



Anti-slavery and human trafficking Statement – 2020

1. Opening statement

HGF is committed to preventing acts of modern slavery and human trafficking from occurring within its business and supply chain, and requires the same high standards from its suppliers. We commit to uphold the principles of the United Kingdom’s Modern Slavery Act 2015, both within the firm and through its relationships with clients and associates.

2. Structure of the organisation

HGF is a group of companies operating in Europe.

HGF Limited is a United Kingdom company (No. 08998652) having its registered office at 1 City Walk, LEEDS LS11 9DX. We operate out of offices in twelve UK cities. Some of HGF Limited’s shareholders are members of a law firm, HGF Law LLP (OC382146) and some are members of HGF Europe LLP (OC425986), both partnerships having their registered office at the same address.

HGF Limited has three wholly-owned operating companies outside of the United Kingdom, namely HGF BV, a Dutch company (No. 63864606) having offices in The Hague and Amsterdam; HGF GmbH, a Swiss company (No. CHE-484.730.827) having an office in Basel; and HGF IP Limited, an Irish company (No. 622725) having offices in Dublin and Westport. HGF Europe LLP has offices in Munich and Heidelberg in Germany, and Salzburg in Austria, as well as in the UK, and operates primarily in the German/Austrian market.

All these companies are hereafter referred to as “HGF” and this statement covers them all. HGF is an independent professional services firm within the Intellectual Property sector, providing advice to clients based around the world. Our services are primarily in advising on, obtaining, enforcing and exploiting intellectual property rights for our clients.

Most of our clients are commercial organisations, research and development based companies, and universities and other institutions, who make inventions and/or design new products, and/or have brands and trade marks that distinguish their goods and services. We work with attorneys in many different countries around the world whom we instruct to provide such services on behalf of our clients. Mostly, these attorneys are also our clients, asking us to perform services for them, on behalf of their own clients.

More information about HGF can be found on our website <http://www.hgf.com/>.

HGF and its legally qualified employees are regulated by one or more of the following professional bodies and codes:

- Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg) - [Rules of Conduct for Patent Attorneys, Trademark Attorneys and other Regulated persons](#)
- Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office - [Code of Conduct and Regulation on Discipline](#)
- Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) – [SRA Handbook](#)
- Patentanwaltskammer – [Patent Attorney Act in Germany](#) and [Professional Code](#)



The majority of HGF's employees are employed directly and on a permanent basis. Recruitment takes place through direct advertising on our website, through reputable agencies and on the basis of referrals from employees within our firm. The identity and right to work in their place of business of all our employees is checked.

3. Policies

As part of our commitment to combating modern slavery, HGF:-

- has a policy regarding slavery and human trafficking
- pays staff fairly for their work and above national standards regarding minimum wage
- acts ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships
- identifies, assesses and monitors potential risk areas in our supply chains to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring
- protects whistle blowers.

We also ensure our clients and associates are aware of our policies, and adhere to the same high standards, by drawing attention to this document, and our policies, in our Terms and Conditions of Business.

All these documents are available for review on our [Legal Documents](#) page on our website.

4. Risk and compliance

HGF evaluates from time to time the nature and extent of its exposure to the risk of modern slavery occurring in its supply chain. Our supply chain outside the United Kingdom in relation to our services consists, on the whole, of other regulated professional service businesses like our own. We consider these to be very low risk in relation to slavery and human trafficking issues. Accordingly, other than visiting our associates from time to time, no specific action is taken with regard to these relationships. In this year, however, visits to clients and associates has been severely curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, we continue to believe there is a very low risk of slavery or human trafficking having a connection with the firm's activities. We do not consider that we operate in high risk sectors or locations. Most of our clients require services to be performed in industrialised countries and we employ legal services that would not normally be considered a likely employer of slave labour, or low paid workers.

We endeavor to ensure that all our suppliers adhere to our anti-slavery Policy. If we were to find evidence of a failure to comply with our policies on this and other matters (eg bribery or corruption) we would immediately seek to terminate our relationship with the relevant client or supplier.

5. COVID-19 Implications

During the Corona virus pandemic, HGF was able to continue its activities by staff working from home. Our IT department was able to provide staff with suitable home-working computer equipment at short notice and most staff remained fully occupied. Regular video-conference contact was maintained with and between staff.

Measures were implemented to ensure the ongoing viability of the business to protect jobs while the pandemic lasts.

6. Training

Because we consider our business to be at a low risk of being involved with slavery and human trafficking, we do not have a specific training programme for our staff beyond making known to them on a regular basis our policy on this and other matters. Employees are encouraged to identify and report any potential breaches of our anti-slavery and human trafficking policy. They are required to comply with our bribery and corruption policy.

7. Further actions and sign-off

Following our review of our actions this financial year (ending 30 April 2020), we are satisfied that our business continues to pose little opportunity for human exploitation, either directly within HGF and through interactions with our business support suppliers, or through our interactions with clients and associate law firms.

This statement, approved by the Board of HGF, is made in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes HGF's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year commencing 1 May 2019 and ending 30 April 2020.

Signature:



Date:

19 October 2020

Paul Sanderson

Chief Executive Officer

HGF Limited, 1 City Walk, LEEDS, LS11 9DX