

UKRI Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2018 - 2019

About UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) formed in April 2018, bringing together the seven Research Councils (Arts and Humanities Research Council, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Economic and Social Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Medical Research Council, Natural Environment Research Council and the Science and Technology Facilities Council); Innovate UK and a new organisation Research England, who work closely with partner organisations in the devolved administrations.

UKRI works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. As a trusted partner, we aim to maximise the contribution of each of our component parts, working individually and collectively with our many partners to the benefit of everyone through knowledge, talent and ideas.

Our mission is to ensure research and innovation continues to flourish in the UK. We support and help connect the best researchers and innovators with customers, users and the public. We invest every pound of taxpayers' money wisely in a way that maximises impact for citizens, in the UK and across the world.

We are measured by the impact we deliver, across three areas:

- We push the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding;
- We deliver economic impact and social prosperity; and
- We create social and cultural impact by supporting our society and others to become enriched, healthier, more resilient and sustainable.

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 by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), supported and challenged by an independent chair and board.

This statement covers the activities of UKRI, consisting of over 8,100 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.

Recruitment, Selection and Resource Management

At UKRI 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

UKRI Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2018 - 2019

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.

Relevant Policies

The Organisation 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 Disciplinary Policy. UKRI is also developing 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.

Whistleblowing Policy - UKRI 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. UKRI's whistleblowing procedure 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 <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/> or call 0800 012 1700.

The UKRI Supply Chain

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 practises 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 shared services provider, UK SBS. 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 their website and can be found here:

<http://www.uksbs.co.uk/use/Documents/UK%20SBS%20Slavery%20and%20Human%20Trafficking%20Statement.pdf>

Modern Slavery Training and Awareness

Prior to the founding of UKRI, and the start of UKRI's first financial year, individual Councils introduced an e-learning Modern Slavery Awareness training tool accessible to UKRI staff. A significant number of employees have been trained and the current provision is being reviewed to ensure that those who require training have access. We have published the Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Policy with guidance for employees, so staff are fully informed about modern slavery and what to do if they suspect it is taking place within our business and supply chain, as well as in organisations benefiting from our funding.

UKRI Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2018 - 2019

Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern Slavery and Human Rights

In July 2019, Prime Minister May announced the creation of a new Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) to bring together academics, businesses and charities, and drive forward new studies, share knowledge, and improve collaboration both at home and overseas. The Centre will provide independent, impartial and authoritative insight and analysis of practical utility to Government, Parliament, business, NGOs, and international organisations. It will undertake policy-focused research to respond to strategic challenges, advance understanding and stimulate innovative and effective solutions.

UKRI is funding this centre with £10 million over 5 years, led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Home Office. The project will be delivered by funding researchers to staff the PEC, which will issue open research calls and commissioning.

The multi-disciplinary Centre will be led by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and will be a consortium of universities and Independent Research Organisations with a track record in world class work on modern slavery. The partners in the consortium are the Rights Lab at Nottingham University, the Wilberforce Institute at Hull University, the Centre for the Study of International Slavery at the University of Liverpool, the Bonavero Institute on Human Rights at Oxford University and The Alan Turing Institute in London.

Next steps

During 2019-20 UKRI will undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

- Ensure that the awareness training is completed by all employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into UKRI;
- 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;
- Focus on the training of key employees working overseas and employees involved in direct engagement with, and research funding to, universities and industry;
- Monitor procurement activities through our 3rd party provider, UK SBS, and any other 3rd party providers;
- Monitor the use of grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
- Monitor the audit process and completion of risk assessments carried out in procurement activity; and
- Work with the Learning & Development team to enhance the training provision within the organisation, looking to include Modern Slavery training within the mandatory training package currently in development.

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 2019.

