

Modern Slavery Statement

2023/2024



INTRODUCTION

This statement is made on behalf of Burness Paull LLP (“**Burness Paull**”) pursuant to Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the “**Act**”).

OUR FIRM

Burness Paull is a limited liability partnership registered in Scotland (SO300380) with 89 partners and over 670 employees, spread across our three offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. We are a full-service, independent law firm working with leading organisations across the UK and internationally. We are regulated by the Law Society of Scotland and the Solicitors Regulation Authority in England and Wales. As a law firm, we always work to the highest professional standards and ensure compliance with the laws, regulations and best practice relevant to our business.

OUR APPROACH

We are committed to ensuring that modern slavery or any abuse of human rights has no place in our firm or supply chain. The purpose of this statement is to reinforce our commitment to the protection of human rights within our operations. It also sets out the steps we took during the latest reporting period and the steps we plan to take in the coming months to effectively manage the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in our business and supply chain.

We believe in the importance of developing a culture of zero tolerance of forced labour, human trafficking, or any human rights abuse. We do so through our good business practices and policies, including being a [Living Wage Employer](#). We will continue to champion increased vigilance in this area and are committed to further fostering this culture across the firm through training and awareness initiatives.

We have chosen to be a member of and endorse the [UN Global Compact](#) and be an advocate of its Sustainability Goals as the focus of our ESG strategy and commitments. This has provided us with a meaningful focus and framework to bring together many of our existing initiatives and it has also given us an opportunity and the ability to consider areas for improvement. ESG considerations and sustainability are the focus of all our decision-making across the business. In particular, we are focused on the following goals which support our zero tolerance approach to violations of labour law and human rights:



OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

As a law firm, we have a relatively simple supply chain, which supports our legal practice and internal operations. As our primary operations are in the United Kingdom, we are compliant with the higher standard of ethical business practice and strong labour regulation within the country. Our suppliers are also mainly based within the UK and the firm's relationship with its suppliers is overseen by our Director of Business Services and our Operations Board. We also have a team that manages our supply chain on an operational level, including a dedicated Contracts Manager, Environmental Impact Assistant and Information Security Officer who support those in the business that are responsible for procurement.

Our supply chain can broadly be broken into the following key categories:

- **Business Services:** including catering, cleaning, travel services and document production and business process services.
- **Professional Services:** including services provided by auditors, advisors (for example in relation to tax and insurance), consultants and other specialists.
- **Facilities:** including leases for our offices, services provided by security providers and contractors engaged in relation to fit out works etc. and the purchase of office furniture and equipment.
- **Human Resources:** including services in relation to recruitment, training, and payroll.
- **Technology:** including services provided in relation to our systems, software, and equipment.

Based on the type of our suppliers and the nature of the goods and services we purchase, we have assessed the overall risk for Burness Paull contracting with organisations that engage in slavery, forced labour or human trafficking, and consider this to be relatively low.

OUR POLICIES AND DUE DILLIGENCE PROCESS

As a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact, we are strongly committed to preventing slavery or human trafficking in any aspect of our business or supply chain. We are confident in our internal policies; we apply the highest possible standards in the recruitment and employment of our people. We also conduct due diligence on our prospective employees prior to them joining Burness Paull. When recruiting, we comply with all employment legislation and any applicable regulations. Burness Paull is an accredited Living Wage employer and we are committed to fair reward through our policies on salary, bonuses, and benefits scheme. In addition, our partners and employees are encouraged to give back to the community and have dedicated over 500 hours of their time for various pro-bono activities. Thus, we consider the overall risk of Modern Slavery existing within our own business to be very low.

In relation to our supply chain, we undertake a regular review of our business policies and procedures to ensure that the preventive measures we take are appropriate and proportionate to the level of risk our suppliers may pose for our organisation.

For the current reporting period, our main activities in relation to our supplier chain were in line with our commitments last year and involved:

- Engaging with suppliers at the point of onboarding/contract renewal to ensure that, where appropriate, contractual terms are in place providing a warranty that both they and their suppliers are in full compliance with our [Supplier Code of Business](#) and all applicable modern slavery, anti-human trafficking and labour laws.
- Including modern slavery risks as part of our comprehensive Sustainable Procurement training for colleagues who deal with procurement, in line with our ESG commitments.

- Conducting training on sustainable procurement for relevant colleagues from across the business, focused on responsible procurement. The focus was on main ESG topics and stressed our zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, among other sustainability issues. This included tailored guidance to help identify the potential risk areas for modern slavery and provided information of the appropriate controls which can be used to mitigate the risk in our supply chain. It also re-emphasises the importance of escalating any concerns around modern slavery.

OUR FUTURE PRIORITIES

Over the next reporting period, in order to further reduce the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chain, we are committed to:

- Keep encouraging our suppliers to sign up to our Supplier Code of Business or present their own materially equivalent code that maps their own compliance.
- Roll out our own ESG Questionnaire as an enhanced due diligence technique to a greater number of our suppliers, allowing us to gather data from a higher percentage of our supply chain. This will help us track our suppliers' commitments to ESG, including their commitments to preventing modern slavery, labour law or other human rights violations.
- Continue our training programme for colleagues who deal with procurement, focusing on raising awareness around sustainable procurement practices which are also in line with our compliance responsibilities.

BOARD APPROVAL

This Modern Slavery Statement has been approved by the Operations Board on 10 November 2023 and is signed by our Managing Partner, Tamar Tammes.

Signed by



Tamar Tammes
Managing Partner

Our previous Modern Slavery Statements can be viewed [here](#)