

News story: Home Office tells business: open up on modern slavery or face further action

The Home Office is writing directly to chief executives of 17,000 businesses telling them to open up about modern slavery in their supply chains, or risk being named as in breach of the law.

Businesses with a turnover of more than £36 million must publish annual transparency statements, known as a Modern Slavery Statement, setting out what they are doing to stop modern slavery and forced labour practices occurring in their business and supply chains.

At the moment, it is estimated that 60% of companies in scope have published a statement. Whilst there are many examples of good practice, some of these statements are poor in quality or fail to even meet the basic legal requirements.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

It is horrible to think some of the goods and services we buy could have been produced by someone forced into modern slavery. This is abhorrent and as global leaders in the fight against modern slavery, we will not tolerate it.

Some businesses are already leading the way in taking action by being open and transparent about what they are doing to identify, tackle and prevent forced labour in their supply chains, but too many are still failing to meet their basic legal obligations.

That's why the Home Office is sending letters to businesses today with a clear message that continued non-compliance will not be tolerated.

It comes as government buildings, including 10 Downing Street and the Home Office, prepare to light up red to show their support for Anti-Slavery Day 2018.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office and the Department for Health and Social Care will also be turning red this evening (Thursday 17 October) to mark the day.

Businesses and landmarks across the UK – including London's BT Tower, Manchester's Co-Op HQ, Bristol's Old Vic Theatre and Nottingham Trent's Cricket Ground – are lined up to follow suit.

Earlier this year, Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss

were asked to independently review the ground-breaking Modern Slavery Act, brought in by Prime Minister Theresa May as Home Secretary.

To ensure we continue to tackle this evolving crime they will consider whether laws should be further strengthened to ensure companies take action to address forced labour from supply chains at home and abroad.

The review will consider a full range of options to drive compliance including tougher sanctions. The Home Office intends to publish a list of non-compliant companies failing to publish a Modern Slavery Statement at the end of the financial year.

In addition, the Home Office has published the [Modern Slavery Annual Report 2018](#).

Press release: Draft bill to restore and renew Palace of Westminster published today

The bill to restore and renew the Palace of Westminster has been published in draft today (18 October 2018) – implementing the decision taken by Parliament to move forward with a full programme of work.

The [Draft Parliamentary Buildings \(Restoration and Renewal\) Bill](#) establishes the statutory bodies responsible for the work to ensure value for money for the taxpayer, whilst securing the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament for future generations.

It also ensures Parliamentarians are consulted and given a vote on the design, cost and timing of the work.

Andrea Leadsom, Leader of the House of Commons, said:

I am pleased that the publication of this draft bill allows the programme to make progress. It marks the next step in Parliament's efforts to protect the Palace of Westminster as the home of our democracy for future generations.

Following agreement by MPs across all parties, we are supporting Parliamentary Authorities to deliver on that decision, and press ahead with this work.

The government's role is to ensure taxpayers' money is protected, and the measures in this draft bill reflect our determination to ensure the delivery of the restoration and renewal programme runs

to time and represents the best value for money. There can be no blank cheque for this work.

The draft bill gives effect to the resolutions voted for by Parliament earlier this year, to create a governance structure for the project by setting up a Sponsor Body, a Delivery Authority and an Estimates Commission.

These bodies will be able to make strategic decisions on the restoration and renewal programme.

The Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body will have overall responsibility for the restoration and renewal programme and is comprised of a mixture of Parliamentarians and external experts.

It will also be empowered to form a Delivery Authority – a non-profit company that will put forward proposals for the restoration works and ensure they are delivered on time and to specification.

This two-tier approach, as used in the successful London Olympics project, was approved by Parliament as the best structure to deliver a value for money programme.

The bill also establishes a Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission which will review and comment on the Sponsor Body's cost estimates and lay them before Parliament.

This bill also gives the Treasury powers to scrutinise and comment on the annual estimates for the funding of the programme. The National Audit Office will also be able to undertake audits and value-for-money reviews.

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, Leader of the House of Lords, said:

As an important parliamentary project, the publication of the draft bill will give members of both Houses, and other interested parties, an opportunity to scrutinise the approach being taken to the governance of the Restoration and Renewal Programme before the bill is introduced.

We welcome the forthcoming Parliamentary scrutiny to ensure that the draft bill achieves the aim of ensuring that the Restoration and Renewal Programme will be sufficiently independent, transparent and accountable to Parliament and to the public.

The decision to take forward these works was made by MPs across Parliament as a result of serious structural, mechanical and electrical, fire safety and asbestos issues in the Palace of Westminster, which cannot be resolved outside a major programme of refurbishment.

Unless significant restoration work takes place, major, irreversible damage may be done to the building, and the risk of a significant building failure

is increasing every year.

1. On 31 January 2018, the House of Commons approved a resolution that work should commence on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.
 2. The resolution required that 'immediate steps be taken' to establish a Shadow Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, and that their 'statutory successors' be established by legislation in due course.
 3. A resolution in identical terms was approved by the House of Lords on 6 February 2018.
 4. The UK Parliament's Restoration and Renewal Programme was established to tackle the significant work that needs to be done to protect and preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster, and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament in the 21st century.
 5. Both Houses of Parliament decided to create a Sponsor Board in shadow form in July, with the following members:
 - Elizabeth Peace CBE (Chair)
 - Lord Carter of Coles
 - Lord Deighton KBE
 - Rt Hon the Lord Geidt GCB GCV0 OBE
 - Neil Gray MP
 - Brigid Janssen
 - Rt Hon Sir Patrick McLoughlin MP
 - Marta Phillips OBE
 - Baroness Scott of Needham Market
 - Mark Tami MP
 - Simon Thurley CBE
 - Simon Wright OBE
 6. For more information, please contact the Restoration and Renewal Media Relations Team on 020 7219 8716 or email restorationandrenewal.comms@parliament.uk
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Press release: Recreational angling puts £1.4bn into English economy

This is according to an Environment Agency study published today, the first time since 2005 that a major study of angling activity and expenditure has taken place.

The Environment Agency study, [A Survey of Freshwater Angling in England](#) examined the spending patterns and behaviour of 10,000 surveyed fishing licence holders to build a picture of the market value of freshwater angling in England.

The study found that angling for coarse fish was the most popular activity for the nation's anglers, accounting for 19 million days of fishing with carp

the most sought after species with an estimated 7 million days fishing time. Game anglers spent 1.6 million days fishing for salmon and trout.

Other findings included:

- Across all types of angling, almost 70% of all angling days were on lakes, ponds, reservoirs.
- Most coarse angling trips took place between 5 and 25 miles from the angler's home. Anglers travelled significantly further for game fishing, with most salmon anglers travelling at least 50 miles from home to fish.
- Anglers each spent an average of over £400 on tackle and around £110 on club or syndicate fees
- A clean and attractive environment with minimal disturbance was more highly valued by anglers than the size and abundance of fish.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency said:

This study highlights the money anglers put into their sport and its importance to some of England's regional economies.

All income from fishing licence sales is used to fund our work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries. This includes improving habitats for fish, facilities for anglers and tackling illegal fishing. We also work with partners such as the Angling Trust, Get Hooked on Fishing, the Canal and River Trust and the Angling Trade Association to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Angling Trust, said:

These figures confirm that angling makes a huge contribution to the economy, alongside the many benefits it brings to the health and wellbeing of millions of people each year. The Angling Trust, working with the Environment Agency, are focused on protecting and growing angling not only as an important contributor to our economy, but also to our society as a whole. Over the last three years we have worked with the Environment Agency to reinvest millions of pounds of rod licence income in improving facilities for anglers, providing information about how and where to fish, together we have helped over 77,000 people try fishing for the first time.

The study assessed legal angling activity, preferences and expenditure patterns in 2015 and compared them with activity in 2005.

[Press release: Recreational angling puts £1.4bn into English economy](#)

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[Press release: Environment Agency commits to fight against modern slavery](#)

- Over 100 EA officers trained to spot signs of exploitation
- Two thirds of victims reported to have worked in waste industry
- Anti-Slavery Day raising awareness of need to eradicate modern slavery

The Environment Agency (EA) has committed to working with police and enforcement agencies to eradicate modern day slavery from the waste and recycling industry by training officers to spot signs of exploitation during site inspections.

Latest figures from anti-slavery charity, Hope for Justice, show that two-thirds of victims are reported to have worked within the waste industry. In response, the EA has worked with the charity to train over 100 waste and regulation EA officers to recognise exploitative work practices.

Today (Thursday 18 October) is Anti-Slavery Day across England and Wales, a day introduced in 2010 to raise awareness of the need to eradicate modern day slavery in all its forms.

The training for officers precedes the government's organised waste crime review, due out later this year, which recognises an emerging criminal subset within the waste management industry. Earlier this year, the EA introduced the use of body worn cameras for waste enforcement officers following a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

Marie Fallon, Director of Regulated Industry at the Environment Agency said:

Modern slavery is an abhorrent crime that often goes unseen. Whilst the majority of the waste businesses we regulate are well run, there are a concerning number of operators who delve into criminal practices which harm the environment, local communities and their

own work force.

Our work with Help for Justice has given our officers the skills to understand the signs of modern slavery which can add value to the work of the police, partners and local authorities who collectively are working to stamp it out.

Sara Squires, UK Training Manager at anti-slavery charity Hope for Justice, said:

It is fantastic to see such strong backing for these efforts from the Environment Agency. I know from first-hand experience that good-quality training leads to an improved response. More than half of referrals to Hope for Justice of potential victims of modern slavery come from organisations we have trained, and many of those referrals lead directly to rescues.

I have sat with rescued victims as they realise they are now safe and free, and as they begin to understand that they can finally start making their own decisions in an atmosphere of care and support, which is so important.

Better understanding among frontline agencies of the indicators of exploitation and the best ways to respond will change the landscape of anti-slavery efforts in the UK, by increasing prosecutions, deterring traffickers and supporting survivors.

EA officers have been instructed to look for common signs of exploitation including an extreme fear of authorities, signs of physical or psychological trauma including anxiety or malnourishment, and evidence suggesting workers may be living on site.

Anyone with suspicions of contemporary slavery can report it to Hope for Justice on 0300 008 8000 or email info.uk@hopeforjustice.org

To report waste crime, please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ENDS

Note to editors

EA announces new powers to tackle waste crime:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-powers-to-crack-down-on-waste-crime>