

The Children's Society Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025-2026



Our Commitment

The Children's Society's (TCS) Goal is to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, setting a path for long lasting growth.

We recognise that modern slavery is a significant global human rights issue that includes human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude and child labour. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in our relationships by taking every reasonable opportunity to act within our direct operations and wider sphere of influence to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in the charity's operations.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It constitutes The Children's Society's anti-slavery and human trafficking policy statement for the financial year ending on 31 March 2026. It covers the activities of The Church of England Children's Society (trading as The Children's Society) and its wholly owned subsidiaries: The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and The Children's Society (Services) Limited.

The Charity's structure

The Children's Society is a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered in England and Wales. Our organisation was established in 1881 with the principal objective to care for and support children and young people in need.

The Trustee Board has the responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the Charity.

Operational management is delegated by the Trustees to the Executive Leadership Team, which is accountable to the Trustee Board for the effective stewardship of the Charity, including oversight of safeguarding, ethical procurement and other modern slavery risk management related areas.

Assessing modern slavery risks in our supply chains and other areas

Modern slavery is hard to detect and is often hidden in plain sight. By its nature, we recognise that there are risks of modern slavery in our supply chains for all types of goods and services. The risk of modern slavery in our operations is considered low due to its relatively small-scale supply chains with the controls and systems that we have in place to manage its supply chain and recruitment. 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.

Our strategic areas of focus include working to prevent and disrupt child exploitation, abuse, and trafficking. Given our work, it is certain that we encounter situations of modern slavery and as a result, our policies and procedures such as safeguarding, whistleblowing and safer recruitment are critical underpinnings of a robust, safe and ethical response.

Our policies and practices for the prevention and mitigation of human trafficking and modern slavery, including steps taken in 2025/26:

Service Delivery impacting young people

We delivered change through a blended model of training and direct intervention, providing learning sessions, resources, communication materials and wider support to prevent and disrupt child exploitation, abuse, and modern slavery through our Home Office commissioned national Prevention Programme. Our national #Look Closer public awareness campaign continued to focus on improving the public and business sector's understanding of child exploitation and modern slavery and their role in spotting and reporting concerns. #LookCloser resources available to the public on The Children's Society's website include information on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – for professionals, for parents & carers and in the context of children transitioning to adulthood, Missing and Exploitation guides and an NRM plain language guide.

The Children's Society Prevention programme continued to work in partnership across the private, public and third sectors to improve awareness of, and responses to modern child slavery. This included work with the police, social care, health professionals, children's homes, schools, transport companies and many others. This year, the Programme focused in particular on improving awareness and practice within the banking and finance sector, through raising the profile, and associated awareness of the financial exploitation of children and young people.

The Programme continues to make a significant contribution to ensuring greater recognition of child financial exploitation, including in the context of fraud and money laundering - which recognises that this activity is a form of modern slavery.

During the year, The Children's Society delivered several different services that either worked with children who were being/at risk of being exploited or supported systems change in statutory services that impacted young people being exploited. These services worked with thousands of young people directly and thousands of professionals through our systems change work.

The services supporting young people who experienced instances of exploitation that fall within the scope of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are explained in Appendix 1 to this Statement.

The Children's Society recognises that Modern Slavery and Prevent are distinct areas, with Prevent forming part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy and Modern Slavery addressing the serious crimes of human trafficking, forced labour and servitude. We also recognise their connection as key components of the UK's wider safeguarding and human rights framework.

During the year, The Children's Society introduced a Prevent action and development plan to strengthen organisational awareness and understanding of Prevent, and its role within the broader safeguarding agenda, including links to Modern Slavery.

The Children's Society has continued to influence Government to sharpen the definitions and new offences included in the Crime & Policing Bill – which received royal assent in April 2026. This marked the first major change in the law on child criminal exploitation in over a decade. Three new offences have been introduced (1. Child Criminal Exploitation 2. Home Takeover and 3. Internal Concealment. This is an important step in recognising young people's experiences and protecting them from harm. There is more to do and The Children's Society will continue influencing in 2026-27, particularly so that the new offences fully align with existing safeguards for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking under the Modern Slavery Act.

Safeguarding

The Children's Society is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and adults that we work with. We ensure that we have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote safeguarding and safe working practice across the organisation.

We have clear procedures on working with children and adults at risk of exploitation and trafficking.

Within the last year we have:

- Ensured that all new starters to TCS complete an online learning module on risks within the community, which covers contextual risks within the community including modern day slavery.
- Worked in partnership across our delivery to ensure collaborative responses to exploitation and risk, including modern slavery when we encounter it.
- Updated the Safeguarding policy
- Reviewed and updated the safeguarding and third-party suppliers policy.

Purchasing and supply chains

The Charity's Procurement Policy outlines our ethical procurement approach and sets out our principles and practices for the acquisition of goods and services. We have integrated modern slavery provisions and due diligence into the Charity's contracting processes. The Charity has a purchase order system to ensure that staff make purchases, other than small expenses, using established processes. This is being monitored by the finance transaction team.

We apply a risk-based approach to supplier due diligence and continuously review and seek to mitigate risks associated with suppliers operating in higher-risk sectors, geographies, or labour-intensive supply chains where modern slavery risks may be elevated.

This includes those who support the procurement of goods and materials for our fundraising and marketing activities and goods and materials for sale in our network of charity shops, particularly where those goods and materials are acquired from suppliers in other countries.

Fundraising

The Charity operates a due diligence process and gift acceptance policy, screening potential donations in excess of £5,000 for a range of reputational, ethical, and legal risk factors, including potential links to modern slavery and human rights abuses. Where due diligence checks indicate a significant issue or concern, the case will be escalated to the Board of Trustees for review.”

People

Our People policies set out workplace rights and new recruits (staff and volunteers) are screened around their right to work in the UK as part of our robust safer recruitment process (and guided by policy). Where it is necessary to hire agency workers or contractors, our staff are directed to vetted agencies that meet our selection criteria regarding their employment policies and practices. The Charity’s pay structure is underpinned by the Living Wage Foundation, which means that staff are paid a real living wage. The Charity implements its own Whistleblowing Policy regarding concerns about potential corruption, fraud, and other unlawful practices within the Charity. If a case of modern slavery were to be suspected, this would be fully investigated, and appropriate action would be taken.

Within 2025/2026, we:

- Continuously improved the supplier onboarding process, by reviewing compliance requirements and educating TCS staff on supply chain due diligence.
- Continued to provide advice and guidance to those teams who have direct responsibility for relevant supply chains and to build awareness of modern slavery risk across our core teams.
- Conducted supply chain due diligence within our Retail operations.
- Ensured high risk supplier contracts include modern slavery obligations.
- Remained committed to only working with Trader Recycling Universal Standard (TRUST) accredited Rag Merchants within the Retail operation. The independent TRUST audit, renewed every two-years, ensures all staff have the legal right to work, that they are paid at least the national minimum wage and are provided with a contract.
- Developed the modern slavery risk management process flow, including sending out a Risk Assurance of Supply Assessment to our key suppliers.
- Updated and refreshed the questions around Modern Slavery within the online Supplier Questionnaire which is completed by all our direct suppliers. The questionnaire covers supplier governance, policies, training and supply chain management processes, BuyingStation further captures supplier Modern Slavery Statements and supports ongoing monitoring to help ensure these remain current and up to date.

Action plan for the next financial year

In 2026-27, in addition to continuing the work outlined above, we will:

- Include modern slavery as part of a review of our procurement policy and procedures and partnering due diligence, processes, and policies.
- Develop and report modern slavery related key performance indicators and management information, supported through BuyingStation reporting and supplier compliance monitoring, to strengthen oversight, transparency and continuous improvement activities.
- In line with our new Procurement 'BuyingStation' we will require suppliers to attach an in-date Modern Slavery Policy which can be reviewed by the contract owner and budget approver. Furthermore, 7 days prior to a supplier's Modern Slavery Policy expiring, a notification will be sent to the supplier and contract owner. The supplier will be expected to attach an updated Modern Slavery Statement. Contract owner notifications allows for intervention by the contract owner if required. All suppliers will be added to the BuyingStation and via spend analysis, the Procurement team will priorities the addition of suppliers flagged as high risk of modern slavery.
- Provide training sessions/drop-in sessions focused on Procurement Policy and best practice as well as focused sessions on Modern Slavery internally at TCS.
- Continue to politically influence publicly and privately to seek changes in legislation to strengthen powers to recognise children as victims of modern slavery and to punish perpetrators
- Review and update the Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy

Publication

A copy of this statement, a full copy of the Act and a simplified overview is accessible to all employees electronically on The Children's Society's Intranet. If anyone has concerns that modern slavery or human trafficking is taking place in our organisation or supply chain, they should raise their concerns through the Charity's Whistleblowing Policy or to the Company Secretary.

This 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 by the Boards of Directors of The Children's Society (Services) Limited and The Children's Society (Trading) Limited and is signed below on their behalf.

Sarah Payne

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Sarah Payne

Chair of the Trustee
Board of The Children's
Society for and on
behalf of the Board

Mark Russell

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Mark Russell

Chief Executive Officer
The Children's Society for
and on behalf of The
Children's Society

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Segun Olowookere

Director
The Children's Society
(Trading) Limited

Nerys Anthony

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Nerys Anthony

Director
The Children's Society
(Services) Limited

Date: 21 July 2026

Appendix 1

The Childrens Society services working with those at risk of exploitation

Service name	Service summary
CARE Essex	Specialist support to children and young people 8-24 years of age who reside in Essex, are of a medium/high risk of exploitation, or actively being exploited, be that sexually or criminally
Checkpoint, Torbay	Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) includes Torbay and Devon CSA and CSA Counselling services. Works with children and young people who have been sexually abused. Our one-to-one work with young people enables them to gain an understanding of sexual abuse, and abusive relationships and build on existing strengths to develop their own coping and keeping safe strategies.
Climb (West Mercia Diversionary service)	Supports young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation by providing direct one-to-one support, group work and diversionary activities. This service was transferred to Catch22 (another charity) part way through the year.
Prevention Programme (national – Home Office funded)	A Programme that works across all of England and Wales to drive improvements in the prevention and disruption of child exploitation and abuse. This programme is commissioned by the Home Office and works in close partnership with organisations across the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to ensure every young victim of exploitation is identified and receives appropriate support.
Safe Spaces, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	Provides CSE and CCE specialist support in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire through close working with families and multiagency collaboration, keeping children safe and improving the system wide response to child criminal and sexual exploitation.
Manchester Missing from care service	The Manchester Missing from Care Service support children and young people in the care of Manchester local authority who go missing from care, as well as supporting parent/carers who have young people who go missing or are on the periphery and coming in late.

SCARPA, Newcastle	Our specialist exploitation service, SCARPA (safeguarding children at risk, prevention and action) provide tailored support to children and young people who are either identified as at risk of child exploitation or who are currently being exploited (Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation). This support includes direct one to one work from a trauma informed perspective, groupwork, and workforce development through training and professional consultations.
Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Youth Hubs	Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Youth Hubs support children and young people aged 10-18 years old who live in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, who go missing and don't have a social worker. We complete a strengths based intervention, and seek to reduce risk and support them into community youth services.