



Modern Slavery Transparency Statement

Introduction

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (The Council) is fully dedicated to tackling modern slavery and ensuring transparency in our supply chains. We are committed to reporting on our business practices and supply chain as well as acting as a first responder and raising awareness of the issue in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

This statement covers direct employees of the Council, agency workers, contractors and works and services delivered on behalf of the Council by third party organisations and in the Council's supply chains.

What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is when an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes but is not limited to human trafficking.

The most common forms of modern slavery are (<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>) :

- **Human trafficking** – The use of violence, threats or coercion to transport, recruit or harbour people in order to exploit them for purposes such as forced prostitution, labour, criminality, marriage or organ removal
- **Forced labour** - Any work or services people are forced to do against their will, usually under threat of punishment.
- **Debt bondage/bonded labour** - The world's most widespread form of slavery. People trapped in poverty borrow money and are forced to work to pay off the debt, losing control over both their employment conditions and the debt
- **Descent-based slavery** - (where people are born into slavery) A very old form of slavery, where people are treated as property, and their "slave" status has been passed down the maternal line
- **Child slavery** - When a child is exploited for someone else's gain. This can include child trafficking, child soldiers, child marriage and child domestic slavery.
- **Forced and early marriage** - When someone is married against their will and cannot leave. Most child marriages can be considered slavery.
- **Domestic servitude** - Domestic work and domestic servitude are not always slavery, and when properly regulated can be an important source of income for many people. However, when someone is working in another person's home, they may be particularly vulnerable to abuses, exploitation, and slavery, as they might be hidden from sight and lack legal protection.

Our Policies

We have a range of policies and processes which reflect our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity to prevent modern slavery. These policies are available to staff via our intranet.

- Procurement
- Safeguarding Children & Young People
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Recruitment and Selection
- Community Safety Partnership Action Plan
- Whistleblowing
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Statement of Licensing Policy

Procurement

Mitigating Risks of Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain is one of the main elements of the Procurement and Commercial Study. The Council will:

- Include clauses in all main contracts requiring the Contractors to have policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act
- Include in major contracts the requirement for Contractors to report suspected Modern Slavery violations and ensure all relevant staff have received Modern Slavery training.
- Risk assess the Supply Chains to identify potential threats

Our Supply Chains

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council spends approximately £40m a year on goods, services and works from approximately 250 suppliers and contractors.

Through the tendering process, the council ensures that our direct suppliers are aware of our commitment to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking.

The Council undertake due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers and will seek to review its existing suppliers on an annual basis through its contract management arrangements. We will also ensure compliance with the s54 (Modern Slavery Act 2015) requirement of having a Modern Slavery Statement and as part of the tender evaluation and ongoing contract management, consideration of the potential and likelihood of modern slavery; seeking mitigations from the supplier through a clear understanding of the suppliers' structure business and supply chains and policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking.

Training and Awareness

At Welwyn Hatfield we are committed to ensuring that our staff have an understanding and awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking. We do this by delivering mandatory modern slavery training to all front line, operational staff and contract managers. Offering all staff optional e-learning on the subject.

In addition to this, staff who are most likely to submit a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral, will have completed the Home Office First Responder E-Learning module.

There will also be a section on our internal staff intranet with up to date information on Modern Slavery including what process staff should follow if they are notified of a case.

We also have staff who are Safeguarding Champions and their role will be extended to include modern slavery. The purpose of these champions are to support and signpost other staff members following an initial safeguarding concern and assist in escalating safeguarding concerns to the appropriate child and adult safeguarding teams where appropriate.

Collaborative Working and Raising Awareness

We have forums such as our Anti-Social Behaviour Forum, Vulnerable & Complex Needs Forum and Multi Agency Child Exploitation Meeting where cases of vulnerable people are discussed and information is shared with the aim to detect, safeguard and prevent cases of modern slavery and human trafficking.

'Working together with Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership to support victims of modern slavery and human trafficking and prevent it happening in the first place' is one of the Community Safety Partnership's objectives under their priorities for 2023/24. We are working closely with Hertfordshire Police's dedicated Modern Slavery Unit to deliver campaigns online and within the community aiming to raise awareness of modern slavery, the signs to look out for and what to do if you have concerns about someone.

Next Steps and Annual Review

We will monitor this policy internally via the internal Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Steering Group that takes place on a regular basis. The statement will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Our Modern Slavery statement will also be published on our website.

Approval and Review

This statement has been approved by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Senior Management Team and will be reviewed and reviewed annually.

February 2024