



CROWBERRY CONSULTING
Environment, Ethics and Corporate Responsibility Management

Modern Slavery FAQ's



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What Is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is a serious crime and includes, but is not limited to, sexual exploitation, forced or bonded labour, forced criminality, domestic servitude and the removal of organs.

Approximately 40,300,000 people live in slavery today ([ILO & Walkfree Foundation 2017](#)), with 13,000 potential victims in the UK ([Home Office 2014](#)). Slavery and human trafficking is still very apparent in the modern day, this Act looks to combat this very real issue and punish those who do not comply. You can find the Government's **2018** Annual Report on Modern Slavery [here](#) along with other material surrounding the [subject](#). In March 2018 it was recorded that 3,337 cases were brought forward in the UK with 5,143 potential victims recorded, 41% of whom were children.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015.

[The Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) received Royal Assent on the 26th March 2015 and is described as an “Act to make provision about slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and about human trafficking, including provision for the protection of victims; to make provision for an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner; and for connected purposes”.

The duty applies to commercial organisations with a total turnover of at least **£36 million** per year and to the financial years ending on or after the 31st March 2016 (it realistically should have already been completed). However, it is good practice for all companies to release a modern slavery statement to show their conformity and support for anti-slavery.

[The Modern Slavery Act 2015 \(Transparency in Supply Chain\) Regulations 2015](#)

also enforce s34 of the Act to require commercial organisations to prepare a statement and ensure that throughout the company's supply chain they are making an effort to seek out and ensure that gangmaster slavery and that even homeworkers are being provided protection.

[The Government has published a practical guide, which gives advice on what employers can include in a statement.](#)



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What Does The Law Require?

Section 54 requires commercial organisations to “prepare a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year” and this statement must contain “the steps the organisation has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains, and in any part of its own business” or “a statement that the organisation has taken no such steps”.

This statement may include information on an organisations structure, business and supply chains, policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking, the training they provide for staff and its due diligence processes. A simple way to do this is for the company to release a pre-employment risk assessment checklist asking their suppliers to fill out and sign to say whether they have a modern slavery statement and steps they are taking towards avoiding modern slavery.

Furthermore, Section 54(7) confirms that if the organisation has a website, “it must publish the slavery and human trafficking statement on that website” and “include a link to the slavery and human trafficking statement in a prominent place on that website’s homepage”.



Image from The Story Pedia.



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What Happens If The Law Is Breached?

If a business fails to comply and does not provide a statement, the Secretary of State has the power to seek an injunction through the High Court requiring the organisation to comply. If the organisation continues to not comply, they will be in contempt of court which is punishable by an **unlimited fine**.

Many businesses have already been prosecuted for being in contempt with the Modern Slavery Act, for example SportsDirect.com and Kozee Sleep.

In 2019, the UK's largest modern slavery ring was uncovered by police with 400 victims working for as little as 50p a day. These workers were doing different labouring jobs such as clearing gardens, cutting grass and labouring for 13 hours at a time. This shows that Modern Slavery and Gangmaster Labour hides in plain sight, so it is vital to report any potential incident.

What Needs To Be Done?

Simply, a slavery and human trafficking statement must be created and in turn must be posted on the website, with a link in a prominent place on the **homepage**. This needs to be completed as soon as possible in order to avoid a potential injunction or, further from that, a **large unlimited fine**.

Furthermore, a company must take adequate steps to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within their organisation or by their suppliers, this has a larger onus on big companies, as dealing with a supplier who is in violation of the Act can look harshly on a big organisation who conducts business with them.



Image from MRW.co.uk

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The 'B' Word?

- The impact of Brexit is still unknown, however, Modern Slavery is a subject matter which is being complied with WORLDWIDE. That being said, it is unlikely that Brexit will have any impact on a company's position and requirements for it to publish and implement a Modern Slavery Statement.
- Due to the importance of this, and the push for Modern Slavery to be abolished worldwide, along with the Modern Slavery Act being a part of UK law, the fight against Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking will only move towards greater and stronger protections, with more and more companies falling into the threshold for compliance.



Image from [JCB Solicitors](#)



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How Can Crowberry Consulting Help You?

- Help with internal audits into the matter. Provide a legal update on a broad range of compliance which can help your company understand the implications of non-compliance.
- We can also provide your company with CSR Training to help director's understand the implications of social and ethical law on the business.
- Provide you with a licence to our 'Ethical Toolkit' that can help you monitor your compliance with ethical matters and help you implement policies and actions which will help you company pass a SMETA Ethical Audit.

The graphic features the Crowberry Consulting logo at the top left, with the text 'CROWBERRY CONSULTING' and 'Environment, Ethics and Corporate Responsibility Management'. To the right, the title 'Ethical Toolkit' is displayed in large white font on a blue background. Below the title, twelve hexagonal icons represent various ethical topics: Environment, Employment is freely chosen, Working Hours, Safe & Hygienic Conditions, Business Ethics, Regular Employment, Freedom of Association, Harsh or Inhumane Treatment, Land Rights, Child Labour, Living Wages, and Discrimination. At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'What is the Ethical Toolkit?' followed by a paragraph explaining its purpose in preparing for social systems or ethical audits, based on 12 common topics. A copyright notice for 2018 Crowberry Consulting Ltd. is at the very bottom.

What is the Ethical Toolkit?

The Ethical Toolkit supports your preparation prior to a Social Systems or Ethical Audit, or indeed testing how Ethical your company actually is. Based on the 12 most common topics included in Ethical Audits and ILO and UN guidance, the toolkit is a fantastic aid to ensuring compliance across this complex area. The scores you receive can be improved by addressing the weaknesses in your system. #EthicsMadeEasy

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