

## **The Children's Society Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2022/2023**



### **Our Commitment**

The Children's Society's (TCS) mission is to overturn the damaging decline in children's well-being, setting a path for long lasting growth.

We recognise that modern slavery is a global significant human rights issue that includes human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude, and child labour. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in our relationships by taking every reasonable opportunity to take action within our direct operations and wider sphere of influence to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in the charity's operations.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It constitutes The Children's Society's anti-slavery and human trafficking policy statement for the financial year ending on 31 March 2023. It covers the activities of The Church of England Children's Society (trading as The Children's Society) and its wholly owned subsidiaries: The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and The Children's Society (Services) Limited.

### **The Charity's structure**

The Children's Society is a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered in England and Wales. Our organisation was established in 1881 with the principal objective to care for and support children and young people in need.

The Trustee Board has the responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the Charity. The operational management is delegated by the Trustees to the Executive Leadership Team, which is accountable to the Trustee Board for its stewardship of the Charity. TCS is organised into five operational domains (Youth Impact, Youth Voice, Social Impact, Enabling Resources and Diversity and Talent).

We employ around 760 staff and have around 4000 volunteers. We had 1,800 retail volunteers assisting in the running of our network of 104 shops – which generated £12m in the past year, while raising vital awareness of our work and serving as inclusive hubs for the local community.

### **Assessing modern slavery risks in our supply chains and other areas**

Modern slavery is hard to detect and is often hidden in plain sight as well as seemingly legitimate industries. By its nature, we recognise that there are risks of modern slavery in our supply chains for all types of goods and services. The risk of modern slavery in our operations is considered low due to its relatively small-scale supply chains with the controls and systems that we have in place to manage its supply chain and recruitment. However, a risk does remain nonetheless, and so the policies and procedures outlined below help us mitigate this, to the point that we are satisfied that we are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Our strategic objectives include working to prevent and disrupt child exploitation, abuse, and trafficking. Given our work, it is certain that we encounter situations of modern slavery and as a result, our policies and procedures such as safeguarding, whistleblowing and recruitment are critical underpinnings of a robust, safe and ethical response.

## **Our policies and practices for the prevention and mitigation of human trafficking and modern slavery, including steps taken in 2022/23:**

### ***Service Delivery for Young People***

We delivered change through a blended model of training and direct intervention, providing learning sessions and other interventions to improve prevention and disruption approaches to child exploitation, abuse, and modern slavery to 21,500 people through our Home Office commissioned national Prevention Programme. Our national [#LookCloser campaign](#) focused on improving the public and business sector's understanding of child exploitation and modern slavery and their role in spotting and reporting concerns expanded to reach 4,231 people through training, over 1 million through social media and the campaign's website had over 16,000 visits in 2022/23.

*"[The Prevention programme team] are much further ahead of a lot of people in terms of raising the profile of exploitation. They work collaboratively to tackle exploitation."*

#### *Partner*

We also contributed evidence to numerous consultations, including on modern slavery and trafficking, policing standards, and supported accommodation. We have been instrumental in supporting the compilation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC) in particular, submitting several pieces to shape both the review and the Government's response to it, including helping to make sure there is an increased focus on teenagers and extra familial harm. We also developed a new child exploitation prevention e-learning product aimed at the corporate sector. This will enable professionals to spot the signs of exploitation and act safely.

TCS has also supported the work of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) during its time of existence. We support the 20 core recommendations and are currently working to influence how these are adopted in the future.

### ***Support for Regional Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Partnerships in the East Midlands***

Throughout 2022/23, our East Midlands Prevention Officer has offered support to Strategic MACE partners in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, including actively facilitating as well as contributing to discussions around specific exploitation issues and offering more targeted, intensive support in the form of problem-solving workshops. Partners from Lincolnshire shared that they were very grateful for the Prevention Officer's role in supporting their continued improvement, particularly around decreasing waiting times and strengthening their ability to respond to exploitation concerns.

## **Gloucestershire Digital Lives Workshops**

In the Southwest, we facilitated a series of workshops to support professionals to better include the digital lives of young people in their work. These sessions helped participants to identify gaps and issues in the ways they were sharing information about a child's life online and consequently led to information sharing agreements being established for professionals in the county.

*"The feedback [from other attendees] was extremely positive, giving people working with children more confidence in tackling this very difficult and worrying issue... (I will be) talking more to my students about issues such as gaming and peer on peer abuse... (and give) consideration of how to approach conversations."*

### *Participant's feedback*

The Children's Society Prevention programme continued to work in partnership across the private, public and third sectors to improve awareness of, and responses to child modern slavery. This included work with the police, social care, health professionals, children's homes, banks, hotels, schools, transport companies and many others. We continued to deliver training on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), providing support to all the devolved NRM decision making sites across England through their national steering group. This support included a particular focus on improving identification and support for children trafficked into the UK for sexual abuse and preventing trafficked Refugee and migrant children from going missing.

We also took forward wider work to improve practice regarding missing and exploited Refugee and migrant children across the year. This included a project in partnership with Barnardo's and the Violence Reduction Partnership in the West Midlands to address concerns regarding missing and exploited Vietnamese children. Through this, we delivered training to seven Local Authorities as well as care providers and the police.

We also supported the National Police Chief's Council to develop the first national police guidance on preventing and responding to missing migrant children and worked with Missing People to develop good practice resources on this issue which will be finalised and published in 2023/24.

We have continued to collaborate with UK Finance to develop national guidance for the whole financial sector on the issue of Child Financial Exploitation alongside work with the Home Office to develop such guidance for all professionals.

We provided 13 different services that either worked with children who were being/at risk of being exploited or supported systems change in statutory services that impacted young people being exploited. In total these services worked with over 956 young people directly and over 18,082 professionals through our systems change work. We reached 8,784 young people via events, worked with 38 parents/carers directly and 358 parents/carers via events.

The 13 services supporting young people who experienced instances of exploitation that fall within the scope of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are explained in Appendix 1 to this Statement.

## **Safeguarding**

The Children's Society (TCS) is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and adults that we work with. We ensure that we have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote safeguarding and safer working practice across our services.

Within the last year we have:

- Updated our ['safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk policy and procedures'](#), which includes clear procedures on working with children and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation and trafficking.
- All new starters to TCS must complete an online learning module on risks within the community, which covers contextual risks within the community including modern day slavery.

## **Purchasing and supply chains**

The Charity's Procurement Policy outlines our ethical procurement approach and sets out our principles and practices for the acquisition of goods and services. We have integrated modern slavery provisions and due diligence into the Charity's contracting processes. The Charity has a Purchase Order system to ensure that staff make purchases, other than small expenses, using established processes. This is being monitored by the finance transaction team.

We continuously review and seek to mitigate risks in relation to suppliers who operate in areas where there may be modern slavery risks in the supply chain. This includes those who support the procurement of goods and materials for our fundraising and marketing activities and goods and materials for sale in our network of charity shops, particularly where those goods and materials are acquired from suppliers in high-risk countries.

Within the last year we have:

- Continuously improved the supplier onboarding process, by reviewing compliance requirements and educating TCS staff on supply chain due diligence.
- Continued to provide advice and guidance to those teams who have direct responsibility for relevant supply chains and to build awareness of modern slavery risk across our core teams.
- Identified the need to introduce a modern slavery process flow across all TCS supply chain activity.
- Conducted supply chain due diligence within our Retail arm.
- Ensured high risk supplier contracts include modern slavery obligations.

## Fundraising

The Charity accepts philanthropic donations and corporate funding from a wide range of sources. With due diligence procedures, we mitigate the risk that sources of potential funding could be linked to unethical or illegal activity, including exploitation (either directly to the prospective donor, or as an underlying source of funding for the donation). The Charity operates a due diligence process, gift acceptance policy, screens potential donations in excess of £5,000 for a number of factors, which includes any potential connection to modern slavery. Where due diligence checks indicate a significant issue or concern, the case will be passed to the Board of Trustees for review.

## People

Our People policies set out workplace rights and new recruits are screened around their right to work in the UK. Where it is necessary to hire agency workers or contractors, our staff are directed to vetted agencies that meet our selection criteria regarding their employment policies and practices. The Charity's pay structure is underpinned by the Living Wage Foundation, which means that staff are paid a real living wage. The Charity implements its own Whistleblowing Policy regarding concerns about potential corruption, fraud, and other unlawful practices within the Charity. If a case of modern slavery were to be suspected, this would be fully investigated, and appropriate disciplinary action would be taken.

## Key Performance Indicators in 2022/2023

	2021/22	2022/23
No. of known reported modern slavery cases in our direct areas of influence in procurement	0	0
No of new staff who completed new modern slavery training module introduced in the last financial year 2022/23 as part of the induction of new staff	197	120
Staff completion rate for safeguarding children training	92.5%	93%*
Staff completion rate for digital safeguarding training	92%	91%*
Staff completion rate for Safeguarding Policy training	84.5%	94%*

*\*Based on a 100% completion rate, with mitigating factors influencing the level of completion such as staff leaving, sickness, long-term leave, and maternity leave. We are also in the process of an integration and data sync project, which will allow for more accurate reporting data.*

### **In the last financial year, we delivered:**

- The Anti-Slavery Policy clarifying responsibilities and accountabilities, setting out expectations for staff, volunteers and other stakeholders, a process for raising concerns or grievances about policy violations and an explanation of how reports will be addressed.
- An e-learning module on modern slavery as part of the induction for new recruits.
- Awareness of modern slavery amongst staff, volunteers, and stakeholders in the procurement cycle.
- Learning from audits of the Rag merchants who are Trader Recycling Universal Standard (TRUST) accredited to shape our Retail Portfolio work. TRUST is the outcome of a coalition dedicated to boosting standards around modern slavery and exploitation in the supply chain within the recycling sector.

### **Action plan for the next financial year**

In 2023/2024, in addition to continuing the work outlined above, we will continue to focus on the following:

- Ensuring modern slavery is considered as part of a review of partnering due diligence, processes, and policies.
- Ensuring the inclusion of modern slavery KPIs and figures as part of a wider range of reportable statistics.
- Updating questions around modern slavery in the online supplier questionnaire completed by our direct suppliers. The questionnaire covers their governance, policies, training, and supply chain management processes.
- Developing a modern slavery risk management process flow.

### **Publication**

A copy of this statement, a full copy of the Act and a simplified overview is accessible to all employees electronically on The Children's Society's Intranet. If anyone has concerns that modern slavery or human trafficking is taking place in our organisation or supply chain, they should raise their concerns to the Executive Director, Enabling Resources or through the Whistleblowing Policy.

This statement will be reviewed annually and published accordingly by The Children's Society on its website.

### **Approval**

This policy statement was approved by the Trustees of The Children's Society and the Boards of Directors of The Children's Society (Services) Limited and The Children's Society (Trading) Limited by majority consensus and signed on their behalf. The Board of Trustees of The Children's Society authorised approval of this statement on its behalf to the relevant signatories on 27 July 2023.



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**Diana Noble**  
Chair of the Trustee Board  
The Children's Society



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**Mark Russell**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Children's Society



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**Elizabeth Walker**  
Director  
The Children's Society  
(Trading) Limited



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**Alasdair C Gillies**  
Director  
The Children's Society  
(Services) Limited

## Appendix 1

### TCS services working with those at risk of exploitation.

1. **CARE Essex**- provides specialist support to children and young people aged 8-24 years, who reside in Essex and are of a medium/high risk of exploitation, or actively being exploited (be that sexually or criminally). During 2022/23, CARE was able to work with 234 Young People. This continues to emphasise the support needed in this area of young people who are at a medium/high risk of exploitation, or those who are actively being exploited.
2. **Checkpoint** – Child sexual abuse (CSA)/ Child sexual exploitation (CSE)/ Sexual assault referral center (SARC) includes Torbay CSE, Devon CSA/E and CSA Counselling services. Checkpoint works with children and young people who have been sexually abused, including exploitation. Our one-to-one work with young people enables them to gain an understanding of sexual abuse/exploitation, grooming and abusive relationships and build on existing strengths to develop their own coping and keeping safe strategies. This one-to-one might include periods of increased levels of support and activity that may be deemed necessary to conduct assertive outreach, establish and maintain therapeutic relationships or respond to crisis.
3. **Climb (West Mercia Diversionary service)**- supports young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation by providing casework and diversionary activities.
4. **Disrupting Exploitation**- disrupts criminal and sexual exploitation through intelligence gathering and task-based activities as well as referrals and case work. The programme works across Greater Manchester, London, and Birmingham.
5. **Hand in Hand Yorkshire**- provides one-to-one support to help children and young people exit abusive and exploitative relationships or situations. Contracted also to provide Return Home interviews in Scarborough but referrals have been held up, so we are doing CSE work there instead.
6. **Prevention**- works across all of England and Wales to drive improvements in the prevention and disruption of child exploitation and abuse. This programme is commissioned by the Home Office and works in close partnership with organisations across the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to ensure every young victim of exploitation is identified and receives appropriate support.
7. **Safe Choices (CC/SE)**- provides CSE & CCE specialist support in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire through close working with families and multiagency collaboration, keeping children safe and improving the system wide response to child exploitation.
8. **Bradford (Missing)** - commissioned by Bradford Children's Trust delivered by The Children's Society and provides support to those children and young people in the care of Bradford Children's Trust who go missing. We are commissioned to

offer every child and young person who goes missing a Return Home Interview (RHI) and ultimately focus on reducing missing from care episodes.

9. **Manchester (Missing)** - The Manchester Missing from Care Service commissioned by Manchester City Council and delivered by The Children's Society, support those children and young people in the care of Manchester Local Authority who go missing from care, as well as supporting parent/carers who have young people who go missing or are on the periphery and coming in late. We are commissioned to offer every child and young person who goes missing a Return Home Interview (RHI) and we offer further support where needed, to ultimately focus on reducing missing from care episodes. Support could be offered on a one-to-one or group basis, and training/advice/consultations are also provided to professionals.
10. **Newham Vanguard**- partnership with local authority and health to offer a multi-agency response to reducing serious youth violence in Newham. We provide parent/carer support to those who have children impacted by serious youth violence, and a community insight and engagement worker who works to bridge gaps between statutory and community partners.
11. **Enfield Parent/Carer Champion Network** – we recruit and support a network of parent/carer champions (volunteers), who provide peer support to parents/carers in the local community. The focus is on supporting parents/carer whose children are at risk of, or experiencing serious youth violence, exploitation, difficulties navigating systems, challenges a school including school exclusion.
12. **SCARPA Project** (Safeguarding Children at Risk- Prevention and Action)- provides intensive targeted one-to-one support for young people, aged between 10 - 18, who are at risk of, or affected by exploitation in Newcastle Upon Tyne. Includes training for professionals to raise awareness of exploitation.
13. **Stride – Pan-London** - project providing intensive one-to-one support for boys and young men who are at risk of or have been trafficked for the purposes of criminal exploitation, reported as missing and/or leaving care.