

Modern Slavery Statement 2023/2024

This statement is made in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It sets out the steps that Southend-on-Sea City Council takes to ensure that no modern slavery or human trafficking takes place within:

- our organisation
- our partners
- our sub-contractors
- supply chain

Modern slavery includes:

- slavery
- servitude
- human trafficking
- forced labour

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity and transparency in all business dealings. We will ensure effective systems and controls are in place to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place within the council or our supply chain.

Our business

Southend-on-Sea is located on the Thames Estuary with a long coastline. As such it is close to:

- Tilbury docks
- DP World London Gateway
- Harwich docks

Southend has an airport and is close to London, meaning there are many transport and access routes for consideration in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking.

Southend-on-Sea City Council is a unitary local authority, serving a population of 180,700 residents (2021 Census). We spend around £190m per year on purchasing services, supplies and works contracts to meet the delivery of services to the public. We employ around 1,800 staff to provide a vast range of services to fulfil statutory and discretionary needs for:

- residents
- businesses

- visitors
- partners

In addition to our duties as an employer, we are committed under [section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of:

- slavery, or
- human trafficking

Our areas of focus

We deem areas of focus to include:

- children and adult services
- housing (including social and private sector housing)
- environmental health
- education and licencing

In particular, those experiencing homelessness or those at risk of becoming homeless are at higher risk of exploitation and falling prey to modern slavery.

We recognise that other areas of focus in the city include:

- restaurants
- car valeting services
- the sex trade and affiliated establishments
- the construction industry (including sub-contractors)
- forced or arranged marriages

We also realise that areas of focus are not just limited to these areas.

Our policies

We review our policies and procedures on a regular basis and operate internal policies. These ensure that business is conducted in an ethical and transparent manner and in compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. These include:

1. The [Modern Slavery | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#) guidance which sets out our stance on modern slavery and explains how employees can identify any instances of this and where they can go for help
2. We operate a robust 'Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy'. This includes conducting eligibility to work in the UK checks for all employees, to safeguard against human trafficking or individuals being forced to work against their will

3. The Procurement Team is responsible for ensuring all procurement activity complies with the Council's 'Contract Procedure Rules' and wider 'Public Contract Regulations 2015'. We operate a Whistleblowing Policy so that all employees know that they can raise concerns about how colleagues are being treated or raise concerns about practices within our business or supply chain, without fear of reprisals.
4. Our 'Code of Conduct' explains the manner in which we behave as an organisation and how we expect our employees and suppliers to act.

South Essex Homes

South Essex Homes is Southend City Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation responsible for the management and maintenance of around 6000 Council homes housing approximately 11000 residents of Southend.

In addition, South Essex Homes and its subsidiary companies employ 300 staff members. South Essex Homes comply with the requirements of:

- SET Safeguarding Adults Guidelines
- SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

They also have their own Safeguarding Children and Adults Policies which align to SET guidelines.

Southend Care Ltd

Southend Care Ltd is also a local authority trading company that is wholly owned by Southend-on-Sea City Council. Their statement is at Appendix 1.

Our suppliers

We operate the following systems and controls to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place within our dealings with suppliers.

- we maintain a database of registered suppliers as well as a corporate contract register
- financial due diligence is carried out on key suppliers before allowing them to become a contractual supplier
- an insolvency and financial alert system also tracks increased risks against our key suppliers

- the new Selection Questionnaire template, as issued by central government in April 2023, is in operation
- the anti-slavery policy forms part of our contract with suppliers - suppliers are required to confirm that no part of their business operations contradict this policy

As part of our contract with suppliers, we also require they confirm to us that:

- they comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015: Requirements under Modern Slavery Act 2015
- they are a relevant commercial organisation as defined by section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- if they answer yes to the previous question, they are compliant with the annual reporting requirements contained within section 54 of the Act 2015

Training

The Corporate Procurement team provides training across the business in the form of:

- e-learning, and
- face to face

This is to raise awareness about the Corporate Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and the procurement process.

Within the CPRs are ethical procurement requirements that link to the procurement process and tests suppliers on their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.

In 2023 we revised our Council Procurement and Contract Management Strategy so that Modern Slavery is one of the key areas of focus in relation to better contract management.

In addition, the Corporate Procurement team has put in place both a:

- contract management framework
- contract management manual

The team has also finalised the building of a corporate contract management system. This will be key to ensuring suppliers are monitored by contract managers in terms of compliance. Suppliers receive regular requests to evidence how they are operating their contracts. Advisors within the Corporate Procurement Team have completed specific, in-depth training in Modern Slavery, as this is an element of formal CIPS qualifications. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Cabinet Office have funded Foundation Contract Management Training, which has been completed by a large number of officers. Ten

officers are also engaged in the Contract Management Pioneer Programme, also funded by:

- DLUHC
- The Cabinet Office
- Crown Commercial Services
- Local Government Association (LGA)

This is with a view to pass knowledge on to relevant officers, which is already happening in relation to contract management tools.

Council employees across all service areas continue to attend training, events and conferences hosted by partner or external organisations as well as national and regional anti-slavery groups. These include:

- National Network Coordinators Forum (NNCF)
- Eastern Region Anti-Slavery Partnership (ERASP)

Next steps

We will further embed the importance of the Modern Slavery Act into our business and supply chain procedures, ensuring that our activities and that of our suppliers are committed to complying with the requirements of the Act. We will continue to monitor and audit our policies and procedures to make amendments and update staff where necessary.

We continue to work with and support the activities of the [SAMS Partnership](#). This organisation:

- identifies and partners with key community stakeholders
- mobilises communities and raises awareness about modern slavery and human trafficking in the community

To ensure the city is protected from violence and criminal behaviour, we will continue to be involved with the Essex-wide Violence and Vulnerability Unit and continue to combine the efforts of strategic partnership boards.

These boards include the:

- Southend Safeguarding Partnership
- Health and Well-Being Board
- Community Safety Partnership

We will draw on the Boards expertise, knowledge and spheres of influence, reflecting our determination to keep Southend-on-Sea safe and thriving.

The Council also commits to:

1. Deliver training for the workforce, partner agencies and third sector organisations. We will also continue to raise awareness.
2. Promote national campaigns to help raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking.
3. Review the adult safeguarding referral pathway to better identify and support potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking We will refresh this pathway if needed.
4. Aligning the work of the Safer Essex (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group

This statement is made under section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for the financial year ending 31 March 2024

Appendix 1: Statement from Southend Cares

Modern Slavery Statement

Modern slavery is a crime and violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as:

- slavery
- servitude
- forced and compulsory labour
- human trafficking

All of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them to personal or commercial gain.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity to all our business dealings and relationships and to ensuring effective systems and controls are in place to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place in our own business or in any of our supply chains.

We are also committed to ensuring there is transparency in our own business and in our approach to tackling modern slavery throughout our supply chains, consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Organisation Structure and Supply Chains

Southend Care Ltd is a Local Authority Trading Company wholly owned by Southend-on-Sea City Council. It was created in April 2017, and:

- employs over 360 staff
- supports over 1000 customers per year

Southend Care Ltd prides itself on working with some of the most vulnerable people in society including those people with very complex and challenging needs. Our positioning reflects this in terms of being a more specialist provider in Southend market and our current portfolio of services includes:

- day opportunities
- residential care
- supported living
- extra care housing
- shared lives
- reablement
- supported employment
- acting as the provider of last resort for Southend-on-Sea City Council

Supply Chains

Our statement applies to all individuals working for us on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels:

- directors
- officers
- agency workers
- seconded workers
- volunteers
- contractors
- third party representatives
- business partners

We expect the same high standards from all our contractors, suppliers and other business partners and as part of our contracting process. We include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children. We expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

We are committed to ensuring that our suppliers reflect our philosophies on Modern Slavery and comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Employees

Southend Care Ltd also recognises the potential for slavery and human trafficking to affect employees working within its business.

Southend Care Ltd has robust HR policies and procedures in place across all its services. These are regularly reviewed to:

- ensure compliance with employment legislation
- prevent unethical working practices

Southend Care is committed to ensure staff:

- are paid fairly and appropriately
- regularly reviewed
- benchmarked against the terms and conditions of employment

Staff are encouraged to report any concerns, including any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. Our Whistleblowing policy is there to support staff feel confident in making disclosures without fear of retaliation.

We have a robust recruitment process, which includes verifying the identity of each employee and their right to work in the United Kingdom before commencing employment. We work closely with reputable recruitment agencies and seek written assurances that they:

- adopt the same robust approach
- adhere to the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

We offer all employees access to an Employee Assistance service with offers guidance and counselling 24 hours, 365 days per year, in respect of work or personal matters. This is a completely confidential service to our employees.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Southend Care Ltd's slavery and human trafficking statement.

Approved by the Board of Southend Care on 23 August 2023.

Peter Little, Chair of Board

V1

Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	27.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	14.9
Passive Sentences	19.0%

V2

Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	32.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	13.7
Passive Sentences	16.6%