UK Government Proposes Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence Law

11 November 2026

On 4 November 2026, the UK government announced in a ministerial statement that it intends to legislate for a new human rights-based due diligence law for businesses to promote responsible business conduct in the United Kingdom.

The new law will establish a mandatory human rights due diligence regime across the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) for services and in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) for goods. It will apply to: (i) domestic businesses with global turnover over £350mn and (ii) non-domestic businesses with domestic-generated turnover over £350mn. Businesses in scope will have to identify, assess and address risks of human rights abuses and labour exploitation within their operations and supply chains. The law does not appear to cover environmental impacts.

The law will also:

- Allow regulators to investigate businesses suspected of placing goods made with forced labour on the market in Great Britain and remove those goods from the market where due diligence obligations have not been met, and forced labour is identified. The statement notes that the UK government will apply the EU Forced Labour Regulation in Northern Ireland, as this leads to similar outcomes.

- Establish a "responsible business conduct guidance hub" to provide a single source of guidance, tools and templates to help businesses comply.

Although many details of the new law remain to be fleshed out (including the regulator responsible for enforcing the new law), the ministerial statement indicates that the law will be risk-based, proportionate and will reflect how responsible businesses already manage risk by aligning with established international standards, including the OECD Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The move marks a shift from the current UK approach. The 2015 Modern Slavery Act requires disclosure of actions taken (if any) to address modern slavery concerns in in-

scope companies' operations and supply chains, but it does not impose any substantive requirements to carry out due diligence or penalties if businesses fail to comply.

It is unclear when the draft legislation will be published, although the statement notes that the government will work to introduce the various measures "as soon as parliamentary time allows", and a separate ministerial statement published on the same day states that the new law should apply alongside application of the Forced Labour Regulation in Northern Ireland from December 2027.

Businesses should take note that the proposed thresholds differ from equivalent EU regulations. They are markedly lower than the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD),[1] but higher than the Forced Labour Regulation.[2] Companies should prepare accordingly.



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[1] EU companies or ultimate parents of groups are in scope of the CSDDD if they have over 5,000 employees and generate over €1.5bn worldwide turnover. Non-EU companies or ultimate parents of groups are in scope if they generate over €1.5bn turnover in the European Union. Other companies may also be in scope based on their franchising or licensing requirements.

[2] Any company which places products on the EU market or exports them from the European Union is in scope of the Forced Labour Regulation.