

Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2019/20

This statement is made on behalf of Homes for Haringey pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement.

Homes for Haringey recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. The organisation is absolutely committed to detecting and preventing slavery and human trafficking within its activities, and to ensuring, as far as possible, that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Homes for Haringey's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and its supply chains.

We recognise that as a provider of social housing in North London, there are a number of ways in which modern slavery could impact Homes for Haringey. These are via our supply chain; detection or concern of actual or potential human trafficking when attending a resident's property or when victims of modern slavery flee their situation and approach our homelessness prevention service for help and support. Homes for Haringey will continue to focus on its procurement practices, safeguarding, whistle-blowing processes, staff training and continuing development of its homelessness prevention services to help detect and tackle modern slavery and human trafficking.

This statement relates to actions and activities during the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Our Approach

We work to high professional standards and comply with all laws, regulations and rules relevant to our business, to the best of our knowledge. We expect the same high standards from those we work with and are committed to ensuring, as far as possible, that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. This includes contractors we employ to undertake repairs and various maintenance related activities on our behalf, where the risks of slavery and trafficking can be higher than in other parts of our supply chain.

We have both a clear Safeguarding Policy, and a Whistle blowing Policy which are published on our staff intranet site. If there are any concerns about wrongdoing or breaches of law these concerns can be raised in confidence without fear of disciplinary action.

Supplier Due Diligence

Suppliers are vetted depending on the value of anticipated spend. Our contract and threshold regulations set out the requirements we have in relation to our engagement with suppliers. Our suppliers are expected to comply with all local and national laws and regulations. Should suppliers fail to live up to our expectations or be unwilling to make any changes we may cease to trade with them.

Homelessness Prevention

From our experience people who face, or who are, homeless are particularly vulnerable to slavery and trafficking. Our front line facing staff are trained and able to support victims of slavery and trafficking and they access partner agencies to do this effectively.

Our Actions in 2019/20

We continue to use the National Referral Mechanism which is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

We continued to raise awareness of modern slavery and provide mandatory training for all staff to help ensure they are robustly trained and have the skills to recognise the signs of modern slavery.

We have strengthened our relationships with organisations who offer support to people who have been the victims of modern slavery to ensure that the pathways into our services are clear. As a result, we have received an increased number of referrals for people needing housing assistance this year (6 new cases).

We are represented on the local partnership groups where issues relating to modern slavery is discussed and are part of the strategic and operational planning.

Our contractors, especially those who visit our properties, are also trained in this area and are provided with concern cards to raise any concerns immediately. A Modern Slavery statement is requested as part of a suite of documents required for large tender processes.

Further Steps

In 2020/21 we plan to further review our training offer to include the learning from cases and use anonymised case studies to highlight the issue to staff. We will ensure that all staff refresh their understanding by completing the on-line training.

We will review safeguarding clauses in contracts and the support/training offered to contractors and suppliers.

The cases we have been involved in during the year have shown a strong link between modern slavery and sexual violence and abuse. We will work with the Council's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategic lead to strengthen the pathway for victims of modern slavery where VAWG is present, including reviewing the contribution that Hearthstone can make.

Our newly appointed Safeguarding Officer will review our approach to modern slavery to ensure we are doing all we can to identify and address issues.