

Modern Slavery Statement 2024

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the Act) requires organisations supplying goods or services with a turnover of above £36m to prepare and publish an annual Modern Slavery Statement.

Our Business

Orwell Housing Association (Orwell) is a housing association working in three distinct areas: the renting of affordable housing, the delivery of care and support for older people, younger persons and those with learning disabilities and the delivery of development and repair services for both itself, other housing associations and local authorities. Orwell has a wholly owned subsidiary; Orwell Homes Limited which undertakes development on behalf of the parent company and builds homes for sale.

Our Supply Chain

Orwell and Orwell Homes Ltd do not operate extensive, worldwide supply chains and where possible procure all labour and materials within the UK and preferably, locally. This enables us to establish strong, long-term relationships with predominantly UK-based suppliers. Overall, this means we procure from a mix of very few global market-leading manufacturers and an extensive amount of small or medium-sized UK based and local businesses.

Our most significant supply chain is through the delivery of programmed works, day to day repairs, new build development and the procurement of associated equipment and materials. These materials and associated services are procured directly in the UK or through procurement frameworks.

In addition, we shall only allow inclusion on to our supplier list if contractors and suppliers have signed a declaration that they are not involved in human trafficking or modern slavery and are fully compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Our policies to resist modern slavery and human trafficking

We have reviewed our existing policies and procedures and we are confident that our policies promote good behaviour among our colleagues at work and within our supply chain. Our policies and procedures are kept under review to make sure they reflect the changing shape of the Association and the Group as a whole and of the needs of the people and the communities which it serves.

Among the policies we consider give strength in avoiding modern slavery or human trafficking in our business are:

- Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy
- Capability and Performance Improvement policy
- Customer Promise
- Disciplinary policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Flexible Working policy

Gifts and Hospitality policy
Grievance policy
Health and Safety policy
Lone Working policy
People Promise
Recruitment and Selection policy
Risk Assessment policy
Risk Management policy
Safeguarding Adults policy
Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
Support and Supervision policy
Violence at Work Prevention policy
Speaking Up (Whistle Blowing) policy

Recruitment of Selection

Orwell employs some 700 people and before confirming employment every successful application is checked for proof for eligibility to work in the UK. This by production of a valid passport, or by other means such as a birth certificate.

For roles that require DBS clearance each role clearly states the requirement for DBS and the level of DBS associated with that role. References are also taken for every potential new starter covering two years full career history and a minimum of two references.

Our ongoing commitment to the Modern Slavery Act 2015

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or any part of our business. Our commitment is to act ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to implement effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place. We are further committed to making sure that our properties are not used to accommodate the work of human traffickers or to detain others for human servitude.

Monitoring Effectiveness

The main method of monitoring effectiveness within the supply chain will be the pre-qualification criteria for suppliers which includes a requirement to have measures in place to minimise the possibility of modern slavery in their business and supply chain.

Governance

Responsibility for compliance with the Modern Slavery Act rests with our Board and across the whole Leadership Team. The Leadership Team take responsibility for implementing the policy and its objectives and shall provide adequate resource and investment to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within the organisation.

Declaration

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54(1) of 'the Act' for the financial year ending 31 December 2023 and has been approved by the Association's Board.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Evans-Hendrick', written in a cursive style.

Wendy Evans-Hendrick
Chief Executive