

Transparency in Supply Chains: view from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

The UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, recently delivered his first annual report, setting out his achievements so far in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking. The report is impressive. While it is clear that his work has only just begun, the Commissioner (whose role was created by the Modern Slavery Act 2015) appears to have made real progress in mobilising the support of the public sector, NGOs, charities and other bodies across the globe.

So what can we learn from the report about transparency in supply chains reporting under the Modern Slavery Act 2015?

- ▶ The Commissioner has communicated with 1000 companies operating in the UK to set out his expectations in relation to the transparency in supply chains reporting requirement. Clearly, rather than waiting for major businesses to publish their reports, the Commissioner has adopted an approach of active engagement at an early stage;
- ▶ The Commissioner has approached Kia and Volvo, who were subject to an *Al Jazeera* investigation into the use of slave labour in car washes in Kent, to understand what steps they were taking to address slave labour issues in their supply chains. As we expected, there is an increasing appetite in the media for investigating and reporting on ethical labour issues;
- ▶ Parliament and the Commissioner are working together to ensure there is a "fit for purpose central repository" for supply chain transparency statements, although we have no further information at this stage on what that repository might look like and where it might be housed;
- ▶ The Commissioner has focused particularly on slavery in the fishing industry, working with charities and non-departmental bodies to improve practices and improve support for victims;
- ▶ There is a clear link between modern slavery and money laundering, and that the proceeds of crime from modern slavery has become a significant money laundering threat. The Commissioner is working with governments and financial institutions, and it seems that we can expect more activity on this during the next year.

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