

Leeds City Council Modern Slavery Statement April 2019/20

Leeds

The multi-ethnic population of Leeds is approximately 785,000 people with more than 130 different nationalities and more than 170 languages spoken in the city. As a council, we provide and commission a significant range of services and therefore have a real opportunity to influence employment practice.

Leeds City Council (LCC) and partners aspire to being the best in the UK and having safe, strong communities is a key priority for us. We take our responsibility to safeguard the most vulnerable in society very seriously and this involves protecting people from the heinous crime of modern slavery.

Why is this important?

1658 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism from April-June 2018. On a more local scale, West Yorkshire Police is among the forces which refers the most suspected trafficking cases to the Home Office or National Crime Agency.

Councils are uniquely placed to be at the forefront of the fight against modern slavery and can demonstrate awareness and ethical leadership by voluntarily completing modern slavery transparency statements.

What we are currently doing

We have a city wide strategy which is published on the council's website to lay our plans and progress on tackling Modern Slavery.

We have a robust approach to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and expect all staff to play a part in safeguarding. We work with the Safeguarding Boards and local Community Safety Partnership to ensure that Modern Slavery is integrated into safeguarding work in the city.

We have trained safeguarding lead officers in all directorates who support staff to respond to safeguarding issues.

We have commissioned services to support victims of modern slavery as part of a Home Office funded pilot to test approaches to supporting victims as they are leaving the National Referral Mechanism.

We have established a multi-agency partnership to oversee and deliver a coherent, city wide plan to address modern slavery.

We work with partners such as West Yorkshire Police and health services to support victims and disrupt perpetrators.

Instinct is the council's internal reporting system for modern slavery concerns. Instinct has been running for 3.5 years and has reported numerous incidents of modern slavery, as well as other crimes, to the relevant bodies, leading to appropriate action being taken where necessary.

We actively participate in West Yorkshire national forums to address modern slavery issues.

We work with West Yorkshire Police to deliver and align workforce development programmes to promote early identification of modern slavery.

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Our Supply Chain

LCC used 10,723 external suppliers in the 2018/19 financial year spending over £10m+ on 13 suppliers.

Specifically regarding the potential of modern slavery in this large and varied supply chain, the council takes steps in the procurement process to try to eliminate risk. The Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ) is a self-declaration form sent to all potential suppliers which can lead to the disqualification of a supplier from the bidding process if the answers to the questions posed are unsatisfactory. Our SSQ asks whether potential suppliers are compliant with the annual reporting requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and asks for either evidence of this or an explanation as to why they do not comply.

In addition, our standard contract terms and conditions require our contractors to:

- (a) Be compliant with all applicable anti-slavery and human trafficking laws, statutes, regulations and codes from time to time in force including but not limited to the Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- (b) Report any, or suspected, breaches of the legislation to the council as well as provide a yearly report on the steps the contractor has taken to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains or in any part of its business; and
- (c) Implement a system of training for its employees, suppliers and subcontractors to ensure compliance with all applicable anti-slavery and human trafficking laws, statutes, regulations and codes from time to time in force including but not limited to the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Next steps

We will continue to build on our current approach to make improvements to ensure the safety of all people in Leeds.

We are in the process of creating a questionnaire that will be distributed to a selection of our suppliers, in order to prompt further consideration of their own supply chains, their workforce awareness of modern slavery and their procedures for dealing with it.

We will be working with partners to establish clear governance arrangements to ensure that modern slavery is addressed at a strategic level as well as developing referral pathways within the local authority to promote access to early intervention for victims in need of help and support.

We will continue to conduct ourselves in a manner that sets a strong precedent and helps to reduce the extent of modern slavery in Leeds and the surrounding areas.

This voluntary statement is made with reference to Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes *the Leeds City Council anti-slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2020*.

Signed and approved by...



James Rogers – Director, Communities and Environment.