

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL

MODERN SLAVERY POLICY 2023-24

1. Policy statement

- 1.1. Modern slavery is a crime and violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. The council has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in its business or in any of its supply chains.
- 1.2. The council is also committed to ensuring there is transparency in its own business and in the approach to tackling modern slavery throughout its supply chains, consistent with disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The council expects the same high standards from all its contractors, suppliers and other business partners, and as part of contracting processes, includes specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children. It expects that its suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all persons working for the council or on its behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, directors, officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, interns, agents, contractor, external consultants, third-party representatives, and business partners.
- 1.4. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the council may amend it at any time.

2. Responsibility for the policy

- 2.1. The Council's Members and Senior Leadership Team have overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with the council's legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under the council's control comply with it.
- 2.2. The Council's Service Delivery Managers have primary and day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, dealing with any queries about it, and auditing internal control systems and procedures to ensure they are effective in countering modern slavery.

- 2.3. Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand and comply with this policy and are given adequate and regular training on it and the issue of modern slavery in supply chains.
- 2.4. Council employees are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries are encouraged and should be raised with the appropriate Service Manager.

3. Compliance with the policy

- 3.1. All employees must read, understand and comply with this policy.
- 3.2. The prevention, detection and reporting of modern slavery in any part of the Council's business or supply chains is the responsibility of all those working for the Council or under its control. Employees are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest a breach of this policy.
- 3.3. Employees must notify their manager or call the Head of HR in a whistle-blowing capacity as soon as possible if they believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future.
- 3.4. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about an issue or suspicion of modern slavery in any parts of the business or supply chains of any supplier tier at the earliest possible stage.
- 3.5. Employees should note that where appropriate, and with the welfare and safety of local workers as a priority, the council will give support and guidance to its suppliers to help them address coercive, abusive and exploitative work practices in their own business and supply chains.
- 3.6. If an employee is unsure about whether a particular act, and the treatment of workers more general, or their working conditions within any tier of the council's supply chains constitutes any of the various forms of modern slavery, they should raise it with their manager or through the Head of HR in a whistle-blowing capacity.
- 3.7. The Council aims to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. The Council is committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of reporting in good faith their suspicion that modern slavery of whatever form is or may be taking place in any part of our own business or in any of our supply chains. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If an employee believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should report this immediately to the Head of HR in a whistle-blowing capacity.

4. Communication and awareness of this policy

- 4.1. Training on this policy, and on the risk our business faces from modern slavery in its supply chains, is available and encouraged to be part of the induction process for all individuals who work for the Council, and regular training will be provided as necessary.
- 4.2. The Council's zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery must be communicated to all suppliers, contractors and business partners at the outset of the business relationship with them and reinforced as appropriate thereafter.

5. Breaches of this policy

- 5.1. Any employee who breaches this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for misconduct or gross misconduct.
- 5.2. The Council may terminate its relationship with other individuals and organisations working on our behalf if they breach this policy.