

Modern Slavery Statement 2025/26

Wigan Council

Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places specific responsibilities on every organisation to ensure that slavery and human trafficking does not exist within the supply chain, and in any part of the business.

Organisations need to demonstrate accountability through transparency to protect workers (both adults and children) from being abused and exploited, which in turn will bring greater confidence to customers and service users.

Modern slavery is a violation of human rights and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking, and includes:

- **Forced labour** – Coerced, deceived or forced into working for little or no pay
- **Sexual exploitation** – Coerced, deceived or forced into providing sexual services
- **Domestic servitude** – Coerced, deceived or forced into working within a home environment for little or no pay
- **Criminal exploitation** – Coerced, deceived or forced into criminal activities (including begging, stealing and growing or selling drugs)
- **Forced or sham marriage** – Coerced, deceived or forced into marriage
- **Organ harvesting** – Coerced, deceived or forced into removing internal organs for another person's gain.

Wigan Council is committed through its policies and practices to prevent slavery and human trafficking and understands its responsibilities to residents, service users, employees and the local community. The council expects suppliers, partners and third parties to adhere to the same values and principles to combat slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Wigan Council's arrangements and procedures that exist to eradicate slavery or human trafficking.

Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking

The Council has in place the following measures to prevent modern slavery within its **recruitment and employment** policies:

- Our recruitment processes require the completion of relevant employment checks and standards, which include eligibility to work in the UK and Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks; suitable references are requested and followed up. These processes are in place regardless of whether staff are employed directly or engaged via an agency.
- We operate a job-evaluation scheme to ensure all employees are paid fairly and equitably.
- We offer a comprehensive Wellbeing programme that gives colleagues access to a wide range of services, tools and resources that promote positive wellbeing and support to help with mental health, physical health, help with finances or general support. This includes (but is not limited to) a Wellbeing Hub and Helpline, Counselling, resources such as the Keeping Team Wigan Well booklet and a well-developed network of Champions who provide support in connection with Health and Wellbeing, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse.
- Our agency workers are sourced via a Framework Agreement, which procures a third party to verify the practices of any agency it uses before accepting workers from that agency.
- We pay the Foundation Living Wage and are an accredited member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter ([Members | GM Good Employment Charter](#)).
- Our code of conduct for employees sets out both the expectations of staff and the organisation.
- Our Dignity at Work policy is in place to ensure that behaviour which could be construed as harassment or bullying in the workplace is prevented.
- We offer our officers an e-learning suite on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery.
- We have in place a 'Raising a Concern' (Whistleblowing) Policy and are committed to creating a culture where colleagues feel safe to speak up, knowing that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. There are a range of employee voice channels that can be used to provide a safe and secure environment for open and honest conversation, and for colleagues to raise concerns.
- We have adopted policies and procedures to ensure full commitment to preventing fraud, bribery and corruption in the

organisation through the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Strategy, and Anti Money Laundering Policy ([Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption \(wigan.gov.uk\)](https://www.wigan.gov.uk/anti-fraud-bribery-and-corruption))

- Inclusion lies at the heart of our Team Wigan Deal (an informal agreement between Wigan Council and our employees) and our Team Wigan Behaviours. More information about what we are doing to drive inclusion across the borough can be found by visiting the [Equality and Diversity webpage](#).

The Council has in place the following measures to prevent modern slavery within its **procurement** policies:

Wigan Council undertakes all procurement and commissioning activity in compliance with Procurement Act 2023. The Crown Commercial Services Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) is used in all competitive tenders, which includes a requirement for potential suppliers to declare and evidence (where applicable) compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as part of the tender process. If suppliers fail this question, they will be disqualified from the bidding process.

A practical, risk-based approach to managing supply chains is achieved in the identified key high-risk areas by working with suppliers to monitor and mitigate these risks where practical as part of the contract management process.

The Council has in place the following measures to prevent modern slavery within its **safeguarding** policies:

Alongside other key partners including Greater Manchester Police, the Council is a key statutory agency in both the Wigan safeguarding Adults Board and Wigan Children's Safeguarding Partnership which have policies, processes and resources to address this form of exploitation:

- Wigan Children's Safeguarding Partnership procedures in relation to Modern Day Slavery can be found here - https://www.proceduresonline.com/wigan/cs/p_uasc.html
- Modern Slavery is a named safeguarding theme in the Care Act 2014 and Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board Policy and Procedures can be found here - <https://www.wigansafeguardingadults.org/Professionals/Wigan-policy.aspx>
- Further resources regarding Modern Slavery and Adult Safeguarding can be accessed here -

<https://www.wigansafeguardingadults.org/Public/Abuse-and-crime/Modern-slavery.aspx>

Legal duties

Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires police, immigration and local authority staff to report to the Secretary of State all instances of having reasonable grounds to believe a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking.

A notification to the Secretary of State must include the information listed in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Duty to Notify) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/1743), where such information is in the possession or control of the public authority:

Schedule 1

This includes information such as the name of the public authority making the notification, whether the suspected slavery or trafficking has been referred to the police, the type of conduct involved, and whether the conduct involved the victim committing an offence.

Schedule 2

This lists additional information that must be provided where the victim is either under the age of 18, or is over 18 and has consented to the disclosure of that information in the notification; this includes the victim's name and date of birth and the name of the perpetrator.

Training on modern slavery and trafficking

The Council's Procurement Team have completed a programme of mandatory training on modern slavery.

Awareness-raising of modern slavery and human trafficking is a priority for the Safeguarding Partnership and is an integral part of the Safeguarding Partnership training plan.

Councillors have completed online training, raising awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking, and how it can be identified within the supply chain.

We have two e-learning modules that are available for all officers to complete on modern slavery and human trafficking and modern-day slavery.