

## **Motion from Members' Council – Inequality**

Our Co-op was founded on principles of equality and equity and our vision 'Co-operating for a Fairer World' continues this focus today. We welcome the launch of Co-op's social mobility campaign, Commitments to Racial Equality & Inclusion and Honest Value food range, as well as its decision to pay colleagues the Real Living Wage.

Following the government's 'levelling up' white paper, we believe our Co-op and movement should be a leading voice on tackling inequality and champion how businesses can make a difference in communities. Specifically, we believe our Co-op should:

- Advocate for approaches that put the needs of individuals, communities and businesses at the heart of spreading opportunity across the UK, identifying and working with like-minded organisations and partners.
- Build on initiatives, such as our community fridge network and our Honest Value range, to enable greater access to affordable quality food.
- Create opportunities to level up life chances for young people through education and employment, building on our longstanding work with Co-op academies and in the areas of apprenticeships, green skills, and youth voice.
- Publish progress against our Commitments to Racial Equality & Inclusion and our ethnicity pay gap, introduce further reporting measures and encourage other organisations to do the same.

## **Supporting Information**

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown in greater clarity than ever before the inequalities in our country which have always been there if not well known. These inequalities will also mean that the cost of living issues will affect those least able to manage the most.

We welcome the Government's desire to tackle such inequalities and the broader political consensus that action must be taken. We have made it clear that we believe businesses have a critical role to play in what must be a national endeavour to tackle inequality so that opportunity is as evenly spread as talent self-evidently is.

Our social mobility campaign, approved by our Members' Council in May 2021, aims to tackle these inequalities by supporting aspiration and driving social mobility. We have established our Co-op as a leading voice on the issue both within Government and the wider business sector. We are proud to be part of the This Is Purpose coalition and are working with other businesses, the Social Mobility Commission and other like-minded organisations to champion action to drive social mobility across the UK.

In our update on the action we have taken since our AGM in 2021, we have set out a range of actions we have taken and many of those initiatives will continue in 2022 and beyond such as our work with Hubbub on Community Fridges; the continued investment we are making in our Honest Value range; our Apprentice Levy Match scheme and with young people through the Peer Action Collective which is funded through our £5.1m partnership with the Youth Endowment Fund and the I Will

Foundation alongside our continuing support of the Cooperative Academies Trust (CAT).