

Durham University
Modern Slavery Statement
(Financial Year 2025/26)

This statement responds to S.54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps that Durham University has taken and is continuing to take to ensure that modern slavery or human trafficking is not taking place within our business or supply chain.

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, human trafficking and forced labour. Durham University has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity and transparency in all business dealings and to putting effective systems and controls in place to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. The processes set out below reflect the University's commitment to acting ethically and with integrity across the organisation.

This statement was endorsed by the University Executive Committee on 02/12/2025 and approved by Council on 16/12/2025.

Our business

Durham University is a legally independent and autonomous institution established by an Act of Parliament in 1832 and Royal Charter (number RC000650). Durham University is an exempt charity under the Charities Act 2011.

Durham University is a higher educational institution based on a collegiate model and composed of academic departments, research institutes, administrative departments, libraries and museums.

We seek the highest distinction in research and scholarship and as a world-leading research institution we are committed to excellence in all aspects of education, student experience, research, and the transmission of knowledge. The University's strategy 2017-2027 can be accessed here [University Strategy - Durham University](#)

Our policies

We operate a number of internal policies to ensure that we are conducting business in an ethical and transparent manner. These include:

1. Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy: Our Whistleblowing Policy makes clear to all employees, students, and anyone engaged to work in the University (including apprentices, interns, atypical workers, agency workers and those with honorary contracts) that they can raise concerns about how colleagues are being treated, or practices within our business or supply chain, without fear of reprisal. The process is set out here:

[PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY \(WHISTLEBLOWING\)](#)

2. Employee Code of Conduct: This explains the manner in which we behave as an organisation and how we expect our employees, visitors, workers, contractors, consultants, lay members, agency workers and suppliers to act. The relevant guidance is set out here: [Code of Conduct](#)

Our suppliers

The University procures goods and services from suppliers across the world. The University's supply chain includes a large number of diverse suppliers including suppliers of goods and services that directly support our teaching, student support and research activity for example, large scale laboratory equipment and laboratory consumables. As part of our initiative to identify and mitigate risks in respect of our supply chains and to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in our supply chains we conduct due diligence on all suppliers before awarding a contract to them. These due diligence measures include an online search to ensure that a particular organisation has never been convicted of offences relating to modern slavery and human trafficking; as well as a requirement that suppliers demonstrate that they provide safe working conditions.

We share our Procurement Policy with our supply chain and point out the Responsible Procurement section. [Procurement Policy and Ways of Working](#) The University is affiliated to Electronics Watch, an independent third party, who provides a monitoring service on supply chains assessing how suppliers are addressing issues and ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any part of the University's business or supply chains.

Contracted suppliers continue to work with [NETPositive Futures](#) regarding sustainable action plans, which include monitoring high-risk areas for modern slavery.

Training

Procurement policies, guidance and procedures were updated in 2023. We regularly conduct training for our procurement teams so that they understand the signs of modern slavery and what to do if they suspect that it is taking place within our supply chain.

Future Actions

Following work by the Modern Slavery Act Working Group, an e-learning Skillsboosters module which explains the Modern Slavery Act and the organisational compliance requirements is now available to all staff via Oracle.

Work to develop an Inclusive Durham action plan (2025-2030) is underway and we will consider further training to promote staff awareness of the Act to meet our institutional obligations such as adapting the [Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit for our use at Durham University](#).



Professor Karen O'Brien
Vice-Chancellor and Warden
2025