

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/24

Modern slavery is all around us, often hidden in plain sight. It is estimated that there are more than 130,000 people trapped in slavery in the UK today (almost 50 million worldwide) and the number of people identified as victims has been rising year on year. Modern slavery exists in many forms in the UK, including trafficking into criminal activities like cannabis farming, sexual exploitation, domestic slavery or forced labour on farms, in construction, shops, bars, nail bars, car washes or manufacturing.

ForHousing is committed to its responsibilities in the protection of fundamental human rights and the elimination of modern slavery by ensuring that slavery, human trafficking and child labour have no place anywhere in our business. This statement, made pursuant to the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, sets out our zero-tolerance approach and the actions we have taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking from occurring in our business and supply chain for the financial year ending 31 March 2024.

Organisational Structure

ForHousing owns and manages more than 24,000 homes across the North West of England. The majority of the homes we provide are general needs housing, but we also provide supported housing and extra care schemes, and (via our subsidiary ForLiving Limited) shared ownership, market rent, private sale properties, and key worker accommodation. At ForHousing we are guided in everything we do by our vision, mission and values:

Our vision is to positively impact the lives of our social housing tenants.

Our mission is to provide safe, well maintained homes and deliver customer focused, equitable and efficient services.

Our values are Respect, Trust, Openness and Passion.

ForHousing is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered with the Regulator of Social Housing.

Our Commitment

It is our policy to conduct all of our business in an honest and ethical manner. ForHousing takes a zero tolerance approach to modern slavery across all areas of the organisation, as well in our supply chains. Accordingly, a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures is in place to guide and control our practices; this includes Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, Recruitment & Selection Policy, Procurement Policy, and Risk & Assurance Framework. We expect the same high standards from all of our contractors, suppliers and other business partners and require those we work with to be able to demonstrate a commitment to our values and compliance with our policies.

Our [strategy](#) sets out how our tenants and their communities are placed at the heart of all we do. ForHousing is completely committed to ensuring everyone is treated fairly and we reject any form of discrimination, victimisation or harassment; working to understand and address the risks of modern slavery in our neighbourhoods is a key part of this.

Our People

Effective people and organisational development is central to a high performing customer focused culture and the wellbeing of our colleagues is important to us. Our culture seeks to bring people together in an environment where they feel safe to openly share knowledge, experiences, opinions and ideas. We have adopted a flexible way of working, encourage a positive work-life balance, and promote colleague wellbeing through a variety of initiatives supporting physical and mental health.

We maintain robust recruitment processes which include all relevant requirements with regards to checking eligibility to work in the UK, employment reference checks, and any additional necessary checks such as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service). All colleagues are issued with an employment contract which adheres to relevant UK employment legislation. We do not operate zero hours contracts and ForHousing is an accredited living wage employer. We also have good working relationships with four trade unions.

At ForHousing we work to create the best possible environment for people and communities to thrive and fulfil their potential. We aim to be an inclusive organisation, making more things possible for more people by challenging inequity and enhancing equality of opportunity. Our approach on Modern Slavery helps remove barriers and identify those who may require more support.

All colleagues are regularly required to complete mandatory training modules on modern slavery, safeguarding, probity, and whistleblowing as well as on equity, diversity & inclusion. Colleagues are encouraged to be observant and report any concerns. We are committed to ensuring our colleagues and customers feel safe.

Our Suppliers

We engage with a wide variety of organisations for a broad range of goods and services. Most of our suppliers and contractors are UK based but we recognise that by the nature of their businesses some of our suppliers are potentially at higher risk of exposure to modern slavery than others, e.g. maintenance, repairs and construction companies. Our tendering and contract management processes ensure we only engage with reputable contractors and suppliers who adhere to all appropriate legislation, regulation and practices. We also carry out an annual check on suppliers to ensure ongoing compliance in relation to Modern Slavery.

Continuous Improvement

In 2023-24 we:

- Developed and introduced a new procurement framework to strengthen controls and defined clear KPIs to measure success.

- Continued to raise awareness of modern slavery with colleagues through mandatory training and regular communications to embed understanding of and compliance with our mission and values and behaviours.
- Continued to work with our Local Authority partners and the Police to manage and reduce homelessness to support those most at risk of being trafficked into modern slavery.

In 2024-25 we:

- Are continuing to raise awareness of modern slavery with customers, colleagues and our supply chain.
- Are working to refine our contract management framework.
- Will conduct an internal audit of our commercial contract management.
- Have become a member of the Supply Chain Sustainability School and are encouraging our suppliers to participate in the multiple information and training resources on modern slavery that are available through this forum.
- Are continuing to work with our partners to manage and reduce homelessness.
- Are continuing to monitor high-risk areas to ensure our suppliers remain compliant.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and has been approved by the Board of ForHousing Limited.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Kennedy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Kennedy
Chair

Date: 9th September 2024