

Modern Slavery Statement

Compliance with Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Financial Year 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024).

“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.”



1. Our Organisation

Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL) is an industry leading educational catering company limited by shares and wholly owned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and therefore any profits made by HCL are always ultimately reinvested into our meals 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 its customers based on integrity and the ability to not only meet but exceed expectations in delivering a healthy and nutritious meal service.





2. 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 (ISO9001:2015) with the Environmental Management System (ISO14001:2015). 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.





3. Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision is - To inspire in all our customers a lifetime love of healthy food.

Our Mission is - To work in partnership to create healthy, nutritious and ethical food that nurtures people and the planet.

We aim to deliver our Vision and Mission through our **5 core values** whilst creating a positive culture within our workforce.





4. Our People

We have a large and diverse workforce in the region of 1,650 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. Our Learning Management System (LMS) allows easy access to our electronic training tools ensuring all mandatory training modules such as modern slavery are carried out by all our staff and new starters, enabling HCL to manage and monitor training and refresher training. As a result, this has enhanced continuous employee engagement and ensures the workforce's knowledge and skills are kept updated on the latest internal policies, current statutory work related legislation and HCL's due diligence processes.

We have a mandatory 3-year refresher training programme of our Modern Slavery module and from the 645 employees due to complete the Modern Slavery refresher training, 66% of staff completed it in this year's training cycle.





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 specific

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 our newly implemented HR System. 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.





5. Our Supply Chain

HCL has 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 450 education and commercial sites.

We review all our key partner suppliers annually and expect them to take pro-active steps in the implementation and enforcement of effective systems and controls to ensure that slavery and human trafficking does not take place anywhere in its supply chains. Currently, our findings have reassured us their systems and controls in place represent minimal discernible risk of their supply base.

We believe our supply partners play a key role in HCL's success as 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





Where We Source Our Produce



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.



6. 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.

In our mandatory 3-year refresher training programme; from 655 Employee's due to complete the mandatory Equality & Diversity refresher training, 73% of our staff completed it in this year's training cycle. This shows 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.





7. Our Commitment of Improvement

HCL is committed to continuous improvement and wants to ensure we build on the progress we have made in previous years in identifying emerging risks and engaging all stakeholders in eliminating poor practices within our workforce and supply chain. Below are four key areas of continuous improvement we have focused on.

Continue data driven decision making

We are continuing to develop systems and processes to empower colleagues to make data-driven decisions and investing additional resource to support this mandate.

Systems Upgrade

HCL is pleased to report that the new in-house HR and Payroll system, implemented in late 2023, is now successfully embedded and being used by our newly structured HR Department.

Our core HR, recruitment data is truly centralised which has enhanced data transparency and streamlined work processes, affording HR teams the ability to make data driven decisions. The system enables teams to better manage and monitor HR and recruitment functions in a more systematic manner resulting in the efficient recruitment of staff, implementation of orderly checks and controls in the recruitment process and enables better planning. In addition, HR Policies are accessible via the system and staff have improved access to their information via the system's Employee Self Service Access.





Raising employee and customers' awareness

Last year, HCL reported the launch of its refreshed Mission, Vision, and Values which was used to raise our brand profile internally and externally. This has been delivered in conjunction with a comprehensive rebrand campaign that has refreshed employee and customers' awareness of our services.

Our re-brand has introduced a fresh look and feel to HCL, engaging both new and existing customers and stakeholders reinforcing HCL's unique selling points in all aspects of our business.

In addition, HCL's introduction of a new CRM system and accurate customer data has enhanced the sales and marketing teams' current efforts towards communicating effectively amongst existing and potential new customers. This allows us to target key audiences. By optimising the CRM, using data and customer insights, we will aim to achieve HCL's ambition of improving the awareness of our ESG targets within internal and external audiences.

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

Ian Hamilton, CEO

4th September 2024

