

# **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2020**

## **1. Introduction**

Human trafficking and modern slavery are, in the words of Pope Francis, 'grievous wounds in the flesh of humanity .... in the flesh of Christ himself'.

This statement sets out the Diocese of Westminster's actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our work. We are absolutely committed to putting in place steps to prevent slavery or human trafficking occurring in our diocese or supply chains. As founding member of the Santa Marta Group, the Diocese recognises our responsibility to tackle this most ancient yet modern of criminal activities. We apply this responsibility through the work of our parishes and our social action agency Caritas Westminster.

## **2. Organisational structure**

The statement covers the activities of the Diocese of Westminster. The Trustees of the Diocese are responsible for the governance of the Trust. The diocese includes London boroughs north of the River Thames, west of the Lea River, in the County of Hertfordshire and the Borough of Spelthorne in Surrey.

The purpose of the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust (WRCDT) is the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion within the Diocese. The diocese comprises approximately half a million Catholics, with 212 parishes, 209 schools, and social outreach agencies, most coordinated by Caritas Westminster including a refuge for victims of modern slavery, Caritas Bakhita House. The diocesan Justice and Peace Commission further promotes social justice and peace through raising awareness of human rights abuses, and unjust trading relationships.

## **3. Actions to mitigate risk with regard to slavery or human trafficking**

1. The diocese engages, on behalf of its schools, in over 200 construction projects a year. This represents the biggest risk of slavery in the diocese's supply chain. In 2020 we reviewed and implemented a new Contract regime, requiring the main consultants for our schools projects to ensure they are monitoring their supply chain. This is only the beginning. Going forward we need to: a) assess existing contracts; b) develop capabilities to review the numerous projects; c) provide training for our employees and for our consultants that manage projects on our behalf.
2. We continue to use Churchmarketplace. It enables parishes and schools to use our collective buying power. Suppliers selected through Churchmarketplace are required to pay their employees the London Living Wage (or Living Wage outside London) and to follow anti-slavery protocols.

3. The diocese monitors continuously the risks of modern slavery on the diocesan risk register, reviewed three times per year.
4. The diocese continues to be an accredited Living Wage Foundation employer and ensures that all contractors comply with Living Wage rates of pay.
5. The diocese is close to achieving Fairtrade diocese status (this has been achieved in 2021), through the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission. Fairtrade is a leading ethical trade mark, now adopted by over 100 of our parishes.

## **4. Advocacy work and social justice in 2020**

### **4.1 Find It, Fix It, Prevent It**

In 2020, the diocese became an active supporter of the ethical investment initiative Find It, Fix It, Prevent It. This is a £7 Trillion alliance of asset owners. It tries to engage with companies to encourage them to proactively manage their supply chain in order to limit and eradicate slavery from their supply chains. In 2020 this initiative engaged with 13 hospitality companies.

### **4.2 Caritas Bakhita House**

Caritas Bakhita House, our safe-house for rescued female victims of human trafficking, celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2020. From its inception, it has welcomed and helped 127 women, 11 new born babies and 1 toddler. That means 139 lives turned around, 139 stories of hope and human dignity restored, 139 new starts. The victims residing in the safe-house helped secure prison sentences totalling 132.5 years for those who traffic and exploit women. The Bakhita House team also contributed to two pieces of research that are designed to build a better understanding of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and modern slavery. They were a) a framework for training people to identify, care for and support victims and survivors; and b) a report on the exploitation of women trafficked from China.

### **4.3 Santa Marta Foundation**

Our Archbishop, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, is President of the Santa Marta Group, an international alliance of the Catholic Church, government agencies and law enforcement officials, set up at the behest of Pope Francis. The diocese continues to support this initiative.

## **5. Employee training**

The Senior Management Team has been provided with training in order to help them prevent slavery and human trafficking in our supply chain. Each Officer is to ensure


that supply chains under his/her control comply with our policy. In 2020, our training programme was disrupted by the pandemic. Further training is planned for 2021.

## 6. Recruitment/agency workers policy

The diocese uses only specified, reputable employment agencies and always verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency, particularly ensuring that they pay at least the Living Wage Foundation<sup>4</sup> rates of pay.

## 7. Trustee approval

This statement has been approved by the Trustees of the Diocese, who will review and update it annually.

Signed by His Eminence, Cardinal Vincent Nichols Chair of the WRCDT Trustee Board	
Date	23 July 2021

