

Motion to full council

Guildford Borough Council has embedded measures to address the evils of modern slavery in its safeguarding policy and procedures and we welcome this as an essential first step to tackling exploitation in Guildford.

However, with the number of people estimated to have been coerced into modern slavery nationally increasing tenfold between 2013 and 2016 – from 13,000 to 136,000 – we believe that a more proactive approach now needs to be taken by this council, in line with the 50 others – including Surrey County Council – that have signed up to the Charter against Modern Slavery.

Collectively, councils across the UK spend £40bn per year on procuring services from hundreds of contractors and sub-contractors and they oversee large supply chains in all areas of their business. As public bodies, accountable to the public, they have a duty to ensure that those supply chains do not hide the sins and iniquities of exploitation.

The Charter against Modern Slavery

By signing the Charter against Modern Slavery, Guildford Borough Council commits to:

1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
2. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.

6. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

Councils who sign this charter can access cost-free support through the Transparency in Supply Chains report (<https://tiscreport.org/>), an NGO that will monitor companies supplying the council in relation to their compliance with section 54 of the Modern Day Slavery Act 2015.

This council resolves:

1. To sign the Charter Against Modern Slavery, which encompasses points 1 to 10 above, immediately to ensure that it does not inadvertently rely on exploitation and modern slavery in use of suppliers.
2. To report back on progress to Full Council on an annual basis, one year from the date the Charter is signed and each year thereafter.