

# Blends for Friends | Modern Day Slavery Statement

## About this statement

This statement sets out Blends for Friends actions to understand potential modern slavery risks in relation to its business and to put in place steps aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its business and supply chains.

## About the company, structure and supply chains

### Our business

Blends for Friends is a bespoke tea blending company within the food sector and employs around 20 people in the UK. We are based near Sevenoaks, Kent in England. We have been sourcing tea, herbs and spices from around the world for more than 15 years, always with a firm commitment to trade ethically and treat our suppliers with respect. We welcome the requirements set out in the Modern Slavery Act, which places a responsibility on businesses to assess the risk of slavery occurring in their supply chains. While the provisions of the Act apply only to businesses much larger than ours, we have chosen to respond proactively and voluntarily because we want to be part of the solution. We are institutionally opposed to forced labour and the treating of people as property.

### Scope

We expect all our directors, employees, and suppliers to act with honesty, integrity, and fairness. Our principles at Blends for Friends ensure we operate lawfully, with integrity and with respect for others. We are committed to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place anywhere in our supply chains or in any part of our business. We fully acknowledge our responsibility to respect human rights as set out in the Human Rights Act.

### Supply chain key information

Blends for Friend's Modern Slavery Policy reflects its commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all its business relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place anywhere in its supply chains or in any part of its business. Blends for Friends regularly reviews the effectiveness of the steps it has taken to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its supply chains and implements a continuous improvement plan to combat slavery and human trafficking.

Blends for Friends has around 200 suppliers of goods and services worldwide, with key spend being in the UK, Europe, Canada, China, Japan, Sri Lanka and India. The supply base is local where possible, but we access a global supply of tea and herb ingredients where appropriate.

Among the other services supplied to us within the UK are: banking, power, freight, couriers and post, telecoms and IT, stationery, waste, professional services. Some of these suppliers publish their own MSA statement, others we have chosen for their ethical policies and others are less transparent. All are subject to the UK labour laws which, while not a guarantee of compliance, does imply a lower risk.

Looking to our supply chains from overseas, we make a distinction between buying from other traders (European/Canadian-based wholesalers) and buying from suppliers at source. Purchasing from traders offers us less transparency, and arguably these are supply chains over which we have less influence. Wherever possible, we buy directly from the company producing the plant ingredient. A direct relationship means we are able to better understand the factors which may lead to forced labour and can help ensure it does not occur.

Our organisation regularly evaluates the nature and extent to which our business and our supply chains are exposed to the risk of modern slavery occurring. The following list of risk management activities and/or procedures demonstrates our commitment to compliance.

- In-country expertise from our representatives in Sri Lanka and India supporting best practice and effective communication. We have worked with these experts over many years and meet face to face with them regularly.
- A formal purchasing policy for all suppliers (whether we are buying at source or through a trader) including a detailed questionnaire for any new supplier which is regularly reviewed and updated.
- An ethical sourcing policy that commits us to working in partnerships and for the long term with our suppliers
- Blends for Friends provides training to its key staff to ensure they understand and are aware of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking and how they can assist in the prevention of it.

### **Training & Awareness**

All new employees are subject to pre-employment checks to confirm their identity and eligibility to work in the UK prior to their starting work within the Group. Information is provided to all employees on their statutory rights including sick pay, holiday pay and any other benefits they may be entitled to by virtue of their employment. We pay all directly employed labour at least the living or minimum wage, as relevant. Where recruitment agencies are used, we ensure they comply with all legal requirements. These procedures collectively help to address our on-going commitment to protect our employees' human rights and the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour. To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains and our business, all staff have been briefed on the subject.

### **Supplier & Human Rights Due Diligence**

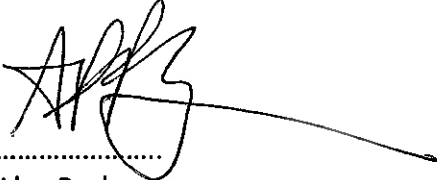
We will continuously seek to develop our practices where possible and to work with our suppliers and contractors to be as certain as we can be that they hold the same values as us.

We strive to engage with all employees to address risks. We work throughout our business to implement and enforce programs that aim to follow key human rights, and we expect others to uphold these criteria, encourage them to adopt similar policies, and will work to develop and strengthen relationships with contractors and suppliers who do so. The standards we expect will address a broad spectrum of working conditions including fair remuneration, working hours, no child labour, non-discrimination, health, safety, and wellbeing, as well as freedom from forced labour.

## Targets

Clear opportunities exist to build on the strong base that is already in place at Blends for Friends. Over the course of the financial year 2023-24, we will:

- Carry out a review of the UK-based providers we work with to establish how best we can engage with them on the risk of modern slavery in their businesses and supply chains.
- Ensure we continue to stay in touch with suppliers in the highest-risk countries to understand their local situation. Taking advice from experts, we will seek to discover what those suppliers are doing to ensure none of the workers in their fields and factories are under duress, and what we can do to support those efforts.
- Add to our supplier approval documentation a section on modern slavery.



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Alex Probyn  
Director