

Cambridgeshire County Council Modern Slavery Act Statement 2026/27

1 Introduction

This statement sets out Cambridgeshire County Council's actions over the next 12 months to understand and mitigate potential modern slavery risks related to its business. This statement meets the requirements of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is an umbrella term that covers the offences of human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced/compulsory labour. It is the illegal exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. Modern slavery is often hidden from view, and many victims do not self-identify meaning that quantifying the extent of modern slavery is challenging.

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to improving its practices to tackle modern slavery and actively supports and champions modern slavery prevention efforts. The Council recognises its responsibility to take a robust approach to modern slavery and human trafficking as an employer, commissioner, contractor, first responder and a public service responsible for safeguarding.

This statement covers the activities of the County Council, it covers direct employees of the Council, agency workers and services commissioned and delivered on behalf of the Council through third party organisations and their supply chains.

2 What is Modern Slavery?

Modern Slavery is a serious and often hidden crime in which people are exploited for criminal gain. The impact can be devastating for the victims. Modern slavery comprises slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking.

The term 'Modern Slavery' captures many types of exploitation, several of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

1. Sexual exploitation: this includes sexual abuse, forced prostitution, and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse videos/images.
2. Domestic servitude: this involves victims being forced to work in usually private households, performing domestic chores and childcare duties.
3. Forced labour: this can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, and beauty.
4. Criminal exploitation: this can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick pocketing, shoplifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.
5. Human trafficking: this requires that a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. The offence can be committed even where the victim consents to the travel. This reflects the fact that a victim may be deceived by the promise of a better life or job or may be a child who is influenced by an adult to travel.

6. Other forms of exploitation: organ removal, forced begging, forced benefit fraud, forced marriage, and illegal adoption.

There is no typical victim, and some do not understand they have been exploited and that they are entitled to help and support. Victims are often trafficked to a foreign country where they are unable to speak the language, have their travel and identity documents removed and are told if they try to escape, they or their families will be harmed.

3 Organisation Structure and Supply Chains

Cambridgeshire County Council is a large upper tier local authority in the East of England. It provides a wide range of services supporting and enabling residents, communities and businesses across the county, services are delivered directly by the Council through commissioned or procured arrangements by third party organisations.

Cambridgeshire County Council has a vision of 'A healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire'. To achieve this vision, the Council is focusing on three ambitions and 12 supporting priorities:

- Support a green and sustainable county: Low carbon council, tackling climate risks, restoring nature, a circular economy.
- Enable full, healthy lives for all: Eating well, stronger ties, active living, independent living. Ensure fairness and opportunity wherever we can.
- Ensure fairness and opportunity: The best start in life for children and young people, jobs for the future, financial security, well connected.

The Council is organised around 5 functions:

- Adults, Health and Commissioning Directorate
- Children, Education and Families Directorate
- Place and Sustainability Directorate
- Finance and Resources Directorate
- The Office of the Chief Executive

The Council employs approximately 4,700 people and is led politically by the 61 elected County Councillors. The Council's budget is in excess of £1bn per year. The procurement of goods, services and works are governed by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procurement Rules. For further information, please read the [Council's Contract Register](#) and its [Procurement Pipeline](#).

In achieving its objectives, the Council provides a wide range of public services delivered both in-house, through external suppliers and in partnership. Consequently, the Council has a diverse supply chain.

4 Country of Operation and Supply

The Council operates in the United Kingdom. Any organisation that works with the Council and which is covered by Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) is expected to understand and comply with the Act's requirements. The Council's procurement and contract management activities help to ensure that it works with compliant organisations. In addition, suppliers are expected to carry out checks on their sub-contractors to ensure their supply chains are free of modern slavery and exploitation.

5 Responsibilities

The Council's Corporate Leadership Team, or CLT, led by the Chief Executive, are the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council that are collectively responsible for ensuring appropriate recruitment, employment and procurement policies are in operation and are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The CLT and its membership is set out in the Council's constitution at: [Management Structure](#)

The Council's Service Directors, who report to the CLT, are responsible for ensuring that robust risk assessments are undertaken across their service areas and where there is deemed to be a risk of modern slavery, this will be included in those assessments with actions identified to mitigate such risks where possible.

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that council policies, such as those relating to recruitment or procurement, are adhered to by employees and agency workers within their teams and that all relevant training is undertaken and kept up to date.

It is the responsibility of all workers, including those direct employees of the Council, agency workers and those within commissioned services, to report any concerns regarding modern slavery.

It is the responsibility of the Adult and Children's Safeguarding teams to ensure appropriate identification of and support for vulnerable residents at risk of modern slavery to enable them to live safe and healthy lives.

6 Policies

The Council has a wide range of policies and processes in place which support its commitment to preventing and tackling modern slavery through its business operations. All policies have been subject to robust assurance processes and are approved by the relevant cross-party Service and Policy Committee of the Council, or through the Corporate Leadership Team. Relevant policies include:

- Pay policy: covers all employees apart from Service Directors, Executive Directors and the Chief Executive and commits to consistent and equitable pay arrangements for employees.
- Employee Code of Conduct: defines the standards of acceptable conduct, values and behaviours expected from employees of the County Council.

- Whistleblowing policy: sets out how employees and others can report a concern.
- Safeguarding policies: describes how the Council's safeguarding arrangements operate.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy: sets out the council's vision and approach and action plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in policies, in employment and with communities.

7 Due Diligence and Risk Management

The Council ensures it undertakes due diligence in all its recruitment processes and when procuring goods and services.

Recruitment processes: The Council uses robust recruitment policies and processes to ensure that all prospective employees undergo immigration and pre-employment checks in line with the latest guidance on Right to Work checks. The Council uses a Government approved right to work check system, keep robust records of all right to work checks and track all employees who are subject to visa restrictions. All employees with responsibilities for recruitment and selection receive appropriate training, including their legal obligations under employment legislation. Agency worker assignments and engagements are subject to the same rigour.

Managing supply chains: The Council takes a practical, risk-based approach to supply chain management by identifying key risk areas and working with suppliers to monitor and mitigate risks wherever practical. Contract management is devolved across the Council, and it is the responsibility of individual contract managers to undertake appropriate due diligence checks when procuring new contracts and managing existing contracts.

The Council undertakes all procurement in compliance with the Procurement Act (2023) and uses the Conditions of Participation which includes a requirement to declare and evidence (where applicable) compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (2015). The Council's due diligence includes:

- Requiring suppliers covered by the Act to self-certify compliance with the Modern Slavery Act as part of the tender process.
- Provisions in all new contracts requiring compliance with the Modern Slavery Act and enabling contract suspension/termination in the event of a breach, where deemed necessary.
- Introducing action plans/sanctions where areas of poor compliance and/or performance were identified.

Service Delivery: If a risk to vulnerable residents is identified, safeguarding assessments would be undertaken to identify the nature of the modern slavery risk. Plans of support put in place for individuals and where criteria would be met the statutory modern slavery National Referral Mechanism processes will be followed.

8 Learning and Development

Council employees undertaking recruitment are required to complete relevant e-learning on the Council's Learning Management System (Thinqi) This includes information on how to recruit safely, with safeguarding as a key priority.

Safeguarding training enables officers in relevant roles to identify and understand how to report incidents of abuse and neglect, including how to raise concerns through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Comprehensive 'Modern Slavery and Trafficking' training is available to all employees via Thinqi.

The Council continues to work with local public sector partner organisations to ensure that relevant training offers and processes are regularly discussed, to improve workforce development and modern slavery understanding across the wider county.

9 Disrupting Modern Slavery

The Council has an important role to play in disrupting modern slavery within the county. Through working with partners such as the police and district councils, the council prioritises a co-ordinated approach to disrupting modern slavery, alongside other forms of serious and organised crime. The Council is represented at relevant partnership meetings.

10 Reporting and Guidance

As outlined in the Modern Slavery Act, local authorities are designated 'first responders' when a suspected victim of modern slavery has been identified. The council has a legal requirement to refer suspected victims of modern slavery to the Home Office. All modern slavery concerns raised by council employees, councillors and volunteers are reported via the National Referral Mechanism.

Any Council employee affected by slavery, or who suspects someone is at risk is advised to:

- Report concerns to a Safeguarding Officer; a list can be found on the Council's Intranet.
- Follow the 'reporting a concern' process for a vulnerable child or adult, the relevant safeguarding process should be followed.

The advice to residents and communities if they are affected by slavery, or suspect someone is at risk, is to:

- Call 999 if it is an emergency
- Call 101 for non-emergencies
- Call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111
- Call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700

- Report online via the Modern Slavery Helpline website or via the free Unseen app, available on Android or iOS.
- If a case is open to Child or Adult Safeguarding services speak with your Social Worker.

11 Duty to Notify

Specified public authorities have a duty to notify the Secretary of State of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of modern slavery or human trafficking. The Duty to Notify (DtN) provision is set out in Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and applies to local authorities in England and Wales which includes Cambridgeshire County Council.

Information on the duty to notify is set out in the Modern Slavery Act Regulations 2015.

The Council's website has further information on safeguarding adults and safeguarding children.

12 Going Forward

The Council will continue to monitor on all elements of the Modern Slavery Act (2015).



Signature

Position Chief Executive

Date 24 July 2026