

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](#).