Dudley MBC

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement and Policy

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Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council ...the historic capital of the Black Country

Dudley MBC: Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement and Policy 2022/2023

In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Dudley MBC makes the following statement in relation to the financial year 2022 / 2023 to prevent, where possible, Modern Slavery (i.e., slavery and human trafficking) taking place in any part of its own business or any of its supply chains.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in our services and activities and to doing all** that **we reasonably can to ensure that our supply chains are taking all necessary measures to mitigate the risk from slavery and human trafficking

The Council has a corporate responsibility to do all it can to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking. The Council will also work with communities and partners to ensure a robust response to tackling these issues.

This policy and statement sets out the Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks relating to our services. We are confident that steps outlined in our action plan will address the Council's commitment to preventing slavery and human trafficking.



Kevin O'Keefe, Chief Executive

Date Approved: 09/09/2022



Councillor Patrick Harley, Leader of the Council

Date Approved: 09/09/2022



Councillor Qadar Zada, Leader of the Labour Group

Date Approved: 09/09/2022

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Introduction

This statement sets out the Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its services and businesses. It also puts in place steps that are aimed at mitigating these risks.

Background

Modern slavery is a hidden crime of indeterminate duration, frequently involving multiple victims and offenders, who may be involved at different times.

Modern slavery offences tend to involve, or take place alongside, a wide range of abuses and other criminal offences. The Home Office (2017)[1] has identified 17 different types of modern slavery offence in the UK, which fall broadly into four overarching categories:

- **Labour Exploitation;** including being subjected to poor / cramped living and / or working conditions with low or no payment and building of debts[2]
- **Domestic Servitude;** where the victim is forced to undertake household chores either for immediate or extended family members or strangers, this can also include forced marriage and other types of domestic abuse.
- **Sexual Exploitation;** including child sexual exploitation, trafficking for sex work and sexual abuse for the perpetrator's own gratification
- **Criminal Exploitation;** including forced gang and drug related activity, forced labour for illegal purposes such as cannabis cultivation, forced acquisitive crime and begging, financial fraud (including benefit fraud) and trafficking for forced or sham marriages

Dudley MBC's Corporate Role and Responsibilities

The Council has a number of responsibilities as an employer and a contractor of services. It also has a duty to safeguard individuals, families and communities.

> Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to develop a slavery and human trafficking statement each year. The slavery and human trafficking statement should set out what steps organisations have taken to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in their business or supply chains.[3]

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act states that the employer's slavery and human trafficking statement might include information on:

- its structure, business and supply chains;
- its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
- its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
- the parts of its business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place, and the steps that it has taken to assess and manage that risk;
- its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-typology-of-modern-slavery-offences-in-the-uk

[2] For more information on the Indicators of Forced Labour please visit the international Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang--en/index.htm

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transparency-in-supply-chains-a-practical-guide/transparency-in-supply-chains-a-practical-guide

business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate; and
- the training about slavery and human trafficking available to its staff.

(The above points are taken into account through this Statement and Policy).

As a Metropolitan Borough Council there is a duty to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. As a first responder organisation this is done through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Dudley MBC is committed to developing and maintaining relationships with its employees, contractors and members of the community, in addition to working with our partners.

Examples of working with our partners to safeguard individuals, families and communities include tackling rogue landlords through the Rogue Landlord Operational Group and tackling issues in respect of child and adult exploitation through the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership Sub-Groups.

Through the implementation of this Statement and Policy the Council will strive to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking and protect individuals from harm.

Organisational structure and supply chains

This statement covers the activities of Dudley MBC. The Council only operates within the United Kingdom.

Dudley has a rich mix of people living and working harmoniously within the borough. According to the 2011 Census, 88.5% of the Borough population are White British. Asian groups constitute 6.1% of the population, 1.8% of people are from mixed ethnic groups, 1.5% Black ethnic groups and a further 1.5% from White groups other than British.

The borough continues to see new and emerging communities choose Dudley as their home.

Dudley MBC is a local authority which provides a wide range of statutory and discretionary services for its residents, businesses, visitors and partners.

The Constitution outlines the way in which the Council is organised to carry out its affairs. It explains the structures and decision-making processes of the Council and includes the Codes of Conduct in relation to behaviour of those who work for or represent the Council. The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the council's governance framework are detailed in its Code for Corporate Governance included in the Constitution. The Council is developing a register of all of its goods, services and works contracts in excess of £5,000 to enable proper governance and contract management. The Council procures goods, services and works from many suppliers. Procurement is governed by the Council's Contracts Standing Orders (also in the Constitution). The Councils procurement and tender activity requires all relevant contracts for goods, services and works to confirm compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (2015) during the procurement process, as contained in Selection Questionnaire Section 7 (Questions 7.1 & 7.2.).

Compliance with this statement

Compliance with the Council's anti-slavery initiatives will be undertaken as follows:

Policies: In addition to this policy, the Council has a number of policies and procedures that contribute to meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and preventing slavery and human trafficking in our services and operations, which are reviewed on an annual basis, based on value and risk, to ensure they remain current and relevant.

Investigations/due diligence: Any concerns regarding modern slavery or human trafficking will be investigated and will be raised with the relevant Senior Officer in the first instance.

Training: Awareness of the issue of human trafficking and modern slavery will be raised via various formats to ensure accessibility to all staff, this will include training and briefing sessions, leaflets and other communications including a dedicated page on the Safe and Sound website, in addition to communications via our internal website 'connect'.

Collaborative working: The Council is committed to and will work collaboratively with relevant organisations across all sectors to support individuals affected by Modern Slavery as and where appropriate.

Identifying and Mitigating Potential Risk in Our Supply Chains

The risk of Modern Slavery in the Council's direct supply chains and local activities is considered low. However, we recognise the potential risks linked to the supply chain of goods, services and works we procure from suppliers and contractors. A large portion of these goods are bought through collaborative contracts, and we work with the relevant bodies to ensure anti-corruption activities are addressed during their procurement processes as well as in our own.

Relevant policies and Guidance

The Council reviews its policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that they remain compliant and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) and preventing slavery and human trafficking in our services and operations.

Procurement Strategy and Guidance: The Council is committed to doing all that we reasonably can to ensure that its suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics. The Council's Contract Standing Orders requires its contractors to provide confirmation of compliance with the Act during the procurement process.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council have embedded obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in the Council's Procurement Process as part of the PAS 91 Tender Template and Selection Questionnaire (SQ). New Terms and Conditions of Contract Clauses on Modern Slavery Act (2015) comply with and underpin our procurement activity. The Process in PAS 91, (SQ) and Terms and Conditions demonstrates the Council's commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implement and enforce effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place anywhere in our supply chains so far is reasonably practicable.

Safeguarding: The Council embraces its responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and of adults with care and support needs. The Council works within multi-agency partnerships to protect and safeguard people.

Recruitment and Selection Guidance for Managers: The Council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. They include robust procedures for vetting new employees, which support the council in doing all that it reasonably can to ensure that individuals are able to confirm their identities and qualifications, and that they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.

Employees codes of conduct: The codes make it clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour in all its operations and when managing our supply chain. Any breaches are investigated.

Whistle Blowing Policy: The Council encourages all of its employees, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities of the organisation or the supply chains of the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The organisation's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is designed to make it easy to make disclosures without fear of retaliation.

Pay Arrangements Policy: The Council has a pay arrangements policy which provides transparency with regard to the council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. It operates a Job Evaluation Scheme to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that all employees are paid fairly and equitably.

Agency workers: The Council uses only specified, reputable employment agencies to source labour. It verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency.

Procedure for Handling illegal migrant workers: While part of the Recruitment process, DMBC also has a standalone document, in accordance with the Immigration and Asylum Act 2006, which states:

'Under the Act the Council carries out prescribed document checks on all potential employees before they are employed, to confirm if a person has both the right to work in the UK and the right to carry out the type of work being offered'

The **DMBC Equality Strategy** states that:

In order to become a leader and a champion for Equality, diversity and inclusion, we need to ensure it is at the heart of everything we do.

We need to centre equality in all of the decisions we make, which includes our policies, procedures and practices. We are committed to true equity and will promote equality and inclusivity in all aspects of our work by:

• Being a service provider that meets the various needs of our residents and employees, regardless of protected characteristics.
• Being our borough's largest employer and setting the standard for other local organisations. We must ensure fair recruitment, have a diverse and inclusive workforce and provide a work environment that is safe, accessible and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

• Being community leaders through our elected members and working with communities, partners and colleagues in the statutory, voluntary and private sections to improve the quality of life for the borough at large

Due diligence

The council undertakes due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers and regularly reviews its existing suppliers where proportionate to risk and value. This is the responsibility of the individual contract managers. The organisation's due diligence and reviews include:

- maintaining a central register of all of the Council's contracts for goods, services and works in excess of £5,000;
- mapping and reviewing the supply chain broadly to assess particular product or geographical risks including risk of modern slavery and human trafficking;
- conducting supplier assessments as appropriate, on a risk based basis focussing on financial stability, covering insurance, compliance with various employment policies and which have a greater degree of focus on slavery and human trafficking where general risks are identified;
- contract monitoring and taking steps to improve poor supplier performance and practices, including providing advice to suppliers and requiring them to implement action plans, to demonstrate compliance with the contract, for example compliance with safer recruitment requirements;
- invoking sanctions against suppliers who fail to improve their performance in line with an action plan or who seriously violate the Council's expectations of suppliers, including the termination of the business relationship.

All invitations to tender for business with the Council will include the following statement in line with the terms and conditions of individual contracts:

> *We are committed to doing all that we reasonably can to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. DMBC will not support or deal with any business knowingly involved in slavery or human trafficking. We use the Crown Commercial Services Standard Selection Questionnaire which includes a self- certification element to our tendering processes. These are used to assess suppliers' compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (2015).*

Staff training and awareness

The Council along with partners has developed a tiered programme of modern slavery training that is available to employees to complete depending on their job role. The programme enables officers in community facing roles to know how to identify and report suspected incidents of exploitation and trafficking. The different tiers of training cover:

- How to identify the signs of slavery and human trafficking.
- The steps that should be taken if slavery or human trafficking is suspected.
- How to escalate potential slavery or human trafficking issues to the relevant parties both within Dudley MBC and elsewhere.
- Victim Referral Pathways.
- The National Referral Mechanism.
- Completion of the National Referral Mechanism.
- The external help available, for example through the Modern Slavery Helpline and The Gang-masters and Labour Abuse Authority.

Performance 2021 / 2022

Overview of work 2021 / 2022
• Work continues to take place internally and with partners to identify victims / concerns and respond as appropriate. • Effective links have been made with the Regional Slavery Adult Safeguarding Case Conference (SASCC) Team • DMBC have been fully engaged with the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership adult and child exploitation groups • Ongoing work on internal care pathways / responses for children and adults has been taking place, with both a Child Exploitation Strategy and an Adult Exploitation Strategy being developed and launched through Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership • Dudley Exploitation Hub for exploited children has been launched and the overarching pathway has been updated to reflect this • Work in respect of data collection and improving reporting and recording systems continue within the Local Authority and across partners. • Dudley MBC took part in the regional Modern Slavery scoping exercise and are identifying how we can proceed in line with the recommendations arising from this • The safe and sound communications plan continues to incorporate planned communications in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking, in addition relevant regional and national communications and resources are shared as appropriate • The modern slavery helphub page on the safe and sound website has been regularly updated to ensure current information is available and accessible. • Safe and Sound Dudley's Community Safety Partnership continued to promote their 'working together' campaign that was launched as a response to COVID-19. This campaign includes business cards and postcards, in addition to a social media footprint, a short video and promotion in various 'e-bulletins'. This ongoing campaign specifically highlights exploitation along with some other key topics and directs people to the safe and sound help hub pages for additional information and support • Work has taken place around housing and individuals with no recourse to public funds, with Adult Social Care NRTPF Policy and procedures being agreed • Modern slavery eLearning across the local authority for all partners including the community, voluntary and faith sector continues to be embedded as 'business as usual' via the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership training offer. A 'level 2' eLearning course has now been developed and launched, in addition to some virtual training sessions being made available. • NRM training has been promoted to relevant staff as appropriate • The local modern slavery leaflet continues to be distributed to partners and community members as appropriate. • Several partnership operations have taken place in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking. • We continue to support the phases of Operation Aidant and other national / regional campaigns and operations as appropriate • An Internal Serious Organised Crime audit has taken place • Staff within the Authority with responsibility for procurement have undertaken Modern Slavery training
Partnership Working
• The Rogue Landlord Operational Group is a multi-agency Group. Modern Slavery is a standing agenda item. Key partners include: - West Midlands Police (WMP), West

Midlands Fire Service (WMFS), DMBC Housing, Safeguarding, Trading Standards, Planning, Private Sector Housing, Probation, DWP.

- During 2021 / 2022 the Community Cohesion Strategic Group received updates in relation to Modern Slavery on a quarterly basis and oversaw the work within the action plan from a strategic perspective. Key partners include DMBC, West Midlands Police (WMP), Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group, West Midlands Fire Service and Dudley Borough Interfaith Network.
- Effective working relationships between the Community Safety Team and WMP Dudley Neighbourhood Policing Unit leads for Modern Slavery continues
- Close links between Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community safety Partnership) and Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership
- DMBC is a member of the Regional Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Board. Regional LA Modern Slavery Leads Group and West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network in order to ensure robust regional links with neighbouring authorities and partners.

While work continues to take place across Dudley MBC in respect of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery as 'business as usual', moving forward the strategic meeting structure for Modern Slavery is being reviewed. This review will ensure joined up work with Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership continues to develop and ensure we are doing all that we can to mitigate the risk of modern slavery within the Local Authority and doing all that we reasonably can to comply with the Act.

Further information can be accessed by emailing Community.safety@dudley.gov.uk

Practical guidance to identify modern slavery and trafficking and how to report

In the course of your employment or business with the Council, you may come across situations and people that cause you concern. This section seeks to give some practical guidance to assist with deciding if someone may have been trafficked or is the victim of modern slavery.

Victims are trafficked all over the world for little or no money – including to and within the UK. They can be forced to work in the sex trade, domestic service, forced labour, criminal activity or have their organs removed to be sold. There is no typical victim and some victims do not understand they have been exploited and that they are entitled to help and support. Victims are often trafficked to a foreign country where they cannot speak the language, have their travel and identity documents removed and are told that if they try to attempt an escape, they or their families will be harmed.

Key indicators of trafficking include:

- Is the person in possession of their own passport, identification or travel documents or are these documents in possession of someone else?
- Does the person act as if they were instructed or coached by someone else?
- Do they allow others to speak for them when spoken to directly?
- Was the person recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job? Have transport costs been paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back through working or providing services?
- Does the person receive little or no payment for their work? Is someone else in control of their earnings?
- Does the victim have freedom of movement? Are they dropped off and collected from work?
- Is the person withdrawn or do they appear frightened?
- Has the person or their family been threatened with harm if they attempt to escape?
- Is the person under the impression they are bonded by debt, or in a situation of dependence?
- Has the person been physically or emotionally harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities?
- Can the person freely contact friends or family? Do they have limited social interaction or contact with people outside their immediate environment?

This list is not exhaustive. Remember, a person may display a number of the indicators set out above but they may not necessarily be a victim of modern slavery or trafficking. Often you will build up a picture of the person's circumstances which may indicate that something is not quite right. **If you have a suspicion,** report it:

West Midlands Police:
Call 999 in an emergency
For all other matters please visit WMPolice Online **https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/**

Modern Slavery Helpline:
For help, advice or information about any modern slavery issue you can contact the Modern Slavery helpline confidentially, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **08000 121 700**

To access the local Dudley Victim Pathway and for more information visit:
https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/modernslavery