Modern Slavery Act 2015 Statement

OUR BUSINESS

Furniture Village is the UK's largest privately-owned furniture retailer selling upholstery, beds, cabinets, and accessories. We operate from over 55 store locations throughout the UK, alongside a fully transactional online website.

All our operations are based in the UK, with our Group Offices in Slough and additional support functions together with a National Distribution Centre located in Milton Keynes. The retail outlets are further supported by 15 Regional Fulfilment Centres. In total, Furniture Village now employs c. 1200 people throughout the UK.

OUR STATEMENT

Slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking (modern slavery) are issues of increasing global concern, affecting all sectors, regions, and economies. Modern slavery is fundamentally unacceptable within our business and supply chains and is an important element in our overall approach to business and human rights. As a family-owned business, Furniture Village is committed to respecting, protecting, and championing the human rights of all those who work within our operations, including employees, stock and non-stock supply chain workers, customers, and local communities. We accept our responsibility to support transparency and honesty; to find and resolve problems, and to work with others to protect the rights of workers, particularly those who are most vulnerable to abuses such as modern slavery.

Furniture Village recognises the importance of its obligation to prevent slavery and human trafficking in the modern world and we operate a zero-tolerance approach to any contravention of this policy, throughout all our business operations.

Any breaches or concerns identified will be dealt with immediately and with positive action.
Furniture Village expects the same high standards from all our suppliers and contractors.

OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

- Furniture Village sources products from both the UK and globally using established wholesalers, suppliers, and factories, using a wide range of substrates such as timber, fabrics, metals, and glass.
- We have long standing, valued relationships with our suppliers, all of which share our values and take appropriate steps to protect both their workforce and those of the sub-suppliers they source from.
- Whilst working globally ensures that we have access to the widest range of commercially priced, quality furniture, we acknowledge that there is an increased potential exposure to modern slavery within these global supply networks.
- We recognise that products sourced from overseas have the potential to pose the greatest risk of modern slavery within our supply chain, both through their sourcing of raw materials, the manufacturing process itself and the shipping to the UK.
- We operate our own fleet of delivery vehicles, delivering from Fulfilment Centres, though we utilise respected third-party contractors during peak periods, with our Suppliers also delivering direct to customers in some instances.
- We also outsource some of our support services, including store building and maintenance activities, though always using highly regarded suppliers who share our values and with whom we have long standing working relationships.

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Furniture Village is working towards full transparency across our supply chain to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking within our business.

Our supply base is categorised by risk, based on the geographical location of the factory, and how we source the product. This categorisation allows us to prioritise workload to mitigate these risks. All suppliers are currently treated equally in the levels of diligence we expect, regardless of their UK brand recognition.

SUPPLIER CATEGORIES – Sourcing Route / Risk		Risk Priority
Import (Asia / Non-EU)	Products sourced from suppliers based in Asia	**1**
Import (EU)	EU manufactured and/or sourced from EU based suppliers	**2**
Supplier Import	Suppliers responsible for UK importation of products	**3**
UK Based	Purchased from, and made, within the UK	**4**

OUR PROCEDURES

We are continuously developing our retail offering whilst being mindful of the UN Global four pillars which include *human rights*, *labour standards*, *environmental* and *anti-corruption* standards. To ensure we achieve this we have developed the following procedures:

- Recruitment – Procedures ensuring employee legal status and right to work.
- Whistleblowing - Communication method ensuring anyone can raise concerns.
- Employee code of conduct – Covering all aspects of employment including anti-corruption / bribery and our Modern Slavery Policy.

All personnel within Furniture Village, its suppliers, and contractors, existing and new, are briefed on the policy and our expectations of full compliance to the requirements set out in the Modern slavery Act.

RISK ASSESSMENT

As an organisation we recognise there is a risk of modern slavery in any area of our business where there is:

- Migrant labour (country to country or within a country)
- High presence of refugees
- Young workers and risk of child labour
- Contract and agency workers
- Women workers

To further mitigate and reduce the risk to Furniture Village as far as is reasonably practical, we are implementing the following measures:

Modern Slavery Risk	Issue	Status / Action
Migrant Labour	Bonded labour and be subjected to inferior employment terms. Workers exposed to deceptive or coercive recruitment practices. Migrant workers often do not understand their rights in the destination country and the terms of their employment.	Audits conducted on high priority suppliers. Audit plan continues.

Refugees and Young/Child Labour	Refugees are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and forced, bonded and compulsory labour. Refugees may not have access to legal means of employment, therefore increasing vulnerability. Children and young workers are more vulnerable to forms of modern slavery. Insufficient HR processes mean that young workers may be employed and enter the workplace without enough checks to confirm their age, ability, and safety in the workplace. Countries of highest risk: **Bangladesh, China, Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, India, and Turkey**	Audits conducted on high priority suppliers. Audit plan continues.
Contract & Agency workers	Contract workers are often less secure in their employment, may have less rights in the workplace and are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation. Labour recruiters create an additional layer between employers and workers, leaving workers exposed to deceptive or coercive recruitment practices. Countries of highest risk: **India, Turkey, UK**	Audits conducted on high priority suppliers. Audit plan continues.
Women Workers	Women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking, and bonded labour. Countries of highest risk: **All source countries**	Audits conducted on high priority suppliers. Audit plan continues.

DUE DILIGENCE

- **Working with our Suppliers**
  Our supply base is ever changing in line with current business needs. We have issued our Modern Slavery policy to all our suppliers.
  Our Trading Partner Agreement is issued to all our supply base. This includes a requirement for transparency of factory locations and the due diligence completed to mitigate slavery risks at the production site and within the supply of materials.

- **Supplier Relationships**
  We have long standing relationships with the majority of our suppliers, with whom we share the same commitment to ensuring that modern slavery does not exist within the supply chain. Our Buying and Quality teams regularly visit our major UK and overseas suppliers and their support to adhering the Modern Slavery Act is of paramount importance.

- **Employee Awareness and Training**
  We recognise the need for training, and we have actively provided all personnel with an awareness and training of the Modern Slavery Act and have developed the training to provide direct access to supplementary training resources via a Learning Management System. In addition to this, when joining the business, all new employees will be required to undertake compulsory training modules to gain an awareness of the Modern Slavery Act and their responsibilities to it.

- **Whistleblowing**
  Furniture Village has a whistleblowing policy which facilitates personnel both internal and external to the business, to report any unethical practices.

EFFECTIVENESS

Continued monitoring of the effectiveness of our Policy will primarily be through our supplier agreement within the Trading Partner Agreement. The speed and effectiveness of any corrective actions being taken because of issues raised is also key, along with a continued commitment to increasing awareness and training throughout the entire supply chain.

We will continue to develop appropriate measures to ensure adherence throughout the supply chain and identify areas for improvement as appropriate.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and has been approved by the Board of Directors. This policy constitutes as our Slavery and Human Trafficking statement for financial year ending June 2023.

Charlie Harrison

Charlie Harrison
Managing Director

December 2023