

Modern Slavery Statement 2021/22

A clear focus on commissioning,
procurement and recruitment
relating to Modern Day
Slavery

**Barking &
Dagenham**

Our Vision

This statement sets out London Borough Barking and Dagenham's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to their activities and to put in place steps to eliminate acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within its business and in its supply chains, sub-contractors and partners. This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

As councillors and leaders of local places, we all need to be aware that the UK is a source, transit and destination country for modern slavery. The Home Office estimated that in 2014 there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK and subsequent publications suggested that the number was considerably higher. This means that there is a good chance modern slavery is taking place in our towns and villages where we live and work.

The Council is committed to improving its practices to combat and prevent slavery and human trafficking in all corporate activities, and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

Definition of modern slavery

Modern slavery includes a range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

- Sexual exploitation: this includes sexual abuse, prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos.
- Domestic servitude: this involves victims being forced to work in usually private households, performing domestic chores and childcare duties.
- Forced labour: this can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, laying driveways, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, maritime and beauty (nail bars).
- Criminal exploitation: This can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.
- Other forms of exploitation include organ removal, forced begging fraud, forced marriage and illegal adoption.

We are passionate about better lives for people in Barking and Dagenham. This statement is supported through our organisational vision: One Borough; One Community; No one left behind. Four corporate themes support the vision:

Theme	Priorities
Theme 1: A new kind of Council	Build a well-run organisation
	Ensure relentlessly reliable services
	Develop place-based partnerships
Theme 2: Empowering people	Enable greater independence and protect the most vulnerable
	Strengthen our services for all
	Intervene earlier
Theme 3: Inclusive growth	Develop our aspirational and affordable housing offer
	Shape great places and strong communities through regeneration
	Encourage enterprise and enable employment
Theme 4: Citizenship and participation	Harness culture and increase opportunity
	Encourage civic pride and social responsibility
	Strengthen partnerships, participation and a place-based approach

Within our own business:

We have several procedures in place that contribute to ensuring modern slavery does not occur in our business:

- Robust recruitment policy and process which are compliant with UK employment legislation. The process includes pre-employment checks, for example “right to work” document checks, referencing and understanding any employment gaps. DBS checks are undertaken for relevant posts.
- Employee code of conduct along with mandatory training which defines the responsibilities and standards required for all work for and on behalf of the Council including interims, agency workers and employees who are seconded to other organisations.
- Reporting knowledge or suspicion of slavery through our whistleblowing procedures and hotline which ensures that staff/ members can raise their concerns confidentially.
- The Council has responsibility to develop implement and monitor policies and processes to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults and children and works within multi-agency partnerships to protect and safeguard people.
- Staff awareness training is in place for specific Council staff which supports the Modern Slavery Act.

Within our supply chain:

Barking and Dagenham Council is a unitary authority providing all local government services for its 200,000+ citizens, from waste collections and clean up teams to public health, schools, and social care. The Council manages a range of services, delivered both directly and through external contractors, with a large and diverse supply chain.

In line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Council expects all relevant 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 Council's expectations. We would request that our suppliers ensure the same of their own supply chains.

We are committed to undertaking due diligence at all stages of the commissioning 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 the risks of modern slavery occurring and to review the supply chain to identify areas of vulnerability and risk.
- Within the category management approach, considering appropriate steps to be taken to mitigate risks, particularly in those areas assessed to be at high risk of modern slavery.
- Taking appropriate measures in the selection of suppliers to enable the exclusion of suppliers with convictions under the Modern Slavery Act.
- To comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the Council has updated its professional and technical ability tender questions within the procurement sourcing process. Selection questions require a bidder to evidence their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. Any bidder who fails to evidence their compliance with the required legislation shall be excluded from participating further in the tender process. Incorporated within the Council's standard contract terms are clauses that specify the supplier's contractual obligation concerning Modern Slavery.
- Working to ensure that unaccompanied children subject to private fostering arrangements, are not subsequently exploited or abandoned if the arrangement fails.
- Any supplier engaged by the Council to undertake the supply of goods and /or services is contracted to do so in line with the following policies:
 - Safeguarding
 - Equality & Diversity
 - Code of Conduct
 - Whistleblowing

These policies are key to ensuring that staff employed by our supply chain have appropriate channels to report any incidents of slavery and human trafficking.

Investigations:

In respect of suspected or known incidents of slavery or trafficking we would refer these to the relevant police authority, the Community Safety Partnership, and the relevant safeguarding boards. The Council's various departments for property services (housing support, tenancy sustainment, enforcement, Be First) will be vigilant for signs of modern slavery on Council property and will report this appropriately if they believe that suspicious activity is taking place.

The Council actively works to ensure the safeguarding of all vulnerable people and recognises at-risk groups including workers in certain roles such as cleaning and care work, and large numbers of adults in multiple occupancy domestic properties. We would expect any colleague who may witness or suspect any wrongdoing to report their concerns to their manager, the police and the relevant safeguarding teams if the incident was in Barking and Dagenham.

Aims for the Coming Year

The focus for the next 12 months with regards to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as follows:

- Continue to work in partnership with a wide range of agencies within Barking and Dagenham to reduce the risk of neglect and abuse, to detect and report occurrences and to support victims.
- Work to better understand the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, in which residents accessing universal credit have increased significantly, and therefore there may be increased vulnerabilities relating to Modern Slavery.
- Work with suppliers to improve the transparency of end to end supply chains and to better understand areas of higher risk.
- Performance management relies on contract management which is delivered by the Council's commissioning teams rather than with its procurement team. Procurement and commissioning teams will undertake appropriate training to highlight obligations to the organisation as whole.
- Work on increasing awareness of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking with our residents, ensuring clear understanding of how to respond appropriately and within Safeguarding frameworks.

Signed:

Claire Symonds, Acting Chief Executive, Barking and Dagenham Council