

Modern Slavery Statement

Introduction

This Statement sets out Acacia's commitment to recognising and preventing slavery and human trafficking in all its business activities and within its supply chains. It outlines the steps we have taken to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA) and minimise the risks of any association with practices which undermine the principles of safety and dignity for our staff, clients and volunteers, particularly with respect to people from vulnerable groups.

As a charity deriving its inspiration and values from the Christian faith one of our core values is to uphold human rights and to never knowingly take advantage of another person and so we continue to strive to minimise the risks of slavery and human trafficking in our business and supply chains and to uphold the rights and welfare of everyone.

Organisation Structure and Business

Acacia is a Birmingham based Christian charity which was founded in 2004 by two local mums who both experienced postnatal depression and were determined to help other families. We have been supporting families ever since. Our services are free and are available to mums and dads in the Birmingham area who are experiencing pre and postnatal depression and anxiety.

We provide, free of charge, a wide range of individual, group based and peer support services to help families recover from the symptoms associated with pre and postnatal depression and anxiety. The service is delivered by both volunteers and paid staff. One of the things that makes Acacia unique is that most of our staff and volunteers have experienced maternal mental health or other mental health problems. The majority of our business is in the direct provision of support services and our supply chain whilst limited is primarily service based ie. The purchasing of additional locally based agency workers.

Due Diligence

We have taken time to understand the implications of the MSA and identify the areas within our business and supply chain where the greatest risk exists.

These are:

- Procurement – modern slavery can occur in a supply chain through inadequate or inappropriate procurement practices. Our supply chain consists primarily of services rather than goods, with the highest risk areas being associated with our helping hands at home and crèche agency staff.
- Supporting vulnerable clients within our service – we may also come across slavery and/or human trafficking in connection with the vulnerable people we support, in particular those from minority or socially excluded groups who may be subject to forced labour and/or domestic servitude, and potentially in connection with our workforce.

We have identified the main risks in respect of these key areas and put measures in place to mitigate them. These include:

- Undertaking an ongoing review of our policy framework and instigating amendments to support compliance when and where required.
- Implementing mandatory training for every volunteer/employee explaining the implications of modern slavery and what they should do to recognise and report potential incidences.
- Screening our procurement processes to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place at each stage in the process.
- Ensuring both Acacia and any preferred supplier agencies we use have the correct checks and balances within recruitment systems, such as eligibility to work in the UK and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Continuing to maintain our accreditation as a Real Living Wage Employer.

Real Living Wage

Acacia is an Accredited Living Wage employer and has been certified by the Living Wage Foundation. By paying the real Living Wage, employers are voluntarily taking a stand to ensure their employees can earn a wage which is enough to live on

The Living Wage is a voluntary higher rate of base pay. It provides a benchmark for responsible employers who choose to pay their employees a rate that meets the basic cost of living in the UK. It applies to Acacia employees, contactors and sub-contractors.

Maintaining this accreditation verifies that we are actively committed to preventing modern slavery and that we have verified that our subcontractors/service supply chain is paying real Living Wages to their staff .

Safeguarding

The Acacia Safeguarding Policy includes reference to modern slavery as a type or pattern of behaviour which constitutes abuse of a person at risk; it also requires all Acacia employees to complete regular training on safeguarding adults/children including recognising and responding to modern slavery.

Policy

Acacia believes in treating its staff fairly. Employee's wellbeing in relation to modern slavery is supported by several internal policies:

- Whistleblowing
- Equality and Diversity
- Employees Manual
- Discipline and Grievance
- Environmental Policy

Recruitment

Acacia carries out all relevant recruitment requirements in terms of checking eligibility to work in the UK and carrying out of necessary checks such as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and references.

Monitoring and Effectiveness

Completion of mandatory training is monitored and processes are in place to identify and address instances in which staff members have failed to complete.

As a key component of our Real Living Wage Employer we continually ensure that all external agencies and service providers which we procure are paying all of their staff the real living wage.

As part of our internal policies we always endeavour to purchase food and drink items which are Fair Trade or equivalent.

Governance

Responsibility for compliance with the MSA rests at the highest level with our Board of Trustees and our Directors.

Georgina Dean, Chair, Acacia Board of Trustees, Feb 2023