

Lincolnshire Co-op

Statement under the Modern Slavery Act 2015



Our purpose is “Bringing together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in our communities.” Our approach to challenging and preventing Modern Slavery reflects this, working in partnership with others to make life better in our communities. We take a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery in any form and are committed to acting ethically, transparently and with integrity in all our business operations.

We have reporting mechanisms for our colleagues to enable them to raise any concerns regarding Modern Slavery, and our relationship with The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership continues to develop. The Partnership were keen to have a participant from the retail/business sector represented, working with attendees from local authorities and Police. As the Partnership recommenced following the relaxation of lock-down, we have subsequently participated in their virtual meetings where representatives of the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority updated us on actual instances of Modern Slavery within Lincolnshire, such as Holbeach and Lincoln.

As part of this group, we have signed-up to participate in the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership’s Charter against Modern Slavery, which commits local organisations to proactively take steps internally to tackle this issue. We have done and continue to be pro-active in this area, including training our colleagues in Modern Slavery awareness, and having measures in place to report any suspected cases of Modern Slavery.

We recognised Modern Slavery Day through our internal communication channels on the 18 October 2019 to maintain awareness within our business of Modern Slavery, and we shall do the same this year. In 2020 we will be supporting the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership by sharing their campaign for Anti-Slavery on our social media channels.

The relationship established with Lincolnshire Police’s Modern Slavery Team has been maintained to share best practice and information. We attended the Lincolnshire Modern Slavery Event hosted by Lincolnshire’s Police & Crime Commissioner in October 2019. During the conference we received an overview of the state of Modern Slavery in Lincolnshire from Lincolnshire Police, and Stronger Together delivered a presentation on Modern Slavery in supply chains. During this conference, the Society were commended for the work we have done in relation to Modern Slavery through our internal and external e-learning.

In July this Year we supported the Farm Work Welfare App, developed by the Clewer Initiative <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org> who are working alongside the National Crime Agency, Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority and Safer Lincolnshire to develop Lincolnshire-specific resources to raise awareness of Modern Slavery. The app is a new tool to help support rural employers, promote workforce welfare and tackle rural labour exploitation and Modern Slavery. As a business, we have endorsed the app along with a number of other local businesses which provides workers with a free resource for advice, guidance and a safe reporting mechanism.

Towards the end of last year, we met with the Wilberforce Institute in Hull looking at how we can work together on Modern Slavery. At the time we met, we took the opportunity to share

some of the work we had done as a business around Modern Slavery and received positive feedback on this.

All bank checks are performed by the Society for all new colleagues starting with us, providing a second resource for identifying suspicious bank accounts which could be an indicator of Modern Slavery activity.

Even during this challenging period for our suppliers, we have had a further 16 external companies complete the Modern Slavery I-Learn module during 2020, with 94% of those completing the module stating that they would recommend it to other businesses, and 72% rating it as 'very good or 'excellent'. This takes the total of companies who have now completed our Modern Slavery I-Learn to 150(153 individuals/employees).

Going forward into 2021, we are now developing a refresher Modern Slavery programme for all our colleagues to grow in knowledge and understanding. This will build on the Modern Slavery e-learning programme undertaken by our colleagues in 2018.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery in any form and are committed to acting ethically, transparently and with integrity in all our business operations.

Approval for this statement

This statement was approved by the Board of Directors on 26 October 2020

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Parker', written in a cursive style.

Stuart Parker
President