

University Of Plymouth Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Annual Statement 2020/21

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending July 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Modern slavery is a crime and a 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.

This is now our fourth successive Annual Statement and we remain committed to improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking.

OUR STRUCTURE

The University of Plymouth is renowned for high quality, internationally leading education, research and innovation. We make a positive difference to people's lives. With a truly global outlook, we are an inclusive and inspiring university community.

The [University Structure](#) is an Independent Higher Education Corporation and an exempt charity under the terms of the Charities Act 2011, with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) acting as the Principal Regulator. Our charitable objectives focus on the delivery of education and research. As a charity, the University must operate for public benefit.

OUR POLICY ON SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In order to achieve our [Strategic Goals](#) the University of Plymouth purchases a wide range of goods, services and works. In these situations, we are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business.

OUR SUPPLY CHAINS

The University of Plymouth's supply chains are truly diverse, with over 2,200 suppliers supporting us to deliver high quality education and research.

All our suppliers are commodity coded against Proc-HE schema/taxonomy, which we use to identify those with the highest potential for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

These have been identified as:

- Audio-Visual, IT & Multimedia Supplies;
- Catering Supplies & Services;
- Furniture, Furnishings & textiles;
- Janitorial & Domestic Supplies & Services;
- Professional & Bought-in Services including consultancy;
- Travel & Transport (incl. Vehicle hire & Subsistence);
- Estates & Buildings;

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

The University has a [Tendering Policy](#) which determines how purchases are to be made when spending University funds. This Policy has been refreshed in the last 12 months; updates include further enhancing the University's stance on 'Responsible Procurement' by which we include Social, Ethical, Economic and Environmental factors.

Following the publication of our Procurement Strategy 2020-23, we reaffirm as a key priority, our responsibility and commitment to addressing Modern Slavery. To support in delivery of this, the Procurement team have all completed e-learning through Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA) on 'A Guide to Modern Slavery' and 'Protecting Human Rights in the Supply Chain'. This has been further supplemented by engagement with the [Crown Commercial Services webinar on Tackling Modern Slavery](#).

The University of Plymouth actively engages with its purchasing consortium SUPC (Southern University Purchasing Consortium) to support ethical sourcing by incorporating checks against slavery and human trafficking as part of the collaborative procurement activity.

For in-house tendering or contracting our [University terms and conditions](#) and supplier onboarding processes are anti-slavery and human trafficking and ensure the potential for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are duly considered.

We raise awareness to our staff about Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking with support from the [UK Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre](#) and have been doing so for the last couple of years via our Procurement SharePoint pages.

We will identify those supply chains that represent a risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and labour rights violations. This is achieved by working with both suppliers and members of both regional and sector purchasing consortia, taking appropriate action if we become aware of such activity.

It is University policy that all new staff joining the University provide documentation to demonstrate their Right to Work within the UK before commencing employment. For those in higher risk areas, such as cleaning, this is asked for at the interview stage.

In a year that has seen wide scale demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in response to the COVID 19 global pandemic, we have worked more closely than ever with suppliers of these such products. We have also maintained a focus on the Modern Slavery agenda, an approach which has seen sharing of knowledge and scrutiny of supplier audits with their supply chain. This has provided reassurance through evidence of supplier compliance and support for downstream compliance with The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, which are derived from Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN THE FUTURE

University of Plymouth expresses its commitment to the continuous review of the supply chains it uses, working towards greater transparency and awareness of the people working within them.

This is a challenge that is best addressed through the ongoing and proactive engagement with both suppliers and the Higher Education Procurement Consortia and professional networks such as HEPA (Higher Education Procurement Association), through which the sharing of experience will establish best practice.

We will expand dialogue with suppliers to the University, to explore collaborative supply chain mapping, whereby both the costs and outputs/benefits can be shared. This follows the University's engagement alongside nine other Higher Education Institutes, with a PhD research project, looking at university modern slavery reporting. The global pandemic has materially inhibited progress on this in the past year, however there remains mutual support and engagement from the cohort to revisit this during the next reporting year.

We will refresh guidance and communicate such changes to staff about the internal e-learning platform covering Finance and Procurement, which includes access to training modules such as a 'Guide to Modern Slavery' and 'Protecting Human Rights in the Supply Chain'.



Louise Parr-Morley
Interim Chief Financial Officer