

AFBI Modern Slavery Statement

The Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

The Agri-food and Biosciences Institute is a non-departmental public body, established in 2006, it is one of the leading providers of science in Northern Ireland. AFBI has a statutory mandate under The Agriculture (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 to deliver scientific services to Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and is responsible for undertaking research and development, statutory, analytical, and diagnostic testing functions for DAERA, other Government departments, public bodies and commercial companies. DAERA is the sponsor department for AFBI.

AFBI has three main themes of work:

- Leading improvements in the agri-food industry;
- Protecting animal, plant and human health; and
- Enhancing the natural and marine environment.

The Institute is located at seven specialised sites in Northern Ireland, on premises leased from DAERA. Additionally, AFBI owns and operates the RV Corystes, a £52m ocean going research vessel. AFBI has a staff of approximately 650. Currently, approximately 66% of AFBI's resource income is provided by grant-in-aid from DAERA while the remainder is derived from a wide variety of contracts with public and private sectors, royalty and farm income.

AFBI's Commitment to the Principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms which deprive a person of their liberty in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain; such as slavery, servitude, human trafficking and forced and compulsory labour. AFBI is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking. In particular AFBI will observe the requirement of the Modern Slavery Act Part Six which is of particular relevance to our business in demonstrating due diligence and transparency of our supply chain.

Policies and Contractual Controls.

As an organisation AFBI is committed to meeting high ethical standards and observing all applicable local, national and international laws wherever we do business. The Modern Slavery Act impacts directly on two key business areas, Human Resources & Procurement.

Human resources:

The group HR function is centrally controlled and managed with appropriate controls and policies to safeguard the rights and welfare of employees and allow them to safely report any abuses.

AFBI's Human Resources include:

- Anti-Bribery
- Bullying and Harassment

- Grievance
- Whistleblowing

AFBI complies fully with employment law applicable and the right for migrant workers to lawfully live and work in the UK is closely scrutinised as part of our UK recruitment process and adheres to minimum wage legislation. We work closely with and are compliant to all regulations set out by UK Visas and Immigration.

Procurement

AFBI's supply chain is diverse and procurement involves a wide range of direct and indirect goods, services and works. AFBI accepts that given the global reach of their supply chains that there is the potential risk of modern slavery occurring, especially in specific areas that are identified as high risk such as, laboratory consumables, facilities management, clothing, catering/food and office supplies.

To combat this AFBI adheres to the procurement procedures as laid out within the Northern Ireland Civil Service guideline - PGN-03-18-Human-Rights-in-Public-Procurement. These procurement procedures are in addition to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which makes it mandatory for Contracting Authorities to reject abnormally low tenders if the low price is due to noncompliance with EU legislation or international law related to social, labour or environmental law.

Requiring agreement of our supply chain partners to Modern Slavery legislation shows our resolve to spread awareness of this most important issue and send a message that as an organisation AFBI will not tolerate, reward, or knowingly contribute to this international problem.

RV Cortyes – Research Vessel.

The research vessel RV Cortyes operates out of its home port of Belfast and occasional visits to UK and Irish ports strict security protocols are in place to prevent non-authorized personnel accessing the vessel. The ship complies with the International Ship and Port Facilities Security Code and the Maritime Labour Convention.

Modern Slavery Training and Awareness

Training on AFBI's Modern Slavery policy and on the risk our business faces from modern slavery within its supply chain has been given where deemed appropriate, for example staff involved within procurement of goods or services will receive specific training on the Northern Ireland Civil Service guideline - PGN-03-18-Human-Rights-in-Public-Procurement.

Next steps

During 2021 AFBI will undertake the following activities, to be reported on in future Modern Slavery and Trafficking Statements;

- Ensure that the awareness training is completed by all employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into AFBI;
- Ensure that all Head of Branch and above complete awareness raising, and discuss the issues within their teams to raise awareness and assist in the management of risks;

- Work with the Learning & Development team to enhance the training provision within the organisation, looking to include Modern Slavery training within the mandatory training package.
- Raising awareness across all staff through posters and an article within the staff newsletter.