



Modern Slavery Act 2015 - Hounslow Council Transparency Statement 2019/20

Hounslow Council recognises the importance of safeguarding vulnerable residents and takes tackling modern slavery very seriously. Whilst Hounslow Council is not a commercial organisation, we are publishing this statement, which will be reviewed annually, as part of our commitment to end modern slavery. The council engages the community, as well as relevant stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors that work in the borough, so that together we can address this issue. We are also committed to our responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act as an employer and our duty to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the act.

We are further committed to preventing modern slavery within our employment practices and supply chains as outlined below:

Structure and Business

Hounslow Council is a local authority that provides a wide range of statutory and discretionary services for residents, businesses, visitors and partner agencies.

Further information on the Council's structure can be found here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20110/open_data_and_information_requests/1393/open_data/3

The Council's Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024 includes how we will support local residents, businesses and our staff, further information found here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20112/strategies_plans_and_performance/1388/corporate_plan

Supply Chain

Hounslow Council procures goods and services from various suppliers; since 2015, all of our contracts have a specific clause ensuring compliance of suppliers with the Modern Slavery Act. This includes key contractors having safeguarding policies in place to ensure that they comply with relevant legislation, such as the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Council has clear Contract Procedure Rules, which are a part of the Council's Constitution and are applied in conjunction with the Financial Regulations. The Contract Procedure Rules makes it clear that all officers have the responsibility to report any suspected concerns related to modern slavery.

Policies

The Council regularly reviews its policies to ensure they are compliant with legislation and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are in place to meet the Council's requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.



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- *Safeguarding* – The Council takes seriously its responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs. The Council has robust policies and procedures in place which staff work within and we also work with multi-agency partners to safeguard residents in the borough.
- *Recruitment* – The Council has a clear and open recruitment process that include robust procedures for vetting new employees, ensuring that they confirm their identity, qualifications and ensure they are directly paid into an appropriate personal bank account. All prospective employees are asked to supply evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK in compliance with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006.
- *Agency workers* – The Council works with Adecco to supply interim and temporary staff, Adecco's Modern Slavery statement can be found on their website at <https://www.adecco.co.uk/modern-slavery-act-statement/>
- *Pay* – The Council has a Job Evaluation process to ensure that employees are paid fairly and equitably. As part of our commitment to being a fair and good employer the Council has paid the Living Wage or higher to employees since 2012. We have also ensured that our major contractors are also Living Wage accredited.
- *Code of conduct* – Our employee Code of Conduct sets out that standards of behaviour expected of all employees. The Council strives to maintain the highest standards for employee ethical behaviour and conduct and breaches of this are investigated.
- *Whistleblowing* – All employees, customers and businesses are encouraged to report any concerns related to direct activities undertaken by the Council or its supply chains. The Council has a whistleblowing policy which is in place to enable employees to make disclosures without fear of retribution.
- *Councillors* – The Council's Constitution sets out the expected behaviour for all elected members. All Councillors are required to abide by the Member's Code of Conduct and the Council expects all members to demonstrate high standards of conduct and behaviour. Breaches will be investigated by the Monitoring Officer and may be referred to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Council also requires all Councillors to record and declare pecuniary and other interests.

Partnership Work

According to Home Office estimates from 2014, there are believed to be between 10,000 and 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK. If the number of victims in Hounslow is proportionate to its population size, this would mean that there are currently an estimated 40-55 victims of modern slavery in Hounslow. This crime is hugely under reported, and many are not aware of the fact that they are victims of modern slavery.

The multi-agency Hounslow Community Safety Partnership with the support of the Hounslow Safeguarding Adults Board and Hounslow Safeguarding Children Partnership, address the issue of modern slavery within the borough's Community Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020.



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To support adults at risk of modern slavery the Council has a Domestic Violence and Trafficking Advisor, located in Adult Social Care Services, who provides one to one support to victims of modern slavery and trafficking. The Council also has an Exiting Prostitution Advocate that provides advocacy support to those engaged in prostitution and those who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Children's Social Care has a dedicated Trafficked Lead who provides specialist expertise and advice to staff on this area. Additionally, the work of Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel addresses children and young people being exploited who are also victims of trafficking.

Training

The Council has a programme of mandatory training that all staff are required to complete. The Corporate Induction programme provides an overview of key safeguarding responsibilities for all staff. More in-depth safeguarding training is also provided for staff who have regular contact with vulnerable residents i.e. social workers and housing officers. In addition, training specifically related to modern slavery is available to all Council staff and its partners online.

How to report

If you're concerned that someone in Hounslow is experiencing modern slavery you can contact the Council using the information below:

- If your concern relates to an adult, you can contact the Adult Social Care Duty number on ASC Duty 0208 583 3100 or email Adultsocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk
- If you believe a child or young person is experiencing modern slavery you can contact Hounslow Children's Front Door on 0208583 6600 option 2 or email childrensocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk
- To report a concern on evenings or weekends for either adults, children or young people please call 020 8583 2222.

If someone is in immediate danger, please contact the Police on 999.