The Children's Society Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2023/2024

Our Commitment

The Children's Society's (TCS) mission is to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, 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 act 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 2024. 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.

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 2023/24:

Service Delivery impacting young people

We delivered change through a blended model of training and direct intervention, providing learning sessions, resources, communication materials and other interventions to improve prevention and disruption approaches to child exploitation, abuse, and modern slavery to over 400,000 people through our Home Office commissioned national Prevention Programme. Our national #LookCloser campaign continued to focus 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 train and directly reach thousands of people.

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, schools, transport companies and many others. This year, the Programme focused in particular on improving awareness and practice within the banking and finance sector and within night time economy businesses such as hotels, taxis and fast food outlets.

The Programme also made a significant contribution to ensuring greater recognition of child financial exploitation, including in the context of fraud and money laundering- which recognises that this activity is a form of modern slavery. This included:

- Training hundreds of frontline and strategic professionals on the issue,
- Supporting Ofsted to begin incorporating it into their inspection approach,
- Working with the Home Office to develop the first ever frontline guidance on financial exploitation and;
- Representing the UK at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) global money week launch event to encourage international finance leads to recognise 'money muling' as child abuse and a form of modern slavery.

We also continued to work to improve practice regarding missing and exploited refugee and migrant children through developing and publishing new best practice guidance on the issue, in partnership with Missing People. Since its publication in February 2024, the guidance has been accessed over 3,000 times.

During the year, we provided several 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. These services worked with thousands of young people directly and thousands of professionals through our systems change work.

The 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 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.

We have a '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.

Within the last year we have:

- Ensured that 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.
- Worked in partnership across our delivery to ensure collaborative responses to exploitation and risk, including modern slavery when we encounter it.

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. 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 other countries.

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 (staff and volunteers) are screened around their right to work in the UK as part of our robust safer recruitment process (and guided by policy). 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 (last updated in March 2024) 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 action would be taken.

Within 2023/2024, we:

- 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.
- Conducted supply chain due diligence within our Retail operations.
- Ensured high risk supplier contracts include modern slavery obligations.
- Remained committed to only working with Trader Recycling Universal Standard (TRUST) accredited Rag Merchants within the Retail operation. The independent TRUST audit, renewed every two-years, ensures all staff have the legal right to work, that they are paid at least the national minimum wage and are provided with a contract.
- Developed the modern slavery risk management process flow, including sending out a Risk Assurance of Supply Assessment to our key suppliers.
- Updated and refreshed the questions around Modern Slavery within the online Supplier Questionnaire which is completed by all our direct suppliers. The questionnaire covers their governance, policies, training, and supply chain management processes.

Action plan for the next financial year

In 2024/2025, in addition to continuing the work outlined above, we will:

- Include modern slavery as part of a review of partnering due diligence, processes, and policies.
- Include modern slavery key performance indicators and figures as part of a wider range of reportable statistics.
- Review and update our procurement policy and procedures including from a modern slavery perspective.

Appendix 1

The Childrens Society services working with those at risk of exploitation

Service name	Service summary
CARE Essex	Specialist support to children and young people 8-24 years of age who reside in Essex, are of a medium/high risk of exploitation, or actively being exploited, be that sexually or criminally
Checkpoint, Torbay	Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation (CSA/E) includes Torbay CSE, Devon CSA/E and CSA Counselling services. Works with children and young people who have been sexually abused, including exploited. 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.
Climb (West Mercia Diversionary service)	Supports young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation by providing direct one-to-one support, group work and diversionary activities.
Disrupting Exploitation Programme (London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester)	Disrupts criminal and sexual exploitation through intelligence gathering and task-based activities as well as referrals and direct support provided to young people and their parents/carers.
Hand in Hand Yorkshire	Provided one to one support to help children and young people exit abusive and exploitative relationships or situations[1].
Prevention Programme (national)	A Programme that 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.
Safe Choices, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	Provides CSE and CCE specialist support in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire through close working with families and multiagency collaboration, keeping children safe and improving the system wide response to child criminal and sexual exploitation.
Bradford (Missing	The Bradford Missing Service commissioned by

[1] Service transferred from The Children's Society to another provider in May 2024.

from home service)	Bradford Children's Trust provides support to those children and young people 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.
Manchester Missing from care service	The Manchester Missing from Care Service support 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.
Newham Vanguard	Delivered in partnership with the local authority and health services 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.
Enfield Parent/Carer Champion Network	The Children's Society 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.
SCARPA, Newcastle	Our Safeguarding Children At Risk Prevention and Action service provides intensive targeted one to one support for young people, aged 10- 18, who are at risk of, or affected by exploitation in Newcastle Upon Tyne. Training for professionals to raise awareness of exploitation is also provided.

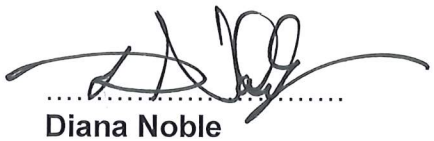
Publication

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 through the Charity's Whistleblowing Policy or to the Company Secretary.

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

Approval

This policy statement has been approved by the Trustees of The Children's Society and by the Boards of Directors of The Children's Society (Services) Limited and The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and is signed below on their behalf.



Diana Noble
Chair of the Trustee Board
The Children's Society for
and on behalf of the Board



Mark Russell
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The Children's Society for
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Date: 25 July 2024