



Canterbury Oast Trust (COT)

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Transparency Statement

Introduction

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps Canterbury Oast Trust (COT) has taken, and is continuing to take, to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking within its organisation, services and supply chains.

COT is a charity based in Kent, supporting adults with learning disabilities and autism, and operating a range of care, employment, training and social enterprise activities, including visitor facing and commercial operations. We are committed to acting ethically, transparently and with integrity in all that we do.

Our organisation and activities

COT delivers regulated care and support services alongside commercial and community-facing activities designed to promote inclusion, skills development and meaningful occupation.

These activities include:

- paid employment roles
- supported employment and training opportunities
- therapeutic placements, designed to support wellbeing, confidence, routine and personal development

Where people supported by COT are involved in commercial or operational activity, this is delivered within a clear care, therapeutic or development framework and is never exploitative.

We recognise that modern slavery can occur in many sectors, including care, agriculture, hospitality and related supply chains, and that it is often hidden.

Our commitment

COT has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to:

- preventing exploitation in our workforce and supply chains
- protecting people supported by COT who may be at increased risk of coercion or exploitation

- ensuring that therapeutic, training and employment activities are ethically delivered and safeguarding led
- promoting a culture where concerns can be raised safely and acted upon

This commitment is underpinned by our values and our safeguarding responsibilities.

Policies and governance

COT has safeguarding, whistleblowing and ethical standards in place which support the identification and reporting of concerns related to exploitation or modern slavery.

We are in the process of developing a full Modern Slavery Policy and Procedure to strengthen and formalise our approach, including how modern-slavery risks are considered in relation to supported employment, therapeutic placements and commercial activity.

This transparency statement operates alongside our existing safeguarding arrangements and will be reviewed as our policy framework is further embedded.

Risk awareness and approach

COT recognises that potential modern-slavery risks may arise in areas such as:

- use of third-party suppliers, contractors and agency staff
- commercial and visitor-facing environments
- employment, training and therapeutic placements involving vulnerable adults

We take a proportionate and risk-based approach, ensuring that safeguarding, dignity and wellbeing take precedence over operational or commercial considerations.

Supporting and protecting people we support

Where people supported by COT participate in paid work, training opportunities or therapeutic placements, this is done in a structured, supported and person-centred way.

COT is committed to ensuring that:

- participation is based on individual choice, capacity and informed understanding
- therapeutic placements are designed for wellbeing and development, not productivity
- appropriate supervision, support and review arrangements are in place
- individuals are not subjected to pressure, coercion or expectation linked to commercial outcomes

- any concerns about exploitation, undue influence or discomfort are responded to immediately

Safeguarding considerations always override commercial or operational objectives.

Training and awareness

COT promotes safeguarding awareness and professional curiosity among staff and volunteers, including awareness of exploitation and coercive practices.

As our modern-slavery arrangements continue to develop, this will be strengthened through targeted guidance and proportionate training relevant to staff roles and responsibilities.

Raising concerns

Anyone with concerns about potential modern slavery or human trafficking connected to COT is encouraged to raise these through internal safeguarding or whistleblowing routes, or via external reporting mechanisms such as the Modern Slavery Helpline.

All concerns are taken seriously and handled sensitively, with the welfare and rights of individuals at the centre of any response.

Ongoing development

COT is committed to continuous improvement in preventing modern slavery and exploitation. This includes strengthening policy, oversight and assurance arrangements in line with the scale, nature and complexity of our activities.

This statement will be reviewed annually and updated as our organisational arrangements evolve.

Approved by: Canterbury Oast Trust

Date: 31st March 2026

Reviewed by March 2028