

Modern slavery statement



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Date due for review: December 2024	Amendments:

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to set out our commitment and responsibilities, and of those working for us, in observing and upholding our position on modern slavery.

Scope

This statement applies to all staff members and trustees, along with self-employed consultants or contractors, third party representatives and business partners, sponsors and any other person associated with us.

Modern slavery statement

Voices in Exile has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery. We strive to act ethically and with integrity in all of our activities and relationships to make sure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in Voices in Exile or in any of our supply chains. We will also make sure our approach is clear with our partner organisations.

We believe that a modern slavery statement is an important part of our approach to implementing our ethical policy. We have opted to adopt a statement which we will update annually, although we are not required to have such a statement under current regulations.

Organisation structure and supply chain

Voices in Exile was established in 2005 to address the urgent need for practical support and legal advice for refugees and vulnerable migrants in Brighton and Sussex. We began as a small, volunteer-led grassroots organisation providing a safe point of contact, advice and practical support for people who didn't know where else to go; became registered as a charity and limited company in 2009; and became OISC-accredited in 2011.

We now work with refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants with no recourse to public funds in East and West Sussex and Surrey, and offer practical and legal support including generalist advice and specialist immigration casework up to OISC Level 2 for those who would otherwise be unable to access justice. As part of our holistic approach we also offer practical destitution support including a weekly food and toiletries bank, and advocate for, accompany and enable people to access services, build community, and develop their own potential through a programme of learning and creative activities, including employability advice and casework.

We are governed by our articles of association and a board of trustees who volunteer their time to help direct our work. They oversee our director, who, with the head of services and management team, manages 18 staff.

Voices in Exile uses a number of suppliers to enable it to carry out its activities which include:

- cleaning of our property
- IT support contracts
- recruitment agencies

Voices in Exile carries out employment checks, including making sure that our people have the right to work for us and we pay at least the Living Wage. Where we use recruitment agencies to fill temporary roles, we make sure their practices meet our standards.

As part of our employability advice and casework, we:

- liaise directly with some employers to ensure that they pay the Living Wage and their terms and conditions are fair
- explain basic employment rights and responsibilities to our clients
- research job opportunities for clients and telephone employers to make basic checks

Strategy for addressing the risk of modern slavery

Voices in Exile considers the risk of modern slavery to be related to our supply chain and therefore, our procurement policy and procedures are key to this. We will:

- review our procedures and create updated procurement documents
- roll out a risk assessment for current and new suppliers.

Continuous improvement

The next steps in our work are:

- following approval of our procurement policy, we will review our related policies and documents to make sure these demonstrate the robustness of our approach to removing the risk of modern slavery from our supply chain
- to update our staff on our new policies and procedures
- that we will roll out our procurement approach to all current suppliers

- that we will use our procurement approach to review all new suppliers
- to make sure modern slavery is addressed in all key relevant policies including recruitment, safeguarding and whistleblowing.