



**University of Worcester**

## **Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement**

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.

The University of Worcester is committed to ensuring that slavery or human trafficking is not taking place in any part of our supply chain or in any part of our own business.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes The University of Worcester's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending July 2021.

This Statement details The University of Worcester's response to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and offers an outline of key areas where Slavery and Human Trafficking are deemed a higher risk area for potential prevalence within the University's supply chain

### **Organisational structure**

The University of Worcester is a Higher Education Corporation created by statute and is an exempt charity. The University also has a number of trading subsidiaries: U W Developments Limited, U W Enterprises Limited, U W Worcester Wolves Limited and UW UP LLP.

We have approximately 9000 students registered on courses in the UK and across the world. We directly employ approximately 2000 staff and have an annual income just below £100 Million.

In addition to the University sites located in Worcester, the University has developed relationships with other countries and has significant teaching partnerships, and works in other countries through research and exchange programmes.

The University's values are entirely consistent with the aim of eliminating slavery. Our work is inspired by a commitment to human equality and dignity, democracy and mutual respect. We aim for equal opportunity and real inclusion in all our activities. We promote sustainable development and active community engagement. We have an important role in generating and applying knowledge for public benefit. We believe that every individual matters and aim to help all our students, staff and partners make the most of their own rich potential as well as to benefit from the practical rewards and prosperity which stem from higher education and learning.

Further details about the University's structure, governance and values, as well as our Strategic Plan, can be found on our website: [www.worc.ac.uk](http://www.worc.ac.uk)

## **Our Policies**

We operate and regularly review workplace policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness in identifying and tackling modern slavery issues. Our workplace policies and procedures demonstrate our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in our supply chains.

Some of the University policies that support our approach to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking include:

### **Whistleblowing Policy**

The University of Worcester is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability and to conducting its business in a responsible way. The policy encourages employees to raise their concerns in a responsible way where there is malpractice (that is, illegal, improper or negligent behaviour) or wrongdoing within an organisation and, where they do so, protects those employees from reprisal.

### **Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults**

This aims to ensure the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk whilst on the University's premises or while engaging in activities controlled by the University

### **Health & Safety Policy**

This sets out the expectations on employees, students, and site users to support the University's efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace and to meet their own individual duty of care to others.

## **Our supply chains**

The University of Worcester is one of the largest purchasers in the county of Worcestershire and recognises that it has a responsibility to minimise the environmental and social impact of purchased goods and services. The University has identified the following procurement areas as being a higher risk to modern slavery and human trafficking within the supply chain:

- Laboratory and workshop consumables and equipment
- Catering and Food chains
- ICT equipment and services
- Construction / Estates goods and services
- Professional services
- Clothing and Textiles
- Estates (Hard and Soft Facilities Management), Works, Products and Services
- Professional Services

Each of the category groups above have been considered and the following specific categories have been identified as having a higher potential susceptibility to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking occurrence.

- Construction works sub-contractors and supply chains
- Estates; hard and soft facilities management services (such as maintenance, cleaning and security services)
- Food and catering
- Travel and accommodation (especially international)
- Office supplies/stationery
- ICT and Audio Visual (AV) equipment and products
- Laboratory and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies
- Clothing (sportswear and work wear)

The University has in place a number of frameworks which underpin its ethical standards across all business activities, this includes a Sustainable Procurement policy, Fairtrade status and Environmental policies.

The majority of the University's demand for office supplies and laboratory consumables is fulfilled by means of using national and regional agreements made available by the Higher Education Purchasing Consortia. A wide range of products is procured across all of these categories, many of which are sourced from international manufacturers operating in low-cost countries where modern forms of slavery are prevalent. The Consortia requests many of the suppliers in these high-risk areas to commit to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and is working to persuade all suppliers in these categories to commit to the Base Code.

The University are a member of the North West Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC) which is a membership based buying consortia for Universities and some Further Education colleges. NWUPC is a member of Procurement England Limited (PEL) which has a shared sustainability policy to which all consortia are committed. The University also have the opportunity to purchase from various other consortia including Crown Commercial Services (CCS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) and various NHS frameworks, these consortia have all published their own modern slavery statements.

The NWUPC has recently become an affiliate member of Electronics watch, on behalf of its members. This membership highlights the overall desire of the HE sector to protect the rights of workers within the supply chain, and that we are committed to taking positive action. A significant proportion of the University's demand for ICT equipment/products is fulfilled by using national framework agreements. The consortia work closely with Electronics Watch to monitor contracts closely to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within the supply chain.

The University has a zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking and have updated our standard terms and conditions to mandate compliance to the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

In order to meet our obligations under this act the University has signed up to NETpositive Futures, this is an on-line assessment tool that allows us to engage directly with all of our suppliers to identify their awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking. All of our suppliers have been contacted to encourage them to sign up to this free HE sector wide tool. The use of this tool by our supply base continues to rise, and engagement with the tool increases with a 21% increase in the number of actions in progress, and a 10% increase in the number of actions completed. The tool actively assists all our suppliers to develop an action plan that addresses Modern Slavery and other key sustainability issues within their businesses and supply chain. Data provided via NETpositives is a rich source of information to use to help us understand our supply chain.

### **Training and awareness raising**

Within the Procurement Team, as the area most actively engaged in the University's operational response to the Modern Slavery Act 2015, all members have undergone training. Ongoing collaboration is sought within the HE sector on best practice. The University will continue to ensure that those who are involved in activities in which modern slavery and human trafficking could be an issue will continue to receive support and training, the University will continue to generally raise awareness across the organisation.

Members of the Procurement Team have delivered lectures to students within the Business School to raise their awareness of sustainability issues arising within the supply of goods and services into the University of Worcester.

### **Plans for the future**

UW intends to take the following further steps to combat slavery and human trafficking

- Continue to better understand our supply chains and work towards greater transparency
- Continue to promote the use of the framework suppliers and lobby via the purchasing consortia to ensure all suppliers have stated anti-slavery and anti-trafficking policies and procedures
- Ensure all contracted suppliers have signed up to and are complying with our terms and conditions which include commitments relating to the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Continue on an annual basis to review this statement and look at ways to enhance.
- Continue to encourage supplier engagement with the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool
- Monitor potential risk areas in our supply chains
- Protect whistle blowers

### **Actions Taken during the reporting year**

COVID-19 has this year greatly affected supply chains across the world, including that of the University and wider public sector. This year we have seen a growth in the need for key products like PPE and hand sanitiser to enable the University to actively ensure that we minimise the health risk to both our staff and students. Alcohol-based sanitisers, distilled from sugarcane is an example of a product found to have involved child labour and modern slavery within its supply chains across Brazil, India, Mexico and Thailand. There is also a shortage of Chips and graphics cards across the globe which Given the need to expedite our sourcing approach in the face of the pandemic, the procurement team will be actively looking to challenge our key suppliers and their supply chains with the support of Higher Education and wider public sector purchasing consortia to understand any risk and ensure we are working with suppliers with robust sourcing platforms

Procurement visited the premises and production line of our appointed sportswear provider, to review garments as they were being produced. The majority of the sublimated garments are manufactured in the UK. Clothing has been identified as a high-risk category of supplies.



Professor David Green CBE DL  
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022