**South Tyneside Council Modern Slavery Statement**

Covering the Financial Year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Agreed by a meeting of Cabinet on 12 August 2020

**PART A: Introduction**

1. South Tyneside Council is committed to understanding and mitigating the risks of slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities and supply chains.

1. By publishing an annual transparency statement, detailing activities undertaken over the latest financial year relating to Modern Slavery mitigation, the Council can keep stakeholders up to date and ensure continued compliance with the obligations arising from section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

**Organisational Structure and Supply Chains:**

1. This statement covers the activities and supply chains of South Tyneside Council, including direct employees of the Council and services delivered on behalf of the Council by third party organisations, and our arms-length management organisation, South Tyneside Homes. More information about the Council structure and governance is available in the Council Constitution (add link here).

**Areas of operation and supply and high risk activities:**

1. South Tyneside Council operates within the United Kingdom, which is considered at low risk of slavery and human trafficking, relative to other parts of the world.
2. Intelligence indicates that several slavery and trafficking incidents have been identified across the United Kingdom, including in parts of the North East of England. The Council remains vigilant to the ongoing threat of Modern Slavery and to the potential that Modern Slavery could be taking place undetected in South Tyneside.
3. South Tyneside Council engages in a wide range of business activities, from refuse collection to the delivery of social care. None of these sectors are classified as high risk for labour exploitation. However, certain frontline workers may be more likely to encounter victims or perpetrators. The South Tyneside Modern Slavery Strategy sets out ways to raise awareness amongst these service areas and engage staff to help us tackle modern slavery.

**Responsibility:**

1. Each Head of Service is responsible for ensuring risks of Modern Slavery are understood and mitigated against in their service area, and for using appropriate resources to prevent and disrupt slavery and to support and protect victims.
2. Any concerns regarding modern slavery or human trafficking in the organisation or supply chains should be raised with the Corporate Director of Business and Resources:

**PART B: Modern slavery policies and initiatives implemented to date:**

1. South Tyneside Council has a number of policies in place which protect employees and supply lines against the risk of modern slavery within the organisation. These include:

* *Employee Code of Conduct* – Enshrined within the Council Constitution, this code sets out actions and behaviours expected of employees when representing the organisation.
* *‘Speak Out’ Whistleblowing Policy* – This policy supports employees, contractors and partners with concerns about any aspect of the Council’s work to come forward and voice these concerns.
* *Equality and Diversity Policies* – The Council has two Equality and Diversity Policies, once for employees and one for residents, which outline a commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and a respect for diversity in all areas of council business, aiming to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; promote equality of access; and promote good relations between diverse communities.
* *Recruitment Policies* – The Council has a range of robust, transparent and regularly-reviewed procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of new employees, ensuring they are able to confirm their identifies and qualifications, and that they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
* *Living Wage* – Following an Independent Wage Commission, in 2015 South Tyneside Council became one of the first Councils in the North East of England to commit to paying all employees the National Living Wage
* *Responsible Procurement* – responsible procurement, as set out in the South Tyneside Council Procurement Strategy 2016-2020, is an integral duty in the Council’s procurement process, ensuring ethical, honest and fair procurement

1. In May 2019, South Tyneside Council launched a comprehensive Modern Slavery Strategy which sets out actions to be taken to reduce the risks of slavery within our services, businesses, supply chains and communities.
2. The Strategy goes beyond the minimum statutory requirements of mitigating internal business and supply chain risks, by also setting our plans to strengthen the Council’s First Responder and community safety roles, as well as setting out ambitions to leverage the Council’s influence and networks to increase community and local business awareness of risks and signs of exploitation.
3. This transparency statement provides an annual opportunity to set out progress made against the ambitions presented in the South Tyneside Modern Slavery Strategy:

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| Modern Slavery Strategy Action Areas | What we said  we would do: | What we have achieved: | Areas for future action: |
| IDENTIFY | Raise awareness of indicators of slavery with all Council staff, including training for social workers and other key staff more likely to encounter victims of modern slavery, to ensure staff are able to help identify and report concerns | * Shared guidance on how to recognise signs of slavery and trafficking to all staff, via Staff News * Developed and issued a Modern Slavery and Trafficking e-learning module to all staff * Offered safeguarding awareness training to help relevant staff identify and report incidences or indicators of abuse and neglect, including modern slavery or trafficking | * Deliver Modern Slavery training to Elected Members * Explore ways to develop a system for capturing, analysing, sharing and responding to soft intelligence |
| RESPOND | Develop and embed a Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation Response Plan to ensure ability to respond quickly and appropriately to the identification of incidences or concerns of modern slavery in the area  Deliver training on National Referral Mechanism for all staff who may encounter potential victims | * Tested Response Plan pathways (June 2019), through a Modern Slavery resilience simulation exercise, involving Council and multi-agency partners * Used simulation to inform final Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation and Response Plan (August 2019) | * Ensure ongoing training is delivered to contact centre officers |
| SUPPORT | Deliver appropriate training to relevant staff on how to work with, and the rights of, potential victims | * Circulated function-specific Modern Slavery mitigation resources and advice (including National Referral Mechanism guidance and detailed information on Trafficking survivor Care Standards) to senior managers (April 2019), to prompt cascade of information/advice | * Further embed guidance on victim support, including with housing and other non-social care employees |
| DISRUPT | Deliver training to relevant teams to ensure staff understand their role to support police disruption operations and how they can maximise evidence preservation and increase chances of prosecution | * Circulated function-specific Modern Slavery mitigation resources and advice (including LGA’s ‘Tackling Modern Slavery: A Council Guide’, which includes information on using regulatory service powers of entry in slavery response) (April 2019) | * Further embed disruption/powers of entry guidance and training |
| PREVENT | Engage Procurement, HR and Commissioning to commit to ongoing and proactive efforts to mitigate risks of slavery in the supply chain, including by communicating clear expectations for suppliers and providers | * Ensured Modern Slavery Act 2015 compliance is a part of all procurement due diligence, through requiring suppliers to confirm annual modern slavery reporting requirements and declare any trafficking offences as part of the Supplier Selection Questionnaire * Strengthened internal HR policies to better protect employees and identify risks, including development of an online recruitment and DBS portal * Circulated function-specific Modern Slavery mitigation resources and advice (including guidance relating to recruitment and supply chain risk assessments) to all senior managers (April 2019) * Shared information and resources for all staff, including commissioning and procurement-specific resources * Shared local insights on supply chain monitoring and reporting with national government via the ‘Transparency in Supply Chains’ consultation | * Form a Modern Slavery Prevention working group, with representatives from HR, Procurement and Commissioning to keep up with best practice and improve risk assessments, monitoring of contracts, and communication with suppliers |
| ENGAGE | Complement national modern slavery awareness campaigns with local approach, leveraging communications capacity and partnerships | * Shared information on modern slavery indicators and advice on how to report concerns with residents including via Council social media and website * Issued press releases to share information about modern slavery, including to align with ‘World Day Against Trafficking in Persons’ (August 2019) * Cascaded modern slavery advice locally in response to national campaigns (e.g. sharing information during Coronavirus outbreak) | * Work with local partners (businesses, public sector partners, third sector, community groups and networks) to improve, coordinate and target communications |

**PART C: Practical Guidance on Slavery and Trafficking:**

**Recognising modern day slavery and trafficking:**

The true extent of modern slavery is unknown, but there are estimated to be between 10-13,000 victims of slavery and trafficking currently in the UK and millions worldwide.

Victims are forced against their will to work for little or no pay for the benefit of others. They are often abused or threatened and stripped of their rights.

There is no typical victim of slavery. Victims can be men, women or children of all ages and nationalities. Many victims are foreign nationals who are brought into the UK specifically so that they can be exploited for the benefit of others, however, a high number of victims are UK nationals, including children.

Modern slavery crimes take place in many different sectors and workplaces, including factories, fields, retail or service units, and within private homes.

Crimes of modern slavery have taken place all over the country. Intelligence suggests that includes within South Tyneside.

**Key indicators of potential trafficking include:**

* Is the person in possession of their own passport, identification or travel documents or are these documents in possession of someone else?
* Does the person act if they were instructed or coached by someone else? Do they allow others to speak for them when spoken to directly?
* Was the person recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job? Have transport costs been paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back through working or providing services?
* Does the person receive little or no payment for their work? Is someone else in control of their earnings?
* Does the victim have freedom of movement? Are they dropped off and collected from work?
* Is the person withdrawn or do they appear frightened?
* Has the person or their family been threatened with harm if they attempt to escape?
* Is the person under the impression they are bonded by debt, or in a situation of dependence?
* Has the person been physically or emotionally harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities?
* Can the person freely contact friends or family? Do they have limited social interaction or contact with people outside their immediate environment?

**What to do if you encounter or suspect modern day slavery or trafficking?**

In the first instance the point of contact for all modern slavery crimes should be the local police force. If you have information about a potential modern slavery crime that requires an immediate response (such as where victims are at risk) dial 999.

If you hold information that could lead to the identification, discovery and recovery of victims in the UK, you can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700. Alternatively, you can make calls anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

If you have concerns or suspect that an adult is at risk of harm or abuse, you can call South Tyneside's Let's Talk single point of contact for Adult Safeguarding:

* 0191 424 6000 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5pm)
* 0191 456 2093 (outside of the above office hours)

If you have concerns or suspect that a child is at risk of harm or abuse, is being trafficked or enslaved, you can call South Tyneside's single point of contact for Children's Safeguarding at:

* 0191 424 5010 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5pm)
* 0191 456 2093 (outside of the above office hours)