

The Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill is published

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The Bill seeks to:

- make it a criminal offence to include information in a modern slavery statement that is false or materially incomplete - this will apply to the relevant person 'responsible' for the statement, which would include directors of companies, partners in partnerships or members of LLPs;
- make it a criminal offence where an in-scope organisation continues to source from suppliers or sub-suppliers that fail to demonstrate minimum standards of transparency after having been issued a formal warning by the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner (the ability to issue such warnings being a proposed new power of the Commissioner); and
- extend transparency by requiring in-scope organisations to:
 - publish and verify information about the country of origin of sourcing inputs in its supply chain,
 - arrange for credible external inspections, external audits, and unannounced external spot-checks, and
 - report on the use of employment agents acting on behalf of an overseas government.

Both offences would come with a sentence following conviction of a fine amounting to 4% of the global turnover of the in-scope organisation, up to a maximum of £20 million. An individual defendant can be sentenced to up to 2 years imprisonment for the offence of including false or incomplete information.

The Bill is a Private Members Bill and will not become law unless sufficient time is allocated to its passage through Parliament. Few Private Member Bills make it through for that reason however, as the government has indicated its commitment to improving the quality of modern slavery reporting, the Bill could have more chance than most. The Bill is likely to be amended as it is scrutinised and debated by Parliament. We shall keep you informed of the Bill's progress.

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