

Appendix 1

Modern Slavery Statement

Introduction

This statement sets out Weymouth Town Council's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks and the steps that are in place to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and its supply chains.

As part of local government, Weymouth Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to prevent slavery, exploitation and/or human trafficking in all its forms. The council also recognises its responsibilities as an employer and procurer of services. It acknowledges its duties as a town council to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and to act and work with other responder agencies under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Modern slavery in its wider sense is commonly accepted to include forced or bonded labour, human trafficking, child slavery, anything involving offences under the Protection of Children Act 1978 or the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and forced or early marriage.

The council is committed to doing all it can to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and/or human trafficking. The statement below sets out practices already in place at the council following the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Organisational structure and supply chains

Weymouth Town Council services cover everything from events and celebrations to cemeteries, public toilets, allotments, parks, gardens, beach, and the promenade. Weymouth Town Council is made up of 29 councillors and a staff team of nearly 50, and over 60 during summer months. Underneath Full Council there are several committees:

- Finance and Governance
- Services
- Planning and Licensing
- Human Resources
- Appeals

The Council procures goods and services from various suppliers through the finance team and procurement officer. Weymouth Town Council would expect all suppliers of goods or services to have their own policy relating to working practices or modern slavery, or for evidence to be available to ensure their standards are in accordance with the Town Council's expectations. We would request that our suppliers ensure the same of their own supply chains.

Responsibility

Weymouth Town Council is committed to ensuring there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or any part of our business. As a Council, our responsibility extends beyond supply chains and our links with third parties, as we have a corporate responsibility to safeguard the community and where residents utilise Council property and services.

The Council has a range of policies and processes which reflect our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity to prevent slavery and human trafficking in all of its operations.

Policies

Council policies are developed by officers employed by Weymouth Town Council and are then approved by a committee and then adopted by Full Council.

Risk assessments

Organisational responsibility for human rights encompasses all services and departments. Modern slavery risk analysis would be provided by colleagues who are actively developing strategies and safeguards around this.

Management responsibilities

Weymouth Town Council takes the welfare of its employees very seriously and as part of the day-to-day management role within the Council, there is a requirement that managers will hold regular supervision meetings with employees to make every effort to address and support any personal welfare issues employees may have. The Council also offers confidential access to a 24/7 free and impartial service, through an Employee Assistance programme which includes a free counselling function.

Investigations/due diligence

In respect of suspected or known incidents of slavery or trafficking we would refer these to Dorset Police. We would expect any colleague who may witness or suspect any wrongdoing to report their concerns to their line manager.

Specific policies which apply

Whistleblowing Policy:

Weymouth Town Council encourages all its workers, customers, and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking.

Employee Code of Conduct:

The Employee Code of Conduct makes clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour, including when managing its supply chain.

Financial Regulations:

Financial Regulations are one of the Council's governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for Councillors and officers. Weymouth Town Council directly recruits its employees via our inhouse recruitment function. Where agency workers are used, these are procured via a third-party company which in turn has its own modern slavery statement. The third-party company will vet employment agencies to ensure they are reputable and verify the practices of any new agency it deals with before accepting workers from that agency. If we engage consultants or other agency workers outside the procured process (only for unique and specialist services), we will ensure the verification of their practices is reviewed and we will ensure modern slavery statements are in place for those agencies. Our ethical procurement objectives are to ensure the well-being and protection of work forces throughout the supply chain, that people are treated with respect and their rights are protected. The Council is an accredited Real Living Wage employer.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing:

This policy provides a framework for the implementation and development of an effective Health & Safety management system for Weymouth Town Council that facilitates a high standard of employee care and wellbeing together with compliance to the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other legislation. Managers will ensure they hold regular one to one meetings with individual members of staff, providing for an opportunity for all to raise any issues of concern and explore a way to resolve them.

Due Diligence of suppliers

We are committed to undertaking due diligence at all stages of the procurement cycle to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking within the supply chain.

Our due diligence measures include:

- Working with partners to develop our understanding of modern slavery and the risk of it occurring
- To review the supply chain and identify areas of vulnerability and risk
- Working in collaboration with suppliers to mitigate risk of modern slavery
- Monitoring the performance of suppliers against the contract requirements,
- particularly in areas of identified high risk

- Developing contracts and policies to include appropriate clauses to require compliance with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act; these will be applicable to subcontractors
- Following good practice guidance in relation to modern slavery
- Take appropriate measures in the selection of suppliers
- Consider appropriate steps to be taken to mitigate risks, particularly in those areas assessed to be at high risk of modern slavery

Safeguarding Weymouth Residents

Weymouth Town Council has a duty to ensure that its most vulnerable residents are safeguarded. An awareness campaign will be launched to ensure that people are educated on the issues surrounding modern slavery and have correct information on how to report any concerns.

Training and awareness-raising

The Town Council will implement a programme of mandatory safeguarding training for employees that enables them to identify and know how to report suspected or disclosed incidents of abuse and neglect, including modern slavery and human trafficking.

Induction briefings on equality and diversity and safeguarding are provided to Councillors and employees.

Promoting and Communicating Modern Slavery Issues

Information will be made available for all colleagues outlining their duties, potential warning signs and what to do if they have any concerns. This will be accessible on SharePoint for all colleagues and supplemented by an internal communications campaign which was implemented to raise awareness of modern slavery, what it is and how it might impact on the day-to-day work of employees.

Declaration

This declaration is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Weymouth Town Council's modern slavery and human trafficking statement.

Signature



Jane Biscombe
Town Clerk

Date: 03/02/21