

## SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT

This statement is published in accordance with Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It explains the action Richer Sounds has taken, and is continuing to take, to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking throughout its business and supply chains during the financial year ending 30 April 2022.

This is Richer Sounds sixth statement issued under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and details the steps we have taken as a business to identify and prevent slavery and human trafficking within our own operations and supply chain.

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### INTRODUCTION

Slavery and human trafficking is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights and remains a hidden blight on our global society. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. We would never knowingly conduct business with suppliers or employees engaged in such practices. Our colleagues are expected to report concerns and management are expected to act upon them. We all have a responsibility to be alert to the risks, however small, in our business and in the wider supply chain and at Richer Sounds, we are committed to doing everything we can to identify and address it within our business operations and supply chain.

### ORGANISATION'S STRUCTURE AND BUSINESS

Richer Sounds is a British retailer of hi-fi, home cinema and TV equipment, committed to giving the best value for money and customer service that we possibly can. The company was established in 1978 by our Founder and Managing Director, Julian Richer, who owned 100% of the business until when in May 2019, Julian Richer passed 60% of his shares in Richer Sounds to an Employee Ownership Trust giving all employees an indirect stake in the business in perpetuity. Julian Richer continues to play an active role in the company as Managing Director and our colleagues take pride in knowing that they are shareholders, building for the future.

We trade from 50 stores nationwide, on-line and through our telesales and business to business departments and are extremely proud of our significant reputation for our award winning customer service and renown expertise in TV, Home Cinema systems and premium audio. Richer Sounds has won 5 'Retailer of the Year' or Best Retailer' awards from Which? in 2010, 2011, 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2021.

In February 2021 we purchased a warehouse facility in Manchester to remove the necessity to use third party warehouse providers; bringing the warehouse operations in-house as enabled us to ensure appropriate safeguards and support is in place to protect the welfare of our warehouse colleagues, reducing the risk of a modern day slavery within our warehouse operations.

Our ethics and culture promote strong values within our colleagues of teamwork, respect & trust, passion & ambition, recognition and giving back to the community. We were one of the first retailers to become an accredited Living Wage employer.

For further information about our company please visit our website [www.richersounds.com](http://www.richersounds.com)

## **SUPPLY CHAIN**

Where possible we build long standing relationships with UK suppliers and make clear our expectations of behaviour throughout our supplier verification process, supplier code of conduct and Anti- Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy.

We preference suppliers who share our values and hold, or are willing to work towards, The Good Business Charter (GBC) accreditation. The GBC is an accreditation that UK organisations can sign up to in recognition of responsible business practices, and measures business behaviour over 10 components, including real living wage, fairer hours and contracts, employee well-being, diversity and inclusion, employee representation and ethical sourcing. An organisation must meet all 10 commitments to receive GBC accreditation – please visit [www.goodbusinesscharter.com](http://www.goodbusinesscharter.com) for more details.

With regards to national or international supply chains, our point contact is preferably with a UK company or branch and we expect these entities to have suitable anti-slavery and human trafficking policies and processes in place. We recognise that the small percentage of our goods which are imported from suppliers outside the UK are potentially more at risk of slavery and human trafficking within their operations and we remain committed to the continual review of our supplier verification processes to address and eradicate any such risks.

## **POLICIES AND DUE DILIGENCE PROCESSES**

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking within our supply chains or in any part of our business.

We expect the same high standards from all of our contractors, suppliers and other business partners, and as part of our contracting processes all new suppliers must agree to adhere to our Supplier Code of Conduct which reflects our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships. The Code includes specific references to modern day slavery legislation, our commitment for all workers to be paid the Real Living Wage and our firm stance against zero-hour contracts. We take reasonable and practical steps, including factors and warehouse inspections, audits and contractual obligations to ensure that our standards are being implemented throughout the businesses of our suppliers and that local legislation and regulations are complied with

The Company's Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy and Whistleblowing Policy apply to all persons working for us or on our behalf in any capacity, including colleagues at all levels, directors, suppliers and contractors and include information on to spot the signs of modern slavery and channels for confidential reporting of any possible concern. The policies are reviewed annually.

Richer Sounds complies with the applicable employment laws and are committed to ensure fairness in the hiring and advancement of all colleagues without discrimination. We are proud to be one of the only retailers to be an accredited Living Wage employer, have a far lower level of colleague turnover than the industry average and oppose zero-hour contracts unless requested by employees.

Our recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. We communicate directly with candidates to discuss job opportunities and to confirm the details of any offer made. We have robust procedures in place for the vetting of new colleagues and ensure that we are able to confirm their identities and they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.

In order to further reduce the risk within our workforce, we run a 'recommend a friend' system whereby colleagues can recommend a friend and if found suitable for the position, the colleague receives £100 for the recommendation which helps ensure that the background of our workforce is known.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

We are proud to have long-term good business relations with our key suppliers due to our on-time payments, and frequent contact.

We have implemented a phased 3-year supplier risk assessment program of our existing 70+ Tier-1 suppliers which includes assessing behaviour and compliance in areas such as labour standards, supply chain audits and business integrity. Unfortunately, progress has been slower than anticipated this year due to the effects of various enforced covid-19 safeguards but we aim to pick up momentum as and when lockdown restrictions allow.

We also have in place Tier-2 supply chain risk assessment program specifically designed for the minority of our key suppliers who have manufacturing operations in countries which have been identified as posing a higher risk (i.e. China) and we work with those identified suppliers, when possible in light of various covid-19 restrictions, to address any high risk areas.

#### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS**

We use the following key performance indicators to measure how effective we have been to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any part of our business or supply chains:

- Completion of internal audits
- Monitoring of any reports received of possible Modern Day Slavery from our colleagues, supply chain and via the whistle blowing channel
- Use of labour monitoring and payroll systems; and
- Communication and personal contact within the supply chain and their understanding of, and compliance with, our expectations.

In 2020/21 no reports or incidences of Modern Day Slavery were reported, or made known to us, within our operations or direct supply chain.

#### **TRAINING**

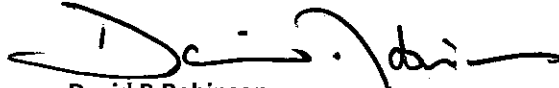
We continue to raise awareness of modern slavery, providing resources to help spot the signs of modern slavery and signposting to the Modern Slavery Helpline. The company's comprehensive Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy is communicated to all colleagues on an annual basis providing guidance on how to identify the signs, how to flag up potential slavery or human trafficking issues to the relevant parties within the organization and what external help is available, for example through the Modern Slavery Helpline.

We are currently improving our colleague mandatory training and are aiming to strengthen awareness through these activities.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- To commission external anti-slavery risk assessment on the new Richer Sounds warehouse facility, operational as at June 2021.
- To increase colleagues' awareness by the introduction of bespoke training modules for store, warehouse and support colleagues
- To review and re-distribution Supplier Code of Conduct.
- To continue with the supplier risk assessment programme; Phase 2 of the Tier 2 supplier risk assessment scheduled to commence February 2022.

**This statement is made in accordance to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Richer Sounds' slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 30 April 2021.**



**David B Robinson**  
Chairman