

Modern Slavery Statement

Compliance with Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Financial Year 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023)

“Modern slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women, or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception, or other means for the purpose of exploitation.”

Our Organisation

Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL) is a company limited by shares and wholly owned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and therefore any profits made by HCL are always ultimately reinvested into Hertfordshire services.

The management team is based at its Head Office in Welwyn Garden City and overall operations are led by Ian Hamilton, Chief Executive Officer, and the Company’s Board of Directors. HCL is an award-winning contract caterer, dedicated to delivering excellence in educational catering and commercial sectors throughout Hertfordshire and surrounding counties.

With over 30 years’ experience within the catering industry, HCL has forged strong relationships with their customers based on integrity and ability to not only meet but exceed expectations in delivering a healthy and nutritious meal service.

Our Achievements



A Soil Association accreditation: Food for Life Served Here Silver ensures the Standards to which our school food is prepared include being healthy, ethical, and making use of some local and organic ingredients. 80% of the schools we service are accredited with a Silver or Bronze award, demonstrating our strategy and standards with our food procurement activity.

This Integrated Management System (IMS) combines the Quality Management System (ISO9001) with the Environmental Management System (ISO14001). In addition to a strong customer focus and the implementation of effective business practices for consistency and quality, the roles of leaders and the need for monitoring and assessment are required by both.



Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision is to become the First Choice in Education catering, renowned for achieving excellence in service delivery and keeping our customers at the heart of everything we do.

Our Mission is to be committed to consistently deliver an exemplary service, by focusing on improving our customers' experience.

Our Values and Behaviours

-  **Passionate about food**
We create tasty, nutritious food that inspires
-  **Care about our customers**
We make our customers everyday experience a priority
-  **Deliver something special**
We are committed to quality and take pride in everything that we do
-  **Stronger together**
We build relationships, where everyone feels valued and can add value
-  **Social responsibility**
We make choices that best support our communities, people and planet



We have a large and diverse workforce in the region of 1,750 colleagues based across our Head Office and education and commercial sites. Training on modern slavery and on the risks and effects of modern slavery forms part of our induction process for all new recruits. We use iLearn as our current electronic training tool to ensure training is easily accessible by all and to help with the monitoring of mandatory training modules such as Modern Slavery. It also allows for continuous employee engagement ensuring the workforce's knowledge and skills are in line with HCL's due diligence processes and the iLearn system records and reminds of refreshers.



Over 53% of our staff completed Modern Slavery refresher training this year.



The Modern Slavery training module is designed to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking and to give staff confidence in recognising and reporting any concerns. At HCL, we have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, and we continue to view modern slavery as a crime that can take many forms such as: slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking.

HCL's staff are the key to our continued success, therefore, we will not tolerate any behaviour which undermines their rights or freedom of association within our own organisation and supply chain. We have many policies and procedures within the organisation that ensures poor work practices do not exist and colleagues are actively encouraged to report such incidents in total confidence. Copies of our Anti-Slavery Policy on modern slavery, and other related policies and procedures, including both grievance and whistleblowing policies (to help police our internal practices), are available to all employees via the Staff Portal. All colleagues and their immediate family have access to a free, anonymous, and confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), including a 24/7, 365 days a year helpline for work or personal issues.



Our Supply Chain

We expect all our suppliers and sub-contractors to implement and enforce effective systems and controls to ensure that slavery and human trafficking do not take place anywhere in our supply chains. We have reviewed the practices of our key partner suppliers and our findings have reassured us their systems and controls in place represent minimal discernible risk of their supply base. We aim to continue our annual review of our suppliers' supply base in the coming financial year. Although we have three main supply partners accounting for 77% of our expenditure who are based locally to our area, our whole supply base covers a broad range of Branded and Non-Branded food, non-food items and services, sourced from various UK and overseas locations delivering to over 475 education and commercial sites.



We believe our supply partners play a key role in HCL becoming the first choice in Education Catering, with exceptional level of commitment to deliver an exemplary service, by focusing on improving every opportunity to ensure the pupils' dining experience will create good eating habits and knowledge of a balanced diet for them to carry into adulthood. For us to do this, we have partnered with industry leaders in wholesale, offering a truly local service operating in education, healthcare, hotels, pubs, restaurants, contract catering and leisure sites.

As HCL is wholly owned by HCC, we are bound by public procurement regulations therefore ensuring we procure and contract in a sustainable manner with a view of embedding sustainable outcomes in the way we do business.

Our Responsibility

HCL modern slavery activities have been identified as part of our modern slavery risk assessment. These include the suppliers that we work with who source in the UK and overseas and the locally managed employment processes we use to recruit our staff.

Over 41% of our staff completed Equality & Diversity refresher training this year, showing our commitment to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way recruitment is handled to the way the service is delivered. The recruitment process for internal or external consultants, agencies and third- party suppliers who assist in recruitment and selection practice on behalf of the company are also required to comply with these HCL Recruitment policies.

As part of our Equality and Diversity policy, the recruitment process seeks to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for each job vacancy regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or other personal circumstances. An offer of employment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including references, medical clearance, proof of relevant qualifications, eligibility to work in the UK and DBS clearance, where applicable.

The Policy outlines proof of right to work checks that HCL will undertake for all candidates the company is considering employing as well as checks for existing employees who have a time limit on their right to work. This policy ensures that the company complies with the legislation detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. All applicants applying for a position in HCL will be required to provide proof of right to work and live in the UK as part of the pre-employment checks. If a candidate cannot provide this the offer of employment will be withdrawn. Proof of right to work documentation must be validated by the hiring manager and placed on the personnel files for all successful candidates.

Our Commitment of Improvement

HCL is committed to continuous improvement and wants to ensure we build on the progress we have made this year in identifying emerging risks and engaging all stakeholders in eliminating poor practices within our workforce and supply chain.

In our next statement, we aim to report the progress we have made against the following commitments:

Continue data-driven decision making:

Continue developing systems and processes to empower colleagues to make data-driven decisions.

Systems Upgrade:

Launching of in-house HR and Payroll system. Benefits of having all data available in one place and increased visibility across our HR functions for reporting of leave and absences, time management, accounting, and recruitment.

Raising employee and customers awareness:

Launch our refreshed Mission, Vision, and Values – Internal.

HCL have raised awareness of the refreshed Vision, Mission, and Values (VMV) within our workforce. The mode of communication varied from holding large workshops with brainstorming sessions to attending smaller group meetings, leading to Marketing Team providing examples and tips of how to deliver our values from colleagues feedback from individual sessions.

Launch our refreshed Mission, Vision, and Values – External.

HCL have appointed Bright sparks – a full-service marketing agency – to deliver the rebranding of HCL and a new website in 2023/24. Introducing a marketing customer relationship management (CRM) tool to communicate, analyse and track behaviour of our existing and new stakeholders giving HCL the ability to communicate the new VMV to our external customers.

Work closely with supply chain partners:

Continue our risk assessment work with suppliers who are outside of the Top 77% of our turnover and analyse the risk assessment of a new Depot in Bedford where our products will be called-off from.

Work closely with supply chain partners:

As part of bringing in-house HR and Payroll system, we aim to review our HR and Payroll policies to ensure it continues to meet our Modern Slavery commitments.

This statement has been approved on behalf of HCL's Board of Directors by Ian Hamilton.

Ian Hamilton, CEO

31st of July 2023

Handwritten signature of Ian Hamilton in black ink, with a dotted line above it.