

Bristol City Council pledges to become world's first Transparent City with tiscreport.org - the world's largest open anti-slavery register

Submitted by: Tiscreport

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Tiscreport.org, the open data registry committed to helping to end slavery within our lifetimes, has collaborated with Bristol City Council to help them eliminate slavery in their supply chains, providing a Local Authority dashboard to meet specific requirements of the council, their systems and their data. Whilst this is in beta at the moment, it will give rise to more insightful features and tools specifically for local authority use.

The Modern Slavery Act passed into law in March 2015 and laid the foundation for combating slavery in the UK. Whilst it mandated companies and groups with over £36M turnover report annually their actions to end slavery in their supply chains, it contained no provision for the creation of a central Government run resource where diverse organisations could register to confirm they have acted and/or are acting to end slavery in their supply chains. Tiscreport was created to provide an open, accessible registry to increase corporate transparency around those supply chains.

"We should not wait for the world to save itself through treaties and alliances. It is for cities to set the example on things that matter, from climate change and inequality to the eradication of exploitation and slavery. Transparency in supply chains starts with transparency of actions taken, and I will ensure that all council procurement requires that suppliers required to comply [with the Modern Slavery Act 2015] and submit their anti-slavery statements to tiscreport.org. Our city was built through the sacrifices of victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. But together with Bristol's business community we will ensure that slavery has no place to hide in our city." Marvin Rees, Elected Mayor, City of Bristol

Bristol City Council made their commitment via tiscreport.org back in April 2016 when the Anti-Slavery Commissioner announced that all companies over £36M turnover would need to produce a modern slavery statement within six months of their next year end after 1st April 2016. Reaffirming their commitment at their Modern Slavery Act event in Bristol last month, the Bristol City Council procurement team has honoured the commitment with both their membership and their open supplier data, which is free to local authorities, public sector bodies and the third sector.

Jaya Chakrabarti, CEO of tiscreport says: "We're incredibly excited that Bristol has stepped up to lead once again, this time in becoming the world's first Transparent City to do business in. We can't change Bristol's past, but by playing to Bristol's strengths and using digital innovation and the power of partnership with social enterprises, we can lead the way in ending modern slavery here in our city and beyond. We have developed numerous transparency tool prototypes that we can't wait to see in use by the Bristol City Council procurement team."

Tiscreport is a public database where anyone can easily search for company information. It also provides great resources to the registered organisations to help them actively improve and comply with the legislation through a range of accessible tools, including a supplier dashboard and a statement builder. It enables companies who have to comply with legislation to check through their suppliers to find out who else needs to comply, and also provides prompts to help them draft their own statements.

What's more the registry is self-funding, meaning that it requires no funds from charitable donations to operate and more importantly it will not require any infusion of public funds from the Government. This innovative model, created through the partnership of social enterprise with charity, is something that is becoming more common and can be applied to other areas, so that the Third Sector can continue to direct maximum resources to the vulnerable.

"We are very proud to have developed a sustainable model that can do so much good in combatting slavery without having to go 'cap in hand' to the taxpayer and without diverting funds from frontline work" says Jaya Chakrabarti MBE, CEO of tiscreport. "For the UK, we now estimate that upwards of 20,000 companies will need to be covered by statements, and the final deadline for this first year of required compliance is October 2017. Our system will provide an accessible, open platform to help achieve this goal."

As a social enterprise, as well as providing a supportive and progressive platform to organisations, 50% of funds raised through the registry also go directly to delivering frontline support for victims of slavery and trafficking.

"It's great to see Tiscreport making such progress. Our business community is fully committed to pro-actively working on how we can help raise awareness of the abhorrent slavery which exists today and we are working with Unseen, Semantrica and many other partners and of course the Modern Slavery Act to do all we can to eradicate it. With over 22,000 members in Bristol and across the South West we are determined that business will help to take the lead." James Durie, CEO of Bristol Chamber of Commerce & Initiative

Launched in early April 2016, following the Home Office Transparency in Supply Chains event on 21st March, the registry has gathered so much momentum that what started as a UK effort to gather statements based on the recent legislation, has transformed into a global project joining up with anti-slavery legislation across the world. Moreover there are more voluntary disclosures due to the public commitment made by prominent companies in each sector being made more visible on tiscreport.

Thanks to its partnership with OpenCorporates.com, the world's largest open database of companies, it is now possible to easily trace company relationships from the UK to the world through mergers, acquisitions, groupings and supply.

The register has been built according to technical standards and guidance from open register experts from the Government Digital Service (GDS) who have been instrumental in ensuring that tiscreport.org has as wide and as deep reach as is possible for a non-government open data register. Useful data has been coming from surprising places; there are even links into the publicly available Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) data from the Food Standards Agency, that will provide useful data on some businesses that are not registered companies.

Says Stuart Gallemore, tiscreport CTO, "It's been very important to us that the data we are collecting is fit for purpose, and provides a flexible framework for improvement to end slavery" he adds "Working in partnership with GDS experts, international NGOs and open data initiatives, we are

gathering momentum at an incredible speed. If we continue to gather proactive partners at this rate, then we see our collective goal of driving a significant proportion of modern slavery out of our supply chains within 5 years as far more achievable.”

Says Jaya Chakrabarti MBE, tiscreport CEO: “Whilst reaching 10k is a UK-specific milestone for compliance under the UK’s MSA legislation, our non-UK data set is also proving that openness and collaboration is alive and kicking in the private sector globally when it comes to ending the exploitation lurking in our supply chains. Our growing number of members and partners are all committed to the challenge.”

Tiscreport partners include: CIPS (chartered institute of procurement and supply), ICC (International Chambers of Commerce), Business West, gov.wales and a growing number of corporate, academic and NGO supporters. The partners have made a public commitment with the Clinton Global Initiative.

<https://www.clintonfoundation.org/clinton-global-initiative/commitments/tiscreport-enabling-business-help-end-modern-slavery>

Links

<https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2015/10/13/the-characteristics-of-a-register/>

Quotes:

“We are living in a world that is increasingly driven by technology, connectivity and data and where open data is a powerful tool for social, environmental and economic change. However, rarely is the challenge so great and also so important as the ambition to use open data to end the practices of modern slavery. This is a test case not just for the power of data but also for our collective will to make this change happen. Jaya is helping to lead the way and I am there to help, along with many, many others.”

Stephen Hilton, Board Director, Bristol Pound, Fellow, Bristol Cabot Institute.

“The social enterprise Semantrica is providing a central registry for businesses to file their annual transparency statements. The introduction of the central registry will become a crucial tool in maximising transparency and fully supporting the important business partnerships we are developing across Wales.”

Stephen Chapman, Wales Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator

"I'm never surprised at the ingenuity, drive and passion I find in entrepreneurial Asian women. Jaya is one of those women, determined to save the world with her skills, through her sheer force of will and integrity. Of the 46 million human lives living in slavery, 14 million of those are Indian, a larger proportion than any other country in the world. That she has chosen to combat modern slavery speaks volumes. There is an obligation many of us non-resident Indians feel about addressing the inequality that affects our motherland, and the world at large. I strongly support Jaya in her mission and urge every company to submit their statements every year to <https://tiscreport.org>. Be a part of the solution. Make sure you are one of them."

Pinky Lilani CBE, DL, Asian Women of Achievement Awards

“I’m delighted Jaya is pursuing this incredibly important initiative. She is a fantastic tech leader

and this project will do a huge amount to raise awareness of this important issue!"

Former Minister Ed Vaizey

"To tackle slavery we can't keep doing what we've always done. Only through collaboration, transparency and the power of technology can we innovate our way to a fairer world. I encourage all businesses to not only submit their statements to tiscreport.org, but to make the words count. Share the data that will help to ensure slavery has no place left to hide."

Baroness Martha Lane Fox

About tiscreport

tiscreport.org is the World's largest Open Data Registry committed to ending Modern Slavery, joining up Transparency In Supply Chains (TISC) reporting globally. As an open data initiative, it meets the compliance requirements of section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 of the Home Office, and was announced at the Home Office TISC event on the 21st March 2016. It also gathers and links with anti-slavery statements relating to other anti-slavery legislation across the globe, making it the largest anti-slavery resource for corporate transparency statements available.

Tiscreport.org was created and maintained entirely by Semantrica Ltd, an independent UK social enterprise. It is funded purely and transparently by commercial membership fees and donations from organisations uploading reports to the [tiscreport](https://tiscreport.org) site. 50% of the proceeds of membership fees are donated to enabling frontline services combat modern slavery.

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