

How Tesco uses Clear Voice interpreters to **combat modern slavery**

Case Study



“Modern slavery has no place either within our business or supply chain and we take a zero-tolerance approach towards it. We’re fully committed to playing our part in eradicating modern slavery and as a business with far-reaching and complex supply chains, we recognise the important role we play.”



Ken Murphy

Group Chief Executive Officer

Tesco

Overview

Preventing modern slavery requires meaningful engagement with workers across complex global supply chains. For Tesco, language barriers posed a significant challenge to achieving this.

To strengthen worker engagement and meet its obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Tesco partnered with Clear Voice to deliver agile, on-demand interpreting support. Through rapid access to professional interpreters across more than 250 languages, Tesco can communicate directly with workers about their experiences and working conditions.

The result is stronger dialogue, greater trust, and improved oversight across operations and supply chains. Clear Voice services help Tesco prevent modern slavery while ensuring every worker's voice can be heard.





“We have worked with Clear Voice since 2022 to access independent, professional interpreters adept at working with survivors of abuse when conducting worker engagement and human rights assessments.”

Modern Day Slavery Statement
Tesco



Introduction

How Tesco uses Clear Voice interpreters to combat modern slavery

Tesco is one of the UK's largest retailers, employing hundreds of thousands of people across its stores, distribution centres and supply chains. With operations spanning multiple countries, its workforce represents a wide range of cultures and languages.

As part of its commitment to ethical business and human rights, Tesco carries out regular worker engagement and modern slavery assessments in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. These assessments are designed to ensure that everyone in their supply chain can speak freely and be heard, regardless of the language they use.

To achieve that, Tesco needed a partner who could provide fast, reliable access to interpreters in a wide range of languages and handle sensitive conversations with empathy and professionalism.

The Challenge

Engaging with workers who don't speak English proficiently

As part of their commitment to prevent modern slavery from their operations and supply chains and to comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Tesco conducts regular worker engagement and human rights assessments.

Tesco's operations and supply chains are supported by a diverse multicultural workforce. Many workers don't speak English proficiently, which can leave them feeling uncomfortable or lacking confidence when discussing their working conditions in English.

The Tesco Human Rights team used to rely on Google Translate for these but wanted to find a more effective tool.

Adapting to the evolving language needs of a changing workforce was also an important consideration.

Tesco's workforce demographics are constantly changing. Three years ago, most workers coming to the UK through the Seasonal Workers Scheme were from Ukraine, while in 2024, it was mostly people from Kazakhstan.



Summary

Tesco works to prevent modern slavery by engaging directly with workers in their supply chain, many of whom are not confident communicating in English.

Their Human Rights team sought a higher quality interpreting and translation service to support these conversations.

Language solutions that support worker welfare

In 2022, Tesco approached Clear Voice to provide the crucial language support needed to engage with its colleagues and workers in its supply chains in a diverse range of languages including Lithuanian, Cantonese, Hindi, Italian, Ukrainian and Nepali.

With our on-demand telephone interpreting service, Tesco can access phone interpreters at any time, in over 250 languages. It only takes an average of 30 seconds to get connected with an experienced interpreter.

Our interpreters have extensive experience handling sensitive topics like modern slavery, gained through our work with the charity Migrant Help, the Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline, and the wider not-for-profit, public and commercial sectors. All interpreters receive 'Interpreting for Modern Slavery' training. Many are survivors of modern slavery themselves, bringing both personal and professional experience to conversations, ensuring they approach sensitive topics with empathy and understanding.

Thanks to our flexible pay as you go service, Tesco only pays for the interpreting services they actually use, ensuring a cost-effective solution. This model is ideal for clients with fluctuating or unpredictable needs, giving them access to language support as required, without committing to fixed costs or long-term contracts.

“We needed an agile service that can provide a really broad range of languages and it’s that on-demand nature that’s really key for us. We can’t predict which languages we’re going to need, when.

We like the pay as you use service. You don’t have to commit to a big budget. You draw down as and when you need it, it’s a much more flexible way to do it.”

Human Rights Manager
Tesco



“Using Clear Voice has made such a huge difference in our interactions with people. It has helped us connect with them. It’s given better assurance to our human rights due diligence.”

Human Rights Manager
Tesco





The Outcome

Improved critical engagement with workers

For Tesco, working with Clear Voice has been essential when it comes to engaging with workers throughout their operations and supply chain.

Leading the way in modern slavery prevention

Working with Clear Voice is at the heart of Tesco's commitment to ensure that their operations and supply chains are free of modern slavery. Tesco detail this partnership in their Modern Slavery Statement.

By using Clear Voice interpreters, Tesco is proactively improving its human rights assessments and showing real commitment to workers' rights and eradicating modern slavery.

A shared commitment to community

Tesco also values Clear Voice's commitment to giving back, which aligns with their efforts to support communities.

As a social enterprise, we donate 100% of profits to the charity Migrant Help, aiding refugees, migrants, and victims of modern slavery. Clear Voice also funds and trains refugees to become interpreters through our vocational education initiative, the InPower Project.

“The one thing that external stakeholders were saying is you're not engaging with workers as much as you should be. Clear Voice is a really important bridge to that. I always say to people, they underestimate an interpreting service. It would be the last thing they thought of, but actually it's completely critical.”



Human Rights Manager
Tesco





We make services accessible in every language

Everyone should be able to access the services they need, in the language they require. We are here to help you make this a reality.

Contact us with your language requirements

findoutmore@clearvoice.org.uk · 0800 817 4777