

## **Barnsley Council Modern Slavery Statement 2024/2025.**

### **Introduction**

This statement outlines Barnsley Council's commitment to understand and respond to all potential modern slavery risks relating to its business operations and supply chains. It is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes the Council's modern slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. The statement is reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance and improvement.

### **Definition of modern slavery**

Modern slavery is an umbrella term encompassing slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion, and deception. Slavery violates human rights, denying people of their right to life, freedom, and security.<sup>1</sup>

Modern Slavery includes a range of types of exploitation including:

- Sexual Exploitation
- Forced Labour
- Child Slavery
- Forced Criminality
- Domestic Servitude
- Forced Marriage
- Organ Harvesting
- Human Trafficking

### **Organisational Structure.**

Barnsley Council is a principal local authority that serves the residents and businesses of Barnsley, a metropolitan borough in South Yorkshire, England. The council is responsible for delivering a wide range of public services, such as education, social care, housing, waste management, planning, and culture. These services are delivered directly by the Council and through external contractors, involving a large and diverse supply chain.

### **Supply Chains and Due Diligence**

The Council conducts risk assessments to identify potential modern slavery risks within its operations and supply chains. Working closely with Financial Services Risk Management to develop strategies and safeguards. Due diligence processes include:

- Challenging abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely on modern slavery.
- Requiring contractors to comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
- Advising suppliers to ensure their contracted workers are free to join trade unions and are not treated unfairly.
- Ensuring staff involved in procurement of contracts have received training around the risks related to modern slavery and human trafficking in supply chains.
- Requiring its tendered contractors to adopt a whistleblowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery
- Establishing a modern slavery working group

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/>

- Actively explore taking action against suppliers who refuse to cooperate in identifying, preventing, and mitigating modern slavery within their supply chains.

The council acknowledges its duty under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking. As an authorised organisation we are committed to ensuring we have identified First Responders trained across our organisation to refer potential victims of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

### Relevant Policies

The Council has implemented several policies that support the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking in our services including:

- **Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy:** This policy is designed to allow those employed by the Council to come forward and raise concerns of wrongdoing involving the actions of the Council's employees, its Councillors, contractors or any aspect of the Council's activities. It seeks to protect those individuals who make certain disclosures with regard to any instance of malpractice or wrongdoing and to investigate them in the public interest.
- **Employee Code of Conduct:** Outlines the expected behaviour of employees, emphasising ethical conduct and integrity. The Employee Code of Conduct policy prevents modern slavery in Barnsley Council by setting clear standards of behaviour and integrity for all employees, and by requiring them to report any concerns or breaches of the policy.
- **Recruitment Policy:** Ensures that all employees are recruited in a fair and transparent manner, following the principles of equal opportunities. The policy also requires that all employees have the right to work in the UK, are paid at least the national minimum wage, and are not subject to any form of coercion, exploitation, or abuse. The policy helps to prevent modern slavery from occurring in the Council's workforce and supply chains and protects the human rights and dignity of all workers.
- **Equality and Diversity Policy:** Promotes an inclusive and respectful work environment that values the diversity of people and perspectives, and does not tolerate any discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. By fostering a culture of equality and diversity, the policy prevents modern slavery from occurring in the Council's operations and supply chains and protects the human rights and dignity of all workers.
- **Preventing Illegal Working:** The Preventing Illegal Working Policy ensures that the Council complies with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the Immigration Act 2016, which aim to prevent illegal working and combat modern slavery. The policy requires that all employees and contractors provide evidence of their identity and eligibility to work in the UK, and that the Council conducts regular checks on these documents.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service Policies:** Ensure that the Council conducts appropriate checks on the criminal records and suitability of employees and contractors who work with children, vulnerable adults, or in positions of trust.
- **Safeguarding Children and Adult Policies:** Safeguarding policies are designed to protect children and adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm from others. Barnsley Council have ensured their safeguarding policies clearly outline their

commitment to how they will meet their statutory duties and obligations including individuals involved in modern slavery/human trafficking. This includes exploring if a referral will be needed to safeguarding teams should a potential case of modern slavery be identified. They aim to ensure that the Council provides a safe and supportive environment for its employees, contractors, service users, and residents, and that it responds appropriately to any concerns or allegations of abuse.

### **Priorities for 2024/2025**

Barnsley Council is committed to continually improving their response to modern slavery and have outlined key priorities to enable this:

- Improve the identification of potential victims of modern slavery within Barnsley.
- Continue to collaborate with our partners to develop a multi-agency response to modern Slavery within Barnsley.
- Review our current training offer for staff working within Barnsley Council to ensure staff are appropriately skilled in tackling modern slavery/human trafficking depending on the area of service the work in.
- Commit to raising the awareness of modern slavery within the organisation and across the community.
- Create a specified working group to drive forward the organisational improvements required relating to modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Ensure attendance at the South Yorkshire Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Partnership Meeting and the Local Government Association (LGA) Anti-Modern Slavery Network Meeting to share local intelligence, improve partnership working and learn from local/national good practice.
- Agree a strategic plan to clearly outline how we will meet these improvements mapped against the LGA's Modern Slavery Maturity Matrix to assess progress across key business areas.

Signed:



Sarah Norman  
Chief Executive  
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council