

## **Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain Statement**

### **Introduction**

Maidstone Borough Council contracts with a range of suppliers of all sizes to provide essential goods and services, in order to deliver its services to the residents and businesses of the borough. The Council understands it has a wider social responsibility and is committed to having a positive impact on the working environments of all those involved in the fulfilment of these contracts.

### **What is Modern Slavery?**

The Local Government Association uses the following definition of Modern Slavery, provided by Unseen UK.

**'The term 'Modern Slavery' captures a whole range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These are defined by Unseen UK to include but are not limited to:**

- **Sexual exploitation: this includes sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos.**
- **Domestic servitude: this involves victims being forced to work in usually private households, performing domestic chores and childcare duties.**
- **Forced labour: this can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, laying driveways, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, maritime and beauty (nail bars).**
- **Criminal exploitation: This can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.**
- **Human trafficking: this requires that a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited. The offence can be committed even where the victim consents to the travel. This reflects the fact that a victim may be deceived by the promise of a better life or job or may be a child who is influenced to travel by an adult.**
- **Other forms of exploitation: organ removal; forced begging; forced benefit fraud; forced marriage and illegal adoption.'**

The Modern Slavery Act (2015) provides the legislation behind the Government's commitment to eliminating Modern Slavery across the United Kingdom. The Council recognises the importance of this legislation, and aims to outline the expectations we have of our officers and supply chain through this statement.

**Our expectations of all Suppliers**

The Council has the following expectation of any supplier its contracts with;

1. The Council expects all its suppliers to recognise and take steps to ensure modern slavery is eradicated from its business activities.
2. The Council also expects that all its suppliers to be in compliance with the Modern Slavery Act of 2015, including the obligation to publish any relevant documents. Businesses should familiarise themselves with this legislation and the relevant guidance.
3. Suppliers will follow the appropriate reporting routes if they suspect, witness or receive any reports of Modern Slavery within their business and through the course of their operations.
4. Suppliers should educate their staff to recognise and report any instances of modern slavery. These reporting routes should be clear and transparent.

**Commissioning**

The Council will integrate this statement into its procedures as follows:

- For all contracts the commissioning/contracting officer will need to request evidence from the supplier that they are in compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (2015).
- During any tendering process, officers will be encouraged to explore the Modern Slavery risks within the contract. This may include;
  - Requesting confirmation that all employees have written contracts of employment.
  - Requesting confirmation that all employees are paid at least the national minimum wage and, where appropriate, encouraging suppliers to pay the living wage.
  - For suppliers with a turnover less than the legally mandated threshold, the Council will encourage production of a Modern Slavery Statement or Policy as appropriate.

Once a procurement exercise is concluded, the responsibility for the contract officers will be to ensure data is collected and monitored and that the supplier adheres to their tender response and is in compliance with all legislation.

This statement will be reviewed periodically and amended as necessary.