

York St John University

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

24 November 2022

Introduction

This statement is made to satisfy the requirements of section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes the University's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 July 2022 outlining the steps York St John University has taken to combat modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its own business and in its supply chains.

About the University

York St John University is a higher education establishment, with a student population of around 8,500 students. It employs 1,076 permanent and fixed term staff (914 FTE), as well as 655 casual staff. The University has an annual turnover of around £78million and spends around £27m per annum on goods and services.

Identified risks and steps being taken

Employment of staff

The University mitigates the risk of modern slavery occurring in its workforce by having in place robust staff recruitment and selection policies and procedures, supplemented by mandatory training for managers. All Right to Work documentation is checked prior to employment commencing or casual workers being engaged. The University's Code of Conduct for staff requires employees to adhere to the employment policies of the University and a Whistleblowing Policy is in place for members of staff to raise any concerns.

Agency staff are only recruited through established and reputable sources that can provide assurance that they comply fully with the requirements of the legislation relating to the rights and welfare of their workers. In the main these are Agencies who have been engaged through North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC),

Students

Although the risks of students experiencing occurrences of modern slavery or human trafficking through direct contact with the University are extremely low it is appreciated that whilst living within the local area they may become aware of such instances or on very rare occasions be entrapped into adopting the life style of a modern slave. In order to mitigate these circumstances, the University has in place easily accessible channels through which students can obtain assistance, support and advice on their wellbeing.

Supply chain

The University's supply chain has been identified as the area of highest risk in terms of possible occurrences of modern slavery. In order to mitigate this risk, the following action has been taken:

Under the University's Procurement policy, as part of the standard supplier selection process all suppliers tendering for contracts must give evidence of their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in order to be eligible to enter a bid.

The University is a member of the North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC), which is itself a member of Procurement England Ltd (PEL) and UK Universities Procurement Consortia (UKUPC). It is also a member of the Yorkshire Procurement Organisation (YPO) and Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC). As of this year, the University now has board level representation within the Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA). These are all bodies dedicated to improving both the quality of procurement and the level of collaborative procurement across the HE sector. Together these collectives develop policies and practices to which all members, including York St John University, are committed. These set out the steps that must be taken in major contract procurement processes that are conducted by members, to help to ensure that slavery and human trafficking cannot flourish in the supply chain.

The University has a zero-tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking. Any supplier or potential supplier who does not reflect our values or is found not to be compliant with the processes outlined above will be considered in-breach of their contractual responsibilities and removed from the University's supplier list. Such suppliers will not be invited to bid for future contract opportunities at the University until they are able to demonstrate full adherence with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and the University's own policies and procedures.

The University recognises that continual vigilance and ongoing improvement is required in its supply chain management. Key suppliers are subjected to annual reviews to confirm, amongst other things, their quality of service, their commitment to high standards of delivery and their efforts to drive Modern Slavery from their own supply chains.

Activities undertaken in 2021-22

The University reviews its supply base each year, breaking down services into distinct categories in order to highlight those that are most commonly exposed to supply chain abuses such as human trafficking and modern slavery. The control methods that the University takes means that our overall exposure to potential abuses is relatively lower than in other sectors, but we recognise that safeguards must remain in place to ensure this remains so.

The University has a responsibly not to exert undue commercial pressure on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), who make up 22% of its third-party expenditure. In its efforts to obtain good value for money on behalf of our fee-paying students, the University will never abuse its relative position of purchasing power. We will not intentionally compel our suppliers or put them under such duress that they are coerced into adopting unethical business practices in order to meet our requirements. We will strive to use plain language in our legal and tendering documents to make clear the expectations we have of our suppliers and the obligations we will put on their people.

The University recognises there are complex issues that exacerbate the causes of modern slavery and contribute to its persistence in our society. In order to better inform and support our suppliers in eliminating these, we have gone to greater lengths to give explicit guidance notes within our tender documentation to help businesses improve their own understanding of the impact modern slavery has. This includes requirements to show:

- Actions taken to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in the delivery of their contract, including within their own supply chains.
- Actions taken to identify and tackle inequality in employment, skills and pay in their contracted workforce.
- To support in-work progression to help people, *including* those from disadvantaged or minority groups, to move into higher paid work by developing new skills relevant to their contract.
- Collaboration with users and communities in the codesign and delivery of their contract, to support strong integrated communities.
- Influencing their own staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of their contracts in a manner that support strong, integrated communities.

The University's Institute for Social Justice brings together expertise from right across our academic community and beyond, working alongside our students, external partners and the wider community. The Institute addresses issues of inequality and injustice across society, including modern slavery and human trafficking, by facilitating research, projects and partnerships that help to pursue and promote a fairer society.

More information can be found on our webpage [University's Whistleblowing Policy](#).

This statement has been approved by the Board of Governors and will be reviewed at least once annually.



Professor Karen Bryan OBE

Vice Chancellor

24 November 2022