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# The Medical Defence Union modern slavery statement

As a member-owned organisation, we are committed to conducting our business with fairness and integrity and to actively addressing the risks of modern slavery. Through continuous review, strong governance and close engagement with our partners, we ensure our operations and supply chains reflect the standards we expect.

**Dr Matthew Lee**  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Introduction

Since our founding in 1885 as the world's first medical defence organisation, the Medical Defence Union has remained dedicated to supporting our medical and dental members through every challenge - from regulatory proceedings to claims of clinical negligence. We are proud of our rich history of guiding, supporting and defending our members. As a mutual, not-for-profit organisation owned by our members, we uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct.

We are fully committed to preventing modern slavery and human trafficking, not only within our own operations but also throughout our supply chain and wider network of partners. In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which requires certain commercial organisations in the United Kingdom to publish an annual slavery and human trafficking statement, this document outlines the proactive steps we have taken during the financial year 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025.

We recognise that modern slavery can take many forms - from human trafficking and forced labour to servitude and exploitation - and often exists hidden beneath the surface. We continuously review and strengthen our practices to uphold human dignity and ensure ethical operations within our organisation and across our networks. This statement outlines our current approach and the actions we are taking, and will continue to take, to combat modern slavery and human trafficking.

## **Our structure**

The Medical Defence Union Limited (MDU) is a not-for-profit mutual company limited by guarantee. As a member-owned organisation, we provide discretionary indemnity, medico-legal and dento-legal services. We also represent our members' interests by engaging with government and other stakeholders on matters related to healthcare law and regulation, advocating for fairness and equity.

The operational activities of the MDU, including membership administration, are managed by MDU Services Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the MDU.

## **Policies and procedures**

We take a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking, both within our operations and across our supply chains. We are committed to the highest ethical standards in all business dealings. We maintain a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures to mitigate modern slavery risks, which include:

- **Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy**
- **Procurement and Supplier Management Policy**
- **Outsourcing Policy**
- **Speak-Up Policy**
- **MDU Code of Conduct**
- **Supplier Code of Conduct**
- **Supplier Management Framework**
- **Supplier Site Visit and Audit Guidance**
- **Right to Work Check Eligibility**

Through these policies and procedures, we proactively address modern slavery risks, fostering a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability.

Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated as needed to ensure their continued effectiveness. For example, we updated our Procurement Policy - now renamed the Procurement and Supplier Management Policy - to reflect its broader remit and strengthen oversight of risks across the supplier lifecycle. The revised policy covers the full contractual lifecycle of supplier relationships, from selection and onboarding through to contract management, performance monitoring, renewal and exit, enabling more robust due diligence and ongoing monitoring of potential risks.

In addition, we implemented a Supplier Management Framework designed to ensure suppliers are managed consistently across the MDU supply base. The framework supports a structured, risk-based approach to supplier oversight, including the identification and management of various risks. New contracts and renewals will incorporate terms aligned with the framework, strengthening expectations on suppliers and supporting ongoing monitoring and compliance.

## **Risk assessment and due diligence**

We have assessed that the risk of modern slavery within our operations and supply chain remains low, based on the nature of our business and the types of services and goods we procure. Our supply base primarily continues to consist of software providers, infrastructure suppliers, professional service firms (e.g., business consultants, facilities management) and marketing merchandise suppliers. The majority of our suppliers are based in the UK or Europe, though we also work with suppliers located globally.

To ensure ongoing oversight, we regularly assess modern slavery risks and conduct additional reviews when there are regulatory changes or developments in our supply chain. This helps us proactively identify potential risks, assess their likelihood and implement effective controls to mitigate them.

As part of the onboarding process for new suppliers, we conduct a risk assessment based on sector, geographical location and the materiality of the goods or services provided. Our Request for Proposal template requires suppliers to provide their modern slavery policies, evidence of compliance and a history of any related incidents. All MDU contractual templates include anti-slavery clauses to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and new suppliers are informed of our Supplier Code of Conduct during onboarding.

## **Supplier Categorisation**

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of supplier categorisation using a materiality-based framework to ensure a consistent, risk-focused approach across the MDU. Supplier assessments are underway, and the resulting classifications will guide contractual requirements, including audit and oversight provisions, to strengthen the management of modern slavery risks.

## **Training and awareness**

We continue to maintain a compliance training programme. Our Procurement team delivered a bespoke e-learning training module on modern slavery to raise awareness of associated risks and support colleagues in identifying and addressing potential issues. Training was provided to personnel who manage or engage with suppliers, ensuring those with responsibility for procurement and supplier relationships are equipped to uphold our standards and mitigate modern slavery risks.

## **Further steps**

In 2026, we will continue to strengthen our approach to managing modern slavery risks by continuing to assess potential risks within our operations and supply chains and implementing appropriate measures to address them. We will also keep our policies under review to ensure alignment with best practice and evolving regulations.

Furthermore, we are advancing the consolidation and oversight of our supplier base to further reduce risk exposure. These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards and preventing modern slavery across our operations and supply chain.

This statement will be reviewed annually and is published on the MDU's homepage. Approved by the MDU Board, it is issued in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, serving as our modern slavery statement for the financial year ending 31 December 2025.



**Dr Matthew Lee**  
Chief Executive Officer  
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