



co-operative councillor

modern slavery briefing

the co-operative party
local

Charter Against Modern Slavery

[Your Council Name] will:

1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
2. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
6. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

Foreword



Tackling the scourge of modern slavery ought to be a priority for everyone in the UK today.

Citizens, communities, businesses, voluntary and community sector groups and the state at every level can all contribute to a national effort to eliminate this illegal and unacceptable practice in our society.

Local government certainly has a part to play. Councils and their local partners can help to identify, refer and support victims in their area, fulfilling their responsibilities for adult safeguarding, child protection and community safety.

Local authorities have housing staff who may come across victims crammed into substandard homes or through their work with homeless and street populations. They have public protection officers who may encounter victims whilst grappling with gangs, organised crime or 'county lines' drug-dealing. Their regulatory services, such as trading standards and environmental health, may come across victims whilst inspecting business premises. Their work to support immigrants with no recourse to public funds may bring them into contact with victims who have been trafficked. Constituents may raise concerns about suspicious activity with councillors in their surgeries. The list of ways that councils can make a difference is long.

This charter, however, relates specifically to local authorities' approach to procurement. Between them, the country's councils spend over £40bn procuring services through the contracts they sign every year. Such serious spending lends them leverage which they can use to stamp out any modern slavery being practised in their supply chains.

Progressive councils have long used procurement policy to secure social value, from requiring contractors to pay the real living wage to refusing to do business with construction firms who practise blacklisting, to securing local apprenticeships. The purpose then of the Co-op Party's important new Charter Against Modern Slavery is to commit signatory councils to taking ten practical steps to ensure their contractors do not exploit anybody as a modern slave, for instance through forced labour or debt bondage.

I am proud to sign this charter and I sincerely hope that many other councillors across the country will too. That way, local government as a whole can use its significant purchasing power to take on those who would treat their fellow human beings as modern slaves.

Cllr Andy Hull

Executive Member for Finance,
Performance and Community Safety
London Borough of Islington

Introduction



The co-operative movement is at the forefront of tackling the issue of modern slavery.

From Labour & Co-operative MPs and Peers seeking to change the law to guarantee at least 12 months care and support to survivors of modern slavery, to the Co-operative Group providing them with paid employment opportunities, over the past year the co-operative movement has campaigned to push this issue up the agenda, and to provide practical support to its victims.

Labour & Co-operative councillors can play their part too, by signing up to the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery.

Councils and businesses have a number of statutory duties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Co-operative Party's Modern Slavery Charter goes further. It provides a framework for local authorities to ensure that none of the £40bn we collectively spend each year as local councillors ends up in the pockets of traffickers.

We urge Labour & Co-operative councillors to be at the forefront of the fight against modern slavery. Passing this charter at your next council meeting is an important step to leading the way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Hoddinott'.

Emma Hoddinott

Local Government Officer
the Co-operative Party

What is Modern Slavery?

Modern Slavery is one of the great evils of our time and it's happening under our noses.

In nail bars, car washes, farms, factories and restaurants, it is estimated that tens of thousands of people in the UK could be victims.

The term 'Modern Slavery' captures a whole range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Forced labour
- Criminal exploitation
- Other forms of exploitation including organ removal, forced begging, forced benefit fraud, forced marriage and illegal adoption

In short Modern Slavery is where traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Modern Slavery can affect adults and children, and last year 51% of victims were female and 49% male. 15% of victims were referred for domestic servitude; and there are now more victims exploited for labour than those who had been trafficked for sex.

It affects foreign nationals, but many of those exploited are from the UK and exploited within this country. In 2016 the third largest victim group came from the UK.



Why does more need to be done?

Modern Slavery is happening all over the UK, but more is needed to be done to recognise when it is happening and support victims.

Those that have been abused and trafficked will often not disclose their situation due to barriers such as fear of the traffickers and authorities, threats to themselves and their family, no long-term options and not self-identifying as victims of modern slavery.

Raising awareness is important so that victims can be identified, and action taken, especially by those that are likely to meet victims in their role.

There are signs that may indicate someone is a victim such as concerns about someone's physical appearance such as unkempt or untreated injuries, isolation, poor living conditions, restricted freedom of movement, unusual travel times and a reluctance to seek help.

There are lots of resources to raise awareness by different organisations. A list of these is available here:

<http://s.coop/modernslaveryresources>

The Charter

The Charter is a series of simple and low-cost actions that councils can take to ensure their supply chains are not contributing to modern slavery.

Awareness is very important, in recognising and acting on the signs of slavery. That is why training of officers is key, as well as informing suppliers of their obligations. Key rights for workers, such as freedom to join a trade union and whistleblowing, help ensure an environment where modern slavery can't thrive.



The Requirements

Below are some guidelines about how the elements of the charter can be implemented by councils.

This may vary from council to council depending on your procurement team and processes. For example, if your council uses Transparency in Supply Chains ([TISCreport.org](https://www.transparencyinprocurement.org)) then these assurances can be checked.

- 1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.**

Understanding of staff who will be able to deliver on this charter is important to its successful implementation. There is already recognised accredited training from the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS). The training is delivered online in a series of modules, followed by online examinations. The candidate gains a certificate valid for 12 months in 'Ethical Procurement and Supply' and the cost is relatively low at £38 + VAT for 2018.

- 2. Require contractors to fully comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.**

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act is a transparency in supply chains measure that requires businesses who a) carry on a business, or part of a business, in the UK; b) supply goods and services; and c) have an annual turnover of £36million or more, to produce an annual statement on the steps they are taking to prevent modern slavery in their supply chains and own organisation.

Your procurement processes should seek compliance with this section of the Act.

3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.

Low cost tenders can be a sign of exploitation and should be challenged. Local Authorities can use Regulation 69 of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 (Abnormally low tenders) which means they can require tenderers to explain the price or costs proposed in the tender.

4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.

Article 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 means everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests. It is also unlawful for an employer to offer a benefit to leave a trade union, treat you unfairly because you are in a trade union, refuse to employ or dismiss your employment for being part of a trade union.

Your procurement and contract processes should ensure that suppliers comply. You may wish to engage local trade unions in raising awareness of the freedom to join a trade union and the benefits of doing so.

Trade unions in the workplace help bring about change through negotiation and also offer their members advice, support and representation if they are having a problem with their employer.

5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.

Councils have whistle-blowing policies, and these can be modified and publicised to ensure that staff know they can report concerns of modern slavery through this mechanism as well.

6. **Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.**

In contracts, you can require suppliers to adopt a whistle-blowing policy so there are mechanisms there for staff to raise concerns. Whistleblowers are protected by law and shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose their job because they have raised concerns that are in the public interest.

7. **Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.**

Your council may already have boards or audit that review spending, and modern slavery should be added to one of the issues for them to be aware of. Are you contracting in high-risk sectors such food processing, fishing, agriculture, construction, domestic and care workers and car washes?

8. **Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.**

It's important that suppliers also have awareness of what modern slavery is, what the signs are and how they can tackle

9. **Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.**

This reiterates the duty for local councils to report concerns using the national referral mechanisms, and a public commitment they will do that for their own contractors too.

10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

Whether through the council, committees or scrutiny, agreeing a way to review this charter annually will ensure that the council learns from the action taken and maintains a vigilance against modern slavery.

What role do local authorities have?

Local authorities have a number of statutory duties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This includes the duty to notify the Home Office of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking. This Charter and guide does not cover all statutory and safeguarding duties.

Those are covered in more detail in the Local Government Association (LGA) guide on how councils can tackle modern slavery available here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery-council-guide>

This Charter is a way of recognising what councils can do above their statutory obligations to raise awareness and ensure their own supply chains don't contribute to modern slavery.





*Oxford City councillor Tom Hayes
and Oxford East MP Anneliese
Dodds*

Best Practice

The Co-operative Group

In 2016 the Co-operative Group formed a partnership with national charity City Hearts to develop the 'Bright Future' programme. Bright Future provides a pathway to paid employment for victims of modern slavery, which includes a paid work placement in a Co-op store or site, followed by a non-competitive job interview.

They have also partnered with the Snowdrop Project, another charity who work to rehabilitate victims of modern slavery. The Group's goal for 2017 was to offer at least 30 people who have been rescued from slavery the opportunity of a paid work placement and a job in the business if they wish.

Oxford City Council

Tom Hayes is an Oxford City Council cabinet member with responsibility for modern slavery and human trafficking. He brought a motion to the council highlighting that victims of modern slavery only get 45 days of recovery and support while the Home Office assesses their case and that is all they are currently entitled to under the law.

The motion supported calls by Labour & Co-operative MPs and Peers to increase the length of support for an additional 12 months.

You can read more here: <http://party.coop/campaign/modern-slavery>

Appendix 1 The Charter

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Appendix 2 **Model Motion**

This council notes

- Though slavery was abolished in the UK in 1833, there are more slaves today than ever before in human history. Figures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggest that there are more than 40 million people in modern slavery across the world, with nearly 25 million held in forced labour.
- There were 3805 victims of modern slavery identified in the UK in 2016. A rising number but still well below the 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims estimated by the Home Office.
- Modern Slavery is happening nationwide. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. This can include sexual and criminal exploitation.

This council believes

- That action needs to be taken to raise awareness of modern slavery and the fact that it is happening all over the UK.
- That the current support for victims is not sufficient and needs to go beyond the 45 days they are currently given by the government.
- That councils have an important role to play in ensuring their contracts and supplies don't contribute to modern day slavery and exploitation.

This council resolves

To adopt the Co-operative Party's Charter against Modern Slavery to ensure our procurement practices don't support slavery.

[Include Charter]

Appendix 3 Resources

There are many expert resources and organisations to help councils tackle modern slavery:

- Local Government Association (LGA) Guide to tackling Modern Slavery
<https://www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery-council-guide>
- Human Trafficking Foundation
<http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/>
- Public Concern at Work (Whistleblowing)
<http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>
- The Salvation Army free e-learning on Modern Slavery
https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/toolkits/ms/story_html5.html
- List of Modern Slavery Training Resources
<http://s.coop/modernslaveryresources>

Note

Modern Slavery is a criminal offence, and if you find instances of Modern Slavery or Human Rights abuses you should take action immediately.

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| ■ In an emergency call the Police on 999 | ■ If you want to speak in confidence to a trained adviser in order to receive help, advice or guidance on any modern slavery issue call the Modern Slavery Helpline 0800 0121 700 |
| ■ Police 101 | |
| ■ Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority 0800 432 0804 | |
| ■ Crimestoppers 0800 555111 | ■ Salvation Army 24-hour confidential helpline 0300 3038151 |

politics for people

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