

# Modern Day Slavery Conference 2025 – Background to the Conference

Every county in the UK has a High Sheriff and the role has existed since Saxon times. Historically, the High Sheriff was responsible for law enforcement, but in the present day, the High Sheriffs role is to raise the profile of charitable works and to be the monarch's representative in the county in relation to everything to do with law enforcement.

Some (but not all) High Sheriffs decide to pick a 'focus' for their year, and David Way, the current High Sheriff has chosen modern day slavery.

Although we appreciate that none of your businesses will be engaged in modern day slavery, the issue is modern day slavery in our supply chains, hidden from view. The Modern Day Slavery Act that was passed by the Government in 2015, only requires a brief statement to be made by businesses. In order to try to properly address this issue, we would like businesses to agree to a Modern Day Slavery Charter – that effectively goes a step further and requires businesses to actively think about their supply chains and how to prevent modern day slavery.

Caroline Haughey OBE KC is regarded as one of the leading legal experts in Human Trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. Having prosecuted the first case of modern slavery in the UK (R-v- SK) Caroline was subsequently involved in advising the All-Party Parliamentary Group on a proposed bill, gave evidence before the parliamentary committee and was subsequently involved in the drafting of the Modern



Slavery Act 2015. She was sole author of the Haughey Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act and joint expert legal advisor of the Independent Modern Slavery Act Review 2019. In March 2024, she was appointed special advisor to the House of Lords' Modern Slavery Act 2015 Committee.

Caroline has worked together with a Charter Committee, set up by David Way, to look at the provisions of a potential Modern Day Slavery Charter for Cambridgeshire. Members of the Charter Committee, together with David and Caroline are Jonathan Agar DL (Chief Executive, Birketts), Doug Field OBE (former CEO, East of England Co-op), John Shropshire OBE, Chairman G's Fresh Group of Companies), Arnab Dutt OBE (Policy Champion for Procurement and Social Value, Federation of Small Businesses) and Lucy Crumplin (COO of Cambridge Building Society). The purpose of the conference is to give leading businesses the opportunity to feedback and contribute to the discussion around the proposed Charter.

The Charter Committee has been very conscious that there is a balance to be struck between producing a Charter with a commitment that goes beyond the basic wording of the legislation – but that is not so onerous to be impractical and unworkable for businesses, meaning that they will feel that they can not commit to it. Together we hope to make an extremely positive change, but we can only do this working with you.

The conference will include an address by a keynote speaker, a panel discussion with, amongst others, Nick Dean KPM (Chief Constable for Cambridgeshire) will talk about how modern day slavery manifests itself in Cambridgeshire, and an opportunity to discuss the Charter and feedback thoughts to the Charter Committee. There will be networking both at the start and end of the conference as well as a dinner in Magdalene College to thank you all for your participation and contribution.

