

Modern Slavery Statement 2016/17

Slavery and human trafficking remains a hidden blight on our global society. We all have a responsibility to be alert to the risks and are committed to understanding modern slavery risks, however small, in our business and in the wider supply chain. Our aim is to ensure that there is no modern slavery in our own business and supply chains.

Our Structure

We are a social housing provider in the West Midlands with almost 12,000 homes for rent (and low cost home ownership) across Shropshire and Staffordshire. Established in 1999, our portfolio of homes is growing through new developments across Shropshire and Staffordshire and includes everything from apartments in well-established residential areas to town houses and family homes in both rural and town locations.

The Trust operates in a group structure and has been joined by Choices Housing Association, Shropshire Housing Alliance, Reviive, South Shropshire Furniture Scheme and Fuse. Within the group we work collaboratively as partners across a wider geographical area and across more diverse areas of business than we could alone.

The Trust has an annual turnover in excess of £65 million

Our Supply Chains

We deliver a range of services to stakeholders including tenants, local authorities, landlords, and housebuyers.

We engage with a wide variety of organisations for a broad range of goods and services - primarily corporate, construction and property related, but also some more specialist requirements.

Our supply chain members are diverse not only in the goods and services they provide, but also in the size and structure of their organisations - from the very small to multi-national institutions. We encourage smaller businesses to apply to join our supply chain in order to promote local business initiatives in the UK.

Our Policies on Slavery and Human Trafficking

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. This statement reflects our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place anywhere in our supply chains.

We have reviewed our existing policies and procedures in light of the Act. We are confident that our policies promote good behaviour among our colleagues at work and within our supply chain. Our policies and procedures are kept under review, among these that we consider give us strength in avoiding modern slavery or human trafficking under the Act in our businesses are:

- Code of Conduct
- Discipline
- Grievance
- Bullying & Harassment
- Mediation
- Single Equality Scheme
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy.

Our Suppliers adherence to our values

We have zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking. We expect all those in our supply chain and contractors comply with our values. Heads of Service are responsible for compliance in their respective departments and for their supplier relationships.

We are strengthening the relationship with our supply chain members through our policies and strategies on Procurement, Corporate Social Responsibility and our Environmental strategy.

These are available to our supply chain members to ensure that all suppliers are aware of our expectations.

We have contracts with supply chain members and in many cases those contracts are for several years' duration. We have introduced a contractual requirement for suppliers that they do not engage in any activity that is contrary to the Act. Where a contract has been renewed during the year or any new contract has been entered into, that contract term has been applied. Over time, we will achieve the inclusion of the contractual requirement in all supplier relationships.

Training

We have discussed the Act, its purpose and the Trust's attitude to it at a board meeting. We have alerted our senior managers to it and challenged them to continue to consider where the risk of modern slavery or human trafficking may arise in their parts of the Trust's businesses. We have provided guidance to our procurement team members on the need to avoid those risks and on possible indicators of them in the supply chain. We will continue to enhance the assurances we seek from supply chain members as to their avoidance of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Declaration

This statement has been approved by the Group board of directors and is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.