

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2018

Introduction

Birkbeck, University of London (Birkbeck) is committed to protecting and respecting human rights through continuous improvement of practices. We have a zero tolerance policy in relation to modern slavery.

This statement is designed to satisfy the requirement of section 54(1), Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by informing students, staff, companies and the public about the College and its policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains. This statement relates to actions and activities undertaken during the financial year ended 31 July 2018, and to planned action for the financial year ending 31 July 2019.

Organisational structure

Birkbeck is a provider of full time and part time courses in the higher education sector and one of the few institutions specialising in evening higher education. Based in the heart of Bloomsbury, we are a leading research university and a vibrant learning community offering over 200 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Academic activities are organised into five schools which are subdivided into nineteen departments, supported by various central services.

Founded in 1823 by the philanthropist Dr George Birkbeck, the College is a body incorporated by Royal Charter and an exempt charity under the terms of the Charities Act 2011. Under the Charities Act universities are supervised by the Office for Students as principal regulator (from 1 April 2018, previously the Higher Education Funding Council for England) with the responsibility for ensuring that universities fulfil their obligations under Charity Law.

During the year the College reported annual turnover of £109 million and employed 1175 full time equivalent staff. The College wholly owns one subsidiary called Birkbeck College (Cambridge House) Limited.

Our mission

The principal aims of Birkbeck are to:

- provide flexible and part-time higher education courses which meet the changing educational, cultural, personal and career needs of students of all ages: in particular, those who live or work in the London region.

- enable mature students from diverse social and educational backgrounds to participate in our courses.
- make available the results of research, and the expertise acquired, through teaching, publication, partnerships with other organisations and the promotion of civic and public debate.
- maintain and develop excellence in research and provide the highest quality research training in all our subject areas.

Our commitment

Our workplace policies and procedures demonstrate our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all of our business relationships. We continue to implement and enforce effective systems and controls and use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that slavery and human trafficking are not taking place in our supply chain.

The College's comprehensive range of policies and procedures set out our commitment to workplace rights and ensure that our employees are treated fairly with dignity and respect. These policies, which are reviewed regularly, include, but are not limited to:

- [Equality and Diversity](#) - sets out the College's legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the various ways in which we meet our duties
- [Dignity at Work and Study](#) - is intended to support our provision of an inclusive working and learning environment
- [Formal Grievance](#) and [Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure \("Whistleblowing"\)](#) - enables staff to report improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) - sets out our responsibilities and position on bribery and corruption.

The College uses the national single pay spine structure which is operated by most higher education institutions in the UK and has safeguards to ensure that the hourly rate of pay to staff does not fall below the current London Living Wage.

To identify possible inconsistencies between policy and practice the College undertakes institution-wide Staff Surveys. These include questions about the experiences of staff in relation to instances of bullying/harassment/discrimination and the ability to manage work-life issues as employees of the College.

The results are compared against past surveys and sector benchmarks. Action plans are developed to tackle issues that are identified. The Survey results, analysis and actions are shared within the institution and included in the institutional Athena SWAN submission.

Our progress

During the year we:

- raised awareness by encouraging staff to familiarise themselves with the key requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and their responsibility as individuals to report behaviour, which they believe suggests a breach of the Modern Slavery Act, to designated Birkbeck staff.
- continued our review of the Procure to Pay processes and the implementation of a new P2P system. We also provided additional guidance for those staff involved in the tendering process.
- reviewed our standard selection questionnaires to ensure that appropriate questions are included to enable an assessment of their controls around Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
- embedded the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act into our procurement procedures and our new supplier registration form.
- monitored a small number of first tier (direct) suppliers and obtained anti-slavery statements from those required to produce them.
- established a central team of dedicated procurement professionals who manage procurement processes and provide support and guidance within the organisation. While the risks of modern slavery in our direct activities are likely to be low, we recognise that there are risks through the goods and services that we procure linked to supply chains around the world.
- developed our knowledge of the Modern Slavery Act through the procurement team completing online Modern Slavery Awareness training and attendance at external events such as the London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) annual conference.
- continued to access a series of frameworks through the use of consortia. The suppliers we use to deliver our activities, and our own operations, continue to be primarily UK and EU based.

The College is a member of the LUPC which procures goods and services for UK higher education institutions. The LUPC remains committed to supporting the UK Government's National Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Our plans for the future

In the coming year we will continue our work in combatting slavery and human trafficking in our supply chain.

Our key objectives are:

- to ensure this Statement is prominently displayed on the College's website
- to review key accounts within our supply chain to identify high risk supply which falls under five 'super categories'. These are:

Laboratory Consumables and Equipment

Library Resources

Professional Services

ICT Equipment and Services

Estates Goods and Services

- to continue the ongoing review of our new Procure to Pay system with a view to streamlining our supplier base so that we have a better understanding of our supply chain
- to identify and assess risk areas in the supply chain, establish how to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and to review how to monitor potential risk areas
- to make available statutory guidance notes on the Modern Slavery Act in an appropriate place on the website
- to introduce free e-learning courses provided by the Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA) on Protecting Human Rights in the Supply Chain
- to include relevant questions in our annual staff survey.

Approved by



Sir Harvey McGrath
Chair of Governors

For and on behalf of Birkbeck, University of London

December 2018