

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

Introduction

This statement, made on behalf of the Walker Group, is published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Walker welcomes the introduction of the Act and fully support its aim to raise accountability with the requirement that businesses be transparent about what they are doing to combat the crime. We, at Walker, are committed to conducting business to the highest ethical standards and take our responsibility to respect human rights seriously. We do not tolerate modern slavery or human trafficking anywhere in our organisation or in any of our supply chains. This is our first annual statement and covers the financial year ending 31 December 2016. It sets out what we are doing to eliminate, as far as possible, the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking taking place.

Who we are and what we do

The Walker Group includes Walker Books Ltd, Walker Books Australia, Candlewick Press Inc and Walker Productions. We are one of the world's leading independent publishers of books and content for children. Our ownership structure includes employees worldwide together with authors and illustrators. Our focus is on children and we endeavour to enrich their lives through the products we produce. The need for a rigorous and responsible attitude to ensure that what we do in no way harms, prejudices or enables people to exploit anyone involved in the publishing process is never underestimated and is at the forefront of how we conduct our business.

Our supply chains

Walker is a founding member of the Publishers Resolution for Ethical International Manufacturing Standards ("PRELIMS"). All our product suppliers are required to work towards the standards set out in the PRELIMS Code of Conduct and part of the process involves them actively engaging in compliance audits. The standards our suppliers have to commit to cover subject areas such as child labour, discipline, forced labour, discrimination, wages, hours, freedom of association and collective bargaining. They also include standards relating to health and safety and the environment. New suppliers are required to provide valid audits before we agree to engage with them.

As part of our business, in addition to producing our own books and related materials, we license others to produce products using our brands. Those merchandising licensees are required to adhere to the standards as set out in the Walker Code of Conduct.

Within our organisation itself, we do not discriminate and ensure all staff are treated fairly and equally. We have adopted a green approach to the way our offices are run and will purchase fairtrade products wherever possible.

Our policies and procedures

Walker has a number of policies and procedures that go towards ensuring there is no modern slavery or human trafficking within our organisation or with the suppliers we use. These include our ethical sourcing policy and the code of conduct referred to above. As far as our staff are concerned,

we endeavour to ensure that pay and conditions, together with benefits, are appropriately managed and monitored against market conditions, and comply with relevant employment legislation.

What next

We are currently undertaking a thorough review of all procedures and policies relevant to this area and will be producing a policy for staff which specifically addresses modern slavery and trafficking. In addition to the training undertaken by members of our production team, other staff will be given training relevant to their areas, and their views and suggestions regarding where there is room for improvement, and how we can achieve that, will be listened to.

The Walker Code of Conduct will be updated and consideration given as to whether its application should be extended to other business partners, or whether our contracts themselves require any relevant changes.

The independence of our company, the ownership structure, and the business that we are involved in, require each and every one of us to play our part.

This statement has been approved by the Board of Directors of Walker.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Lotz', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Karen Lotz

Group MD