

Surrey County Council

Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ending 2022/2023

Introduction

In 2022 the latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery reported that there were 50 million people living in modern slavery in 2021. Of these, an estimated 28 million were said to be exploited in forced labour in all areas of the private economy. Research suggests that there has been a significant increase in the number of people trapped in modern slavery in the last five years. The problem of modern slavery is endemic in local and global supply chains, with current and emerging research, evidence and data shining a light on high-risk areas within the UK and beyond.

As a public sector body, Surrey County Council recognises that we have a duty to ensure that public money is spent responsibly and to ensure that our activities are conducted in an ethical, responsible, and sustainable manner.

In Surrey, as part of our Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 (the 2030 vision) the Council has an ultimate ambition-that no one is left behind. This includes: growing a sustainable economy; tackling health inequality; enabling a greener future; and empowering communities. Our [organisational strategy](#) sets out our contribution towards achieving the outcomes in the 2030 Vision.

In line with our organisational values and strategies, we are actively working towards mitigating the risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains and in doing so, aim to influence the behaviour of those who we do business with to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and abuse.

Surrey County Council understands that there are several ways modern slavery can exist within supply chain activities, namely, in the goods that are procured as well as vulnerable workforces and people performing obligations under a contract. The Council understands that poor labour and employment practices - while they may not be considered modern slavery, can escalate to more extreme forms of exploitation amounting to slavery practices if not addressed. Further, we recognise that while we do not condone any form of unethical and exploitative conduct, all organisations can be linked to exploitative practices through their activities, purchasing practices, and business relationships.

In our previous modern slavery statement, we expressed a commitment to doing more to address modern slavery risks within our operations and supply chains and reporting on the actions we undertake. Over the last financial year, we have aimed to demonstrate this commitment by progressing understanding of the problem of modern slavery within supply chains, looking more closely at our own spending to understand potential risks, and putting measures in place to strengthen our response.

This statement outlines the steps we have taken during the 2022 to 2023 financial year to mitigate these risks. This is pursuant to Section 54 (Transparency in Supply Chains) of the

Modern Slavery Act 2015 which requires certain organisations to publish an annual Modern Slavery Statement. This statement includes information on: our organisational structure and supply chains; policies in relation to modern slavery; due diligence measures to respond to this problem, including how we are assessing, prioritising and managing risks; how we monitor the effectiveness of actions taken; and training available to our staff.

This statement relates to the steps taken by the Council during the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Our organisational structure and supply chains

Our Corporate Leadership Team provides strategic direction to the whole Council which is organised into the following directorates:

- Corporate Resources
- Children, Families, and Lifelong Learning
- Adult Social Care and Integrated Commissioning
- Environment, Transport, and Infrastructure
- Public Service Reform
- Customer and Communities
- Communication, Public Affairs and Engagement
- Partnerships, Prosperity and Growth
- Surrey Fire and Rescue

As detailed in our previous statement, Surrey County Council have partnered with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council to establish Orbis Procurement – our shared service partnership working together to deliver lean procurement support, shared learning to achieve excellent outcomes, and shared resource for the delivery of achieving value for money for our residents. Collectively, we comprise of one of the largest public procurement spends in local government with an expenditure circa £2 billion a year with external suppliers across the three local authorities. As we deliver a significant amount of our projects annually via our Orbis Procurement service, its contribution to our anti-slavery in supply chain activities is vital. Accordingly, this work is driven by our Orbis Procurement service for the benefit of the three authorities.

For each of the authorities where services are not procured directly by Council departments, we procure them via our Orbis Procurement service. This statement reports on activities related to these services. Further work will be required to map services procured outside our partnership and directly by Council departments. These services are often significantly lower in value and spend and are governed by the Council's procurement and contract standing orders. As noted in our 2021/2022 statement, it is anticipated that such work would require longer-term assessments in collaboration with other teams working across the Council. Focusing on services procured via our Orbis Procurement partnership allows us to ensure adequate prioritisation of modern slavery risks and allocation of shared resources to respond to these risks.

During the 2022 to 2023 financial year the Council spent approximately **£921 million** with 6,102 suppliers, procured via Orbis Procurement's services on behalf of the Council.

Education, health & social care	£629 million
Assets and infrastructure	£199 million

Corporate & Business	£93 million
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Our policies in relation to modern slavery

Surrey County Council recognises the importance of policies to communicate our commitments and expectations of our staff, suppliers, and those who we do business with, to effectively address modern slavery. We also recognise that modern slavery sits on the extreme end of the labour exploitation continuum. Therefore, we have several policies, procedures, and codes of conduct with respect to fair labour and employment conditions that work to prevent and respond to a range of issues, including modern slavery, in our operations and supply chains. This includes whistleblowing, recruitment, health and safety, and grievance policies. Details of these policies and their relevance to modern slavery can be found in the Annex.

Over the last financial year, Orbis Procurement conducted a review of its Supplier Code of Conduct to assess whether it is fit for purpose in addressing modern slavery and other ethical and sustainable issues within our supply chains. The Code of Conduct outlines the Council's expectations of suppliers with regards to ethical conduct when bidding for and delivering contracts. Following a review of the current Code and consultation with strategic procurement leads across the three authorities, we identified the need to refresh the Code to ensure that it adequately communicates our expectations of suppliers and that all procurement and contract management officers are aware of the Code and how to utilise it in their respective roles. Consequently, the Code and supporting guidance on implementation and monitoring compliance is currently being drafted.

Due diligence

Assessing and prioritising risks

To tackle potential labour abuse and modern slavery practices occurring in our operations and supply chains, Surrey County Council recognises the importance of understanding spend categories that may be at high-risk. Following a review of the three authorities 2021/2022 spend via our Orbis Procurement service, we have collectively identified areas to prioritise for further due diligence as construction, adult social care, facilities management, and waste (See below for description of categories). These were prioritised as a result of the risk of labour exploitation and modern slavery facing workers in the supply chain. They are known high-risk areas abusive labour and employment practices due to the type of industry and activity, nature of the workforce and supply chain model. Key issues highlighted by existing research and evidence on these sectors include complex subcontracting arrangements, third-party recruitment and inadequate employment checks, exploitation of workers by labour agencies, abuse of vulnerable migrant labourers and low-skilled workers. There have also been reports of poor forms of labour and employment practices and more extreme forms of exploitation amounting to forced labour and modern slavery generally in the sectors. This includes withholding of workers' wages, abusive working conditions, excessive overtime, and abuse of workers' vulnerabilities. Prioritising these categories will enable the Council to use its resources to bring about the greatest impact. Additionally, it will allow the Council to test its approach to mitigating modern slavery risks within supply chains.

Category	Description
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Adult social care	Residential and living related care support for adults
Construction	Construction activity including construction works, building and maintenance works such as highway construction, construction of buildings, and road works
Facilities Management (FM)	Includes hard and soft FM activities such as maintenance works, cleaning services, and security
Waste	Includes activities such as waste removal and recycling

Managing risks

To ensure that we adequately manage potential risks, the Council have so far taken the following steps:

- We have amended all Orbis Public Law contract templates and purchase orders terms and conditions to include a clause on modern slavery. In performing obligations under the Contract, the clause requires suppliers to : comply with all applicable labour, employment, and modern slavery laws and regulations ; not engage in any activity, practice or conduct that would constitute certain offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ; engage with their own direct subcontractors and suppliers on this issue; and notify the Council of any actual or suspected issues pertaining to slavery in the supply chain relevant to the contract.
- Through the Orbis Procurement partnership we established a task group to standardise Orbis tender documents to ensure alignment with the three authorities governance requirements. A review of a draft Invitation to Tender for Open Procedures is currently underway and includes a clause on modern slavery which outlines Surrey County Council's commitment and actions to tackle it in our supply chains and our expectations for suppliers to have appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Our joint use of a project management system with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council now includes a modern slavery triage process to allow for early identification of new projects which may be at high-risk for modern slavery. The system allows potential risky projects to be flagged and assessed early to ensure modern slavery elements are considered in the procurement project end to end.
- We have consulted extensively with external best practice and resources on modern slavery risk management (including guidance issued by central government) to tailor advice for our procurement and contract management teams. In addition to information on the areas we are prioritising for due diligence, our procurement guidance includes information and guidance on how modern slavery should be considered throughout the procurement lifecycle, the early identification of potential high-risk projects, how to assess compliance and quality of modern slavery statements and recognising purchasing practices which can unintentionally lead to poor working practices and modern slavery. Our contract management guidance includes additional information for contract managers on engaging with suppliers, performance indicators that could be incorporated into contract management activity and advice on the termination of contracts.

Measuring our performance

Surrey County Council have determined the following measurements to assess the effectiveness of our actions and progress taken to address modern slavery within our organisation and supply chains in upcoming modern slavery statements:

- Regular monitoring of modern slavery risks within our supply chain to inform our approach to mitigating risk
- Early identification of projects at high-risk for modern slavery
- Productive engagement with high-risk suppliers
- Training and capacity building of key supply chain management staff
- Number of cases uncovered in the supply chain and resulting response
- Monitoring implementation of supplier code of conduct once reviewed

As our efforts to mitigate modern slavery risks progress, Surrey County Council remain dedicated to developing firm measures that continuously advance and improve over time.

Training

While we already have modern slavery training on our e-learning platform, we identified the need to have a suite of training materials focusing on the specific issue of modern slavery in supply chains and the need for training that is consistent and relevant for key personnel, such as procurement staff, working across all Orbis partner authorities. Our Senior Policy Lead on Modern Slavery has initiated this work by developing a one-hour introductory e-learning course on modern slavery in supply chains and organisational response to this issue. The course is now available on our e-learning platform to ensure it is accessible to all current and new staff, including commissioners, contract managers and those working in human resources.

Separately, our Orbis Procurement's internal intranet now includes regular guidance developed by our policy lead, information, and content on modern slavery for our procurement teams to ensure that staff are kept informed and updated on the latest changes and developments in this area.

Approval of statement

This statement has been approved by the Corporate Leadership Team on 21 July 2023. It will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Signed by:

Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council

Date: 01/09/2023

Joanna Killian, Chief Executive

Date: 23/08/2023

Annex: Organisational Policies

Policy	Relevance to tackling modern slavery
Council Constitution	Surrey County Council's Constitution sets out how the council conducts its business, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The "Procurement and Contract Standing Order" in the Constitution sets out how the Council authorises and manages spending and contracts with other organisations. The procurement approach is relevant to tackling modern slavery as it covers issues such as: social sustainability measures to ensure that supply chain partners operate fair and ethical working practices; the requirement of procurement teams to work closely with human resources to manage direct and indirect employment arrangements (such as temporary workers, agencies, and consultants); and ensuring that relevant policies and codes of conduct are communicated to suppliers.
Whistleblowing Policy	Our whistleblowing policy enables individuals to feel confident in raising a serious concern and reassures that they will be protected from possible reprisal or victimisation. The policy covers: all council employees; members of the council; those carrying out work for the Council on our premises, such as agency workers, contractors, and consultants; providers of works services and supplies, including external contractors; and those providing services under a contract with the council in their own premises, for example, care homes. The policy provides information on how individuals may raise concerns confidentially and how they will be dealt with. This policy is important for individuals wanting to raise concerns about modern slavery and/or related issues.
Social Value Policy	The aim of this policy, and the accompanying guidance, is to set out how Surrey County Council will deliver maximum social, economic and environmental value, not only through its commissioning, procurement, and contract management activities but also through enabling wider collaboration and resource sharing between people and organisations across the county. The policy and accompanying guidance are relevant to tackling modern slavery as they encourage commissioners to identify social issues that might be connected to a project or service. This is relevant for projects or services where the risk of poor working practices and modern slavery are high.
Officers' Code of Conduct	The purpose of this Code is to help employees support the Council's aim to provide high quality services fairly and efficiently in line with its values of listening, responsibility, trust, and respect. The Code of Conduct, which applies to all council employees, agency workers and contractors, outlines the expectations of the organisation in terms of the behaviour of individuals whilst working for, or on behalf of, the Council. This is relevant to the anti-slavery agenda as the Code expects employees to behave ethically and maintain high standards of personal conduct and be aware of and act in accordance with the Council's values and behaviours.
Health and Safety	The Council has various policies which aim to promote high standards and good practices in relation to health, safety, and welfare. This includes a Health and Safety Manual on aspects of work such as safe workplaces, safe equipment, and training and supervision. These procedures are important to tackle modern slavery as victims of forced labour and modern slavery may be at increased risk of work-related injuries due to inadequate protective equipment and health and safety measures, including appropriate training.

Working Time Regulations Policy	The Council recognises that excessive overtime beyond permitted national legal limits can contribute to forced labour practices when coupled with forms of threat. The Working Time Regulations Policy sets out the Council's position regarding working time in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998. This policy applies to all Surrey County Council's employees who are defined in the regulations as "workers" and includes all permanent, part-time, temporary, and casual employees and relief workers employed by the Council. Managers using agency workers are expected to ensure that the limits to working time and rest break requirements are applied to these workers when they are working for the Council.
Recruitment	The Council has several recruitment policies to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. Key policies include: Resourcing policy: This covers various aspects of the resourcing process such as human resource planning, internal progression, recruitment, selection, and induction. It ensures that relevant eligibility and safeguarding checks are in place in the hiring process. This includes ensuring eligibility of successful candidates to work in the UK and confirming qualifications and experience. Safe employment and disclosure and barring service policy: This enables the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations to perform appropriate background checks on employees and volunteers who carry out certain roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults. This policy applies to individuals who are, or wish to be, directly engaged by the Council to carry out work duties and voluntary activities on its behalf. The policy does not cover contractors or agency workers. Short term resourcing needs policy: The policy covers the management of temporary or short-term resourcing needs, including the use of agency workers or consultants. Managers are responsible for ensuring there is a clear business case based on the urgency of service needs, potential scarcity of skills and the impact insufficient staffing would place on the service prior to engaging a temporary worker. The Council have a managed service provider who supplies all agency workers. The Council have set out the responsibilities for the agency as a hiring manager throughout their assignment. The policy recognises the rights of agency workers including the rights under the Agency Workers Regulations 2010 which gives agency workers the entitlement to the same or no less favourable treatment as comparable employees with respect to basic employment and working conditions, if and when they complete a qualifying period of 12 weeks in a particular job. Equal opportunities in employment policy: This policy ensures that the Council provides equal opportunity in employment and service provision. This includes ensuring that terms of employment, benefits, facilities, and services are afforded equally to all employees in the same or similar circumstances. We also have an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan for 2021 to 2022 which aims to make EDI central to the council's culture.
Equality policy	The above policies are relevant to the anti-slavery agenda as they cover aspects of work where vulnerable people could be taken advantage of and exploited. The Council recognises that victims of modern slavery can be exploited in legitimate jobs with legal terms of employment but exploited by others unrelated to the Council. Therefore, the above policies are important to ensure that potential victims and vulnerabilities are identified during the resourcing and recruitment process. The Council also recognises that certain vulnerable, marginalised, and underrepresented groups are at a higher risk of poor labour and employment practices and therefore our equality and diversity policies ensure that every member, manager, and employee have a duty to be aware of equality issues in their daily activities. Additionally, the policies are relevant to the anti-slavery agenda as they cover aspects of work where vulnerable people accessing our services could be taken advantage of and exploited.

Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure	The Council is committed to creating a positive working environment in which managers and employees can discuss any problems or concerns openly and deal with them promptly and fairly. This policy's objective is to encourage staff to resolve any issues as quickly, locally, and informally as possible and the procedure and associated guidance have been devised to support managers and employees when complaints have been raised formally. There is also a Procedure and Guidance document to assist those involved of the approach required to handle the grievance resolution process effectively and fairly. Grievance mechanisms are important to tackle modern slavery as it involves an additional route by which employees can raise complaints or concerns.
Domestic Abuse	This policy gives guidance to managers on how to recognise and support employees who are victims of domestic abuse and how to deal with employees who are perpetrating domestic abuse. The principles and standards apply to all employees and temporary workers whilst working for, or on behalf of, the Council. This does not require that all those involved in an incident of Domestic Abuse are Surrey County Council employees. The policy educates managers on signs that may indicate an underlying domestic violence issue such as a drop in performance, increased absenteeism, deliberate isolation at work and showing obvious signs of stress and nervousness. While this policy focuses specifically on domestic abuse, it is important for tackling modern slavery as cases may share similar indicators of abuse.
Trade Unions	At Surrey County Council unions meet very regularly with the Council's management to discuss a wide variety of issues and to feedback staff concerns and issues. The Council provides information to staff on the benefits of trade union membership and information on how to join a union. The Council has published guidance on the Facilities and time off for Trade Union duties and activities. The guidance aims to avoid or minimise misunderstandings, ensure fair and consistent treatment and facilitate better planning for trades unions duties and activities. The Council recognises that trade union representation in the workplace can help reduce the risk of modern slavery by representing the interest of workers, ensuring fair working practices, supporting workers in negotiating their terms and conditions, and the resolving of grievances.