

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium

Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

August 2019

Introduction

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) is a membership-based buying organisation for universities and further education colleges that develops and manages framework agreements. SUPC is a division of Southern Universities Management Services, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 2732244) and registered charity No 1042175.

Using our agreements, members procure competitively priced goods and services across a wide range of commodity areas. These agreements save members both time and money. Members also have access to advice, support and market knowledge.

SUPC is committed to acquiring goods and services for its members without causing harm to others. SUPC is committed to supporting the UK Government's approach to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

SUPC's turnover is below the financial threshold for businesses to comply with the requirements of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to publish a statement. Nonetheless, SUPC wishes to demonstrate our commitment in respect of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and labour violation rights in our supply chains. This statement therefore demonstrates the steps SUPC have taken to identify, prevent, and mitigate such risks.

Our structure

The SUMS Management Committee (the Board) has responsibility for SUPC's strategic direction. The Board comprises representatives from different disciplines in our member institutions: Finance Directors, Estates Directors and Heads of Procurement.

SUPC Council advises on operational issues. SUPC Council comprises Heads of Procurement from each of our full member institutions, and represents a wide range of institutions from large research-intensive universities to smaller specialist universities.

SUPC is in a strategic partnership with London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC). The partnership is overseen by a Strategic Partnering Advisory Board. Its membership is made up in equal numbers of members of both SUMS/SUPC and LUPC.

SUPC is one of six regional purchasing consortia serving UK higher education: many of the framework agreements that SUPC manage are shared nationally.

SUPC is a member of UK Universities Purchasing Consortia (UKUPC), the shared vehicle by which English HE purchasing consortia manage joint developmental and improvement projects for collaborative procurement in our sector.

Our policy

We share our Members' values when it comes to responsible procurement. Purchasing consortia that make up UKUPC share a common [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#).

Our spend categories and those that present risks of human rights abuses

SUPC's supply chains fall under four 'super-categories':

1. Science, Technical, Engineering and Medical Goods and Services
2. Corporate Services, including Travel
3. ICT Equipment and Services
4. Estates Goods and Services

The principal areas that carry material risks are office supplies, laboratory consumables, ICT and AV equipment, workers in the travel and hospitality industries, and some estates services, such as cleaning and security services.

Suppliers in these higher-risk areas have been asked to commit to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). SUPC will work to persuade suppliers in these categories to support these initiatives. The ETI Base Code is founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is an internationally recognised code of labour practice, requiring that:

1. Employment is freely chosen
2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic
4. Child labour is not used
5. Living wages are paid
6. Working hours are not excessive
7. No discrimination is practised
8. Regular employment is provided
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.

Our due diligence processes and their effectiveness

SUPC have implemented the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool that provides a mechanism to engage suppliers with the issues of Modern Slavery. The tool collects data on which suppliers are aware of, and engaged with, aspects of modern slavery. Adoption of the tool provides a simple response to the Modern Slavery Act and enables suppliers to develop their own action plan to ensure they have addressed Modern Slavery considerations.

1. Science, Technical, Engineering and Medical Goods and Services

SUPC leads the national (excluding Scotland) agreement for laboratory consumables. A wide range of products are supplied, many of which are sourced from overseas manufacturers which operate in low-cost countries where forms of modern slavery are prevalent. Suppliers in these higher-risk areas will be asked about their commitment to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) as part of the renewal of the Laboratory Consumables Framework being undertaken in early 2019.

2. ICT Equipment and Services

SUPC leads in the procurement of servers and storage equipment as well as IT-related parts and accessories for UK higher education institutions. We play an active part in the management of supply agreements led by sister consortia for Apple products, desktop computers and notebooks, and other ICT equipment.

SUPC supports the principles of Electronics Watch, an independent monitoring organisation working to achieve respect for labour rights in the global electronics industry, through socially responsible public purchasing in Europe. We work closely with Electronics Watch and include their contract monitoring clauses in all relevant agreements that we award. During 2018, Electronics Watch conducted reviews and audits at factories operated by sub-contractors to Apple, Dell and HP in China, India and the Czech Republic.

We continue to work with contracted suppliers to monitor regimes where corporate codes of conduct, and social auditing policies and practices, are failing in their transparency and effectiveness.

3. Estates Goods and Services

SUPC works with contracted suppliers to ensure we meet our responsibilities concerning modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in our supply chains.

Many suppliers within the Estates supply chains are SMEs and do not reach the minimum turnover to require a formal modern slavery statement. SUPC ensures that these SMEs understand their obligations under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act, and works with them to ensure they are compliant with requirements contained within the act.

4. Corporate Services

SUPC lead the tendering for the renewal of the Temporary and Permanent Recruitment Framework that facilitates the engagement of personnel by Member institutions. The Framework will encompass roles including cleaning, catering, and other facilities management, which pose a higher exposure to

risks of Modern Slavery, such as forced and bonded labour. A key aspect of the evaluation adopted for the Framework has been to require that all awarded suppliers have a commitment to tackling Modern Slavery, and will have produced a Modern Slavery statement. SUPC is helping SMEs and those below the required turnover threshold of £36m, to produce a compliant statement that underpins the education sector's commitment in this area.

Our plans for the future

SUPC expresses its commitment to understand its supply chains and work towards greater transparency and responsibility for people working within them.

For contracts awarded, we will identify supply chains that represent a medium to high-risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and labour rights violations. Working with suppliers, members and other relevant organisations, we will monitor supply chains identified as a potential risk, and take action if necessary.

SUPC will monitor and update its policies and procedures in relation to responsible procurement. We will ensure that this is embedded in all processes and strategies to maximise influence in the market and ensure due diligence in the supply chain.

This statement has been approved by the SUMS Board and will be reviewed annually. If you have any questions, please contact supc@reading.ac.uk.

Bernarde Hyde

SUMS Group CEO

11/10/19