

Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains statement 21/22

This statement sets out the steps taken during 2021/22 by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and is published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015.

Our ambition

Modern slavery is sadly all around us, but often hidden from sight and difficult to spot. Many victims also do not identify that way. The [2021 UK annual report on modern slavery](#) confirms that since the Modern Slavery Act became law, the number of live police operations has increased from 188 in December 2016, to 3,335 in August 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic played a part in increasing and creating new opportunities for human trafficking, and, as the report sets out, is believed to have negatively impacted referral numbers as a result of the restrictions¹. Measuring the impact is hard, so this number is no doubt much higher and increasing.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has forced many innocent people out of their homes, fleeing their war-torn country. Whilst there has been a huge global effort to support the innocent victims of the conflict, the dreadful reality is that many join the vulnerable people in society who are at risk of harm.

Protection and prevention is at the very heart of everything we do at Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority). Together with our partners and suppliers we take our responsibility to drive the change that we all want to see happen incredibly seriously, empowering every member of our organisation to act on any concerns they identify. Together we are working towards a world that is free of slavery, persecution and exploitation.

This statement shares the actions we have taken so far, and our commitment on what we intend to do to help combat this offence. We are proud that we have made a good start, however, we know that there is still much to do and it will take time to stamp out Modern Slavery, wherever it exists, for good.

Who are we?

Every minute of every day, we are here to save lives and make our county even safer. We are a forward thinking, modern fire and rescue service with a long and proud history. Together with our customers we are creating a safer future for Kent and Medway.

Helping to keep people safe in their homes, where they work and in places of education. We are there for our customers in times of need – whether it's a fire, a road crash or a water rescue.

The Authority is formed of over 1,447 members of our team across an estate of 55 stations, a training centre, control centre and service headquarters within the area of Kent and Medway. We also have around 50 volunteers available to support customers. We have 21 Safe and Well Officers who provide a reassuring service to both the public and any member of our teams who may have encountered someone identified either through operational incidents or Safe and Well visits as being 'at risk.' The team works closely with other agencies such as Social Services, Mental Health teams, Local Authorities, Housing Associations and the Police to put high risk intervention measures in place, often at very short notice. The team made 10,883 visits in Kent and Medway throughout 21/22.

We also have 11 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). Our safeguarding processes are established to make sure our Authority helps to protect the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk as our teams come into contact with them during the course of their work. We have a Safeguarding Policy and guidance that includes activities that are undertaken to protect specific children, young people and adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse harm or neglect. Our teams have raised 309 safeguarding cases between April 2011 and March 2022.

Our customer promise sets out our commitment to all customers as we work with them to create a safer future for Kent and Medway. We promise to provide excellent, personalised and accessible services, to maintain our customers trust and to work with our customers to keep improving. Our promise, in many ways, aligns with our ambition included within this statement.

We are committed to establishing a culture of listening and understanding to encourage everyone to be curious and compassionate, which not only helps us all to value difference and be kind, but our differences support us to help our customers and to be able to identify when someone is at risk of harm.

We don't just comply with the relevant laws and practices on how we should treat colleagues, customers and anyone who comes into contact with our organisation, we extend our role beyond compliance by ensuring zero-tolerance in all of our business practices and behaviours of everyone within our organisation and our networks.

You can find out more information on who we are and what we do on [our website](#).

Our sourcing map

Our average annual spend with third parties is £20m and we currently source a variety of goods and services from 49 countries worldwide (an increase from 28 as published in our [20/21 statement](#)).



List of countries we source goods and services from

- United Kingdom
- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Madagascar
- Mexico
- Monaco
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Poland
- Republic of Ireland
- Romania
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Turkey
- UAE
- USA
- Vietnam

Our Progress: What are we doing about Modern Slavery?

Our suppliers

Our sourcing map illustrates our extensive global supplier base, and, given the current global supply issues impacting all sectors, is an evolving picture as we navigate the challenging landscape in terms of continuity of critical supply of the goods and services that we need for our front-line. Our map has expanded substantially and this is a reflection of the work that the Authority is undertaking in order to have greater transparency in our supply chains.

The issues with supply mean that our risk-based approach to due diligence is crucial now more than ever. As a publically funded organisation, we ensure absolute transparency in all of our purchasing decisions and practices. We made a promise in our last [Statement](#) that all of our Tier 1 suppliers will be required to sign up to the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#). We have made great progress in this area. Over £27.7m worth of contracts with suppliers across all categories¹ are now working with us to publish their performance against key measures on the Tool. The level of information shared with us is proportionate to the critical nature of the goods and services that each supplier provides us, and the level of risk of Modern Slavery associated with the specific markets they operate within.

We continue to work with our Tier 1 suppliers to ensure that they are committed to providing training to workers and their local suppliers on modern slavery risks and compliance.

We are also progressing with the block-chain analysis with our critical personal protective clothing supplier, which has been a process of learning for both the Authority and supplier. It is fair to say that there is more work to be done in this area, which has highlighted just how complex the audit and traceability processes are when dealing with an extensive supply chain for critical goods. It has also been made more complicated due to the increasing fragile nature of the markets over the past year. However, the results are so far positive, and the learning and outcome from this work will be shared nationally with all Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.

Supplier Code of Conduct

Our Authority works in a responsible, ethical and open way and we expect the same from our suppliers. We have therefore introduced a Supplier Code of Conduct [link](#) which sets out the standards, values and behaviours we expect from our suppliers, asking them to confirm that they will work with us to protect and respect human rights. Working together with shared values and purpose will undoubtedly deliver positive change for our communities.

¹ Fleet, Information Communications Technology, Facilities Management and Construction, Ops equipment, Clothing/Personal Protective Equipment and Professional Services

Policies and controls

We are committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability. As such, the following policies have been developed or updated in relation to slavery and human trafficking:

- Modern Slavery Policy
- Speak Up Policy
- Transparency Policy
- Safeguarding Policy:
 - Guidance Document G27 – How to raise a safeguarding concern.
 - Guidance Document G28 – Safeguarding Terms and Definitions.
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

In the event that a modern slavery risk is identified, our Modern Slavery Policy provides links to comprehensive statutory guidance to ensure that the appropriate action is swiftly taken.

Process and risk

We have developed a safeguarding concern referral form, and have signposted all of our people to the process of raising a concern through guidance published on our intranet, mandatory safeguarding training and posters that are on show in all of our buildings that provides a process flow diagram for raising a concern. We are continually reviewing the referral process to ensure that first accounts are recorded by the person who has identified the concern. The information requested on the referral form is consistent with other partners to ensure that the required information such as the concerns and feelings and wishes of the person are documented at the earliest opportunity.

Working with our legal advisers, we have developed enhanced obligations on our suppliers by introducing modern slavery compliance clauses which we are including in all of our relevant procurement projects. As a result, our suppliers are obligated to take steps to investigate and identify issues relating to the Modern Slavery Act and to notify us immediately if they become aware of any issues within their supply chains. We want to ensure that the rights of everyone working on our contracts are protected and have therefore also included provision for income security and working hours. Our future contracts will also include details of the Modern Slavery Helpline and link to the online reporting facility.

Training and awareness

- **All of our teams:**

A two year training plan was launched in March 2022. Modern slavery and human trafficking is included within the main areas of our mandatory safeguarding training to which is rolled out to all colleagues. Specific roles will determine whether members of our teams receive level 2, 3 or 4 training, i.e, call handler level 2 Designated Safeguarding Officer level 4. This is evidenced in our Safeguarding Policy.

The training plan started October 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

- **Our front-line:**

Our Safeguarding Manager and Customer Safety Lead attended the National Fire Chief Council’s train the trainer session on fire service bespoke safeguarding in October 2021, after which, a training package for Level 3 and 4 was delivered to 50 strategic level members of the team.

- **Commercial and Procurement:**

The Commercial and Procurement team is in the process of their CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply E-Learning. This includes any member of the team that is not CIPS qualified but has responsibility for sourcing or supplier relationship management. Once 100% of the team are certified, the Authority will sign the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics and Ethics statement, which means that we shall be listed on the CIPS Corporate Ethical Register and is our commitment to procure ethically and to take proactive steps to eradicate malpractice from our supply chains. The statement also confirms our commitment that we will continue to ensure our people are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to make this happen. This will be renewed annually.

The team are also committed to their continued professional development and have participated in webinars to expand their learning and exposure to actions taken and lessons learned from real-life cases found within supply chains.

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

Compliance and positive steps towards change relies on teamwork and our partnerships are integral for the Authority in addressing modern slavery risks. We have had many successes in terms of intervention as a result of multi-agency collaboration as outlined in the number of safeguarding cases we have identified.

Key organisations and initiatives we continue to partner with are;

Partner	Who	Issues/Areas of work	Working together
Stop the Traffik	Registered Charity building a global picture of human trafficking hotspots and trends through information sharing and collaboration.	To build resilience into communities, and to encourage appropriate response and reporting.	Providing training and support to KMFRA Safeguarding Manager
The Salvation Army	24/7 support	Modern Slavery Helpline available 24/7.	Support provided via the helpline if concerns are identified and further advice needed.
Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority	Non-Departmental Public Body set up to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.	Investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking,	Point of reference for knowledge, skills and experience in terms of all aspects

		forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage and Employment Agencies Acts.	of human rights abuse.
Police	Emergency services partner	First responders for modern slavery issues	Sharing of information if detected to help trace individuals. Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Co-ordinator provided training to our Designated Safeguarding Officers and Head of Commercial and Procurement
UK Fire and Rescue Services	Fire and Rescue Sector	Sharing of information and learning	Sharing of model template for Modern Slavery Policy for adoption sector-wide.

Looking ahead

Combatting modern slavery is hugely important to our Authority. It is a distressing reality. We believe its everyone's responsibility to change that, and we know our Authority can be a positive force in that cause.

We are committed to ensuring that there are no forms of modern slavery in our supply chains or business operations. It is our responsibility to continually improve transparency; to seek out, identify and resolve problems and risks; to regularly review our procurement practices and to collaborate with others to protect the rights of workers, particularly those who are most vulnerable to abuses such as modern slavery.

As we gain more visibility of our supply chains and as the medium to long term impact of the current global crisis materialises, we recognise that we will need to continually review our efforts to ensure that we mitigate negative human rights impacts on vulnerable people in our supply chains. We must remain particularly aware of emerging risks and be alert to the dynamic nature of modern slavery.

Our commitments for next year are to continue to audit Tier 1 suppliers and, if feasible, start to expand to Tier 2 suppliers, working to gain greater visibility throughout the supply chain. We will continue to take steps to implement our human rights due diligence processes, in line with all current and forthcoming legislation, ensuring that our contractual terms and conditions align to all relevant legislation, and we will continue to work with our suppliers to

ensure that the stated procurement criteria on Modern Slavery are met, providing greater awareness of the living wage throughout our supply chains. Our programme of training and awareness will continue to be updated and rolled out annually, ensuring that our people are fully aware of what they can do to help tackle modern slavery in their daily lives and we hope to proudly carry the CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply Mark to demonstrate that our knowledge and focus on ethical procurement remains current.

On behalf of the Authority, we confirm our commitment to working with not just our people, but also with our suppliers, customers and many other stakeholders to continue to drive change and help make modern slavery a thing of the past.

Signed

Nick Chard – Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
Ann Millington – Chief Executive – Kent Fire and Rescue Service