

MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT

Introduction

The following statement is made by the University of Essex in acknowledgement of section 54(1) part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps that the University has taken, and will be taking, to ensure that slavery and human trafficking are not taking place in our supply chains or in any part of our core activities.

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

Our Organisation

Established over 50 years ago, the University of Essex has gained a global reputation for pioneering research which helps change lives. The University provides a research-led education which equips students with the curiosity and capability for personal and professional success. Our mission is to contribute to society through excellence in education and excellence in research.

Our spend categories and those that present risks of human rights abuses

The principal categories of spend which the Central Procurement Unit (CPU) deems as carrying material risks are laboratory consumables, ICT equipment and some estates services. The corresponding source countries are as follows:

Laboratory consumables, including gloves - Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan

ICT equipment - China, India, Mexico, Taiwan, Brazil, Poland, Czech Republic, Malaysia, USA, Ireland, Philippines, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand.

Estates services including Cleaning and Security Services – mainly United Kingdom

Most of our spend in these categories is purchased through the use of collaborative framework contracts via the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC). When procuring these services SUPC require the suppliers to commit to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). The ETI Base Code is founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is an internationally recognised code of labour practice, requiring that:

- Employment is freely chosen
- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
- Working conditions are safe and hygienic
- Child labour is not used
- Living wages are paid
- Working hours are not excessive
- No discrimination is practised
- Regular employment is provided
- No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.

Our Policies and Actions to Prevent Slavery and Human Trafficking

The University has taken the following actions:-

- We have hosted an event for the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) led by Modern Slavery experts.
- Within our supply chain for the provision of goods, services and works, we include in all of our tendering exercises above £25,000, appropriate questions to suppliers related to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. This forms part of our assessment for a supplier's suitability for selection.
- We have been a member of the evaluation panel for several SUPC contracts. This has enabled us a greater understanding of the assessment of Modern Slavery by leading procurement consortia.
- Our catering outlets continue to provide Fairtrade/ Rain Forest Alliance certification tea and coffee as standard offerings and actively reduce the use of non-recyclable plastic.
- We require all potential new staff attending an interview at the University to provide documentation to demonstrate their Right to Work within the UK.
- We have assessed our key construction suppliers and reviewed their Modern Slavery Policies.
- Increased the usage of frameworks where possible.

Our Future Actions

During 2021 we will:

- Renew our Construction Framework ensuring the evaluation methodology is robust with a focus on Modern Slavery. This initiative was delayed due to COVID-19 but will be delivered in 2021.
- Renew our ICT computer framework ensuring Modern Slavery is thoroughly evaluated with Supply Chains being understood wherever possible. This initiative was delayed due to COVID-19 but will be delivered in 2021.
- Renew the delivery model of our general maintenance contract for Estates, possibly bringing some services in house and procure others externally, ensuring modern slavery risk is assessed. This initiative was delayed due to COVID-19 but will be delivered in 2021.
- Implement a pilot contract for Temporary Resourcing Services to improve Modern Slavery compliance.
- Continue to work with the relevant purchasing consortia, that, where the University utilises the consortia frameworks, the suppliers on that framework have been appropriately assessed. CPU will continue to volunteer to be part of the evaluation team.
- We will continue to implement and develop our procedures to address the risks slavery and human trafficking represent in our supply chains and core operations.

This statement will be reviewed annually to monitor progress in minimising the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in any part of the University's supply chains or core operations.



Jane Hamilton
Chair of Council

January 2021