

Modern Slavery Statement 2020

Introduction

The UK Modern Slavery Act (MSA) 2015 received Royal Assent on Thursday 26 March 2015. It was the first in Europe, and one of the first in the world, to specifically address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century. Provision 54 of the Act, requires organisations, in any sector, which do business in the UK to disclose, the steps they are taking to address modern slavery in their business and supply chain in an annual Statement. This provision requires organisations to be transparent about how they conduct their business.

This statement sets out Blaby District Council's measures to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps aimed at ensuring there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and its supply chains.

As part of the public sector, Blaby District Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. The Council is committed to improving its practices to combat and prevent slavery and human trafficking in its activities, and to ensure that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking. We work with other authorities, the police, health professionals and other relevant local groups to ensure good communication and best practice is shared.

Organisational structure and supply chains

Blaby District Council provides a range of services for its 96,500 residents, from council tax collection, waste collection, planning management and environmental health. Other services, such as schools, social care and roads/transport links are provided by Leicestershire County Council. Goods and services can be delivered both directly by the Council and through external contractors.

Countries of operation and supply

The Council operates in the United Kingdom. We consider the risk of slavery and human trafficking to be low due to the type of activity that we undertake. However, we will remain vigilant and potential risks will be considered when delivering our services or undertaking procurement exercises.

Responsibility

Our **Core Values** commits the Council to:

- Put the customer at the heart of everything that we do

- Listen, learn and make a positive difference
- Build and maintain strong partnerships to meet the needs of the District
- Be ambitious, creative and resourceful

With these principles in mind we have a range of policies and processes which reflect our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity.

Policies: Council policies are developed by officers employed by the authority and are then agreed by our senior officers, councillors, and partner organisations where relevant.

Risk assessments: These are undertaken by officers within the relevant service area and corporately. Support and advice is provided by those charged with Safeguarding, Equality and Human Rights, Procurement, Human Resources and Risk Management responsibilities.

Investigations/due diligence: Under Section 52 of the Act, the 'duty to report, we will refer any suspected or known incidents of slavery or trafficking to the relevant authority via nominated Safeguarding Officers.

Any investigations in relation to suspected or confirmed modern slavery will be conducted through partners such as the NCA Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit.

Specific policies which apply:

- **Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Adults in Need of Safeguarding Policy:** The Council has two Safeguarding policies, which are declarations of the council's commitment to safeguarding people, irrespective of age. Whilst it is not our job to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, it is our responsibility to report any concerns we have over the welfare of an adult and to co-operate in any multi-agency investigations as appropriate. These policies include procedures for delivery of a safe environment by officers and for effective operation with its partners, to report safeguarding issues. As such the 'duty to notify' provision as set out in Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which applies to public authorities, including districts councils, will be supported by this policy. Safeguarding training is provided through e-learning and face to face sessions for both staff and councillors.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** The Council encourages all its workers, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the activities of the council or its contractors. The Council's [Whistleblowing Procedure](#) is designed to make it easy for workers, customers, partners etc to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. We encourage employees, who have serious concerns to raise these via nominated the persons specified in the Policy. We want to know if customers have any issues and concerns; these can be reported through the [comments and complaints processes](#).

These concerns, if appropriate, will be followed up via the Council's Safeguarding policies and procedures.

- **Employee Code of Conduct:** The organisation's code makes clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The Council strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour, as set out in 'the Nolan Principles' including when managing its supply chain. ([Constitution: PART 5](#)).
- **Member Code of Conduct:** The organisation's code makes clear to members the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The Council members are required to maintain the highest [standards](#) of courtesy and respect and to follow the 10 general principles specified by the Secretary of State following the Nolan Report. ([Constitution: PART 5](#))
- **Procurement:** The Council has a Procurement Toolkit and the Contract Regulations are laid out in [Part 11 of the Constitution](#). The Toolkit and regulations support the role procurement plays in minimising the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking suppliers by laying out the requirements to comply with legislation and equality principles.

Where a procurement is valued over £50,000, the Council will seek to ensure that potential suppliers are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, by inclusion of distinct evaluation award criteria. Further evidence will be sought if the procurement is considered to be high risk in terms of modern slavery, e.g. transport and waste related procurements.

Blaby District Council expects all suppliers of goods or services to the council who meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (i.e. their turnover is above £36m) to have their own policy relating to working practices or modern slavery, or for equivalent and sufficient evidence to be available to ensure their standards are in accordance with the Council's expectations. Compliance will be monitored as part of the contract management procedures following award.

- **Equality and Human Rights Policy:** The [Equality and Human Rights Policy](#) recognises that the Council has a responsibility to challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation in delivering services and as an employer. We aim to meet both our legal and moral duty to ensure that the principles of fairness, equality and respect. The Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 focus on the right of people not to be discriminated against and safeguard the fundamental freedoms of everyone.
- **Data Protection:** Due regard should be given to data protection legislation Data Protection Act (2018) Councils' statutory powers support joint investigations by allowing for the sharing of information in support of the prevention or detection of crime and in support of legal proceedings. The Council's [Data Protection Privacy Notice](#) explains how we use, store and share information. The LGA has a memorandum of understanding on data sharing with HMRC which all councils are able to sign up to in order to share and receive data from HMRC.

Planned Actions to tackle slavery and human trafficking

1. **Training and awareness-raising:** The council will work in partnership to deliver training to staff and to councillors. The council recognises that certain colleagues within the organisation may require more specific or in-depth training, depending on their job role, in order to raise awareness further and ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

This will include considering awareness of the following;

- The basic principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- How employers can identify and prevent slavery and human trafficking
- What employees can do to flag up potential slavery or human trafficking issues to the relevant parties within the organisation, and
- What external help is available, for example through the Modern Slavery Helpline.

We will also make available information for all staff outlining our duties, potential warning signs and what to do if they have any concerns.


2. **Policy updates:** Relevant policies, procedures and processes will be reviewed and adapted to include the aim of ensuring there is no slavery or human trafficking in the Council's own business and its supply chains.
3. **Employment:** Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking within the Council will be tackled through our Human Resources policies and procedures. This will apply to those already in employment, during recruitment and temporary and /or agency staff. We will ensure a safe environment within the Council for concerns to be raised and reported.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Blaby District Council's modern slavery and human trafficking statement for the year 2020/21.

Signed:



Cllr Terry Richardson, Leader, Blaby District Council



Jane Toman, Chief Executive, Leader, Blaby District Council

Date: 27 October 2020