

Velocity 400 Limited t/a Ensemble Purchasing Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Version 1.0

Introduction

Velocity 400 Limited (which trades as Ensemble Purchasing) is a non-profit cost sharing group providing professional procurement services to its members, established in 2016.

Ensemble Purchasing is committed to acquiring goods and services for its members without causing harm to others. In so doing, Ensemble Purchasing is committed to supporting the UK Government's [Action Plan](#) to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Ensemble Purchasing's members are also members of London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC), a non-profit professional collaborative buying organisation. Ensemble Purchasing uses LUPC framework agreements for goods and services wherever appropriate and thus shares the same values and commitment to sustainable and ethically responsible procurement. LUPC's Director, Andy Davies, is a director of Velocity 400 Limited.

LUPC is a member of Procurement England Limited (PEL), the shared vehicle by which English HE purchasing consortia manage joint developmental and improvement projects for collaborative procurement in our sector. PEL has published its shared [Sustainability Policy](#), to which all PEL member consortia are committed.

This Statement is designed to satisfy the requirements of Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, by informing members, students, staff, campaigners and the public about Ensemble Purchasing and its policy with respect to modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in its supply chains.

Although, as a business, Ensemble Purchasing turns over far less than the threshold for businesses required to publish a statement under the Act, its Board considers that our members' collective turnover, which exceeds the threshold, warrants a statement on the risks inherent in its members' supply chains and the steps we are taking to address them.

Our spend categories

Ensemble Purchasing's members' supply chains mainly fall under four 'super-categories', which are:

- Library Resources
- Professional Services
- ICT Equipment and Services
- Estates Goods and Services

The principal categories which carry material risks are office supplies, ICT equipment and some estates services, such as cleaning and security services.

Office supplies

LUPC leads in the procurement of office supplies for UK higher education institutions and other Members. A wide range of products are supplied, many of which are sourced by our distributors from producers in low-cost countries in south and south-east Asia, Africa and South America, countries where modern forms of slavery are prevalent.

Many of our suppliers in these higher-risk categories have committed to the [Base Code](#) of the [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI) and we are working to persuade our remaining suppliers in these categories to join them. The ETI Base Code is founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is an internationally recognised code of labour practice, requiring that:

1. Employment is freely chosen;
2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected;
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic;
4. Child labour shall not be used;
5. Living wages are paid;
6. Working hours are not excessive;
7. No discrimination is practised;
8. Regular employment is provided; and
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.

ICT Equipment

LUPC leads in the procurement of desktop and notebook personal computers for UK higher education institutions and other Members. LUPC also plays an active part in the management of supply agreements led by its sister consortia for Apple products, servers, storage and other ICT equipment.

In 2014, LUPC became a founding member of [Electronics Watch](#), an independent monitoring organisation working to achieve respect for labour rights in the global electronics industry through socially responsible public purchasing in Europe.

Public sector buyers like LUPC with a will to act on labour rights issues do not have an effective way to do so as they have insufficient leverage over brands, companies and manufacturers. With Electronics Watch, LUPC is seeking to work with suppliers of ICT equipment to commit to new monitoring regimes where corporate codes of conduct and social auditing policies and practices are failing in their transparency and effectiveness. Currently there is no comprehensive, credible and independent monitoring system for the electronics industry that involves workers and local civil society organisations.

LUPC successfully pressed for the inclusion of new monitoring clauses in a new national supply agreement for Apple products in 2016, and will include them in the next iteration of the National Desktop and Notebook Agreement, to be tendered in 2017.

Cleaning and Security Services

LUPC offers a supply agreement for cleaning and security services to its members. These are recognised as spend categories where operatives are traditionally among the lower paid and LUPC perceives a medium-level risk to workers in these supply chains. Under LUPC's new framework agreement for these services, new clauses were introduced requiring suppliers to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to the [ETI Base Code](#), the [International Code of Conduct for Private Security](#)

[Service Providers \(ICOC\)](#) and to ensuring that they take steps on members' behalf to guard against modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations in this supply chain.

LUPC's partnership with the BHRE

LUPC has partnered with academics at the [Business, Human Rights and the Environment Research Group \(BHRE\)](#) in the School of Law at the University of Greenwich, led by Dr Olga Martin-Ortega, who was elected to the LUPC Board in 2015. Together LUPC and BHRE are organising stakeholder events, initially to sensitise and promote awareness of the risks of the electronics supply chain among public procurement professionals.

In November 2015, Andy Davies and Dr Olga Martin-Ortega together attended the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva and the first Learning Lab on Public Procurement and Human Rights, organised by the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR), the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), the Harrison Institute at Georgetown University Law Center, and the Public Procurement Research Group at the University of Nottingham's School of Law.

In December 2015, LUPC and the BHRE jointly organised the Socially Responsible Public Procurement of Electronics Goods Symposium at Greenwich.

Our plans for the future

As part of this reporting exercise in this and the coming years, Ensemble Purchasing and LUPC express their commitment to better understanding members' supply chains and working towards greater transparency and responsibility towards people working on them.

Ensemble Purchasing will work with LUPC and suppliers in product supply chains to encourage more of them to commit to the ETI Base Code. Working with our suppliers and with groups like Electronics Watch and People and Planet, LUPC plans to map out all those supply chains which represent a medium- to high-risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and labour rights violations.

This Statement has been approved and published by the Board and will be reviewed at least once annually.



Judith Barber, Chair
Velocity 400 Limited, t/a Ensemble Purchasing

July 2016