



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Report title: Lewisham Modern Slavery Statement 2024-2025**

**Date:** 13/03/2024

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Tony McGuinness, Head of Financial Strategy, Planning and Commercial; Teresa Hitchins, Procurement and Commercial Services Manager; Paul Philips, Organisational Development Advisor; Martin Crow, LSAB Business Manager.

### **Outline and recommendations**

The Modern Slavery Statement 2024-2025 sets out the London Borough of Lewisham's commitment to the opposition of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) and sets out the role it plays as a public sector organisation, together with its partners, to work towards the elimination of modern slavery (Prevent); ensure victims are fully and effectively supported (Protect); fully understand the local picture regarding modern slavery (Prepare) and robustly tackle perpetrators of modern slavery (Pursue). This report sets out the impact and implications of Mayor and Cabinet approving the Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-2025 and sets out changes the Council will implement in an attempt to reduce and eradicate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in the Borough and maintain our Borough of Sanctuary status.

### **Timeline of engagement and decision-making**

The Modern Slavery Statement for 2023-2024 was approved at Mayor and Cabinet on 8 March 2023.

The Modern Slavery Statement for 2022-2023 was approved at Mayor and Cabinet on 9 March 2022.

The Modern Slavery Statement for 2021-2022 was approved at Mayor and Cabinet on 10 February 2021.

The Modern Slavery Statement for 2019-2020 was approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 13 February 2019.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the London Borough of Lewisham's fourth Modern Slavery Statement which covers the period 2024-2025.
- 1.2. Appended to this report is Lewisham's Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-2025 and the Lewisham Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) Partnership Strategy.
- 1.3. Lewisham MSHT Partnership Strategy was approved by the Safer Lewisham Partnership Board for use by the Council in September 2022.
- 1.4. Lewisham MSHT Victim Care Pathway was introduced in July 2022 and has helped to inform the Modern Slavery Statement 2024-2025.
- 1.5. These are our ambitions for the next year and linked to them are a number of targeted commitments against which our progress can be monitored and measured. The pace of delivery may be impacted by the current cost of living crisis coupled with any possible post COVID-19 pandemic effect and this could similarly have an effect on the ability of some of our partners to engage with the programme.
- 1.6. Please refer to section 12 – Glossary – to better aid the understanding of the terms and/or acronyms contained within this report.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:  
approve the Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-2025 as appended to this report.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. This report responds to Lewisham's Corporate Strategy 2022-2026 by contributing towards the delivery of the following five Corporate Priorities as outlined in the Corporate Strategy:
  - 3.1.1 a) Open Lewisham – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
  - b) Children and young people– Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
  - c) A strong local economy – Everyone can access high quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
  - d) Health and wellbeing – Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services then need.
  - e) Safer communities – Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. Although 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 suggest that there are more than 50 million people living in modern slavery in 2021 across the world, with nearly 27.6 million held in forced labour.
- 4.2. In 2022, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) received 16,938 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery, which represents a 33% increase in referrals compared to the preceding year (12,706). This year saw the highest number of annual referrals since the NRM began in 2009. Overall, 49% (8,260) of potential victims claimed

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exploitation in the UK only, compared to 58% in the prior year, and 41% (6,922) claimed exploitation overseas only, compared to 30% in the prior year.

- 4.3. In 2022, there were 6,189 conclusive grounds decisions issued, a 118% increase on the number made the prior year (2,845). The number of conclusive grounds decisions issued this year is the highest since the NRM began. This follows the increasing trend since the early months of 2021 due to the recruitment of additional decision makers by the competent authorities. The proportion of positive conclusive grounds decisions was 87% for adult and 92% for child potential victims.
- 4.4. Modern slavery is happening nationwide and worldwide. 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.
- 4.5. The Council is committed to opposing modern slavery and human trafficking. The Council continues to demonstrate its duty towards this commitment by, addressing this through the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Network and signing up to the Co-operative Party Charter against modern slavery.
- 4.6. The Co-operative Party Charter against modern slavery required the Council to pledge to enact ten key commitments as part of its adoption. The Charter made necessary a number of actions from the Council and many of these actions were considered and addressed within the Modern Slavery Statement for 2018-2019. A motion was passed at full Council requesting that Mayor and Cabinet agree to signing the Co-operative Party Charter on the 3 October 2018, this was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet on the 13 February 2019 as part of its approval of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2019-2020 and it was signed shortly after this time.
- 4.7. The Lewisham Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Partnership Strategy outlined and defined human trafficking and modern slavery - and provided information about Lewisham's approach, including the role of the Council in relation to:
  - a) Help to Prevent Exploitation
  - b) Ensure Victims are Identified
  - c) Support Victims
  - d) Bring Exploiters to Justice
- 4.8. The Lewisham MSHT Partnership Strategy was subsequently expanded to support wider partnerships across the Borough and supported through the Safer Lewisham Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board.
- 4.9. In addition to the above, the Council has sought to publish regular Modern Slavery Statements, last doing so in March 2023. In publishing this statement for 2024-25 the Council clearly sets out the role it plays as a public sector organisation, together with its partners, to drive the identification, recognition, raising of awareness and disruption of this abhorrent crime. Lewisham continues to publish statements annually.
- 4.10. Lewisham Council is clear about its zero tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking in all its forms. The Council will use all avenues open to it using proportionate and appropriate measures through its statutory powers, its role as a procurer of supplies and services, its role as an employer, and its role as critical partner and influencer of other public sector bodies such as the Police, health, fire service and voluntary sector bodies.
- 4.11. These avenues include the use of policy, practice and statutory intervention, all of which have differing impacts on both the ability to disrupt and reduce this activity, but

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changes to policy and practice can have wider financial and legal implications. One example of this in action is the commitment in Sustainable Procurement Strategy for Lewisham 2021-25: "In terms of Lewisham's procurement, our contractors and suppliers are predominantly UK-based and we are committed to effective systems and controls to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place within our supply chain. With the UK having now left the European Union, Global Initiative has made it clear that there is a risk that hard won gains in tackling human trafficking and modern slavery will be lost due to the terms for UK collaboration with Europol and Eurojust being diminished. The London Borough of Lewisham will therefore have to level up its efforts to protect people from modern slavery, as well as providing support to people who have experienced modern slavery. In order to be able to do this effectively, we need to make sure that all of our suppliers are considering their modern slavery obligations. This means paying even closer attention to our procurement process and supply chains in order to ensure that visibility of modern slavery increases on both sides of the tendering process. With this in mind, we ask questions in all of our above threshold tenders as to whether organisations have produced (and can share) their MS statement."

4.12. In line with the [Global Slavery Index](#), the Council will monitor the 5 top high-risk categories:

- 1) Food
- 2) IT (monitored by Electronics Watch)
- 3) People (Labour)
- 4) Works/Construction
- 5) Horticultural

As part of our contract management framework the council has produced tiering for our contracts, these contracts form part of the top 5 risk categories identified Lewisham's Modern Slavery Statement is reviewed and updated annually

4.13. In adherence to our Sustainable Strategy for Lewisham, to ethical governance and corporate responsibility, the Council is continuing the establishment of an annual Modern Slavery Risk Register, aligning with international standards such as the [Global Slavery Index](#). This proactive measure will focus on monitoring high-risk categories, including:

- Food
- IT (monitored by Electronics Watch)
- People (labour)
- Works/construction
- Horticultural.

Supported by a tiering system integrated into our contract management framework, this initiative ensures a meticulous scrutiny of contracts within these high-risk categories.

4.14. The procurement team has created the Modern Slavery Risk Register 2023 (Appendix E) and will review this annually. This process includes identifying risks and assessing their impact. It involves monitoring suppliers' modern slavery commitments, collecting their modern slavery statements, and offering future recommendations.

## 5. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

5.1. As set out in the Statement, the Council is itself not legally obliged to publish a

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statement on modern slavery and human trafficking under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. As a public sector body, however, the Council has powers which allow it to act in the way set out in this report. For example, it is legally required to operate in ways that are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998; it can use its role in setting policy and practice; its role as a procurer of supplies and services; its role as an employer; and its role as critical partner and influencer of other public sector bodies such as the Police, health, fire service and voluntary sector bodies. Those tools will be used in a proportionate and appropriate manner Accordingly this report set out the proposed approach and the wider implications including financial and legal issues.

- 5.2. The rights under this Act include the right for people to be free from slavery and forced labour. The Council will of course take steps which will help deliver that outcome, including using the tools available to it to ensure contractors comply with legislative requirements such as the Modern Slavery Act 2015 where those apply to the contractor, and complying with its duty to notify the Home Office of any individual encountered in England and Wales who it is believed is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking.
- 5.3. Publishing this statement – and taking the actions contained within it helps the Council deliver those outcomes. The London Borough of Lewisham’s Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2024-2025 therefore outlines the principles, policies, recruitment practice, procurement practice and actions to be taken to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking within the organisation. While acknowledging that the Council itself is not bound by the Act, the Statement is aligned with the approach set out in the Act.
- 5.4. The Act suggests that a slavery and human trafficking statement for a financial year is a statement of the steps the organisation has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place:
  - a) In any of its supply chains, and
  - b) In any part of its own business
- 5.5. It further states that an organisation’s slavery and human trafficking statement may include information about:
  - a) The organisation’s structure, its business and its supply chains;
  - b) Its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
  - c) Its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
  - d) The parts of its business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place, and the steps it has taken to assess and manage that risk;
  - e) Its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate;
  - f) The training about modern slavery and human trafficking that is available to its staff members.
- 5.6. Lewisham Council is clear about its zero tolerance approach to modern slavery in all its forms and is committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any part of the organisation. Furthermore, the Council will use all avenues open to it to seek to eradicate this crime from the Borough. These include:
  - a) The use of proportionate and appropriate measures through our

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statutory powers

- b) Setting supplier standards via Procurement in our role as a procurer of supplies, services and works.
- c) Taking, where necessary, direct action in our role as an employer
- d) Influencing others, in our role as critical partner to a number of public sector bodies such as health, fire and police services - as well as voluntary sector bodies.

5.7. The MSHT Partnership Strategy highlights the following local strategic priorities 2022-2024

- a) Help to Prevent Exploitation
- b) Ensure Victims are Identified
- c) Support Victims
- d) Bring Exploiters to Justice

5.8. We will deliver our commitments by taking steps to manage and mitigate risk at all levels within both the procurement process and throughout the life of the contracts we award. In this new Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the year 2024-2025 the Council clearly sets out the steps it has taken towards this aim as well as its ambitions for the year ahead and how these will further hinder the ability for traffickers and the beneficiaries of modern slavery to operate within our Borough.

5.9. Our developing priorities and action areas for next year, as committed to in Lewisham's Modern Slavery Statement 2024-2025, are:

- 1) Improving protection and support for modern slavery survivors
- 2) Encouraging suppliers to consider their modern slavery obligations
- 3) Increasing the uptake of additional modern slavery training
- 4) Growing our work with the Human Trafficking Foundation
- 5) Embedding modern slavery visibility in our quotes and tenders
- 6) Undertaking supplier SMETA Audits on procurements with a higher supply chain risk for modern slavery

5.10. Our focus on these action areas will feed into the project to help us deliver the following commitments to combat modern slavery in Lewisham:

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Improving protection and support offer for modern slavery survivors	• Modern slavery is included in all Procurement Training.	Ongoing
	• Continue to roll out Learning portal starter pack	Ongoing
	• Development of E-learning module for all new starters	Ongoing
Encouraging suppliers to consider their modern slavery obligations	• Modern slavery and supply chain risk is a set discussion point in contract management/monitoring meetings on an annual basis, as	Ongoing

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	<p>included on the Contract Management Monitoring Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working closely with Tier 1 suppliers to build a complete picture of the full supply chain.</li> <li>Requesting and monitoring information from the Tier 1 suppliers on how they manage their own supply chain to address modern slavery risks</li> </ul>	
Increasing the uptake of additional modern slavery training across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content on modern slavery included in existing training sessions run by HR</li> <li>Introduction to Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value Training</li> <li>To provide frontline staff and their supervisors with access to training on modern slavery</li> <li>eLearning modules that cover the subject of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, it is covered in safeguarding courses undertaken by staff members who work with the public in a direct capacity.</li> <li>Meet the buyer event 2023</li> <li>Early market engagement for above threshold procurements</li> <li>Regular supplier engagement and awareness raising with local businesses more widely.</li> <li>The MSHT Network is committed to delivering local training sessions as well as regular communications</li> <li>Delivery of a Modern Slavery Conference on 23.1.24 organised by the MSHT Network.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>In development</p> <p>In development</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>In development</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Growing our work with the Human Trafficking Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is being achieved via the Lewisham MSHT Network</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Embedding modern slavery visibility in our quotes and tenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All suppliers are asked to agree to our Sustainable Procurement Code of Practice 2022 upon their submission and at the contract</li> </ul>	Ongoing

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	<p>award stage, this includes modern slavery commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern slavery covered in the post-award stage through the Contract Management Framework.</li> <li>• Modern slavery is also covered off in SSQs/SQs and Annual Compliance Health Checks</li> <li>• Consider robust KPIs for relevant contracts to be discussed and agreed with suppliers and monitored regularly.</li> </ul>	In development
Undertaking supplier SMETA Audits on procurements with a higher supply chain risk for modern slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To undertake a risk-mapping exercise on all of the Council's suppliers, those identified as high risk may be put forward for a SMETA audit.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

5.11. These are our ambitions for next year and we shall continue to deliver positive outcomes.

## 6. Financial implications

6.1. There are no specific financial implications at this stage. The work set out in the report will be carried out within existing budgets.

## 7. Legal implications

7.1. This report seeks Mayor and Cabinet approval for the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2024-2025. As set out in the Statement, the Council is itself not legally obliged to publish such a statement under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act"). However, as a public sector body the Council may choose to publish modern slavery statement which would be lawful and compatible with its wider duties and obligations.

7.2. As stated in the report, the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2024-2025 contains all the elements the Act provides a public statement should contain.

7.3. Demonstrating action to identify and manage the risks modern slavery in the delivery of a contract and in the supply chain is in line with central government policy. This highlights how modern slavery is incorporated into the Social Value model in procurement. Any procurement carried out by the Council will be in accordance with the relevant public procurement legislation for duration the Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2024-2025 is in force.

## 8. Equalities implications

8.1. The Council and the Lewisham Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) Network continues to analyse all of the available data to monitor trends in the reporting of modern slavery offences, and for those who are entering the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). This monitoring takes into account (as far as is reasonably

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practicable) the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation as part of the public sector equality duty, with a particular focus on age, race and gender (sex) which are most relevant. Disability is also an important area of focus, although the data picture on this subject needs further development.

8.2. In this regard the Council is exercising as part of its functions the need to have due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

8.3. As outlined in this statement (Section 5.10) the council has specific objectives that are designed to prevent modern slavery from occurring, best support victim survivors when they are identified, and to work with local communities to achieve these goals. The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor and Cabinet, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which the Council can demonstrate that they have had ‘due regard’.

## 9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. Lewisham’s Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-2025 has no direct climate change and environmental implications in terms of how this Statement will interact with the Borough.

9.2. It’s worth noting here, however, that as the current climate emergency continues to worsen, the number of people being trafficked is unlikely to decrease. The Institute for Economics and Peace recently said that that around 1.2 billion people face becoming Climate Refugees within the next 30 years as the climate crisis and rapid population growth drive an increase in migration. Among the total of 60.9 million new internal displacements registered in 2022, 53% were triggered by disasters. As of 31 December 2022, at least 8.7 million people in 88 countries and territories were living in internal displacement as a result of disasters that happened not only in 2022, but also in previous years. This is a 45% increase in the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to disasters compared to 2021. It is unfortunately inevitable, therefore, that some of this population of vulnerable people in migrating populations will find themselves at an increased risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking.

## 10. Crime and disorder implications

10.1. The Council must consider how its activity can prevent crime and disorder in the borough. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to identify community safety implications in all our activities. One of the key areas of focus in this statement is the aim to increase information sharing between the Council and agencies such as anti-trafficking charities and organisations such as *Unseen*.

10.2. Increased communication and information sharing could potentially lead to an increase in sites of concern with regard to modern slavery being communicated to the Police – and this may have implications in terms of increased policing of this abhorrent crime – and as a result, reduced incidences of this crime, as well as a reduction of fear of this

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crime within the community.

## 11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1. Lewisham's Modern Slavery Statement 2024-2025 will have a direct impact on the health, mental health and wellbeing of anyone affected by the scourge of modern slavery as it seeks to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking in the Borough.
- 11.2. The Council's Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-2025 seeks to increase information sharing with agencies, such as anti-trafficking organisations like *Unseen* and the *Human Trafficking Foundation* and empower anti-trafficking survivors. It could be the case that this will lead to an increase in demand for access to health and social care services from survivors.

## 12. Glossary

A table of definitions from this report and the MS statement are listed below:

EHRC	The Equality and Human Rights Commission
Climate Refugees	Climate refugees are a subset of environmental migrants forced to flee their country of residence due to sudden or gradual alterations in the natural environment related to at least one of the three impacts of climate change: sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and drought and water scarcity.
Human Trafficking	Human trafficking is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of Modern Slavery
Modern Slavery Act	The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is designed to combat modern slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery.
NRM	The National Referral Mechanism ( NRM ) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.
MSHT	Modern Slavery Human Trafficking
Lewisham Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme	This is the Council's statement of strategic equality objectives and a framework through which elected officials, officers and the public can assess and evaluate the equality impact of strategic planning and service delivery. It is a vehicle through which the Council can demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
LSCP	Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership
Sedex SMETA	A Sedex (supplier Ethical Data Exchange) SMETA – which stands for Sedex Members' Ethical Trade Audit – is an audit of a supplier site based on their organisation's standards of labour health and safety, environment and business ethics.
VCP	Victim Care Pathway

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### 13. Report author and contact

13.1. Katharine Nidd, 020 8314 6651, [Katharine.Nidd@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Katharine.Nidd@lewisham.gov.uk)

### 14. Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources

14.1. David Austin , [david.austin@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:david.austin@lewisham.gov.uk)

### 15. Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law, Governance and HR

15.1. Please see the Legal Implications above.

15.2. Mia Agnew, [Mia.Agnew@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Mia.Agnew@lewisham.gov.uk)

### 16. Appendices

- *Appendix A – Lewisham MSHT Partnership Strategy*



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- *Appendix B – Lewisham MSHT Victim Care Pathway*



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- *Appendix C – Lewisham Modern Slavery Statement 2024 - 2025*



Modern Slavery  
Statement 2024 - 202

- *Appendix D - Sustainable Procurement Strategy for Lewisham 2021-25*



Sustainable  
Procurement Strategy

- *Appendix E - Risk Register Modern Slavery (Sptember 2023)*



Risk Register Modern  
Slavery 2023 sept.xls

### 17. Sources of information

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<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

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