

Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement

Introduction

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) is fully committed to applying its influence and power to take positive action against modern slavery and human trafficking.

Human trafficking is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of modern slavery.

This commitment to prevent human trafficking and modern slavery is strengthened in everything we do, the partners we work with and the supply chains we engage with. In line with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the following statement sets out what steps the Council has taken towards this aim.

Modern Slavery

The term 'modern slavery' captures a whole range of exploitation, which may occur together to have a combined effect on people's rights and liberty. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Child slavery - in addition to forced child labour, this can involve child trafficking, forced marriage and child domestic servitude.
- Criminal exploitation - exploitation of a person to commit a crime or combination of crimes.
- Domestic servitude – enforced work in a private household, usually performing domestic chores and childcare duties.
- Forced labour – people forced to work long hours for little or no pay, in poor conditions and under threat of violence to themselves or their families.
- Sexual exploitation - including sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the production of child pornography.
- Trafficking - involving the transportation, recruitment, receipt or harbouring of people for purposes of exploitation using immoral means, including violence, threats, deception, coercion, abduction or bribery.

Within WCC

The Council has a number of policies in place to raise staff awareness of the issue of modern slavery, reduce the risk of exploitation happening, and encourage any member of staff to speak up about any concerns they may have.

- Employee Code of Conduct – the Code describes the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from our staff and any staff seconded or engaged from other organisations to undertake the work of the Council and Worcestershire Children First (WCF). This includes information on staff expressing concerns about irregularities and tackling malpractice.
- Recruitment processes – the Council has robust recruitment processes, which includes:
 - o Right to Work ID document checks for all successful applicants, reference checks, and that employees are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure - We encourage employees and others working at or for the Council who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

- Pay – the Council operates a job grading (job evaluation) system which is objective and nondiscriminatory and supports the principles of equal pay. The Council takes a robust approach to ensuring that the job grading system is applied consistently and transparently.
- Agency Workers – the recruitment of the sizable proportion of agency staff is managed via contract with Matrix CR. Matrix CR is a Managed Service Provider and have no direct link to agencies or recruitment firms and manage the "supply chain" on the County Council's behalf.

Training

The Council provides a number of training resources to all staff, to increase awareness of the issue of modern slavery and inform staff about the actions they should take if they suspect modern slavery to be happening. The courses available are:

- Safeguarding E-Learning - Adults
- Safeguarding E-Learning - Children's
- Modern Slavery Duty to Notify

Procurement

When procuring goods or services, the Council includes the Modern Slavery Statement in its requirements and as part of the tender evaluation and ongoing contract management, considers the potential and likelihood of modern slavery and seeks mitigations from the supplier through a clear understanding of their:

- structure, business and supply chains
- policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking
- due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains
- training available to all staff to support the identification of slavery and human trafficking

A statement has been produced which is used in our Standard Selection Questionnaire which covers the requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Where a bidder fails to answer satisfactorily to these questions they are immediately excluded from further consideration.

Remedies – all our contracts contain terms for default events and breaches of contract, and these could be activated if modern slavery were to be found in our supply chain.

This statement has been approved by the Council's Chief Officer Group (COG) for financial year ending 31 March 2024 and will be reviewed and updated annually in April.



Paul Robinson
Chief Executive