**Berneslai Homes Modern Slavery Statement 2023 to 2024**

**This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.**

## Introduction

This statement sets out our commitment to eliminate, as far as possible, the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking taking place in our organisation and in our supply chain.

## Our Organisation

Berneslai Homes is an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) and wholly owned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. Berneslai Homes is a company limited by guarantee and is overseen by a Board of Directors. The implementation of policies and the day to day running of Berneslai Homes is delegated to the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team.

## Our Corporate Objective

Berneslai Homes manages approximately 18,000 homes on behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. We also have a successful and profitable in-house Construction Services trading arm employing a skilled and safe workforce.

## Our Core Services and Added Value

- Barnsley Homes Standard
- New Supply
- 24/7 Responsive Repairs
- Getting Connected
- Rent Collection
- Tenant Support
- Helping People into work
- Visible & Accessible front-line staff
- Fuel Poverty
- Barnsley Homeseeker Scheme
- Neighbourhood Management
- Tenant Engagement

## Our Supply Chain

Berneslai Homes procures goods and services. We work with a wide range of different suppliers and partners, details of which are published via the contracts register on our website. Our supply chains include suppliers of building materials, ICT and other office equipment, professional services, office cleaning and other office facilities services. Our contractors and suppliers are predominantly UK based.

## Tenants

We have tenancy verification checks in place for sign-ups and undertake a number of operational activities where possible signs could be highlighted. These include:

- Periodic visits to our properties where we haven't had any recent contact.
- Financial inclusion and tenancy support delivered by our Tenants First Team.
- Neighbourhood management with area-based Officers, resulting in our officers knowing a large number of tenants.
- Strong working relationships with local Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs).
- Collaborative working with BMBC Corporate Assurance.
- Annual advertised estate inspections where we might notice anything indicating modern slavery, and residents can attend and often report issues.
- We have an embedded Vulnerability Protocol "Something Doesn't Look Right" across the organisation where staff and contractors can raise any concerns to our Neighbourhood Teams.

## Employees

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy contains relevant requirements in terms of checking of eligibility (Right to Work checks that meet Home Office guidance) to work in the UK and carrying out of necessary checks such as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on relevant employees, including agency and temporary employees.

References are requested on all employees, and this includes asking referees for any concerns about the applicant working with vulnerable people or children.

Salaries are in line with the Living Wage.

## Our Policies

Our opposition to modern slavery and human trafficking is recognised in our Vulnerability Protocol.

## Due Diligence to Our Values and Ethics

Our Procurement Strategy includes reference to modern slavery and human trafficking. We require new suppliers to declare that they are not involved in slavery or human trafficking and are fully compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

## Assessment of Risk within our organisation

Berneslai Homes operates a wide number of activities in delivering neighbourhood and property maintenance services. Some of our supplier's subcontract work or rely on recruitment agencies to supply temporary or permanent staff. By the nature of their businesses, some of our suppliers are potentially at higher risk than others, for example: maintenance, repairs and construction companies and waste recycling.

Our contracts have equality, diversity and inclusion and modern slavery sections contained within them. As part of our contract management responsibilities, if a potential risk is identified concerns will be reported and may result in termination of the supplier's contract.

**What we did in 2023-24, including ongoing processes:**

- Annually we remind our staff of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, including the definitions of slavery and human trafficking.
- We continue to develop our internal policies and governance to reduce the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking taking place anywhere in our organisation or supply chains.
- Our standard terms and conditions for the procurement of goods and services include Modern Slavery Act provisions.
- We continue use the Cabinet Office Selection Questionnaire to evaluate tenderers and ensure that minimum requirements are met for Find A Tender projects.
- We continue to include a supplier and contractor code of conduct in our tender documents so that all our potential suppliers and subcontractors are aware of our commitment to reduce Modern Slavery in our supply chains.

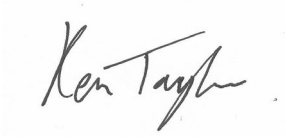
**During 2024-25 we will:**

- Review the supplier code of conduct to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose.
- Continue to work with our suppliers to ensure modern slavery does not exist within our supply chain.
- Continue to raise awareness with our staff through internal communications.
- Support and promote the national modern slavery website and helpline to the public: https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/ 0800 0121 700 via our website and social media platforms.
- We will publish our statement to the government registry https://modern-slavery-statement-registry.service.gov.uk/.

**Declaration**

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Berneslai Homes' modern slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31st March 2024, as approved by the Board in September 2024.

Signed on the Board's behalf



by: ……
Ken Taylor
Chair of Berneslai Homes Board