This statement is published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

It sets out the steps that the North of England Zoological Society has taken to ensure that slavery or human trafficking is not occurring in any part of our organisation, in that of our direct suppliers, supply chain or other partner organisations. This statement relates to the Society's financial year ended 31st December 2023.

Our Procurement Policy demonstrates our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implementing effective systems and controls, to reduce the risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place within our organisation or our supply chains.

Areas of Risk

The Society has identified a number of areas of heightened risk in relation to its operations; these have not changed since the last reporting period, as the Society has not made any significant changes to its activities and processes:

1. Overseas conservation partners
2. Overseas suppliers of retail merchandise
3. Construction contractors and subcontractors
4. Suppliers of fresh produce for catering and animal feed
5. Its own staff and volunteers

Due Diligence

The Society has undertaken due diligence to reduce the risk of human trafficking and slavery within its operations and supply chains. Written confirmation is obtained from all conservation partners and any evidence of compliance with the Modern Slavery Act is obtained from suppliers with whom the Society has had expenditure in excess of £100,000 over the 12 months prior to the date of this statement. On set up, suppliers are asked to verify they adhere to the Modern Slavery Act and where possible, additional assurance has been taken, by verifying the Modern Slavery Act statements of qualifying organisations.

Our employees

Where an employee requests their salary to be paid into an account with a different name to themselves, due diligence will be undertaken with the employee to ensure they will be in receipt and control of their salary. Such changes to bank details would be flagged by the Society's payroll team to the People Team, where confirmation and assurance would be ascertained from the individual concerned.

Our Supply Chain

We have 1300 active suppliers and in the last 12 months we spent over £100,000 pa with 85 of those suppliers. A large number of our suppliers have turnovers which trigger a requirement to comply with the obligation to produce a Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "Act"). We expect that the companies who supply us to give us commitments (as and when contracts are entered into or renewed) that they will:

– Comply with the Society's Procurement Policy
– Comply with all applicable laws relating to slavery and human trafficking (including the Act)
– Undertake their own due diligence into their own supply chains and business partners; and
– Ensure that any contracts with their subcontractors have similar obligations.

We ask the same of our conservation partner organisations and education partners. The implementation of this depends on negotiating formal agreements as and when they come up for renewal.

Conservation Partners

This statement covers all field conservation projects involving Chester Zoo and is relevant for Chester Zoo employees, affiliates and partners.

Exceptions are projects that are part of community support for conservation involving multiple donors and where Chester Zoo have confidence that due diligence and responsibilities is undertaken by other parties, such as contributions to EEP-endorsed projects.

Partner organisations will conform with 'The Modern Slavery Act 2015' and warrant that they have thoroughly investigated their labour practices and those of their direct suppliers to ensure that there is no forced labour used anywhere in the organisation or used in any of direct suppliers' or subcontractors' organisation and that this will continue to be the case at all times.

Training our team

A training programme is in place to ensure all management staff are aware of the organisation's responsibilities in accordance with the Act. It helps staff identify any concerns around modern slavery as they go about their duties and how to escalate this in the organisation. The training forms part of the new starter process for relevant staff and refresher training is then provided annually via an e-learning course.

Actions for the next reporting period

The Society will continue to deliver training courses in order to maintain the awareness and understanding of staff who work in the areas of heightened risk.
New suppliers and partners will be expected to confirm their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 before their relationship with the Society is formalised.
This statement and the commitments and actions within it will be reviewed and updated each year.

Jamie Christon — Chief Executive Officer

Liz Carnie — Corporate Director

30 June 2024