



Modern Slavery Statement 2022/2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Modern Slavery is a term used to encapsulate offences in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 such as slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which result in the deprivation of a person's liberty by another, in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. Modern slavery and human trafficking are crimes and a violation of fundamental human rights.
- 1.2 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) has a zero-tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking and all forms of corruption and bribery and will not deal with any business or organisation knowingly involved in modern slavery practices in any part of its operations.
- 1.3 The Authority is committed to the highest level of ethical standards and governance. It will act with integrity in all its business relationships and take all reasonable and practical steps to ensure compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 with the aim of eradicating modern slavery or human trafficking from its supply chains and all parts of its business activities.

2. Organisation structure

- 2.1 The Authority is the publicly accountable body that oversees the policy and service delivery of fire and rescue services on behalf of the community in the Tyne and Wear area. The Authority successfully leads the operational delivery of fire and rescue service such as public protection, fire and other emergency prevention, operational response and resilience. Its stations, staff and appliances are strategically placed across Tyne and Wear to ensure efficient and effective response to fires and other emergencies. Appliances work across station areas and can be mobilised whilst away from their home station. The Authority also has robust arrangements with neighbouring services to enable additional support during major emergencies. This is achieved through the provision of over-the-border mobilisations into neighbouring fire and rescue service's and vice versa where required. This is catered for under s.13 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and is termed Section 13 Mutual Assistance Agreements.
- 2.2 The Authority's 17 fire stations are staffed by highly trained firefighters and their work is complemented by corporate staff and community volunteers.
- 2.3 Further details of the organisational structure are available on the Authority's website at: <https://www.twfire.gov.uk/about-us/>

3. Supply Chain

- 3.1 The organisation spends around £13.4 million each year on the procurement of goods, services and works from a diverse range of suppliers. The Authority has a public duty to ensure this money is spent in the most effective way whilst delivering value for money. In addition, a firm commitment is made to ensuring that ethical practices to combat slavery and human trafficking are followed throughout the supply chains used.



4. Workforce

- 4.1 The Authority's workforce is mainly employed on a permanent, (including retained) or temporary contract basis. The recruitment processes used include direct advertising on the Authority's website and use of reputable agencies.
- 4.2 All employees are subject to checks, including the verification of identity, references, eligibility to work in the UK, baseline security check and evidence of qualifications where appropriate.
- 4.3 The Authority has a dedicated Safeguarding Manager who is fully committed to the development of safeguarding arrangements by attending local safeguarding boards for adults and children in Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland (and their sub groups).

5. Business ethics and policies that cover Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

- 5.1 This Statement reflects the Authority's commitment to acting ethically, vigilantly and with integrity in all business relationships, implementing and enforcing systems and controls that seek to ensure modern slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any areas of its business or supply chains.
- 5.2 Any instances of non-compliance will be assessed on a case by case basis and remedial action will be tailored appropriately.
- 5.3 The Authority's Corporate Governance Framework ensures that the good governance principle of 'Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law' is embedded within all relevant corporate governance and organisational documents to ensure compliance and to reduce potential risk (e.g. Transparency, Procurement, Employment Policies, Codes of Conduct, Anti-Fraud and Corruption, and Whistleblowing).
- 5.4 Modern slavery and human trafficking risks are included and embedded in both the Authority's safeguarding policies and associated procedures that are communicated and available to all staff, regularly reviewed and revised as appropriate.

6. Business Risks

- 6.1 The four main areas of risk in relation to slavery and human trafficking within the Authority are:
 - 1. Supply chain
 - 2. Employment/recruitment
 - 3. Training
 - 4. Policies and procedures
- 6.2 There are continuous improvements being taken within each of these business areas that demonstrate the Authority's ongoing commitment to mitigating any business risk relating to slavery and human trafficking.



6.3 Supply Chain

The below highlights the work undertaken so far in reducing the risk of any slavery and human trafficking within the Authority's supply chain:

- Contract documents set clear guidance with regard to complying with anti-slavery and human trafficking laws, statutes and regulations;
- The Procurement Policy 2021-2024 complies with current legislative requirements and promotes the Professional Standards as set out in the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Corporate Code of Ethics, an element of which is a commitment to eradicating unethical business practices including Human Rights abuses.
- Standard terms and conditions mandate that the incumbent contractor to comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. When the Authority's terms and conditions are not used, compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 will be a bespoke clause added to these individual contracts.
- For any non-contracted spend of low value, all purchase orders detail the standard terms and conditions of business.
- All standard tender documentation includes a mandatory pass/fail section relating to complying with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

6.4 The following actions have been undertaken to further enhance the systems and controls already in place to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place within the supply chain:

- Ensuring that members of the Procurement team undertake specific training related to modern slavery and human trafficking in supply chains as well as having completed the annual CIPS Ethical Procurement module and test.
- Implementing an effective contract management framework across the organisation which identifies those high risk areas of the supply chain which may be at risk of modern slavery.

6.5 Employment / Recruitment

The actions set out below highlights the work that has been undertaken so far in reducing the risk of any slavery and human trafficking within the Authority's employment and recruitment procedures.

All potential employees must satisfy the following checks prior to being appointed:

- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK in accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996;
- Declaration of any unspent convictions;
- Reference checks covering three years;



- Pre-employment occupational health screening which includes drug and alcohol testing;

6.6 Key roles within the Service have been identified as being eligible for enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and checks against the barred list for children. These include; some Community Safety roles, senior financial roles and volunteer roles. All new starters, including firefighters, are subject to standard DBS checks.

6.7 During financial year 2022/2023, the following actions were taken to further enhance the systems and controls that are already in place to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, modern slavery is not taking place within any of the Authority's employment and recruitment procedures:

- Although the use of employment agencies to supply staff to the Authority is the exception rather than the rule, HR will continue to work with the Procurement Team to ensure that any supplier to the Authority has all necessary due diligence measures in place to ensure their responsibilities and overall compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requirements;
- Any employment agency will be checked to ensure the new requirement for all temporary staff and permanent staff to have, as a minimum, a standard employment check.

6.8 Training

The highlights below set out the work undertaken to date to reduce the risk of any slavery and human trafficking within our training procedures:

- All employees complete safeguarding training which is refreshed on a three yearly cycle and includes modern slavery and human trafficking as part of the training. Diversionary Activities staff who engage with the community complete this training annually;
- New employees receive modern slavery awareness input as part of an overall induction to safeguarding during their introduction to the organisation as part of their trainee course or assigned as part of their new starter induction;
- In addition to the above training, all staff complete an online training package in relation to Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion when joining the Service. This is refreshed every two years;
- All operational staff receive initial training on delivering and completing Safe and Well Checks within the community. This includes procedures for the identification and reporting of children or adults who are perceived to be vulnerable or at risk;
- Fire Safety Auditors have also received role specific training to recognise the signs of human trafficking in business/commercial premises.



6.9 Policies and Procedures

During financial year 2022/2023, the following actions were taken to further enhance the systems and controls already in place within any of the training or community safety procedures:

- Review of safeguarding policies and procedures;
- A review programme established for all policies and procedures, in line with their review cycles or to reflect changes in legislative and/or operating practices;
- Community Safety s employees who work in the community, may encounter modern slavery, and report any concerns through the appropriate channels;
- Fire Safety employees represent the Authority on the multi-agency Operation Sentinel groups where issues such as modern slavery are addressed.

7. **Whistleblowing**

- 7.1 Employees and suppliers are encouraged to report any concerns they may have in relation to fraud, corruption or any other wrongdoing. The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy within the Authority's Standing Orders includes clauses covering whistleblowing and details how disclosures can be made without fear of recrimination.
- 7.2 During 2022/23 the Authority consulted on its Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, with a view to formulating and implementing a separate whistleblowing policy during 2023/24.
- 7.3 Any member of staff who has concerns about modern slavery or human trafficking taking place within the Authority (or supply chain), can utilise this procedure, or contact Safecall – the confidential helpline.

8. **Corporate commitment**

- 8.1 In addition to the four activity risk areas identified above in 6.1, the Authority continues to demonstrate its ongoing corporate commitment by:
- Enforcing and ensuring that effective governance systems and controls are in place to minimise the risk of modern slavery taking place;
 - Acting ethically and with integrity in all of its business relationships;
 - Continuing to encourage staff, partners and suppliers to report any malpractice in the workplace (whistleblowing) or wrongdoing in line with the Authority's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.
- 8.2 This is made under Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It constitutes as the Authority's Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2023.

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**



CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE, TWFRS

for

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