

## **A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement for the Financial Year 2023/24**

Slavery and human trafficking remains a hidden problem and a serious crime within our global society, abusing the human rights of vulnerable workers. This can take the form of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and/or human trafficking.

The Company has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to acting legally, ethically, with integrity, and with transparency in all of our business activities and relationships in order to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place within our business. We expect the same high standards from our suppliers, trade partners and contractors. We are committed to continuously reviewing, updating and improving our practices and policies to ensure that we are addressing slavery and human trafficking risks within our industry.

We all have a responsibility to be alert to the risks, however small, in our business and in the wider supply chain. Employees are expected to report their concerns and management are expected to act upon them.

### **Our Company**

Our Company was founded in 1917 and is one of the largest family-owned businesses in the UK. The company began life in 1917 as a counter-service grocery store and has since grown from humble beginnings into a company that today employs more than 6,000 people and has a turnover more than £1.2bn.

Food and drink have always been the lifeblood of A.F. Blakemore, and the business now includes a Retail Business Unit and a Food Solutions Business Unit. They are supported by central support functions and a supply chain network with national coverage across the UK. Alongside its shareholding in SPAR, A.F. Blakemore is also a member of the Country Range and Unitas Wholesale buying groups.

### **Our Supply Chain**

Our supply chains include the sourcing of materials principally related to the provision of food and drink.

Our suppliers are expected to comply with the Company's standards in relation to modern slavery. This includes their commitment to comply with all legislation in relation to the Modern Slavery Act 2015, to commit to not taking part in any action that might cause or lead our business to be in violation of the Act, to assist our business in the performance of activity by any regulatory body for the purposes of the Act.

More recently we have commenced a supplier engagement programme to work more closely and collaborate with our key suppliers. The purpose is to enable greater understanding of any risks and opportunities by collecting supplier responses via a Responsible Sourcing survey.

### **Our Policies on Human Rights**

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. Our Human Rights Policy reflects our commitment to acting

ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships and to ensuring slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in our supply chains.

### **Due Diligence Processes for Slavery and Human Trafficking**

As part of our initiative to identify and mitigate risk:

- We operate licensed premises to ensure optimum control of the work environment;
- We are committed to building long-standing relationships with local suppliers and customers and make clear our expectations of business behaviour;
- With regards to national or international supply chains, our point of contact is preferably with a UK company or branch and we expect these entities to have suitable anti-slavery and human trafficking policies and processes. We expect each entity in the food chain to, at least, adopt 'one-up' due diligence on the next link in the chain. It is not practical for us (and every other participant in the chain) to have a direct relationship with all links in the food chain, ultimately to the field or utility generator.
- We have in place systems to encourage the reporting of concerns and the protection of whistle-blowers.
- We have a SEDEX membership via SPAR UK and are working to ensure suppliers are a member of a Modern Slavery compliance organisation and/or have systems and procedures in place to evidence compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.

### **Our Policies**

We operate a number of internal policies to ensure that we are conducting business in an ethical and transparent manner. These include:

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy – this Policy clearly sets out the company's position on modern slavery and explains how our colleagues can identify and report instances of modern slavery and human trafficking within our business activities or supply chain. Within our policy we confirm that:

- we will not tolerate any form of Modern Slavery,
- we are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships,
- we take seriously any allegations of Modern Slavery in our business and/ or supply chains, and
- we are committed to constantly reviewing, updating and improving our practices to ensure that Modern Slavery is not taking place in our business and/or supply chains.

Whistle-blowing Policy – this policy is designed to ensure our colleagues understand how to make disclosures without fear of reprisal. Colleagues can use the 'Speak up Now' reporting portal to make such disclosures. Any disclosures in relation to modern slavery or human trafficking will be reported to the Police.

'Speak up Now' – confidential reporting portal that is in place for colleagues to report any instances of unacceptable behaviour within our business.

During the reporting period ending April 2024, there have been no identified cases or reported instances of suspected slavery and/or human trafficking behaviour in our business.

## **Ongoing Due-Diligence**

As part of our commitment to tackling modern slavery, the business is currently looking to partner with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party that will be able to map our supply chains assessing industry sector and geographical risk, this assessment will cover the whole of our business, which will include support functions and also our product supply chains. By having this assessment conducted we will have clearer understanding of where the biggest risks lie and where the actions we can take to ensure a more positive impact.

## **Modern Slavery Training**

All directors and relevant members of staff have been briefed on this policy and its implications. Whilst the Company's Directors are responsible for compliance in their respective divisions/departments and for their supplier relationships, there is ongoing review and design of the training and development of leaders and colleagues in support of the business commitments to eradicating Slavery and Human Trafficking in the UK.

**This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, following a review and update process, and constitutes AF Blakemore & Son's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year 01 May 2023 to 28 April 2024.**

This statement has been approved by the Board of Directors on 22 October 2024.

All Directors and relevant members of staff have been briefed on this policy and its implications.

Carol Welch  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
26 October 2024