

# Modern Slavery Act

## **Covers Timber and Builders Merchants Modern Slavery Act Statement 2023**

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

### **Introduction**

We understand that the issue of slavery and human trafficking is a global issue and we take the approach that we will not accept slavery or human trafficking in any area of our supply chain or wider business dealings.

### **Our Business**

Covers is one of the largest independent merchants in the UK.

We operate from 15 locations across the south of the country with an approximate turnover of £90m pa.

Our business predominantly supplies three main category areas

1. Building Materials
  - a. Such as but not limited to bricks, blocks, aggregates, insulation
2. Lightside Materials
  - a. Such as but not limited to building chemicals, decorating, fixings, bathrooms
3. Timber products.
  - a. Such as but not limited to softwoods, boards, flooring, doors

Covers are also part of, and play an active role in, Fortis Merchant Buying Group (Fortis) which has over 40 member companies across the UK with combined turnover exceeding £2.3 billion pa.

### **Supply Chain**

The majority of purchases are made in the UK from long standing recognised UK suppliers, a substantial number of which are made through Fortis trade agreements.

In addition Covers comply with the UKTR (United Kingdom Timber Regulation) and have signed up to the FSC and PEFC external schemes.

Both Covers and Fortis have statements and supplier codes of conduct in relation to slavery and human trafficking, which all suppliers are asked to confirm their adherence to:

### **Covers / Fortis Supplier Code of Conduct**

All of our suppliers are asked to confirm their adherence to the following standards:

1. **Child Labour**

Child labour **MUST NOT BE** used by a supplier.

A child is defined as any person under the age at which the local minimum age law stipulates for work or mandatory schooling. As a general rule this would be anyone under fifteen years of age.

2. **Slavery, Forced, Bonded\* or Involuntary Labour**

\* Bonded Labour, e.g. a person becomes a bonded labourer when their labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan.

There **MUST NOT BE** any slavery, forced, bonded or involuntary labour in use across a supplier's operation.

To ensure compliance, workers should have the legal right to work at the premises, to leave the premises at the end of their working day and the freedom to terminate employment at any time in accordance with the agreed notice period.

3. **Human Trafficking and Exploitation**

There **MUST NOT BE** any labour who could be considered to have been subject to Human Trafficking.

To ensure compliance, workers cannot be recruited through a person who arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. It is irrelevant whether that person has consented to travel.

4. **Health and Safety Hazards**

Workers **MUST BE** prevented from exposure to any health and safety hazards that are likely to pose an immediate risk of causing death, permanent injury or illness.

5. **Working Hours**

A reliable system for recording working hours and wages for each individual employed **MUST BE** in place within a supplier and these should be available for audit.

6. **Business Ethics**

There **MUST NOT BE** any form of bribery offered or used in relation to Covers or Fortis business.

## **Recruitment and Human Resources**

Covers operate processes and controls to ensure:

- All staff are assessed for their right to work in the UK
- Workplace equality policies are in place
- Wages and benefits comply with relevant government legislation

## **Continual Improvement**

Both Covers and Fortis continue to review and develop policies, procedures, systems and controls to ensure ethical and legal compliance.

## **Compliance with this policy**

All Covers and related company employees, officers and directors in the JH & FW Green Limited Group must comply with this policy.

## **Review**

Statement reviewed 27/01/2023 and updated accordingly  
Financial Year period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022  
Statement made on behalf of Covers Timber and Builders Merchants

Rupert Green  
Chairman  
David Cover & Son Ltd