

Southern Universities Management Services

Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

August 2020

Introduction

SUMS works for universities and is owned by universities. SUMS is a not-for-profit, a registered charity and membership organisation that has three divisions.

It is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 2732244) and registered charity No 1042175. The SUMS Management Committee (the Board) has responsibility for SUMS strategic direction. The Board comprises representatives from different disciplines in our member institutions: for example, PVCs, Secretary and Registrars, Finance Directors, and Heads of Procurement. The three divisions are:

1. **SUMS Consulting** provides expert consultancy to the higher education sector.
2. **Procurement Shared Service (PSS)** helps universities improve procurement performance by helping clients focus on what matters to deliver value for money and feel confident about the work they do.
3. **SUPC** helps universities and colleges buy smarter. Members use our frameworks and support services to help ensure their procurement activities deliver value for money for students, staff and the wider community.

SUPC

SUPC is one of six regional purchasing consortia serving UK higher education: many of the framework agreements that SUPC manage are shared nationally. 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 in a strategic partnership with London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC). A Strategic Partnering Advisory Board oversees this partnership. Its membership is made up in equal numbers of members of both consortia.

SUPC has a Council that 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. The Council informs the work of SUPC.

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

This year we recognise the entire operating structure of SUMS, PSS, and SUPC in our Modern Slavery Statement. We recognise the overall group turnover is lower than the financial threshold of section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the procurement activities of SUMS and PSS are minimal.

The joint statement demonstrates 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 that the group have taken to identify, prevent, and mitigate such risks.

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

SUPC Spend Categories that Present Risks of Human Rights Abuses

SUPC's supply chains fall under five '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
5. Academic 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.

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 that operate in low-cost countries where forms of modern slavery are prevalent. Suppliers in these higher-risk areas were asked about their commitment to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) as part of the renewal of the Laboratory Consumables Framework undertaken in early 2019.

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.

A review was undertaken of the modern slavery statements for the awarded suppliers on the new ITRAP framework with guidance provided where SUPC believed the statements fell short of the standards we expect of our supply chains. SUPC will also include the review of modern slavery statements as a key criterion in the evaluation and award of the Servers and Storage (SSNA) agreement which will be tendered during the course of 2021.

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.

SUPC are aware that construction and janitorial are areas that are high risk in the UK for modern slavery and while we don't have any frameworks of our own, we ensure that we have sufficient tools to equip our suppliers where need be, to assist managing that risk.

Corporate Services

SUPC are aware that Temporary and Permanent Recruitment is a still a high-risk area for modern slavery in the UK. We continue to work with our supply chain, especially SMEs to ensure they understand their obligations as part of the framework.

We also recognise that the Travel Framework is another area where there are risks of modern slavery. Particularly overseas, where suppliers might lose sight of some areas of their supply chains. Hospitality workers are at high risk, so we made specific

mention of this while tendering, asking our suppliers to be consciously aware in this area.

Academic Services

SUPC are aware that the Library Services Framework and the Periodicals framework are of lower risk than many others, due to the nature of the goods and services provided. The physical element of packaging and warehousing books does present a risk, but the largest part of the market is 'e-services' where there is little human intervention.

Our Due Diligence Processes and their Effectiveness

SUPC are current users of the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool.

The tool provides a valuable mechanism for us to monitor our suppliers' awareness and engagement of modern slavery in their supply chains. The tool collects their data of awareness and engagement and shows if their actions are in progress or completed. This allows us to engage meaningful with them from a position of knowledge and guide them where necessary.

UKUPC Responsible Procurement Group

SUPC are proud to have a member of the team actively participating in the UKUPC Responsible Procurement Group - a new cross consortia group that focuses on all aspects of Responsible Procurement. Deliverables have included a Responsible Procurement Glossary, to ensure we standardise meanings across the sector and our respective supply chains. The group have also produced standard tender questions, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, some of which tackle modern slavery; this is available for all consortia and all members to use at tender or call-off stage.

SUMS Sustainability Policy

SUMS group have recently updated its Sustainability Policy, to make specific reference to 'People and Social' and outline our commitment to human rights throughout supply chains, in not only modern slavery but Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity. Many aspects of this will help change the conversation around slavery and marginalisation.

Through UKUPC we align with the other HE consortia and share a common [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#).

Electronics Watch

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 subscribe to Electronics Watch and include their contract monitoring clauses in all relevant agreements that we award.

In 2019, Electronics Watch undertook eight full compliance investigations, documented and responded to worker complaints in nine factories, screened 56 factories, conducted a full regional risk assessment. One supply chain screening involved two major OEMs covering 38 suppliers. As a result, ten factories improved their conditions, eight brands engaged to improve conditions, and compensation was secured for 12,000 workers for excessive and unfair recruitment fees.

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.

Our Plans for Next Year

Sustain Supplier Code of Conduct

SUPC have adopted the Sustain Supplier Code of Conduct. This code is being adopted by all UK Purchasing consortia and SUPC's adoption of this code will help standardise the sector approach to modern slavery and the expectations we put on our supply base, and those of customers and institutions. SUPC will be working to embed the code of practice within SUPC practices and those of its suppliers.

Netpositives Supplier Engagement Tool

SUPC are updating our action plan on the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool. The outcomes will be two-fold, to increase our awareness and allow us to better review, improve and update our own processes and policies.

This will also allow us to demonstrate to our suppliers that the demands and standards we expect of them, are standards to which we hold ourselves accountable.

SUPC Responsible Procurement Policy

The SUMS Sustainability Policy makes mention of a new SUPC Responsible Procurement Policy which will formalise and build on the standards we already work to. By formalising them and publicising them, we are ensuring that we show our



clients and institutions the standards we work to, as well as showing the supply chain what we will be expecting of them to meet our own goals.

SUPC Modern Slavery Statement Guidance

We are working with the UKUPC Responsible Group to develop a guidance to help SMEs and other organisations produce meaningful modern slavery statements that go further than meeting the basic legal requirements. We believe this will help SMEs improve their tender responses. It will outline how by making some simple changes, awareness of modern slavery in supply chains can be increased, how it can be stopped and prevented. This will complement existing guidance that allows public sector buyers to evaluate modern slavery statements as meaningful documents.

Electronics Watch

SUPC is currently in discussion with the other members of the UKUPC regarding sector wide membership to cover all of the members of all the UKUPC affiliated consortia. To this end, SUPC are actively pursuing Electronics Watch membership for the members of SUPC.

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
08/02/2021