



# Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement

## Introduction

Founded in 1495, the University of Aberdeen is Scotland's third oldest university and the fifth oldest in the UK. The principle of serving the public good is enshrined in its founding purpose, to 'be open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others'. In keeping with this principle, the University takes a zero tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking in all its forms.

Today, the University employs over 3,000 staff and teaches in the region of 14,500 students from countries around the world. In line with our Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policy, which aims to set best practice standards meeting or surpassing the requirements of legislation.

This statement reflects our commitment to act ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships, to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and to establish and maintain effective systems and controls which ensure the University is not contributing to modern slavery in any way.

## Purpose of the Statement

In accordance with Section 54, Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, this statement sets out the steps the University has taken and will take in relation to slavery and human trafficking.

## University Employees

The University Human Resources Policies set out our commitment to workplace rights at the University. The risk of modern slavery occurring in the University's workforce is mitigated by ensuring that staff are recruited following robust recruitment policies. We are rigorous in checking that all new recruits on our home campuses have the right to work in the UK.

The University adheres to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and implements its own Whistleblowing Policy regarding concerns about potential corruption, fraud or other malpractices within the University.

The University is an accredited Living Wage (Scotland) Employer.

## Supply Chains

We buy a wide range of goods, services and works, 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. We have a published University Procurement Strategy and Action Plan which details our principles and practices and outlines how we take steps to ensure an ethical procurement approach.

The University is a member of Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), the procurement centre of expertise for Scotland's universities and colleges. We have contributed to and adopted the APUC Code of Conduct as the University's Code of Conduct ensuring consistency in approach to the Supply Chain. In asking relevant suppliers to adopt the Supply Chain Code of

Conduct we collaborate with others to demonstrate a commitment not to use forced, involuntary or underage labour.

Through the APUC SUSTAIN web-tool and database, suppliers are asked to provide details of measures they take in relation to modern slavery in their supply chain, including any third-party accreditations and assessments to evidence this. Where risks have been identified, we work with APUC or contact suppliers directly to deal with any social responsibility issues.

Also, each regulated procurement process conducted by the University requires tenderers to complete a European Single Procurement Document (ESPD) and disclose whether the bidder or any member of their organisation has been convicted in the last five 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 to that Act. Tenderers that confirm such a conviction will be excluded from the process unless they can successfully demonstrate that they have self-cleansed.

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 require our overseas partners to assess and address their own modern slavery risks, sharing their findings and actions with us.

In 2015, The University of Aberdeen became a founding member of Electronics Watch, an organisation that works to ensure good working conditions in factories producing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) goods bought by public sector members across Europe. We provide them with regular reports detailing the factories in which the ICT equipment we buy are produced, according to our suppliers, and Electronics Watch works with civil society organisations in the countries where the factories are located to monitor working conditions.

In 2017, all members of APUC became members of Electronics Watch through the consortium membership, recognising the need to work together to achieve greater impact, and the University remains an active member.

### **Steps Taken During Last Financial Year**

The University's Procurement Policy & Procedures were updated and published on the University website in July 2018. A new Formal Quotation process has been introduced for expenditure between £10K and £50K (excl VAT) and templates provided. The requirement is that the Invitation to Quote package sent to bidders must include the University of Aberdeen Supply Chain Code of Conduct and companies must confirm they adhere to the Code of Conduct, in order to enforce and promote sound social, ethical, environmental and economic practises.

APUC has undertaken a refresh of the prioritisation exercise on all collaborative framework agreements which they lead on, to identify areas where Modern Slavery may be occurring and to take appropriate action to ensure that these framework agreements exclude the use of modern slavery practices. The Procurement Team continues to promote the use of these framework agreements within the institution and as such we can be confident that our supply chain has been analysed when contracting under these agreements. We will look to increase reliance on these collaborative frameworks which will reinforce the compliance with our policies

The Procurement Team attended a training event on Serious Organised Crime Prevention which dealt largely with Modern Slavery linked to potential criminal behaviour.

### **Next Steps**

Where possible, within our own tenders & contracts, the University will continue to address areas of concern around modern slavery with identified suppliers and their supply chains. The Procurement Team will further increase its understanding of sustainability risk associated with each commodity category.

We will continue to participate in further Sustainable Procurement training and in supplier engagement, including through the SUSTAIN database and face to face events.

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



David Beattie

Director of Finance

30 January 2019