

# Sandwell Anti-slavery partnership Modern slavery strategy

Striving for a Slavery Free Sandwell

2022 - 2027





# Introduction and Context

Modern slavery remains a pressing global issue that requires concerted efforts from organisations and societies to combat. As an organisation committed to ethical leadership and social responsibility, we recognise the imperative to address modern slavery within our operations and supply chains. This strategy outlines our approach to tackling modern slavery, aligning with the objectives of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and our dedication to creating a slavery-free society.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework that guides Sandwell Councils efforts in preventing, identifying, and addressing modern slavery risks. By implementing this strategy, we aim to uphold our legal obligations, protect vulnerable individuals, and contribute to the eradication of modern slavery.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 serves as the legislative foundation for our strategy. This important legislation requires organisations to take proactive steps to ensure that modern slavery and human trafficking are not present in their operations or supply chains. Compliance with the Act is crucial for both legal and ethical reasons, and failure to address modern slavery risks can have severe consequences for individuals and society.

We are fully committed to combating modern slavery and recognise our responsibility to play an active role in creating a slavery-free society. Our strategy reflects this commitment by outlining clear objectives, action plans, and mechanisms for accountability. We understand that addressing modern slavery requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration with stakeholders, rigorous risk assessment and due diligence, and ongoing efforts to raise awareness and build capacity.

Together with our employees, partners, and stakeholders, we are committed to working towards a society where every individual is free from the shackles of slavery. This strategy serves as a roadmap for our collective efforts, ensuring that we prioritise the identification, prevention, and mitigation of modern slavery risks throughout our operations and supply chains.

In the following sections, we will outline our key objectives, actions, and initiatives, as well as the mechanisms for governance, monitoring, and reporting that will underpin our modern slavery strategy. Through a comprehensive and integrated approach, we aim to make a tangible difference and contribute to the broader movement against modern slavery.

Together, let us strive for a future where every individual can live a life of freedom, dignity, and respect.

# Slavery free Pledge



As leaders in Sandwell, we, the undersigned, are wholeheartedly committed to the eradication of modern slavery within our Borough. We recognise the gravity of this issue and the urgent need for collective action. By signing this pledge, we affirm our dedication to working collaboratively with national and local government, law enforcement agencies, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, faith bodies, and our local communities.

Through our collective efforts and alignment with the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, we are committed to achieving the eradication of forced labour, ending modern slavery and human trafficking, and eliminating the worst forms of child labour, abuse, and exploitation by 2030.

By upholding this pledge, we send a strong message that modern slavery will not be tolerated within our Borough. We call upon all stakeholders to join us in this endeavour, as together, we can create a future where every individual is free, protected, and empowered.

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**Demonstrating Strong Local Leadership:** We will take a proactive stance in leading and supporting anti-slavery initiatives within our Borough. Through strong leadership, we will drive change and foster a united front against modern slavery.

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**Raising Awareness:** We will actively raise awareness among our staff, associates, and the people we serve on a daily basis. By educating and informing others about the signs, risks, and consequences of slavery, we aim to create a culture of vigilance and empowerment.

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**Training Staff:** We will invest in comprehensive training programs to equip our staff with the knowledge and skills to identify and respond appropriately to potential signs of slavery. By enhancing their capacity, we strengthen our collective ability to combat modern slavery effectively.

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**Sharing Intelligence and Information:** We will actively share intelligence and information to detect and prevent instances of slavery. By fostering a collaborative network and information-sharing system, we aim to disrupt and dismantle modern slavery operations in our area.

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**Supporting Victims and Survivors:** We are committed to providing support and assistance to victims and survivors within our communities. Through partnership with support organisations, we will ensure that victims receive the necessary care, protection, and pathways to recovery.

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**Removing Slave-Based Labour from Supply Chains:** We recognise the importance of responsible procurement practices. We will work diligently to identify and remove any slave-based labour from our supply chains. Through rigorous monitoring, due diligence, and engagement with suppliers, we aim to create supply chains that are free from exploitation.

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**Building a Prosperous and Slavery-Free Local Economy:** We will actively contribute to building a prosperous local economy that is free from slavery. By supporting ethical business practices, promoting fair employment, and fostering sustainable economic growth, we strive to create an environment where exploitation has no place.

# 01

# Vision and Objectives

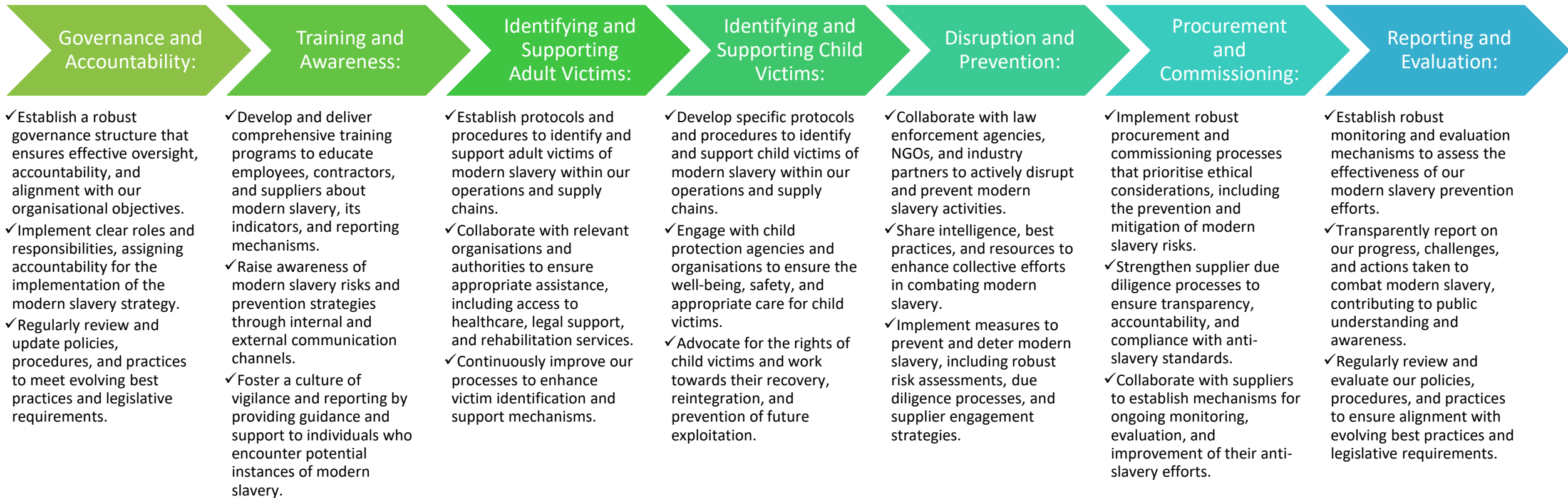


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Without Slavery

# Vision and Objectives

Vision: Our vision is to create a society where modern slavery has no place, where every individual is free from exploitation and can live a life of dignity, equality, and freedom. We aspire to eliminate modern slavery in all its forms within our operations and supply chains, setting an example for others and contributing to the broader anti-slavery agenda.

Objectives: Through the pursuit of the objectives below, we aim to make significant strides in our fight against modern slavery.



# 02 Governance and Accountability



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# Governance and Accountability



The implementation of our modern slavery strategy is supported by a dedicated governance structure that ensures effective oversight, accountability, and alignment with our organisational objectives. This structure encompasses key leaders and representatives from various departments and partnerships within the Safer Sandwell area. Together, they provide strategic guidance, program management expertise, and operational coordination to combat modern slavery effectively.

Through the robust governance structure and dedicated first responders, we strive to combat modern slavery effectively in the Sandwell area. The involvement of the Safer Sandwell Police and Crime Board, Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership, PoVE, SHOP, CEB, Horizons, and the Early Help Partnership ensures a comprehensive approach to addressing modern slavery and its related challenges.

The leadership positions, including the Lead Councillor/Cabinet Lead, Modern Slavery Program Manager, and Community Safety Officer, provide strategic guidance, program management expertise, and operational coordination.

Regular reporting and review mechanisms enable us to track progress, address emerging issues, and drive continuous improvement in our efforts to create a society free from exploitation. Together, we are committed to combatting modern slavery, safeguarding victims, and working towards a safer Sandwell community.

## Governance Structure:

- ✓ The Safer Sandwell Police and Crime Board assumes a central role in providing overall governance and strategic oversight of the modern slavery strategy.
- ✓ The Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership serves as a key entity that offers strategic oversight and drives best practices in combating modern slavery.
- ✓ The Prevention of Violence and Exploitation (PoVE) sub-group, operating under the Safer Sandwell Police and Crime Board, focuses specifically on preventing and addressing instances of violence and exploitation. The Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) oversees operational responses to modern slavery, conducting monthly meetings and ensuring the daily coordination of modern slavery cases.
- ✓ The Child Exploitation Board (CEB) provides dedicated oversight and guidance on matters related to child exploitation within the context of modern slavery.

## Leadership Structure:

- ✓ The Lead Councillor/Cabinet Lead for Modern Slavery provides leadership, advocacy, and high-level decision-making in addressing modern slavery.
- ✓ The Modern Slavery Program Manager takes the lead in driving the strategic direction and implementation of the modern slavery program, overseeing coordination, partnerships, and progress monitoring.
- ✓ The Community Safety Officer leads and coordinates the operational aspects of tackling modern slavery, working closely with agencies, law enforcement, and community stakeholders to ensure a cohesive and effective response.
- ✓ The Team manager for Horizons leads and coordinates work around child exploitation.

## Dedicated First Responders:

- ✓ Frontline first responders within the local authority, including social workers, housing officers, and anti-social behaviour officers, form a dedicated team trained to handle modern slavery cases.
- ✓ These professionals play a critical role in identifying, assessing, and providing immediate support to individuals who may be victims of modern slavery within the community.
- ✓ Their expertise and coordinated efforts contribute significantly to the overall response, ensuring the safety, well-being, and effective support for individuals affected by modern slavery.

# 03

# Training and Awareness



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# Training and Awareness



Training and awareness play a crucial role in our efforts to combat modern slavery. We recognise the importance of equipping our employees and key stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to identify, address, and report instances of modern slavery.

Through comprehensive training programs and awareness-raising initiatives, we aim to create a vigilant and informed community that actively contributes to the prevention and eradication of modern slavery.

By designing and delivering comprehensive training programs and implementing awareness-raising initiatives, we aim to equip our employees and key stakeholders with the knowledge and awareness necessary to recognise and respond to modern slavery effectively.

Through these efforts, we strive to create a vigilant community that actively contributes to the prevention and eradication of modern slavery.

Together, with collaboration and partnerships, we can make a significant impact in the fight against modern slavery and create a safer and more just society for all.

## Design and Delivery of Training Programs:

- ✓ Our training programs will cover various aspects related to modern slavery.
- ✓ Participants will gain an understanding of the nature of modern slavery, its different forms, and the indicators that may suggest its presence.
- ✓ We will emphasise the social, economic, and human rights implications of modern slavery and its impact on individuals and communities.
- ✓ Role-specific training will be provided, tailored to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and address modern slavery risks within their respective areas of responsibility.

## Awareness-Raising Initiatives:

- ✓ In addition to training programs, we will implement awareness-raising initiatives to foster a widespread understanding of modern slavery risks and prevention strategies.
- ✓ Through internal communication channels, such as newsletters, intranet platforms, and staff briefings, we will disseminate information about modern slavery risks, our policies, and the importance of vigilance.
- ✓ External communication channels, including our website, social media platforms, and stakeholder engagements, will be utilised to raise awareness about modern slavery risks and our commitment to eradicating it.

## Fostering a Culture of Vigilance and Reporting:

- ✓ To foster a culture of vigilance and collective responsibility, we will actively encourage the reporting of suspected cases of modern slavery.
- ✓ Robust whistleblowing mechanisms will be in place, ensuring that individuals can report concerns safely and confidentially.
- ✓ We will create a supportive environment where individuals feel empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisals, emphasising that reporting suspected cases is an act of responsibility and solidarity.

# 04 Identifying and Supporting Adult Victims



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# Identifying and Supporting Adult Victims



Identifying and supporting adult victims of modern slavery is a crucial aspect of our strategy. We recognise the need to enhance our processes for identifying adult victims within our organisation and supply chains.

Through collaboration with stakeholders and the provision of adequate support services, we are committed to ensuring that adult victims receive the necessary assistance to rebuild their lives. By raising awareness and providing training, we aim to equip our employees and stakeholders with the knowledge and skills to effectively identify and support adult victims of modern slavery.

Identifying and supporting adult victims of modern slavery is a priority within our strategy. By enhancing our identification processes, collaborating with stakeholders, providing adequate support services, raising awareness, and establishing referral pathways, we are strengthening our response to modern slavery.

Through these concerted efforts, we aim to ensure that adult victims receive the necessary support, protection, and assistance they require to recover from their experiences and rebuild their lives.

## Enhance Identification Processes:

- ✓ To improve our ability to identify adult victims of modern slavery, we will strengthen our identification processes.
- ✓ This includes providing training to relevant staff members on the indicators of modern slavery and implementing robust procedures to ensure prompt identification.
- ✓ By enhancing our internal processes, we can increase our vigilance and responsiveness to potential cases of adult exploitation.

## Collaborate with Stakeholders:

- ✓ We recognise the importance of collaboration with external stakeholders in identifying and supporting adult victims of modern slavery.
- ✓ By working closely with law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and support organisations, we can leverage their expertise and resources to enhance victim identification.
- ✓ Effective partnerships enable us to access specialised knowledge and services that are crucial in providing comprehensive support to adult victims.

## Establish Referral Pathways:

- ✓ Establishing clear referral pathways and protocols is vital to ensure that identified adult victims receive the appropriate support and are connected to relevant agencies and services.
- ✓ We will collaborate with local authorities, support organisations, and the National Referral Mechanism to facilitate referrals and ensure a coordinated and effective response.
- ✓ By streamlining the referral process, we can expedite access to support and services for adult victims.

# 05 Identifying and Supporting Child Victims



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# Identifying and Supporting Child Victims



Identifying and supporting child victims of modern slavery is a paramount concern within our strategy. We are dedicated to strengthening our safeguarding measures to ensure the protection and well-being of children within our organisation and supply chains.

By providing comprehensive training, collaborating with child protection agencies, and delivering child-focused support services, we aim to safeguard the rights and welfare of child victims. Additionally, we are committed to referring child victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and providing support as needed.

By strengthening our safeguarding measures, training staff on child protection, collaborating with child protection agencies, and providing child-focused support services, we are dedicated to ensuring the safety, well-being, and recovery of child victims. Our commitment extends to referring child victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to ensure they receive the necessary support and protection.

Through these collective efforts, we aim to create a safe and nurturing environment where children are protected from exploitation and can thrive.

## Strengthen Safeguarding Measures:

- ✓ To effectively identify and respond to child exploitation and modern slavery, we will provide comprehensive training to relevant staff members.
- ✓ This training will equip them with the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs of child exploitation and take appropriate action.
- ✓ By raising awareness and enhancing their capacity to protect children, we are strengthening our collective ability to safeguard vulnerable individuals.

## Provide Child-Focused Support Services:

- ✓ Child victims of modern slavery require specialised support services that address their unique needs.
- ✓ We are committed to providing child-focused support, including safe accommodation, specialised counselling, education support, healthcare, and other essential services.
- ✓ By tailoring our support to the specific needs of child victims, we can facilitate their recovery and help them regain their dignity and childhood.

## Referring Child Victims to the NRM:

- ✓ We are committed to referring child victims of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- ✓ The NRM is a crucial mechanism for identifying and providing support to potential victims of modern slavery.
- ✓ Through this referral process, we ensure that child victims receive appropriate assistance, access to legal protections, and the support necessary for their well-being and recovery.

# 06

# Disruption and Prevention



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# Disruption and Prevention



Disruption and prevention are integral components of our strategy to combat modern slavery. We are committed to strengthening partnerships with law enforcement agencies, adopting a victim-centered approach, targeting high-risk industries and sectors, raising awareness, supporting prevention initiatives, engaging in research and innovation, and monitoring and evaluating our prevention efforts.

Through these proactive measures, we aim to create an environment where modern slavery is deterred, perpetrators are held accountable, and potential victims are protected.

Disruption and prevention are integral to our commitment to combat modern slavery. By strengthening partnerships with law enforcement, adopting a victim-centered approach, targeting high-risk industries, raising awareness, supporting prevention initiatives, engaging in research and innovation, and monitoring and evaluating our efforts, we strive to create an environment where modern slavery is deterred and potential victims are protected.

Our comprehensive approach, aligned with the LGA maturity matrix, ensures that our actions are strategic, impactful, and contribute to the broader goal of eradicating modern slavery from our society. Together, we can make a significant difference in the fight against this heinous crime.

## Support Victim-Centered Approach:

- ✓ Our approach to disruption and prevention prioritises the well-being and empowerment of victims. We will provide comprehensive support services that enable victims to exit and recover from exploitative situations.
- ✓ Our efforts will focus on assisting victims in accessing justice and ensuring their voices are heard throughout the process.
- ✓ By adopting a victim-centered approach, we aim to address the immediate and long-term needs of survivors and support their journey to recovery.

## Target High-Risk Industries and Sectors:

- ✓ To effectively disrupt and prevent modern slavery, we will target high-risk industries and sectors where exploitation is prevalent.
- ✓ Through enhanced due diligence, audits, and engagement with suppliers and contractors, we will identify and address modern slavery risks.
- ✓ By promoting ethical practices and establishing transparent supply chains, we contribute to creating an environment that is hostile to modern slavery and fosters responsible business practices.

## Support Prevention Initiatives:

- ✓ Addressing the root causes of modern slavery is essential for effective prevention.
- ✓ We will actively support prevention initiatives that tackle underlying issues such as poverty, inequality, and lack of education.
- ✓ Through partnerships with community organisations and government agencies, we will work towards long-term solutions that reduce vulnerability to exploitation and create a society where modern slavery is less likely to occur.

# 06 Procurement and Commissioning



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# Procurement and Commissioning



In our commitment to combat modern slavery, we recognise the significant role that procurement and commissioning practices play in promoting transparency and ethical sourcing throughout our supply chain. We are dedicated to developing and implementing robust policies and procedures that address modern slavery risks and encourage responsible sourcing practices.

Through transparency, ethical standards, supplier engagement, monitoring compliance, and continuous improvement, we strive to create a supply chain that upholds human rights, ensures fair working conditions, and actively contributes to eradicating modern slavery.

Through our procurement and commissioning practices, we are committed to promoting supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing.

By developing policies and procedures, engaging with suppliers, monitoring compliance, and driving continuous improvement, we aim to create a responsible and ethical supply chain that upholds human rights, ensures fair working conditions, and actively contributes to the eradication of modern slavery.

## Developing Policies and Procedures:

- ✓ To promote transparency and ethical practices, we will develop and implement policies and procedures that address modern slavery risks and encourage responsible sourcing.
- ✓ These measures will enable us to identify potential risks and take appropriate actions to mitigate them.
- ✓ By requiring suppliers to provide comprehensive information about their supply chains and establishing ethical standards aligned with internationally recognised principles, we establish a foundation for responsible and transparent procurement practices.

## Encouraging Responsible Sourcing Practices:

- ✓ Recognising the importance of responsible sourcing, we will engage with our suppliers and provide them with education and guidance on responsible sourcing practices and modern slavery risks.
- ✓ Through training, workshops, and collaborative initiatives, we will help our suppliers understand the significance of ethical procurement and support them in implementing best practices.
- ✓ By developing and implementing a supplier code of conduct that outlines our expectations regarding responsible sourcing and human rights, we ensure that our suppliers acknowledge and adhere to these principles.

## Monitoring Compliance and Continuous Improvement:

- ✓ Ensuring compliance with ethical sourcing standards and driving continuous improvement is a crucial part of our procurement and commissioning approach.
- ✓ We will conduct regular audits and assessments of our suppliers to monitor their compliance with our ethical standards and identify any potential modern slavery risks.
- ✓ These assessments may include site visits, document reviews, and interviews with workers to assess working conditions and ensure compliance.

# 07

# Reporting and Evaluation



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# Reporting and Evaluation



In our commitment to combat modern slavery, we recognise the importance of establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

This framework will enable us to track progress, measure the effectiveness of our strategies, and ensure accountability in our fight against modern slavery.

By setting key performance indicators, collecting relevant data, publishing regular reports, seeking external verification or accreditation, and collaborating with stakeholders, we aim to maintain transparency, learn from our experiences, and continuously improve our efforts to eradicate modern slavery.

Through the establishment of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, regular reporting, and seeking external verification or accreditation, we maintain transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in our fight against modern slavery. By assessing the impact of our strategies, identifying areas for enhancement, and collaborating with stakeholders, we contribute to the collective efforts in eradicating modern slavery.

Our commitment to reporting and evaluation reflects our dedication to transparency, learning, and making a tangible difference in combating modern slavery.

## Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

- ✓ To ensure the effectiveness and impact of our modern slavery strategy, we will define clear and measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with our objectives and targets.
- ✓ Through the collection of accurate and relevant data, we will implement mechanisms to track modern slavery-related activities, incidents, and progress.
- ✓ This data collection will involve regular reporting, incident tracking systems, surveys, and collaboration with stakeholders to gather comprehensive information.

## Publishing Regular Reports and Statements:

- ✓ Transparency and accountability are fundamental in our fight against modern slavery. To demonstrate our commitment, we will publish regular reports or statements on our progress in combating modern slavery.
- ✓ These reports will provide an overview of our activities, achievements, challenges, and future in line with legal requirements and industry best practices.
- ✓ We will also disclose key findings from our monitoring and evaluation efforts, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement. By sharing this information, we aim to foster transparency, promote learning, and inspire collective action against modern slavery.

## Cultivate a Culture of Continuous Improvement:

- ✓ We are dedicated to fostering a culture that values continuous learning, adaptation, and innovation in addressing modern slavery.
- ✓ This commitment starts from leadership and extends to all levels of the organisation.
- ✓ By promoting a culture of continuous improvement, we encourage our employees to stay informed, seek new knowledge and insights, and explore innovative approaches to prevent and address modern slavery.