

## **MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT**

April 2016 - March 2017

Onward Homes is the largest registered provider of social housing based solely in the North West of England. We are a not-for-profit organisation regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency.

As a group of leading housing providers with a 50-year track record, we're committed to the regeneration and sustainability of our region.

Our member organisations are united by a common purpose – to make a positive difference in the communities we serve.

- We build, manage and maintain homes for people who are unable to access housing on the open market
- We deliver high quality homes and first class services that make a real difference to the people living in our neighbourhoods
- We offer customers support and assistance, helping people to overcome the challenges faced in our communities
- We provide homes and support to vulnerable people, helping them to live independent lives in the community
- We work with partners, voluntary groups and government agencies to provide more homes for people from all backgrounds, meeting the increasing need for housing throughout the North West

We are pleased to be publishing our second Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement covering April 2016 – March 2017, with the aim of tackling inequality and improving life chances, which is one of our key operating principles.

Onward Homes is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking within our business and our neighbourhoods. This is our second Statement and it sets out the steps we've taken to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in our business, and also states what we intend to do over the coming year to prevent modern slavery occurring.

### **Over the last year we:**

- Continued to hold the Living Wage Foundation accreditation, ensuring that contractors we work with comply with the requirements of the Foundation
- Requested Modern Slavery Statements from our top suppliers. Out of 23, 14 are required to have a Statement and so far we have received Statements from 13 of those and are pursuing a MSS from one company. We received Statements from 2 suppliers that are not required to have one by law, and we will be encouraging other smaller companies to follow their good example

- Worked with procurement consortia to raise awareness of Modern Slavery
- Launched a mandatory Modern Slavery e-learning module for all Onward colleagues (over 1000 colleagues) to complete on an annual basis
- Developed a tailored Modern Slavery presentation for contractors and requested that 37 contractors/main suppliers deliver it to their workforce across the region
- Raised awareness of the issue with our customers in an online newsletter
- Ensured that Modern Slavery is a regular agenda item at Onward's Safeguarding forum meetings, and our definition of Safeguarding now includes Modern Slavery
- Developed an internal Staff Vigilance guide for colleagues to help keep our tenants safe, which sets out the actions expected of all staff in respect of safeguarding, domestic abuse and modern slavery

**In the coming year we will:**

- Establish a list of preferred employment agencies and as part of that process we will ask how companies are tackling modern slavery
- Mark Anti -Slavery Day on October 18 with a number of activities to raise colleagues' and customers' awareness of the issue
- Review our Confidential Reporting policy to ensure it covers the reporting of Modern Slavery suspicions
- Include reports of suspected modern slavery cases from colleagues as part of our wider safeguarding reporting to Board
- Revise and improve our E- Tendering portal to include information about Modern Slavery so that all prospective partners are aware of the importance Onward places on tackling Modern Slavery

This statement has been approved by Onward Homes' Board of Management and is signed by Onward Homes' Chair.

**Signed**



**Date**

**21/9/17**

**Name**

**Dr. Neil Goodwin**