

# Anti-Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement


2024 - 2025

asendia

[asendia.co.uk](https://asendia.co.uk)

 THE WORLD IS  
YOUR ADDRESS





**‘Almost 50 million people live as enslaved people today. In the UK alone, there are estimated to be over 100,000 victims silently hidden – in places like car washes, brothels, nail bars and restaurants. In our neighbourhoods and on our streets.’**

[justiceandcare.org](https://justiceandcare.org)

Logistics plays a vital role in keeping supply chains moving across every sector. Therefore, industry players in this sector must be extra vigilant in identifying and preventing modern slavery.

This is the ninth annual Modern Slavery Statement to be published by Asendia UK Limited, and is for the period from 31st May 2024 to 30th May 2025.

### **Introduction**

Slavery may feel like a topic that should be confined to the history books and the past, but unfortunately, it is a genuine issue in the present day for all UK businesses, regardless of their size. Modern slavery (just like any form of slavery) is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights.

In recent years, we have seen unprecedented world-changing events, which have all led to an increase in the number of people susceptible to the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking. People may end up trapped in slavery because they are vulnerable to being tricked, trapped and exploited, often as a result of poverty and exclusion.

Over the past ten years, the UK have witnessed large numbers of people ending up living in slave-like conditions, having fled war zones in their home country. Criminal gangs are taking advantage of the chaos of war. Concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the war are facing exploitation were raised in the House of Commons by Theresa May. The former prime minister warned that from the moment the invasion began, people traffickers began

gathering at the borders in the hope of “making money out of this human distress and vulnerability”.

“It’s a sad reflection on human nature that at the very point where these women and children are fleeing Ukraine for their safety to find refuge elsewhere, the criminal gangs have moved in to make money from the trafficking of what they consider to be yet another commodity, that is human beings.”

In recent years, the world has witnessed a profound migration crisis unfold, with millions of individuals undertaking perilous journeys in search of safety, opportunity, and a better life.

Modern slavery is a broad term, and while forced labour is its most common form, many broader abuses fall within modern slavery legislation. These include failure to pay the minimum wage, depriving workers of facilities to wash, rest, eat and drink, demanding excessive hours, domestic servitude, harassment, assault and unpaid wages.

It can also be very subtle and complex to detect.



## Complex Global Supply Chain

Slavery can potentially exist in all supply chain stages, from picking raw materials to manufacturing goods such as garments. Finally, it can be shipped and delivered to consumers. Exposure to exploitation and modern slavery is, therefore, a genuine risk for vulnerable workers.

Most products pass through a long chain of producers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers before they reach the end consumer. Supply Chains now span an increasingly interconnected globe, which increases the risk of exposure to poor working conditions and compliance gaps, making it more likely that unethical practices can go undetected.

Logistics has, by nature, very long and complex supply chains. The more people a business works with, the more difficult it becomes to keep up with everyone's working practices. In logistics, labour mainly spreads nationally and internationally, a complex web of relationships and interactions.

**'Modern slavery is all around us, often hidden in plain sight. People can become enslaved by making our clothes, serving our food, picking our crops, working in factories, or working in houses as cooks, cleaners or nannies. Victims of modern slavery might face violence or threats, be forced into inescapable debt, or have their passport taken away and face being threatened with deportation.'**

[antislavery.org](https://antislavery.org)

## Asendia UK's business and Supply Chains

Asendia provides e-commerce parcel solutions for e-tailers selling internationally. We help growing businesses achieve international e-commerce success by providing managed logistics solutions that overcome global expansion challenges.

We are located on four continents and deliver parcels and mail worldwide to over 200 countries and territories.

Asendia UK's 'direct supply chain' consists of our valued e-commerce retailer clients and our trusted global business partners: collection, sortation, freight forwarding partners in the UK and customs clearance and delivery partners in several international jurisdictions.

### Our Goal and Vision

Our aim is to establish Asendia as a top-tier provider of cross-border deliveries and customer service, delivering excellence in our services while ensuring that we hold true to our commitments in every aspect of our operations. Our vision is straightforward: We strive to provide customers worldwide with seamless access to global markets through sustainable and innovative cross-border e-commerce logistics solutions.

We provide dependable and efficient delivery and returns services to support e-commerce operations. Our services are easy to use and reliable, making it easier for businesses, whether large or small, to focus on growing their business.

## Synopsis by Renaud Marliere, CEO

Despite the UK abolishing slavery in 1833, the exploitation of individuals has continued in different forms. The stark reality is that slavery deprives victims of their most basic human rights – an inhumane practice which holds no place in any modern society. Recognising the misery caused by these issues, the UK's Modern Slavery Act came into force in 2015, with zero tolerance for its associated abusive labour practices.

Among many provisions, the Act requires businesses and their supply chain partners to act together to operate responsibly and eradicate unethical practices, unsafe or abusive working conditions, and forced labour in their supply chain. From due diligence to risk assessments, businesses and their suppliers must show that they're safe to work and partner with and be transparent about managing their operations.

Throughout our global operations, Asendia is committed to conducting business in a legal, ethical, and socially responsible manner and fostering a culture of compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including human rights. This commitment extends to our relationships with our suppliers.

As the business grows, we are working with more suppliers and partners, further expanding our supply chain. We acknowledge that you cannot eradicate slavery from the supply chain overnight. However, a steady shift in cultural practices and an increased awareness of

its issues offer hope for a brighter future.

With 50 million people worldwide in modern slavery, 28 million of which are in forced labour and 3.3 million of those children (International Labour Organization), there has arguably never been a better time for businesses to ensure that they are operating responsibly to protect the people in their organisation and supply chain.

We are committed to understanding our supply chain, being transparent about what we find, and working to help eradicate modern slavery. We recognise that as a company with a global presence, we can also work with others to tackle modern slavery by pushing for positive changes for workers. Eliminating human suffering cannot be done on a piece of paper. Awareness of modern slavery alone will do little to help exploited people. This is an issue that requires constant, proactive attention.

To combat the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our own business and our supply chains, we have taken (and continue to take) steps that we are proud to share with you in this statement; therefore, I present our 2024 Modern Slavery Statement, our 9th statement to date, which outlines how we have built up previous foundations to increase the scope and impact of our modern slavery work.

### Risk Assessment

We take a broad approach to combat modern slavery within our business and our supply chain. To understand risks, actively support human rights and remedy any issues we identify.





## Our Key Challenges

As a logistics company shipping parcels worldwide, we work with many businesses and partners who entrust us to ship their parcels to their valued customers. All our partners have their supply chains and associated risks. We recognise that modern slavery risks are higher in our supply chains than in our operations. Our key challenge lies in the risks of our partners' supply chains and trusting that they are doing the appropriate due diligence in their supply chains - identifying modern slavery risks and how they would address issues, should they find any.

### Demand For Labour

The significant demand for labour currently being seen within the logistics industry is making it a high-risk environment for modern slavery. While online shopping has consistently increased in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in people shopping online.

This then created a need for more workers in our warehouse units to help with the increase in parcel sortation and processing for onward delivery. Although the need for workers has increased, the number of workers available to fill these roles has significantly decreased. Brexit has contributed to some of these labour shortages, thus reducing the number of workers available – This search for labour is making our industry potentially vulnerable to unethical recruitment practices. Therefore, we have focused on third-party agencies supplying our temporary workers, which we deem our highest risk area.

To address this risk, we work closely with external recruitment agencies to recruit our temporary and permanent staff.

All our agency providers are asked to provide us with their Modern Slavery policy and statements and to advise us of their processes to ensure that their workers are not trafficked or victims of

modern slavery. We would not engage with a new supplier until an audit of their process has been undertaken. Last year, we rolled out a more in-depth audit of all of our temporary agency providers to ensure compliance to prevent the risk of modern slavery and ensure they comply with other legislative requirements, such as Health and Safety and the Right to Work in the UK.

### Our Approach

We want to work with suppliers who share our values, understand the salient risks, and will address any human rights violations should they find them.

The relationships with the majority of our partners and clients have been established over several years and are built upon trust, respect and mutual values. We have close and personal links and maintain regular contact with the owners, directors and senior managers of each partner and client business to ensure our business and ethical values are aligned. As a global

business, we use carriers worldwide to deliver our customer's parcels, where steps to eradicate Modern Slavery are not as advanced, posing a potential risk to our business. To address this, we use suppliers who already have a connection with a part of our global group of companies, so a trusted relationship has been formed.

We adopt several approaches to prevent, identify and address all forms of modern slavery:

- Implementing policies and processes that clarify good practice and unacceptable practices.
- Conduct employer training.
- Communicate to our employees and business partners to raise widespread awareness of risks and highlight how, as a business, we can be a force for good in identifying hidden issues and speaking up to ensure these are investigated and dealt with in the right way.

## Due Diligence

At Asendia UK, we strongly believe in undertaking due diligence and addressing any human rights risks that appear within our supply chain. Asendia UK continues to conduct appropriate supply chain due diligence, which includes assessing common symptoms of modern slavery risks.

Internally, we have appointed a dedicated HR representative to the warehouse who is aware of the signs of modern slavery and walks the floor regularly, building relationships with the workers and engendering a workplace of trust and respect. Our supervisors are trained to monitor, record and report where workers' appearance may show signs of injury or malnourishment. Our supervisors and managers are also encouraged to talk informally to workers to understand whether they are experiencing issues.

Our supplier contracts contain clauses related to modern slavery and human trafficking and our due diligence processes. In addition to complying with all applicable modern slavery laws, we require our suppliers to assess the risk of these practices within their business and to take reasonable steps to ensure they don't exist in their supply chain, striving to achieve the best practice possible in line with UK standards. We now require our suppliers to complete our supplier due diligence questionnaire before we contract business.

As part of our commitment to trade compliance, we at Asendia UK have decided to implement two new automated screening tools. These tools

will help us screen senders, recipients, and supply base partners against international sanctions lists. We aim to eliminate trading with denied parties or suppliers with unsavory reputational profiles, such as those with connections to modern slavery or human rights abuse. Our efforts will help rid our supply chain of parties involved in activities related to modern slavery.

## Sustainability

We at Asendia UK take immense pride in our commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives, which you can discover more about on our website. Our dedication to sustainability has been recognized with a Silver EcoVadis Medal, placing us in the top 25% of companies evaluated by EcoVadis. Our sustainability management system is rigorously assessed based on 21 CSR criteria, spanning four themes: environment, labor and human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement.

## Being a Responsible Employer

To ensure that we recruit and treat employees fairly and eliminate the risk of modern slavery at all costs, we recruit and select employees in a fair, lawful, and professional manner, both for internal and external candidates.

We employ around 350 permanent staff across 3 sites in the UK in various professions, including warehouse workers, operations, human resources, IT, legal, and finance. During peak season, we also employ agency workers.

We aim to employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of society at all

levels, and we are proud to share that we have 38 different nationalities working at Asendia. We all represent distinct cultural, racial, religious, age, disability, and gender diversity. Our workforce is almost a 50/50 split of male and female employees.

Our recruitment process incorporates checks to ensure we adhere to employment age and right-to-work laws. Proof of eligibility to work in the UK is verified during the recruitment process before any offer of employment is made. We provide fair working conditions for all our employees, including terms and conditions of employment, remuneration, working hours, health and safety, break times, holiday entitlements, and benefits.

Employees are not contractually required to work more than a 40-hour week, and overtime is only available on an optional basis.

We value everyone's contribution equally and are committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment. We will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour or attitudes in the workplace or in dealings with our customers, agents, suppliers, or anyone we contact during the working day. We are committed to respecting, protecting and championing the human rights of all who come into contact with our operations, including employees, supply chain workers, customers and local communities.

Warehouse work typically requires workers to be on their feet for extended periods, which can involve standing in one place for long periods packing

items or walking long distances when picking items from various locations in the warehouse. With this in mind, we recently purchased more supportive chairs in the break-out room to support their backs during rest time.

We are currently testing anti-fatigue mats in the warehouse to help alleviate the strain and discomfort that comes from standing for prolonged periods. The intention is to roll this out in 2024 across the three sites.

The war in Ukraine has brought further pressure with the cost of living crisis, the rise in gas and electricity charges and the cost of fuels and food. We need to be mindful of the issues that these events have exacerbated. Those already struggling financially are potentially finding themselves vulnerable to the risks of Modern slavery.

To help with these pressures, we run a subsidised canteen that substantially reduces food and snacks.

All our employees are offered a cash plan, which gives each employee a financial allowance for payment for health services such as dental, optical, physiotherapy, chiropody, and counselling. There is also 24/7 online access to a GP. Our employees also have access to a retail discount portal offering savings and cashback on purchased items.

Our London Heathrow site has recently moved into the ULEZ zone, potentially increasing costs further; therefore, cycling has become a viable transport option for staff members. To encourage our employees to cycle safely, we



recently introduced a bike mechanic who attends the site quarterly.

In all of our washrooms, we supply free basic hygiene and feminine hygiene products.

### **Listening to OUR PEOPLE**

We seek feedback from employees throughout the year and more formally through our annual people survey, which is open to all Asendia employees globally. The results from this survey help our leaders and HR teams identify behaviours and practices that could lead to a failure of ethics, controls, or governance before they occur. This confidential feedback also allows for potential exploitation to be raised and investigated.

In 2023, we established a group of individuals with our company's culture at their heart, aptly named 'The Culture Champions'. This group's purpose is to embrace and celebrate our cultural events together and learn from one another. The Culture Champions are also a forum to give every employee a voice and a safe space to discuss, promote, and share ideas on how we, as a company, can help improve the working lives of our staff.

### **Policies and Practices**

We have several policies that help us enforce the standards set to prevent the risk of modern slavery in our supply chains and encourage disclosure of any such practices within our business and throughout our supply chains. Some of our employment policies, including the Anti-Modern Slavery policy and

our Employee "Code of Conduct and Business Ethics" policy, form part of our employee induction process. Employees also have training sessions on induction to the business to ensure that all employees understand the seriousness of the subject and how it can impact our business and supply chain. Employees must confirm that they are committed to and will participate in further training on these policies. These policies are available to all staff via our HR software and Employee Handbook.

All employees must behave in a way that reflects our ethical principles of honesty and integrity. Disciplinary measures may be taken against any employee who violates our policies.

### **Our Anti-Slavery & Human Trafficking Policy**

This policy clearly defines Asendia's position on Modern Slavery. It sets the minimum standards that we expect all suppliers to comply with to ensure the fair treatment and well-being of all workers in our supply chains.

### **Our Whistleblowing Policy**

We encourage employees and supply chain members to report illegal or unethical practices within our business or supply chains and ensure their protection for speaking up. Anonymity is guaranteed for whistle-blowers. Our 'Speak Out' hotline is available 24/7 in nine languages to report concerns or policy breaches within our organization.

### **Our Code of Conduct and Business Ethics policy**

This policy incorporates our stance on the following ethical subjects: Anti-competition, Anti-bribery and corruption, Gifts and Hospitality, Anti-money laundering, Data protection and IT security, Procurement, the Environment, Anti-modern slavery, Human rights, Equal opportunities, Bullying and harassment. We do not take breaches of these policies lightly. When there is an opportunity to influence change, we will work hard with our suppliers.

### **Training and Raising Awareness**

Asendia engages with a number of agency staff at our warehouse units, and we understand the associated risks. Therefore, all of our staff must clearly understand the risks of modern slavery to our business, especially within our workforce. We train all teams within the business to educate them about the risks and to recognise the indicators of modern slavery. Equipped with this knowledge, our staff are more likely to identify possible warning signs related to modern slavery, and they can raise issues if they have any suspicions that any of our agency workers are trafficked or victims of modern slavery. Our staff can also recognise if any of our suppliers appear not to be meeting our expected standards.

We also send regular modern slavery communications to all staff to continue raising awareness of the issue.

Our Anti-slavery and Human trafficking policy and our Modern Slavery statements are published on our website

for staff, suppliers, customers and anyone with an interest in reading about the risks to our business and the steps we are taking to combat modern slavery.

### **Anti Slavery Organisations**

Several organisations can support and guide enterprises and SMEs, helping raise awareness of modern slavery, both within businesses and wider supply chains. These include: [unseen.uk](https://unseen.uk); [coalitiontostopslavery.org](https://coalitiontostopslavery.org); [antislavery.org](https://antislavery.org); [justiceandcare.org](https://justiceandcare.org) and [hopeforjustice.org](https://hopeforjustice.org)

### **Future Steps for 2024 - 2025**

Modern slavery is a serious crime being committed across the UK in which victims are exploited. The signs are not always apparent because of their complex and hidden nature. However, everyone has an important role to play in recognising that slavery has not gone away, the situation is not improving, and action needs to be taken.

Assessing and tackling modern slavery risks that prevent, identify, and mitigate modern slavery should be based on the five factors that create the enabling environment to eradicate modern slavery.

All five factors are essential:

- Government legislation and enforcement.
- Responsible recruitment.
- Freedom of movement.
- Effective grievance mechanisms.
- Remediation



Asendia UK understands that it has an ongoing responsibility to continue to assess and mitigate the risk of modern slavery for the long term. As we advance into our next financial year, 2024-2025, we hope to continue to combat modern slavery in the following ways:

- We have many supply chains that contribute to the operation of our business. Asendia UK continues to grow, and our supply chains do so too. We have released our Supplier Compliance Questionnaire, which aims to survey, open a dialogue, and gather information from our supply chain. This will help us identify positive practices within our supply chains and focus on what support might be needed. This questionnaire will be sent out on supplier set-up as we begin working with new partners and annually for all suppliers to

complete. We hope that the additional information we gather from responses to our questionnaire will enable us to benchmark suppliers and practices to ensure that modern slavery is a key focus when selecting potential business partners.

- Maintain a declaration of commitment from our suppliers.
- Maintain a declaration of commitment at the UK Board level to eradicate slavery from our supply chains and to work collaboratively with others to address those issues that we cannot resolve alone.
- Continue to raise awareness of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking within our business and our direct supply chain.
- Continue to request further information on the business practices of our current and future direct supply chain

clients and partners and, as travel permits, attend supplier sites in person to observe operations and discuss business practices with the senior management of each of our partners face to face.

- Measure and benchmark our performance against the action steps identified in this statement, as well as best practices amongst similar commercial organisations and emerging case law in this area, and identify further areas of improvement to add to our annual compliance risk management process.
- Continue to conduct appropriate supply chain due diligence, which includes assessing common symptoms of modern slavery risks.
- Maintain regular and engaging staff training.

To date, we have not been made aware of or discovered any instances of human trafficking or slavery within our own business or our direct supply chain. However, as a business, we continually strive to ensure that any mistreatment of individuals is identified and eradicated at each touch point of our business and direct supply chain.

This Statement is made in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 section 54(1) and constitutes Asendia UK's Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for the period 31 May 2023 to 30 May 2024. It will be reviewed annually.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Renaud'.

**Renaud Marliere**  
CEO  
Asendia UK Limited  
31st May 2024



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