



**UK Research  
and Innovation**

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## **Modern Slavery Statement 2023-2024**

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## **Overview of UKRI**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funds research and innovation. We are a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) which invests in research and innovation to enrich lives, drive economic growth, and create jobs and high-quality public services across the UK.

UKRI's operations are based primarily in Swindon with offices and scientific units, institutes, and facilities throughout the UK. UKRI also funds a variety of institutions which include universities, businesses, and other research organisations.

UKRI is committed to eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking in all its forms, within its own operations, business, supply chain and the organisations it funds.

## **Policies in relation to UKRI and modern slavery**

UKRI has a suite of policies to mitigate the risk of modern slavery occurring in its operations or supply chain and to encourage effective reporting.

This includes UKRI's Code of Conduct, Managing Conduct and Performance policy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy aimed at UKRI employees, and the UKRI Safeguarding policy which outlines how UKRI protects from harm and promotes welfare of vulnerable groups.

UKRI's standard supplier and grant Terms and Conditions include provisions on the prevention of modern slavery.

Those who work for and with UKRI are encouraged to speak up and report concerns of modern slavery through UKRI's Complaints or Whistleblowing Processes.

## **Due diligence processes**

The primary modern slavery risk areas for UKRI are in its supply chain, employees and recruitment, and in organisations it funds.

### **Supply chain**

UKRI undertakes robust due diligence on organisations in its supply chain.

Many of UKRI's services are procured through UK SBS, which is classed as a public body. UK SBS produces its own Modern Slavery statement. We procure goods in line with the legal framework which governs public procurement and use public sector framework agreements to contract with suppliers, such as the Crown Commercial Services framework, in compliance with Action Note Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 02/23.

In 2024, UKRI published its Responsible Procurement Charter which sets out how UKRI ensures the goods, services, and works it procures are responsibly sourced. This includes specific provisions on modern slavery. Where a contract or supplier is deemed to be at high risk of modern slavery, we require suppliers to complete the Cabinet Office's Modern Slavery Assessment Tool, as an additional monitoring mechanism.

### **Employees and recruitment**

UKRI has an established process for recruiting employees, which includes pre-employment checks, right to work in the UK checks and security screening. Similar processes are in place for contractors, and UKRI works with a number of trusted agencies and recruiters.

Some of UKRI's senior leaders are recruited through the DSIT Public Appointments process. DSIT contribute to the UK government-wide Modern Slavery Statement.

### **Funding**

UKRI maintains a programme of funding assurance to ensure the institutions it funds are complying with its Terms and Conditions. UKRI ensures that funded organisations in receipt of competitive funded projects ensure that they publish a modern slavery statement if required to do so.

UKRI funds organisations which take part in higher-risk areas identified within PPN 02/23: Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains, such as mining, manufacture, construction, and electronics.

### **Risk assessment and management**

UKRI's risk management processes for modern slavery comply with government guidance on good practice, set out in the Orange Book. Local areas manage individual modern slavery risks and assess the effectiveness of controls, supported by a central Risk and Assurance team according to the three lines of defence model.

UKRI's senior committees, including the Executive Committee, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Board have oversight of UKRI's key modern slavery risks and set UKRI's risk appetite during the year. UKRI's IGRAF process assesses the level of assurance of UKRI's modern slavery risk, in 2023-24 UKRI decreased the level of assurance on modern slavery reflecting an unsatisfactory audit in supply chain resilience. UKRI has established a Modern Slavery Working Group to bring together expertise in modern slavery from across the organisation to monitor risks and improve controls.

### **Training on modern slavery and human trafficking**

UKRI's Modern Slavery training module is compulsory for all employees on joining UKRI and compliance is monitored.

UKRI also provides optional additional e-learning based training and has piloted targeted training for those exposed to a greater risk of modern slavery in their roles, such as those working in procurement.

### **Key performance indicators**

Alongside UKRI's risk management, complaints and whistleblowing escalation processes, the Modern Slavery Working Group supports UKRI in developing and monitoring key performance indicators for modern slavery. This will include metrics on the number of modern slavery concerns or complaints reported.

### **Progress update**

During 2023-24, UKRI:

- continued to promote Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking e-Learning training
- monitored recruitment and commercial activity for modern slavery indicators
- published the Responsible Procurement Charter
- established a Modern Slavery Working Group to bring together expertise from across the organisation and to monitor risks and controls

- continued to monitor procurement activities delivered through our third-party provider, UK SBS, and any other third-party providers
- continued to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate modern slavery and human trafficking risks, benchmarking across similar government organisations
- contribute to the UK government Modern Slavery registry by adding UKRI's Modern Slavery statement

UKRI will continue to publish a modern slavery statement in accordance with its legal obligations and responsibilities as a public sector organisation. UKRI's statement for 2022-23 has been added to the registry and the 2023-24 statement will also be added after publication.

### **Next Steps**

During 2024-25 UKRI will undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future modern slavery and human trafficking statements:

- develop and monitor key performance indicators for modern slavery, including reviewing UKRI's risk exposures from subcontracting by grant recipients and in supply chains
- ensure effective implementation of the responsible procurement charter across the organisation
- review UKRI's training offering on modern slavery and continue to promote uptake of training by all staff
- respond to guidance and changes in legislation on modern slavery and human trafficking
- monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate modern slavery and human trafficking risks, benchmarking across similar government organisations
- contribute to the UK government Modern slavery registry by adding UKRI's Modern Slavery statement

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes UKRI's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2024.



Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser  
23rd September 2024