



**Hampshire
& Isle of Wight**
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

HIWFRA Full Authority

Purpose: Approval

Date: **14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Title: **HIWFRA MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2020-2021**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1. This report seeks approval of the Authority's annual Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (HIWFRA) Modern Slavery statement for 2020-2021 and for subsequent publishing on the Authority's website.

BACKGROUND

2. Modern slavery, which includes human trafficking, is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It can take various forms including:
 - Domestic exploitation
 - Labour exploitation
 - Organ harvesting
 - EU Status exploitation
 - Financial exploitation
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Criminal exploitation
3. It is a current requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for certain commercial organisations (but arguably not public bodies) to publish a Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. To date, HIWFRA have chosen not to publish and update an annual statement. Other public bodies have chosen to err on the side of caution and publish statements.

4. Recently, the Government announced an intention to amend section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to expressly require public bodies with a turnover of £36m or more to publish a statement and therefore remove any uncertainty. The Act has not yet been amended to that effect, however, to ensure good governance and to demonstrate the Authority's commitment to prevent modern slavery, it is considered best practice that a statement be published. The creation and publication of a Modern Slavery statement also puts the Authority one step ahead of any legislation changes in the future.

THE HIWFRA MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

5. The HIWFRA Modern Slavery statement sets out the steps that are being taking to prevent modern slavery throughout the Authority and in its supply chains. The statement is set out to include key information to demonstrate its' commitment to tackle modern slavery. It is important that the Authority demonstrates its commitment to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its business activities and across its supply chains and is also open and transparent about any specific instances of slavery identified.
6. The statement sets out the actions taken by the Authority to understand, prevent and address all modern slavery risks within its services (directly provided and commissioned) and supply chains. The statement also provides some context behind the environment in which the Authority operates and sets out key responsibilities. It also importantly describes the due diligence undertaken by the Service in areas of recruitment, procurement and training.
7. If approved by the Authority, the HIWFRA Modern Slavery statement will be published on the Authority's website and will be presented to the Authority for approval on an annual basis. The Service will also run internal campaigns to raise awareness and ensure that individuals complete the necessary training.

SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

8. **Our Communities: We work together to understand different community needs and deliver accessible, local services which build safer places:** the Modern Slavery statement demonstrates the Authority's commitment to ensuring safer communities by playing its part in tackling modern slavery. It provides assurances to our communities that we are working towards safer places.
9. **Our People: We look after each other by creating great places to work and promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of our people:** the health, wellbeing and safety of our people is extremely important. The

Authority, by tackling modern slavery, is working towards safeguarding our people and creating great places to work.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no resource implications related to the Modern Slavery statement. Current policies and procedures are carried out by teams within their roles.
11. There are no financial implications as a result of the Modern Slavery statement.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

12. A stage one impact assessment has been completed. There are no identified impacts as a result of publishing the Modern Slavery statement.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There is a requirement under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for commercial organisations to publish a Modern Slavery statement. Currently, the Authority arguably isn't included in the definition of "commercial organisation" although there is some ambiguity about this. However, in light of the government's intention to amend the legislation to remove any doubt and as a matter of best practice, it is considered appropriate that the Authority demonstrates that it takes modern slavery seriously and is working towards its prevention.
14. The Modern Slavery Act does include, at section 43, a legal duty for the public authorities (including local authorities) to cooperate with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. This means that the Commissioner may request the Authority to cooperate in any way that the Commissioner considers necessary for the purpose of the Commissioner's functions.

OPTIONS

15. Option one: The Authority approve the Modern Slavery statement at appendix A for subsequent publishing. This is the recommended option. The Authority has a responsibility to demonstrate its understanding in relation to modern slavery and its commitment to tackling it. The publishing of the statement evidences how the Authority see this is a priority.
16. Option two: The Authority do not approve the Modern Slavery statement at appendix A and wait for there to be a statutory obligation to publish a statement.

RISK ANALYSIS

17. Although arguably there is currently no legal requirement for the Authority to publish a Modern Slavery statement, it is likely that legislation will change in the future and then the Authority will be on the back foot. There is also a risk that by not publishing a Modern Slavery statement that the Authority are seen as not supporting this important issue or a priority. An open transparent published modern slavery statement mitigates any risks and also supports the priorities of the Safety Plan 2020-2025.

CONCLUSION

18. Modern Slavery is an important issue that we all have responsibility to play our part towards preventing. The Authority has a responsibility to demonstrate it recognises how important tackling modern slavery is. The publishing of the statement illustrates the commitment the Authority make towards the important issue. It also ensures transparency and provides assurances to our people and communities.

RECOMMENDATION

19. That the HIWFRA Modern Slavery Statement 2020-2021, at appendix A be approved by the HIWFRA Full Authority and is subsequently published on the Authority's website.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

20. **Appendix A – HIWFRA Modern Slavery statement 2020-2021.**

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