



The COOK position on Modern Slavery

Let's face it, in the 21st century it's rather shocking that we should be legally required to state publicly the steps we're taking to combat slavery. But the sad fact is that so-called "modern" slavery continues to thrive in the shadows of society. The term covers child slavery, bonded labour, forced and compulsory labour, descent-based slavery, early and forced marriage, and human trafficking. As a food business buying hundreds of ingredients from around the world, there is a risk that, if we are not supremely vigilant, we could inadvertently be supporting modern slavery. This statement outlines the steps we're taking to make sure this never happens.

What we do:

COOK makes and sells quality, hand-prepared frozen food, with 87 shops nationwide and two large kitchens. We are a family-owned business with over 750 employees. Around a third of our shops are run by franchisees. Our founding statement in 1997 was to cook using the same ingredients and techniques you would use at home, so everything looks and tastes homemade. It's how we still do things today.

We work with more than 450 suppliers, most of whom supply us with food ingredients. Every day we receive up to 20 tonnes of different foods, sourced from around the world. We have worked hard to build strong relationships with our suppliers based on trust and transparency and are building on this to develop a clear code of conduct for all our suppliers.

Tackling modern slavery:

We are at the start of our journey to ensure our business does not tolerate or perpetuate modern day slavery in our supply chain, or in any other way. We will be working with suppliers to strengthen our code of conduct, make more robust our due diligence and extend our internal training on modern slavery. We will be carrying out a risk assessment over the next year to identify areas where the potential for slavery exists and evaluating the extent of that risk in order to target our efforts and respond accordingly.

We will make clear to all suppliers our intention to guard against modern slavery in our supply chain and will be asking them to support these efforts. This year we have been working on a new code of conduct for our suppliers, we will extend this to include greater detail regarding modern slavery and then roll this out to all our primary suppliers.

We will include the following statement regarding modern slavery in our initial supplier questionnaire and as part of our new supplier process:

'COOK is committed to ensuring that no part of its supply chain, or those that come into contact with it, benefit from activities connected with modern slavery. Should this issue arise, we will investigate and seek a resolution with the supplier in question. If a solution cannot be found, it will lead to cessation of business activities with this supplier.'

As we request specific information from suppliers, we will assess and review this data and use our risk assessment to work out suitable performance indicators and basic benchmarks to use in our monitoring and reporting.

We are aware that there are risks of forced labour in the UK as well as further afield. COOK is committed to ensuring that everyone working for us has the right to do so freely and legally and is being paid fairly. COOK's working environment is based on trust and transparency and strong relationships with all our employees. We take great care to ensure that our recruitment process is vigilant in ensuring that everyone employed by COOK is able to work with us legally and freely and is paid fairly. We also have systems in place to enable anonymous reporting of concerns and protection of whistle blowers. We are committed to ensuring that we are making every effort to guard against modern slavery and recognise that there may be improvements we can make to ensure we are being as vigilant as possible. During 2016/17 we will be reviewing our processes to ensure they meet with best practice and to identify any areas we need to prioritise as we seek to manage these risks.

Our staff will be integral to ensuring our business guards against modern slavery, particularly members of our Technical, Supply Chain and People Teams. Currently, training in this area has been conducted on an informal basis, but as we establish new processes, we will train staff accordingly.

Founder and CEO