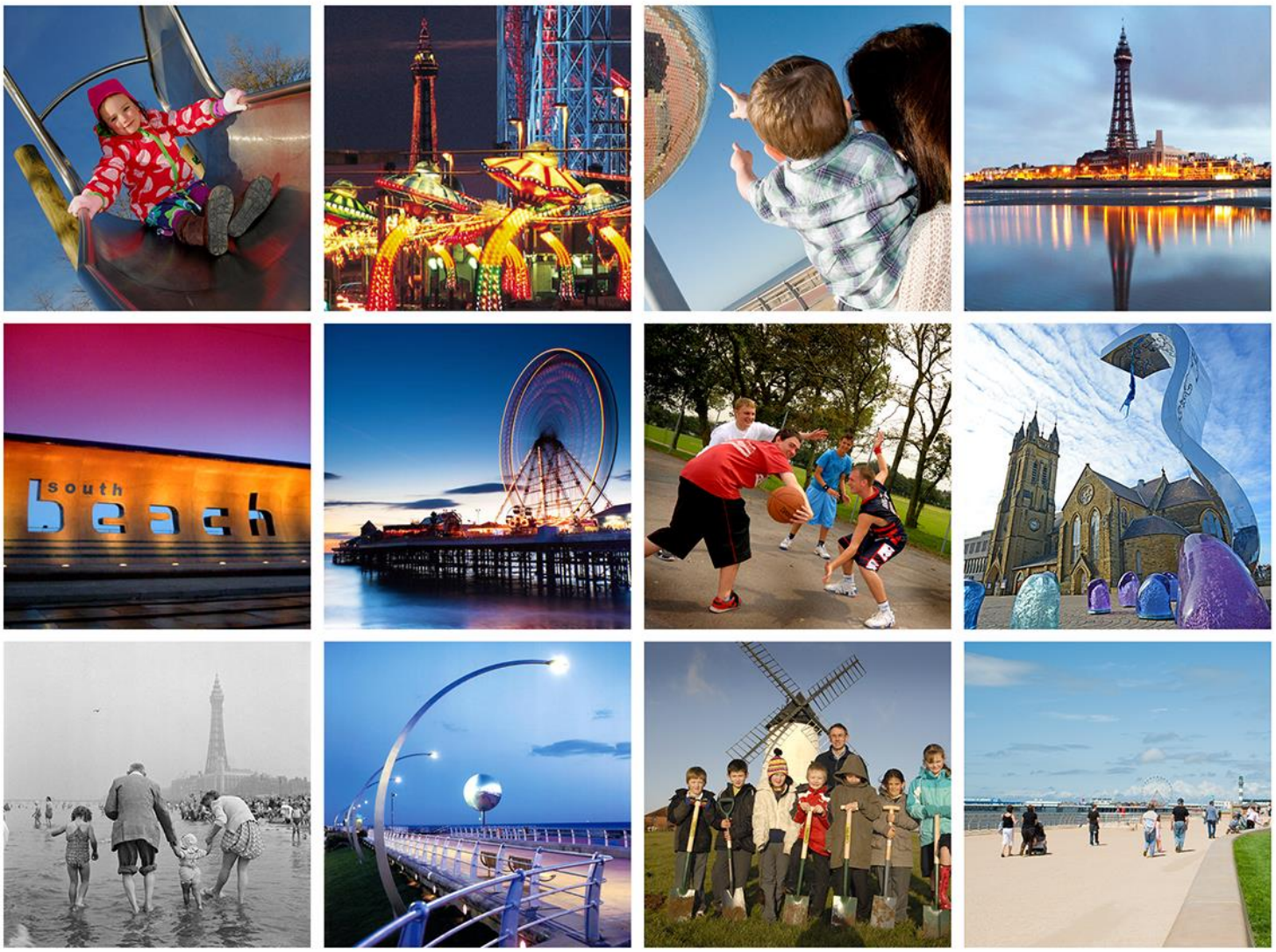
Blackpool Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021/2022

Blackpool Council



Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Blackpool Council's Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Introduction

This statement sets out the measures taken by the council to understand all potential modern slavery and human trafficking risks related to its business, and the steps put in place aimed at ensuring that there is none in our own business and supply chains. We regard modern slavery and human trafficking as such important challenges that this statement helps to address. This statement will be reviewed and updated as required.

In the course of developing this statement, we have considered the potential links and impacts on people affected or vulnerable to these issues who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected. Where possible, we will use data and evidence on the links between these equality issues to inform and suggest future operational policy development.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 consolidates slavery and trafficking offences, introduces tougher penalties and sentencing rules and provides more support for victims. Blackpool Council fully supports the implementation of the Act. We stand firmly against any exploitation of people, and are committed to protecting the most vulnerable people in Blackpool.

Definition

Modern slavery includes:

- **Forced labour -** Victims are forced to work against their will, often for very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence;
- **Debt bondage** – Victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to;
- **Sexual exploitation** - Victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will, such as prostitution, escort work and pornography. Adults are coerced under threat;
- **Criminal exploitation** - Often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will;
- **Domestic servitude** - Victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores in private households with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy, often sleeping where they work.

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into one of the above situations.

Organisation Structure and supply chains

Blackpool Council is a Lancashire unitary Local Authority, with a jurisdiction of approximately 35 square kilometres and a population of approximately 138,400 people. The council is comprised of 42 elected members (councillors). There are 2 councillors for each of the 21 wards, serving for a period of 4 years.

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The Council has two main priorities for the town:

Priority One – The Economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
Priority Two – Our Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

Our vision for Blackpool is to be:

The UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

Supply Chains and Due dilligence

Blackpool Council is responsible for providing a wide range of statutory and regulatory services for Blackpool's residents, businesses, visitors and partners. Our services are delivered both directly by the Council and through external contractors. There are just under 1,000 live contracts held on the contract register. Council spend with third party providers is £200 million (2020/2021).

The Council recognises its responsibility to prevent slavery and human trafficking within its supply chain. The Council makes clear to our suppliers and potential, future suppliers that they are required to provide confirmation that they are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. They are also required to confirm their subcontractors and suppliers comply with the act.

Procurement professionals have critical influence over, and visibility of, supply chain decision-making, particularly in terms of the level of due diligence that is done and the manner in which suppliers and their tenders are evaluated and assessed. A risk based approach, in line with guidance is adopted in respect of due diligence.

Our Approach

As part of Local Government, the council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to combating and preventing slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities, and to ensuring our supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

The council has approved and operates a number of policies and practices which either contribute to minimising the risk of slavery and human trafficking in our businesses and supply chains, or which help to establish an organisational culture which is aware of and acts on the issues involved:

- The **Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP)** and **Local Safeguarding Adults Board** both have multi-agency policies and procedures that include modern day slavery and human trafficking. These include descriptions of modern day slavery and human trafficking, outlines of the processes used to ensure the victims are supported and safeguarded and links to further information from other organisations. Safeguarding concerns about adults should be reported by calling 01253 477592 (in office hours) or 01253 477600 (out of office hours); and about children by calling 01253 477299 (24 hours).

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- **Pan-Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership, Modern Slavery Toolkit:** This includes detailed guidance on the process to follow where suspected victims have been identified**;**
- **Council Plan:** The Council Plan sets out how we will develop organisational resilience through the support and development of the people we employ, growing their knowledge and skills. It also sets out values of accountability, compassion and fairness;
- **Ethical Principles**: These include specific principles around the promotion of social justice and reduction of poverty and inequality; upholding the dignity of all people; and promoting and supporting health and wellbeing;
- **Supplier Charter:** This document sets out what we expect suppliers to adhere to when bidding for and delivering contracts for goods, works and services. Our aim is to adopt and ensure ways of working in our supply chains which: respect fundamental international standards against criminal conduct (such as bribery, corruption and fraud) and human rights abuse (such as modern slavery), responding immediately where they are identified, and result in direct improvements to the working lives of people who contribute to our supply chains. Our purpose in doing this is to ensure our suppliers are delivering contracts responsibly, and we build trust with the public by promoting a culture of high ethical standards that deter or expose poor behaviour and practice;
- **Responsible Procurement:** Responsible procurement plays an integral part of Blackpool Council's procurement process. The **Blackpool Council Procurement Strategy** contains a commitment to ensure equality, transparency and accountability. Invitations to Quote include a statement of *Corporate Social Responsibility* which encourages contractors to adopt the principles of ethical procurement, including that employment is freely given; working conditions are safe; child labour is not used; living wages are paid; and there is no inhumane treatment;
- **Living Wage:** On the 1st April 2013, Blackpool Council committed to paying all employees the National Living Wage. As an accredited employer to the Living Wage Foundation and in order to support the lowest paid workers in the council, the Real Living Wage supplement is applied for council employees whose total hourly rate is currently less than £9.30;
- **Equality and Diversity:** The council's **Equality and Diversity Goals** outline the council's commitment to integrating equality of opportunity and respect for diversity into all aspects of its activity. The overall aim is to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; promote equality of access; and promote good relations between diverse communities in the council's employment policies and practices, in service delivery and in engagement with partners and communities in the town.
- **Recruitment:** The council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. This includes robust procedures in place for the vetting of new employees and ensures they are able to confirm their identities and qualifications, and they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- **Speak out – Whistleblowing:** Blackpool Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. The council encourage its employees, contractors and partners who may have concerns about any aspect of the council's work to come forward and voice those concerns;

When these policies are reviewed, the council will consider whether further measures to strengthen their direct impact on modern slavery and trafficking is necessary.

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Training and Awareness

The council has a programme of multi-agency training available for all relevant employees and members, including Safeguarding Awareness Training and a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking training e-learning iPool module. This 75 minute e-learning module has been developed to raise awareness of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, and to help staff recognise their role in identifying and reporting concerns. Training enables officers in community-facing and regulatory roles to look out for, identify and report incidents of abuse and neglect, including modern slavery and trafficking to the relevant agencies.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

The percentage of staff completing the 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking' module will be reported as a KPI to measure how effective Blackpool Council Staff are in identifying the signs of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Review

We will review and update this statement on an annual basis. The 22/23 statement will be approved in April 2023.

Approval of this statement

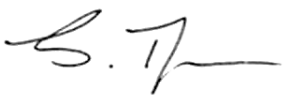
This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The statement covers the full activities of Blackpool Council and its wholly owned companies and relates to the 2021/22 financial year.



Signature – Leader of Blackpool Council



Signature – Chief Executive Officer at Blackpool Council



Signature – Director of Resources at Blackpool Council

For and on behalf of Blackpool Council