

# MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT 2025

## Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

(registered charity 1199568 (England) 457 (Jersey) and CH263 (Guernsey))



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth recognises the grave impact of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, as described by Pope Francis as *'grievous wounds in the flesh of humanity... in the flesh of Christ himself'*.
- 1.2 This statement outlines our commitment to address and mitigate the risks of modern slavery comprehensively within our operations and supply chains. We acknowledge our responsibility to address this criminal activity through collaborative efforts in our Diocese including parishes, schools, and Caritas Portsmouth, our social action agency.

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 2.1 This statement encompasses the activities of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, governed by the Board of Trustees. Our Diocese is spread across five counties on England's South Coast, and the Channel Islands. We are the local Church for the whole of Hampshire, Berkshire, the Isle of Wight, Jersey, and the Bailiwick of Guernsey as well as the Southern Part of Oxfordshire and the Eastern part of Dorset.
- 2.2 There are 93 priests and 43 Deacons in active ministry within the Diocese and 209 members of staff. The Diocese estate owns and maintains over 500 buildings including churches, schools, parish halls, commercial and residential properties.
- 2.3 Through our parishes there are an estimated 2,000 volunteers working on community projects across the Diocese. Projects that deliver foodbanks, homeless shelters, support for the elderly, the isolated and the vulnerable.

## 3. ACTIONS TO MITIGATE RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- 3.1 As a charity operating across the South of England, comprising urban and rural areas, inland and by the sea, we have identified three areas where the Diocese may be exposed to potential modern slavery risks: our workforce, our investments and our supply chains.

## **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

- 3.2 We are dedicated to attracting, recruiting, and retaining the best individuals for our charity. Our Recruitment and Selection Policy ensures compliance with legal employment requirements in the UK, including conducting identity and right to work checks on all employees.
- 3.3 We will engage with a reputable recruitment agencies for difficult-to-fill and highly specialised or senior roles, only where necessary.

## **Investments**

- 3.4 Our investment policy states that the Diocese will only hold investments which are aligned with Catholic Social Teaching as outlined in *Mensuram Bonam*. This states that:

*"human activity that results in any deficit in basic human dignity – such as impoverishment, enslavement, or the privation of freedom – violates the fundamental integrality of God's plan for creation and humanity."*

- 3.5 Investment managers are required to demonstrate that they can screen investments for the Diocese's ethical criteria. This is overseen by the Investment Committee, which reports to the Board of Trustees.

## **Supply Chains**

- 3.6 We are currently focusing on the high-risk area of construction in our property services. On an annual basis, the diocese manages and completes multiple construction and refurbishment projects in its wide estate.
- 3.7 We are committed to working with suppliers who share our values and commitment to human rights. Our Procurement Policy requires consideration of sustainable, fair trade and of the environmental impact of contracts and purchases, seeking suppliers whose values are in line with the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3.8 We will conduct due diligence on our high-risk, or larger suppliers, including reviewing their policies, procedures, and practices related to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
- 3.9 We will also work towards developing a framework for parishes and schools to use when choosing suppliers or contractors.
- 3.10 Training and resources will be available for clergy, staff and volunteers who may be involved in selecting and managing contractors.
- 3.11 We encourage suppliers to adhere to internationally recognised standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

## **Training and Awareness**

- 3.12 We understand that raising awareness among our staff and stakeholders is crucial to combating Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. To this end, we will highlight the training available via the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency and ensure information on identifying the signs of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, reporting mechanisms, and relevant legislation is available. We will encourage all employees and volunteers to complete the training, and

we integrate this training into our induction process for new staff and volunteers.

- 3.13 We will also collaborate with external organisations, such as Caritas Social Action Network, Medaille Trust, Stella Maris, Together with Refugees Coalition and local law enforcement agencies as appropriate, to highlight issues and enhance our understanding of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

### **Personnel**

- 3.14 Clergy, employees, volunteers, agency workers and contractors are expected to maintain professional boundaries and foster an inclusive and non-discriminatory working environment.
- 3.15 A series of updated HR policies are being prepared to ensure there are clear procedures for reporting and addressing grievances, bullying and harassment and ensuring that all complaints are treated seriously, confidentially and impartially. We encourage open communication and provide support to victims of such behaviour.

### **Reporting and Whistleblowing**

- 3.16 We have established a confidential reporting mechanism that allows employees, volunteers, and stakeholders to report any concerns or suspicions, which may include issues such Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
- 3.17 The Whistleblowing Policy ensures that individuals can report such matters without fear of retaliation. Reports are thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions are taken in response.

### **Continual Improvement**

- 3.18 We acknowledge that addressing Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is an ongoing effort. We regularly review and evaluate our policies, procedures and practices to identify areas for improvement. We do this by engaging with stakeholders, participating in industry forums, and staying updated on legislative changes and best practices in combating Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth is committed to combatting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in all its forms.
- 4.2 We recognise the importance of robust policies, training, and collaborative efforts with our stakeholders to address this issue effectively.
- 4.3 Through our endeavours, we aim to contribute to the eradication of Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and the protection of human rights within our organisation and supply chains.
- 4.4 We will continue to strengthen our efforts and regularly report on our progress in future statements.

In Corde Iesu

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Philip". The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Philip" is written in a cursive script.

Rt Rev Philip A. Egan

**Bishop of Portsmouth**

**Chair of the Board of Trustees, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth**