



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

Statement on Slavery and Human Trafficking 2022/23

Introduction

Modern Slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. The College is committed to improving its practices to help combat slavery and human trafficking.

Founded in 1837 as the world's first publicly-funded Government School of Design, the Royal College of Art ("the College") is now the world's largest community of postgraduate art and design students. A national asset, the College attracts talent from all of Britain's communities and is an important fountainhead for UK creative industries. For nine consecutive years we have been ranked as the world's leading art and design university by the respected QS ranking.

This Statement is designed to satisfy the requirements of Section 54 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), by informing our students, visitors, partners, suppliers, staff and the public about the College's policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains and the steps taken to identify, prevent and mitigate the risks. This is the College's eighth annual statement to be published under the Act.

In our 2021/22 Statement, we set out what we did during the year to address the risk of human rights abuses in our supply chains and what we plan to do in the future. This year's Statement will show how we have moved that agenda along during the year 2022/23.

Our organisation

Managing the College's supply chains is the direct responsibility of the Head of Procurement, who reports to the Chief Financial Officer and thence to the Vice Chancellor and Council.

During 2022/23, the College spent £44.5m on goods, services and works, from a total expenditure of £91m.

Our policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking

The College is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct in our activities, including our research. Our objective is to achieve best value and the highest professional standards in the procurement of all goods, services and works and our central procurement function promotes propriety, transparency and compliance with the College's legal obligations and ethical standards. The College is committed to procuring goods, services and works without

causing harm to others.

The College supports the UK Government's [National Action Plan](#), updated in May 2016, to implement the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

Our supply chains and those that present risks of human rights abuses

The College acquires goods, services and works from a wide range of suppliers across a number of categories, similar to other organisations in the education sector. The College's principal spend categories are:

- Art and design teaching equipment and materials
- Building maintenance services
- Construction services
- Digital services and software
- Electronic equipment
- Exhibition design and production services
- Goods for resale in our retail outlet
- Library resources
- Professional services
- 'Soft' facilities management services (cleaning, catering and security services)
- Temporary labour

In 2022/23, the College completed a risk assessment exercise to identify 'high-risk' spend categories. The principal categories that the College deems as carrying higher risks of human rights abuses were identified as garments, electronic equipment, services such as cleaning, catering and security services and temporary labour.

The College deems the corresponding source countries to be as follows:

Category	Countries of Origin
Garments	Bangladesh, China
Electronic equipment	East Asia, China, India, Eastern Europe, Mexico
Goods for re-sale	East Asia, China, India
Cleaning services	United Kingdom
Catering services	United Kingdom
Security services	United Kingdom
Temporary Labour	United Kingdom

Our supply chain due diligence and its effectiveness

In line with developing good practice in public procurement, the College follows a risk-based approach to supply chain due diligence. We do this by adopting a tailored approach to mitigating the risk of human rights abuses in each 'high-risk' spend category listed above.

Working to improve conditions for workers in global electronics supply chains: Affiliation to Electronics Watch

The College is a long-established and active member of the [London Universities Purchasing Consortium](#) (LUPC), a non-profit collaborative buying organisation renowned for its progressive approach to ethical sourcing of goods and services, on whose board of directors the College's Chief Financial Officer serves. The College is thereby able to benefit from research and risk assessment of supply chains carried out by LUPC. Through its membership of LUPC, the College is affiliated to [Electronics Watch](#), an international, non-profit and collaborative monitor of global electronics supply chains for labour rights abuses. Electronics Watch continues to achieve successes in its monitoring activity and by taking direct action with manufacturers and other actors in the supply chain.

Reducing the risk to people working in high-risk activities in the College

The College has reported in a previous Statement that temporary labour is recruited only through established and accredited sources that provide assurance to the College regarding the rights and welfare of their candidates and employees having completed all appropriate checks.

Working to raise awareness of the impacts made by the College's procurement activity

In 2022/23, the College prepared a new Responsible Procurement Policy that sets out the College's aims in attaining best value for money in the acquisition of goods, services and works for the College in a manner that is environmentally, ethically and economically sustainable. We want to manage our supply chain in a manner that reflects the College's values of integrity, inclusion, collaboration and curiosity. We expect the values to be embedded both in our procurement processes and in our requirements of suppliers.

Our goals for 2023/24

The College reconfirms its commitment to better understanding its supply chains and working towards greater transparency and responsibility towards people working on them. We will continue to work with our partners and suppliers to undertake supply chain due diligence and mitigate the risks to human rights in our supply chains.

In 2023/24, the College will:

- (i) Develop a new supply chain management strategy that will set out its approach to implementing its new Responsible Procurement Policy, including measures to help reduce the risk of modern slavery, human trafficking and other labour rights abuses in its supply chains; and

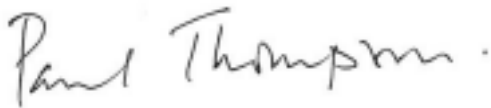
- (ii) The College will exercise greater due diligence in its supply chains by becoming a more active affiliate of Electronics Watch and participating directly in support of its monitoring activities in the College's own electronics supply chains.

This Statement has been approved and published by the Council of the Royal College of Art and will continue to be reviewed at least once annually.

Approved by Council

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Peter Hytton Bazalgette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, 22 November 2023
Pro-Chancellor & Chair of Council

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Dr Paul Thompson, 22 November 2023
Vice-Chancellor