

Modern Slavery Charter

Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present a Modern Slavery Charter to County Council (Appendix 2) and to seek agreement to the Charter.

Background

- 2 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance, which accompanies the Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a category of abuse. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 identifies its aim to make provision about slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, including human trafficking. It includes provisions for the protection of victims and the appointment of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
- 3 Recent Government estimates suggest that there are up to 13,000 victims of human trafficking in the UK. Since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, there has been an increase in prosecutions and a 40% rise in the number of victims. There is national recognition that further work needs to continue to raise awareness and respond to modern slavery reports.
- 4 Where Modern Slavery police operations have taken place across County Durham, the Council have been involved throughout the process including in the preparations, as part of the operation and post operation.
- 5 The governance for Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking sits under the Local Safeguarding Adult Board arrangements.
- 6 In December 2017, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner published *Modern Slavery a Council Guide*. This guidance outlines the role councils play in tackling modern slavery, from identifying and reporting instances and support for victims to procurement and supply of services.
- 7 Section 54 (9) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 identifies the requirement for larger organisations or employers with a turnover of £36 million to have a modern slavery statement in place. As best practice, the County Council has

a Modern Slavery Statement in place. The Statement is publicised and reviewed each financial year.

- 8 In 2017-2018, a range of activities took place to support raising awareness of Modern Slavery. A number of multi-agency training briefings delivered in partnership with Durham Constabulary to staff across the wider workforce took place and those briefings will continue in 2018-2019.
- 9 A range of articles and e-bulletins continue, sharing key messages across the wider partnership and front line staff. The focus is upon raising awareness of modern slavery, the signs and indicators and guidance on how to report concerns.
- 10 In response to research from the University of Nottingham and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) in 2017 to promote consistency across the UK, an Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit was published in October 2018. The toolkit aims to support partnerships to develop their approach to tackling modern slavery, inclusive of governance, accountability, modern slavery statements, performance and monitoring.

Modern Slavery Charter

- 11 The main aim of the proposed Charter is to illustrate the County Council's commitment to the prevention of modern slavery and its occurrence in County Durham.
- 12 Adopting the themes of Prevention, Protection and Partnership are in line with the key messages in the Modern Slavery Council Guide.
- 13 Themes in the Charter cover a broad range of activities from raising awareness to procurement activity. The Charter is an additional element of ongoing work to tackle the issue locally, with performance and monitoring as a feature in keeping with the IASC and Nottingham University toolkit. Further work will take place to review the toolkit against the modern slavery partnership activities to ensure it is adopting best practice throughout all areas planned.
- 14 Monitoring the progress against each Charter commitment will take place on an annual basis.
- 15 Development of the proposed Charter took place in consultation with Unite, GMB and Unison Trade Unions.
- 16 Unions received the Charter positively, with agreement to endorse with their individual logos.
- 17 Partner agencies will be encouraged to adopt their own Charter.

Recommendations and reasons

- 18 County Council are recommended to approve the Modern Slavery Charter and publish it on the Council's website.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

The Charter illustrates commitment of the Council to ensuring modern slavery does not exist in supply chains. If decommissioning takes place of any contracts due to slavery or trafficking issues identified, the Council may incur costs from any future commissioning activity.

Staffing

The MS Charter should be made readily available to all staff with access to the website and also for wider promotion.

Risk

Potential risk to reputation without evidence of success of Charter implementation.

Equality and Diversity

Those subject to slavery and human trafficking are often from diverse communities. The steps set out in this Charter will help to ensure the risks they face are minimised. Adoption of the Charter seeks to raise awareness, to help to identify victims of trafficking or slavery across all protected characteristics and particularly age, disability and race. On that basis, the Charter is likely to bring about a positive impact across those diverse communities.

Accommodation

Accommodation issues related to those people who have been subject to modern slavery will be considered as part of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Crime and disorder

Adult safeguarding and safeguarding children both link with Modern Slavery/Trafficking. Partners of the police such as the Council and the local safeguarding boards ensure there are related policies and procedures in place.

Human rights

Legislation and related policy for the protection of any victims identified are used to inform single agency and any multi-agency working. It includes for example, the Modern Slavery Act 2015, EU Directive Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its Victims, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights 2010.

Consultation

The MS Charter is written in consultation with wider service areas in the council, elected members and Trade Unions.

Procurement

The commitment of Corporate Procurement steps to support the Charter is included. Corporate Procurement ensure the Council is meeting its requirements and has systems in place to identify any potential issues with procured services.

Disability issues

Not applicable.

Legal implications

There is no legal requirement for the Council to adopt a Modern Slavery Charter. However, the adoption of the Charter represents good practice and helps to demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting its obligations under the statutory guidance and Modern Slavery, a Council Guide.



Our Charter Commitment against Modern Slavery

Durham County Council as a public sector organisation recognises that Modern Slavery is a crime, and as such, we collectively take a stand against Modern Slavery and its occurrence in Durham. We have agreed 3 key aims for our Charter:

1. Prevention

- Improve public awareness of modern slavery and provide advice and support to people on how to protect themselves from modern slavery.
- Provide a range of awareness raising to all DCC employees in understanding the nature of modern slavery and recognising the signs.
- Ensure Corporate Procurement staff will continue to work towards the ethical procurement and supply, to prevent the existence of modern slavery in any of our supply chains.

2. Protection

- Promote safeguarding policies for children and adults to all employees and the wider workforce to help to protect those most vulnerable.
- Provide consistent messages to all DCC employees on how to respond to modern slavery and ensure they comply with our employee code of conduct for equality and diversity.
- Support all employees and our contractors to adopt and understand whistle blowing to help to identify victims and protect them at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote that concerns or knowledge of modern slavery should be reported to the Police on 101.

3. Partnership

- Promote consistent messages to DCC employees, the public and partners, including all Area Action Partnerships across County Durham.
- Support inter-agency working across all partners in the prevention of Modern Slavery and reporting requirements of the National Referral Mechanism.
- Measure the effectiveness of our activities to inform wider partnerships.

