

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium

Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

August 2017

Introduction

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) is a membership-based buying organisation for universities and further education colleges that primarily 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.

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

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

Our structure

The SUPC Management Board has responsibility for setting our strategic direction and the SUPC Council advises on operational issues. The SUPC Management Board is made up of representatives from different disciplines in our member institutions as well as an independent external procurement expert. Board members represent Finance Directors, Estates Directors and Heads of Procurement.

The SUPC Council is constituted from Heads of Procurement from each of our Full Member institutions, and hence represent a wide range of institutions from large research-intensive universities to smaller specialist universities and everything in between.

SUPC is one of six separate, regional purchasing consortia serving UK higher education, sharing many of the framework agreements that we manage for the benefit of our members nationally.

SUPC is a member of Procurement England Limited (PEL), the shared vehicle by which English HE purchasing consortia manage joint developmental and improvement projects for collaborative procurement in our sector. Together we have published our shared Sustainability Policy to which all PEL member consortia are committed. This statement is designed to satisfy the requirements of Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, by informing our members, students, staff, campaigners and the public about SUPC and its policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains.

Although, as a business, SUPC turns over far less than the threshold for businesses required to publish a statement under the Act, SUPC's Board considers that our members' spend (around £450m annually) through its supply agreements warrants a statement on the risks inherent in our supply chains and the steps we are taking to address them, in line with SUPC's pioneering practices in sustainable and responsible procurement.

SUPC have also registered with the TISC report website to demonstrate our commitment to eradicating Modern Slavery throughout the Supply chains supporting Higher Education.

Our policy

We share our Members' values when it comes to responsible procurement. Our current [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) is shared by all purchasing consortia that make up Procurement England Limited, our vehicle for national, developmental collaboration in procurement in English higher education.

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

SUPC's supply chains mainly fall under four 'super-categories', which are:

- Science, Technical, Engineering and Medical Goods and Services
- Professional Services
- ICT Equipment and Services
- Estates Goods and Services

The principal areas which carry material risks are office supplies, laboratory consumables, ICT and AV equipment, and some estates services, such as cleaning and security services.

Many of our suppliers in these higher-risk areas will be asked to commit to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and we will be working to persuade all 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 shall not be used;
5. Living wages are paid;
6. Working hours are not excessive;
7. No discrimination is practised;
8. Regular employment is provided; and
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.

Our due diligence processes and their effectiveness

1. 100% of our supply chain have been made aware that modern slavery is a consideration for their business

2. X % of our supply chain have acknowledged modern slavery is a consideration for their business

3. X % of our supply chain have committed to take action

4. X % of our supply chain have completed actions that address modern slavery in their business

5. X% of our supply chain have set actions to undertake training on modern slavery

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 who operate in low-cost countries where modern forms of slavery are prevalent. Suppliers in these higher-risk areas will be asked to commit to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) as a Mandatory Qualification Criteria in the renewal of the Laboratory Consumables Framework being undertaken in 2017/18.

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 and other members. We also play an active part in the management of supply agreements led by our 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 early 2017 Electronics Watch reviews and audits have been conducted at factories operated by sub-contractors to suppliers including Apple, Dell and HP in China, India and the Czech Republic.

We will continue to work with our contracted suppliers to commit to new monitoring 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 closely with contracted suppliers to ensure we fully meet our responsibilities with regards to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains.

Many of the suppliers within the Estates supply chains are SMEs and as such do not always reach the minimum turnover required to have a formal modern slavery statement. SUPC ensures that these SMEs understand their obligations under section 54 of the modern slavery act regardless of turnover and are working with them to ensure they are compliant with the annual reporting requirements contained with the act.

Our training, capacity building and contribution to wider policy development

In May, our annual conference, staged in partnership with SUPC, included a session for our Members on the Modern Slavery Act. This led to the development of a one-day training course for procurement professionals and other managers in higher education, delivered by the BHRE for the Higher Education Procurement Association (HEPA).

We plan for all SUPC Procurement staff to complete the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) on-line training module on ethical procurement and supply by the end of October 2017.

Our plans for the future

As part of this reporting exercise now and in the coming years, SUPC expresses its commitment to better understand its supply chains and work towards greater transparency and responsibility towards people working within them.

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

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