

Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Our commitment to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act (2015):

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54(1)6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the Act) and sets out Optalis's approach to its responsibilities under the Act.

Optalis is committed to ensuring that there is no form of slavery or human trafficking within our supply chains or in any part of our business. We have a zero-tolerance approach towards slavery and human trafficking. Any identified concerns regarding slavery and human tracking are escalated as part of our company's safeguarding process working in conjunction with other local authority agencies as necessary and in line with our Company values.

Our Company

Optalis Ltd (Optalis) is a Local Authority Trading Company owned by and delivering Adult Social Care on behalf of The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough Council.

Our Head Office is in Wokingham, Berkshire. Our support is provided to vulnerable adults in a range of community, residential and home-based services across Wokingham and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Optalis is committed to providing efficient, effective, and high-quality services to all customers whilst also ensuring these services represent value for money.

We're committed to creating an environment where people feel valued, respected and able to speak up.

Optalis is committed to the principles and values of equality, diversity, social inclusion and protection of human rights of the people we support and the staff who help us deliver our services.

Our people

- Optalis currently directly employs c900 people with over 850 dedicated to our front-line services.
- All new recruits are employed on permanent or fixed term contracts; we do not offer zero-hour contracts.
- All our employees are paid at a rate above the National Minimum Wage.

Recruiting

As a provider of social care services, we recognise our responsibility to identify any customers or employees who may be a victim of forms of slavery or human trafficking. To support this, we have a series of policies and processes to identify and prevent slavery and human trafficking, which include:

- All new employees are subject to pre-employment checks as defined by the Care Quality Commission, Skills for Care Safer Recruitment and best practice. This includes checking each employee's UK address, right to work in the UK, suitable references and any gaps in employment.
- Our on-boarding process includes overseas checks for all applicants who have lived and/or worked abroad for 12 months or more in the last ten years; they should seek a certificate of good conduct (overseas criminal record check) in accordance with the guidance specific to that [country](#).
- Where RTW is time limited, there are processes in place to ensure that reviews take place at the right time.
- We ensure that all employees have appropriate clearance at the correct DBS level and that DBS checks are reviewed at least every 3 years. For those staff who come to us via an agency, the DBS is processed by the employing agency and forms part of our due diligence checking.
- We have a sponsorship license, but do not recruit directly from overseas thereby limiting our risk exposure.
- Where employees TUPE into us, we ensure the relevant legal checks are undertaken.
- We review working hours in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998
- Our Supported Employment Service team undertakes appropriate and proportionate checks to help ensure that the vulnerable adults they provide job coaching in the workplace for are entering safe working environments and make every reasonable effort to identify and prevent any potential risks.

Our Supply Chain

When procuring services, including agency staff, from third-party companies, we review their published information in respect of their responsibilities under the Act. Where possible, we seek to work with local companies which are known to us and where we have previously undertaken the necessary due diligence to satisfy ourselves that there have been no convictions of offences relating to modern slavery. We will not work with any organisation which is unable to demonstrate its commitment to complying with the requirements of the Act or which gives us reason to suspect that their supply chains are non-compliant with the Act.

Compliance Audits take place annually on companies that supply us with agency staff to ensure that due diligence has taken place.

Policies

We have several internal policies that raise awareness and provide guidance on how we conduct our business in an ethical manner:

- Recruitment Policy
- DBS Policy
- Whistleblowing (Speaking Up) Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy Statement
- The Berkshire Safeguarding Adults policies and procedures, which identifies and defines modern slavery (section 2.3), specifying how the company must react and deal with any identified safeguard concern.
- Conduct and Personal Behaviour policy.
- Professional Boundaries policy

Training and Support

There is a safeguarding workshop in our Induction programme; all new employees are obliged to undertake induction.

All our employees are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training annually which includes modules on modern slavery. Compliance with mandatory training is monitored and remedial action taken where necessary.

We have a dedicated Safeguarding Lead who supports management and employees.

We have an internal Whistleblowing hotline.

Performance indicators

The effectiveness of these steps is demonstrated if

- no reports are received from employees, the public, or law enforcement agencies or local safeguarding teams to indicate that modern slavery practices have been identified.
- our Compliance Audits have not revealed any information which has led to us ending a relationship with a supplier.
- there have been no reported Safeguarding incidents of concerns to modern slavery practices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Woodland', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Helen Woodland
CEO, Optalis

Date: 15 October 2025
Review due: October 2026