

## **Modern Slavery Statement 2020-21**

### **Introduction**

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking - all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another, in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

We are committed to improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking.

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 financial year ending 31 July 2021.

### **Overview**

Queen's University is one of the leading universities in the UK and Ireland, with a distinguished heritage and history. The University is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and through Senate, is aware of our responsibilities as a charity to act for the public benefit across all of its activities.

A member of the Russell Group, the University is ranked joint 1st in the UK for research intensity (Complete University Guide 2021), while 10 subject areas are ranked in the top 200 in the world (QS World Rankings by Subject 2021). With an annual turnover in excess of £390 million, over 25,000 students and 4,300 staff, our university plays a unique role in Northern Ireland and is a key partner within the Belfast Region City Deal and a founding member of Innovation City Belfast.

The University's 2020-21 Annual Report sets out that during the year, Queen's signed the UN Accord, demonstrating our commitment to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in every aspect of our activity. Our Strategy 2030 is centred around four Strategic Priorities — Education and Skills; Research and Innovation; Global Reputation and Partnerships; Social and Civic Responsibility and Economic Prosperity — which build on our rich heritage of innovation, both economic and social, and focus on the global challenges aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Modern slavery risks are considered in relation to people working on campuses, our supply chains, fundraising and investments, overseas employment and international partnerships.

### **Our supply chains**

Our supply chain is diverse and we procure a wide range of direct and indirect goods, services and works. Where appropriate, we utilise procurement frameworks established by collaborative consortia who assess and monitor risk.

Given the global reach of the supply chains associated with our business, we recognise that there is the potential risk of modern slavery occurring, especially in specific areas that are identified as high risk such as electronics, building materials and construction, facilities management, laboratory consumables, clothing, catering/food and office supplies.

## **Our policies on slavery and human trafficking**

We recognise our responsibility to ensure environmental and socially responsible practice in all our teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities, and this extends to the sustainable and responsible procurement of works, supplies and services.

In light of the obligation to report on the steps to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in our supply chains, we have reviewed our procurement policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness in identifying and tackling modern slavery issues.

Our well-established procurement policies and procedures demonstrate our commitment to acting ethically, and with integrity, in all our business relationships, and have been enhanced to ensure that we include direct reference to slavery and human trafficking. We include Modern Slavery as a supplier response question and have included it in the Invitation to Tender as a consequence, when relevant. Furthermore, incident response plans are required from high risk suppliers.

It is acknowledged that Modern Slavery is a constantly changing global issue, and we will endeavour to consciously update and review processes for the detection of its existence in our supply chains, and review approaches to monitor the effectiveness of such processes. Full consideration has been given to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and how this integrates with our commitment to Modern Slavery.

## **Due diligence processes for slavery and human trafficking**

Modern slavery is now a contract clause in all procurement contracts that are on Queen's terms, this requires ethical sourcing of supplies and we actively contribute to the sectoral Purchasing Consortium, of which we are a member, to ensure that Modern Slavery is considered in areas that have known risks.

As part of our initiative to identify and mitigate risk we have also worked with our sectoral Purchasing Consortium to review available risk assessment tools and techniques which can assist in the management of supply chain risk, and have committed to the use of such tools. Queen's supports and signed up to membership of Electronics Watch in September 2019.

## **Supplier adherence to our values**

We adopt a zero tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking. To ensure all those in our supply chain, and our contractors, comply with our values we will review our agreements and dealings with suppliers in risk areas to ensure compliance with anti-slavery measures. We have ensured that the matter has been highlighted on our [website](#) under the section that deals with information for suppliers and have enhanced our minimum standards to include a section on Modern Slavery. We support and contribute to the development of a free supplier planning tool enabling suppliers to track and report on actions taken on Modern Slavery.

In February 2021, the University Operating Board endorsed a new [Supply Chain Code of Conduct](#). This code is applicable to all suppliers and links directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose of the Code is to create awareness across our suppliers of social, ethical, economic and environmental issues. The Code will help suppliers understand the behaviours and standards that are expected of them and their supply chains when working on University contracts. In the next period we intend to put further focus on supplier adherence to the code, the first section of which is in regard to Social Compliance and forced, involuntary and underage labour.

## **Training**

To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains, we have made awareness training, delivered by the charity Unseen, available as part of the Finance Training Programme. We keep our website for internal staff guidance refreshed to ensure that the issue of Modern Slavery is at the forefront of communications.

All Procurement Office staff are also required to undertake annual training on Modern Slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply or by utilising the training provided by the Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA). We will continue to develop awareness of Modern Slavery in both our supply chain, and with our staff.

### **Reporting victims of Modern Slavery**

In a University context, if you think someone may be a victim of Modern Slavery or if there is a risk of it occurring please report this without delay to the Procurement Office using the e-mail address [procurement@gub.ac.uk](mailto:procurement@gub.ac.uk).

Suppliers, staff or students may also use the [Whistleblowing process](#) which is available on the University Website and / or the confidential [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) on **08000 121 700**.



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