

# Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Transparency Statement

## Introduction

Modern slavery is a global problem and international crime, affecting millions of people worldwide, including many victims within the UK. Men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds can fall victim to human trafficking. Victims can be controlled by force, threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and deception.

Mid Sussex District Council provides a wide range of services alongside partners, to the local community. We are making a clear commitment to tackle modern slavery by signing up to this Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Transparency Statement.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places specific responsibilities on organisations to ensure slavery and human trafficking does not exist within its supply chain or in any part of its own business. The term 'modern slavery' captures a whole range of exploitation which includes:

- **Sexual exploitation:** this includes sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children, in order to produce child abuse images or videos;
- **Domestic servitude:** this involves victims being forced to work in usually private households, performing domestic chores and childcare duties;
- **Forced labour:** this can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, laying driveways, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, maritime and beauty (nail bars);
- **Bonded labour:** this includes descendant slavery when people give themselves into slavery as security against a loan or when they inherit a debt from a relative;
- **Criminal exploitation:** this can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shoplifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker;
- **Human Trafficking:** this requires that a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. The offence can be committed even where the victim consents to the travel. This reflects the fact that a victim may be deceived by the promise of a better life or job or may be a child who is influenced to travel by an adult;
- **Other forms of exploitation:** including organ removal, forced begging, forced benefit fraud, forced marriage and illegal adoption.

## Our responsibilities

The abuse of human rights in our supply chains through modern slavery is gaining greater awareness. The Council has a responsibility to prevent slavery and human trafficking within

our supply chain and in any part of the organisation. It expects the same high standards from all of our contractors, suppliers and other business partners.

This Statement sets out the Council's actions and commitments to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our activities and to put in place steps to combat and prevent acts of slavery and human trafficking within our business and supply chains. It applies to everyone working for the Council or on our behalf in any capacity. The Council's Senior Management Team has overall responsibility for ensuring this Statement complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under the Council's control comply with it.

The Council has signed up to the Modern Slavery Pledge and will adhere to its principles.

The Council's commitment to addressing the issue of modern slavery in its business and supply chains will be communicated to all suppliers, contractors and business partners at the outset of its business relationship with them and reinforced as appropriate thereafter.

## **Our Policies**

The Council has a range of policies which reflect the commitment to acting ethically and with integrity to prevent modern slavery in its operations. The following policies are considered to be key in meeting the Council's requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- Procurement Code
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistle-blowing policy
- Pay Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct

## **Duty to Notify**

Specified public authorities have a duty to notify the Secretary of State of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking. The 'duty to notify' provision is set out in Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and applies to local authorities in England and Wales which includes Mid Sussex District Council.

Guidance on the duty to notify is provided at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-to-notify-the-home-office-of-potential-victims-of-modern-slavery>

This requirement in respect of potential victims of Modern Slavery is set out in the council's safeguarding operating procedures and guidance where, as an employee of the local authority, members of staff have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns in relation to a child or adult at risk.

The advice to residents and communities if they are affected by slavery, or suspect someone is at risk, is to:

- Call 999 if it is an emergency
- Call 101 for non-emergencies
- Call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111
- Call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700
- Report online via the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#)

There are factsheets and a poster that explain what you need to do if you think someone has been a victim of Modern Slavery:

Modern Slavery - Duty to Notify Poster: [6.2286 HO LL Duty of notice poster 2 v2.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Modern Slavery – Duty to Notify Factsheet: [6.2286 HO LL factsheet duty to notify copy V3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Due Diligence and Supply Chain Management**

The Shared Procurement Service, who deal with most contracts worth £50,000 or more, take the lead on tackling modern slavery within our supply chains, and work in conjunction with stakeholder departments who may face the greatest risk of procuring goods, services or works associated with this crime. Staff are trained to ensure they are aware of the risks and issues and how to mitigate these in the procurement process.

The Council expects all suppliers regardless of size to actively work towards mitigating the risk of modern slavery within their organisations and its supply chain and may request evidence to demonstrate steps taken. In addition, the Shared Procurement Service has processes and due diligence mechanisms in place to ensure that modern slavery is tackled by its supply chain.

The Council aims to monitor the commitments which our suppliers have pledged, including the identification and management of risks in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking. This is done by:

- Increasing openness, transparency and efficiency in the management of supply chains
- Improving ability to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in supply chains
- Improving communications with suppliers
- Enhancing relationships with suppliers

## **What the council has done**

Since we published our first statement in 2022, the council has undertaken the following to meet its commitment to tackle modern slavery:

- Worked with Police, Home Office and other relevant partners where there has been concerns around modern slavery;
- Incorporated modern slavery in our safeguarding training to all frontline staff;
- Arranged specific modern slavery training for staff covering what constitutes modern slavery, how to spot the signs and action to be taken to report concerns or suspicions;
- Arranged specific training for staff around county lines and exploitation;
- Promoted and made available on our intranet the Home Office e-learning modules on First Responder Training and Child Victims of Modern Slavery Training;
- Ensured that all staff in the shared procurement service have had training in modern slavery incorporating recognising the signs in spotting it and how to incorporate it in procurements;
- Provided training and guidance on contract management incorporating potential modern slavery risks to staff responsible for managing contracts;

- Ensured that all new suppliers complete a self-declaration document to say that they have met the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act;
- Assessed recruitment policies and procedures for above threshold contracts or higher risk contracts as appropriate;

## Our commitment for the next year

- We will disclose identified instances of modern slavery and continue to work with Police, Home Office, West Sussex County Council, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and other relevant authorities as appropriate where there are slavery concerns;
- We will notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking under Sections 43, 52 and 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- We will continue to offer training to staff which supports their duties under the Modern Slavery Act;
- We will ensure that modern slavery considerations are incorporated in any relevant new or updated council policies;
- We will continue to monitor our supply chains and report on any issues identified through non-compliance or insufficient information provided;
- We will continue to ensure that any supplier that wishes to tender for Council contracts must provide evidence that they have met the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to be able to bid and complete our Self-Declaration document contained in the tender pack. Any supplier who fails to evidence their compliance shall be excluded from participating further in the tender process.
- As part of our contract management processes, we will continue to undertake annual gathering and reviewing of Modern Slavery Statements for all suppliers with an annual turnover of £36m and over.
- We will include clauses in our standard contract terms that specify the supplier's contractual obligation concerning modern slavery.
- For all Above Threshold contracts (currently £213,477, inclusive of VAT) or contracts where we believe there are likely to be greater supply chain risks, we will continue to assess suppliers' recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that they are minimising the risk of modern slavery in their organisation.
- The Shared Procurement Service will undertake an annual risk assessment of its supply chain to identify high risk areas and will continue to deliver training and guidance to contract managers to highlight the potential modern slavery risks.

## Declaration

This Statement is made under Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for the period 1st July 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. It is approved by the Council's Management Team and Cabinet and will be subject to review on an annual basis.



Signed:

Lucy Corrie Assistant Director - Communities, Mid Sussex District Council