

# Aspens Services Annual Modern Slavery Statement 2024

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending September 2023.

## Introduction

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

This is now our fifth successive annual statement, and we remain committed to improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking.

## Our structure

Aspens Services Ltd is renowned for high quality, leading educational food service provision. We make a positive difference to children's lives. With a truly holistic outlook, we are an inclusive and inspiring business.

## Our policy on slavery and human trafficking

In pursuit of our mission Aspens Services Ltd procures a truly diverse range of goods and services. As we undertake our voyage, we are committed to taking action in order to ensure there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our operations.

## Our supply chains

Aspens Services Ltd.'s supply chains support diversity and inclusion and enable the delivery of high-quality Food Services for our clients.

When a supplier is on-boarded by our outsourced Procurement provider Added Value Enterprises Ltd (AVE) they are enabled through an E- Procurement system and are assigned a commodity code. By doing this, we are better positioned to identify suppliers who trade in commodities where potential for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is a higher risk. The use of Procurement coding in this way draws upon the collaborative work and outputs of the industry assessments and support of SEDEX. The highest risk commodities areas have been identified as follows:

- Food And Drink supplies
- catering supplies and services
- Workwear
- Disposables
- janitorial and domestic supplies and services
- professional and bought-in services including consultancy

## What are we doing now

Our Procurement provider Added Value Enterprises which provides our supply chain has a Tendering Policy that details the processes required and provided as a framework with the supply chain. This policy includes a Responsible Procurement statement, which includes Social, Ethical, Economic and Environmental factors. Both the Policy and Statement are reviewed and updated periodically.

Following the publication of our Procurement Strategy 2024-25, we reaffirmed our commitment to addressing Modern Slavery. In order to advance this, the procurement team at AVE have completed e-learning through Higher Education on 'A Guide to Modern Slavery' and 'Protecting Human Rights in the Supply Chain' and in addition. By virtue of the topics of Modern Slavery being a key priority, this also ensures it features regularly as a discussion topics in our meetings with them.

In recognising that Aspens Services Ltd buys commodities that have been identified as high-risk for modern slavery and human rights infringements (for example workwear and disposables) we work with suppliers who are engaged with SEDEX to ensure we have full transparency and audit through supply chains.

We are also committed to a sustainable food culture for clients, meaning one that supports local, sustainable and Fairtrade suppliers and produce. By promoting this culture through our Procurement providers tender processes when establishing contracts for catering supplies & services, we consider modern slavery and human rights infringement risks and seek to address them early on in the contracting process.

Aspens Services Ltd engages with its purchasing consortium Added Value Enterprises to support ethical sourcing by incorporating checks against slavery and human trafficking as part of the collaborative procurement activity.

Aspens Services terms and conditions for direct tendering or contracting, including the supplier on-boarding process, aim to ensure the potential for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are duly considered at the early stages of the contracting cycle.

Awareness to our staff about Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is supported through promotion of the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline via our internal intranet pages.

We will continue to identify those supply chains that represent a risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and labour rights violations, by working with both suppliers and purchasing consortia, taking appropriate action if we become aware of such activity.

Aspens Services Ltd.'s policy that all new staff joining provide documentation to demonstrate their Right to Work within the UK before commencing employment. For those in higher risk areas, this is asked for at the interview stage.

## What are we going to do in the future

Aspens Services expresses its commitment to the continuous review of the supply chains it uses, working towards greater transparency and awareness of the people working within them through its supply chain partner AVE.

The challenge of modern slavery and human trafficking is one that is best addressed through the ongoing and proactive engagement with suppliers, Our Procurement Consortia and wider professional networks through which the sharing of experience will establish and maintain best practice.

During the Financial year ending 30th September 2024, we will.

- Continue dialogue with AVE to explore collaborative supply chain mapping, whereby both the ethical values are clear, and costs and outputs/benefits can be shared.
- Undertake a midpoint review and update to our Procurement Strategy.
- This is an opportunity to reflect upon progress in all areas, including the commitment to addressing the modern slavery agenda, which is already established as a key priority within the strategy.
- Work with our sustainability team, to explore the suitability and associated benefits of integrating responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the 'Act') into our ISO14001 (2015) Environmental Management System accreditation. The perceived benefits include providing externally audited assurance; an additional means of raising awareness of our responsibilities under the act; support in the development of key performance indicators.
- Aspens Services Ltd already makes the Speak Up platform available to staff, students and suppliers. It is available to support the anonymous reporting of any abuse, harm or hate and any such allegations are taken incredibly seriously. We will review the suitability of using this platform as a mechanism to report any modern slavery or human trafficking concerns, alongside the existing UK modern slavery & exploitation helpline (Unseen).

Stuart Lenton

Managing Director

Aspens Services Ltd

Date: September 2024