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Terry Brown,
Coordinator,
Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation
Commission,
Cathedral House, Westminster Bridge Road,
London,
SE1 7HY

Dear Terry,

The Living Wage

Thank you for your letter and the attached separate sheets of signatures in respect of the Living Wage for employees of the Diocese, which you passed on to me recently.

The first thing I want to mention is that the Diocese does support the principle of the Living Wage for all diocesan and parish employees but in some instances it still remains a work in progress. Certainly all the employees of the Diocese Curia receive at least the Living Wage and we have encouraged parishes which employ lay people to do likewise. In regard to contractors who work for the Diocese or the parishes, where we have direct contact with such providers, we ask them to make sure that they are paying the Living Wage which, as a consequence, means that any increased costs fall to us (the employer/recipient of the service provided), as they are then include in the fees which we are charged for the services provided.

Having consulted the Diocesan Finance Office, as far as we know no one who is employed by the Diocese or the Parishes have Zero Hour Contracts.

We have to take into account too, that in the poorer parishes, the lack of parish funds reduces their ability to pay more than the living wage. So I do think it does need to be very clearly understood by everybody that whilst the principle is clear it is quite a complex matter to put into practise. For example, some people have refused to accept the increase in their wages which would result from paying them the Living Wage because they are already on benefits, and any increase in pay could result in their benefits being reduced. Consequently, they could end up with an even lower income.

Obviously all this needs to be kept under review by the Diocesan Finance Committee, so it will remain "a work in progress" and may need to be adjusted in the light of future changes which may be made by the Government of the Day.

With every kind wish,