best practice.

✓ It's based on your overall commitment to change, rather than completing every criteria

Not every criteria has to be met. If you look at the thresholds table in "Process for Accreditation", only a certain % of criteria needs to be met to achieve accreditation.

✓ The accreditation is free

Therefore, the cost impact is likely to be low, especially when weighed up against the value that the Good Work Standard provides to a provider's employees and students.

✓ You will receive support during the accreditation process

Once you take the initial foundation assessment, you will be allocated an officer from the GLA who will liaise with you to make sure you've received the correct information and will support you in the process of accreditation.

✓ Organisations that have completed the Good Work Standard have been able to demonstrate social value and tangible benefits to employees

Implementation of the criteria is what drives the impact on staff, and the accreditation is a formal recognition of this process.

Process for accreditation

1

Whatever stage you think you're at, we would recommend every adult education provider to start with the quick online self-assessment for the foundation criteria: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/business-and-economy/supporting-business/good-work-standard-gws/good-work-standard-application-form>

These are the statutory requirements and basics of employment practice that you should have in place. This should take around an hour to complete, and you will receive the results immediately.

Once you go through this, the process won't seem as daunting as it might first appear.

2

Once you have completed this stage, you will be invited to register for the Good Work Standard, of which there are two levels:

- **Achievement** - the standard for good employment practice
- **Excellence** - for employers that demonstrate how they embed excellent practices into their organisation

You will complete a self-assessment form which includes a combination of Achievement and Excellence level criteria. The questions only require yes, no and n/a responses.

Process for accreditation

3

Once you submit your self-assessment form, an officer from the GLA's Economic Fairness team¹ will review it and support you through the process from there. However, if you have any questions before starting the form, you can also e-mail fairness@london.gov.uk

If your application reaches the threshold for Excellence, you will be asked to provide evidence to satisfy a combination of both Achievement level and Excellence level criteria. If you only reach Achievement thresholds, you will only be asked to provide a sample of evidence related to Achievement criteria. Extra notes and context can be provided in the e-mail communication between the officer and applicant.

Below are the thresholds:

	Size of Business	% Achievement Criteria Met	% Excellence Criteria Met
Receiving Achievement Accreditation	Under 250 employees	75%	n/a
	Over 250 employees	80%	n/a
Receiving Excellence Accreditation	Under 250 employees	80%	50%
	Over 250 employees	85%	60%

As you can see, you do not need to state "yes" to all Achievement criteria to be considered for Excellence level.

¹ The team that ensures the delivery of the Mayor's commitments to a fairer and more inclusive economy, working with employers to achieve the Good Work Standard.

Process for accreditation

4

Once your supporting officer is happy with the evidence provided, a panel of senior advisors will discuss the application and assess whether further clarification is needed. Once this has been obtained and if the panel are satisfied with the response, the accreditation will be finalised.

5

You'll receive an email and then a letter confirming accreditation signed by the Deputy Mayor. You will then receive a comms toolkit and a plaque in the post.

If for any reason the panel decides not to accredit, the application will be kept on hold and clear suggestions will be provided to reach the Good Work Standard criteria. Your supporting officer can provide additional support to you during this time and then present your application to the panel again later once developments have been made.

Case study

Anonymous provider

Background

As the first Adult Education Provider and FE college to receive accreditation for the GWS, 'Anonymous Provider' saw the value and importance of the standard for many reasons:

- Becoming an employer of choice in an increasingly competitive sector amidst a workforce and skills crisis
- Improving the wellbeing of staff
- Aligning priorities to funding from the Greater London Authority
- Positive impact on students who will benefit from a more diverse workforce

As a result, recognising the need for senior buy-in, the college received backing from key stakeholders, including governors, the CEO, the Finance Director and the unions, who all believed in the importance of achieving the GWS.



You need a holistic approach to fully appreciate the value of the GWS. Though any cost implications in the short term may sound daunting, the value achieved in the long-term outweighs this. Ultimately, we want to be an organisation that aligns our work with our values.



Anonymous provider

Process

Overall, Anonymous Provider found the process less daunting than initially perceived. The accreditation took just under a year to complete and one employee was dedicated to completing the process as part of their role. Many of the criteria were

already being met and required only some minor tweaking. Balancing the staff need was also important, for example, a lot of staff preferred less traditional contracts because it suited their way of working. The assessment allowed room for these sorts of sector-specific considerations.

One of the larger tasks was achieving the London Living Wage, as contractors and suppliers also had to be involved for this. However, it was clear from the outset that leaders believed it was the right thing to do, especially as some staff were working multiple jobs to earn more income. There is a huge recruitment and retention crisis in the sector, achieving the London Living Wage would help to mitigate this crisis at the college and prevent in-work poverty.

Impact

The true reward was the improvement of Good Work for staff and students during the implementation of criteria, as opposed to gaining a certificate.

Some of the resulting changes:

- The college became a Disability Confident employer, attended disability jobs fairs, and spoke to a government minister about their work. As a result, they managed to recruit someone with a disability in a hard to fill role.
- Staff retention and satisfaction has improved as evidenced by various data points.

The panel assessing them was particularly impressed with the college's:

- Commitment to providing health, wellbeing and development of staff.

- Consistent and effective communication across the organisation.
- Focus on continuous development of an inclusive and diverse workforce.

“

If colleges are recruiting a diverse workforce reflecting communities they are based in, this is positive for students. There is a feeling of belonging, recognition, positive role models, safer spaces and greater wellbeing for students. Younger people are vocal of values they would like to see in organisations.

”

Anonymous provider



Case study

East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT)

Background

It was very important to the college as a responsible employer to have an external accreditation. As a London based education provider it made sense to ELATT that they align to the London Good Work Standard.



We wanted that peer benchmark and peer support to ensure we never work in isolation and that we build the reputation and the responsibility to our current and future employees and also to demonstrate that added value for funders.



Anthony Harmer, Chief Executive

Process

The accreditation process took around 3 months to complete with one dedicated employee, leading the collation of evidence on the side of the college. It was particularly important to the college that they could move forward at their pace in a busy working environment with a small staff. Many of the criteria the college already had in place, for example they were the first education provider in Hackney to be London Living Wage accredited.

Where evidence needed updating or developing, ELATT found the support from the GWS officer vital to talk through what was required, and the officer provided helpful examples of evidence and templates where needed.



During and post Covid we found there were fewer peer support events and there was a risk of isolation in employer practice. We found the process of going through the GWS assessment to be really positive, flexible, supportive and only took us around 3 months to complete.



Anthony Harmer, Chief Executive

Impact



We are thrilled to be one of the first third sector organisations and one of the first training providers in London to be awarded the Mayor of London's Good Work Standard, which we achieved at Excellence level!



Anthony Harmer, Chief Executive

Some of the resulting changes:

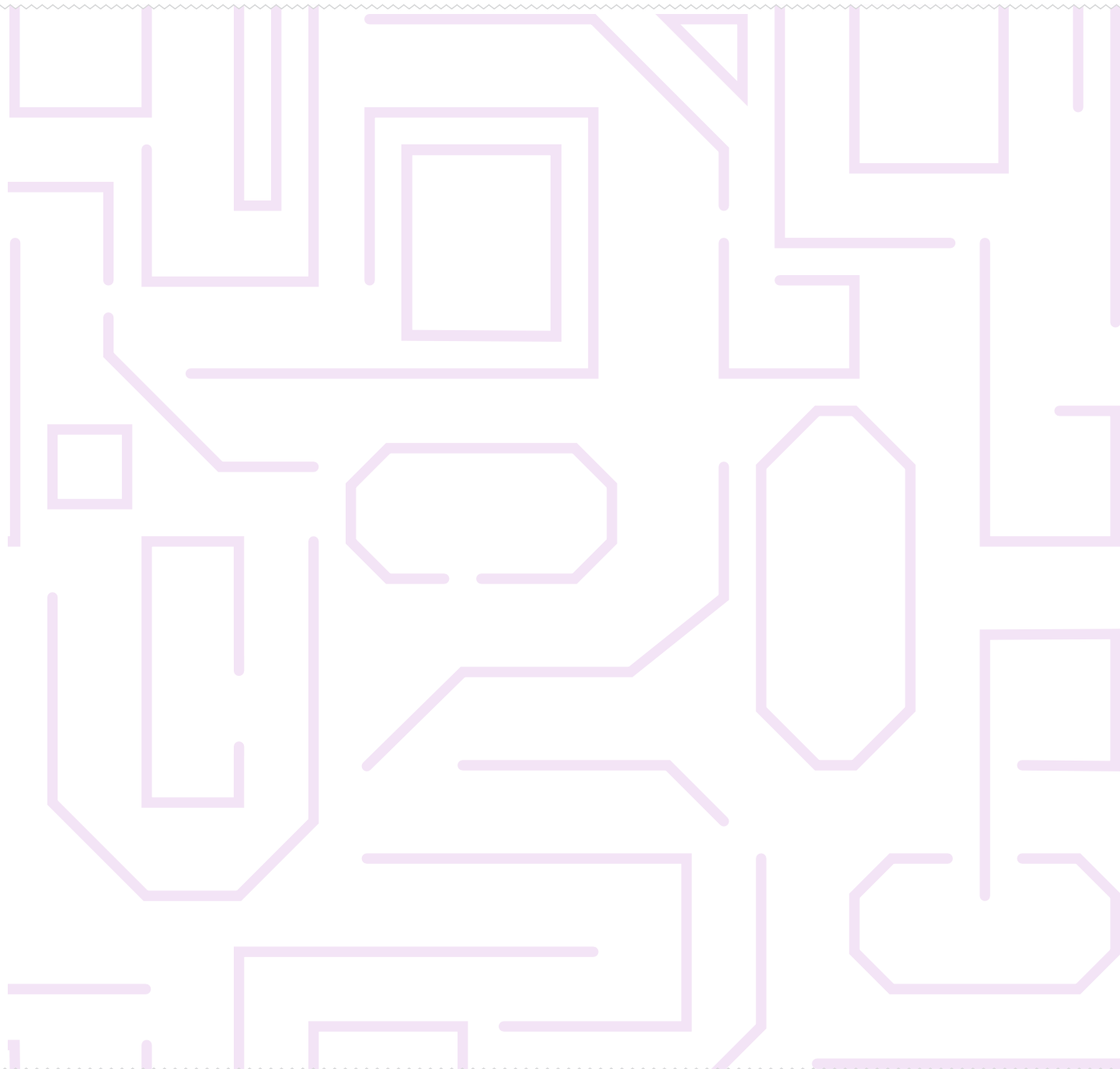
- The college developed an adoption leave policy which has already had a positive impact on individual employees and their families.
- The college has been able to complete funding applications that require accreditation to the London Good Work Standard.



Overview of each pillar

There are four pillars to the Good Work Standard, with several criteria to meet under each pillar. Various stakeholders from the sector were consulted on how these pillars might translate to the adult education sector and this is outlined below, alongside an introduction to each pillar. This toolkit is not designed to be comprehensive, but instead addresses key considerations. Please refer to the [Employer Guidance for the Mayor's Good Work Standard](#) for comprehensive guidance.

As an essential first step, the London Living Wage accreditation needs to be achieved at the start of this process, where all workers and employees are paid at least the London Living Wage.



PILLAR 1

Fair Pay and Conditions



Fairness, merit and transparency should be at the heart of any good pay and reward strategy.



CIPD

Some of the first things being asked of employers are to:

- Provide the best possible leave entitlements for parents, sick leave and annual leave.
- Write clear employment contracts and written statements for workers and employees.

Considerations for the adult education sector:

1. London Living Wage: Some providers may find accreditation to the London Living Wage an initial barrier. However, being able to pay a higher rate of pay will allow a provider to be an employer of choice in a competitive sector.

- 2. Contracts and conditions:** The adult education sector offers many types of flexible contracts, benefits and flexible working practises. The GWS takes this into consideration and can support providers to build clarity and consistency of quality for all employees across different types of terms and conditions.
- 3. Terminology & evidence criteria:** Some examples provided in the criteria, such as offering Tenancy and Childcare Deposit Loans (criteria A3.3), may be a step outside the sector norm as this is not something commonly provided. However, the GWS officer will accept other financial benefits that would make a difference to employees' living costs based on various needs.

Key resources

- ✍ [Living Wage Foundation](#) - for more information on achieving the London Living Wage.
- ✍ [Acas](#) - for free and impartial advice workplace rights, rules and best practice.
- ✍ [Employers Childcare Offers Toolkit](#) – for support with childcare offers.
- ✍ [Childcare Deposit Loan Scheme Toolkit](#) – to make childcare more accessible for working families.

Case study/example:
[Social Value Procurement Statement provided by GLA](#)

PILLAR 2 Workplace Wellbeing



All employers have a duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of their workers. But the well-being of people at work should go beyond fulfilling the legal requirements.



CIPD

Some of the first things London employers can do as part of the Good Work Standard:

- Put in place channels for regular workforce dialogue, whether through team meetings or staff surveys.
- Foster a positive culture around work-life balance by offering flexible working for everyone and get senior management to model this behaviour.

Considerations for the adult education sector:

1. **Engagement with staff:** There is an opportunity within this pillar to increase engagement with employees, to improve channels of communication and better understand the employee experience. Regarding criteria A6.4, workforce do not need to be formally consulted on shift patterns and times, as long as there is an open dialogue to ensure agreement, availability and fairness.
2. **Flexibility:** The flexible nature of the sector means that there are many options in place to explore flexibility in roles. Ways of working through the pandemic have continued in a hybrid form, with employees working compressed hours, in a job share or exploring other flexible arrangements.

Key resources

- ✎ [Thrive LDN](#) – public coalition of partners working towards equal opportunity for good mental health and wellbeing
- ✎ [Timewise](#) – for support on flexible working
- ✎ [Working Families](#) – for guidance on working parents and carers
- ✎ [Gingerbread](#) – for guidance on single parent families
- ✎ [Investors in People](#) – accreditation process for employee engagement, wellbeing and apprentices

Case study/example:

[Family Leave policy provided by GLA](#)

[Leave policy](#)

PILLAR 3 Skills and Progression



London has one of the most highly skilled workforces of any city in the world, but effectively managing that can be challenging. Leaders and line managers play a crucial role in the development of an organisation's people.



CIPD

Some of the first things employers should do are:

- Develop clear progression pathways and systems for promotion and pay growth throughout the organisation.
- Implement training for managers and leaders on core people management skills including objective setting, coaching and providing feedback.

Considerations for the adult education sector:

- 1. Structured pathways:** Due to the nature of the sector, the commitment to learning is high but often the pathways are not clearly mapped out and appraisals not linked strongly enough to progression. Securing the GWS is an opportunity to lay a solid foundation for formal learning and development in their organisations.
- 2. Line manager training:** Some providers are beginning to offer line manager training, coaching and map employee lifecycle expectations. For some providers where the turnover is low, there can be little room for progression to occur. However, if the structures are in place and progression can happen in theory, the criteria can be met.

Key resources

- [Team London](#) – the Mayor's volunteering programme.
- [Apprenticeships](#) – for guidance on employing apprentices
- [The Careers and Enterprise Company](#) – for developing careers education
- [Education and Training Foundation](#) - Improving the quality of leadership in the Further Education sector

Case study/example:

[In-Work Progression – Organisational Development policy CCG provided by GLA](#)

PILLAR 4

Diversity and Recruitment



London is one of the most diverse cities in the world so its employers should embed a culture of inclusion in how they recruit, train, manage and develop people at all levels in their organisation.



CIPD

Some of the first things being asked of employers are to:

- Put in place a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- Use a fair, open and transparent recruitment process, using multiple channels to advertise jobs and encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

Considerations for the adult education sector:

- 1. Data and reporting:** Low self-declaration rates are common for some characteristics such as disability. Communicating the importance of data collection and how people's data will be used is crucial. The Mayor's Workforce Data Equality Guide provides guidance on data planning and communication. Reporting on retention rates of pregnant women (criteria A10.5) may not be necessary for some smaller providers because of little to no volume. However, data should still be collected in case volume increases.
- 2. Benchmarking:** Benchmarking should be done against a combination of local and sector data. If this doesn't suit certain providers due to the structure of their organisation, benchmarking could instead focus on progress over time, and use comparisons with other comparable organisations for benchmarking.
- 3. Impact on learners:** This pillar has a particular impact on learners. Any zero-tolerance policies on discrimination, bullying and harassment should apply to learners alongside staff. Having diverse teachers that are representative of the community can make learners of the community feel a greater sense of belonging.

Key resources

- ✎ [Stonewall](#) - for support on attracting, retaining and nurturing LGBTQ+ talent
- ✎ [Business in the Community](#) – for support on developing equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- ✎ [Business Disability Forum](#) – for guidance on improving the lives of disabled employees
- ✎ [Our Time](#) – the Mayor's sponsorship programme to tackle gender inequality in the workplace
- ✎ [Workforce Data Equality Guide](#) – for guidance on data planning for your organisation

Case study/example:

[EDI Action Plan](#)

[Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit – BDP](#)

Checklist & top tips

Checklist

Understanding the value of the GWS accreditation

Understand the full range of benefits that be gained from completing GWS accreditation.

Senior leader buy-in

To ensure resource, sign off and speedy implementation of change initiatives.

Allocate resource to complete the process

For example, one team member who is responsible. This can be as a part of their role.

Motivation to improve work for staff

The Good Work Standard accreditation is ultimately to improve the lives of employees in the workplace. This is the true value of the accreditation.


Accurate understanding of cost implications


Doing a light-touch cost-benefit analysis with a realistic understanding of how much budget is required and the benefit to employees, learners and the appeal of the provider to all external stakeholders. This can help with gaining senior leader buy-in, as the cost implications may be lower than expected.


Support from employee representatives


This includes union representatives or feedback from employee forums.

Top tips

 Whatever stage you're at, go through the initial online foundation assessment as a first step, just to understand where your organisation currently stands.

 Understand which level is realistic to meet by having a read through the criteria (found [here](#)) - achievement or excellence. Don't be discouraged if excellence seems too difficult at this stage. Whilst we want to encourage excellence, achievement level is a great step towards this and will go a long way to benefiting your workforce and learners.

 Go through the process one pillar at a time and take it in bitesize chunks.

 Be patient – it varies between each employer how long it takes to go through the accreditation process.

Action plan template

Creating an action plan similar to the one below can help you keep track of your progress against the criteria. Block out time on a regular basis to run through and update your action plan.

Example action plan template:

CRITERIA	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	PROGRESS	EVIDENCE TO PROVIDE
A1.1 The organisation is accredited as a Living Wage employer.	HR employee	n/a	Achieved	Achieved	A letter or email confirming accreditation
A1.2 Apprentices are paid higher than the apprentice minimum wage and receive pay increases to match their growing skills and experience as they progress through their apprenticeship.	HR lead	Review pay conditions terms and conditions	Dec 2023	TBC	Remuneration details of apprentices

Further Resources



Achieving the Good Work Standard is linked to separate accreditation processes including:

- [Women's Night Safety Charter](#)
- [London Living Wage](#)

[Employer Guidance for the Mayor's Good Work Standard](#)

[List of accredited businesses](#)

[CIPD resource area](#)

[GWS Foundation Assessment Form](#)

[Living Wage Foundation](#)

[London Business Hub](#)

Platforms:

[Association of Colleges – London HR Directors Network](#)

Acknowledgements

Waltham Forest College

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Acas

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City Lit

AELP

CIPD

City of London

Education & Training Foundation

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