



# Modern 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 in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking in all its forms.

Today, the University employs over 3,000 staff and teaches over 15,000 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, transparently 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

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps the University has taken and will take to identify and prevent such practices from taking place in any of its supply chain and in any part of its own business.

## 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 and implemented the new Accredited Living Wage rate in December 2018.

## Supply Chains

The University of Aberdeen procures a wide range of goods, services and works. Our supply chains fall under the following main categories:

- Laboratory Supplies (equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals etc.)
- Estates, Buildings and Facilities Management
- Computer Supplies and Services (including Audio Visual equipment)
- Professional Services
- Utilities

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 Ltd (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 disclose whether the bidder or any member of their organisation with decision making powers 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 taken sufficient measures to demonstrate compliance with this Act.

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 will conduct proactive human rights due diligence from the inception of all such projects and will require our overseas partners to assess and address their own modern slavery risks, sharing their findings and actions with us.

The University of Aberdeen is 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.

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

In line with the University's Procurement Policy & Procedures, suppliers continue to be sent 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.

Members of the Procurement Team attended training provided by APUC and HEPA (Higher Education Procurement Association) on Modern Slavery Act Guidance and Protecting Human Rights in the Supply chain.

### **Next Steps**

The University will continue to address areas of concern around modern slavery with identified suppliers and their supply chains where appropriate.

Further members of the Procurement Team will attend HEPA training to increase its understanding of Human Rights and the risks associated with each commodity category.

APUC is currently reviewing the Supply Chain Code of Conduct to ensure ongoing relevance and the University will participate in the working group who will take this forward.



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