Modern Slavery Transparency Statement

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Dorset Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for the financial year April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Introduction

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. There is no typical victim of slavery. Victims can be men, woman, or children of all ages and nationalities. The following definitions are encompassed within the term 'modern slavery' for the purposes of the Modern Slavery Act 2015:

- 'slavery' is where the ownership is exercised over a person
- 'servitude' involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion
- 'forced or compulsory labour' involves work or service extracted from any person under menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily
- 'human trafficking' concerns arranging or facilitating the travel of another with a view to exploiting them. It is irrelevant whether the person consents to the travel. Both modern slavery and human trafficking are crimes,

Our Organisation

The Dorset Council Plan 2020 to 2024 Dorset Council's Plan - Dorset Council sets out our ambitions for the next 4 years that puts the Council at the heart of the community. Our priorities being:

- Economic growth
- Unique environment
- Suitable housing
- Climate and ecology
- Strong, healthy communities
- Staying safe and well
- Supporting strategies and policies
- Our transformation programme

We are committed to opposing Modern Slavery and recognise the role we can play as a public sector organisation in its identification and disruption. As such, we have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of Modern Slavery and we are committed to acting ethically with integrity and transparency in all that we do, whether alongside our internal workforce or externally with partners and suppliers.

Our Supply Chain Due Diligence

Approximately 51% of the Council's annual budget is spent on buying external goods, services and works. Spend ranging from Stationery to ICT Infrastructure (Corporate0; Speech Therapy to Residential Placements (People – Children); Adult Day Services to Residential Care (People – Adults); School Transport to Surface Dressing (Place); School Nursing to Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services (Public Health Dorset). We recognise therefore the importance of effective procurement processes and contract management that takes measures to identify and mitigate modern day slavery within our supply chains.

We continue to review and assess our commissioning, procurement, and contract management processes to ensure we take into consideration the different risks associated in our supply chains, including modern slavery and human trafficking, and that we seek to mitigate risks. We continue to review our policies and procedures, to ensure that they are effective and appropriate, and we will update these as necessary. However, we recognise such policies and procedures must be proportionate to the size of the commissioning, procurement, contract, or supplier. This includes consideration on the impact of any process on SMEs and VCSEs. In practice this means:

- being proportionate in the overall approach
- ensuring barriers to participating in new commissioning or procurements are not created
- ensuring unnecessary burdens are not placed on SMEs and VCSEs

The use of data and intelligence gathered pre-commissioning and pre-procurement, including early market engagement, shall help to assess whether modern slavery risk is relevant to the subject matter of the contract and shape specification requirements. Knowing the risk of modern slavery guides the approach to contract management and how to work with the supplier to identify and mitigate risk.

Our Policies and Procedures

The current key policies and procedures which contribute to minimising the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in our organisation and our supply chain include the following:

- **Protocol and Guidance for Modern Slavery**
  The Council has worked with partners across Dorset to develop the local Modern Slavery Protocol, which sets out how to deal with any potential cases of modern slavery and links to the mandatory responsibilities to notify cases through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
  Protocol and Guidance for Modern Slavery - Dorset Council

- **Anti-Slavery Partnership**
  The Council is a partner of the Dorset Anti-Slavery Partnership that works collaboratively across Dorset in all matters relating to trafficking and slavery.
  Dorset - Anti Slavery Partnership (aspartnership.org.uk)

- **Commercial Strategy – Commissioning and Procurement**
  This strategy is the mechanism to ensure that the commercial approach to commissioning and procurement takes place in accordance with the Council's strategic

aims, that it is effective and delivers best value to residents of the Council's local authority area. It is subordinate to the Council's Constitution and is complemented by the Council's Contract Management Procedure Guide. The Strategy sets the importance of effective contract management that includes taking measures to identify and mitigate modern day slavery risks in contract.
Commercial strategy - commissioning and procurement - Dorset Council

- **Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**
  This describes the Council's commitment to support and protecting whistleblowers, and the steps that you need to take if you wish to blow the whistle on serious wrong-doing (known as making a 'protected disclosure') and how the Council will respond. It applies to all council employees and other workers; including freelance staff; temporary and agency staff; trainers; volunteers; consultants; and contractors.
  Document Whistleblowing Policy - Dorset Council

- **Safeguarding**
  Modern Slavery is included and categorised as a type of harm in the local Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board Procedures.
  Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board - Dorset Council

- **Dorset Council's Equality Scheme**
  The Council is committed to the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion in both employment and the delivery of services. The Equality Scheme sets out the Council's key quality objectives and demonstrates the work that Council is doing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.
  Equality scheme - Dorset Council

Training

We have in place for our staff a Safeguarding Learning Pathway that provides understanding on how to protect the rights of others to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect. This pathway gives staff a basic overview of what safeguarding is and how we can all work together to protect the rights of others. This pathway includes Modern Slavery training that includes the Home Office Modern Slavery e-learning training and links to local protocols.

Further learning pathway is available to our staff that focuses on "Modern Slavery and Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management". This provides some background on the Modern Slavery Act and the considerations of the Act in terms of engaging with suppliers and their supply chains, whether through commissioning, or procurement, or contract management. It includes an assessment tool to review level of modern slavery risk against:

- industry type
- nature of workforce
- supplier location
- context (in which the supplier operates)
- commodity type
- business / supply chain model

Approval for this Statement

This statement was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 26th July 2022, Agenda Item 10. Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

Decision Cabinet 26th July 2022