



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

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Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and prevent modern day slavery and human trafficking. The Act consolidates slavery and trafficking offences, introduces tougher penalties and sentencing rules and provides more support for victims.

The Service's Modern Slavery Statement demonstrates our commitment and responsibility to meet the requirements under various pieces of legislation. Examples of modern slavery include:

- **Forced labour:** victims are forced to work against their will, often very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence.
- **Debt bondage:** victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to.
- **Sexual exploitation:** victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will, such as prostitution, escort work and pornography. Adults are coerced often under the threat of force, or another punishment.
- **Criminal exploitation:** often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick-pocketing against their will.
- **Domestic servitude:** victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores in private households with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy often sleeping where they work.

In accordance with the Fire Safety Order the Service has the right to:

- enter premises at any reasonable time; to be accompanied by a police officer, or any other person the inspector deems necessary;
- make such investigation, require such assistance and take such evidence and samples as is specified in the legislation and enforce the legislation and responsibility for which lies with the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- conduct interviews with, and take signed statements from, any person whom the inspector has reasonable cause to believe is able to give information which may be relevant to an investigation.
- issue notices of alteration, improvement, enforcement and necessary steps in circumstances where safety measures fail to meet statutory requirements or where the relevant statutory provision is contravened.
- prohibit or restrict the use of any area or access to any area or equipment where there is a serious risk to any person in the event of fire occurring.

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service actively:

- assists in victim identification through staff training and education such as safeguarding;
- works in partnership with relevant agencies and groups such as the identification of rough landlords.
- engages with the private sector to ensure responsible procurement practices that improve our tendering and contracting processes.

Modern Slavery and Public Procurement

The Service takes responsibility to enhance its procurement practices with the aim to encourage fair pay and working conditions in our supply chain and to assist in the identification and elimination of modern slavery and human trafficking. The Service expects its suppliers to be aware of and comply with the requirements of the Act.

We are fully cognisant of our statutory duty under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to identify and manage in a prompt and effective manner risks of slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, whilst discharging its commissioning, procurement and contract management functions. The Service is fully committed to applying risk-based analysis principles that are proportionate to the subject-matter and size of the contract for new procurements, as well as the size of the supplier when assessing existing contracts, for the purpose of identifying and tackling modern slavery breaches.

The Service is also committed to eliminating modern slavery in its supply chains and sub-contracting arrangements, both during the procurement and contract management phases.

In applying this overall proportionate approach, we aim to ensure that barriers to participating in new procurements are not created and unnecessary burdens are not placed on organisations when assessing risks in existing contracts. It will discharge its duties by undertaking the following activities:

- Thorough review of the industry and the supplier base as part of the preliminary market consultation process for the purpose of determining whether the subject-matter of the contract could give rise to modern slavery risks;
- Procurement strategies take into consideration modern slavery risks for the purpose of ensuring that the award criteria to be used to determine the winning supplier are capable of addressing modern slavery issues;
- Terms and Conditions of Contract have appropriate and proportionate performance, monitoring, business continuity and remedies provisions to ensure that modern slavery risks are closely monitored throughout the lifecycle of the contract, both at main contractor and sub-contractor / supply chain levels;
- Bidders and their key sub-contractors (where relevant) who are relevant commercial organisations as defined within Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 will be required to complete the online Modern Slavery Assessment Tool ('MSAT'), which is available by the Cabinet Office; and
- During the contract management phase, the appointed Contract Manager will be responsible for recording, reporting and responding to suspected incidents of modern slavery in consultation with the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

The Service will engage with suppliers to encourage the adoption and promotion of policies that ensure supply chains are free from slavery.

Partnership Working

The Service is working in partnership with Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnerships who have collectively designed, developed and implemented the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) Strategy to ensure collaborative approaches to tackling the issues of modern slavery.

To support our partnership aims, the Service will implement communication and education programmes for staff which will highlight the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act, any high-risk areas within Bedfordshire and the referral mechanisms.

The Service believes that it has a key role in keeping the communities of Bedfordshire safe and well from harm including through its work with suppliers of goods and services to ensure the appropriate publication of a statement that is transparent about the actions it will take.

Reporting

Help free the UK from Modern slavery by reporting it.

If you suspect modern slavery, report it to the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 (free from landlines and most mobile phones), or the police on 101. In an emergency always call 999. Don't leave it to someone else. Your information could save a life.

Signed by:



Date: 10 June 2021

**Chief Fire Officer Andrew Hopkinson
Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service**

Further information on Modern Slavery is available from:

- Bedfordshire Police Protecting People and Fighting Crime Together: [Modern slavery and human trafficking](#)
- Modern Slavery is closer than you think: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv1H_fAoOG4&feature=youtu.be
- Modern Slavery Helpline: <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/>