



Marshalls plc Publishes Modern Slavery Statement

Marshalls has today, (27th May 2016) published its first 'Modern Slavery and Anti Trafficking Policy and Disclosure Statement' in response to the UK Government Modern Slavery Act 2015. Marshalls' statement makes clear the work that has already taken place and identifies clear areas of activity for the coming twelve months. These include; delivering an internal awareness campaign throughout its UK operations; enhanced specialist training for all individuals directly involved in supply chain operations; supplier communications and verification programme; further development of supply chain due diligence processes, related human right programme, external auditing programme and transparent reporting regarding the identification of slavery; development of a remediation process which focuses upon the needs of victims; and a commitment to reporting on the organisations effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains.

Martyn Coffey, Marshalls CEO, said, "We welcome the introduction of the UK Government Modern Slavery Act. It provides a platform which allows us to communicate our longstanding commitment to upholding human rights and the important work that we have been doing since 2005. It has also prompted us to engage even more deeply with third sector and intergovernmental organisations as critical friends in order that we can further develop our work in this area and ensure that we put victims of slavery at the heart of our processes."

Chris Harrop, Marshalls Group Marketing Director, commented, "Businesses now have a legal remit, as well as a moral obligation, to make their operations and global supply chains a hostile environment for traffickers. The UK Modern Slavery Act provides both the incentive and the vehicle for the private sector to ensure that vulnerable people are not exploited and that their organisations do not unwittingly become corporate victims of crime."

Harrop also pointed to Marshalls ongoing, 10 years plus, inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index, commitment to the United Nations Global Compact principles of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to Marshalls' own embedded brand values – of leadership, excellence, trust & sustainability - as vindication of the organisations continual efforts to meet and seek to exceed globally recognized corporate responsibility standards.

Marshalls' Business & Human Rights Specialist, Elaine Mitchel-Hill, added, "The appetite throughout all business operations to engage with and support the UK Governments drive to eliminate modern slavery has been substantial. The work that we have been doing since 2005 to eradicate child labour in the Indian stone sector, to support children's rights and uphold human rights, means that we have a well-developed understanding within the organisation of the issues and impact of slavery for society and business, both overseas and in the UK. Together with our wider human rights programme this has provided strong foundations upon which we are further developing our efforts to protect and promote human rights globally."

Coffey added, "There is a cast iron business case for our business and human rights programme. Whilst it clearly takes into account risk mitigation and legislative compliance, it is much more to do with further driving and embedding sustainability specifically regarding human rights, working effectively and creatively within the UN system, selectively extending our areas of influence and ultimately creating competitive advantage for our business."

Coffey concluded by pointing out that UK companies will see an increase in the number of victims of modern slavery that are identified and the instances of modern slavery in supply chains, "This should be expected and welcomed as an indication that the private sector is working in support of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the UK Government departments and agencies working to combat serious and organised crime."

Slavery is not an issue confined to history or an issue that only exists in certain countries, it is something that is still happening today. It is a global problem and the UK is no exception. It's a

growing issue, affecting men, women and children. 1,746 cases were reported in the UK in 2013 - a 47% increase on the number of cases reported in 2012. But these are just the victims we know about. Slavery's hidden nature means actual numbers are likely to be far, far higher. (1)

It is believed that these figures underestimate the true scale of modern slavery in the UK. It is also widely accepted that this is a hidden crime. Many victims will still be in slavery or servitude, with their exploiters preventing them from being identified. Victims in certain circumstance may not even view themselves as victims of exploitation. Some victims may not be identified by those who encounter them and we know that many victims who escape choose not to come forward to the authorities. (2)

ENDS

(1) Source: <https://modernslavery.co.uk/>

(2) UK Government Modern Slavery Strategy -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/383764/Modern_Slavery_Strategy_FINAL_DEC2015.pdf

Editors Notes:

[Marshall's Modern Slavery & Anti Trafficking Policy & Disclosure Statement](#)