

MEDINA



Medina is an Ottolenghi inspired restaurant based in the heart of Aberystwyth town centre, producing fresh, organic food every day. The restaurant's namesake and owner, Medina Rees, established the restaurant back in 2015 and since then has expanded into a larger premises with an additional Medina in-house bakery and organic food shop, providing a welcoming environment with the ethos around fresh food.

There is no other restaurant quite like Medina in Aberystwyth, this along with its fresh, nutritious meals and welcoming staff means the business is truly established within the local community. Medina is not only beloved by the customers, but it is also revered amongst staff too for its adoption of Fair Work practices. Although Medina has only recently started her journey as a Fair Work employer, like many businesses, she already has many of the pillars in place to ensure her staff are supported and nurtured.

FAIR REWARD

As a hospitality business, the restaurant relies heavily on its staff, therefore, Medina has always ensured to pay a fair wage to all employees. Medina explains: *"It's all about your experience and your ability for the job, not your gender or age. Ultimately, we're a business that can't function without a good team, it's all about the people, I can't do it all my own, so looking after the people around you is very important."*

The business currently employs 40 members of staff and is working towards providing them with Real Living Wage salaries. It can be a delicate, and

difficult, balance in hospitality between competitive markets, rising overheads and remaining sustainable, but one way the business keeps staff engaged and aids in employee development is by keeping them updated with the rising costs associated with the business. Medina elaborates: *"For example, we had a box of broccoli come in one day at £14 and the next at £22. It's important to engage staff with the business challenges for clarity as well as their personal development, as these are lessons they can carry with them, potentially into their own business one day!"*

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CASE STUDY

EMPLOYEE VOICE & COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION

Quarterly meetings take place with the entire team at Medina and this is usually when changes are discussed, such as introducing a new seasonal menu and to gather information of each section with its highs and lows.

Although there is often a lot to cover in these meetings, Medina always ensures staff can be rewarded with some fun too, she explains: *"We tend to close for an afternoon or open later to carry out training or will taste the menu together, which gives everyone the opportunity have their input in an informal environment. It provides the opportunity for us all to learn and chat over some nice food and drink."*

Staff also utilise WhatsApp, both for the wider and smaller teams, so there are always open channels of communication

between everyone, which is helpful in the fast-moving world of hospitality. For example, if someone is unwell then another team member will pick up an extra shift quickly, so there is lots of time for the employee voice to be heard, both directly and indirectly.



OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCESS, GROWTH AND PROGRESSION

Every employee at the restaurant is trained in Level 2 food hygiene, allergens and labelling as standard when they enter the business. All employees also have access to additional training if it helps them progress in their current role or supports their move into another area of the business, and this is always fully paid for by the company. With the expansion of the Medina restaurant which now houses a bakery and food shop, staff can move to new roles. Medina elaborates: *"We have many staff that have changed roles within the company, for example, Cari who has been with us since 2016 has progressed many times over the years and has recently made the move from front of house into the bakery."*

"With this flexibility, staff are able to develop and progress into areas of the business that they find interesting, and this also helps with long-term staff retention as with additional training, team members soon develop into senior team leaders."

New team members are also paired with a mentor upon their arrival into the business, ensuring they always have someone on hand to help them settle and grow into their new role.

CASE STUDY

SECURITY AND FLEXIBILITY

All staff are hired on permanent contracts at Medina. Contrary to some hospitality businesses, Medina will not offer split shifts, Medina explains: *"I don't do split shifts, it's a historical thing in our industry, where you use people at the busy times of the day and then get rid of them during the quiet periods, but that is not our style here."*

As a hospitality business, hybrid working is not always achievable for all members of staff, but at Medina, flexibility and security are guaranteed with minimum hours, a well-communicated rota that is given to staff well in advance or as early as possible allowing for adjustments if needed.

For ease and accessibility, Medina uses the Bright HR app to digitalise and

modernise staff flexibility processes. In this app, staff can access annual leave calendars, request time off and read through the staff handbook. As well as the handbook, all staff go through an induction process which includes an introduction to the team and roles, their own responsibilities, health and safety, food hygiene, sickness reporting, and company policies.

Staff security and flexibility is something that Medina takes very seriously: *"It's quite a lot of power over somebody's life when you schedule their shifts each and every week. Therefore, it's important to think about their lives. Giving nice shift patterns is one of the things we can offer our employees in this industry."*

SAFE, HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The restaurant ensures that it recruits a variety of ages, ethnicities, and neurodiverse individuals into the team. With a healthy balance between genders, this has contributed to the creativity and inclusivity within the business' culture. Medina comments: *"Hospitality draws in all sorts of people and having a diverse workforce brings a lot of value to the business as you have access to different perspectives, particularly with development and employee voice."*

As well as ensuring inclusivity at every level of the business, Medina also has processes in place to ensure that any issues are dealt with at the lowest possible level to prevent escalation and this has resulted in a low turnover of staff with many working at the restaurant for several years. There is also a designated health and safety contact as well as clear management and responsibility of HR functions within the business.

CASE STUDY

LEGAL RIGHTS RESPECTED

The restaurant is incredibly mindful of ethical supply chains and uses local, organic produce wherever possible, this includes sourcing local vegetables, flour and organic milk from Talybont which is delivered in reusable glass bottles.

The business also recycles all relevant waste and materials by splitting waste into food, glass, paper/card and plastics, and all packaging from Medina's takeaway service is biodegradable too.

Medina has always been driven to abide by all statutory rights and is actively looking into how the business can support staff at all levels, this combined with guaranteed minimum hours and no split shifts helps employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and ultimately being happy, productive and successful at work.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FAIR WORK EMPLOYER

Adopting Fair Work practices has produced significant benefits for Medina, her staff and her restaurant. By not discriminating against age or gender regarding pay, Medina's staff retention levels are high and along with the access to training and progression opportunities, staff are able to grow with the business and find a solid footing as valued and appreciated members of the team.

The support and guidance each employee receive also aids with retention rates and has created an inclusive and diverse team who reflect the local community, making Medina a very welcoming establishment where everyone's voices are heard.



CASE STUDY

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As a result of these benefits, Medina has been able to expand with an additional outlet and grow her business.

Medina explained: *"We have taken over Aberystwyth Prom Diner and although it will be the same business, we've got lots to learn as it's got a whole different set of challenges. But we will still be working with the same Fair Work principles, albeit with a different offering!"*

As she looks to the future, Medina hopes that her recent expansion will allow her to navigate the balance between offering her staff a Real Living Wage and being able to afford the rising costs associated with running multiple businesses.

As she continues her Fair Work journey, Medina also aims to document the principles more thoroughly with the help of a Business Wales advisor.

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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