



Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

# MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

## About

This Statement has been published in accordance with Modern Slavery Act 2015. It sets out the steps taken by Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (hereafter referred to as the Authority) to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains.

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## 2 Introduction

Modern Slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, human trafficking and forced labour. The Authority has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery.

This statement outlines the steps that the Authority are taking to prevent modern slavery, bonded and forced labour, labour rights violations within its supply chain and steps taken to identify, prevent and mitigate risks.

We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity and transparency in all business dealings and to putting effective systems and controls in place to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place within the organisation or within our supply chain.

## 3 Our Business

The Authority is the statutory fire and rescue service for the county of Essex, England and is one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country, serving a county with a wide variety of risks.

The Service is governed by Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority. The Authority is responsible for fire and rescue services covering an area over 1,400 square miles and a population of 1.8 million.

Its operations extend globally, both in terms of operational assistance and potential supply base.

## 4 Our High Risk Areas

The Authority uses many small and medium businesses in its supply chain that are not required in law to make formal declarations relating to the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Authority recognises that these suppliers, along with any outside the borders of the United Kingdom present the highest risk to its operations in relation to the Act.

## 5 Policies and Contractual Controls

The Authority operates a number of policies to ensure that we are conducting business in an ethical and transparent manner. These include:

**The Public Contracts Regulations 2015** – A set of European Union Directives, regulations and policies relating to the procurement of supplies, services and works for the public sector.

**Modern Slavery Policy** – A policy that is designed to satisfy the requirements of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by informing those we serve, our suppliers, employees, and the public.

**Financial Regulations** – A set of internal, locally approved policies and procedures to control financial processes within the Authority.

**Recruitment Policy** – The Authority uses only specified, reputable employment agencies to source labour and always verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency.

**Safer Recruitment principles** are applied in all cases, this means an applicants' history and motives are established in addition to undertaking an appropriate level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for relevant roles.

**Whistleblowing Policy** – The Authority 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. The organisation's whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for workers to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. Employees, customers or others who have concerns can use our confidential helpline 020 3117 2520 or advice email [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk).

**Code of Conduct** – The Authority's Code of Conduct makes clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the Authority. The Authority strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour when operating and managing its supply chain.

**Supply Chain Code of Conduct** – A supplier compliance document that sets out the behaviours and compliance that the Authority expects from its supply chain in delivering goods and services on behalf of the Authority.

## 6 Suppliers

The Authority operates an Approved Supplier List. All suppliers on this list are asked to demonstrate that they have a modern slavery policy if their turnover exceeds £36m per annum. Smaller suppliers are questioned during the induction process regarding their own policies on Modern Slavery and are asked to confirm that they do not take part in any of the following activities:

- Any form of forced or indentured labour.
- Any form of bonded labour, including debt bondage.
- Restriction of workers movements or their ability to terminate employment.
- Removal of any government issued identification including passports or work permits.
- Fees being charged for employment.

## 7 Further Steps

The Authority shall carry out regular checks with suppliers to eliminate any form of modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chain. We shall also ensure our own policies and

procedures do not permit the introduction of any form of modern slavery within our own organisation.

## **8 Our Performance Indicators**

We will know the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to ensure that slavery and/or humantrafficking is not taking place within our organisation or supply chain if:

- no reports are received from employees, the public, or law enforcement agencies to indicate that modern slavery practices may have been identified.
- no reports are received from within our supply chain to indicate that modern slavery practices have been identified.
- there are no instances found whilst auditing our supply chain.

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Rick Hylton

Chief Executive Officer/Chief Fire Officer

Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority