

# MRS. BUCKÉT



**Mrs. Buckét was established by founder, Rachael Flanagan, 18 years ago as a domestic cleaning business. However, since 2019, the business solely focuses on commercial cleaning with big name clients including GE Wales Aviation, Sony UK Technology Centre and the Wales Millennium Centre.**

The company has grown from the original 20 employees to 350 employees today and spans from West Wales to Bristol. Mrs. Buckét experienced substantial growth as a result of the pandemic, where the business was key in enabling many other sectors to be able to return to the workplace.

Kate Ablett became Head of People at Mrs. Buckét in January 2022, an appointment the company felt had become an essential part of the leadership team. Kate explains: *"Rachael, as CEO, understood that she needed to build an executive team to enable us to manage the business effectively, this also included a focus of Mrs. Buckét becoming a Fair Work employer."*

## FAIR REWARD

Since 2022, all employees of Mrs. Buckét have been paid the Real Living Wage. The journey to this was not something that happened overnight.

In fact, it was a considerable piece of work over several years to make sure all employee contracts were aligned.

However, this was an important step to ensure the treatment of staff was aligned with the company values and mission.



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### EMPLOYEE VOICE & COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION

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Mrs. Buckét uses biannual surveys to understand their employees' perspectives, facilitating the direct employee voice. In their most recent survey, the focus was on reward and, in particular, what people were looking for from the company. This was a key piece of work as part of increasing the employee offering, which included employee benefits.

However, with a diverse workforce, it is essential to understand what is important to every employee. Kate explains: *"Rather than saying, 'Oh, we are going to bring in this benefit,' we actually wanted to know what people's priorities were and then look to action something that reflected all the generations and diversity within our teams."*

The direct employee voice is also engaged with through active listening groups. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) invites groups of employees to the Mrs. Buckét head office to discuss the things that matter most to them.

Kate explains: *"We think it is very important to give a direct voice to employees from all levels within the company, and the SLT and the employees involved find the exercise incredibly productive."*

### OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCESS, GROWTH AND PROGRESSION

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As a company, Mrs. Buckét want to ensure that they are offering their employees consistent opportunities to develop themselves professionally. From NVQ qualifications to enrolling employees on courses at the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), solidifying the training offering over the past year has been a focus of Kate's: *"I have been working to ensure that we have development opportunities on offer for all levels within the business. We have found that promoting employee in-job professional growth means they have more job satisfaction and are more likely to stay at the company."*

Mrs. Buckét is also proud to have an in-house Cleaning Academy, this is the technical training that is given to cleaning technicians when they join. An additional level of training has recently been added to the programme called the Passport to Success. The training is designed to do more than teach technical skills, it also focuses on people skills such as leadership and management. Additionally, they are looking to utilise the programme to empower employees, build on their resilience and encourage professional development.

## CASE STUDY

### SECURITY AND FLEXIBILITY

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Mrs. Buckét offers predominantly permanent contracts to employees with a variety of options in relation to hours.

The availability of a range of contract hours is an appealing factor to those looking for flexible work, something that Mrs. Buckét is keen to champion. In fact, this flexible approach is not a new initiative to Mrs. Buckét. Kate explains: *"We have naturally been doing these things for a number of years because that has enabled us to serve the customer and effectively perform our contracts, whilst also giving employees the added bonus of job flexibility."*

Whilst zero-hour contracts have become a contentious issue in recent years, Kate explains that they do have some staff who request them: *"Generally, we do not hire for zero-hour contracts. However, there are people within our business that are on zero hours, because they have requested it as they might not be based in the area permanently or want seasonal work only."*

### LEGAL RIGHTS RESPECTED

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Mrs. Buckét are incredibly conscious of their environmental impact. Whether it is ensuring their supply chain is ethically resourceful or their new chemical provider is not toxic, the team are always striving to do more. To accomplish this goal, Mrs. Buckét works with BioHygiene, a leading brand for biological cleaning solutions. Their cleaning products benefit from not being harmful to the environment or human health as there are no toxic ingredients, they are carbon neutral and help stop plastic pollution.

With so many employees, the company is proud to say that they abide by all its statutory obligations to its employees. Kate explains: *"We are doing everything possible from a compliance perspective. There are robust processes in place from an onboarding and people perspective to ensure that we are at the forefront of our industry in being seen as a Fair Work employer."*



### SAFE, HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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Mrs. Buckét are a proud Chwarae Teg FairPlay employer, meaning they are always looking for ways to be as inclusive as possible. They are a Disability Confident employer and are actively working to achieve the next level of this accreditation.

Teams are trained on inclusive recruitment practices and the company's recruitment policy has been reviewed to reflect this. Recruitment is done digitally through telephone and video screenings, however, they can be carried out in person when needed. To ensure inclusive recruitment, jobs are advertised across disability friendly platforms as well as on the Mrs. Buckét website and recruitment sites such as Indeed.

Extracting diversity information from the workforce has been difficult, but Kate made it a priority when she started at Mrs. Buckét: *"We are in the process of setting up an analytics system that will give us data around the gender people identify with, disabilities, race, religion, where people live and how far they travel. This is going to be incredibly insightful for us as a company, especially in allowing us to ensure we are providing the most inclusive work environment as possible for our employees."*

In 2022, the company set about on a project to understand its employee profiles. The purpose was to discover why employees are choosing to work at Mrs. Buckét. Kate elaborates: *"At the moment, we employ more females than males which is not too surprising based on where we have come from and the traditional image of a cleaner. However, what we are now seeing when taking on large industrial contracts is that we are employing more men full-time."*

What they also found from this project was that the age profile of their workforce is predominantly over 45. As a result of this, the company has been conducting research, through an age inclusive business review in conjunction with [Business in the Community](#) (BITC), to try and understand how they can continue to attract a wide age range of people through ensuring that they are an inclusive workplace for all generations.

Embracing the ethnic diversity of the Mrs. Buckét employees has also been essential in ensuring everyone benefits from an inclusive working environment. The primary language for many of the workforce is Polish, therefore all relevant correspondence is communicated in both English and Polish to ensure the whole workforce feels part of the team and that no essential information is inaccessible to employees due to a language barrier.



### THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FAIR WORK EMPLOYER

At Mrs. Buckét, the customer retention rate is 93%, an incredible achievement for the company. Kate adds: *"We believe that this has a tangible correlation between having a happy team. From a talent perspective, we know that we are competing in a competitive market. So how we are portrayed internally and externally through the Fair Work initiatives, such as encouraging staff development, growing careers, and paying a fair wage is incredibly important to us in recruiting and retaining staff."*

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Having doubled their turnover in the last couple of years and being on track to reach over £10m over the next three years, Mrs. Buckét know that their people are their greatest asset.

Kate explains: *"We want to treat people fairly, we want them to have meaningful work for meaningful reward, which is ultimately the right thing to do."*

The desire to continue building the employee offer is also a future focus for the company. They are looking at ways to provide a more enjoyable work experience and are keen to move away from the traditional stereotypes of 'mop and bucket cleaning'. Mrs. Buckét also aims to exemplify the use of innovative technologies, which benefits a role such as the cleaning technician by developing enhanced skills.

### CONTACT

Contact us to speak 1-2-1 with a specialist adviser about how your business can realise its Fair Work ambitions and take steps towards becoming a more equal, diverse, and inclusive employer.

Call Business Wales on **03000 6 03000** or visit **[Fair Work | Business Wales Skills Gateway \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales)** for further information, free advice and support.

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