

# ASCENTIAL

## ASCENTIAL PLC – MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

### Background

- The Modern Slavery Act came into force in October 2015 to combat illegal trade in human trafficking, child labour and modern slavery.
- Through purchasing decisions companies have the capacity to improve the working conditions of those employed by exploitative suppliers whilst rewarding those who treat works with dignity and respect.
- Ascential must publish an annual standalone slavery and human trafficking statement within six months of the end of the financial year. This statement must include “a statement of the steps the organisation has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains” (or that they have taken no such steps).

The Board is asked to approve the following statement for publication on the Ascential website.

### Company Snapshot

- Ascential is a leading specialist, global information company, listed on the London Stock Exchange. Our information optimises our customers’ offering on the journey from product design through to marketing and sales
- Each of our brands unlocks actionable information and insights for our customers. Through business-critical intelligence, world-class events and advisory services, we anticipate trends and connect brands to market-leading, sector-specific expertise.
- Ascential operates from 39 offices around the world, serving customers in 150 countries.
- Our suppliers, partners and other third parties involved in the provision of goods or services are important to us. They underpin our ability to serve our customers and while delivering our valued and trusted products, it is important to us that we and our suppliers do business responsibly, ethically and lawfully.
- The majority of our customers are consumer product and service companies (or companies in their supply chain), who operate globally.
- Our trusted, market-leading brands include:
  - Cannes Lions, the International Festival of Creativity
  - The world's premier payments and financial services congress Money20/20
  - The global fashion trend forecasting service WGSN
  - eCommerce data and analytics platform Edge
  - Leading Amazon managed services provider Flywheel
- The company has taken a leading approach to gender diversity, with 57% women on the plc board, the highest in the FTSE250.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ascential recognises that slavery, forced labour and human trafficking (Modern Slavery) is a global issue. Ascential has a zero tolerance approach to Modern Slavery of any kind and has taken steps to ensure it is not present in its internal operations or its supply chain. Ascential published its first modern slavery statement in June 2017 and in the past year we have continued to increase the breadth and depth of our work on Modern Slavery.

We consider Modern Slavery to be a growing global issue and know our customers share our concern. As part of our commitment to our customers we always treat people and our business and our supply chain fairly and this includes our efforts to eradicate Modern Slavery.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

In 2016 we devised and approved risk assessment criteria for determining the risk of modern slavery in our internal operations and our external supply chain using guidance from sources such as the Walk Free Foundation. These criteria were maintained in 2018 and include:

- geography (countries where bonded labour is more prevalent);
- sectors (the nature of product or service procured or supplied and whether it is typically associated with unfair labour practices); and
- the nature of our business operations and supplier relationships.

We anticipate continuing to use this criteria in 2019 to effectively categorise the risk level of our operations and suppliers and to focus our efforts accordingly.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Ascential's Third Party Code of Conduct outlines our ethical approach to doing business and explains the standards we strive to ensure that all our suppliers should abide by. It contains provisions on involuntary and child labour, freedom of association, diversity and equality, anti-corruption, intellectual property and privacy, health and safety and the environment. We also expect our suppliers' suppliers to adhere to it. Our Third Party Code of Conduct can be found on our website here: [https://www.ascential.com/~/\\_media/Files/A/Ascential-V2/documents/ascential-third-party-code-of-conduct.pdf](https://www.ascential.com/~/_media/Files/A/Ascential-V2/documents/ascential-third-party-code-of-conduct.pdf)

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## OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

Ascential does not engage with manufacturing and none of our top tier procurement spend is directed at businesses frequently associated with modern slavery. Regardless, Ascential has a large and diverse supply chain based around the world. We are therefore aware of the importance of taking meaningful lasting action to mitigate the risk of modern slavery.

Most of our highest risk suppliers are associated with our events businesses (involved in event build and breakdown), making the sale of our Exhibitions brands notable (the sale also resulted in reduced engagement with suppliers from Mexico and Turkey). At the end of 2017 we had also sold MEED Media FZ, our middle east business intelligence unit based in Dubai. We continue to engage with third parties in higher risk locations such as India and China; in particular, this year we launched Money 2020 Hangzhou.

We require all of our suppliers to adopt, as a contractual obligation, our Third Party Code of Conduct or adhere to an equivalent internal code. Additional anti-modern slavery risk mitigation activity may include the following, depending on the supplier risk profile:

- subjecting suppliers to an approvals process before they are permitted to supply services to us (this may include a questionnaire designed to identify any areas of non-compliance with our Third Party Code of Conduct and confirmation that our supply chain is slavery and human trafficking free);
- inclusion of our Third Party Code of Conduct in all procurement processes;
- the use of specific anti-modern slavery clauses in contracts and framework agreements;
- restrictions on the use of sub-contracting;
- onsite monitoring; and
- communication and training.

Should a supplier fail to fulfil the minimum standards outlined in our Code, Ascential reserves the right to terminate the business supplier relationship without consequence or liability.

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## **1. REPORTING**

Our Whistleblowing policy enables our staff to report any wrongdoing which extends to human rights violations, including modern slavery. All employees have access to an independent reporting service where concerns regarding unacceptable working practices can be reported. Reports may be made anonymously. All reports are investigated and appropriate action taken.

## **2. TRAINING**

Our Code of Conduct is available to all employees on our Group intranet and has been communicated directly by the Chief Executive to all employees to underpin the importance of the Code.

To ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking, we have provided training to our senior leadership team, Group finance and to Procurement. We are also rolling out an on-line training module to all staff on the Code.

## **3. FURTHER STEPS**

We will periodically review the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to sure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains by continuously improving any policies, procedures and systems that we have implemented.

## **4. BOARD APPROVAL**

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 December 2018.

This statement was approved by the Board of Ascential plc on 21 February 2019 and will be subject to annual review.

For and on behalf of the Board,

Duncan Painter  
Chief Executive