

MODERN SLAVERY ACT STATEMENT December 2017

This statement has been produced and published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Here we set out the steps taken by Damartex UK and relevant group companies in 2016 and 2017, to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in our business and supply chains.

Who we are

Damartex UK is a subsidiary of Damartex SA, a company incorporated in France, a multi-channel, multi-brand European business that develops and distributes predominantly clothing and accessories for seniors and provides a Financial Services offering which allows customers to spread the cost of shopping with us.

Damartex UK trades principally under the Damart brand which was established in 1953 in France. We sell our own brand and third party branded products in the UK and our own brand products in the USA. We share much of our supply chain with our parent Group. In the UK we have over 500 employees; our UK Head Office is in Bingley and our Distribution Centre in Steeton, both West Yorkshire.

Our commitment

Modern slavery is a term used to encompass slavery, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking and is an abhorrent abuse of human rights. It is a global and growing issue and exists in all economies across the world, with no sector being immune to the risks.

Damartex is committed to ensuring a working environment that prohibits modern slavery and human trafficking, both in our own organisation and that of our supply chain.

What have we done so far?

Key areas of focus in 2016 – 2017

Initiative Clause Social (ICS)

We have joined the Initiative Clause Social (ICS). ICS is a group of 20 leading retailers who have joined together with a shared objective to sustainably improve conditions for people at work, and responsibly support suppliers in this aim. Joining the group has enabled coordination of our audit approach in line with other retailers. It also allows us to benefit from the pooled resources and results.

Sustainable Procurement Charter

As a Group, we review our supply chain standards under the “Damart Way” initiative. As part of this initiative, our Sustainable Procurement Charter is a collaborative commitment between Damart and our UK and International merchandise suppliers to express our shared accountability for responsible sourcing. We are dedicated to ensuring that our suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics.

Damartex have requested suppliers to declare that they:

- provide safe working conditions
- treat workers with dignity and respect
- act ethically and within the law in their use of labour

The aim is for our products to have no negative impact on the health of those who produce them or consume them, or on the environment.

It is our aim for all of our suppliers to sign the Sustainable Procurement Charter by the end of 2018.

Product Suppliers

To date 142 suppliers have signed up to the charter and a total of 95 factories have been visited by Damartex. Our approach is to minimise risk by working with suppliers. The first step is to sign the charter; we then build on this by visiting factories, by evaluating social and environmental risks and by auditing factories. Damartex plan to audit all factories on a 5 year rolling programme.

In addition to our own audits, in the first six months of 2017, we have collated 30 audits through joining Initiative Clause Social (ICS), 10 which have been completed on behalf of Damartex and 20 from sharing with other suppliers through the initiative. A further 10 factories are due to be audited on behalf of Damartex through ICS by June 2018.

Non-product Suppliers

At the end of March 2017 we contacted our 'higher risk' suppliers. These had been identified by the volume of business we share and also by the nature of the business in which they trade. They were sent our own Modern Slavery Act statement and the Sustainable Procurement Charter and were asked to respond in agreement and/or provide a copy of their own statement. We are now collating and following up on all unsigned statements, to ensure that they are taking similar measures in tackling the problem.

Internal training

Colleagues from across the business attended an internal CSR event, to raise their awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking; this included our Sustainable Procurement Charter. We are also taking steps to ensure that this forms part of our new employee induction programme, to ensure all new employees are made aware of Modern Slavery and our policy related to it. In addition, representatives of the internal Modern Slavery Act (MSA) team attended the West Yorkshire Police Modern Slavery Conference.

Internal Communication

We have developed an internal communication strategy within Damartex UK and our group to ensure the principles are understood throughout the business.

What are we doing going forward?

Steps for the next 12 months

- A modern slavery action plan has been compiled with clear accountabilities and deliverables and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the senior management team with an annual UK board review.
- Adapting and updating current procedures and documents to reflect the modern slavery policy and measures, including our new employee induction programme and our new supplier contracts. Then working further to raise the profile of these within the business.
- Follow up on un-signed charters that are currently with suppliers.
- Raise further awareness of the Damartex whistleblowing policy and promote the internal and external, confidential whistleblowing telephone line.
- Develop our internal training package to include the Modern Slavery Act.

The responsibility for ensuring that modern slavery does not exist in the operations and supply chain of Damartex sits with the UK Board of Directors, along with our Group Director colleagues, and its effectiveness will continue to be monitored.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

Fiona Mannion

Managing Director Damartex UK

Dated: January 2018