

## **Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

### **Modern Slavery Statement September 2023**

#### **1. Introduction**

Through the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) the Authority supports the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the Act).

“Modern slavery is a serious crime that violates human rights. Victims are forced, threatened or deceived into situations of subjugation, degradation and control which undermine their personal identity and sense of self.” (Home Office, 2021)

The Act was established to tackle these crimes and it provides the law enforcement agencies the powers to pursue and bring to justice criminal activity related to human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. The Act consolidates slavery and trafficking offences, introduces tougher penalties and sentencing rules for offenders and provides more support for victims.

The following definitions are encompassed within the term ‘modern slavery’ for the purposes of the Act:

- ‘slavery’ is where ownership is exercised over a person.
- ‘servitude’ involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion.
- ‘forced’ or ‘compulsory’ labour involves work or service extracted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily.
- ‘human trafficking’ concerns arranging or facilitating of another with a view to exploiting them.

The Authority supports the implementation of the Act, which requires organisations to provide their commitment through the publication of a Modern Slavery statement.

#### **2. Our Commitment**

The Authority is committed to eliminating discrimination and exploitation in all business dealings and through our supply chains. We believe the obligations placed upon commercial organisations, within the Act, as essential in the prevention of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

This statement sets out the current practises in place across the Service to tackle and prevent modern slavery and human trafficking, within the Service, including through our supply chains, and our duty to identify and report such instances to the relevant bodies. The Service endorses this through:

- staff training, awareness and education.
- working in collaboration with our partners, other agencies and through attending groups.
- having appropriate and responsible procurement practices and supply chain management.

### 3. Our Service

The Service has 50 Community Fire Stations across the two counties of Dorset and Wiltshire, which is made up of four Local Authority areas, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset, Swindon and Wiltshire. We deliver a broad range of community safety initiatives, including education programmes, safe & well visits and road safety education alongside fire safety and enforcement activities. We target risk and vulnerabilities and work collaboratively with partners to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery.

In line with the Act, this statement covers the Service's activities, including all direct employees, agency workers, volunteers and supply chains. This statement is reviewed annually by the Authority, alongside the Statement of Assurance.

The Service's organisational structure can be viewed via the following link.

[Organisation Chart](#)

Public trust and confidence in our Service relies on us all demonstrating ethical behaviours. Our [Code of Ethics](#) sets out ethical principles and helps us all to continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity and assists us in supporting our communities in the best way.

It is the responsibility of everyone within the Service to escalate concerns or signs of modern slavery or unethical behaviour, across our operations and within our supply chains. The Service has several ways in which our staff can speak up, including through our Culture Network, our Equality Diversity & Inclusion Champions, reporting through our Safeguarding provisions and through our Whistleblowing arrangements. Our staff are aware of these channels through our Service communications along with our procedures and guidance available through our internal intranet site.

#### **Service procedures:**

The Service has several internal procedures to ensure an ethical and transparent nature when conducting our organisation and activities. These procedures are reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate. The main procedures, which incorporate the identification and approach to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, are:

- Safer Recruitment (ED18 SI)
- Safeguarding of Children & Adults at risk (PCE1)
- Adult & Child Abuse (PCE1 SI)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI 1)
- Whistleblowing
- Contracts & Procurement (FM 8)
- Code of Ethics.

## **Service practices:**

To ensure the Service is acting responsibly activities are undertaken to protect our staff and agency workers, as well as our supply chains, from modern slavery and human trafficking. The Service does this through the following actions:

- Carrying out pre-employment checks for all directly employed staff and approved staffing agencies.
- Undertaking pre-screening checks as part of recruitment, including identity checks, right to work, references and, where applicable, education and professional qualification checks.
- Recruiting professionals who uphold appropriate professional codes of practice, relating to procurement and supply chains.
- Ensuring that agency providers used undertake safeguards to ensure that pre-employment checks are carried out on all agency workers and their right to work in the UK.
- Having a pay grading system in place to ensure that pay rates are in place and based on the skills and responsibilities required to carry out the role.
- Giving appropriate and fair access to training and development opportunities for all staff.
- Consulting with the Trade Unions and staff representative groups on policies and proposed organisational change.
- Purchasing goods and services from UK or Overseas companies, who are required to comply with the Act.
- Incorporating a clause in our standard terms and conditions that requires contractors to comply with the Act and, when our terms and conditions are not used, adding a bespoke clause to individual contracts to ensure compliance with the Act.
- Having standard terms and conditions of business detailed on all purchase orders for any non-contracted spend of low value.
- Ensuring that our staff are aware of their responsibilities, in both their professional and personal lives, to report any concerns regarding human trafficking and modern slavery.

The Service is committed to ensuring a fair and transparent process to determine individual salary increases. This is undertaken by using the Greater London Provincial Council job evaluation scheme. This is an important aspect of our modern slavery position and is a key step in reducing vulnerability to slavery like practises.

## **Service procurement and supply chains:**

The Service is committed to ethical procurement practices which aim to encourage fair pay and working conditions in our supply chains, to assist in the identification and elimination of modern slavery and human trafficking. The Service expects all its partners, contractors and suppliers, that are subject to Section 54 of the Act, to understand and comply with the requirements set out in the legislation.

In all tender processes, modern slavery is an important consideration and appropriate actions are taken to ensure any risks of modern slavery are addressed. The Service also assesses other actions it can take, such as collaboration opportunities with its partners, to further promote the Act and minimise the possibility of Modern Slavery in its business and in its supply chain.

While it is impractical for the Service to audit and monitor every supplier in its entire supply chain, the Service takes a proportionate risk management approach. As a contracting Authority, the Service undertakes procurement in compliance with the UK Public Contract Regulations 2015. The standard selection questionnaire, asked in all competitive tenders, includes a requirement to declare and evidence (where applicable) compliance with the Act. Also, specific questions are built into the scoring criteria, where this is relevant, to the procurement being undertaken. This is an example of how the Service considers more than just price when selecting a supplier and is committed to reducing the risk of modern slavery in our supply chains.

**Service training and awareness:**

All staff and volunteers attend a Service induction, where safeguarding, modern slavery and human trafficking are covered. In addition, all staff and volunteers are required to complete mandatory, level one, E-learning training on Adult and Children’s Safeguarding, this includes a section on modern day slavery. Furthermore, level two designated safeguarding training, through the Virtual College, is provided for appropriate staff and officers. Designated safeguarding leads across the Service also undertake level three training.

The procurement team undertakes specific training related to modern slavery and human trafficking in supply chains as part of their annual CIPS (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply) Ethical Procurement and Supply Module and test.

The Service also runs regular campaigns on modern slavery and human trafficking through our internal communication methods and provides additional guidance on our internal intranet pages.

Our training and awareness campaigns are aimed at developing knowledge and awareness in how to identify the signs and indicators of exploitation. It also provides information and learning on what to do when a member of staff meets a potential victim and how to escalate and report concerns.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

The Service recognises the importance of the Act, and that the review and assessment of our actions, to identify and address modern slavery risks across our Service, will be an ongoing and evolving process.

The Service currently uses the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to continue to review and understand the effectiveness of our approach to reducing the risk of modern slavery within our Service, our practises and approach:

<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
% of staff completed level 1 E-Learning training for Adult & Children Safeguarding	95%	97.2%
% of designated officers completed level 2 Safeguarding training	95%	100%
% of designated safeguarding leads completed level 3 Safeguarding training	95%	100%

% of assessed suppliers, for competitive tenders above £100K, that have a Modern Slavery Statement (if required) 100%	100%	100%
Number of Whistleblowing reports regarding modern slavery	N/A	0

**Approved by the Authority on (DATE).**