



Home Office

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Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 March 2020

Dear Yvette,

I am writing to inform you that today, on the fifth anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act's Royal Assent, the UK has become the first country to publish a Government Modern Slavery Statement.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 included a ground-breaking requirement for large businesses to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and global supply chains. Now we are leading the way for the public sector and the publication of this first ever Government Modern Slavery underlines the Government's commitment to eradicating this heinous crime and harnessing our spending power in this fight.

The Statement reports on the actions being taken to address the risk of modern slavery across approximately £50bn of annual spend on goods and services by central Government. This includes direct engagement with around 400 suppliers to implement effective modern slavery due diligence and modern slavery training delivered to over 250 Government commercial staff.

The Statement includes headline goals for ministerial departments to work towards as they prepare to publish their own annual Modern Slavery Statements from 2021 onwards. The Government will also publish a progress update in 2021.

While we have made great progress there is still more that needs to be done and we are also looking at what more we can do to strengthen our approach. We have consulted on proposals to extend the reporting requirement to large public bodies and are committed to enhancing transparency through the development of a new Government run reporting service for modern slavery statements. Five years on from the Modern Slavery Act we remain as committed as we were in 2015 to eradicating modern slavery in partnership with business the wider public sector and civil society.

A copy of this letter and the Government Modern Slavery Statement will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

Victoria Atkins MP
Minister for Safeguarding