

Introduction

This statement sets out Hastings Borough Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and its supply chains. This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

As part of Local Government, the council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking.

The council is committed to improving its practices to combat and prevent slavery and human trafficking in their corporate activities, and to ensuring that their supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

Organisational structure

This statement covers the full activities of Hastings Borough Council across as determined by the Council's organisational structure.

Corporate Plan

The council's Corporate Plan clearly states its aim to support and develop the people it employs, growing their knowledge and skills, now and for the future.

Policies

The council has a range of policies and processes which reflect the commitment to acting ethically and with integrity to prevent slavery and human trafficking in their operations.

Council policies are developed by officers employed by the authority and are agreed by Corporate Management Team and/ or committee, which would include councillors and senior officers. The following policies and procedures are considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.

Employee code of conduct

The council's Employee Code of Conduct makes clear to employees the actions and behaviours expected of them when representing the council. The council strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour and breaches are investigated and, if appropriate remedial action taken.

Equality & diversity policy

The council is committed to making equality and diversity an integral part of the business as usual. This includes a commitment to use our influence and purchasing power to help make equality a reality for all, and to take action to eradicate discrimination and inequality when delivering services, when empowering others to deliver services on our behalf and when providing funding to others to provide services.

Recruitment policy

The council directly recruits its employees and where agency workers are used, the council will verify the practices of the agency before accepting workers from that agency.

The council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. This includes robust procedures for the vetting of new employees and ensures they are able to confirm their identities and qualifications, and they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.

Pay

The council operates a job evaluation scheme which ensures that all employees are paid fairly and equitably. In addition to this, the council has introduced the accredited living wage..

Whistleblowing policy

The council encourage all its workers, volunteers and elected councillors to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The councils' whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for workers to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation.

Safeguarding policy

The council actively works to ensure the safeguarding of all vulnerable people. As part of its safeguarding responsibility, the council regularly undertakes safeguarding training for colleagues across the authority, to help identify any signs of potential safeguarding incidents and the relevant referral pathways. We would expect any colleague who may witness or suspect any wrongdoing to report their concerns to the council's Nominated Senior Officer or Safeguarding Contacts or police and/or East Sussex Children's' and Adults' Services.

Contractors and service providers

The council expects its key contractors to have safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place including policies and statements required by the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Approval

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Hastings Borough Council's modern slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31st March 2018.