



**Interaction**  
international development  
**toolkit**

## Fair trade & ethical procurement

### *What are UK local authorities doing?*

#### **Fair trade in the workplace**

The use of Fairtrade goods, such as tea and coffee, by staff and at council meetings is a simple, positive action that any local authority can take. These days Fairtrade hot drinks are readily available from most national suppliers, often at no extra cost.

#### **Fair trade in procurement**

By incorporating fair trade into procurement processes, councils can contribute to key corporate objectives such as the creation of sustainable communities and economies. In this way, fair trade is an important component in sustainable procurement.

#### **Fair trade in the community**

Becoming a Fairtrade Town provides an opportunity for the local authority to work in genuine partnership with a range of community organisations and representatives, opening new channels of communication and creating real community engagement.

### **What are UK councils doing?**

#### ***Newcastle City Council working across the region***

Newcastle has been a Fairtrade City since 2003 and since then it has increased its support both regionally and nationally, including strong representation on the North East Regional Fairtrade forum and the Hadrian's Wall Fairtrade Campaign.

[www.fairtradehadrianswall.co.uk](http://www.fairtradehadrianswall.co.uk)

As well as providing Fairtrade tea and coffee at all meetings, the Newcastle City Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy has included a section on fair trade. In it they commit themselves to increase awareness of fair trade and find ways for procuring Fairtrade products.

Newcastle has made a unique commitment by funding a dedicated fair trade Officer for a number of years. This has enabled fair trade to gain continual support through the engagement of new audiences. Particular work has taken place with SMEs working with the Newcastle Business Forum and the North East Chamber of Commerce. Newcastle steered the production of the recent North East Fairtrade Purchasing Guide which recommends national and local suppliers of wholesale fair trade products.

### ***Cumbria County Council: embedding fair trade into procurement processes***

Cumbria County Council has made progress in embedding fair trade into their procurement processes. With the County attaining Fairtrade status in 2006, officers have worked closely with the Cumbria Fair Trade Network to ensure their policy commitments have been translated into tangible actions.

These include the requirement that suppliers contribute to corporate objectives, including around 'sustainable communities and economies'. Fair trade is seen as an important component in their sustainable procurement strategy, which not only involves requesting Fairtrade components when procuring or using external venues, but also working with the Cumbria Fair Trade Network to inform stakeholders about switching to fair trade products including schools, suppliers, commercial partners, third sector organisations and other public bodies in the county.

Key to this progress has been commitment by elected members, a strong partnership with campaigners, and fair trade being seen as part of the wider sustainable agenda.

### ***Leicester Masaya Link Group: bringing a fair trade link to life***

The Leicester Masaya Link Group co-ordinates the link between Leicester and Masaya in Nicaragua and is also a Development Education Centre. They are a member of Leicester Advocating Fair Trade and have found that the link with Nicaragua provides an invaluable resource and real life stories of Nicaraguan coffee growers, which sets the trading processes in context of an active link and makes the issues more pertinent.

The Leicester Masaya Link Group also works in partnership with the University of Leicester Botanic Garden, and has developed a resource for schools called Food for Thought, which looks at how plants go from the farmer's field to the market place. This interactive project helps students to understand some of the factors that impact upon producers in developing countries like Nicaragua and as a result they are more likely to see the importance of fair trade as one mechanism for improving the lives of the growers. This project has also encouraged schools to become Fairtrade Schools.

### **Resources & further support**

**Fairtrade Foundation** provides a range of resources including Fairtrade guides specifically for local authorities, Fairtrade towns action guides, case studies, procurement guidelines and much more. [www.fairtrade.org.uk/towns](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/towns)

**Ethical Trading Initiative** provide a range of support for companies, trade unions, NGOs and government organisations on ethical procurement including training courses and guidance documents. [www.ethicaltrade.org](http://www.ethicaltrade.org)

**LG Alliance Interaction toolkit** designed specifically for local authorities to help improve their international development activities, contains a range of case studies, self-assessment questions, guidelines, tips and resources. [toolkit.lg-alliance.org](http://toolkit.lg-alliance.org)

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