



## **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2020/21**

### **1. Introduction**

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the Act) requires organisations above a certain size, which supply goods or services to prepare and publish an annual Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement.

Modern slavery is an international crime which affects an estimated 29.8 million victims globally. It is a growing issue which transcends age, gender and ethnicity. Such victims include persons forced to work illegally against their will in sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, construction, retail and manufacturing.

This statement sets out the Council's actions to recognise all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and corporate activities, and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business or its supply chains. This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

The Council accepts and recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. In addition to the Council's responsibility as an employer, it acknowledges its duty to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Council also notes its responsibility under the National Referral Mechanism as a 'First Responder'.

This statement has been approved by the Council's Executive Management Team and the relevant Portfolio Holder. It will continue to be reviewed and updated annually. The statement with associated actions is reported to the Cabinet each year for monitoring and assurance purposes.

### **2. Organisational structure**

The Council's core business is the supply of Public Services to residents of its Borough. The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme covers some 81 square miles and has a population of approximately 123,000 (based on the 2011 census). The Borough Council employs around 489 staff with a mix of full time and part time, administrative, technical and support officers.

The Borough Council has a budget of £12,425,000 and £7,302,000 available for capital expenditure (2020/21). The Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme operates a devolved procurement structure where each directorate / service area are responsible for their own purchasing /procurement and contracting function, this is supported corporately by strategic procurement officers.

### **3. Our Supply Chains**

The Corporate Procurement support team, led by the Business Improvement Manager, is responsible for strategically supporting officers in the contracting of high value, high-risk commodities as well as offering support in the Council's general supply chain.

The Council's supply chains spend is split between four directorates and several categories:

Directorates:

1. Chief Executives;
2. Operational Services;
3. Regeneration and Development;
4. Resources and support Services;

Categories:

1. Energy;
2. Vehicles and parts;
3. Computer supplies and services;
4. Estates and buildings (repairs and maintenance);
5. Postal services;
6. Professional services;
7. Printing supplies;
8. Janitorial supplies;
9. Training;
10. Safety and security;
11. Stationery and office supplies;

#### **4. Average Transactional Spend**

The Council's spend profile (2019/20) by transaction/value shows that 99.36% of its spend is low value (i.e. under £30,000) high transactional (5135 transactions).

#### **5. Our Policies on slavery and human trafficking**

This Statement is designed to satisfy the requirements of Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, by informing our officers and the public about the Council and its policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains.

The Council is committed to ensure that all parts of our business and supply chain are slavery free.

As part of the Council's procurement, contracting and contract review processes with its suppliers and their supply chains, it will endeavour to ensure that all suppliers on strategic, high value, high risk agreements are monitored and supported by use of an ongoing monitoring process. We will continue to develop tools to address and develop action plans that address modern slavery and other key sustainable /social value issues.

The Council will also ensure that any tendering activity includes statements to ensure compliance to this Act. In particular, the Council aims to reduce the risk of modern slavery in its supply chain by undertaking the following actions:

- Where appropriate require key contractors to have safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place, in addition to providing confirmation of compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.
- Consider modern slavery factors when making procurement decisions.
- Include modern slavery criteria in specification and tender documents where appropriate.
- Consider modern slavery factors when evaluating specifications and tenders.
- Requires that all contractors do not engage in slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, the sale or exploitation of children and all exploitative practices in the workplace, and do not knowingly themselves contract with third parties which do. In

entering into or continuing a business relationship with the Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme, contractors' warrant that is the case (see annex 1 - Supply Chain Commitment).

The Council reviews its policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain compliant and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are also considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

- **Safeguarding**

The Council embraces its responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support. The Council has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy which all staff and councillors are expected to read and work within. The Council works within multi-agency partnerships to protect and safeguard people.

- **Recruitment**

The Council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. They include robust procedures for completion of pre-employment checks, which ensures they are able to confirm their identities, right to work and qualifications, and they are paid directly to an appropriate, personal bank account. To comply with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006, all prospective employees are asked to supply evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. References are also requested and followed up.

- **Agency Workers**

The Council look to use only reputable employment agencies to source labour and verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency.

- **Pay**

The Council operates a Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure that all employees are paid in line with legislation around equal pay. As part of its commitment to being a good employer, the Council has paid the Living Wage or more to its employees since 2013.

- **Employee Code of Conduct**

The Council's Employee Code of Conduct makes clear to employees the actions and behaviours expected of them when representing the Council. The Council strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour and breaches are investigated.

- **Whistleblowing**

The Council encourages all its employees, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities or the supply chains of the Council. The Council's whistleblowing procedure is designed as a transparent and straightforward mechanism for individuals to make disclosures.

## **6. Supplier adherence to our values**

The Council will adopt a zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking. Any supplier or potential supplier who does not adhere to these values or is found not to be compliant will be suspended and removed from the Council's supplier list and will not be considered for future

supply unless they are able to demonstrate full adherence with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.

## **7. Training**

To ensure high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking we will provide training to officers prior as part of contract monitoring and procurement processes on a one to one basis.

## **8. What we are going to do in the future**

The Council expresses its commitment to work towards greater transparency toward the people/officers working on the Council's supply chain. We are committed to developing a supply chain code of practice to which all our strategic and high value suppliers will need to abide by.

## Annex 1



### Anti-slavery and human trafficking – Supply Chain Commitment

1. The Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme values require that all workers are treated with dignity and respect. It is fundamentally opposed to slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, the sale or exploitation of children and all exploitative practices in the workplace.
2. The Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme requires that all contractors do not engage in any such practices, and do not knowingly themselves contract with third parties which do. In entering into or continuing a business relationship with the Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme, contractors' warrant that is the case.
3. The Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme values would require that it terminates business relations with any contractor found to be in breach of this warranty.

#### Definitions

**Slavery:**

*One person depriving another person of their liberty in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.*

**Human Trafficking:**

*Human trafficking is the act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through any coercive means (such as threat, use of force, deception or abuse) for the purpose of exploitation.*

**Forced Labour:**

*Forced labour is work or service that is taken from a person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily.*

**Debt Bondage:**

*Debt bondage is a worker pledging their labour or the labour of others under their control as security for a debt; when either the real value of the work undertaken is never applied to repayment of the debt, or the length and nature of the work that has to be undertaken is never fully defined or limited.*

**Sale and exploitation of children:** *The sale and exploitation of children involves situations where children are transferred by one person to another for remuneration or other consideration; or are used in sexual activities for remuneration or other consideration; or are forcibly or compulsorily recruited for use in armed conflict.*