

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/24

This statement is made and published pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "Act"). It sets out the actions taken by Wessex Water Limited and its relevant subsidiaries in the UK¹ (together with Wessex Water Limited, "Wessex Water") and constitutes the slavery and human trafficking statement for the current financial year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024).

Wessex Water is predominantly a provider of water and sewerage services, with Wessex Water Services Limited being a statutory undertaker operating across the south-west of England including Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, most of Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire and Hampshire. Wessex Water Enterprises Limited is a provider of sustainable waste solutions, providing renewable energy, soil conditioners and bio-fertilisers.

Our Policies

Wessex Water is committed to meeting the aims of the Act and having a work environment that is free from human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Wessex Water is unreservedly opposed to slavery and human trafficking in its supply chains and in any part of its business.

Wessex Water embeds the principles of the Act within all appropriate internal policies and procedures, including its whistleblowing and anti-bribery policies, to operate responsibly and ethically as a business. Our ethics, core values as well as procurement and people policies outline our commitment to acting with integrity in all our operations and ensuring people are treated with dignity.

Wessex Water provides a fair, safe, and inclusive place to work for our employees and our supply chain, supported by a governance framework that is:

- aligned with good practice such as (but not limited to) the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS); and Home Office guidance
- supported by a company-wide risk assessment for the Board. This assesses all risk across Wessex Water including that of modern slavery, across our supply chain and employees. Following our business-as-usual checks and controls we have a confirmed low-risk environment

Our Supply Chain

Wessex Water continues to build and maintain longstanding relationships with trusted suppliers, making clear its expectations of business behaviour. Modern Slavery forms part of our supplier selection and vetting, with all suppliers expected to demonstrate their commitment to compliance with the Act, treating their workers and their ongoing supply chains fairly and free from enslavement. Wessex Water is committed to making a positive and sustainable impact on society which includes a commitment to tackling modern slavery.

¹ Relevant group companies include Wessex Water Services Limited and Wessex Water Enterprises Limited.

Wessex Water's supplier base is predominantly UK-based. All suppliers are vetted by standard procurement processes that include a variety of checks and reviews designed to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the Act. Modern slavery clauses are included in Wessex Water's contracts and purchase order standard terms and conditions and require suppliers to assure that they and their supply chains meet the obligations under the Act and demonstrate the steps taken to monitor compliance.

Wessex Water is member of Achilles UVDB (Utilities Vendor Database) Steering Group and is working closely with other industry participants to drive industry best practice. Wessex Water uses Achilles UVDB as an approved qualification system for the purposes of compliance with the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006. This includes pre-qualification questions confirming compliance with the Act as a prerequisite to registration as an approved supplier. Wessex Water conducts audits of certain suppliers against the information they have provided in the questionnaire.

Wessex Water is also a member of Utilities Against Slavery (formerly known as Utilities Modern Slavery Working Group) which is made up of representatives from the 26 gas, water and electricity providers working together with the support of the Slave Free Alliance to eradicate Modern Slavery from the utilities sector.

These measures seek to verify that suppliers meet their obligations under the Act and where required, demonstrate the steps they have taken to monitor compliance.

Our People

Wessex Water has a strong purpose and value led culture that drives what we do and how we work. These values and behaviours are embedded into our company's recruitment processes, vacancy adverts, contracts of employment, and interview techniques throughout all levels of the company. 91% of employees rated Wessex Water as a good employer.

Wessex Water rigorously checks that all its employees have the legal right to work in the UK and all agency and temporary workers are subject to the same checks. We have recently updated our company induction and onboarding process. We consider the overall risk of modern slavery and human trafficking to be low due to the nature of our embedded values, culture, and the level of checks we have in place.

Wessex Water employees receive the statutory employment rights to which they are entitled and are paid at or above the minimum wage. We also have processes and programmes in place which seek to create not only a safe, fair, and inclusive working environment, but also one that supports wellbeing and learning. We work closely with our trade unions.

As well as setting out the rights and benefits which are available to Wessex Water employees, published policies, employee handbooks and individual contracts of employment make it clear what actions and behaviours are expected of them.

Wessex Water has an established Raising a Concern process that provides a free 24/7 helpline to raise any concerns, including but not limited to bullying, harassment or any suspected illegal activity including entrapment, human trafficking or other employee or contractor concern. The helpline is widely communicated to all staff and all concerns are taken seriously and investigated.

In addition, our Early Careers Advisor has achieved a Level 3 Safe Guarding qualification and is responsible for ensuring all managers involved in our early career's programmes (apprenticeships, work experience and graduate recruitment) are trained in how to spot symptoms and escalate potential risk scenarios for investigation.

Staff working in areas that are more exposed to modern slavery risks such as procurement, commercial, HR, finance and customer teams are asked to undertake training each year covering financial crime and modern slavery.

Modern Slavery Risk

Wessex Water has assessed modern slavery risk as low and maintains an active review over its operations. It has not uncovered evidence of slavery and human trafficking within its own operations and those of its suppliers.

This statement was approved by the Boards of Directors of the respective companies within Wessex Water in March 2023 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.



Colin Skellett
Group Chief Executive
March 2023