

Modern Slavery Statement

Compliance with Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Financial Year 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025).

“Modern slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harboring or receiving of children, women, or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception, or other means for the purpose of exploitation.”



1. Our Organisation

Hertfordshire Catering Limited (HCL) is an industry-leading educational catering company limited by shares and wholly owned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and therefore any profits made by HCL are always ultimately reinvested into our meals services.

The management team is based at its Head Office in Welwyn Garden City and overall operations are led by John Want, Chief Executive Officer, and the Company's Board of Directors.

HCL is an award-winning contract caterer, dedicated to creating exceptional dining experiences that cater to the diverse needs of its school communities and the commercial sectors throughout Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties

With over 30 years' experience within the catering industry, HCL has forged strong relationships with its customers based on integrity and the ability to not only meet but exceed expectations in delivering a healthy and nutritious meal service that suits every customer's needs.





2. Our Achievements

A Soil Association accreditation: Food for Life Served Here Bronze, ensures the Standards to which our school food is prepared include being healthy, ethical, and making use of some local and organic ingredients. 80% of the schools we service are accredited with a Bronze award, demonstrating our strategy and standards with our food procurement activity.

This Integrated Management System (IMS) combines the Quality Management System (ISO9001:2015) with the Environmental Management System (ISO14001:2015). In addition to a strong customer focus and the implementation of effective business practices for consistency and quality, the roles of leaders and the need for monitoring and assessment are required by both.





3. Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Mission is to offer every child access to healthy, nourishing meals that give them the foundations to grow, learn and achieve their potential. Working in partnerships with children, young people, parents, schools and local suppliers, we can make sure everyone feels valued and can add value.

We aim to deliver our Mission through our 5 core values whilst creating a positive and inclusive culture within our workforce.





4. Our People

We have a large and diverse workforce of over 1,550 colleagues based across our Head Office and education and commercial sites.

Training on modern slavery and on the risks and effects of modern slavery forms part of our induction process for all new recruits. Our Learning Management System (LMS) allows easy access to our online training tools ensuring all mandatory training modules such as modern slavery are carried out by all our staff and new starters, enabling HCL to manage and monitor training and refresher training. As a result, this has enhanced continuous employee engagement and ensures the workforce's knowledge and skills are kept updated on the latest internal policies, statutory legislation and HCL's best practices.

The Modern Slavery training module is designed to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking and to give staff confidence in recognising and reporting any concerns. At HCL, we have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery,





viewing it as a crime that can take many forms such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. HCL's staff are the key to our continued success, therefore we will not tolerate any behaviors which undermine their rights or freedom of association within our own organisation and supply chain. We have specific policies and procedures within the organisation that ensures poor work practices do not exist and colleagues are actively encouraged to report such

incidents in total confidence. Copies of our Anti-Slavery Policy on modern slavery, and other related policies and procedures, including both grievance and whistleblowing policies (to help police our internal practices), are available to all employees via our HR System. All colleagues and their immediate family have access to a free, anonymous, and confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), including a 24/7, 365 days a year helpline for work or personal issues.





5. Our Supply Chain

HCL has three main supply partners accounting for 77% of our expenditure who are based locally to our area. Our whole supply base covers a broad range of Branded and Non-Branded food, non-food items and services, sourced from various UK and overseas locations delivering to over 440 education and commercial sites.

We review all our key partner suppliers annually and expect them to take pro-active steps in the implementation and enforcement of effective systems and controls to ensure that slavery and human trafficking does not take place anywhere in its supply chains. Currently, our findings have reassured us their systems and controls in place represent minimal discernible risk of their supply base.

We believe our supply partners play a key role in HCL's success as the first choice in Education Catering, with exceptional level of commitment to delivering an exemplary service, by focusing on improving every opportunity to ensure the pupils' dining experience will create good eating habits and knowledge of a balanced diet for





Where We Source Our Produce



them to carry into adulthood. For us to do this, we have partnered with industry leaders in wholesale, offering a truly local service operating in education, healthcare, hotels, pubs, restaurants, contract catering and leisure sites.

As HCL is wholly owned by HCC, we are bound by public procurement regulations therefore ensuring we procure and contract in a sustainable manner with a view of embedding sustainable outcomes in the way we do business.



6. Our Responsibility

HCL modern slavery activities have been identified as part of our modern slavery risk assessment. These include the suppliers that we work with who are sourced in the UK and overseas and the locally managed employment processes we use to recruit our staff.

We are committed to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way recruitment is handled to the way the service is delivered. The recruitment process for internal or external consultants, agencies and third-party suppliers who assist in recruitment and selection practice on behalf of the company are also required to comply with these.

As part of our Equality and Diversity policy, the recruitment process seeks to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for each job vacancy regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or other personal circumstances.

An offer of employment is subject to rigorous pre-employment checks, including references, medical clearance, proof of relevant qualifications, eligibility to work in the UK and DBS clearance, where applicable.





7. Our Commitment of Improvement

HCL is committed to continuous improvement and through our active engagements with all our customers, stakeholders and suppliers we are better informed and equipped in dealing with emerging risks and eliminating poor practices within our workforce and supply chain. Below are key areas of continuous improvement we have focused on.

Technology and System Upgrades

At HCL we are on a continual journey to develop and upgrade our digital infrastructure. Upgrades to our HR and Payroll systems enable teams to better manage and monitor recruitment functions and strengthen checks and controls in the recruitment process. Our implementation of a new learning & performance management system will further improve HCL's monitoring whilst delivery of training and advancements in our CRM system will offer better customer experience and efficiency in our retention and processing of information. All this allows HCL to focus resources effectively across the business as well as empowering colleagues to make informed data-driven decisions.





A Safer Place to Work and Dine

HCL have introduced a new corporate objective, “A Safer Place to Work”. Aimed at reinforcing and building upon the culture of safety amongst our people, our services and our food. This also extends to our Supplychain, expecting suppliers to share the same safety commitments. As an all-encompassing objective, it underpins everything that we do. We have reviewed and implemented additional checks and controls in our operations to consistently maintain high standards of safety. We have also set further targets to reduce the amount of overdue online training modules that employees are required to complete as part of their refresher training and ongoing development.

This statement has been approved on behalf of HCL's Board of Directors by John Want.

John Want, CEO

