



Modern Slavery Statement 2025-2026

Date produced: April 2026



1. Assurance statement

- 1.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) maintain a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to acting ethically, responsibly and transparently, and to upholding human rights throughout our operations and supply chains.
- 1.2 During the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, no confirmed incidents of modern slavery or human trafficking were identified within our operations or supply chain. However, we recognise that the absence of confirmed reports does not necessarily indicate an absence of risk. We therefore continue to take a proactive and risk-based approach to the identification, prevention and response.
- 1.3 This statement is published annually to promote transparency and to meet the requirements of Section 54 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

2. Organisational Structure, Business and Supply Chains (s.54(5)(a))

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

- 2.1 The Authority is the publicly accountable body responsible for overseeing the delivery of fire and rescue services to approximately 1.127 million¹ residents, workers, and visitors across Tyne and Wear. It ensures services meet legislative and regulatory requirements and maintains high standards of conduct, integrity, and professionalism.
- 2.2 The Authority comprises 17 elected members:
- 16 members appointed by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear (North Tyneside, Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland) in accordance with the [Local Government Act 1985](#)
 - The Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, appointed under the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

- 2.3 TWFRS is led by the Chief Fire Officer, supported by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Modern slavery performance indicators are reviewed quarterly by the Internal Governance Board, providing transparent oversight and assurance.
- 2.4 TWFRS operates from 21 sites, including 17 community fire stations, Service Headquarters, the Brigade Training Centre, the Technical Services Centre and Safetyworks – the Service’s interactive education facility.
- 2.5 In pursuit of its vision of “*creating the safest community*”, the Service delivers the following core functions:
- **Prevention** – Raising awareness of fire and emergency risks through education and early intervention, with targeted support for the most vulnerable.
 - **Protection** – Enforcing fire safety legislation to ensure buildings and occupants are as safe as possible.

¹ Dataset population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021 (2022) Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021-Office for National Statistics. (Accessed: 02 March 2026).

- **Response** – Deploying highly trained personnel and specialist resources to respond effectively to emergencies.
- **Resilience** – Managing major and wide-scale incidents while maintaining essential services and working collaboratively with partner agencies.

2.6 Further information about our governance and organisational structure is available at www.twfire.gov.uk.

3. Policies in Relation to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (s.54(5)(b))

3.1 We maintain a comprehensive framework of policies and procedures that support the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking, including:

- Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- Counter Fraud Framework.
- Financial and Procurement Regulations.
- Procurement Procedures.
- Recruitment Policy and Safer Recruitment Principles.
- Safeguarding Policy.
- Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy.

3.2 These documents set clear expectations for ethical behaviour, provide routes for reporting concerns, and outline the standards expected of employees and suppliers. All relevant policies are reviewed regularly and updated as required.

4. Due Diligence Processes in relation to Modern slavery (s.54(5)(c))

4.1 Our due diligence processes are designed to identify, assess and manage modern slavery risks across our supply chain.

- The Authority spends approximately £7.7 million per annum on goods, services and works. All procurement activity must comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wider UK legislation and the Authority's Standing Orders and Financial and Procurement Regulations.
- We primarily use public sector frameworks and, where appropriate, conduct open market procurement routes to ensure mandatory checks are completed prior to contract award.

Supplier Due Diligence Measures

4.2 Our procurement and contract management arrangements include:

- Requiring suppliers to confirm adherence to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 through tender documentation.
- Mandatory exclusion of bidders convicted of modern slavery offences, in line with the Procurement Act 2023.
- Discretionary exclusion where credible evidence of modern slavery exists, even in the absence of a conviction.
- Requiring suppliers to take appropriate steps to manage risks within their own supply chains.

- Verifying that suppliers operate lawfully, ethically and in line with our expectations.

- 4.3 Suppliers within the scope of the Act are expected to publish annual modern slavery statements.
- 4.4 The Authority has again met the criteria to remain on the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Corporate Ethics Register, with recognition extended to 20 June 2027, demonstrating our commitment to ethical procurement and high standards of supplier conduct.

5. Risk Assessment and Management (s.54(5)(d))

- 5.1 We recognise that modern slavery risks may arise through both supply chains and recruitment activity, and that these risks can evolve over time.

- Risk considerations form part of procurement, contract management, and recruitment processes.
- Given our predominantly UK-based workforce and supplier base, the overall level of risk is assessed as low but not negligible. We continue to monitor external developments and adapt our approach as necessary.
- Policies, systems, and governance arrangements are in place to reduce risk, ensure compliance and support early identification.

- 5.2 Potential areas of elevated risk include:

- **Supply chain** - particularly sectors reliant on low-cost or outsourced labour, and
- **Recruitment** - especially where third-party agencies are used or where individuals may be vulnerable to coercion.

Recruitment-Related Risk Controls

- 5.3 We ensure all applicants are legally entitled to work in the UK and are protected from exploitation.

- 5.4 Pre-employment checks include, as appropriate:

- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
- Declaration of unspent convictions.
- References covering the preceding three years.
- Occupational health screening (including substance misuse testing).
- Standard or Enhanced DBS checks.

- 5.5 Due diligence is also undertaken when engaging third-party suppliers to identify risks of forced labour or unethical recruitment practices.

6. Monitoring and Effectiveness (s.54(5)(e))

- 6.1 The effectiveness of our approach is monitored through:

- Periodic review of relevant policies and procedures.
- Ongoing modern slavery, safeguarding and ethical conduct training.
- Maintenance of confidential whistleblowing and safeguarding reporting routes.

6.2 The Internal Governance Board reviews modern slavery key performance indicators quarterly. As of 31 March 2026, performance was as follows:

- **98%** of staff completed mandatory modern slavery e-learning.
- **98%** of staff reported confidence in identifying and responding to suspected modern slavery.
- **0** whistleblowing reports were received relating to modern slavery.

7. Training and Capacity Building (s.54(5)(f))

7.1 Employees receive training to enable them to identify and report potential modern slavery concerns through the appropriate channels, including line management, the Safeguarding Manager, the Procurement Services Manager or the whistleblowing process.

- All employees and volunteers complete mandatory safeguarding training on induction, with refresher training every three years.
- Advanced safeguarding training is provided annually to operational and community-facing roles including crews, Flexi Duty Officers, Fire Safety Inspectors, Prevention and Education teams and Control Room operatives.
- Mandatory annual modern slavery e-learning supports recognition of exploitation indicators and clear escalation routes.
- Procurement professionals undertake ongoing CPD, including the annual CIPS Ethical Procurement module, to ensure responsible and risk-aware procurement practices.

7.2 During the reporting year, one suspected incident of modern slavery was identified during operational activity and appropriately reported through internal and external safeguarding and referral processes.

7.3 Training compliance is monitored via the Service's learning management system and overseen by the Learning and Development Team.

8. Governance Approval and Publication

8.1 This statement:

- Covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- Has been approved by the Authority.
- Will be published on the TWFRS website and submitted to the UK Government Modern Slavery Statement Registry, in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.



Councillor
Chair
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority



Stewart Nicholson
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Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service