04 July 2019

Dear Mr Field,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee’s inquiry into in-work progression. The John Lewis Partnership, of which Waitrose is a trading brand, has career progression at the heart of its constitution so I welcome the opportunity to address your questions.

1. **If you have a policy in place to encourage internal staff progression and promotion, and if you could provide details of this policy;**

   Our constitution states that the Partnership encourages Partners (employees) to fulfil their potential and increase their career satisfaction by:
   - promoting Partners of suitability;
   - encouraging changes of responsibility;
   - providing knowledge and access to training to help them carry out their responsibilities better;
   - encouraging their personal development and interests in fields not directly related to their work.

   Our Learning and Development focus is on providing access to development and this underpins progression for all our Partners, regardless of their level. This involves us having regular performance conversations with Partners to understand their current performance, as well as their future career aspirations.
We provide managers with various tools and information to support Partners in developing their careers. This includes structured training plans, talent planning and skills frameworks. We also offer a number of routes to help Partners explore opportunities across our business including secondments, job shadowing and short term transfers.

Our pay policy explicitly supports and rewards progression as we pay based on performance and contribution. This means that within each role, every Partner has the opportunity to progress their pay as their performance improves, and this encourages the acquisition of skills to enable each person to do their job better.

2. For what roles in your organisation you allow and/or encourage flexible working?

A flexible approach to working is also written into the John Lewis Partnership's constitution. It states that all Partners, especially managers, have a responsibility to be imaginative and energetic in promoting each other’s wellbeing and to recognise the importance of a healthy balance between the needs of the business and the personal life of Partners.

When we advertise vacancies we offer different ways to work flexibly and ask applicants to talk about what flexibility means to them at their interview. We also have a page dedicated to flexible working on our external careers site https://www.jlpjobs.com/flexible-working/

We go above the statutory requirements and allow Partners to request flexible working arrangements from day one of their employment (rather than the 26 week statutory requirement).

3. Any special programmes you have in place to encourage the internal progression of your staff, particularly the lowest paid.

The Partnership recently invested in an ‘Empowered Leadership’ programme. It’s focus is to encourage managers to give opportunities for everyone in their team to thrive. This is backed by training materials, and ideas on how to put greater responsibility in Partners’ hands are shared via internal company social media.

We encourage Partners to consider their potential under the following areas:

● how can they do better in the role they’re in?
● how they can do more in their role?
● what can they do differently in an alternative role?
We also have internal support services for Partners including coaching, mentoring and an interview bank to help people explore career aspirations and prepare for interviews.

The John Lewis Partnership offers apprenticeships to Partners to help them develop new skills, progress in their jobs or move into a new job internally. We want to offer over 30 different types of apprenticeships - from LGV drivers, to retail managers, sewing machinists to accountants. We've currently got over 1,000 Partners learning on the job in apprenticeships. We think it's really important that apprenticeships are open to everyone, regardless of their age or life stage. They're a powerful tool for social mobility.

You may have seen our recent announcement about our investment in our service counters to help us differentiate our business. We have launched a specific pilot to raise the expertise of all Partners working on their service counters to an even higher level. Initially training 10 fishmongers and 10 butchers, the longer term ambition is to train a further 200 existing Partners over the next two years.

I hope this has helped to explain our strong support for progression but please don’t hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Collins