

# Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

## Modern Slavery Statement

In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council recognises it has a responsibility as an employer to be aware of the potential for instances of modern slavery and to report such instances or concerns to the relevant body.

As a public sector organisation, and with our partners, we can play a role in the identification and disruption of modern slavery and human trafficking. We are fully committed to using all avenues open to us to identify modern slavery, ensuring it has no place in our business and supply chains.

### **What is Modern Slavery?**

Modern Slavery is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It can take many forms including the trafficking of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery. Victims can be any age, gender, nationality and ethnicity. They are tricked or threatened into work and may feel unable to leave or report the crime through fear or intimidation. They may not recognise themselves as a victim.

### **The Modern Slavery Act 2015**

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places specific responsibilities on organisations to ensure slavery and human trafficking does not exist within its supply chain or in any part of its own business. It sets out a range of measures on how modern slavery and human trafficking should be dealt with in the UK.

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act is entitled 'Transparency in supply chains'. It requires a commercial organisation to publish a Modern Slavery Statement for each financial year. This statement is for the financial year 2024-2025.

### **Our organisation**

MTCBC procures external goods, services and works in the course of its business. These are procured from a wide variety of local, national and international organisations, businesses and voluntary sector organisations. Modern supply chains are complex networks, however MTCBC seeks as far as possible to ensure compliance and best practice across a number of priorities and commitments including modern slavery – not only within our suppliers but also in the supply chains that serves them.

### **Supply Chains**

The Procurement team, who deal with most contracts worth £75,000 or more, will take the lead on tackling modern slavery within our supply chains, and will work in conjunction with stakeholder departments who may face the greatest risk of procuring goods, services or works associated with this crime. The Council expects all suppliers regardless of size to actively work towards mitigating the risk of modern slavery within their organisations and its supply chain and may request evidence to demonstrate steps taken.

The Council is committed to ensure that suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics. Where suppliers are appointed through a competitive tendering process, tenderers are requested to sign up

to the Welsh Governments Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in Supply Chains (if not already done so). The Council signed up to the code of practice in September 2018 and since that time we have included relevant Modern Slavery and Ethical Employment practice questions from that code of practice in our tender packs. Any supplier who fails to evidence their compliance is excluded from participating in the tender process.

### Further Steps

The Procurement team will review supply chains on an annual basis to identify suppliers with a turnover of more than £36m. These suppliers will be audited to ensure that they are complying with the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act.

The Council will aim to monitor the commitments which our suppliers have pledged, including the identification and management of risks in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking.

This will be done by:

- Increasing openness, transparency and efficiency in the management of supply chains.
- Improving contract management and communications with suppliers.

### Our commitment

- We will disclose any identified instances of modern slavery.
- We will monitor our supply chains and report on any issues identified through non-compliance or insufficient information provided.
- We will report any concerns to the corporate safeguarding reference group.
- We will notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking under Sections 43, 52 and 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

### **Employment**

We undertake thorough right to work checks in order to ensure that all new employees have the right to work in the UK. Individuals are asked to confirm if they have the right to work in the UK on their application form as well as at interview stage. Appointment will also be subject to receipt of satisfactory references with any necessary disclosures and evidence of any required professional qualifications. Original ID documentation is requested during pre-employment checks for successful candidates. For all non-UK nationals, a Home Office online toolkit is used to confirm their right to work. All information gathered is saved to personal files.

### **Training and awareness**

A government agency called Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority Guidance (GLAA) has delivered training to key staff who work in environments where modern slavery may take place. These include Trading Standards, Licensing, Community Safety and Housing Solution. The teams are now aware of the signs of modern slavery, are vigilant when carrying out their work, and report any suspicions to the relevant agencies. Officers have a contact with the intelligence officer from the GLAA and can feed information to them, for action to be taken if considered necessary.

All Council staff have access to Modern Slavery supporting material via an online training platform.

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