

Worcestershire Children First Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021

This statement sets out the steps that Worcestershire Children First (WCF) has taken to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains and own business. This statement relates to the financial year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

The Company also acknowledges its duty as set out in Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, to notify the Secretary of State of any individual encountered in England and Wales who it believes is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking.

Organisational structure, business and supply chains

WCF is a wholly owned council company, managed by a Board of Directors and was launched in October 2019. We employ 980 staff and provide children safeguarding, social care and education services for children, young people and families in Worcestershire. WCF governance processes ensure that decisions made by the Executive Directors are approved the WCF Board in accordance with the company's articles of association. WCF's Board is responsible for the management of the company in line with the strategic vision and objectives set in the Business Plan.

WCF wants to work collaboratively with our supply partners including suppliers, contractors on quality, continuity and sustainable procurement. Our supply chain includes professional services providers, such as financial auditors and legal firms, consultants, IT equipment and other office supply companies, furniture and equipment suppliers for our service and partners such as educational or training providers. We seek to have proactive relationships based on honesty, openness, respect and fairness in all areas of procurement.

Information about the WCF's Board including areas of responsibility can be found at:

<http://www.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk/info/9/company-board>

WCF 2021/22 Business Plan

WCF's Business Plan sets out the company's vision, mission and values. It provides information on the company's priorities and how it operates. [Link to 2021/22 Business Plan.](#)

Commitment and policies

The Board of Directors of WCF recognise the importance of ensuring that all our suppliers deliver their products in a responsible and ethical manner to us as a company and to those who we provide services for. We are committed to partnering with our supply chain in a way which is consistent with our company values of being empowering, welcoming, inclusive, trustworthy and innovative. To this end, we utilise the human resources and procurement services of Worcestershire County Council in sourcing many of our suppliers.

Procurement

When procuring goods or services, we will ensure that the requirements refer to the Modern Slavery Statement and as part of tender evaluation and ongoing contract management, consider the potential and likelihood of modern slavery and seek mitigations from the supplier through a clear understanding of their:

- structure, business and supply chains
- policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking
- due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains. Appropriate performance indicators and steps are taken to assess, monitor and manage any risks
- training available to all staff to support the identification of slavery and human trafficking

A statement has been produced which is used in our Standard Selection Questionnaire which covers the requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The questions used by WCC are:

- Are you a relevant commercial organisation as defined by section 54 ("Transparency in supply chains etc.") of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act")?
- If you have answered yes to question 1 are you compliant with the annual reporting requirements contained within Section 54 of the Act 2015?
 - If Yes provide URL
 - if No provide an explanation

Non selection if suppliers do not meet our pre-qualification requirements.

Remedies– all our contracts contain terms for default events and breaches of contract, and these could be activated if modern slavery found in our supply chain.

Human Resources (HR) Policies and Procedures

WCF launched its updated Core Employment Policies in October 2019. A review of the rest of the HR policy framework is ongoing. As appropriate, HR policies and procedures are developed with input from senior management, HR, trade unions, and legal and democratic to ensure best practice.

The following policies and procedures support the Company in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure- the Company is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others working at or for the Company who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Company's work to come forward and voice those concerns.
- Employee Code of Conduct - the Code describes the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from our staff and any staff seconded or engaged from other organisations to undertake the work of the company. This includes information on staff expressing concerns about irregularities and tackling malpractice.
- Recruitment processes - the Company has robust recruitment processes which includes carrying out document checks on candidates before employing them to make sure they are allowed to work in the UK, appropriate reference checks, and that they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- Agency Workers - the recruitment of the sizable proportion of agency staff is managed via the Matrix system (Agency Staff Recruitment System). Matrix are a Managed Service Provider and have no direct link to either agencies or recruitment firms but act as a "middleman" and manage the "supply chain" on the Company's behalf. Matrix helps to streamline the recruitment process and ensure that the people hired are qualified, trustworthy, and compliant.
- Pay – the Company operates a job grading (job evaluation) system which is objective and non-discriminatory and supports the principles of equal pay. The Company takes a robust approach to ensuring that the job grading system is applied consistently and transparently. The Job Grading system applies to all posts across the 'main salary scale'.

Safeguarding E-Learning - Adults

The Company has implemented mandatory safeguarding adults e-learning module which staff (not including those based in schools) are required to complete. Topics covered in this module include what defines an adult as 'at risk' and how we define 'abuse'. The module also covers the different types of abuse (including modern slavery) and the signs that abuse may be taking place as well as what to do when reporting actual or suspected cases of abuse.

Safeguarding E-Learning - Children

The Company has implemented mandatory safeguarding children e-learning module which staff (not including those based in schools) are required to complete. This module helps staff understand the importance of safeguarding, how everyone can keep children safe from abuse, understand the different signs and types of child abuse or neglect, and also learn how to involve Children's Services.

Modern Slavery Duty to Notify

The Company hosts e-resources on Modern Slavery Duty to Notify guidance specified for public authorities. These include a factsheet and posters that explain what to do if you think someone has been a victim of modern slavery as well as links to related training. The resources detail the steps to be taken depending on whether you think the victim is under or over aged 18.

This statement has been approved and will be reviewed and updated annually.

Phil Rook

Director of Resources

14th April 2021