

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

A) ORGANISATION

This statement applies to all companies within and associated to Evolution Architecture LLP (referred to in this statement as ('The Organisation')). The information included in the statement refers to the financial year commencing 1st April 2023.

B) ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The business operates from its offices which are located at 135/137 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0QT. The organisation is controlled by a Board of Partners. The Organisation's employees are based at this office.

Evolution Architecture is an architectural practice providing professional architectural services which includes feasibility studies, planning and design, and project management within the Residential, Commercial, and Education sectors. Demand for our services is consistently high throughout the year and is therefore not seasonal.

C) DEFINITIONS

The Organisation considers that modern slavery encompasses:

- Human trafficking;
- Forced work, through mental or physical threat;
- Being owned or controlled by an employer through mental or physical abuse of the threat of abuse;
- Being dehumanised, treated as a commodity or being bought or sold as property;
- Being physically constrained or to have restriction placed on freedom of movement.

D) COMMITMENT

The Organisation acknowledges its responsibilities in relation to tackling modern slavery and commits to complying with the provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Organisation understands that this requires an ongoing review of both its internal practices in relation to its labour force and, additionally, its supply chains.

The Organisation does not enter into business with any other organisation, in the United Kingdom or abroad, which knowingly supports or is found to involve itself in slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

No labour provided to the Organisation in the pursuance of the provision of its own services is obtained by means of slavery or human trafficking. The Organisation strictly adheres to the minimum standards required in relation to its responsibilities under relevant employment legislation within the UK.

E) SUPPLY CHAINS

In order to fulfil its activities, the Organisation's main supply chains who are predominantly suppliers of office stationery and are based within the United Kingdom. We understand that the Organisation's first-tier suppliers are intermediary traders and therefore have further contractual relationships with lower-tier suppliers.

F) POTENTIAL EXPOSURE

The Organisation considers its main exposure to the risk of slavery and human trafficking to potentially exist within the supply of office stationery because of the possible involvement of the provision of labour in a country where protection against breaches of human rights may be limited.

In general, the Organisation considers its exposure to slavery/human trafficking to be relatively limited. Notwithstanding this, the Organisation has taken steps to ensure that such practices do not take place in its business nor the business of any organisation that supplies goods and/or services to it.

G) IMPACT OF COVID-19

During the reporting period covered by this statement, the COVID-19 pandemic had taken hold. For several months, the UK was placed into lockdown to stem the spread of COVID-19. This created several challenges for the Organisation, as it did for others across the nation.

The Organisation welcomes the UK Government's decision, as confirmed in April 2020, to allow for a delay of up to 6 months in the publication of modern slavery statements without the risk of facing penalty.

The Organisation concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic did not adjust the risk of modern slavery to a level above that which existed before the pandemic, which is as set out under 'POTENTIAL EXPOSURE' above.

During the pandemic, the Organisation's employees still had access to the grievance procedure to raise any concerns that they may have had.

In line with emergency legislation passed by the Government, The Organisation's employees have been paid Statutory Sick Pay during periods of self-isolation where it has not been possible to agree a temporary period of homeworking.

The Organisation's modern slavery risks were subject to the same monitoring procedures during the pandemic as at all other times.

H) STEPS

The Organisation carries out due diligence processes in relation to ensuring slavery and/or human trafficking does not take place in its organisation or supply chains, including conducting a review of the controls of its suppliers.

The Organisation has not, to its knowledge, conducted any business with another organisation which has been found to have involved itself with modern slavery.

In accordance with section 54(4) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Organisation has taken the following steps to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place:

- To question our suppliers to determine whether adequate steps have been taken to eradicate modern slavery within their respective organisations.
- To determine whether our own suppliers carry out due diligence processes in respect of their own suppliers in relation to modern slavery.
- Establish whether our suppliers pay their employees at least the national minimum wage / national living wage, as appropriate.

I) KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Organisation has set the following key performance indicators to measure its effectiveness in ensuring modern slavery is not taking place in the Organisation or its supply chains.

- The Organisation receives undertakings from suppliers in respect of compliance.
- No reports are received from employees, the public, or law enforcement agencies to indicate that modern slavery practices have been identified.

J) POLICIES

The Organisation has the following policies which further define its stance on modern slavery;

- Whistleblowing policy: The Organisation encourages all of its employees, consultants, clients and other business partners to report any concerns directly relating to activities, or supply chains of the Organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The Organisation's whistleblowing procedure has been developed with a view to making employees feel comfortable to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. This policy is explained within the Organisation's Employee Handbook which is readily available for all employees to view.
- Employee code of conduct: the organisation's Employee Handbook makes clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The Organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour when managing its supply chain.
- Professional services suppliers code of conduct: The Organisation is committed to ensuring that its suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics.
- Recruitment policy: The Organisation only engages with reputable recruitment consultants to source employees in a professional capacity.

K) SLAVERY COMPLIANCE OFFICER

The Organisation has a Slavery Compliance Officer, to whom all concerns regarding modern slavery should be addressed, and who will then undertake relevant action with regard to the Organisation's obligations in this regard.

This statement is made in pursuance of Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and will be reviewed for each financial year.

NOTE: A copy of our previously published Modern slavery Statements can be obtained upon request.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Chris Longman', with a stylized vertical line and horizontal strokes.

Signed.....

Chris Longman
Partner