

Essex County Council Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2018/19

Our Vision

This statement sets out Essex County Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to their activities and to put in place steps to eliminate acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within its business and in its supply chains, sub-contractors and partners. This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

As part of local government, Essex County Council recognises its responsibilities to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking.

Definition of modern slavery

Modern slavery includes a range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

- Sexual exploitation: this includes sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos.
- Domestic servitude: this involves victims being forced to work in usually private households, performing domestic chores and childcare duties.
- Forced labour: this can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, laying driveways, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, maritime and beauty (nail bars).
- Criminal exploitation: This can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.
- Other forms of exploitation include organ removal, forced begging fraud, marriage and illegal adoption.

We are passionate about better lives for people in Essex. This is being delivered through our [organisational strategy](#) which has the following four strategic aims.

- Enable inclusive economic growth
- Help people get the best start and age well
- Help create great places to grow, live and work
- Transform the Council to achieve more with less

Within our own business:

We have a number of procedures in place that contribute to ensuring modern slavery does not occur in our business:

- Robust recruitment policy and process which are compliant with UK employment legislation, The process includes a number of pre-employment checks, for example "right to work"

document checks, referencing and understanding any employment gaps. DBS checks are undertaken for relevant posts.

- Employee code of conduct along with mandatory training which defines the responsibilities and standards required for all work for and on behalf of ECC including interims, agency workers and ECC employees who are seconded to other organisations.
- Reporting knowledge or suspicion of slavery through our whistleblowing procedures and hotline which ensures that staff/ members can raise their concerns confidentially.
- The Council has responsibility to develop implement and monitor policies and processes to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults and children and works within multi-agency partnerships to protect and safeguard people.
- Staff awareness training is in place for specific ECC staff which supports the Modern Slavery Act.

Within our supply chain:

The Council is utilising a Category Management approach to minimise any market risks concerning slavery and human trafficking within its large and complex supply chain. Category plans and strategies utilise market risk assessment tools to identify countries that use child and forced labour to produce goods and services.

To comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 Essex County Council has updated its professional and technical ability tender questions within the procurement sourcing process. The questions require a bidder to evidence their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. Any bidder who fails to evidence their compliance with the required legislation shall be excluded from participating further in the tender process.

Incorporated within ECC's standard contract terms are clauses that specify the supplier's contractual obligation concerning Modern Slavery.

Any supplier engaged by Essex County Council to undertake the supply of goods and /or services is contracted to do so in line with the following Authority's policies:

- Safeguarding
- Equality & Diversity Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing

These policies are key to insuring that staff employed by our supply chain have appropriate channels to report any incidents of slavery and human trafficking.

Policies, Due Diligence & Audit Process

ECC's Supplier relationship and contract management teams utilise Supply Chain Management techniques to ensure that effective contract management is applied to direct suppliers and their supply chain to deliver the Council's requirements in the most cost effective manner. This would include the identification and management of risks in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking. This is done by:-

- Increasing openness, transparency and efficiency in the management of supply chains,
- Improving ability to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in supply chains.
- Improving communications with suppliers
- Enhancing relationships with suppliers

The teams are also responsible for undertaking audits on suppliers to ensure compliance with the Contract Agreement. The team is continuing to review how modern slavery will be incorporated into the contract management process.

Training

Staff in the ECC Procurement team have completed training for Modern Slavery Act 2015 and wider Diversity and Equality issues.

Aims for the Coming Year

The focus for the next 12 months with regards to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as follows

- Continue to work in partnership with a wide range of agencies within Essex to reduce the risk of neglect and abuse, to detect and report occurrences and to support victims.
- Continue to work with suppliers to improve the transparency of end to end supply chains and to better understand areas of higher risk.
- Continue to review active contracts to address modern slavery i.e. audits, KPIs
- Review of internal Procurement training to support the modern slavery act and roll out for wider professional implementation. Staff awareness training has been rolled out to specific ECC staff to support the Modern Slavery Act implementation. In the coming year further training will be reviewed and rolled out for wider professional implementation.



Cllr David Finch
Leader of the Council



Gavin Jones
Chief Executive