



# Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement

## **Introduction**

This statement is made in pursuant to Section 54 part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The University of Aberdeen takes a zero tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking in all its forms, and supports the UK Government's approach to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This statement reflects our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships (in line with the University's Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policy) and to implementing and enforcing systems and controls that seek to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within our supply chains.

## **Purpose of the Statement**

This statement is designed to demonstrate our commitment to the Modern Slavery Act 2015, (and specifically to section 54 (1)), and the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 by informing our students, staff, partners and the public about the University of Aberdeen and its policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains.

It sets out the steps the University has taken and will take in relation to slavery and human trafficking.

## **Employment of Staff**

The University is rigorous in checking that staff on our home campuses have the right to work in the UK. The risk of modern slavery occurring in the University's workforce is mitigated by ensuring that staff are recruited following robust Human Resources recruitment policies. The University adheres to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and implements its own Whistleblowing Policy regarding concerns about corruption, fraud or other malpractices within the University.

## **Modern Slavery risks in our supply chain**

We buy a wide range of goods and services, including laboratory supplies (equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals etc.), furniture and stationery, electronics (computers, audio visual, etc.), travel services, food and catering supplier, waste and recycling services, books and printing, construction services and supplies, and do so

in accordance with public procurement law. A large portion is bought through frameworks established by collaborative consortia.

The University of Aberdeen is a member of Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), the procurement centre of expertise for Scotland's universities and colleges. The University benefits from its close links with APUC in a number of areas within sustainable procurement and is aligned to the APUC Code of Conduct ensuring consistency in approach to the Supply Chain. The University actively engages with APUC to support the inclusion of ethical sustainability, including addressing slavery and human trafficking, in their procurement programmes.

We have an expanding programme of transnational education projects, which includes setting up campuses in countries that may have different labour standards and practices and different legal recourse for victims of exploitation. We conduct proactive human rights due diligence from the inception of all such projects, and encourage and support our overseas partners to assess and address their own modern slavery risks, sharing their findings and actions with us.

### **ICT Equipment – Electronics Watch**

The University of Aberdeen became a founding member of Electronics Watch in 2015, an independent organisation that works to ensure good working conditions in factories providing goods bought by public sector members. We regularly provide reports to them of ICT equipment we buy and where they are produced and Electronics Watch work with civil society organisations in the countries where the factories are located to monitor working conditions.

### **Steps Taken during last financial year**

Every regulated procurement process (as defined in the procurement laws of Scotland) conducted by the University now requires potential suppliers to disclose whether it has been the subject of a conviction by final judgement within the last 5 years of any offence under Part 1 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 or under any provision referred to in the Schedule of that Act. Any bidders with such convictions will automatically be excluded from the bidding process, unless they can sufficiently demonstrate reliability of changes to their practices.

The Procurement Team received training and implemented APUC's SUSTAIN toolkit. The web-based assessment tool provides a database where suppliers can provide details of measures they take in relation to modern slavery in their supply chain, including third party accreditations and assessments to evidence this. Where risks have been identified, we work with APUC or directly with suppliers to raise social responsibility questions including human rights issues and follow-up on any concerns we may identify.

## **Future Plans**

As part of this reporting exercise in this and the coming years, the University will continue to ask identified suppliers about their actions to tackle modern slavery in their supply chains. We will work with others to ensure focus on modern slavery in all priority regulated contracts. Where appropriate, we will also encourage sharing of information within our supply base.

The University will also continue to work with APUC on the use of sustainability tools for supplier assessment to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any part of its activities.

This statement has been approved by the University Court and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

15 January 2018