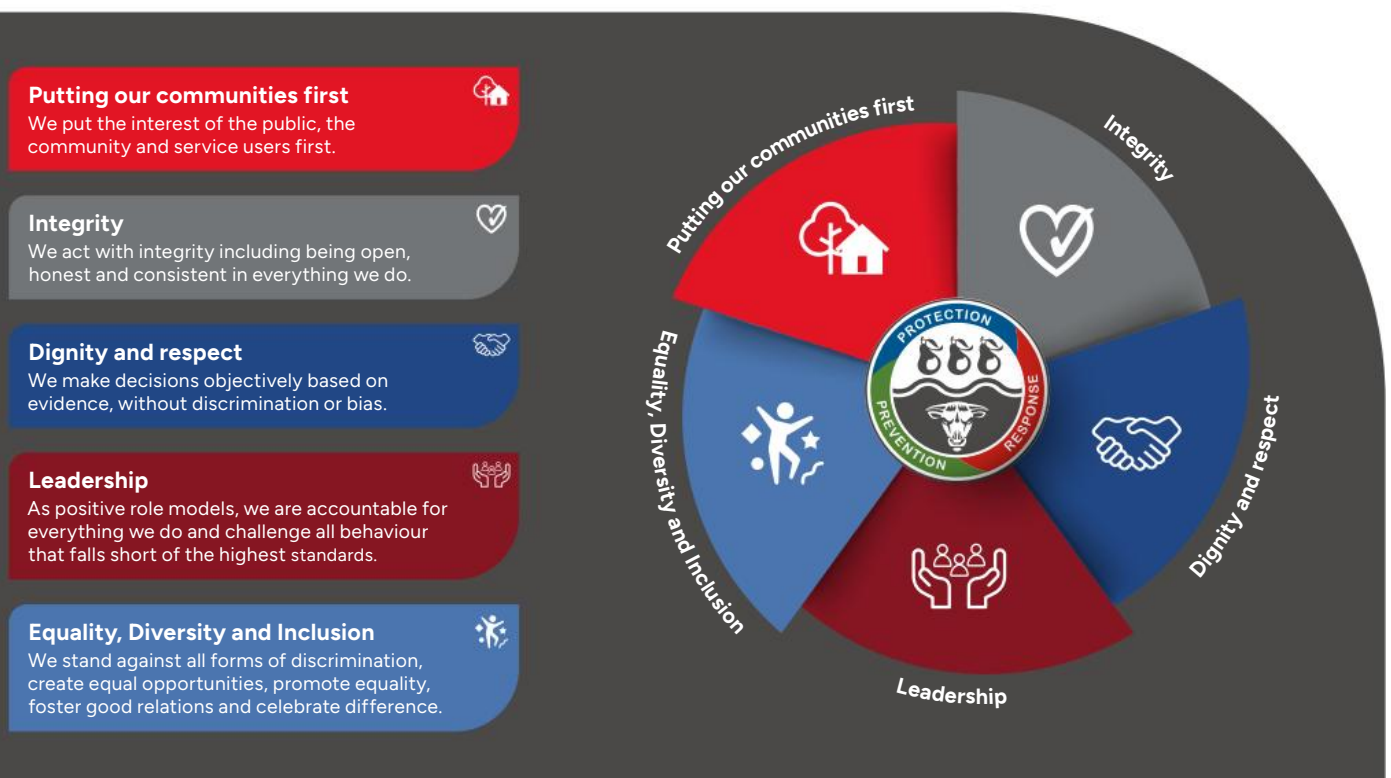


# Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/2024



The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to produce an annual statement setting out the steps they have taken to ensure there is no modern slavery in their own business and their supply chains.

As a public sector organisation Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (HWFA) is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking. We are making the statement in line with the ethical principles of the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#).



This statement sets out the steps that HWFA has taken to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains and own business.

## About Us

The Fire Authority is composed of 25 Members, all of whom are local councillors appointed by Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in proportion to the size of the population of those two counties currently as follows:

Herefordshire Council	6
Worcestershire County Council	19

HWFA has a constitution which sets out how it operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local communities. Some of these processes are required by the law and others HWFA has chosen to implement.

HWFA oversees Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service which serves a population of approximately 790,700 across the two counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. HWFA employs 691 members of staff, working in 762 roles and in 2022 / 23 had a budget of £36.9 million.

Information about our Service structure, the Strategic Leadership Board and their areas of responsibility can be found at: <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/about/the-fire-service/slb/>

The [Annual Service Plan](#) sets out our purpose and values along with the priorities for 2023 / 24 to help to deliver the [Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25](#), which sets out our medium-term priorities to keep people safe, support our workforce and deliver value for money.

## Policies in relation to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

### Procurement

Due to the nature of our organisation, we assess ourselves to have a low risk of modern slavery in our business and supply chains. Our supply chains are limited and we procure goods and services from a restricted range of UK and overseas suppliers through the open market and via UK government frameworks. Our due diligence requirements are set out in our procurement terms and conditions, which include:

- **[Contract Standing Orders](#)** - when assessing the appropriateness of suppliers, e.g. those to whom the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 apply, we consider the supplier's Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, their Whistleblowing Policy and Ethical Framework, Safeguarding Policies and Code of Conduct and evidence of compliance.
- **Ethical Code in Relation to Procurement** - HWFA colleagues are advised not use suppliers whose own corporate procurement practices and conduct whether directly or indirectly are deemed to be in breach of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- **Contract Terms** - our contracts contain terms for default events and breaches of contract which could be invoked should a supplier be found to have failed to meet their obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 or other applicable laws.

### Our Policies

As an equal opportunities' employer, we are committed to creating and ensuring a non-discriminatory and respectful working environment for our colleagues. We want all colleagues to feel confident that they can expose wrongdoing without any risk to themselves.

Our recruitment and people management processes are designed to ensure that all prospective employees are legally entitled to work in the UK and to safeguard employees from any abuse or coercion.

HWFA consults with trade unions on the development of policies and has the following policies in place to help it meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act:

- **Whistleblowing Policy** - HWFA is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. We expect colleagues who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Service's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

The policy can be viewed at: <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Whistleblowing-policy-v4-04.pdf>

- **Confidential Reporting Line** – Say So and Say So Plus are an external, independent and impartial service for any employee of HWFA or member of the public to report issues or concerns. Say So can securely accommodate anonymous, confidential, or fully open reports and these are cleansed where necessary to prevent identification of the reporter. Their systems and protocols have been designed to manage all data securely.
- **Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy** – We want to learn from the public about their experiences of using our services and we welcome their feedback. It's our aim to provide a high-quality service but if a user is unhappy with their experience it is important that we use this feedback to improve the services we provide.

The policy can be viewed at: <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/managing-complaints-and-concerns-v4-02-final-version.pdf>

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** - This policy sets out how HWFA seeks to ensure compliance with the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This policy supports all staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors, service users and members of the public. It applies to all policies, procedures and working practices and will influence the nature, shape and delivery of our services.
- **Employee Code of Conduct** – The Code of Conduct identifies our values, purpose and the roles and responsibilities of all colleagues.
- **Dignity at Work policy** – This policy promotes a positive and supportive working environment which is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation; where individuals are confident, if they bring a complaint in good faith, that the matter will be dealt with according to the agreed procedures without fear of subsequent victimisation or disadvantage.
- **Recruitment policy** – HWFA has a robust policy in place which incorporates safer recruitment to ensure colleagues have a right to work in the UK, with checks made before employment including appropriate reference checks, and that they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- **Pay Policy** - Pay for all HWFA colleagues is determined by the Local Government Employers with the Employers' Sides of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Middle Managers' Negotiating Body, the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, the Fire and Rescue Authority locally and representative bodies nationally. Pay awards are considered annually for all colleagues. Our Pay Policy Statement can be viewed at: <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/pay-policy-statement-1-424.pdf>

## Safeguarding

HWFA is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs as well as children and young people across the two counties.

The Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a form of abuse and requires that local authorities consider this when carrying out or requesting others to carry out a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry.

HWFA has safeguarding guidance and training in place for all colleagues who engage with the public, whether operational colleagues through the emergency response provided or by colleagues and volunteers in respect of our protection and prevention work. The guidance provides detailed information on how to raise concerns about adults with care and support needs or children who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

## **Training**

Mandatory Level One (Universal) Adult and Children's Safeguarding training is provided for all staff and volunteers, which includes a section on Modern Day Slavery. Furthermore, level two and three safeguarding training is provided for appropriate staff members. Designated Safeguarding leads across the Service undertake level four training.

All staff and volunteers who work for HWFA are required to complete mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training delivered by an external training specialist. All staff and volunteers also participate in mandatory Ethical Dilemma Workshops to support the embedding of the Core Code of Ethics in to the organisation.

## **Partnership Working**

HWFA is involved in various Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) operations, with partners such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Housing, West Mercia Police and Home Office Immigration Enforcement. The information generated through the initiative helps to target the enforcing agencies resources to help protect those who may be at risk of slavery or human trafficking.

This statement has been approved by the Fire Authority.

**Jon Pryce**

*Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive*

**Cllr. C. Taylor**

*Chairman*