



Modern Slavery Statement
2017/18

1. Introduction and Structure

The Wrekin Housing Group ('the Group') is a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority under the Co-operative & Community Benefit Society Act 2014. Our main business is the provision of social housing, care and support, adding social value to the lives of the people who receive our services and live in our communities.

The Wrekin Housing Group has three subsidiaries – Choices Housing Association, a care provider; Old Park Services – a trading subsidiary; and Strata Housing Services – a development subsidiary.

The Group is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing, with Choices Housing Association regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

This statement covers the Group and its subsidiaries for the financial year ended March 2018.

- The Wrekin Housing Group is one of the largest social housing providers in the West Midlands, with over 13,000 homes for rent and shared ownership across Shropshire and Staffordshire. We provide affordable homes for single people, couples and families. Working with various community groups in these areas, we help to build and support local communities.
- Choices Housing Association is a not-for-profit supported housing and care organisation, the principal activity being the provision of housing, care and support services for older people and individuals with learning and/or other disabilities. We offer a range of housing options and support services to meet the needs of individuals who want to live independently, bringing care where it's needed to enhance quality of life and enable individuals to live the life they want, in their own home and communities.
- Through Strata Housing Services, our significant development programme provides added benefits beyond providing homes. These include job and apprenticeship opportunities, support to local businesses and economic growth.
- Old Park Services carries out trading activities and this includes maintenance, ICT, personal alarm equipment, upcycling and selling pre-used furniture and other goods through social enterprise - Reviive. Old Park Services also manages and lets market rented properties.

2. Statement

As a business we are committed to upholding the highest standards of probity, openness and transparency so we can provide the best service to our customers. We are committed to preventing the existence of slavery and human trafficking within our business and supply chains, we are and will continue to address the issue with appropriate urgency and seriousness, devoting senior management time and resources to meet our obligations and good practices. We expect those we work with to have the same approach and we would not work with any organisation whose approach or practices are incompatible with our own.

We recognise that there is potential for our service users, tenants and leaseholders to be affected by modern slavery. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure that employees are vigilant to the risks for those who are vulnerable within our sector and business, for example, through the **Safeguarding Policy** and the **Homecheck Policy**. Through our **Corporate Social Responsibility Policy**, **Procurement Strategy** and **Code of Conduct** we demonstrate our commitment to respecting human rights and operating in an ethical way with integrity. We strive to work with partner organisations to prevent and detect modern slavery. Our business is in the early stages of tackling the issue comprehensively and the implementation of our Modern Slavery Policy and twelve month action plan, led by the Group Board and Executive Team, will demonstrate our zero tolerance approach.

3. Supply Chains and due diligence

Our key area of risk lies in our relationships with supply chains – suppliers, contractors and business partners. We are committed to ensuring that our supply chains are clear to expose evidence of slavery and human trafficking. Our goods and services are from UK based suppliers although supply chains are global and we recognise that no supply chain can be entirely free from the potential of slavery or human trafficking. We have an expectation that those in our supply chain and those who contract with us comply with our values and our pre-qualification questionnaires determine the suitability of potential suppliers. All new and existing suppliers are being asked to provide evidence of how they mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their business and in their supply chains. They are also being asked to declare that they have not been involved in modern slavery and human trafficking offences.

4. Employment

We recognise that there is potential for employees to be affected by modern slavery and human trafficking. We have robust policies and procedures in place which are regularly audited to ensure compliance with employment legislation.

We encourage employees to report any concerns relating to business activities. Our **Whistle-blowing Policy** makes it easy for employees to raise concerns in confidence.

Recruitment processes include the verification of identity and the right to work in the UK. Given the nature of the care sector, there is a need to employ temporary staff and this is a potential area of risk as we do not have full control over the recruitment process.

5. Training for Staff

The Executive and Senior Management Team consider where the risk of modern slavery or human trafficking may arise in their parts of the business and ensure that their teams are aware of this risk.

This year we are providing training to employees on Vulnerability & Exploitation and the Modern Slavery Awareness Handbook (Home Office publication) has been published on our intranet for staff to help them recognise the signs.

This statement is made under section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.



Anne Ward
Group Chair

