

## **Council – 8 April 2019**

### **Notice of motion – Modern slavery**

A notice of motion has been received from Councillors S. Coughlan, Shires, D. Coughlan, Ward, Underhill, Jeavons, Robertson, Hussain, Chambers, Jukes and Nawaz:-

Walsall Council notes the Co-operative Party's Charter against modern slavery and shall:

- Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
- Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
- Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
- Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
- Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
- Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
- Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
- Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
- Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
- Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually."

This Council believes:

- That action needs to be taken to raise awareness of modern slavery and the fact that it is happening all over the UK.
- That local businesses should be encouraged to follow our lead in looking at how procurement practices can be used as a tool to help prevent modern slavery.
- That the current support for victims is not sufficient and needs to go beyond the 45 days they are currently given by the government so that an additional period of 12 months support is given.
- That Councils have an important role to play in ensuring their contracts and supplies don't contribute to modern day slavery and exploitation.

This Council resolves to:

- Ensure it is doing all it can to tackle modern day slavery in line with the LGA's guidance.
- Write to government to ask that support for victims is extended beyond the current 45 days.
- Adopt and apply the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery (as far as is legally possible) to ensure that our procurement practices don't support slavery.

**Response:**

The council undertakes due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers and regularly reviews its existing suppliers. This is the responsibility of the individual contract managers. The organisation's due diligence and reviews include:-

- Maintaining a central register of all of the Council's contracts;
- Conduct supplier assessments that focus on financial stability, covering insurance, compliance with various employment policies and which have a greater degree of focus on slavery and human trafficking where risks are identified.
- Mapping and reviewing the supply chain broadly to assess particular product or geographical risks including risk of modern slavery and human trafficking;
- We use the Standard Selection Questionnaire which includes a self-certification element to our tendering processors. These are used to assess suppliers' policies and practices on slavery and human trafficking" and covers the requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Which includes conducting supplier assessments on a regular basis focussing on financial stability, covering insurance, compliance with various employment policies and which have a greater degree of focus on slavery and human trafficking where general risks are identified.
- Contract monitoring and taking steps to improve poor supplier performance and practices, including providing advice to suppliers and requiring them to implement action plans, to demonstrate compliance with the contract.
- Invoking sanctions against suppliers who fail to improve their performance in line with an action plan or who seriously violate the Council's expectations of suppliers, including the termination of the business relationship;
- All invitations to tender for business with the Council will include the following statement:
- "We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. Walsall Council will not support or deal with any business knowingly involved in slavery or human trafficking."

As part of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015 the Council has the following statutory responsibilities:-

- Section 54: Local authorities are required to develop a 'Transparency Statement' outlining the steps taken during the previous financial year to ensure

modern slavery is not present within the organisation's workforce, business or supply chains. This statement should be available for review on its website.

- Section 52: As an identified 'First Responder' the council has a duty to identify and refer child victims through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). This duty also extends to consenting adult victims but where adults do not consent form MS1 must be completed and forwarded to the Home Office.
- Section 43: The council has a duty to cooperate with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. The Commissioner is responsible for producing an overall strategy and produces an annual plan that will identify and promote best practice.

The West Midlands region benefits from strategic coordination through the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network (WMASN) and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Board. These in turn are sub-boards of the West Midlands Public Service Leadership Board and the Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People Board.

Walsall Council has been working with the above to develop a regional training framework and since May 2018, the Council has implemented the training programme designed by Modern Slavery Training UK.

A task and finish group was established some time ago to develop a comprehensive delivery plan that provides:-

- A joined up response in supporting the needs of victims,
- Clear and accessible referral pathways for all of our communities,
- Identification of First Responders and Champions across service areas to ensure support, improvements and evaluation is ongoing
- Identification of a SPOC for each service area
- Rolling out a tiered structure of training provision which is mandatory for all staff
- Providing training to the VCS including train the trainer to ensure sustainability across this sector
- Development and delivery of posters and leaflets for dissemination to the wider community and partners alike
- Seek and share intelligence across partners and organisations to identify and support victims and disrupt offenders

A draft Transparency Statement is also being developed that sets out the Council's commitment to prevent slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities and to ensure our supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

James Walsh  
Executive Director, Resources and Transformation  
29 March 2019