

Report to Cabinet

Title:	Modern Slavery: What steps should the Council take to ensure it fully meets the responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act 2015?
Date:	23 April 2018
Date can be implemented:	1 May 2018
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Local members affected:	All
Portfolio areas affected:	All

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Summary

The Transport, Environment, Economy and Communities Select Committee undertook an Inquiry on Modern Slavery which examined the implications of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act") for local authorities and the steps the Council should take in order to comply with its duties under the Act.

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.' (Modern Slavery Strategy, 2014)

The inquiry group held evidence gathering sessions between September and November 2017 to develop the conclusions and recommendations highlighted within their report. During these evidence sessions they heard from a variety of witnesses including:

- Head of Community Wellbeing and Lead Officer for Community Safety
- Cabinet Member for Community Engagement
- The Heads of Safeguarding at BCC (Adults and Children)
- A BCC Social Worker working in the Swan Unit (CSE)
- Written evidence from BCC Executive Directors

- Thames Valley Police(Investigations lead, and Anti-Slavery Coordinator)
- Manager of Rahab, (Victim Service in Reading)

Under Section 52 of the Act, Councils have a key role to play in tackling modern slavery. This includes the identification and reporting of victims; training and awareness to improve identification; submission of intelligence to police; support for victims - adults and children, and tackling perpetrators as part of a multi-agency.

The Council also has duties to address modern slavery under other legislation. For example, Modern slavery is included as a category of abuse under the **Care Act 2014**. Duties include a duty to promote well-being including protection from abuse and neglect (section 1) and to carry out s.42(1) safeguarding enquiry's. **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act** places a duty on local authorities to consider crime and community safety in all its decisions.

Furthermore, the requirements under the Act underpin the Council's strategic priority of "safeguarding our vulnerable". This highlights a commitment to protecting slavery victims as vulnerable people (regardless of legal duties). This crime is, and will be, affecting vulnerable residents and children in Buckinghamshire.

Our employees are an important resource and play a crucial role in identifying signs of slavery in their everyday work. It is essential that the Council is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in all of our activities to improve protection for victims.

The Committee's report (see Appendix) summarises our findings and makes 8 key recommendations which focus on the steps that Buckinghamshire County Council should take to demonstrate its moral commitment and leadership in this key policy area and its compliance with its duties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Recommendation

1. **That the Council prepares a statement on anti-slavery and human trafficking which should be published on the Council's website and reviewed annually. Examples and guidance can be found in the appendices to this report.**
2. **That Business Unit Plans should explicitly identify any potential risk of slavery and human trafficking and the steps that will be taken to manage that risk.**
3. **That the Council should develop a training strategy for modern slavery and roll out training across the organisation. The strategy should:**
 - **Identify who should be trained, for whom training should be mandatory and what the training needs are (e.g. first responder, frontline staff)**
 - **Prioritise training for frontline staff in safeguarding teams and first responders.**
 - **Identify the best approach to training (e.g. face to face, online, e- learning, awareness campaigns).**
 - **Identify other key stakeholders/partners who should receive the training (the committee's further inquiry work may inform this).**
4. **That an internal awareness raising campaign for all Members and Council staff be initiated imminently, using resources available to local authorities on the government website (information can be found in the appendices).**
5. **That the Council should introduce a clear process and guidance for completing the national referral mechanism form and notification of potential victims of modern**

slavery form MS1. This guidance and links to the referral forms should be accessible on the Council's website.

6. We recommend that the Council should agree an appropriate approach to designated single points of contact for modern slavery and first responders across the whole of the Council. First responders should receive mandatory training on their role and the process for completing the NRM referral process.
7. We recommend that an agreed data collection process should be introduced to record internally, the referrals made to and by the Council. Dedicated lead officers/first responders should be responsible for collecting this data, which should be collated centrally by adults safeguarding.
8. We recommend that the pilot Victim Support service should be evaluated at 6 months and a report presented to the TEC Select Committee on the progress and outcomes of the pilot service.

Resource implications

The resource implications of all recommendations are to be considered as part of Cabinet's response to the Inquiry Report.

Progress Monitoring

The Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee will monitor progress against the implementation of agreed recommendations at 6 and 12 month intervals.

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 20 April 2018. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk