



UKRI Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2021 – 2022

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Our Commitment

About UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

Launched in April 2018, UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Our organisation brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK.

Our vision is for an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit, enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally.

Research and innovation enriches and improves our lives and increases prosperity by creating knowledge that enables us to understand ourselves and the world around us. This also empowers us to tackle the many challenges we face as individuals and as communities, nationally and globally.

We work with partners to shape a dynamic, diverse and inclusive system of research and innovation in the UK that is an integral part of society, giving everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit.

Our mission is to convene, catalyse and invest in close collaboration with others to build a thriving inclusive research and innovation system that connects discovery to prosperity and public good.

We bring together nine organisations with great depth and breadth of expertise, allowing us to connect research communities, institutions, businesses and wider society, in the UK and around the world.

This combination enables us to work across the whole research and innovation system, informed by our networks and expertise.

As the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation it is our responsibility to ensure the health of the system as a whole, now and in the future. We work together with many other actors. These include our close partners at the heart of the research and innovation system such as higher education institutions and institutes, innovative businesses, investors, not-for-profit organisations and policy makers, and a wider set of partners such as those in the education system and civil society. We will fulfil our role through the ways in which we catalyse, convene, incentivise, invest in and conduct research and innovation.

We are an independent organisation, principally funded through the Science Budget (through BEIS) and supported and challenged by an independent Chair and Board. This statement covers the activities of UKRI, consisting of over 8,000 employees largely based in the UK, with some colleagues also based in UKRI's international offices and on secondments and postings abroad.

UKRI's Commitment to the Principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It can take various forms which deprive a person of their liberty in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain, such as slavery, servitude, human trafficking and forced and compulsory labour. UKRI is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Control Framework

Recruitment, Selection and Resource Management

Our recruitment processes are designed and managed to ensure that all prospective employees are legally entitled to work in the UK via our Baseline Personal Security Standard (BPSS) process, which consists of verification made up of the following 4 parts (RICE), we obtain assurance on:

- Right to work – Nationality and Immigration Status (including an entitlement to undertake the work in question)
- Identity – ID Data check (electronic identity authentication - name, address, aliases, links, accounts, etc.)
- Criminal Records – Search for unspent convictions only (Basic Disclosure)
- Employment history check – Confirmation of past 3 years employment (minimum) history / activity

Furthermore, UKRI has a rigorous suite of policies and a confidential Employee Assistance Programme all of which are designed to support and safeguard our employees.

Commercial Arrangements

We are committed to ensuring transparency within our business and supply chain; and ensuring our approach to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking is consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We endorse the implementation and promotion of ethical business practices to protect our employees from abuse and exploitation and expect the same high standards from all our contractors, suppliers and other business partners. As part of our contracting processes, we include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children. We expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

Our supply chain is extensive, and we procure goods and services from a wide range of suppliers. Where procurements are over £50k in value or are otherwise complex, UKRI procures its own goods and services. Common Goods & Services (CG&S) including those under £50k in value, procurement services are provided by a third-party provider, UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) Ltd.

UKRI has its own Procurement Policy which includes a commitment to and provisions on Modern Slavery and how supplier relationships are managed. Modern Slavery commitments will also form part of wider Responsible Procurement Charter which will be developed and approved during the next financial year (22/23).



UK SBS publishes its own statement on Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking which includes their mechanisms for guarding against modern slavery in their client's supply chains. This statement is published on the [UK SBS website](#). Modern Slavery is also appropriately considered at all stages of the procurement and contracting lifecycle, and not just as a pre-qualification criteria.

Relevant Policies

UKRI operates a series of policies to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and outlines the steps taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations; these include the [UKRI Code of Conduct](#), [Whistleblowing policy](#), and the [Managing Performance and Conduct Policy](#). UKRI has also published a policy on [Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research and Innovation](#) and a [Safeguarding Policy](#), which includes international safeguarding. These policies are accessible to all UKRI employees and the public and are currently being reviewed and modernised.

UKRI's Whistleblowing Policy encourages all its employees, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. It is designed to provide a simple process for employees and other concerned parties to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation.

Employees, customers or other concerned parties can also refer to the UK National Helpline at www.modernslaveryhelpline.org or call 0800 012 1700.

Progress update

During 2020-21 UKRI we stated we would undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

1. Ensure that Modern Slavery and Human trafficking e-Learning training is completed by key employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into UKRI; employees working overseas; employees involved in direct engagement with, and research funding to, universities and industry;
2. Continue to monitor and report on the use of employee grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
3. Continue to monitor procurement activities delivered through our third-party provider, UK SBS, and any other third-party providers;
4. The Responsible Procurement Charter (which encompasses Modern Slavery) will be submitted for approval and anticipated implementation. This Charter will inform how UKRI will apply the statement, policies/strategy as well as obligations as directed via Government (Cabinet Office)
5. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking risks;
6. Respond to guidance and changes in legislation on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and leaving the European Union;
7. Participate in the biennial Cross-Government data matching exercise and investigate any issues that it identifies; and
8. Contribute to the UK government Modern slavery registry by adding UKRI's Modern Slavery statement.



Modern Slavery Training

UKRI is currently rolling-out its programme of Universal Learning to all employees. UKRI has developed e-learning modules in-house, and this includes the UKRI Modern and Slavery and Human Trafficking e-learning. This training package has been tailored to ensure employees have a comprehensive understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking and the key risks to them in their roles. This includes risks within our business and supply chain together and guidance on how to raise concerns if they suspect modern slavery is taking place, and as well as an awareness of risks in organisations benefiting from our funding.

In 2021-22, all senior employees at Band G and above were required to complete the training. This concluded in October 2021 with a completion rate of 95.7%.

A staggered roll-out of the training was then launched to all employees UKRI January 2022. To date, this been rolled out to a further 4608 users. Of those, 76% have successfully completed their training to date. UKRI will continue rolling out training to all employees to drive completion rates towards 100%.

During the year, we have also piloted some tailored workshops supporting Programme Managers in identifying Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking risks in their specific roles.

Monitoring

To date there have been no reports on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking via UKRI's Grievance mechanisms.

UKRI has continued to monitor both through procurements it undertakes on its own behalf and through UK SBS, our third-party provider for Common Goods and Services. All procurements adhere to the UKRI Procurement Policy and associated guidance which states our commitment to transparency in the supply chains modern slavery.

A project team has been established to ensure that UKRI is able to meet the requirements of the biannual National Fraud Initiative data matching exercise. This exercise has the potential to detect modern slavery in our human resources and commercial activities.

UKRI's risk management and assurance processes continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of controls. The risk and control environment is reviewed regularly and is currently scored within UKRI's appetite.

Changes in legislation and publication on the Registry

There have been no significant changes to report on concerning the impact of Covid-19 and leaving the European Union on modern slavery and human trafficking in UKRI. UKRI will continue to publish a Modern Slavery statement in accordance with their legal obligations and responsibility as a public sector organisation.

UKRI's statement for 2020-21 has been added to the registry and the 2021-22 statement will also be added after publication.

Planning



Next Steps

During 2022-23 UKRI will undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

1. Continue to promote Modern Slavery and Human trafficking e-Learning training, with the aim that it is completed by all UKRI employees. We will continue piloting specific training to those in high-risk areas.
2. Continue to monitor and report on the use of employee grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
3. Continue to monitor procurement activities delivered through our third-party provider, UK SBS, and any other third-party providers;
4. Implement our Responsible Procurement Charter (which encompasses Modern Slavery) following approval. This Charter will inform how UKRI will apply the statement, policies/strategy as well as obligations as directed via Government (Cabinet Office)
5. Respond to guidance and changes in legislation on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking;
6. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking risks, benchmarking across similar government organisations; and
7. 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 2022.

SIGNATURE

NAME: Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser

TITLE: UKRI CEO

DATE: 26/09/2022