

Fair Deal

Fair Deal was founded in Castlemilk in 1989 in Glasgow by a group of forward thinking parents of family members of people with learning disabilities, who were campaigning about the conditions at Lennox Castle Hospital on the outskirts of Glasgow in 1985. It now offers a range of activities and support options for people who have learning disabilities in Scotland. Chief Executive Ann Marie Docherty speaks about the organisation and how political changes are impacting the social care industry.



Ann Marie Docherty, CEO

We are rooted in the history and culture of Castlemilk and have been since the organisation was formed. At the core of what we do is a desire to influence, change and break new ground in relation to service design and delivery for people with learning disabilities. Since joining in 1991 as the first employee Fair Deal has steadily grown with an operational budget in 2017 of £2.9 million and 125 employees, and continues to offer services to some of the most disadvantaged people in Glasgow.

Empowerment

Some of the key areas we focus on are improving services for people with learning disabilities and others with social care needs living within the communities we work in. We are strongly committed to helping people live ordinary lives through devising, developing and implementing innovative opportunities for people to use their own personal budgets (self-directed support). We are a fair-work employer and provide job opportunities in our operating area. The recipe that we champion in the service we offer is respect, empowerment, choice, interdependency, partnership and equality.

Examples of our work include the Help Yourself Grow programme. We developed this innovative programme to support young people (18-30) who have learning disabilities. Its aim is to afford young people skills in horticulture and cooking to empower them to work, volunteer or set up their own social enterprise. Other examples include the Social and Leisure programme.

The programme came about after many of the people we work with told us that they were lonely and wanted to enhance their social lives. Accordingly, we decided to organise day-long trips funded by people pooling their budgets. We also set up a week of taster sessions inviting people to come along and try drama, football, bowling, art, music, gardening and cooking. We also do a lot of work providing transport to the people we work with, ensuring that they can access social and leisure activities.

AT A GLANCE FAIR DEAL

- » Headed by Ann Marie Docherty CEO and voluntary board of directors
- » Established in 1989
- » Based in Castlemilk, Glasgow
- » Services include delivery of creative social care support
- » 125 employees
- » www.fair-deal.org



Lord Provost Sadie Docherty, Ann Marie Docherty and Andrew Smith at Launch of HYG

“We are passionate about knowing more about the people we work with and the staff who support them”

Staff and Recruitment

Like many other social enterprises offering support to the most vulnerable people, there are difficulties rewarding staff fairly for the work they do. Paying the Scottish living wage and budgeting for this is particularly precarious for companies like ours. Salaries have fallen and one of the main challenges we face in relation to the staff paid above the SLW is the fact that there will be no difference between the front-line manager and the support staff. This is largely because we are not being awarded an uplift across our staffing budget.

If the Scottish living wage does rise to £8.70 from £8.45, as expected, Fair Deal will need an additional £45,000. What is more, to reach the £9 per hour living wage by 2020, a proposal set out by George Osborne, we will need an additional £90,000.

Staff retention is also a significant obstacle across both the city and the country. In Scotland, almost half of the providers of social care services, including care homes and support in the community, face difficulty recruiting the right staff.

Indeed, more than a third of providers (35 per cent) across the sector reported vacancies in 2016 alone.

It is well known that problems filling vacancies exist in care at home services (64 per cent), care homes for older people (57 per cent), care homes for adults (49 per cent) and housing support services (48 per cent) across Scotland. Recruitment in this area is very challenging and there are some major difficulties that Scotland's almost 2,600 social care employers are experiencing. Not only that, nurse agencies (61 per cent) and residential special schools (61 per cent) had a high proportion of services reporting problems filling vacancies.

Notwithstanding the fact that these percentages were based on a small number of services, in Scotland applicants with experience (58 per cent), too few applicants in general (58 per cent) and too few qualified applicants (50 per cent) are still the most common reported themes within most service types for why vacancies were hard to fill. Because of people living longer, and early learning and childcare expansion, Scotland undoubtedly needs more people employed in social care. Brexit is another factor adding to concerns over recruitment.

Despite the tide of obstacles approaching us, Fair Deal is still committed to designing and delivering a flexible and very cost-effective support arrangement for people in Glasgow. Coupled with this is our commitment to raise the profile of social care within Glasgow and Scotland more broadly to ensure that staff are remunerated and recognised for the excellent work that they do.

We are also passionate about knowing more about the people we work with and the staff who support them. Not only that, but we are actively committed to being one of the leaders of social care in Scotland.



Horticulture Trainee with Fair Deal Co-Trainer