Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office
By Email

December 2018

Dear

RE: Modern slavery in UK public sector supply chains

The cross-party Environmental Audit Committee has been examining the sustainability of the fashion industry. As part of our inquiry we have been exploring the problem of modern slavery in fashion retailers’ supply chains, both in the UK and overseas.

We have read troubling reports of such practices in the UK public sector supply chain, for example factory workers producing rubber gloves for the NHS in Malaysia being subjected to forced labour, forced overtime, debt bondage, withheld wages and passport confiscation.

Evidence to our inquiry has called on Government to extend the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act to public procurement to help to address these problems. We questioned Ministers on this on 18 December, who suggested that this would be considered as part of the review of the Act being led by Frank Field MP. They also told us that currently it was dependent on the individual procurement contract as to what requirements were placed on suppliers.

I would be grateful if you could provide the following information to assist the Committee:

- What action has the Cabinet Office taken to ensure that companies bidding for public contracts are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act?
- What discussions have taken place with the Home Office about formally extending the provisions of that Act to public procurement?
- Is the Government aware of any other incidents of labour exploitation in UK public sector supply chains?

We would appreciate a response by **Wednesday 9 January 2019**. Thank you for your attention in this matter. I am copying this letter to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, and to Frank Field MP.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Creagh MP
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

cc. Frank Field MP