

16 March 2021

Church investors call on companies to sign up to the Living Hours initiative

[The Church Investors Group](#), representing 60 members and more than £21bn in assets, will, from today, contact a select group of UK companies in which it invests to encourage them to provide guaranteed minimum working hours each week for their employees in accordance with the Living Hours initiative.

Initially targeting the finance and insurance sectors, the Church Investors Group plans to extend its engagement later this year to also include the construction and utilities sectors.

The [Living Hours](#) initiative calls on companies to become accredited Living Hours employers by agreeing to provide stable minimum working hours, in addition to paying their staff the real Living Wage. The Church Investors Group's advocacy for the Living Hours initiative follows on from [its commitment to the Living Wage initiative](#) which commenced in 2012.

Since 2011, the Living Wage movement has increased the pay of more than 250,000 people and put more than £1.3 billion extra into the pockets of low-paid workers in the UK. But millions of low-paid workers are also struggling to get the security and stability of hours they need to have real control over their lives. More than five million people were in low-paid, insecure work on the eve of the Covid-19 pandemic, with this number liable to rise substantially, according to research by the Living Wage Foundation and New Economics Foundation. Of the millions in insecure work, 1.3 million were key workers and two million were parents.¹ It is for this reason the Living Wage Foundation developed a new standard that offers 'Living Hours' alongside a real Living Wage.

The Revd Canon Edward Carter, Chair of the Church Investors Group, commenting on the initiative said:

"Church investors are deeply committed to supporting workers' access to decent pay and hours. Insecure hours affect too many low-paid workers and without the security minimum hours bring, workers and their families are denied the basic preconditions needed for them to flourish. The Covid-19 pandemic has made this issue even more pressing as a lack of sufficient working hours is causing 'in work' poverty while the insecurity of working hours has a real effect on families' wellbeing, causing significant stress and leading to mental health issues."

The Living Hours standard calls on employers to provide the right to:

- Decent notice period for shifts: of at least 4 weeks' notice with guaranteed payment if shifts are cancelled within this notice period.

¹ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/news/news-over-5-million-workers-insecure-low-paid-work>

- Accurate contracts: the right to a contract that reflects actual hours worked.
- Guaranteed minimum hours: of 16 hours of work a week (unless the worker requests otherwise).

Josephine Carlsson, responsible for leading the Church Investors Group secretariat added: *“It is not just the workers who will benefit from companies signing up to the Living Hours initiative. A number of organisations have suggested a correlation between insecure work and productivity. The British economy has been failing to deliver higher wages and more sustainable growth and the increase in insecurity may be partly responsible. Workers with little security are likely to be less committed, so the the Church Investors Group believes the Living Hours initiative can also deliver positive benefits for companies that adopt it, as well as society at large.”*

Laura Gardiner, Director of the Living Wage Foundation, said:

“Our research shows that job insecurity is concentrated in lower-paid industries, and disproportionately affects groups already facing labour market disadvantages, including women, young people, black and minority ethnic workers; as well as those in poorer regions of the UK. Given that the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the prevalence of insecure working conditions in some parts of the economy, it is more important than ever for companies to take the lead in their fields and commit to supporting their workers with decent wages, guaranteed contracts and secure work, to help families and the economy sustainably move out of this crisis.”

The Church Investors Group has been supportive of the Living Wage initiative, a precursor to the Living Hours initiative, since 2012. Since that time, it has engaged with financial services and pharmaceutical sector companies it invests in resulting in these companies either committing to become or becoming accredited Living Wage employers.

Ends.

About the Church Investors Group

The Church Investors Group exists to promote ethical investment for the public benefit. More information on <https://churchinvestorsgroup.org.uk/>

The Church Investors Group is a company registered in England and Wales with Company No. 11024016 and a charity registered in England and Wales with number 1179162. The Church Investors Group Secretariat is provided by CCLA.

About the Living Wage Foundation

The Living Wage Foundation recognises and celebrates the leadership shown by the 6,000 Living Wage Employers across the UK who voluntarily commit to ensure their staff earn a real Living Wage that meets the basic cost of living (currently £9.50 per hour and £10.85 in London). The Living Wage foundation is an initiative of Citizens UK.

More information on the [Living Hours initiative can be found here](#)