



## MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT NATIONAL VETERINARY SERVICES GROUP (NVS Group)

In respect of the financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Introduction

In line with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "Act"), this statement outlines the steps that National Veterinary Services Group ('NVS Group' or 'We') have taken during the financial year ending 30 April 2023 to prevent any form of modern slavery from occurring within our business operations and supply chain.

Modern Slavery is an umbrella term that encompasses the offences of human trafficking and slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, as set out in the anti-slavery legislation in place in the UK. Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights.

As an employer in the Distribution and Logistics industry, NVS Group recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. NVS Group is committed to ensuring our employees work in satisfactory conditions and that we fully comply with both Health and Safety and employment law standards and requirements in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

NVS Group is committed to the principles of fair and honest trading, through the way in which we source goods and develop relationships with suppliers who share the same principles.

### Organisational structure and supply chains

This statement covers the activities of NVS Group including National Veterinary Services, Nationwide Laboratories and VetIT. NVS Group are part of Patterson Companies Inc.:

**Business Activities:** We are the UK's leading Veterinary Supplies business, with customers across the United Kingdom. We supply medicines, surgical instruments, equipment, consumables, pet products and accessories; along with the provision of IT business solutions and laboratory services, to the Veterinary industry.

**Nature of Supply Chain:** Our supply chain involves the sourcing of 3<sup>rd</sup> party manufactured products for wholesaling to veterinary practices.

**Countries of Operation and Supply:** The organisation currently operates in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Goods are sourced in the main from UK based suppliers.

### Responsibility

Responsibility for the organisation's anti-slavery initiatives is as follows:

- **Policies:** We have zero tolerance for modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships, and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure slavery is not taking place anywhere in our own business. We expect the same of our business partners and do not knowingly conduct or engage in commercial or operational activities with any individuals or companies that participate in improper labour practices, including child labour, physical punishment, forced or prison labour, or human trafficking. Please see the section on Due Diligence below for additional information.
- All employees are educated in the concept of modern slavery and are responsible for reporting any behaviours which do not meet the standards described in this statement.
- All Directors and Senior Managers are responsible for compliance in their respective departments and for their supplier relationships.

### Due Diligence

The organisation undertakes due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers. Within the organisation's due diligence:

- We will issue a supplier questionnaire to help us assess the risk of modern slavery within our supply chain.
- Where possible we will build long standing relationships with suppliers and make clear our expectations of business behaviour.

- We will invoke sanctions against suppliers that fail to improve their performance in line with an action plan that may be agreed.

### **Risk Assessment**

The following is a process by which the company assesses whether particular activities or countries are higher risk in relation to slavery or human trafficking:

- We mainly source goods from UK suppliers and require these entities to have suitable anti-slavery and human trafficking policies and processes. We also ask our suppliers to commit to not sourcing from countries considered to be 'higher risk' as identified by the global slavery index.

### **Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken**

We have the following activities in place to strive to minimise the risk of modern slavery in our supply chain:

- For our workforce, we have processes in place to verify our new hires have the right to work in the UK, including documentation checks. Additionally, we require new employees to be paid into a bank account of their own name.
- For our suppliers, we have processes in place to only accept new suppliers who meet the requirements of our risk assessment.

### **Training on modern slavery and trafficking**

The organisation raises awareness of modern slavery issues through communication and training.

### **Relevant policies**

The organisation operates the following policies that describe its approach to the identification of modern slavery risks and steps taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations:

- **Whistleblowing policy** - The organisation encourages all of its employees to report any concerns related to the direct activities or the supply chains of the organisation.

This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The organisation's whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for employees to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. Individuals with concerns can use the Company's confidential compliance helpline: 0800 014 8928 or visit <http://www.speakuppatterson.com>. All new starters receive a copy of this policy.

- **Patterson Code of Business Conduct** - We promote the organisation's code to employees through online mandatory training, to ensure their actions and behaviours, and those they witness, are to the standards required.

In managing its supply chain the organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour.

**Additional Resources** A copy of the U.K. Modern Slavery Act, 2015 can be accessed [here](#) and general information on the principles for government action is available [here](#).

### **Managing Director Approval**

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our company's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year to the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. It has been approved by the organisation's Managing Director who will review and update it annually.

**Managing Director's signature:**



**Director's name:** Martin Riley

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023