

Sodexo joins with OCS to spearhead pan-industry Modern Slavery Council

3 years ago



Sodexo has joined forces with OCS to spearhead the creation of a new council comprising of 19 organisations to form a cross-industry group to tackle modern slavery, supported by government.

The new service and infrastructure modern slavery council will work together to eradicate risk, remove the crime and support the victims of modern slavery through supply chains.

Sodexo had been working with OCS since the middle of 2021 on the idea and presented the proposal through a webinar on the subject held by the Business Services Association (BSA) in December 2021 with speakers from government and industry including Sodexo and Serco.

The BSA has supported Sodexo and OCS in the formation of the council with one of the key aims of the group to create a playbook for the industry which will incorporate the rules by which organisations should work to. The group will also work to raise awareness within the industry, markets and communities as well as share best practice to mitigate the risks relating to modern slavery.

Madeline Lodge, modern slavery lead, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: “We are committed to tackling modern slavery and by bringing together a collective body of organisations we are looking to ensure standards are set and maintained. This is a hugely important area; modern slavery can take many different forms including forced labour and servitude. It is estimated that at any given time over 40 million people worldwide are in modern slavery and the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem .

“We are thrilled to have so many organisations join this Council and look forward to working with all in an open and collaborative manner to address this important issue. Working together we have the power to make real change.”

The intention is for the Council to hold virtual meetings every other month. The first meeting was attended by a number of large organisations, as well as the Cabinet Office, Home Office and the Business Services

Association (BSA). Guest speakers included Peter Campbell from the BSA and Susan Bannister from the Slave Free Alliance, a social enterprise and membership initiative launched by anti-slavery charity Hope for Justice, who shared the modern slavery landscape with attendees.

Steve Caddell, Procurement Director, OCS said: “As a family owned, people centred business, we at OCS place the highest priority on human rights, in particular, modern-day slavery. We continue to work tirelessly to eradicate this from our supply chains, increase standards and drive genuine social change. As such, we are committed to working across the sector to bring together fellow industry leaders and specialists to make a real and tangible difference.”

Sodexo is committed to ending modern slavery through comprehensive policies, better working practices and improved contracts. This commitment is included in its Social Impact Pledge which was launched in February 2021.

The formation of the Service & Infrastructure Project Providers Modern Slavery Council follows the formation of its Modern Slavery Strategic Supplier Forum with its four largest strategic suppliers – Brakes, Bunzl Catering & Hospitality Division, Blue Arrow and Mi Hub Ltd trading as Alexandra in April 2021. The Forum meets every six months to highlight risks, share best practice and agree common commitments to tackle modern slavery within their respective organisations.

Sodexo is a signatory to the UN Global Compact and respects human rights, including the right of people to be free from involuntary or forced labour as set forth in the International Bill of Human Rights and the International Labour Organisation Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

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