

## **Modern Slavery Act 2015**

### **Guidance and Contractual Standards for Postmasters**

#### **1. WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?**

1.1 The Modern Slavery Act describes a number of offences which constitutes modern slavery. For example, it is an offence for any person, irrespective of whether they have a Post Office, or any other kind of business, or are acting in a purely personal or domestic capacity

- a) to hold another person in slavery or servitude in circumstances where the person knows or ought to know that the other person is held in slavery or servitude; or
- b) to require another person to perform forced or compulsory labour in circumstances where the person knows or ought to know that the other person is being required to perform forced or compulsory labor; or
- c) to arrange or facilitate the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited.

1.2 Indicators of forced labour would include:

- Abuse of vulnerability
- Deception
- Restriction of movement
- Isolation
- Physical and sexual violence
- Intimidation and threats
- Retention of identity documents
- Withholding of wages
- Debt bondage
- Abusive working and living conditions
- Excessive overtime

1.3 The Act ensures that perpetrators of modern slavery can be given suitably severe punishments for modern slavery crimes, including life sentences.

1.4 The Act applies to you and you have a personal legal obligation to comply with it.

#### **2. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE**

2.1 This Guide does not give an overview of the Act but it does explain Post Office Limited's contractual standards on modern slavery. These instructions have contractual effect.

- 2.2 Post Office's contractual standards apply to all Postmasters, including sub-postmasters, franchisees, operators and any other agents operating Post Office branches or outreach services.
- 2.3 Compliance with these standards does not in itself ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. It remains the responsibility of Postmasters to ensure they comply with the Act.
- 2.4 We are committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of reporting in good faith their suspicion that modern slavery in whatever form is or may be taking place in any part of our business, including in a Post Office branch or any retail business associated with it, or in any of our supply chains. Detrimental treatment includes contract termination, corrective action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. However, if a postmaster has been involved in any breach of the Act or these standards, we may take corrective action against him/her, which may include contract termination. Individuals that have concerns about modern slavery practices should notify Post Office by contacting the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) or through our Speak Up line on 0800 048 4531.
- 2.5 Post Office Limited may amend this Guide and the contractual standards at any time.

### **3. POST OFFICE CONTRACTUAL STANDARDS**

- 3.1 You must ensure that you read, understand and comply with this Guide and the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Further information regarding the Act can be sourced from the Government's website [www.modernslavery.co.uk](http://www.modernslavery.co.uk)
- 3.2 You are responsible for the prevention, detection and reporting of modern slavery in any part of your Post Office branch and any associated retail business or supply chains.
- 3.3 You must notify Post Office Limited as soon as possible if you believe or suspect that a breach of, or conflict with the Act has occurred, or may occur in the future. You must do this by contacting the confidential reporting service, Speak Up, on 0800 048 4531.
- 3.4 You should raise any concerns you have about any issue or suspicion of modern slavery in any parts of your or our business or supply chain at the earliest possible stage.
- 3.5 You should report it to us even if you are unsure about whether a particular act, the treatment of workers more generally, or their working conditions within any tier of your or our business and/or your or our supply chains constitutes modern slavery.

3.6 We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith in relation to modern slavery, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

#### **4. FAILURE TO MEET THE CONTRACTUAL STANDARDS**

4.1 Any Postmaster who fails to comply with these contractual standards and/or the Modern Slavery Act 2015 is at risk of contractual action, including possible immediate contract termination.