

## MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2023

References to **we**, **us** and **Walker Morris** in this statement relate to Walker Morris LLP on behalf of itself and its subsidiaries.

This modern slavery statement is the eighth that Walker Morris has published, having published our first in 2016. Our modern slavery statements are published in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the **Act**) and sets out the work we have undertaken this year to build on and develop our efforts to ensure transparency in our business and throughout our supply chains to eradicate the risk of modern slavery.

### Our business

We conduct all of our business in an honest and ethical manner.

We continue to operate as a full service commercial law firm, with a national centre of excellence in Leeds, focusing on providing our clients in the UK and overseas with partner-led, high quality, insightful advice. The single, national centre of excellence in Leeds that we have built offers significant advantages in terms of developing a strong team-based culture within the firm, coupled with the inherent value and cost effectiveness that a Leeds base brings.

As our business grows and develops, our client base will inevitably also undergo some changes. However our clients, many of whom are blue chip, continue to be drawn from a broad range of sectors, predominantly manufacturing, real estate and infrastructure and financial services. Other sectors include retail, food and drink, technology and media, energy, construction and sport.

As a major employer in Yorkshire, our employees are at the heart of our business and two of our core values are talent engagement and sustainable careers. We focus on not only giving the opportunities and pathways for development but also supporting them throughout the process and investing in their overall wellbeing.

We comply with all applicable legislation relating to employee terms and conditions, including pay, and none of our staff earn less than the real Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation. We have retained our Living Wage Accreditation first awarded in 2021.

### Our policies

Our Anti-Slavery Policy and supporting documentation reflects the changes and the progress we have made in relation to our supplier processes. We have a number of other relevant policies in place which support our compliance with the Act and which are reviewed and updated as appropriate on a rolling annual basis, including:

- Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy
- Colleague, Dignity and Respect Policy
- Corporate Responsibility Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing policy, and
- Safeguarding Statement

We continue to provide training to our staff on the key points of these policies, as appropriate.

## **Our supply chain**

We expect all of our contractors and suppliers to meet the same high ethical standards that we apply to our own business.

The vast majority of our suppliers are UK businesses although some are multi-nationals. Our supply chain is not complex; it consists largely of the purchase of services and goods to support the delivery of our services such as IT equipment, software, facilities maintenance, general office equipment and consumables. We continue to assess and monitor our supply chain as it develops for evidence of modern slavery.

## **Risk assessment and due diligence**

This year we have completed a further detailed risk assessment of new tier 1 suppliers in our supply chain. This involved scoring suppliers against various criteria, in relation to factors such as known ethical breaches or criminal convictions, sectoral risk, geographical risk based on the 2018 Global Slavery Index and taking into account matters such as our spend with the supplier and the length of our relationship with them. We used this scoring to categorise our suppliers as representing a high, medium or low risk of modern slavery taking place in their business. This year 80% of new tier 1 suppliers assessed using these criteria were categorised as low risk and, due to their sector risk score, 20% were categorised as medium risk. Due diligence has been conducted on these suppliers to better understand the risk posed, and following completion of this due diligence exercise we have identified no evidence of modern slavery regarding these suppliers. The outcome of the risk assessment process did not identify these suppliers as presenting us with a concern regarding modern slavery.

We re-risk assess existing suppliers on a rolling 5-year basis as part of our ongoing supplier due diligence approach and last year carried out fresh risk assessments (using the criteria mentioned above) of all tier 1 suppliers in our supply chain.

We will continue to review and refine how we engage with our existing suppliers and our processes for onboarding new suppliers, including incorporating appropriate provisions in our contractual arrangements with suppliers.

## **Key performance indicators**

We continue to make good progress in developing and refining our anti-slavery procedures and we believe that, at this stage, it remains inappropriate for us to adopt any specific modern slavery key performance indicators. However, we will keep this under review.

## **Approval**

This slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 30 April 2023 is signed by Malcolm Simpson, Managing Partner and Designated Member on behalf of the members of Walker Morris LLP in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act.



Malcolm Simpson, Managing Partner

October 2023