



**Department for
Business, Innovation,
Science and Trade**

The Lord Alton of Liverpool
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Lord Anas Sarwar
Minister of State for Trade
Department for Business, Innovation,
Science and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY

T: +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E: Sarwar.Correspondence@businessandtrade.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk

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Dear Lord Alton,

Thank you for leading the recent House of Lords debate on the Joint Committee on Human Rights' report 'Forced labour in UK supply chains'. I am particularly grateful for your continued engagement on this important issue and for the warm welcome extended to me in the House of Lords. I greatly valued the opportunity to hear from Members with such deep expertise and commitment to tackling the egregious human rights abuse that is forced labour.

During the debate, you highlighted the importance of transparency in the implementation of the provisions introduced through the Health and Care Act. I noted your remarks and wanted to provide further information on the steps being taken to ensure those requirements deliver meaningful outcomes in practice.

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England recognise that legislative requirements must be underpinned by effective operational delivery. To support implementation ahead of the Regulations coming into force on 17 May 2026, a modern slavery risk assessment tool was integrated into the NHS e-procurement platform, while NHS England published detailed implementation guidance for procuring authorities. NHS England and DHSC also delivered a programme of jointly hosted training webinars, attracting over 1,000 registrations, and undertook extensive engagement with NHS organisations, suppliers and wider stakeholders across the healthcare sector.

Work is now focused on embedding these requirements across the system and strengthening organisational capability. This includes an enhanced training offer, the development of additional compliance and assurance tools, and new reporting arrangements to support public bodies procuring for NHS purposes in monitoring and demonstrating compliance. Progress and emerging good practice continue to be reported through the annual NHS-wide Modern Slavery Statement.

The Government remains committed to ensuring these measures drive genuine improvements in the identification, assessment and mitigation of modern slavery risks within NHS supply chains. We will continue to monitor implementation closely, gather evidence on how the regime is operating in practice, and consider opportunities to strengthen transparency and due diligence further as the policy matures.

Thank you once again for leading this important debate and for your continued engagement on this important issue. I would be very happy to meet with you to discuss further, and my office will be in touch to arrange a convenient time.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anas Sarwar', with a stylized, flowing script.

LORD ANAS SARWAR
Minister of State for Trade
Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade