**Heathcoat Fabrics responds to rising cost of living
with early pay award**

**Pay rise of almost 10% for lower paid staff
– and all staff see wage rise of 6.2%**

One of Mid Devon’s largest employers has bucked labour market trends by announcing a minimum 6.2% pay rise across its business.

Heathcoat Fabrics in Tiverton has told staff that those on lower paid grades and operational staff would see their guaranteed minimum wage increase by almost 10%. This means 460 staff will see wages increase beyond the rate of inflation.

A YouGov poll earlier this year suggested British employers are expecting to award average pay rises of 3% in 2022 – way below the current level of inflation. However managing director of Heathcoat Fabrics, Cameron Harvie, has recognised the strain that the currently escalating cost of living is putting on the lives of staff and their families.

He said: “We annually review pay levels and negotiate a cost of living pay award with Unite and staff representatives. This is usually applied from 1 June but due to current economic conditions we’ve brought this forward to 1 April, two full months early so that this will be now be reflected in our people’s pay packets. We’ve worked with Unite the Union at all stages to ensure their agreement for members.

“While we’ve agreed an overall percentage increase of 6.2% we appreciate this proportionally benefits higher paid staff. So we’ve weighted to lower paid grades who will receive an increase of 88p per hour with a new guaranteed minimum wage of £10 per hour before shift and other premiums. This compares to the National Living Wage of £9.50 per hour.”

Jason Chamberlain, Heathcoat employee and Unite Senior Steward, said: “This award will certainly help our members in this difficult time with the cost of living crisis. We are pleased the company has recognised the work the members have done towards the continued profitability of the firm by insulating them from the worst of this crisis.”

Chris Kiely, Finance Director at Heathcoat Fabrics, added: “The hard work and commitment of our employees is the cornerstone of our successful business at Heathcoat. We are pleased to be able to recognise this through a significant pay increase, which results in pay levels being above the Real Living Wage for all our employees.”

Heathcoat Fabrics, which received the Queen’s Award for Enterprise earlier this month, has impressive plans for expansion of its manufacturing capacity to meet growing international demand for its solution focused technical textiles. The employer anticipates recruitment of more than 40 positions in the coming months.

Visit www.heathcoat.co.uk/careers

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