

## Press Release

For immediate release

### Waste & recycling sector unites to tackle modern slavery

Northampton, United Kingdom, 01 July 2021: **The waste and recycling sector's leading professional membership and trade bodies, CIWM and ESA, have today announced a joint commitment to tackle slavery, forced labour and human trafficking across the industry.**

By working together, the two organisations will leverage their combined membership, which has a significant reach across the UK's major waste and recycling operators, to reduce the risk of modern slavery across their membership base and the wider sector. This will be achieved by raising awareness and understanding of the issue, setting out clear codes of practice and sharing intelligence, guidance and best practice. Both parties will also work collaboratively to tackle the problem alongside other charities and sector bodies.

In 2018, just under 7,000 people were formally identified as being potential victims of modern slavery in the UK - up 300% from 2013. The situation is, however, likely to be far more severe, with The Global Slavery Index estimating that there are around 136,000 people living in modern slavery in the UK at any one time.

The waste and recycling sector is a major UK employer, maintaining over 120,000 jobs (0.3% of total UK workforce). Despite operating in a highly regulated environment, with increasingly robust employment policies, the industry does embody a number of characteristics which can be exploited by criminal activity. These include high levels of sub-contracting and the employment of low-skilled temporary workers who often originate from outside of the UK.

*"Issues as complex as modern slavery can only be addressed through meaningful collaborative and cross-sector working", said Sarah Poulter, CEO of CIWM. "The UK waste and recycling sector has developed some of the most robust employment practices found anywhere in the UK but there is always more that we can do. Both CIWM and ESA have been committed to addressing this issue for some time now and a crucial first step was to recognise that we work in an industry where this can be a problem and to promote honest and open dialogue. We look forward to working with ESA and our members to implement effective working practices that will protect both the people and businesses delivering this vital service."*

**Executive Director of the ESA, Jacob Hayler, said:** *"Modern slavery is a horrific crime which can devastate lives and families and we know that the recycling and waste sector has been previously targeted by criminals. The ESA has set clear standards for its members, to help drive any criminal activity out of our sector, and these are enshrined within our code of conduct."*

*In recognition that this affects whole sector, and will require collaborative action to address, we are pleased to partner with CIWM to make this joint commitment today – working together to reinforce standards and compliance; to raise awareness and develop best practice; to share intelligence and to support our combined members develop proactive anti-slavery strategies."*

Further detail on the CIWM and ESA commitment be found [here](#).

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. CIWM: CIWM is the leading professional body for the resource and waste management sector representing around 5,700 individuals in the UK, Ireland and overseas. Established in 1898, CIWM is a non-profit making organisation, dedicated to the promotion of professional competence amongst waste managers. CIWM seeks to raise standards for those working in and with the sector by producing best practice guidance, developing educational and training initiatives, and providing information on key waste-related issues. More information can be found at [www.ciwm.co.uk](http://www.ciwm.co.uk)
2. The Environmental Services Association (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK's resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK's waste is managed [www.esauk.org](http://www.esauk.org)

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