

The Children's Society Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2018/2019

The Children's Society is a national charity committed to improving the lives of thousands of children and young people every year. We recognise that children and young people rarely face difficulties in just one area of their lives – the problems they face are multiple and complex. Children we meet have often undergone terrible trauma. They may have been exploited, abused or neglected. Alongside physical harm, many may be suffering from mental health issues, facing poverty or living in fear of their safety. In spite of this, we know that with the right support, a challenging childhood does not have to limit a child's future. Therefore, we work to address the multiple disadvantages that children and their families face.

In 2018/2019, we worked with 9,872 young people through direct practice and youth engagement. We carried out intensive case work with 4,502 and offered advice and guidance to 5,370. We reached a further 16,553 young people through our preventative work, which includes awareness raising work in schools, events and youth engagement outside of direct practice.

There are several examples of raising awareness and funding for work tackling modern slavery. For example, the award winning Children's Society's Rise Project in London working with boys and young men who have been victims of trafficking. The Rise Project won the Advice and Guidance award at the 2019 Children and Young People Now Awards. The Rise Project also worked with an e-learning provider to create an e-module on trafficking and modern slavery. The short online course was completed by 6257 learner practitioners in the educational, teaching, sports clubs, leisure centres or social care sector since its launch in 2018.

Our commitment to tackling modern slavery

Modern Slavery is the term commonly used to refer to illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Sadly, far from being a horror confined to history, slavery and exploitation is an absolute reality of the world today. Child and adult victims of modern slavery will often find themselves trapped in situations of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced criminality, and forced labour. Groups facing poverty, persecution and marginalisation are even more likely to experience these abuses.

The Children's Society's commitment to tackling modern slavery goes well beyond a statutory obligation to report. It is directly rooted in our commitment to human rights and to our practice and policy work with children and young people who are trafficked and exploited both within the UK and from abroad, whether they are British, settled or have any other status or nationality.

The Children's Society is committed to ensuring the organisation and its supply chains are free of slavery. The Children's Society acknowledges its responsibility to comply with all principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "Act"). This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Act. It constitutes The Children's Society's slavery and human trafficking statement and policy statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2019. It covers the activities of The Children's Society and its wholly owned subsidiaries: The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and The Children's Society (Services) Limited.

At The Children's Society, we tackle modern slavery in three core ways:

1. **We support children and families**– through our services we work with victims and potential victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse and through our advocacy work we campaign for continual improvement in policy and legislation to tackle all forms of modern day slavery
2. **We ensure our own actions as an employer** are robustly, fairly and transparently confronting the risks of modern day slavery
3. **We challenge our suppliers** to demonstrate a shared commitment against slavery and exploitation in their provision of goods and services to us.

This statement highlights the policies and procedures that underpin a commitment to tackling modern slavery across these three areas.

Experiences of modern slavery from our work with young people

Between April 2018 and March 2019, we worked with 162 children and young people where experiences of human trafficking were recorded. Of these cases:

- 68% of these children and young people were male and 32% were female. The proportion of males has increased by 6% compared to last year.
- 94% of young people were aged 16 to 25 years-old, 6% were under 16. This year, we have seen a 6% increase in the upper age group, particularly those aged 17-19 (64% of all trafficking cases we have supported).
- The top three nationalities were Vietnamese, British and Afghanistan – forming around 55% of all trafficking cases that we supported. This has changed slightly from last year when Albanian was the 3rd most common nationality.
- Of the 149 young people who stated their ethnicity, 28% were Black, 26% Asian and 24% were White.
- 78% of young people were in the care of a local authority, under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- Where it was recorded, the type of exploitation affecting the highest proportion of young people was 'County Lines' (criminal exploitation forcing vulnerable young people to sell drugs); with the second highest being sexual exploitation, closely followed with forced labour within nail bars, car washes or domestic servitude.
- We see in our work the frequent mis-categorisation of victims of modern slavery as criminal perpetrators, which TCS challenges routinely in order to access appropriate support for such victims.

Our practitioners have raised particular concern around young male victims of trafficking whose vulnerabilities are not recognised by statutory services and who, as a result, end up being criminalised.

Our Policies and Procedures

The Children's Society has a comprehensive body of policy and procedure guiding its work, its approach to partnership, and to regulate the behaviour of its staff.

- In relation to our own activities as a charity, we assess the risk of slavery, human trafficking or exploitation as relatively low, given that the majority of our work is delivered by our directly employed staff, with relatively small-scale supply chains. However, a risk does remain nonetheless and so the policies

and procedures outlined below help us mitigate this, to the point that we are satisfied that we are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- In relation to our thematic focus on tackling issues of exploitation, abuse and trafficking faced by young people, the likelihood of encountering young people with experiences of modern day slavery is extremely high (certain). As such, our policies and procedures such as procurement, whistleblowing and recruitment are critical underpinnings of a robust, safe and ethical response.

Through the effective administration and implementation of a range of policies, The Children's Society very substantially mitigates the risk of unwittingly breaching the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act. These policies are updated, reviewed and approved by the governing Board of Trustees on a periodic basis.

The Trustee Board has reviewed a number of organisational policies in relation to the Modern Slavery statement. In addition to the commitment made in the statement above, the prevention of Modern Slavery is also referenced through our Safeguarding and Whistleblowing policies.

A copy of this policy statement, a full copy of the Act and a simplified overview is accessible to all employees electronically on The Children's Society Intranet. If any staff are concerned that modern slavery or human trafficking is taking place in our organisation or supply chains they should raise their concerns to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services or through the Whistleblowing policy.

This policy statement will be reviewed annually and published accordingly by The Children's Society on its website.

Approval

This policy statement has been approved by the Trustees of The Children's Society and the Boards of Directors of The Children's Society (Services) Limited and The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and signed on their behalf. The Board of Trustees of The Children's Society delegated approval of this statement on its behalf to the relevant signatories at its board meeting on 29 January 2020.


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Chief Executive Officer
The Children's Society


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Director
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Alasdair Gillies
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