

UKRI Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2020 – 2021

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Our Commitment

About UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

Launched in April 2018, UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Our organisation brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK.

Our vision is for an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit, enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally. Research and innovation improve our lives and increase prosperity by creating knowledge that enables us to understand ourselves and the world around us, empowering us to tackle the many challenges we face as individuals and as communities, nationally and globally. We work with partners to shape a dynamic, diverse and inclusive system of research and innovation in the UK that is an integral part of society

Our mission is to convene, catalyse and invest in close collaboration with others to build a thriving inclusive research and innovation system that connects discovery to prosperity and public good. We bring together nine organisations with great depth and breadth of expertise, allowing us to connect research communities, institutions, businesses and wider society, in the UK and around the world. This combination enables us to work across the whole research and innovation system, informed by our networks and expertise. As the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation it is our responsibility to ensure the health of the system as a whole, now and in the future. As a steward of this system, we will work together with many other actors. These include our close partners at the heart of the research and innovation system such as Higher Education Institutions and institutes, innovative businesses, investors, not-for-profit organisations and policy makers, and a wider set of partners such as those in the education system and civil society. We will fulfil our stewardship role through the ways in which we catalyse, convene, incentivise, invest in and conduct research and innovation.

In pursuing our vision and mission, we will continue to harness the depth and breadth of our councils' expertise and engagement, working with partners right across the research and innovation system to facilitate the movement of people and ideas through the system. Together, we will deliver the Government's ambitions of a world class research and innovation sector that is at the heart of the UK's economic and social fabric for decades to come.

We are an independent organisation with a strong voice for research and innovation, both to government and internationally. We are principally funded through the Science Budget (through BEIS) and supported and challenged by an independent chair and board. This statement covers the activities of UKRI, consisting of over 7,200 employees based in the UK, and colleagues seconded to overseas postings hosted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other stakeholders.



UKRI's Commitment to the Principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms which deprive a person of their liberty in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain; such as slavery, servitude, human trafficking and forced and compulsory labour. UKRI is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Control Framework

Recruitment, Selection and Resource Management

Our recruitment processes are designed and managed to ensure that all prospective employees are legally entitled to work in the UK via our Baseline Personal Security Standard (BPSS) process, which consists of verification made up of the following 4 parts (RICE), we obtain assurance on:

- Right to work – Nationality and Immigration Status (including an entitlement to undertake the work in question)
- Identity – ID Data check (electronic identity authentication - name, address, aliases, links, accounts, etc.)
- Criminal Records – Search for unspent convictions only (Basic Disclosure)
- Employment history check – Confirmation of past 3 years employment (minimum) history / activity

Furthermore, UKRI has a rigorous suite of policies and a confidential Employee Assistance Programme all of which are designed to support and safeguard our employees.

Commercial Arrangements

We are committed to ensuring transparency within our business and supply chain; and ensuring our approach to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking is consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We endorse the implementation and promotion of ethical business practices to protect our staff from abuse and exploitation and expect the same high standards from all our contractors, suppliers and other business partners. As part of our contracting processes we include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children. We expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

UKRI's procurement for goods and services is provided by a 3rd party provider, UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) Ltd. Our supply chain is extensive, and we procure goods and services from a wide range of suppliers. UK SBS have published their statement on Slavery & Human Trafficking which includes their mechanisms for guarding against modern slavery in their client's supply chains. This statement is published on the [UK SBS](#) website. Modern Slavery is also appropriately considered at all stages of the procurement and contracting lifecycle, and not just as a pre-qualification criteria.



Relevant Policies

UKRI operates a series of policies to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and outlines the steps taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations; these include the [Code of Conduct](#), [Whistleblowing-policy](#), and the [Managing Performance and Conduct Policy](#). UKRI has also published a policy on [Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research and Innovation](#) and a [Safeguarding Policy](#), which includes International Safeguarding. These policies are accessible to all UKRI staff and the public and are currently being reviewed and modernised.

UKRI's Whistleblowing Policy encourages all its staff, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. It is designed to provide a simple process for employees and other concerned parties to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. Employees, customers or other concerned parties can also refer to the UK National Helpline at www.modernslaveryhelpline.org or call 0800 012 1700.

Progress update

During 2020-21 UKRI stated that we would undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

1. Ensure that Modern Slavery awareness training is completed by all employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into UKRI.
2. Ensure that all senior staff (Band G and above) complete awareness training, and discuss the issues within their teams to raise awareness and assist in the management of risks;
3. Focus on the training of key employees working overseas and employees involved in direct engagement with, and research funding to, universities and industry;
4. The essential learning framework currently under development will include Modern Slavery Training as one of its key elements;
5. Monitor the use of employee grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
6. Monitor procurement activities delivered through our third-party provider UK SBS, and any other third-party providers;
7. Monitor the audit process and completion of risk assessments carried out in procurement activity, and;
8. Respond to guidance and changes in legislation on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and leaving the European Union.

Modern Slavery Training (1 - 4)

In accordance with the Universal Learning framework (formerly essential learning), UKRI has been developing e-learning modules in-house since January 2021. UKRI Modern and Slavery and Human Trafficking e-learning launched to a further 176 staff in April 2021 has been tailored to ensure employees have a comprehensive understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking. The module also focuses on red flags, risks within our business and supply chain together with providing guidance on what to do if they suspect modern slavery is taking place, and as well as an awareness of risks in organisations benefiting from our funding.

In the 2019/2020 Modern Slavery Statement UKRI reported 75% of employees at Band G and above grades had successfully completed their Modern Slavery Awareness Training by the 1st



October 2020. UKRI continues working towards 100% completion and has extended the training deadline to 30 May 2021. To date 93% have completed the new training. Additional training will be offered to staff with a greater exposure to modern slavery risks and issues thereafter.

Monitoring (5-7)

To date there have been no reports on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking via Grievance mechanisms. UK SBS are our third-party provider for Common Goods and Services and they adhere to the UKRI Procurement Policy which states our commitment to transparency in the supply chains modern slavery. Recently UKRI's procurement for goods and services has been delivered by an in-house team and shared services provider, UK SBS. Risk assessments on all procurements are carried out when considering all aspects of our policy.

Changes in legislation (8)

There have been no significant changes to report on concerning the impact of Covid-19 and leaving the European Union on modern slavery and human trafficking in UKRI. UKRI will continue to publish a Modern Slavery statement in accordance with their legal obligations and responsibility as a public sector organisation.

Planning

Next Steps

During 2021-22 UKRI will undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

- Ensure that Modern Slavery and Human trafficking e-Learning training is completed by key employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into UKRI; employees working overseas; employees involved in direct engagement with, and research funding to, universities and industry;
- Continue to monitor and report on the use of employee grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
- Continue to monitor procurement activities delivered through our third-party provider, UK SBS, and any other third-party providers;
- Respond to guidance and changes in legislation on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and leaving the European Union;
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking risks, and;
- Participate in the biennial Cross Government data matching exercise and investigate any issues that it identifies;
- Contribute to the UK government Modern slavery registry by adding UKRI's Modern Slavery statement.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes UKRI's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dame Ottoline Leyser', written in a cursive style.

Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser

Chief Executive, UK Research and Innovation

21.09.2021