

A2i Transcription Services Modern Slavery Statement

A) Organisation

This statement applies to A2i Transcription Services (referred to in this statement as ‘the Organisation’).

The information included in the statement refers to the financial year 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.

B) Organisational Structure

The Organisation works from 1 office location in Bristol, UK. There are less than 10 employees, who work in the office or from home. The Organisation has a Board of 1 Executive Director and 1 Non-executive Director.

The Organisation transcribes information into alternative formats for people with disabilities e.g. Braille, Large Print, Audio, Tactile Diagrams, Easy Read, E-text, BSL Videos. The transcription service and production are mostly completed in-house, although some parts such as consultancy or printing are occasionally outsourced. Demand varies throughout the year, usually with peaks around September due to work with higher education institutions, and March due to the financial year-end for many customers, but is not considered to be seasonal.

The labour supplied to the Organisation in pursuance of its operation is carried out in the office in Bristol, UK, with some home-working.

C) Definitions

The Organisation considers that modern slavery encompasses:

- Human trafficking;
- Forced work, through mental or physical threat;
- Being owned or controlled by an employer through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;
- Being dehumanised, treated as a commodity or being bought or sold as property;
- Being physically constrained or to have restriction placed on freedom of movement.

D) Commitment

The Organisation acknowledges its responsibilities in relation to tackling modern slavery and commits to complying with the provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Organisation understands that this requires an ongoing review of both its internal practices in relation to its labour force and, additionally, its supply chains.

The Organisation does not enter into business with any other organisation, in the United Kingdom or abroad, which knowingly supports or is found to involve itself in slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

No labour provided to the Organisation in the pursuance of the provision of its own services is obtained by means of slavery or human trafficking. The Organisation strictly adheres to the minimum standards required in relation to its responsibilities under relevant employment legislation in the UK, and in many cases exceeds those minimums in relation to its employees.

E) Supply Chains

In order to fulfil its activities, the Organisation’s main supply chains include those related to office stationery e.g. paper, CDs, packaging. Most first-tier suppliers are based in the UK, and locally-based suppliers are chosen where possible. We understand that first-tier suppliers may be intermediary traders and therefore have further contractual relationships with lower-tier suppliers.

F) Potential Exposure

In general, the Organisation considers its exposure to slavery/human trafficking to be relatively limited.

G) Impact of COVID-19

During the reporting period covered by this statement, the COVID-19 pandemic had taken hold. For several months, the UK was placed into lockdown to stem the spread of COVID-19. This created several challenges for the Organisation, as it did for others across the nation.

The Organisation welcomes the UK Government's decision, as confirmed in April 2020, to allow for a delay of up to 6 months in the publication of modern slavery statements without the risk of facing penalty. Despite the permitted, delay, the Organisation remains in a position to publish its statement for the financial year 2019/2020 in line with the original publishing requirements.

The Organisation concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic did not adjust the risk of modern slavery to a level above that which existed before the pandemic, which is as set out under 'POTENTIAL EXPOSURE' above. Its use of suppliers dropped significantly due to a reduction in sales. Several of our workforce were placed on furlough as a result of the drop in demand for our services, meaning there were no additional temporary labour needs.

During the pandemic, the Group's employees still had access to the grievance procedure to raise any concerns that they may have had.

In line with emergency legislation passed by the Government, all employees were placed on furlough or agreed a temporary period of homeworking, or a combination of both.

The Organisation's modern slavery risks were subject to the same monitoring procedures during the pandemic as at all other times.

H) Steps

The Organisation has not, to its knowledge, conducted any business with another organisation which has been found to have involved itself with modern slavery.

In accordance with section 54(4) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Organisation has taken the following steps to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place:

- Highlight our commitment – this statement will be published online and shared with new customers and suppliers when appropriate.
- Monitor news relating to supply chains – supplier relationships will be ended where the supplier is, or is suspected, to be involved in modern slavery; or where it is possible to influence change work will be carried out to ensure unlawful practices end.
- Communicate with all staff – staff can report any concerns about modern slavery within The Organisation or our supply chain.

I) Training

The Organisation provides induction training to all new staff, and regular refresher training, including providing information about this statement, our commitment and steps to report any concerns.

J) Slavery Compliance Officer

The Organisation has a Slavery Compliance Officer, to whom all concerns regarding modern slavery should be addressed, and who will then undertake relevant action with regard to the Organisation obligations in this regard.

This statement is made in pursuance of Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and will be reviewed for each financial year.