

## Divisions Affected - All

### CABINET

18 June 2024

## Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

### Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

## RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - a) Approve the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for Oxfordshire County Council

## Executive Summary

2. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement provides an overview of the council's commitment to prevent modern slavery in our work and supply chains, together with a summary of relevant policies, training, and risk management processes in place to support this. The council does not currently have a Modern Slavery Statement for the whole organisation.
3. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires commercial organisations with a turnover of over £36 million to produce a Modern Slavery Statement outlining their procedures around reducing the dangers of modern slavery in their work.<sup>1</sup> The Act does not require local authorities to write such a policy as a statutory duty, but many authorities have published statements to demonstrate their commitment to fair and equal procurement, and going above and beyond in limiting instances of slavery in work done by suppliers and partners.

## Background

4. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 addresses issues of "slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour", including human trafficking (transporting or coercing people in order to benefit from their service or work). This can take various forms, such as domestic servitude, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and criminal exploitation.
5. Modern slavery and human trafficking are live issues in Oxfordshire. A [recent report from Oxford City Council](#) highlighted that there had been 379 reports of cases involving adults in Oxfordshire in 2022 and 2023. These cases were

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<sup>1</sup> [The Modern Slavery Act 2015 \(Transparency in Supply Chains\) Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

reported to the Anti-Slavery Coordinator Oxfordshire (ASCO), based in Oxford City Council, in a role funded by the Community Safety Fund and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Number of Cases Reported to ASCO 2022 &amp; 2023</b>
Oxford City	126 (101 individual; 25 business/premises)
Oxfordshire	253 (210 individual; 43 business/premises)

## **Oxfordshire County Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement**

6. Whilst the Modern Slavery Act 2015 does not require local authorities to produce such a Modern Slavery Statement as a statutory duty, many councils voluntarily choose to write one to outline their commitment to ethical procurement and reducing exploitation in their work and local area.
7. Oxfordshire County Council currently addresses the risk and management of modern slavery in a range of service-specific policies, including around pay and recruitment, safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, and our procurement processes. However, we do not currently have a council-wide statement recognising all of the relevant procedures and policies in place.
8. The council-wide Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement has been drafted to affirm our commitment, and demonstrate work undertaken, to eliminate and prevent acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within the organisation and our supply chains and partners' procurement processes.
9. The statement will be published on Oxfordshire County Council's website and registered on the government list of relevant policies.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

10. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement supports Oxfordshire County Council's Strategic Plan to tackle inequalities and support the health and wellbeing of residents.

## **Financial Implications**

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Activity related to modern slavery and human trafficking is built into the functions of the council and as such funded as part of the council's budget.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer,  
[kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Finance)

## Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
[paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Legal)

## Staff Implications

13. There are no staff implications arising from this report.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement is expected to have positive impacts on all communities and protected characteristics. The statement reaffirms and demonstrates our commitment to eliminate and prevent acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within the organisation and our supply chains, and applies equally to all groups.

## Sustainability Implications

15. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

## Risk Management

16. There are no risks arising directly from this report.

Lorna Baxter  
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Oxfordshire County Council Modern Slavery and Human  
Trafficking Statement 2023/24

Contact Officer: Karina Russell, Policy Team Leader, 07917921511,  
[karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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