

Modern Slavery Act Statement

This statement is produced in accordance with s54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Introduction

Dehns (hereafter referred to as “the Firm”) is a group of professional services businesses operating within the Intellectual Property sector as a leading firm of IP specialists. The Firm is headquartered in London, with partners and staff based in five further office locations across the UK and additional European offices situated in Munich, Germany and Oslo, Norway. We work with contacts on an international basis in order to establish, protect, enforce, oppose or otherwise advise upon relevant intellectual property rights for our clients.

The Firm currently has 43 partners and around 280 partners and staff in total.

Our principal supply chains involve contracting with organisations around the world that provide comparable professional services to the Firm for the jurisdictions in which they are qualified to act. Some of these organisations will use similar professional sub-contractors to perform the services in certain jurisdictions. In addition, we have the usual supply chains associated with the operation of professional services-based offices in the UK and Europe.

The Firm is committed to the prevention of modern day slavery and human trafficking within the business or associated supply chains. This statement sets out the Firm’s approach to monitoring and tackling such abusive activities with the aim of ensuring that they do not occur in the Firm’s business or connected businesses.

Risk assessment

The Firm has assessed the risk of slavery and trafficking activities within its own business and supply chains to be very low given:

- 1) The professional nature of its business, together with a high proportion of its personnel being professionally qualified or undergoing professional training (see further below);
- 2) Our supply chains mostly involve established reputable corporate entities (including our international links) or other professionally regulated organisations;
- 3) The Firm has direct relationships with suppliers not normally consistent with the engagement of slave labour. Only partners, associates and senior Business Services staff are entitled to agree supplier terms, and do so after appropriate due diligence has been carried out on the provider.
- 4) The Firm, where practical, uses preferred suppliers in all areas of its business. The majority of these preferred suppliers are considered by their nature to be of very low risk. Where a potential supplier is considered to be in a higher risk category, due diligence is carried out to ensure that our standards are met before they become a preferred supplier.

The Firm has therefore not conducted an extensive review of its supply chains but does require all of its suppliers to adhere to a compliance code. For details, see: <https://dehns.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/22141648/UK-compliance-suppliers.pdf>

Ethical and risk management policies, and any associated training, are mainly reviewed by a combination of the Firm's Managing Partner, Chief Operating Officer, Head of HR, Head of Facilities and Environmental Management and the Environment and Social Responsibility Group.

Relevant policies and procedures

The Firm has several compliance measures in place to monitor working credibility and integrity:

- The Firm expects a very high level of professional conduct at all times from its partners and staff. The Firm's professionally qualified members, and those undergoing professional training, (who currently make up over half of all personnel) are also subject to the separate regulations and/or professional code of conduct of one or more of the following organisations:
 - o Intellectual Property Regulation Board;
 - o Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office;
 - o Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys;
 - o Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys;
 - o Solicitors Regulation Authority
 - o Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development;
 - o Chartered Institute of Marketing;
 - o Chartered Institute of Management;
 - o Association of Chartered Certified Accountants;
 - o Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

- Appropriate due diligence is carried out on prospective clients, including those we are working with on an individual basis, which includes, where appropriate, identity checks before we carry out work for them;

- The Firm has a Whistleblowing Policy in order for any member of the Firm to highlight concerns about working practices. Individuals are afforded all relevant protection and reassurance in raising any issues;

- The Firm has introduced an external reporting hotline to allow any member to report concerns (including anonymously) about worrying and/or unethical behaviour;

- The Firm has an Anti-Corruption Policy in place in which all partners and staff are required to be vigilant about any suspect behaviour and to formally report the same;

- The Firm usually prefers to engage all employees on a direct basis and to limit agency staff wherever possible. Employment with the Firm is subject to academic, employment and criminal reference checks. All employees are paid fairly for work performed; they are also subject to identity and right to work checks. Any recruitment agencies that the Firm works with are respectable and established organisations which have entered into proper contractual relations with the Firm. Where temporary members of staff are supplied by a recruitment agency, their employer is asked to provide proof that identity and reference checks have been carried out to the same level;

- The Firm has an Environment and Social Responsibility group which encourages any member of the Firm to speak out about potentially unethical or worrisome behaviour by anyone that we employ or have a business relationship with. Should the Firm determine any evidence of slavery or human trafficking within any of its professional relationships, the Firm would seek to address such issues without "tipping off". The Firm would also look to terminate the working relationship and report the offending, or suspected offending, actions to the relevant authority if appropriate;

- The Firm has an Employee Assistance Helpline in place to assist employees and their family members with any issues connected with work or home life;
- The Firm has 15 Mental Health First Aid Champions, a mix of partners and staff across various locations. Champions take a proactive interest in staff welfare, provide a support group network at peer group level, and remain watchful for signs of poor mental health which, although possibly emanating from other aspects of an individual's life, could be linked to concerns relevant to this statement;
- The Firm has voluntarily ensured that all direct employees are paid a minimum of the Living Wage, either on the London or National basis as applicable. The Firm has taken steps to ensure that all relevant suppliers are also Living Wage compliant. and the Firm received official Living Wage Employer accreditation in September 2020.

Planning and priorities

Building on the steps we have taken to date, we have identified the following as objectives for the coming year:

- Increase knowledge and awareness of the new external reporting hotline referred to above



Adrian Samuels
Managing Partner