

# Hostile to traffickers, compassionate to victims

## The Co-op fighting slavery in 2017



In April 2018 we published our second Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, reporting on the steps we've taken during 2017 to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking taking place in our business and supply chains. This is a short summary of our full statement, which can be found at [co-operative.coop/ethics/modern-slavery](http://co-operative.coop/ethics/modern-slavery).



Steve Murrells and speakers at the Co-op AGM 2017 Fringe meeting on Modern Slavery

Since 1844 our Co-op has been a business with a clear social commitment. And today, we're doing everything we can to make sure modern slavery has no place in our business and supply chains.

We report on our three key areas of activity in our 2017 statement:

### 1. Managing the risk of modern slavery

Across the Co-op, we continued to set out and manage our commitments on ethical trade, human rights and modern slavery through a number of key policies, through contract clauses for suppliers and through strong governance structures across our business.

In our food business, we've been increasing transparency of our supply chains beyond Tier 1 (a production site where goods are finished, ready for supply to the end company). We've also worked hard to improve due diligence across our other businesses and throughout the supply chains for the goods and services we use in our own operations (GSNFR).

We take an open and transparent approach to reporting on our progress to tackle modern slavery. The case study below shows our collaborative approach to tackling issues.



"We need more companies to respond to modern slavery like the Co-op"

**Kevin Hyland, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**

#### Case study Dealing with issues

In April 2017 we were alerted by one of our Tier 1 suppliers that an alleged case of modern slavery had been identified at their supplier's site in Nottinghamshire.

The incident was uncovered when a worker at the site confided in their manager that they were being exploited. The supplier called in the GLAA (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority), the person went into protective custody and an investigation was started; it revealed that modern slavery had been committed by the victim's landlord. A second victim was also identified and both were looked after by the Salvation Army.

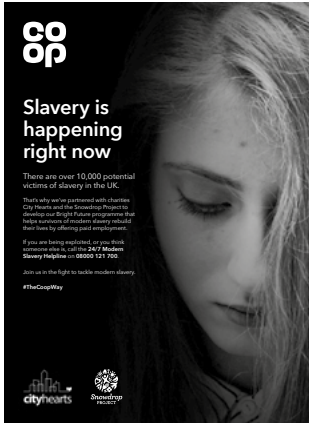
The GLAA and the police commended our supplier for their actions and for following the training they had received on how to deal with situations of modern slavery. The perpetrator pleaded guilty and was sentenced to eight years imprisonment.

We have since worked with our supplier to share lessons from the case with other local suppliers and to raise awareness of the issue.

### 2. Training, capacity building and collaboration

Modern slavery will only be stopped if we all work together, which is why we continue to work with suppliers, colleagues and others to improve their understanding of the issue.

In 2017 our food business delivered over 7,000 hours of training to more than 1,000 delegates, held its 5th Ethical Trade conference and continued to work with key industry organisations. We started helping our non-food and GSNFR suppliers to identify and manage the risk of modern slavery in their business and supply chains. We also continued to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst our colleagues through internal communications and at events throughout the year.



Raising awareness of modern slavery through the media (our advert was placed in national newspapers on Anti-Slavery Day)



**Recognition of our work:**  
We were proud to be the first British business to be awarded the **Thomson Reuters Stop Slavery Award in 2017**, for excellence in supplier engagement/capacity building and the Bright Future programme.

Our Food Ethical Trade team continue to play an active and collaborative role in the Ethical Trading Initiative, Stronger Together and other working groups to improve working conditions across the world. And in 2017 we played a key role in setting up a working group with four other large retailers, to engage GSNFR suppliers in ethical trade.

### 3. Campaigning on modern slavery

Perhaps most importantly, we never lose sight of those affected by modern slavery - the vulnerable people who criminals exploit for their own gain. This is something our members also feel strongly about, voting overwhelmingly in support of a motion at our AGM in May 2017, to campaign for victims of modern slavery.

In 2017 our campaign included the following areas of activity:

**i) Bright Future.** In March 2017 we launched our Bright Future programme, which offers the chance of a paid work placement and a job in our food business to those rescued from modern slavery. By the end of 2017 we'd created 14 placements within the Co-op, and a further 19 were under discussion. We've set up seven partnerships with victim support charities and supported 12 businesses to participate in the programme.

**ii) Advocacy and lobbying.** We believe that the 45 day statutory support provided for victims of modern slavery is not enough for them to fully recover and reintegrate into society. We're working to help change this, through advocating for a longer period of support for victims. In 2017 we supported the Private Members' Bills proposed by Lord McColl and Baroness Lola Young, and took part in the Business Against Slavery Forum by invitation of the Home Secretary Amber Rudd MP.

**iii) Raising awareness.** We know that the general public has little awareness of modern slavery, so in the first year of our campaign we spent time talking with our members and colleagues about the issue at various events, and in blog posts, through social media and adverts in national newspapers.

### Case study Peter's Story

'Peter' came to the UK to make money to send back home to Romania. He was working in Scotland in an Indian restaurant when he got a call from a friend offering him a job in a London car wash, paying double his current salary.

Peter accepted the job and the offer of a bed in a shared house, but after a week he realised he wasn't going to be paid for his work at the car wash. When he tried to leave, the men he lived with intimidated him, and told him "You're working for us now."

They made fake IDs for Peter and forced him to open bank accounts for money laundering. They went with him to the bank and told him what to say. After a couple of weeks, while the men were drinking, Peter and his friend took the fake IDs and ran to the local police station.

From there Peter was referred to a safe house, and then onto the Bright Future programme and a job at Co-op. The job transformed Peter's life. He told us, "I love my life now, I can travel and think about my future."

### Our targets and plans

You can review our progress against our 2017 targets on our [website](#), where we show that we've achieved or are on track with 22 of the 24 targets we set ourselves.

Our 2018 targets build on the activities and progress we've made over the past year, and include enhancing our due diligence processes; training and awareness raising and scaling up Bright Future. Our targets can be found on the final page of our [2017 statement](#).

**Our full modern slavery statement can be found at:**  
[co-operative.coop/ethics/modern-slavery](https://www.co-operative.coop/ethics/modern-slavery)