



Modern Slavery Statement 2021

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2021

References to we, us and Walker Morris in this statement relate to Walker Morris LLP on behalf of itself and its subsidiaries.

This modern slavery statement is the sixth that Walker Morris has published, having published our first in 2016. Our modern slavery statements are published in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 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 chains and to eradicate the risk of modern slavery.

Our business

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

We continue to operate as a full service commercial law firm, with a national centre of excellence in Leeds, focusing on providing our clients in the UK and overseas with partner-led, high quality, insightful advice. The single, national centre of excellence in Leeds that we have built offers significant advantages in terms of developing a strong team-based culture within the firm, coupled with the inherent value and cost effectiveness that a Leeds base brings.

As our business grows and develops, our client base will inevitably also undergo some changes. However our clients, many of whom are blue chip, continue to be drawn from a broad range of sectors, predominantly manufacturing, real estate and infrastructure and financial services. Other sectors include retail, food and drink, technology and media, energy, construction and sport.

As a major employer in Yorkshire, our employees are at the heart of our business and one of our core values is talent engagement. We focus on our staff and we commit to working with them to develop their skills by giving them opportunities and support.

We comply with all applicable legislation relating to employee terms and conditions, including pay, and none of our staff earn less than the Living Wage. We have recently been awarded the Living Wage Accreditation in 2021. We have an Employee Forum which gives our employees a voice on our working conditions and practices. We have undertaken surveys during the pandemic relating to working at home (and back to the office) and health and safety throughout.

Corporate responsibility policy

Corporate responsibility is something that should be of concern to all businesses; we recognise the importance of corporate responsibility and creating a positive social impact.

For Walker Morris, this is about managing our business in a way that enhances the positive and minimises the negative economic, social and environmental impacts of our activities and services. We aim to combine the provision of high quality commercial legal advice to our clients with a rewarding working environment and an awareness of the wider community.

This involves balancing the interests of our stakeholders, which includes our clients, our employees, the local community and relevant regulatory bodies. Our stakeholders are fundamental to the success of our business and to achieving our vision of the responsible delivery of legal services by highly motivated employees working with clients to produce commercial and cost effective solutions. Our corporate responsibility policy builds on the values we hold as a firm for the benefit of all our stakeholders, and guides us in making a positive social impact.

Our corporate responsibility strategy continues to focus on three key areas:

- promoting an inclusive and supportive working environment and opening up access to professional and development opportunities;
- being a responsible contributing member of our local community; and
- minimising our environmental impact.

Having a talented and diverse workforce, where each individual brings their own unique capabilities, experiences and characteristics to their work, is key to being able to respond to our wide-ranging client base. We are committed to seeking out and retaining talented and motivated individuals and to treat all people with respect and dignity. We strive to create and foster a supportive and understanding environment, in which everyone is given the opportunity to realise their maximum potential free from discrimination and harassment. We believe diversity is about more than having a policy. It is about encouraging diversity and allowing everyone to be the best they can be without barriers. Our approach is to support diversity rather than simply tick boxes.

Working with our suppliers

We expect all of our contractors and suppliers to meet the same high ethical standards that we apply to our own business.

We have a de-centralised procurement process and a complex supply chain involving a large number of suppliers.

This year, we have completed a further detailed risk assessment of new 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 2018 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 to categorise our suppliers as representing a high, medium or low risk of modern slavery taking place in their business.

Again over 95% of suppliers assessed using these criteria were categorised as low risk and the outcome of the risk assessment process did not identify any suppliers presenting us with concern regarding modern slavery risk.

We will continue to review and refine how we engage with our existing suppliers and our processes for onboarding new suppliers, including incorporating appropriate provisions in our contractual arrangements with suppliers.

Our policies

We have a number of other relevant policies in place, including an anti-bribery policy, a corporate responsibility policy, an equality and diversity policy, a whistleblowing policy and a safeguarding statement, which are reviewed and updated as appropriate on an annual basis.

We have now finalised our modern slavery policy to reflect the changes and the progress we have made in relation to our supplier processes and we have provided training to our staff on the key points.

Key performance indicators

We continue to make good progress in developing and refining our anti-slavery procedures and we believe that, at this stage, it remains inappropriate for us to adopt any specific modern slavery key performance indicators. However, we will keep this under review.

Approval

This slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 30 April 2021 is approved by the members of Walker Morris LLP and signed by Malcolm Simpson, Managing Partner and Designated Member of Walker Morris LLP in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act.



Malcolm Simpson, Managing Partner

October 2021