



Slavery & Human Trafficking (Modern Slavery Act Transparency) Statement

For the year ending 31 March 2021

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Introduction

Social responsibility and integrity have been embedded across the organisation since it was incorporated in 2000. We have a long-standing commitment to supporting a diverse culture, where equal opportunity is actively promoted and unlawful discrimination is not tolerated.

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (“the Act”) requires us to provide a slavery and human trafficking statement on a yearly basis, outlining our commitment and actions taken to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within the organisation or our supply chains.

This is our fifth statement since the introduction of the Act we are proud to be able to reference several long-standing policies and activities that support the aims of the Act.

We will continue to improve our policies and activities to support our zero-tolerance approach, which to date have ensured that we have had zero reported incidences of slavery or human trafficking.

Our structure

We are a social regeneration business, providing housing, training and neighbourhood services in the social housing sector. Our mission is to create successful communities, to enhance lives and maximise opportunity.

We have over 450 employees and operate solely in Staffordshire & Cheshire (UK). Our head office is in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

For more information on our current structure visit:
weareaspire.org.uk/our-people

Our supply chains

Our supply chains are largely based in the UK and include a significant proportion of local suppliers who work closely with us and are managed by individual contract managers. We believe that, given that we operate solely in the UK, within the social housing sector, with simple financial transactions and business partnerships, we have a lower risk of exposure to acts of modern slavery.

All suppliers are made aware of the requirements of the Act when they are issued with our terms and conditions of purchase, which includes a clause, as standard that they comply with the Act.

To further strengthen our supply chain controls we have created a checklist of a number of terms in relation to modern slavery, which we are not willing to compromise when agreeing to supplier terms and conditions.

Our policies

Whilst we do not have a standalone Modern Slavery Policy, we believe that our commitment to equality and fairness is the foundation of all of our activities and our policy framework supports the Act's aims to ensure that any potential modern slavery is mitigated against in our business or supply chain, including specifically:

- Aspire Group Equality & Diversity Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Aspire Group Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Aspire Group Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy
- Aspire Group Whistleblowing Policy
- Violence and Aggression Policy
- VFM Strategy outlines the procurement requirements

We regularly review our terms of employment to ensure that they comply with all relevant legislation.

For further details of these policies please contact governance@aspirehousing.co.uk

Training & communication

Training and Development

To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking we have provided training since 2017 to our new starters and existing staff in our neighbourhood teams. This training raises awareness of how to recognise potential victims of modern slavery and guidance on what to do if slavery is suspected in interactions with customers, suppliers or others. 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking' training can be accessed by everyone in the organisation at any time to refresh their knowledge as and when required and all neighbourhood team staff are required to undertake refresher training every 3 years; the last mandatory refresher training taking place in 2020.

We also provide safeguarding training to all front line roles across the organisation which is refreshed every three years. In 2020 all of our front line staff in housing completed 'Safeguarding Everyone' training which is centred around the symptoms that are associated with abuse, what types of abuse there are and those factors that can make an individual more at risk of abuse.

All Achieve Training staff undertake Safeguarding and Understanding Pathways to Extremism training and have refresher training every two years. We also offer a range of Equality and Diversity training which is available to new starters and all staff. In late 2020 we added unconscious bias and dignity at work training to our e-learning suite of courses.

Training & communication (cont)

Priority Steps for the Next Coming Year

This statement, once published, will be shared with all staff, along with details of resources including the Modern Slavery Helpline (0800 0121 700) and the Stronger Together initiative (www.stronger2gether.org).

The following policies will be reviewed and updated in accordance with the following timelines:

- Aspire Group Equality & Diversity Policy (December 2021)
- Aspire Group Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy (October 2021)

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 ended 31 March 2021.

Aman Dalvi
Aspire Housing Chair
20 July 2021

we are
aspire



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