

# Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2025

## Introduction

References to we, us and Ward Hadaway in this statement relate to Ward Hadaway LLP.

We recognise that modern slavery is a global issue and we are committed to maintaining effective systems and controls to safeguard our business against any form of modern slavery taking place within it and our supply chain.

Our Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement (our **Statement**) is published in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the **Act**) and sets out the work we have undertaken this year to build on and develop our efforts to ensure transparency in our business and throughout our supply chain to eradicate the risk of modern slavery. We acknowledge our responsibility under the Act and continue to work to achieve transparency within our business to meet the objectives of the Act.

## Our business

We conduct all our business in an honest and ethical manner.

During the period to which this Statement relates We have continued to provide a full range of legal services in the UK from our offices in Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle. Since 1 June 2025 we have opened a new office in Birmingham and we have merged with a law firm based in Teesside. We will include and consider these two new offices for compliance with the Act in our 2025-2026 Statement. Our client base continues to span the UK and overseas.

As a full service law firm we offer a variety of services to a wide cross section of client groups including private and public sector organisations and private individuals. Our clients operate across multiple sectors and territories both within the UK and internationally including manufacturing, emerging technology, all aspects of the built environment, healthcare, public and third sectors including local authorities and charities.

People are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in acting fairly, openly, responsibly and honestly at all times to everyone we come across. As a firm, we take our social responsibilities seriously not only for our own people, but for the communities in which we live and work and the organisations we work with. Our Responsible Business Board is chaired by our Client Relationship Director, with wider membership including our Managing Partner who is also a member of Management Board. Its purpose is to co-ordinate delivery of our Responsible Business Strategy, including publication of our Responsible Business Manifesto and annual report.

Reporting into our Responsible Business Board are the committees which exist to drive forward our Responsible Business Strategy, these being the Wellbeing Committee, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Environment Committee and the Social Value Committee.

We have been a Real Living Wage accredited employer since 20 February 2025 meaning that we pay all directly employed staff a Living Wage.

## Our policies

We have a number of policies and procedures which support our compliance with the Act, and which are reviewed and updated as appropriate on a rolling basis, including:

- Modern Slavery Policy
- Responsible Business Policy
- External Appointments and Interests, Pro Bono Work, Volunteering and Disclosure Policy and Procedure
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Procedure
- Procurement Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

## Our supply chains

We expect our contractors and suppliers to meet the same high ethical standards that we apply to ourselves and the way we do business.

The majority of our suppliers are still UK businesses although some are multi-nationals. Our supply chain is not complex; it consists largely of the purchase of services and goods to support the delivery of our services such as IT equipment, software, facilities maintenance and cleaning, general office equipment and consumables.

We have continued to increase our focus on understanding our supplier compliance and approach to modern slavery this year as part of a wider review of our end-to-end supplier onboarding and ongoing management processes. We have created a new Supplier Management Working Group (the **Group**) to specifically consider and review the standards we expect of our supply chain in areas including legal and regulatory compliance, as well as ethics and sustainability. This Group is also looking at ways to improve how we assess our suppliers performance through the creation of a management framework and the use of questionnaires and technology to provide better oversight and internal reporting capabilities.

## Risk assessment and due diligence

We continue to assess our supply chain prior to contracting with them to better assess the risk they might pose in relation to modern slavery. This includes asking suppliers to provide information on various legislative requirements, including the Act, during our supplier onboarding process. Our assessment of suppliers, if adverse, may lead to either their exclusion from our supply chain or a requirement for improvement.

This year we have completed a further detailed risk assessment of existing tier 1 suppliers in our supply chain. This involved scoring suppliers against various criteria in relation to factors such as known ethical breaches or criminal convictions, sectoral risk, geographical risk based on the 2023 Global Slavery Index, and taking into account matters such as our spend with the supplier and the length of our relationship with them. We used this scoring system to categorise our suppliers as representing either a high, medium or low risk of modern slavery taking place in their business. Of 83 tier 1 suppliers assessed using these criteria, they were all assessed as low risk meaning that the assessment of our supply chain year ending 30 April 2025 has identified no concern of modern slavery.

We will continue to review and refine our approach to how we engage with our existing suppliers and our processes for onboarding new suppliers as a result of the work being undertaken by the Group.

We have continued with our annual completion of a sustainability assessment via EcoVadis to assess and help us continuously improve our position on ESG risk and compliance. This independent annual assessment by EcoVadis includes a review of, amongst other things, our approach to labour and human rights and includes our response to modern slavery.

## Effectiveness

We continue to make progress in developing and refining our anti-slavery procedures. At this stage we have not adopted any specific modern slavery key performance indicators over and above our risk assessment process. However, we will continue to actively review what those indicators should be and how we measure them.

## Training and awareness

Within the last 12 months we have taken the decision to rollout modern slavery training to our senior leadership and management teams, and also to those individuals who are involved in supplier engagement across the different departments (both where we are the buyer of goods and services and also where we are the supplier of legal services). The purpose of the training is to help to raise awareness of the risks of modern slavery both within our organisation and also our supply chain and we hope that this in turn will help with the identification and reporting of concerns of such behaviour.

We will continue to keep our approach to training and awareness on modern slavery under review over the coming 12 months.

## Publication

We have taken the decision to voluntarily publish our Statement on the Government's Modern Slavery Statement Registry, as well as on our website. Our Statement is also uploaded to various platforms operated by or on behalf of our clients on request, who in turn are assessing our compliance with the Act. Our staff, our clients and our suppliers are aware of our Statement via the publication on our website.

## Approval

This Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the financial year ending 30 April 2025 was approved by the Management Board of Ward Hadaway LLP on 24 October 2025, and is signed by Steven Petrie, Managing Partner, in accordance with section 54 of the Act.

*Steven Petrie*

**Steven Petrie**

Managing Partner

