

Modern Slavery Statement 2021

Our purpose

Lincolnshire Co-operative has always been proud of its ethical and responsible approach to business, operating in a helpful, inspiring and trustworthy way in the communities we serve. We take a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery, in any form, as a business.

Our Modern Slavery Statement for 2021 is made pursuant to s.54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps that we have taken to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place within our business or supply chain. This, our fifth statement, shows how we have consolidated our stance on Modern Slavery and outlines the progress we have made in the last year.

Our Business

We are an independent co-operative based in Lincoln with over 290,000 members and 223 outlets offering a wide range of services including Food stores, Pharmacies, Travel, Funeral Homes, Post Offices & a Florist outlet . We trade predominantly through Lincolnshire, with sites in Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire.

Our Suppliers

At Lincolnshire Co-operative approximately 95% of products sold within our Food premises are supplied by the Co-operative Group under the terms of a buying services agreement managed by Federal Retail & Trading Services Ltd (FRTS), which purchases on behalf of our Food area of the business.

FRTS has its own Modern Slavery statement & Sound Sourcing Code of Conduct (SSC) which can be viewed at www.co-operative.coop/ethics. FRTS is a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative, whose vision is a world where all workers are free from discrimination and exploitation.

As a result, we are confident that the Co-operative Group has taken and continues to take reasonable measures to minimise the risk of modern slavery within its operations and supply chain.

As a business we seek to support our local suppliers by selling their products in our stores, and as we source their products directly from them, we work with them to ensure that their operations are free from any aspects of modern slavery. We carry out due-diligence checks in relation to Modern Slavery for each potential new supplier or contractor prior to engaging with them as a business to ensure compliance with the Society's standards around Modern Slavery.

All prospective local suppliers to our Food premises have an audit carried out by our procurement and buying Team which covers Modern Slavery to ensure compliance with our standards around this subject. Once accepted, the supplier is asked to complete our bespoke I-learn module on Modern Slavery to increase their knowledge and awareness in this area.

We maintain an approved contractor list for construction works and services and only companies held on this list are used. We ask these companies to also complete our bespoke I-Learn module on Modern Slavery, to ensure our standards as a business are maintained and to raise awareness within the contractor's own operations. It is also a requirement of our standard terms and conditions that they confirm compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

We have seen more completions of our Modern Slavery I-Learn by our local suppliers since our last report, even through what has been a difficult and disruptive year for them.

Our Policies & Procedures

At Lincolnshire Co-operative, we maintain policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of any person being exploited within our business. These include:

- A robust recruitment policy, including eligibility to work in the UK checks for all potential colleagues, to safeguard against Human Trafficking or persons being forced to work against their will.
- A Whistle-blowing Policy to allow concerns to be raised in complete anonymity by anyone without fear of any reprisal.
- A new Modern Slavery Policy to underpin this statement.

As well as our Whistle-blower facility, our colleagues can also report any suspicions or concerns they may have internally to our Security Team via the Society's intranet, to allow for any further investigation if appropriate at a business-level.

Training & Raising Awareness

2051 of our colleagues have undertaken Modern Slavery training, and this year the module has been updated and tailored to provide information which is more relevant to us as a business and the areas we trade in. The revised I-Learn training programme is scheduled for re-launch in October 2021 for our colleagues.

Colleagues with specific responsibilities in relation to Modern Slavery prevention also undertake additional enhanced training from external providers as appropriate.

“Lincolnshire Co-operative asked us to provide a bespoke briefing session around modern slavery risks and were very pleased to see that they had already done a lot of training for staff in house on identifying potential victims of modern slavery.”

Cristina Talens, Director of Risk Assessment Services, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull.

Our intended I-Learn for our commercial tenants was delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, as many of the tenants’ businesses were forced to close due to government restrictions. We have taken the opportunity to review and refresh the content of this module and intend to offer this to our commercial tenants before the end of 2021.

This year we have worked with the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership in supporting their plans to recognise Modern Slavery day in October 2021. We responded to a request from them to help promote MS Day by adding a message inside our Pharmacy prescription bags, providing details of how customers could seek help if they needed to or how they could report any concerns. We will be placing 5000 leaflets in our prescription bags and distributing them through our Pharmacy outlets during the week of Modern Slavery Day 2021.

We have maintained our relationship with Lincolnshire Police during 2021, engaging with their Modern Slavery Officers regularly to keep updated on instances of Modern Slavery in our area. We recently shared our new Tenant I-Learn with them, which they were pleased to endorse, as they previously have our Local Supplier & Contractor I-Learns. **Lincolnshire Police said:**

“We have been working alongside Lincolnshire Co-op in its partnership approach to raising awareness and tackling Modern Slavery.

Lincolnshire Co-op’s approach in training its staff has been exceptional with investment in bespoke training packs from external providers. Their approach and understanding around Modern Slavery has been further delivered through other campaigns - one very prevalent being the use of their Pharmacy locations to spread Modern Slavery awareness messaging through till receipts and leaflets.



From a Lincolnshire Police perspective, the Co-op has been a leader in the fight against Modern Slavery through its work thus far and we look forward to further engagement around this in the future”

We recognise Modern Slavery Day in October each year internally to our business by sharing information on Modern Slavery with our colleagues through our Colleague app and raise awareness of how this is relevant to us as a business.

Monitoring & Effectiveness

We know the steps we are taking in relation to Modern Slavery are effective by:

- the number of incidents or reports received from our colleagues, public or law enforcement agencies.
- The increased number of our colleagues who have completed our Modern Slavery I-Learn
- The increased number of our suppliers & contractors who have completed our Modern Slavery I-Learn
- The increased awareness demonstrated by our colleagues & suppliers who have completed our Modern Slavery I-Learn
- The maintenance of regular contact with law enforcement agencies by those Colleagues with specific responsibilities for the prevention of Modern Slavery.

Approval for this statement

This statement was approved by the Board of Directors on 25 October 2021

Signed

David Cowell, Chair