



Is your company ready for the Modern Slavery Act?

**'Soft' reporting deadline of 30 September 2016 for
companies with a financial year end of 31 March 2016**

Construction industry faces 'strong
risk' of modern slavery

Modern slavery statements: September deadline
looms

PM calls for global action to stop
modern slavery

Championed by Prime Minister Theresa May, the Modern Slavery Act has quickly become one of the biggest topics – and concerns – for medium and large businesses in the UK.

The Modern Slavery Act requires all UK companies with a turnover greater than £36m to publish a Modern Slavery Statement each year. This details your anti-modern slavery policies and progress and doesn't just apply to UK operations, but because of the section 54 clause, Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC), your entire global supply chain.

Those who don't comply, or do so only notionally, risk being publicly named and shamed by the media and by NGOs. In short, not addressing modern slavery seriously could do untold damage to your company's reputation.

The question is, therefore: how sure are you that your entire supply chain is modern slavery free?

Here are seven key modern slavery act considerations:

1. Be prepared. The Modern Slavery Act statement cannot be left until the last minute. In fact, addressing Modern Slavery should be an immediate and ongoing endeavour.

2. Make your statement as specific as you can. Nobody is expecting the problem of Modern Slavery to be stamped out immediately, but your statement should identify problem areas and give a detailed analysis for how you plan to tackle them. [The Government sets out guidelines for the statement here.](#)

3. Nominate a dedicated specialist/team. Wherever possible, you should have a dedicated specialist in-house who can take the lead on developing an anti Modern Slavery policy, as well as its implementation and evaluation. Having a wider support team – including representation from legal, C-Suite and communications is a good idea.

4. Keep your statement honest and transparent. A golden rule in communications, but especially true in an area where some will be on the look out to expose large companies. This means meticulously fact-checking statements before they go live, and ensuring they are compliant.

5. Bring in the professionals. It's straightforward to comply with the Modern Slavery Act – it just involves publishing a statement in the right manner. But actually eradicating modern slavery from your supply chain is something else. Depending on your situation, you may consider hiring an external auditing company that specialises in the Modern Slavery Act.

6. Seize the opportunity. The Modern Slavery Act is a good opportunity to review your employment policies, practices and broader human rights position. The Act's focus on labour and working conditions in your direct operations and supply chains represents an opportunity to improve your efficiencies, drive continuous improvement, demonstrate leadership and deliver competitive advantage.

7. Be proactive. In 2016, reputational integrity is fundamental to business success. Whatever the contents of your statement, businesses who proactively communicate their CSR achievements build up goodwill with their stakeholders. An ongoing CSR-centric campaign in the media and on social media is a great way to positively position your company among key stakeholders.

Sustain Worldwide and Spider PR offer a bespoke Modern Slavery Act Communications Service.

This can include:

- Announcing your release of your statement and co-ordinating media enquiries
- Ongoing announcements as Modern Slavery Act goals are met
- Sector-leading thought-leadership on Modern Slavery Act (sector specific and broader)
- Support and advice on statement from a media point of view
- Crisis support in the event you are targeted by the media
- Monitoring service – upcoming trends / competitor analysis
- Business critical campaigns to meet your specific objectives
- Social media
- Workshops facilitation with your operational business teams and supply chain

Sustain Worldwide and Spider PR are also experts in developing strategic CSR communication campaigns that highlight the positive work your company is doing, positioning you as a leader in your field.

For **more information** about how we can help you communicate effectively, contact Gordon Miller on 07771 790299 or Thom Walton on 0207 403 6900.

To find out more about how the Modern Slavery Act will impact construction businesses:

Sustain Worldwide, working with PR partner, Spider PR, and BRE, a UK-headquartered world leading environmental research & science centre, have partnered to convene the inaugural Modern Slavery and Ethical Labour in Construction Leadership Symposium, on 10 November 2016 at the House of Commons, London SW1.

Symposium Supporters and Sponsors include: GLA, ETI, IHRB, BHRRRC, Stronger Together, Unchosen, FSI Worldwide, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Mazars, Shoosmiths, Marshalls, Interserve, Travis Perkins, Global Group.

For details of the full programme and speakers for this business critical international symposium, visit www.MSA4Construction.com