

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust Modern Slavery Act statement 2023/24

Introduction

Modern Slavery is one of the most important human rights challenges of our time. According to International Labour Organisation, the term modern slavery includes concepts such as forced labour, debt bondage, and human trafficking. It is an umbrella term to refer to situations of exploitation that an individual cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or an abuse of power.

The pandemic has exacerbated underlying factors that can make people vulnerable to modern slavery, including poverty, financial insecurity, lack of mobility caused by local or national shutdowns and supply chain and logistics challenges.

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust does not tolerate modern slavery. We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any part of our organisation, including our supply chains.

The aim of this statement is to demonstrate that we follow best practice and take all reasonable steps to prevent slavery and human trafficking. We expect our staff and suppliers to comply with the legislation and report any concerns where they may have them.

Governance and Policies

We have zero tolerance for slavery and human trafficking and are fully aware of our responsibilities towards our service users, carers, employees, and local communities. We expect all companies that we do business with to share the same ethical values. Our policies support us in conducting business in an ethical manner.

To identify and mitigate the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our own business and our supply chain we:

- ♦ Undertake appropriate pre-employment checks on directly employed staff including conducting eligibility to work in the UK.
- ♦ Where off framework agencies are required to fill vacancies, most commonly for medical staffing, the Trust is implementing direct engagement for medical locums. One outcome of this project will be to end the limited utilisation of off-framework agencies.
- ♦ We have an established Freedom to Speak Up service which enables staff to raise concerns in confidence through a variety of means including anonymously.
- ♦ Ensure all staff are protected from poor treatment and/or exploitation by complying with all respective laws and regulations. This includes provision of fair pay rates, fair terms and conditions of employment and access to training and development opportunities.
- ♦ Provide opportunities for anonymous and other feedback from people about concerns that they have about modern slavery.
- ♦ Use staff from agencies on approved frameworks so that we are assured that pre-employment clearance has been obtained to safeguard against human trafficking or individuals being forced to work against their will. If there is not an available worker from a framework agency, this is escalated to senior managers and, if usage is approved, local pre-employment checks, including the right to work in the UK, are sought.
- ♦ Focus support to vulnerable groups such as young and student workers, vulnerable populations such as refugees, domestic and foreign migrant workers and contract and bank /agency workers.
- ♦ Comply with the code of practice for health and social care organisations in England, that are recruiting personnel internationally. The Trust ensures that when using an agency for overseas recruitment they are from an approved framework with a verified track record of international recruitment. The Trust ensures that in all cases pre-employment checks are undertaken including Identification & Right to Work verification and that staff receive appropriate pastoral support on arrival to the UK.

The central Procurement Team include relevant contractual terms in new procurements. Service and goods contracts for which modern slavery is relevant are issued with the NHS Standard Terms and Conditions which cover “Modern slavery and environmental, social and labour laws”.

All category managers in the Procurement Team have undertaken the Government Commercial College training on modern slavery.

The Government identifies high risk sectors as domestic work, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing, accommodation and food services, wholesale and trade, personal services and mining and quarrying. Of these areas the Trust is most likely to commission services or purchase goods at scale in the categories of domestic work, construction, and manufacturing. Our main supplier of domestic work provides our cleaning contract; this contract is managed tightly; staff are typically on Agenda for Change rates and work as part of the Trust team. In manufacturing our main supply is via NHS Supply Chain, and they undertake the modern slavery checking on our behalf.

Supplier Due Diligence

We engage in robust due diligence of all our suppliers through the NHS supply chain adhering to the 'Supplier Code of Conduct' which includes the provision around forced labour.

We spent over £100 million on non-pay expenditure in 2023/24. We also let contracts for one-off capital works and purchases. We purchase most consumable products through NHS Supply Chain. Where we deal with other NHS providers, their compliance with the Act is a prerequisite of our agreements with them. For our service contracts, we have sought written assurance that they are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- ♦ For high-risk service contracts (typically low pay, low skill services) ongoing assurance is sought at contract review meetings.
- ♦ Tenders include specific clauses in all Terms and Conditions that reflect our obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- ♦ Our tendering processes ensure that suppliers are carefully selected through robust selection criteria.
- ♦ We require that any main contractor provides details of sub-contractor(s) to enable the Trust to check their credentials.
- ♦ Where a tender price is significantly lower than other bids or gives other grounds for doubting the credibility of the bid, a written explanation of the offer is sought and if the evidence provided does not satisfactorily account for the bid price or the offering, the bid will be rejected.

Assessing our risk

Understanding our modern slavery risk is critical to targeting our actions and partnerships to prevent and address the issues. We analyse our risk by engaging with key partners and stakeholders such as the Local Authority.

We continue our membership of the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton Modern Slavery Partnership with an aim of contributing towards raising awareness of modern slavery, working in partnership, sharing good practice, and supporting victims.

Information about modern slavery and human trafficking, including how to identify and respond to concerns and how to report suspected cases of modern slavery, is included in our Safeguarding Children and Adults training which all staff must complete and update every 3 years. As of 31 March 2024, 97% of staff were compliant.

Advice and support regarding modern slavery concerns is available to all staff via our safeguarding adults support and advice line. Any concerns raised that may relate to child or adult exploitation and / or suspicious incidents that may be linked to slavery, are reported on to Ulysses and alerted to the Safeguarding team then reported to the Local Authority. The police are part of this multi-agency process.

The Trust reviews its modern slavery and human trafficking statement on an annual basis, and it is approved by the Trust Board at a meeting in public. This demonstrates a public commitment to ensure visibility and encourages reporting standards.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Signed



Ron Shields, Chief Executive

07 May 2024