



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2024-25

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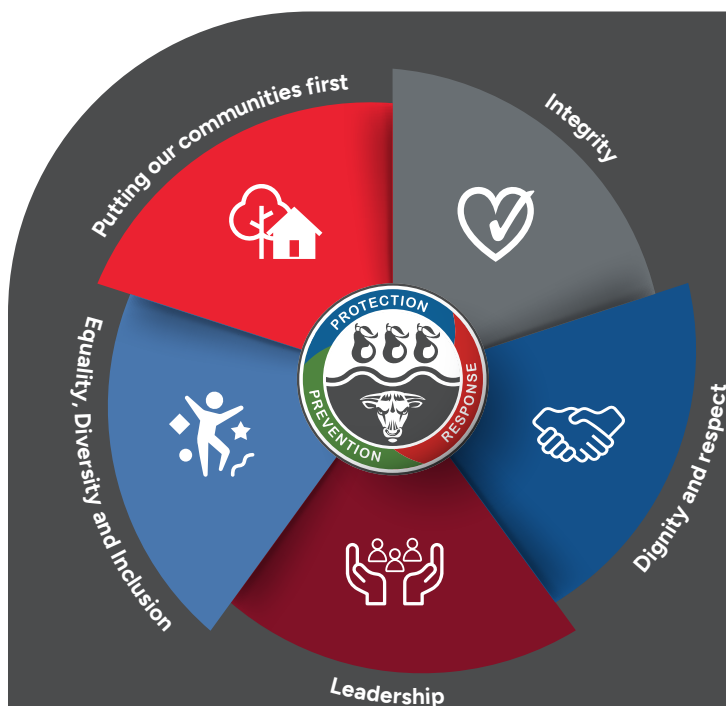
Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 defines modern slavery as human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. It covers a range of exploitative practices, including sexual exploitation, removal of organs, and securing services by force, threats or deception.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to produce an annual statement setting out the steps they have taken to ensure there is no modern slavery in their own business and their supply chains.

As a public sector organisation Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (HWFA) is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking. This statement is being made with the ethical principles of the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#), and our Core Code of Conduct.

In support of this legislation, the Authority and the Service have produced this statement which sets out the steps that HWFA has taken to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains and own business.



Putting our communities first



We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity



We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect



We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership



As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.

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About Us

The Fire Authority is composed of 25 Members, all of whom are local councillors appointed by Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in proportion to the size of the population of those two counties currently as follows:

Herefordshire Council	6
Worcestershire County Council	19

HWFA has a constitution which sets out how it operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local communities.

HWFA oversees Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service which serves a population of approximately 792,500 across the two counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. HWFA employs 688 staff members working 756 roles and in 2023-24 had a budget of £36.1 million.

Information about our Service structure, the Strategic Leadership Board and their areas of responsibility can be found on our [website](#).

The [Annual Service Plan](#) sets out our purpose and values along with the priorities for 2025-26 to help to deliver the [Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25](#), which sets out our medium-term priorities to keep people and the communities we work for safe, support our workforce and deliver value for money.

Procurement

Due to the nature of our organisation, we assess ourselves to have a low risk of modern slavery in our business and supply chains. Our supply chains are limited, and we procure goods and services from a restricted range of UK and overseas suppliers through the open market and via UK government frameworks. Our due diligence requirements are set out in our procurement terms and conditions, which include:

- **Contract Standing Orders** - when assessing the appropriateness of suppliers, e.g. those to whom the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 apply, we consider the supplier’s Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, their Whistleblowing Policy and Ethical Framework, Safeguarding Policies and Code of Conduct and evidence of compliance.
- **Ethical Code in Relation to Procurement** - HWFA colleagues are instructed not to use suppliers whose own corporate procurement practices and conduct whether directly or indirectly are deemed to be in breach of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- **Contract Terms** - our contracts contain terms for default events and breaches of contract which could be invoked should a supplier be found to have failed to meet their obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 or other applicable laws.

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Policies in relation to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

We are committed to creating and ensuring a non-discriminatory and respectful working environment for our colleagues. We want all colleagues to feel confident that they can expose wrongdoing without any risk to themselves.

Our recruitment and people management processes are designed to ensure that all prospective employees are legally entitled to work in the UK and to safeguard employees from any abuse or coercion.

HWFA consults with trade unions on the development of policies and has the following policies in place to help it meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

- **Confidential Reporting Line** - Safecall is an external, independent and impartial service for any employee of HWFA to report issues or concerns. Safecall can securely accommodate confidential, or fully open reports 24 hours a day. Their systems and protocols have been designed to manage all data securely.
- **Dignity at Work Policy** - This policy promotes a positive and supportive working environment which is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation; where individuals are confident, if they raise a concern in good faith, that the matter will be dealt with according to the agreed procedures without fear of subsequent victimisation or disadvantage.
- **Employee Code of Conduct** - The Code of Conduct clarifies the expectations of the Fire Authority and ensures all employees, volunteers and those working on behalf of, or representing the Authority understand the standards of conduct required.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** - This policy sets out how HWFA seeks to ensure compliance with the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This policy supports all staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors, service users and members of the public. It applies to all policies, procedures and working practices and will influence the nature, shape and delivery of our services. HWFA have an Equality, Diversity Plan (2021 – 2025) and published Equality Objectives on the Service website [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service](#).
- **Financial Regulations** - There are a number of policies and procedures to control financial processes within the Authority which include Anti-Money Laundering Policy; Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Correction Policy.
- **Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy** - We want to learn from the public about their experiences of using our services and we welcome their feedback. It's our aim to provide a high-quality service but if a user is unhappy with their experience, it is important that we use this feedback to improve the services we provide. The policy can be viewed at: [Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy](#).

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- **Pay Policy Statement** - Pay for all HWFA colleagues is determined by the Local Government Employers with the Employers' Sides of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Middle Managers' Negotiating Body, the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Fire and Rescue Authority locally and representative bodies nationally. Pay awards are considered annually for all colleagues. Our Pay Policy Statement can be viewed at: [Pay Policy Statement](#).
- **Recruitment Policy** - HWFA has a robust policy in place which incorporates safer recruitment to ensure colleagues have a right to work in the UK, with checks made before employment commences including appropriate reference checks and DBS checks, and that they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- **Scheme of Delegation** - HWFA's Constitution includes the Scheme of Delegation, which details what authority has been delegated to Service employees.
- **Whistleblowing Policy** - HWFA is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. We expect colleagues who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Service's work to come forward and voice those concerns. The policy can be viewed at: [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Safeguarding

HWFA is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs as well as children and young people across the two counties.

The Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a form of abuse and requires that local authorities consider this when carrying out or requesting others to carry out a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry.

HWFA has safeguarding guidance and training in place for all colleagues who engage with the public, whether operational colleagues through the emergency response provided or by colleagues and volunteers in respect of our protection and prevention work. The guidance provides detailed information on how to raise concerns about adults with care and support needs or children who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

Key Performance Indicators and Effectiveness

HWFA will know the effectiveness of the steps they are taking to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place in our supply chains and own business if:

- No reports are received from employees, the public, or law enforcement agencies to indicate that modern slavery practices may have been identified.
- No reports are received from within our supply chain to indicate that modern slavery practices have been identified.
- No instances are found whilst auditing our supply chain

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Training

Mandatory Level One (Universal) Adult and Children's Safeguarding training is provided for all staff and volunteers, which includes a section on Modern Day Slavery. Furthermore, level two and three safeguarding training is provided for appropriate staff members who engage with the public. Designated Safeguarding leads across the Service undertake level four training.

All staff and volunteers who work for HWFA are required to complete mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training delivered by an external training specialist. All staff and volunteers also participate in mandatory Ethical Dilemma Workshops to support the embedding of the Core Code of Ethics into the organisation.

Records of who has completed training are held in the Authority's Learning Management System.

Partnership Working

HWFA has responsibilities to work with partners to protect vulnerable people and has responsibilities to support the [Serious Violence Duty 2022](#).

HWFA is involved in various Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) operations, with partners such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Housing, West Mercia Police and Home Office Immigration Enforcement. The information generated through the initiative helps to target the enforcing agencies resources to help protect those who may be at risk of slavery or human trafficking.

This statement has been approved by the Fire Authority.



Signed on original

Jonathon Pryce
KFSM

Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive



Signed on original

Councillor
Roger Phillips

Chairman of the
Fire Authority



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



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