



Modern Slavery Act and Human Trafficking Statement

2025-26

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Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 defines modern slavery as human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. It covers a range of exploitative practices, including sexual exploitation, removal of organs, and securing services by force, threats or deception.

The Act requires certain organisations to publish an annual statement outlining the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery within their operations and supply chains.

As a public sector organisation, Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (HWFA) is fully committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and to the eradication of modern slavery and human trafficking. This statement is issued in alignment with the ethical principles of the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#) as well as our own Core Code of Conduct.

In support of this legislation, the Authority and the Service have produced this statement which sets out the measures HWFA has taken during the reporting period to ensure modern slavery and human trafficking are not present within its organisation or supply chains.

OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services \(FRS\)](#) in England which guides everything we do.

Putting our communities first

We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect

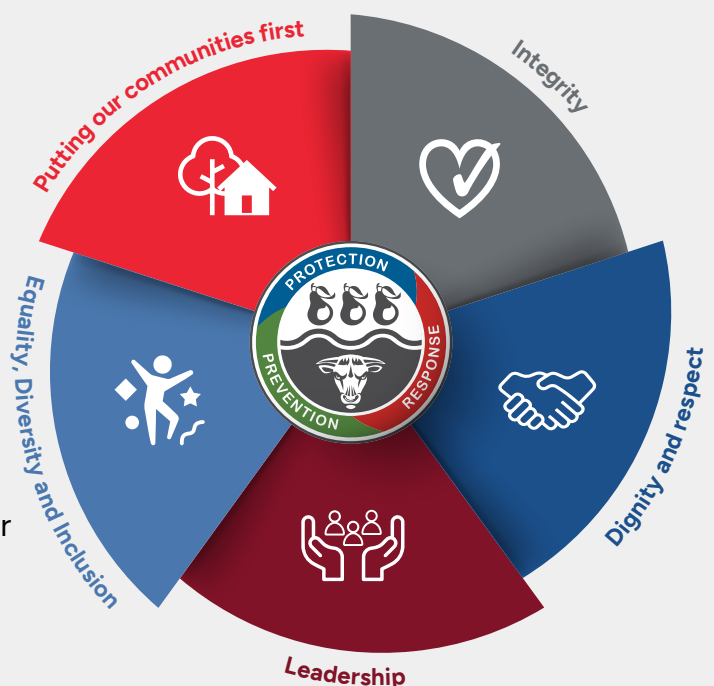
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership

As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



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About Us

The Fire Authority consists of 25 Members, all of whom are local councillors appointed by Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council, with representation allocated in proportion to the populations of the two counties as follows:

Herefordshire Council	6
Worcestershire County	19

HWFA has a formal constitution that defines its governance arrangements, decision making processes and the procedures in place to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability to the communities it serves

HWFA oversees Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, which supports a population of around 792,500 across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. HWFA employs 685 staff working across 756 roles and manages an **annual budget of £45.1 million.**

Information about our Service structure, the Strategic Leadership Board and their areas of responsibility can be found at: <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/about/the-fire-service/slb/>

The [Annual Service Plan](#) sets out our purpose and values along with the priorities for 2025 / 26 to help to deliver the [Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30](#) which sets out our medium-term priorities to keep people and the communities we work for safe, support our workforce and deliver value for money.

Procurement

Due to the nature of our organisation, we consider the risk of modern slavery within our operations and supply chains to be low. Our supply chains are relatively limited, and we source goods and services from a defined selection of UK and international suppliers through the open market and established UK government frameworks. Our due diligence expectations are outlined within our procurement terms and conditions, which include the following requirements:

- **[Contract Standing Orders](#)** – When evaluating supplier suitability, particularly for those covered by the Modern Slavery Act 2015 – we review their Anti Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, Whistleblowing Policy, Ethical Framework, Safeguarding Policies, Code of Conduct, and any evidence demonstrating their compliance.
- **Ethical Code in Relation to Procurement** – HWFA colleagues are instructed not to use suppliers whose own corporate procurement practices and conduct whether directly or indirectly are deemed to be in breach of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- **Contract Terms** – Our contracts contain terms for default events and breaches of contract which could be invoked should a supplier be found to have failed to meet their obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 or other applicable laws.

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Policies in relation to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

We are committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and non discriminatory workplace for all colleagues. We want everyone to feel safe and supported in reporting any concerns or wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.

Our recruitment and people management practices are designed to ensure that all prospective employees have the legal right to work in the UK and are protected from any form of exploitation or coercion.

HWFA consults with trade unions on the development of policies and has the following policies in place to help it meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

- **Whistleblowing Policy** – HWFA is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. We expect colleagues who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Service's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

The policy can be viewed at: [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

- **Confidential Reporting Line** – Safecall provides an external, independent and impartial service that allows any HWFA employee to raise concerns or report issues. Safecall operates 24 hours a day and can receive both confidential and open reports, with all data managed securely through their robust systems and protocols.

- **Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy** – We want to learn from the public about their experiences of using our services and we welcome their feedback. It is our aim to provide a high-quality service but if a user is unhappy with their experience, it is important that we use this feedback to improve the services we provide.

The policy can be viewed at: [Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy](#).

- **Equality Duty Policy** – This policy sets out how HWFA seeks to ensure compliance with the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This policy supports all staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors, service users and members of the public. It applies to all policies, procedures and working practices and will influence the nature, shape and delivery of our services.

HWFA also have a Diversity Framework 2025 –2029 and this will be published on the Service website. The Diversity Framework incorporates the service Equality Objectives: [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion](#).

- **Employee Code of Conduct** – The Code of Conduct clarifies the expectations of the Fire Authority and ensures all employees, volunteers and those working on behalf of, or representing the Authority understand the standards of conduct required.

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- **Dignity at Work Policy** – This policy promotes a positive and supportive working environment which is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation; where individuals are confident, if they raise a concern in good faith, that the matter will be dealt with according to the agreed procedures without fear of subsequent victimisation or disadvantage.
- **Recruitment Policy** – HWFA has a comprehensive policy that incorporates safer recruitment practices to ensure all colleagues have the legal right to work in the UK. This includes completing appropriate reference and DBS checks before employment begins and ensuring that all employees are paid directly into their own personal bank accounts.
- **Pay Policy Statement** – Pay for all HWFA colleagues is determined by the Local Government Employers with the Employers' Sides of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Middle Managers' Negotiating Body, the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Fire and Rescue Authority locally and representative bodies nationally. Pay awards are considered annually for all colleagues. Our Pay Policy Statement can be viewed at: [Pay Policy Statement](#).
- **Scheme of Delegation** – HWFA's Constitution includes the Scheme of Delegation, which details what authority has been delegated to Service employees.
- **Financial Regulations** – There are a number of policies and procedures to control financial processes within the Authority which include Anti-Money Laundering Policy, Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Correction Policy.

Safeguarding

HWFA is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs as well as children and young people across the two counties.

The Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a form of abuse and requires that local authorities consider this when carrying out or requesting others to carry out a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry.

HWFA provides clear safeguarding guidance and delivers training for all colleagues who interact with the public, whether through operational emergency response or through Protection and Prevention activities carried out by staff and volunteers. This guidance outlines how to raise concerns about adults with care and support needs, as well as children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Our Safeguarding Policies can be found here:

- [Adult Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy](#)

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Key Performance Indicators and Effectiveness

HWFA will be able to assess the effectiveness of its measures to prevent modern slavery within its operations and supply chains when:

- No concerns are raised by employees, members of the public, or law enforcement agencies suggesting potential modern slavery practices.
- No issues are reported by suppliers indicating that modern slavery has been identified within the supply chain.
- Audits of the supply chain reveal no evidence of modern slavery or human trafficking.

Training

Mandatory Level One (Universal) Safeguarding training for adults and children is delivered to all staff and volunteers and includes content on Modern Day Slavery. In addition, Level Two and Level Three safeguarding training is provided to relevant colleagues who work directly with the public, while Designated Safeguarding Leads complete Level Four training.

All HWFA staff and volunteers must undertake mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, delivered by an external specialist. They additionally participate in Ethical Dilemma Workshops to help embed the Core Code of Ethics throughout the organisation.

Training completion records for all staff and volunteers are maintained within the Authority's Learning Management System.

Partnership Working

HWFA has responsibilities to work with partners to protect vulnerable people and has responsibilities to support the [Serious Violence Duty 2022](#).

HWFA participates in various Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) operations, with partners such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Housing, West Mercia Police and Home Office Immigration Enforcement. The information generated through the initiative helps to target the enforcing agencies resources to help protect those who may be at risk of slavery or human trafficking.

This statement has been approved by the Fire Authority.



Signed on original

Jonathon Pryce
KFSM

Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive



Signed on original

Councillor
Roger Phillips OBE

Chairman of the
Fire Authority



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



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