

## Edge Hill University

### Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Financial Year 2023/24

## INTRODUCTION

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

### Our organisational structure

We are a UK Higher Education Institution providing a wide range of teaching, research and related activities. Our main campus is based in Ormskirk, West Lancashire. We have 14,000 students registered on courses in the UK and overseas (Provisional figure). We employ 2,950 people and have an income of £142,799 for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

More information about us and our activities is available here:  
<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/>

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. All of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

We are committed to combatting slavery and human trafficking in our business practices. This statement identifies our status and the actions we are taking, to prevent acquiring goods and services without causing harm to others. In doing so we are supporting the UK Government's action plan to implement the UN guiding principles on business and human rights.

Like most universities we purchase goods, services and works from a wide range of suppliers and from several categories, which have been identified as high risk in terms of the potential for slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and human trafficking, referred to as Modern Slavery in this statement. These include but are not limited to:

- Security Services
- Hospitality and Catering
- Information Communication and Technology Equipment and Services (IT)
- Cleaning
- Construction
- Clothing

### Our supply chains

Edge Hill University is actively engaged with its responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. An initial briefing and regular updates at the Value for Money (VFM)

and Procurement Group has raised awareness across faculties and departments, and we have continued to engage with consultancy support from NETpositive Futures to consider our actions under the Modern Slavery Act. We remain committed to better understanding our supply chains, working towards greater transparency and responsibility towards the people working in them.

We will be continuing to use the NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool to provide a single mechanism to engage contracted and non-contracted suppliers with issues of modern slavery and human trafficking. This Tool was developed by the North West Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC), the University Caterers Organisation (TUCO) and the North Eastern University Purchasing Consortia (NEUPC).

The Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool will enable us to:

- collect data on which of our suppliers are aware of, and engaged with, the responsibilities relating to modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as those which are not;
- offer support, guidance or training to our supply base and to share best practice between them;
- track the actions being taken, and, where required, the progress being made, by our supply chain in addressing aspects of modern slavery;
- have access to this information in real time; and
- build modern slavery into our contract management processes based on action plans developed by our suppliers.

### **Our effectiveness in combating slavery and human trafficking**

The NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool allows us to access data created by our suppliers to enable us to ascertain the percentage of our suppliers which have:

- been **made aware** that modern slavery is a consideration for their business;
- **acknowledged** modern slavery is a consideration for their business;
- **committed** to take action to address modern slavery in their business;
- **completed** actions which address modern slavery in their business; and
- set actions to **undertake training** on modern slavery.

The Tool will also provide **examples and evidence** shared by our suppliers about their activities in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking. The data from the Tool will enable us to differentiate responses by business type so we can identify progress in priority risk areas such as construction, hospitality and clothing.

## Actions from August 2023 to July 2024

1. We have reviewed our supply chain and ensured were required that our suppliers are aware of their obligations under the MSA15 act. This will be by communicating to them, asking them if they have signed up to Net Positive Futures and completed the online assessment tool, or if they have a statement, policy or other documentation that identifies that they are aware of MSA15, and are actively working towards ensuring they deliver their responsibilities, namely ensuring Modern Slavery is not in their supply chain.
  - a. We have contacted 3887 suppliers since October 2023, all suppliers are used at Edge Hill University and ranked by value and we have identified which of those are not currently using the NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool (this is our entire supply chain). When contacting them we asked for them to engage with the tool. Below in the two tables, are a comparison of June 2023 to this year's June 2024.

NPF and have Statements																					
June 2023	No of suppliers (top to bottom)	1	50	100	150	200	250	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	4000
	In NPF or have statements	1	45	81	112	151	177	203	251	300	327	350	382	398	432	497	554	589	610	618	634
	%	100	90	81	75	76	71	68	63	60	55	50	48	44	43	33	28	24	20	18	16
	Improvement since last report	0	1	13	27	41	53	63	88	107	119	128	141	146	163	185	215	242	256	263	274

NPF and have Statements																					
June 2024	No of suppliers (top to bottom)	1	50	100	150	200	250	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	3887
	In NPF or have statements	1	48	90	131	168	204	238	304	351	391	436	458	488	512	615	681	716	744	758	760
	%	100	96	90	87	84	82	79	76	70	65	62	57	54	51	41	34	29	25	22	20
	Improvement since last report	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	13	15	17	25	29	36	44	67	80	85	98	101	103

- b. In the last year, an additional 126 genuine suppliers have been added to the database or have available on their website or by email a statement to demonstrate they are aware of MSA15 and they are actively working towards ensuring their supply chain is free from Modern Slavery.
- c. This is due to our commitment to email our suppliers, our discussions with suppliers at reviews and as part of the procurement and new supplier onboarding process in Facilities Management.
- d. This will actively reduce the risk of a supplier failure.
- e. This now means, that out of our top 100 suppliers, 90% have either signed up to the NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool or have a statement on their website or available on request, compared to 81% in 22/23, and 71% 21/22.
- f. In summary overall, 90% of the top 100 suppliers that are responsible for £15.6m spend in 2020/2021 and £21.5m spend in 2021/2022, we can say with a certain amount of assurance, that the suppliers are aware of

Modern Slavery and are working to ensure that it is not present in our supply chain.

2. We actively encourage engagement with the Northwest Universities Purchasing Consortium, for example, (NWUPC) and The Universities Catering Organisation (TUCO) frameworks that embed Modern Slavery Act considerations, within their procurement activities as an option to procure goods and services though directing staff in our Financial Regulations.
3. The Modern Slavery Policy has been supported by the Value For Money (VFM) group and communicated to the wider University in 2023/24, this was completed across all support functions and faculty. To really drive an awareness into the fabric of the University, as part of new staff induction, they also receive information about modern slavery and signposts to the statement and policy document as well as access to the NPF tool and a named institutional contact for further advise or information.

More information including tool kits and guidance can be found on the links below.

- [Modern Slavery | North Western Universities Purchasing Consortium Ltd \(nwupc.ac.uk\)](https://nwupc.ac.uk)
- <https://netpositivefutures.co.uk/>

## Supplier Engagement and Development

We continue to focus on our top 100 suppliers by value. As of June 2024, 90% of those suppliers are now registered with Net Positive Futures or have access to a statement on their website. This is an improvement for the same period on the previous year. The suppliers utilising the NPF tool have completed a sustainability assessment including Modern Slavery and have an action plan in place to mitigate the risks associated with their supply chain. We have continued to contact a great number of suppliers and have requested that they engage with the tool as soon as possible. This work will continue in 2024/25.

Since December 2019, we have also been completing Modern Slavery audits around the campus. This involves approaching contractors and agency staff on site, requesting their name, company name and purpose of their visit. We then contact their head office and request that they confirm that the contractor or agency staff member on site has completed the appropriate right to work in the UK checks. We have challenged **52** contractors and agency staff in the last financial year from **29** companies. This is a practical step to ensure that contractors and agencies demonstrate due diligence and are aware that we take the risk of Modern Slavery very seriously at Edge Hill University. We feel this is particularly relevant for suppliers bidding for work on an ongoing basis, they are aware that we monitor contractors on site, we believe this will act as a deterrent to poor modern slavery practice.

We continue to work with our sector colleagues to share best practice and keep up to date on identifying and assessing risks and actions within the supply chain through our involvement with the Purchasing Consortia.

## **Planned actions for August 2024 to July 2025**

We are committed to ensuring there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. As part of this commitment, we intend to take the following further steps:

- We will continue to complete the Modern Slavery contractor and agency staff audits.
- We will continue to refresh our top supplier list and identify within our top 100 and beyond supply chain, any suppliers of products or services that do not engage with the NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool; this will lead to further requests to engage with the tool or identifying if they already have a statement and/or policy. This will then be recorded on our register.
- We will continue to communicate our Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy through our induction process to all new starters;
- We will actively promote the Modern Slavery Policy on our internal wiki;
- We will continue to ensure where possible all future procurement is completed with suppliers who currently engage or who will be prepared to engage with the NETpositive Supplier Engagement (HE) Tool;
- We will look at ways of linking the HE Tool (NPF) to our sustainability goals. This approach and the evidence gathered will assist us in targeting our activities to those suppliers and supply chains who are either not aware that Modern Slavery is an issue for their business or are not taking a pro-active approach within their supply chains. We consider this activity a sensible approach to set our baseline for engagement with our suppliers and in the priority supplier categories.

31<sup>st</sup> January 2025