

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY GROUP OF COMPANIES

MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT FOR PERIOD 1ST AUGUST 2023 TO 31ST JULY 2024

Introduction

The University of Derby is committed to working with our supply chain to acquire goods, services and works without causing harm to others. This statement relates to the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 which is the financial year of the University and is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It sets out the steps that the University has taken in this financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains or in any part of its own business.

Modern Slavery is a hidden crime and violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, debt bondage, child labour, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another to exploit them for personal or commercial gain and is extremely prevalent across the globe. The Walk Free Foundation who collates The Global Slavery Index, estimates that in 2023, the number of people who were victims of modern slavery worsened to 49.6 million driven in part by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. Of these, 22 million are in a forced marriage and almost 27.6 million in forced labour.

Most children reported as victims of Modern Slavery are in the 16–17 year-old age category, yet they can be of any age, including the very young. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions and any services that they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The University is committed to safeguarding our students and vulnerable adults, improving our practices and policies both internally and throughout our supply chain, to combat modern slavery.

Organisational Structure

The University's core business purpose is teaching, learning and research and has a student population of approximately 31,755 based in the UK and Overseas. The total head count is approximately 2,718 employees across the University Group including its subsidiaries. In the financial year 2023/2024, group turnover was c£219m.

The University has its main campus in Derby with a large University presence right across the city of Derby and both higher and further education provided in Buxton, Leek, and Chesterfield. The University also has the following academic Colleges:

- Science and Engineering
- Business Law and Social Science
- Health, Psychology and Social Care
- Arts, Humanities and Education
- Skills and Further Education

The University is a member of the North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC) which is a member of the UK Universities Purchasing Consortium (UKUPC). The consortium supports collaborative procurements across the Higher Education sector and takes measures to mitigate the risk of modern slavery in its sourcing activity. We also engage with the wider university sector through our membership with the Higher Education Purchasing Association (HEPA).

There are ties to major employers and public service providers in Derby, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire. In addition, there are partnership arrangements in place with both UK and overseas education institutions.

Our Policies

The University's approach to addressing modern slavery is embedded in all relevant University policies including Fairtrade and National Minimum Wage issues and is specifically referenced in our Procurement Policy dated January 2023 and our Procurement Strategy launched February 2024.

Our policy sets out that we are committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and to ensure that no slavery or human trafficking is taking place in any part of our business or supply chains.

How we support our students

The University recognises that our students may also be at risk of becoming subject to modern slavery and provides a safeguarding approach with mandatory awareness training for all staff focusing on how to spot the signs and report concerns. Student welfare staff in the Student Union, Registry Student Services as well as in the Multi Faith centre act as a joined-up network to ensure concerns are reported and our students receive appropriate support.

Our Supply Chains and Tendering Approach

The University is committed to conducting its business in a socially responsible and sustainable way, supporting SMEs, and ensuring goods and services we procure are free from modern slavery and human trafficking. Our main supply chains fall under the following categories:

- Professional services including agency staff, marketing, media, and library
- Estates and facilities, construction, goods, and services
- ICT equipment and services
- Corporate services and STEM

We continue to operate our practices and due diligence in relation to mitigating and managing the risk of modern slavery in our supply chains. To support this the Procurement team, maintain checks by engaging with key strategic suppliers and manage the on-boarding of new suppliers in which a due diligence exercise is undertaken for providers wishing to trade with the University Group.

The Group works with a diverse range of suppliers, all of whom have to agree and sign up to our [Supplier Code of Conduct](#).

Every competitive tender includes a requirement for the supplier to sign a Declaration of Modern Slavery Compliance and confirm that they will comply with Supplier Code of Conduct. For new tenders, bidders are encouraged to sign up to NET Positives which is a Supplier Engagement Sustainability tool used by the Higher Education sector to track the actions being taken by the University's supply chain in addressing Modern Slavery.

Risk Assessment

Whilst there have been no reported instances of Modern Slavery impacting the University's supply chain during FY23/24, a risk-based approach will continue to be applied to the identification of priority areas that are a high risk for modern slavery and human trafficking. A rolling programme of checks of local suppliers in key risk areas include:

- Catering
- Cleaning services
- Security
- Capital building projects – construction workers
- Clothing
- Furniture
- IT
- Transport services

What have we done so far?

Supplier review meetings held with contracted suppliers in these areas will pay particular attention to ensuring compliance with the Code. If any instance of modern slavery or human trafficking is suspected there is a National [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) to report these concerns and the University would either report directly if appropriate or direct anyone with concerns to the Helpline.

As part of our reviews, we conduct spot checks with current suppliers in key risk areas (construction and cleaning) working collaboratively with them to ensure there are no individuals at risk of modern slavery. These checks ensure our suppliers can provide an up-to-date modern slavery statement on request and can evidence how they manage the associated risks including how they pay those whether employed directly or via subcontractors and suppliers further down the supply chain. All reasonable steps are mitigated to avoid the risk of slavery and does not expose the University to these unacceptable risks.

Raising Awareness and Due Diligence

The University's focus to modern slavery has increasingly recognised the risk as much in supplies and services delivered close to home and to our own student base as it is in global supply chains.

As a result of shift in focus in 2024, the University started working with Rebuild East Midlands a charity that exists to empower and assist survivors of modern-day slavery and human trafficking to overcome the barriers that they might face in starting a new life, free from slavery. Rebuild East Midlands supports individuals to fully access opportunities to embrace a hope filled future and is the only charity in the region that offers holistic, long-term support to adults in Derby and Derbyshire who have experienced modern slavery, providing them with practical, emotional and community support to help them move forward with their lives.

On National Anti-Slavery Day (18th October 2024), Rebuild East Midlands joined the University to raise awareness and to encourage staff and students to sign up and become a Spot the Signs ambassador. The campaign provides resources which can be used across the University's social media platforms and communications channels whilst supporting others to break free from this exploitation. As a follow up, Rebuild East Midlands delivered an online event for university staff and students about the realities of Modern Slavery in the UK.

The University has also continued to maintain the following activities to mitigate the risk of Modern Slavery:

- Procurement Business Partners are leads for each key area of spend. The key objectives of the Business Partner approach are a better understanding of the relevant markets, improved planning and research and a greater involvement in supporting supplier management all of which will have the benefit of reducing the risk of modern slavery by maintaining focus and awareness in the areas of higher risk.
- Developing and implementing category strategies to build awareness of supply chain mapping, concentrating on the 'at-risk' contracts.
- Monitoring risk management and mitigation plans as part of the delivery of the category strategies including any changes in operational practices with suppliers are managed to minimise modern slavery risks.
- Suppliers are registering with Net Positives [Supplier Engagement Tool & The Modern Slavery Act – NETpositive Futures](#) which captures Modern Slavery statements and action plans. Any supplier refusing to agree to comply with the Supplier Code of Conduct will be removed from the supplier database.
- A minimum 10% social value and sustainability weighting in tender evaluation criteria is part of the scoring criteria, as set out in the Government Guide for Social Value Model for in scope contracting authorities, with suppliers demonstrating social value and sustainability. Incorporating social value and sustainability has a lasting impact on students, communities, and the environment.
- Procurement staff registered with the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) have completed the CIPS 'Ethical Procurement and Supply' on-line training.
- The University continues to participate in Modern Slavery Awareness Week and will continue to do so on an annual basis.
- Membership with Rebuild East Midlands supporting the University's Modern Slavery Statement.
- The University has retained its [Fairtrade](#) accreditation that reduces the risk of modern slavery in this supply chain
- The University collaborates with other Higher Education purchasing consortia and Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA) on risk assessment and due diligence processes to share good practice and avoid duplication of effort for both the universities and external suppliers.
- The University will promote the [Walk Free Foundation](#) website, which works towards ending Modern Slavery in all its forms by taking a strong, multifaceted and global approach.

How Effectiveness Is Measured with regards to staff and students

As part of the University's efforts to eradicate practices and issues arising from modern slavery and human trafficking, guidance of how to spot warning signs is covered in the mandatory training as part of the staff induction programme. Appraisal ratings cannot be given to staff without completion of mandatory training and is monitored by Managers and HR.

We have measurable activity working with external organisations such as Rebuild East Midlands to build effectiveness with staff and students relevant to modern slavery e.g. webinars, exhibition stands on site, manuals.

How Effectiveness Is Measured with regards to the supply chain

Headline figures 2023/2024

862	Suppliers currently registered with Net Positives in 2023/24 (an increase from 846 in 2022/23 due to removal of inactive suppliers by Net Positives)	83% of which are SMEs of which 34% are micro businesses (an increase of 1% from 2022/23)
99%	Are aware of modern slavery (We have reached out to the 1% of supplier(s) to address this and to ensure they are taking appropriate action)	
69%	Of suppliers source their goods and services are sourced solely within UK and Europe (down from 70% in 2022/23) due to global economic factors primarily Brexit.	
923 Modern Slavery Actions have been committed to. (900 in 2022/23)		380 additional actions have been completed in the year (330 in 2022/23)
		184 are in progress (169 in 2022/23)

Current and Future Plans

- Implement an approach to supplier relationship management that considers where Modern Slavery risks exist in key contracts and tracks suppliers action steps to mitigate these risks.
- Conduct rolling programmes of checks with suppliers in key risk areas e.g. Catering, Cleaning, Clothing, and Construction.
- Continue to monitor and encourage long term suppliers to register with via Net Positives and complete Modern Slavery action plans.
- Build on work with Rebuild East Midlands to help Spot the Signs of modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Continue to work with Student Union and Student Services to leverage our joined-up approach.
- Changes to Public Procurement Legislation with the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 will provide further opportunities for Small Medium Enterprises. Due diligence will continue to be in place alongside the central supplier platform. Alternative assurance may be sought as smaller organisations may not have the staff or scale to have mature modern slavery policies.
- The University will continue to seek out and implement best practice relating to modern slavery including the use of collaborative materials produced by Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA) and other Higher Education Consortia.

- The University will also review and implement appropriate measures from the British Standards Institution (BSI) modern slavery guidance <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/bs-25700/> that provides organisations with guidance for addressing the risk of modern slavery, including prevention, identification, response, remediation, mitigation, and reporting.

Members of the University's Governing Council have reviewed this statement and gave its approval of the document 5 February 2025. It was then signed on behalf of Council by the University's Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive.

Signed by:

Professor Kathryn Mitchell BSc, PhD, CPsychol
Vice-Chancellor, the University of Derby