

Draft SESAM statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires commercial organisations that supply goods or services and have a minimum annual turnover (currently £36 million) to publish an annual "slavery and human trafficking statement". Although South East Scotland Area Meeting's turnover falls below the level which would require us to make an annual statement, we have chosen to issue this statement to demonstrate our commitment to addressing modern slavery and human trafficking.

South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is an operator of meeting and event venues in ~~the~~ Scotland. We currently operate meeting houses in Edinburgh and Kelso. We recognise that there is scope for modern slavery to occur and the risk of modern slavery in our organisation will be kept under review.

South East Scotland Area Meeting is committed to preventing modern slavery within our operations and sphere of influence.

Currently, we consider that the areas of greatest risk are within our supply chain and the way in which our venues are used.

Supply chain risks

We recognise that one of the ways in which we mitigate the risk of modern slavery is through our own purchasing practices. We actively seek out suppliers who act in an ethical and transparent manner, pay fairly and promptly and give appropriate briefs and lead times.

We expect all those suppliers in our supply chain to comply with our values. If a supplier is alleged to be demonstrating unacceptable practices it will be investigated. This may include taking appropriate advice from relevant trade unions and/or labour rights groups. Where allegations are substantiated the welfare of workers will be a key consideration and as such our first step will be to either provide suppliers with guidance on the required improvements and/or seek to work with them to understand the root causes of the problem and develop a joint action plan. If no improvement is implemented within a reasonable period or suppliers indicate an unwillingness to address unacceptable practices, we will take steps which would ultimately result in the termination of our trading relationship. Suppliers may also be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Building use risk

The same applies of our venues. We are committed to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to seek to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place on our estate; either through our supply chain or the way in which our venues are used.

To this end we have a policy of minimising the use of agency/subcontracted staff to provide our hospitality services. Where use of agency staff/subcontractors is unavoidable we have systems to check that workers are paid at least the minimum wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation).

In the unlikely event that staff ~~or others~~ suspect that our premises are being used by customers or members of the public as a location in which slavery or human trafficking is taking place; our first concern will be for victim welfare. We will wherever possible seek advice from appropriate authorities and civil society organisations.

Commented [1]:

Do we have such a policy on agency staff, and minimum wage checks? MGW – not that I am aware, and I wonder whether this is proportionate for an organisation of our size? We use agency staff for cleaning and I understand that we ask whether they pay living wage.

Commented [MW2]: If we delete the previous paragraph as unrealistic I wonder if we can broaden this one, so that we at least commit to investigating any concerns reported to us?

We will continually review our existing procedures and supply chain for compliance. This will determine associated risk, detection and prevention of modern-day slavery and human trafficking within our supply chain for products and services to the organisation.

We will communicate this statement to all staff as appropriate to ensure an understanding of the risk of modern slavery in our business and supply chains.

This statement has been adopted by SESAM Trustees on