



## SLAVE-FREE ALLIANCE

Working Towards a  
Slave-free Supply Chain

# SLAVE-FREE ALLIANCE

## in partnership with CURRYS & ELKJOP

How Currys plc is incorporating modern slavery awareness training to maintain their staff's skills and knowledge to prevent and address modern slavery and labour exploitation



**“We have been really grateful for our partnership with Slave-Free Alliance throughout the years. Recently we have been maximising this partnership by requesting policy reviews for modern slavery, child labour and conflict minerals”**

Jessie Greenhalgh, Responsible Sourcing Manager at Currys

## A strategic and operational partnership

As one of the founding members of Slave-Free Alliance, Currys is committed to carrying out rigorous checks to identify and prevent modern slavery in its operations and supply chains.

The omnichannel retailer provides technology products and services, with operations based in the UK and Ireland as well as the Nordics, under the brand names Elkjøp, Elgiganten and Gigantti.

Currys first started working with Slave-Free Alliance in 2018 and since then, we have cultivated greater awareness among employees and conducted multiple reviews, resulting in outcomes which have strengthened and fortified its operations against modern slavery.

Currys' desire is to introduce practical steps that are proactive rather than reactive. Recognising that the fight against modern slavery is a process, Currys has already put a plan in place for the year ahead, taking a strategic approach towards a slave-free supply chain.

## About Currys PLC

In the UK and Ireland, the business has some 300 stores, employing around 15,000 people, most of whom are UK-based. Currys also has their sourcing operations in Hong Kong, where around 70 staff oversee sourcing from East Asia.

Meanwhile in the Nordics, there are 10,000 staff working across 420+ stores located in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. Currys also has franchise stores in Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. There are an additional 500 employees working at its distribution centre in Sweden, 300 employees working at its repair centres in Norway and Sweden, and 400 employees working at their customer care centres in Finland, Denmark and Norway.

Currys has extensive recruitment needs within its own operations, in addition to services such as transportation of products, which are overseen by third parties. Currys has 6,500 suppliers worldwide, including products, services and goods not for resale. When combined with the supply chains associated with its products, there are many opportunities for modern slavery to occur in the business operations and supply chain, hence the need to strengthen visibility and robustness.

## Working together

### STARTING THE JOURNEY

One of Slave-Free Alliance's early projects with Currys was a review of its waste and recycling departments in the UK. This is a well-known area of risk in businesses and the review helped Currys to better understand what was being done well and reinforced the positive processes and procedures that existed.

In 2022, Slave-Free Alliance carried out a Gap Analysis, identifying compliance risks and building up a clear picture of the supply chain. This confirmed some areas of good practice whilst also highlighting some areas for improvement. It culminated in the presentation of a findings and recommendations report from the Gap Analysis, which constituted a foundational piece for Currys' continued relationship with SFA.

In 2019, Currys also asked Slave-Free Alliance to conduct a recruitment review at its internal warehouse operations in Newark, UK.

### SCALING UP

Wanting to replicate this model of work in an international area, Currys then collaborated with Slave-Free Alliance to review the recruitment processes at its Nordic Distribution Centre in Sweden.

There are 56 nationalities represented in the employee base at the warehouse, and Elkjøp uses agencies to provide additional workers. The company wanted to carry out a due diligence exercise to analyse the risk of modern slavery in its warehouse operations.

Slave-Free Alliance conducted a two-day recruitment review at the Sweden site, which comprised a site tour, interviews with the site manager, HR team and workers, including permanent staff, agency staff and third-party security staff.

Sofie Ambjörn-Christiansen, Elkjøp Nordics' Head of Risk & Compliance, said: "The conclusion of this review was that there were no signs of modern slavery detected but that awareness of this issue needed improvement."

Lara Diskus, Business Development Manager at SFA, said: "As part of the Slave-Free Alliance membership, Currys was able to validate the work they were already doing, ensuring there are robust processes and checks in place to reduce the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in the business' operations."

### RESPONDING TO THE FINDINGS

Currys has taken positive steps in acknowledging the gaps in its approach and is working to address these. Conversations are being had around what more can be done to reduce the risk of labour exploitation. The company places an important emphasis on looking after its employees and wants to build on its levels of awareness around the issue of modern slavery so that staff at every level of the business are informed.

Some of the steps that have been taken include:

- Launching awareness sessions to educate employees on what modern slavery looks like, how to report modern slavery, and utilise the whistleblowing hotline
- Practical feedback around recruitment and ways to implement change, including optimising processes such as ID checks
- New Swedish classes offered to some employees to improve language barriers and promote inclusion
- Additional 360 reviews offered and early conversations around addressing some of the workforce's lack of access to feedback mechanisms

### LOOKING AHEAD

Currys wants to work with Slave-Free Alliance to review high risk areas of its store network in the UK, including security and cleaning. This will look at Currys recruitment partners for those roles.

These projects will form part of Currys' updated Modern Slavery Statement to showcase the company's commitment to a slave-free supply chain.

Looking further ahead, Currys plans to carry out an audit of the waste section in the Nordics, building on the work of Slave-Free Alliance with Currys in the UK earlier on in its membership journey.

Sofie Ambjörn-Christiansen, Elkjøp's Head of Risk & Compliance, said: "In the Nordics, we are committed to being responsible employers to our 10,000 employees. Our partnership with Slave-Free Alliance has been instrumental in raising awareness, enhancing our practices, and thoroughly reviewing our processes. Having an objective third party evaluate our procedures is invaluable; it reveals areas for improvement that we might overlook. This collaboration fosters continuous improvement and heightened awareness. We recognise that addressing modern slavery is an important component of our responsible sourcing efforts."



## THE SOCIAL IN ESG

Currys has an overall ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) strategy which, like many companies, has had a large focus on Environmental to date.

Good progress is being made to strengthen the Social element, such as offering training on responsible sourcing, conducting ethical audits for all own label & licensed brand suppliers, and supporting survivors of modern slavery to find work in their business as part

of the Bright Future programme. The company is also trialling providing data on suppliers' sustainability to customers at the point of purchase to help them make informed decisions. Elkjøp in the Nordics wants to establish an internal procurement policy to strengthen its Social offering. It is also carrying out some of their own smaller-scale social audits.

## In Summary

By partnering with SFA as a critical friend to further its human rights strategy over the past 6 years, Currys has shown industry leadership in placing social impact at the core of its sustainability agenda. Both teams look forward to developing new impactful human rights projects that will continue to strengthen the company's resilience to modern slavery and human trafficking risks.



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