Slavery-free? Prove it.

77% say they can. 96% found it.

SOCIAL RISK REPORT 2026

In partnership with

Foreword

Modern slavery is often described in terms of systems, risks and compliance. But behind every indicator, audit finding or escalation pathway is a person whose freedom, safety and dignity may have been taken from them. At Unseen, our work with survivors, our operation of the UK-wide Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, and our partnerships with businesses show us every day that exploitation is not an abstract supply chain issue. It is a human one.

Supply chains are now global, layered and fast-moving. Goods and services pass through multiple hands before they reach the end customer, and responsibility can become blurred across tiers, geographies and commercial relationships. For procurement, supply chain and ESG professionals, this presents a difficult but vital challenge: how to look beyond contractual assurances and headline policies to understand what is really happening to the people who produce, move, package, clean, process, harvest or deliver the products and services on which organizations depend.

The reality is that modern slavery and wider human rights abuses thrive where there is complexity, poor visibility, insecure work, lack of worker voice and downward pressure on cost or speed. They can be hidden in recruitment practices, subcontracting arrangements, labour providers, seasonal work, outsourced services or indirect suppliers. Finding concerns should not be seen as failure. In many cases, it is evidence that an organization is beginning to see more clearly, listen more carefully and take its responsibilities seriously.

The challenge now is to move from awareness to action. Businesses need practical due diligence, safe reporting routes, trusted grievance mechanisms, effective remediation and the confidence to respond in a way that protects people from further harm. This means working collaboratively across procurement, sustainability, legal, HR, risk and operations, and engaging suppliers as partners in prevention, rather than treating modern slavery as a reputational problem to be managed quietly.

We are grateful to the CIPS Foundation for funding and supporting work that strengthens the ability of procurement professionals to combat modern slavery. Procurement has real influence: it shapes expectations, sets incentives and can open doors to better protection for workers. This report is an important contribution to that effort. It recognizes both the seriousness of the problem and the commitment of professionals who are trying to address it. Above all, it reminds us that better supply chain practice is not only about compliance or resilience; it is about people, and the urgent need to ensure that work is never built on the exploitation of workers.

Justine Carter
Deputy CEO, Unseen

Leveraging global procurement standards for systemic change

CIPS Foundation uses best practice procurement as a system lever to transform lives around the world. By leveraging the power in global procurement and supply chains, the Foundation is tackling environmental and social issues head-on to embed systemic change.

Our funded programmes implement procurement and supply chain interventions to address climate action, economic inequality, reduce hunger and poverty and tackle human rights abuses. From distributing a million books to UK school children, to supporting the development of Unseen's Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, and tackling child labour in Ghanaian cocoa-growing areas, our grants, bursaries and procurement expertise support programmes that make a real difference to people's lives. By professionalizing procurement and supply chain management, we create agents for change and embed solid foundations for sustainable growth.

Emma Scott
CIPS Foundation Lead
Find out more about the CIPS Foundation

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Introduction

Modern slavery operates in the shadows but its malign influence is felt everywhere. We all pay the price when goods and services are produced through coercion, debt bondage, unsafe conditions or abuse. The economic, social and personal consequences can be far-reaching: responsible businesses are undercut, tax receipts weakened, criminal gangs strengthened and consumers are duped. It is the vulnerable and abused workers, however, who pay the highest price.

Despite growing scrutiny, modern slavery is on the rise. Data from the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, for example, recorded nearly 3,000 cases of modern slavery in the UK in 2025, up 41% compared with 2024, while labour exploitation cases rose by 65%, the highest level to date[1]. While a report from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner identified a potential 23,000 victims from its referral scheme, a 22% increase from 2024[2]. Beyond the UK, it's a similar story: modern slavery is prevalent across the world, including Europe – where rates of those living in modern slavery vary from 8.5 per thousand people (Bulgaria) to 3.3, 2.1 and 0.6 per thousand in Italy, France and Germany respectively. While in South Africa, the figure sits at 2.7 per thousand people[3]. Climate change, geopolitical and trade tension and technology are only adding new pressures and creating more opportunities for abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people.

Many companies are committed to shining a light to find, and eliminate, any instances of modern slavery in their supply chains. To better understand the challenges of these anti-slavery efforts, The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and the British Standards Institution (BSI) conducted research to find out why modern slavery remains such a persistent challenge despite growing awareness, investment and scrutiny, and exploring the barriers organizations face in identifying, evidencing and demonstrating meaningful impact.

[1] www.unseenuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Unseen-Helpline-Annual-Assessment_2025.pdf
[2] www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/news-insights/new-report-anticipating-exploitation-a-futures-analysis/
[3] www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/europe-and-central-asia/

> **"The economic, social and personal consequences can be far reaching. It is the vulnerable and abused workers, however, who pay the highest price"**

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The human stories behind the numbers

Behind the data and figures are real people, experiencing withheld wages, excessive working hours, coercion, debt bondage and restrictions on their freedom. Businesses are uniquely positioned to help prevent this harm to people. Thank you to Unseen for providing us with these real-world stories.

Peter came to the UK on a skilled worker visa for a role in a restaurant. On arrival, his employer told him he owed £5,000 for “visa costs” and deductions would be made from his salary to repay the debt over time. Peter’s employer kept half of his salary each month leaving him with little to live on. When the employer had claimed £5,000 in free labour from Peter, he then increased the debt by another £10,000. His employer threatened to cancel his visa if he did not comply.

Manny secured a role as a catering manager through a recruitment agent in Pakistan. After arriving in the UK on a skilled worker visa, Manny’s employer informed him that he owed £20,000 for his visa and was threatened with immediate deportation if he did not pay. He took out a loan to pay the sum in full and retain his job. Instead of working as a catering manager as agreed, Manny was made to work washing pots and cleaning for upwards of 75 hours a week and rarely allowed breaks. He was forced to live in poor conditions on-site and was not allowed to leave the premises alone. Manny’s employer withheld his passport and was verbally and physically abusive towards him.

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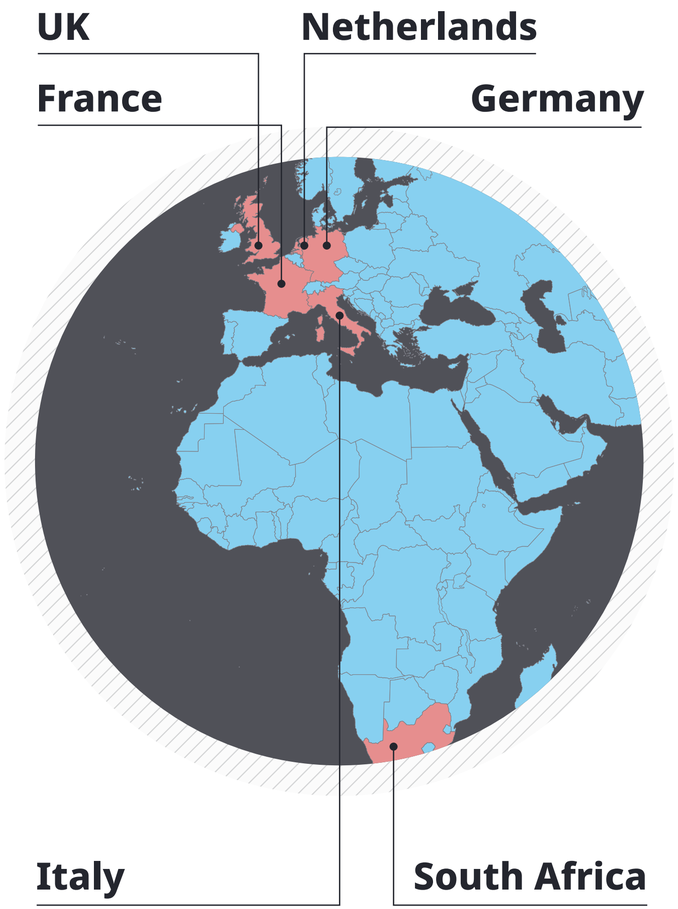
Methodology

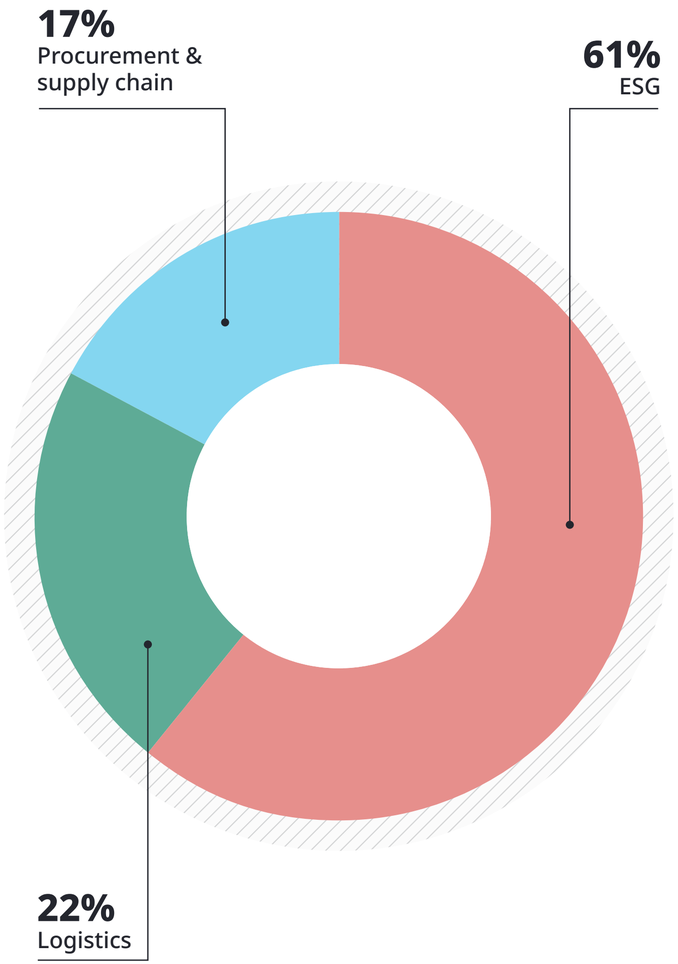
The research was conducted by Censuswide[4] in June-July 2026. The global study surveyed 900 respondents across nine markets, with this report focusing on the 600 respondents across EMEA, split evenly across the following countries: UK, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands and South Africa. Respondents work for companies with more than 100 employees in the retail and consumer goods, food and beverage, agriculture, and pharmaceutical industries. Qualifying respondents were those who identified wider social issues to be a "business risk". The primary roles of the respondents were in ESG, logistics, and procurement and supply chain. They were identified as senior decision-makers, holding managerial, senior leadership, director or business ownership positions.

[4] Censuswide is a member of the Market Research Society (MRS) and the British Polling Council (BPC), and a signatory of the Global Data Quality Pledge. It adheres to the MRS Code of Conduct and ESOMAR principles.

Locations of respondents



Primary role function of respondents



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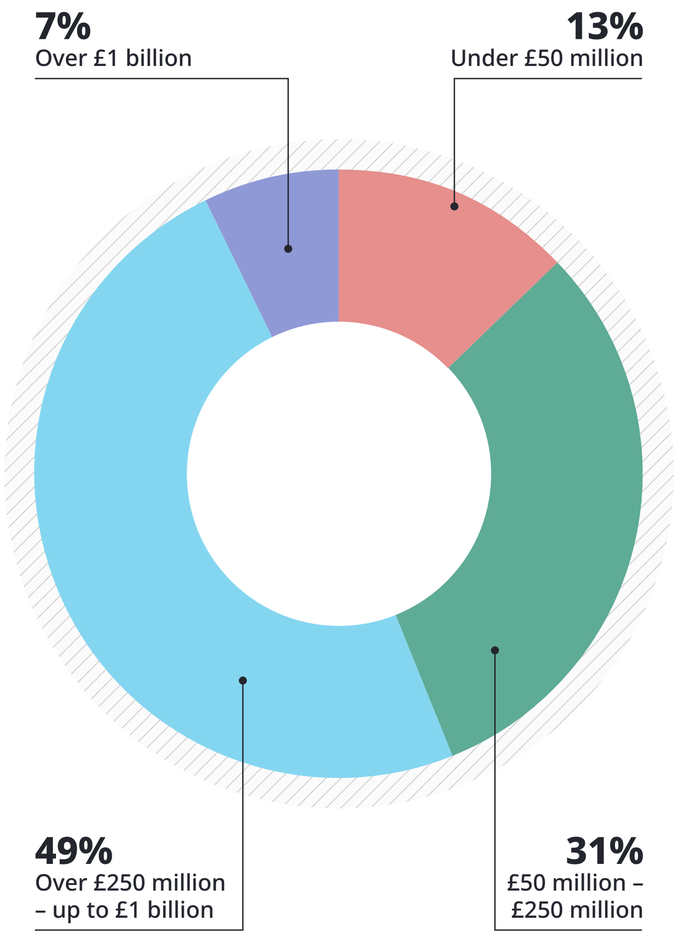
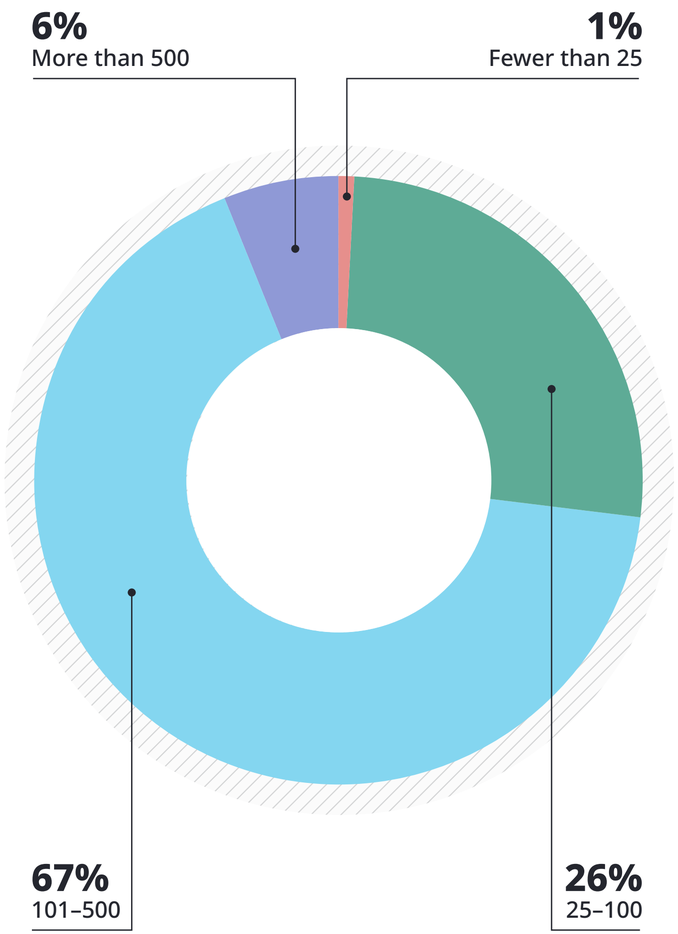
Revenue of respondents



Number of Tier 1 (direct) suppliers



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Section 1

Look and you will find it

Modern slavery is the human rights crime hiding in plain sight. It is estimated that slavery can be found in the supply chain of every single large company, making it near impossible to guarantee a slavery-free product[5].

As our research shows, if you look for signs of slavery, you will almost certainly find them. Almost all of the respondents to our survey (96%) said they had identified instances of modern slavery, forced labour, or serious labour rights violations in their supply chain in the preceding 12 months. Only 2% found nothing and said they are confident there is nothing to find, highlighting how widespread and pernicious the problem is in today's economy.

Yet this data also indicates some positive signs, demonstrating that the identification work being carried out by organizations is working. Due diligence activity is uncovering violations, reinforcing the importance of ongoing monitoring.

And businesses are committed to continuing this work. Three quarters of respondents said their organizations were highly committed to identifying and addressing modern slavery and wider human rights issues in their supply chains[6]. Yet despite taking the issue seriously and investing significant effort, organizations still report barriers in identifying, evidencing and demonstrating impact – as we shall see in section three. The challenge, therefore, is not the willingness to act – rather in visibility and evidencing impact across all layers of increasingly complex supply chains.

96%

found instances of modern slavery, forced labour or serious labour rights violations in their supply chain in the last 12 months

[5] www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/frequently-asked-questions/
[6] "Highly committed" refers to those respondents who said they were either "extremely" or "very" committed. UK businesses reported the highest levels of extreme commitment (46%).

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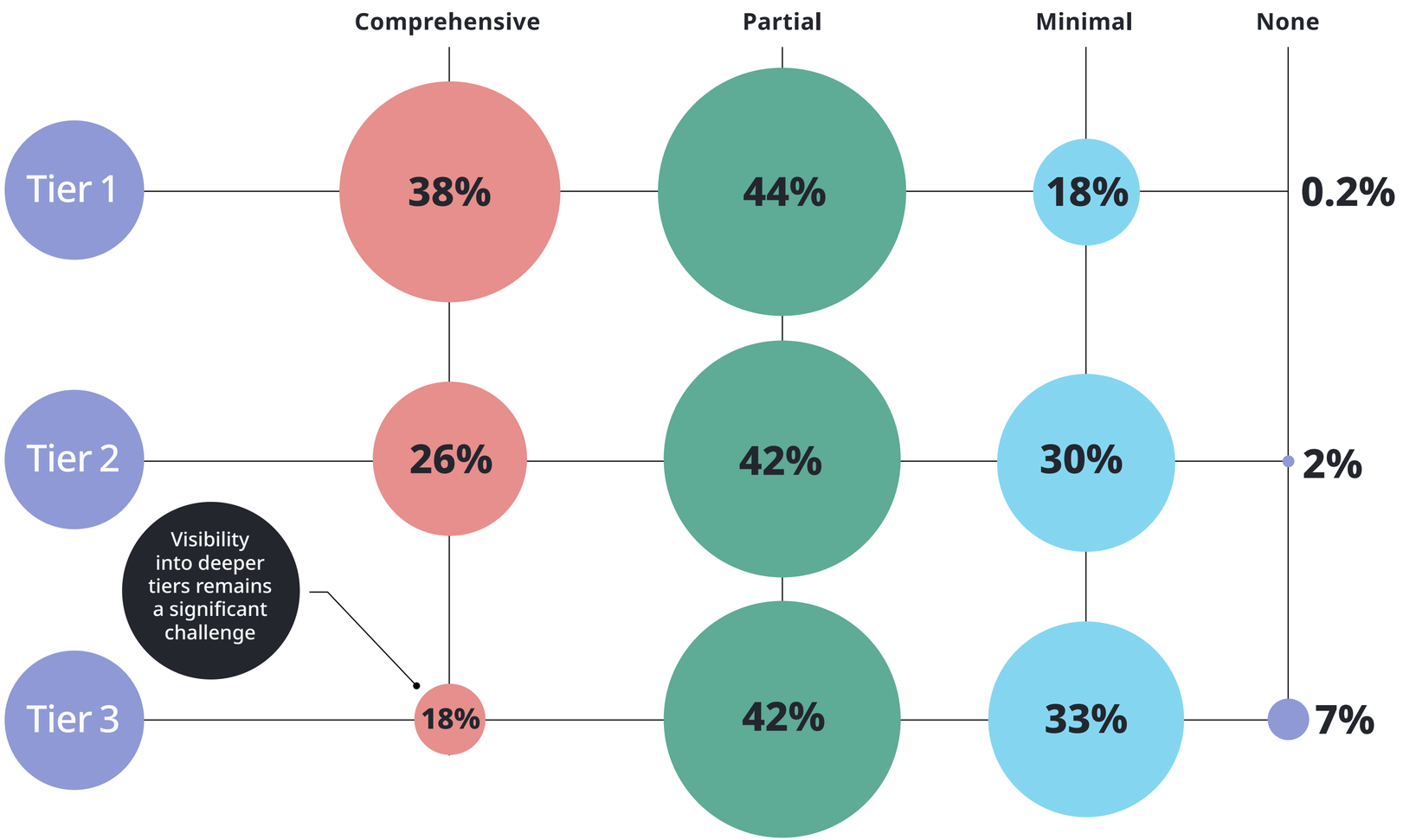
Visibility declines deeper into the supply chain[7]



[7]Note on data: Respondents were asked to describe their organisation's visibility of social risks at each tier of their supply chain.

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Where the visibility ends

The complex nature of modern supply chains means organizations routinely lose sight of what's happening upstream. Protracted supply chains expose companies to challenging and unfamiliar socio-economic conditions, making best practice supply chain management more difficult, while layers of contracting and subcontracting may obscure who is actually doing the work and under what conditions.

Unsurprisingly, the furthest reaches of the supply chain are the least understood, with visibility sharply eroding as supply chain tiers deepen. While 38% of our surveyed organizations claimed to have comprehensive visibility of their Tier 1 (direct suppliers), that drops to 26% at Tier 2 (suppliers' suppliers) and just 18% at Tier 3 and beyond.

This limited visibility makes it more difficult to identify, assess and address social risks across the supply chain. Organizations are left vulnerable to reputational risk and compliance failings, as they continue to rely on assumptions, supplier reporting or indirect indicators when assessing conditions beyond Tier 1.

Organizations face a combination of operational, structural and data-related challenges when trying to extend visibility beyond Tier 1 suppliers. According to our survey, these challenges are data quality, supply chain complexity, governance and resource-related issues. Visibility is also limited by suppliers being unwilling to share information (26%) and sub-tier suppliers being unknown (24%).

Complete visibility across all tiers is likely unrealistic for many organisations, with 73% of respondents working with 101 or more Tier 1 suppliers alone. The challenge then becomes risk-based visibility: identifying those countries, sectors or categories where the greatest risks lie, and working with suppliers to improve transparency in targeted areas.

Bridging this knowledge gap will be key if organizations are to truly tackle modern slavery in their supply chain.

18%

have comprehensive visibility of their Tier 3 suppliers and beyond

"Visibility should not become a data-collection exercise. Procurement needs to know where the greatest risks to people sit and use that insight to look deeper into the relevant value chains.

Crucially, we also need to create the conditions for transparency. If suppliers believe identifying or disclosing a problem will automatically lead to punishment, we risk incentivizing concealment rather than openness.

The objective is not visibility for its own sake. It is visibility that enables intervention."

Maxfield Weiss, Global Head of Sustainability, CIPS

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Section 2

What organizations believe... and what they can show

Over the past decade, awareness of modern slavery has increased significantly. Governments have introduced reporting legislation, businesses have published disclosures and public scrutiny has intensified. Yet the scourge of labour rights abuses continues to grow, with policy, business and enforcement responses struggling to consistently keep pace with the activities of criminal networks. Vulnerable people remain at risk.

The scale of the challenge is clear, though our respondents are highly confident that their organizations are fully compliant with anti-slavery laws: with 97% believing their due diligence approach would satisfy a regulatory inspection or enforcement action. Astonishingly, two-thirds (67%) are confident their current practices would meet the requirements of any future legislation in their market.

97%

said their due diligence approach would satisfy a regulatory inspection or enforcement action...

...and

67%

are confident their current practices would meet the requirements of future legislation in their market

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Despite confidence in their compliance with laws that are yet to be written, however, almost all (96%) admitted they had identified instances of modern slavery, forced labour, or serious labour rights violations in their supply chain in the preceding 12 months. There is a positive sign here: due diligence is working and uncovering problems, but this also suggests even a compliant organization is still very exposed to modern slavery. Furthermore, this confidence begins to evaporate when the test is not compliance but real-world impact. Even in the UK – the market most confident in meeting compliance requirements – only 45% are extremely confident their data reflects real-world conditions: and just 29% of organizations overall are extremely confident their audits and assessments reflect conditions on the ground. This is the "confidence gap" in stark reality.

Only

45%

are extremely confident their data reflects real-world conditions

This widespread confidence signals that this is an area where expectations, standards and evidence requirements are still evolving. This evolution results in different rules and levels of rigour in different jurisdictions, which impacts confidence. What doesn't change is the obvious commitment shown by organizations not just to be compliant, but to make a difference.

In the UK, the first country in the world to have legislation dedicated to tackling modern slavery with the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act of 2015, there is now a decade of familiarity with its provisions and processes. As a result, four out of five (80%) of our UK respondents were confident about their compliance with the existing legislation and two-thirds (67%) confident about any anticipated future legislation.

In jurisdictions where the compliance thresholds are higher, confidence levels drop. The German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (LkSG) and French Duty of Vigilance law are among the most detailed due diligence regimes included in the study, and organizations are less confident they meet the proofs of these more specific and established requirements. Only 45% are confident of their compliance with the LkSG and 48% for France's *Loi de Vigilance*.

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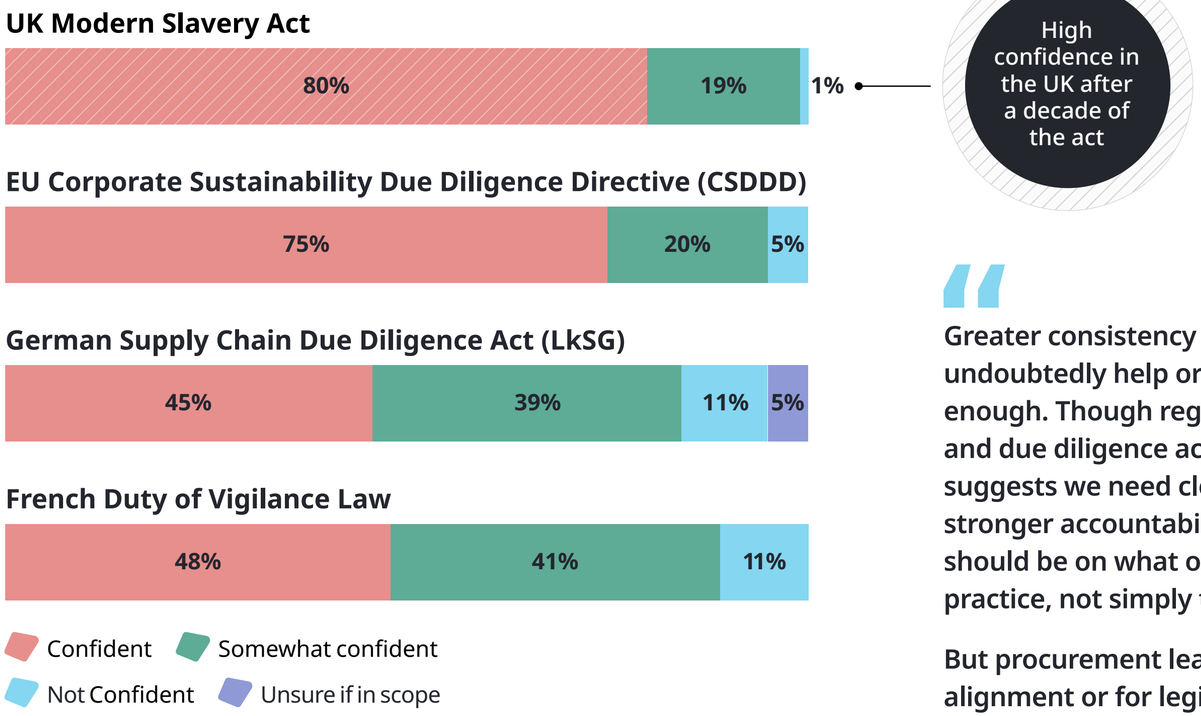
Confidence falls as due diligence requirements become more demanding[8]



[8]Note on data: Only relevant geographic respondents shown – e.g. Only UK respondents represent data for the UK Modern Slavery Act. The remaining 5% for the Germany Supply Chain Due Diligence Act answered 'unsure if they were in scope'.

"Greater consistency between regulatory regimes would undoubtedly help organizations, but consistency alone is not enough. Though regulation has helped to drive greater transparency and due diligence activity, the confidence gap this research identifies suggests we need clearer expectations of effective due diligence, stronger accountability and meaningful enforcement. The focus should be on what organizations can demonstrate is happening in practice, not simply the processes they have in place.

But procurement leaders cannot wait for perfect regulatory alignment or for legislation to prescribe every action. Regulation establishes an important floor; procurement excellence requires us to go further. The strongest functions will build due diligence around outcomes rather than individual pieces of legislation. That creates a system capable of responding as regulation evolves, rather than repeatedly redesigning processes simply to satisfy the next compliance requirement."

Maxfield Weiss, Global Head of Sustainability, CIPS

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The evidence gap

Continuing this theme, contradictions in the data from our survey further demonstrate the confidence gap. The majority believe they are carrying out good due diligence processes and are making an impact – yet when methodology is tested in the real world, inconsistencies emerge.

Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents were confident their social audits and assessments reflected real-world conditions in their supply chain, while the same number were confident their audit methodologies were applied consistently. Yet, when asked about the barriers to building a credible evidence base for social risk in their supply chain, 61% cited inconsistency in audit standards. While there is confidence in the process organizations are undertaking, they are struggling to accurately benchmark the work and evidence the real-world impact.

The result points to a broader challenge for managing modern slavery and social risk in supply chains: confidence in due diligence processes consistently exceeds confidence in the evidence underpinning them.

The result is a divergence between the confidence organizations have in their processes and what they can evidence when it comes to understanding real-world conditions across the supply chain. Whether through policies, audits or compliance assessments, organizations are already doing a great deal, yet they are less able to demonstrate whether those activities reflect conditions on the ground or improve outcomes.

The next maturity stage will be for organizations to move from due diligence activity, to using these tools more strategically for due diligence effectiveness.

77%

believe they have sufficient evidence to prove their supply chain is free from modern slavery...

...yet

96%

found violations in the last 12 months while visibility beyond Tier 1 remains limited

74%

believe their compliance activities translate to real-world impact, but the majority can't evidence that impact

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Section 3

No single approach tells the whole story

Modern slavery, forced labour and human rights abuses thrive in the shadows. Visibility is key, yet too often organizations find the tools designed to illuminate abuses in their supply chains are either unsuitable or under-used, and are often reliant on their suppliers.

These tools roughly fall into two camps:

- Managed by the organization: modern slavery-specific risk screening tools; desktop due diligence and country/sector risk mapping; outsourced social audits by accredited bodies; on-site assessments conducted by an in-house team.

- Managed by supply chain partners: supplier self-assessment questionnaires, supplier training and capacity building; worker voice/grievance mechanisms.

64%

cited difficulty accessing sub-tier suppliers as a barrier to building a credible evidence base

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Approaches to identifying social risks are broadly distributed

35% Supplier self-assessment questionnaires

35% Modern slavery-specific risk screening tools

33% Desktop due diligence/country and sector risk mapping

31% Third-party/ outsourced social audits

31% Supplier training and capacity building

31% Worker voice/ grievance mechanisms

30% On-site assessments conducted by your own team

No single activity dominates. Organizations are trying lots of different approaches to understand social risks and build evidence but find themselves thwarted by the scale and complexity of the challenge, including their reliance on suppliers who may not be motivated to engage honestly or who may not even be known. Indeed, difficulty accessing sub-tier suppliers is the most cited barrier, named by 64% of respondents, and reinforcing the visibility challenge beyond Tier 1.

The absence of one dominant tool is also evidence that there is no single intervention that constitutes effective due diligence. Instead, this may suggest that the combination of activities organizations are using requires a more integrated approach to help connect the dots and identify where efforts will be most effective in protecting workers.

We found remarkable consistency across responses. Organizations are all doing something, with no single approach dominating, making it hard to unpick what works and what doesn't. And despite all this commitment and activity, 96% still identified violations in their supply chains in the last 12 months. It's another stark reminder that while organizations struggle to prioritize any one activity, the prevalence of modern slavery means it is never far away when organizations look for it.

It's a similar story when it comes to the obstacles that are constraining efforts to build a credible evidence base for social risks across the supply chain.

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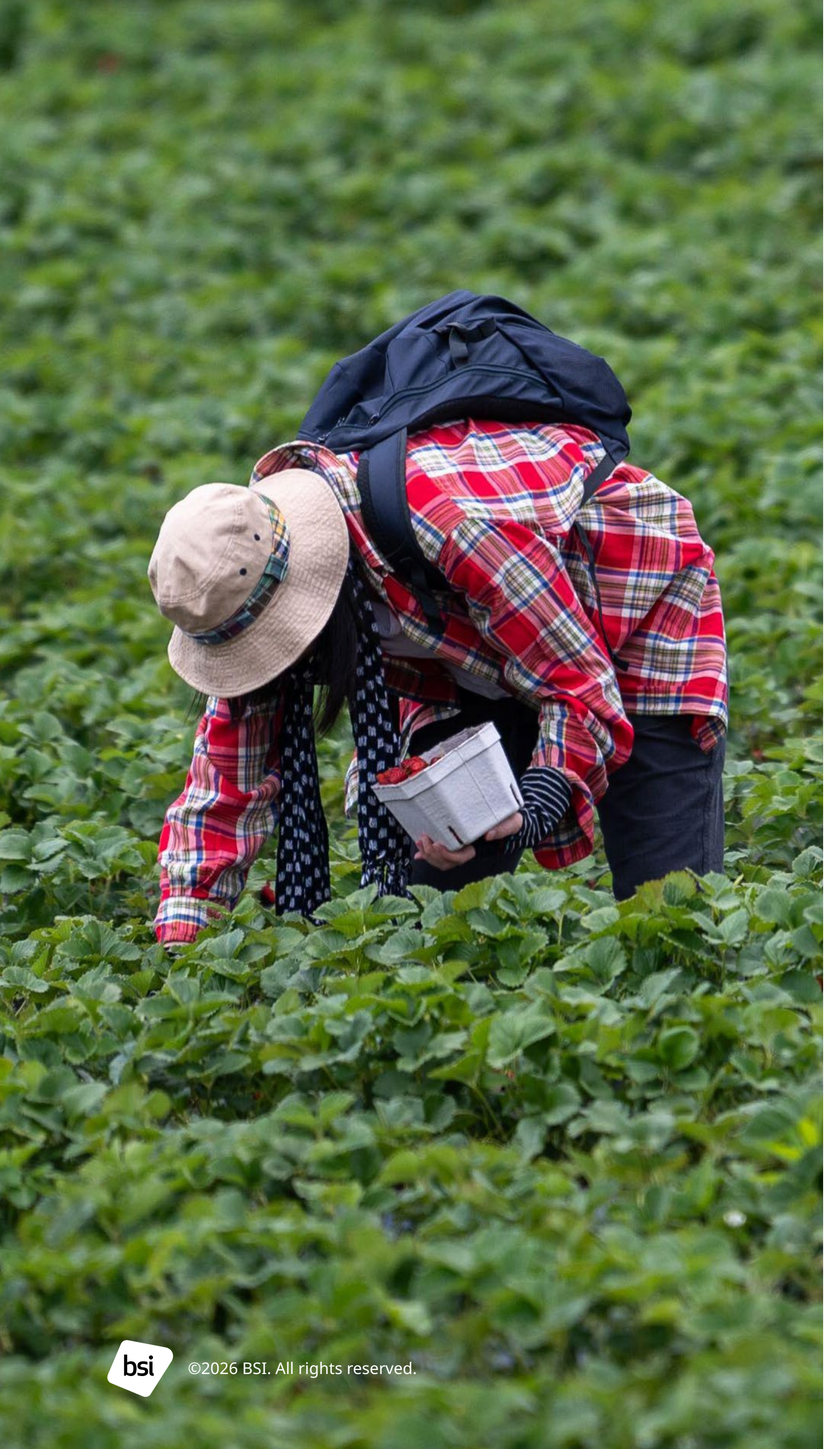
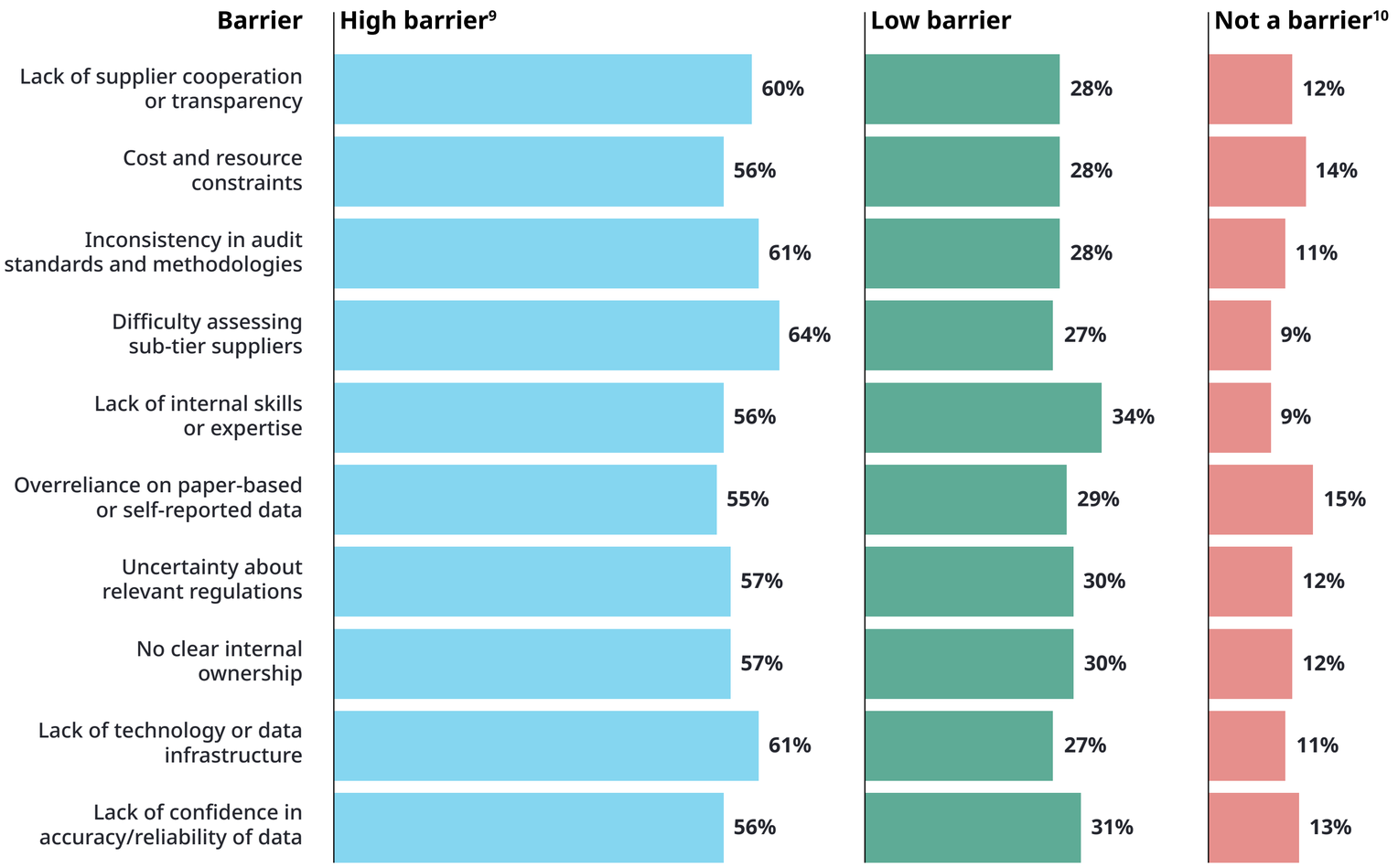


Organizations face widespread barriers to building a credible evidence base



[9]Note on data: “High barrier” combines respondents who selected “Major barrier” or “Significant barrier” in the survey.
[10]Note on data: Respondents were also able to select “not applicable”, not included here in the table.

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The data tells the story. The challenges and barriers cited by respondents span the entire evidence-gathering process, including data, technology, governance, supplier engagement, skills and regulatory complexity – and there are common complaints, with almost every barrier cited as a major or significant issue. With no standout action making itself a key target for additional investment, it is hard for organizations to make rapid headway in overcoming these barriers.

"The absence of a single dominant solution sends an important message: organizations should stop looking for one. Each activity can provide useful insight, but none constitutes effective due diligence on its own. Procurement excellence means connecting these activities as a system, from risk segmentation and sourcing all the way through to remediation.

The same is true of collaboration. Risks are often shared across suppliers, sectors and value chains. Collaboration within industries can help organizations develop common expectations, share intelligence and identify systemic risks, while buyers must work with suppliers to develop practical solutions together. That requires trust, shared responsibility and, where appropriate, collective leverage. There is also a role for professional bodies and standards organizations to bring organizations together, share what works and help establish clearer expectations of good practice.

Ultimately, the test is whether all this activity improves decisions and improves outcomes for workers."

Maxfield Weiss, Global Head of Sustainability, CIPS

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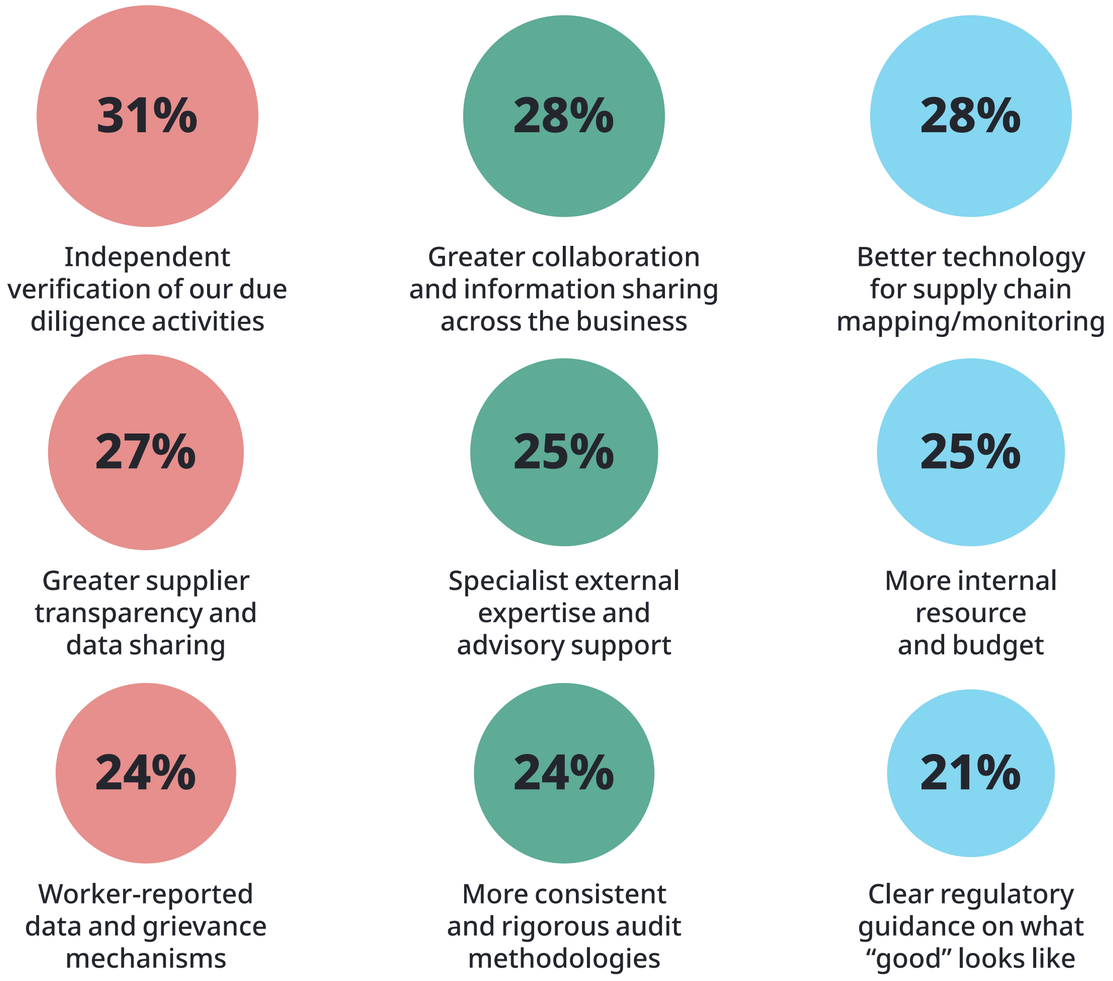
No single action stands out for improving the social risk evidence base[11]



[11]Note on data: Respondents could select up to three actions that would most improve their ability to build a credible social risk evidence base.

Section 4

It's not complacency, it's complexity

The picture that emerges from our research is of well-intentioned and committed organizations attempting to tackle the blight of modern slavery and build a credible evidence base. Yet they face constraints across people, processes, systems and supply chain transparency, and are finding it hard to prioritize.

Not only are organizations committed to action, they have also used legislation to hone their due diligence processes and build confidence in their compliance to identify modern slavery and human rights violations. But in terms of impact, there's a clear credibility gap: it is either hard to measure or it isn't evidenced.

It isn't that organizations aren't trying – it's that the scale of the problem is so big, risks can sit deep within complex supply chains, and the barriers to building reliable evidence are considerable. This creates a contradiction, between confidence in the rightness of approach and the frontline evidence to back that up.

One finding stands out: with almost every surveyed organization finding violations in their supply chain in the last 12 months, it's clear that there needs to be honest conversation and real attention on what happens when issues are uncovered. When organizations lift the carpet, they find vulnerable people and victims of abuse working in their supply chains. Detection alone is not evidence of effectiveness. The critical test is what happens after identification – does the response reduce harm?

This raises another challenge – that of remediation. The findings show that organizations who are committed to tackling labour rights abuses in their supply chains are finding it. But the question remains about what you do in response. There is no straightforward answer, and organizations must be confident their approach protects vulnerable people and victims of abuse – whether directly or through their engagement with suppliers.

Our research shows that when abuse was found, over half (54%) of companies chose not to terminate the contract with the supplier in question. Instead, these companies documented the abuse and sought to remediate the issue.

77%

believe they have sufficient evidence to prove their supply chain is free from modern slavery, yet only **18%** have comprehensive visibility beyond Tier 3

74%

believe compliance activity translates into real-world impact, yet only **36–43%** can evidence impact across the activities measured

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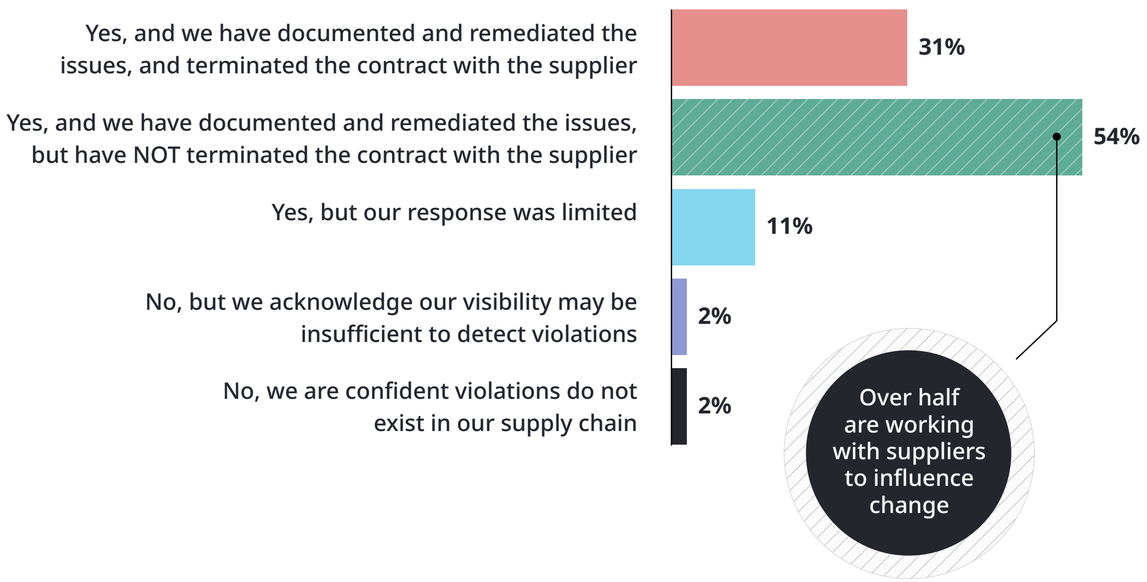
Almost all organizations identified violations in their supply chains



With almost all organizations finding abuse when they look for it, the question is not whether abuse exists in modern supply chains – but what happens next? Removing a supplier from your supply chain and actually removing harm for vulnerable people from the supply chain are not necessarily the same thing. Fostering an environment where these issues can be openly discussed, lessons shared and strategies for effective remediation developed is an important approach to finding a way through the complexity.

When we uncover exploitation, our first instinct is to act – and to act quickly. But ending a supplier relationship is not always the strongest or most responsible response. There will be times when stepping away is necessary, but doing so immediately can mean losing the chance to influence change, pushing exploitation further from view and, most importantly, leaving vulnerable workers in an even more difficult position.

For me, the right response must always start with the people affected. We need to protect workers, listen carefully, understand what has allowed the harm to happen and work with suppliers to put things right. That also means checking that change is real and lasting – and being prepared to escalate when it is not.

We also must be honest with ourselves and ask a difficult question: how might our own commercial decisions have contributed? Pressure on price, unrealistic lead times and the way contracts are structured can all ripple through a supply chain and create the conditions in which exploitation takes hold. Responsible procurement is therefore about buyers taking accountability too, not simply expecting suppliers to carry it alone.

Ultimately, this is about more than removing risk from an organization's supplier list. Taking one supplier out of a supply chain does not, by itself, take the harm away. What matters is how we use our influence to create meaningful change, protect people and reduce exploitation across the wider economy.

Justine Carter, Deputy CEO, Unseen

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Section 5

Are you ready to turn confidence into credibility?

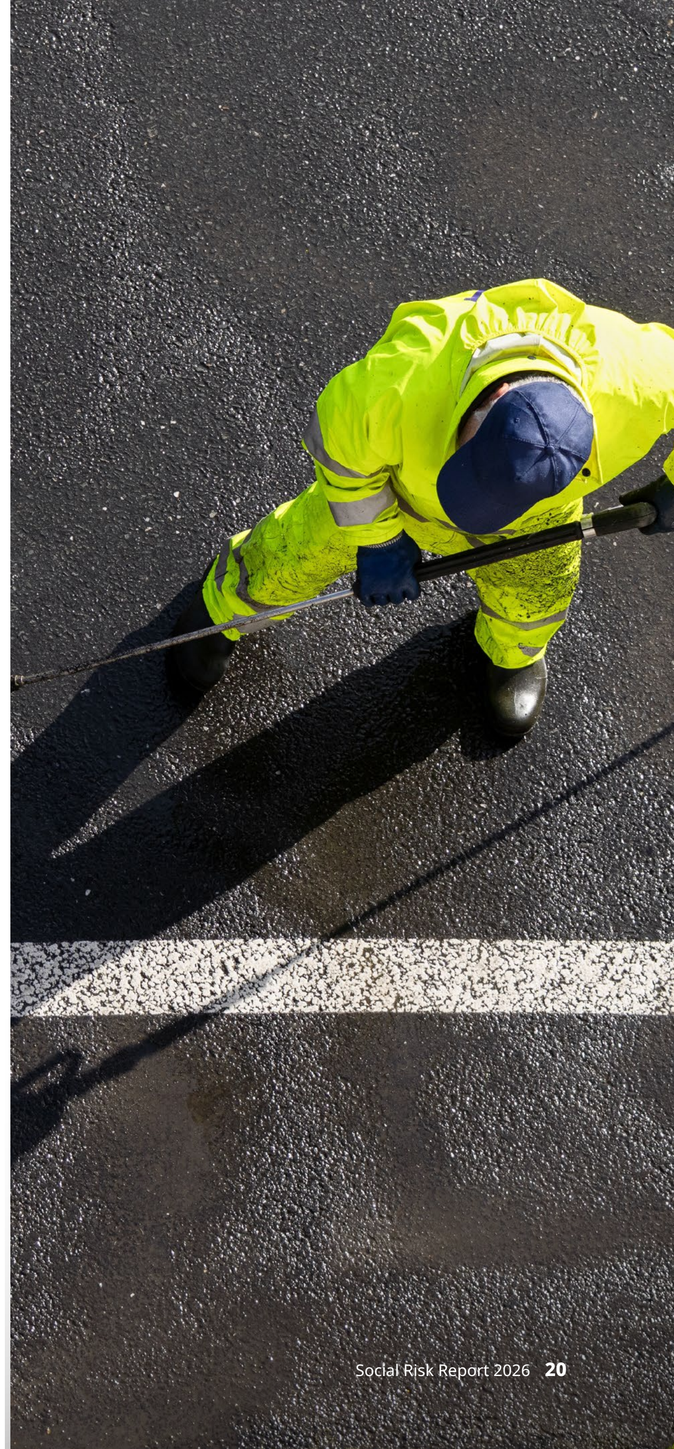
Organizations face a formidable challenge in tackling modern slavery: a crime often driven by serious organized crime, but where macro events such as climate change, pandemics and geopolitical tensions all serve as triggers for new vulnerable populations. The scale of the impact on individuals and communities must not be underestimated.

Despite this picture, our findings show organizations who view social issues as a business risk are clearly committed to tackling modern slavery in their supply chains. And due diligence efforts are uncovering the reality of modern slavery's existence within global supply chains.

The challenge is turning confidence in their compliance capabilities into credible action where it matters. Key to this will be creating an environment where organizations feel able to discuss these issues openly, where detection is treated as evidence of visibility rather than failure, and where transparency, even when it leads to uncomfortable discoveries, is valued ahead of perfection.

Recommendations:

- Treat detection as evidence of visibility, not failure
- Prioritize visibility according to risk
- Define clear benchmarks for what good looks like
- Make remediation victim-centred and outcome-led
- Embed and verify human rights in procurement and purchasing practices
- Collaborate to triangulate evidence and use collective leverage



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The message from BSI

"Our report reveals an uncomfortable truth – modern slavery exists everywhere. It is not a theoretical risk, it's real. How an organization responds is a direct reflection of its culture – not just in terms of human rights, but in their day-to-day governance.

A modern slavery policy is a meaningless piece of paper without governance and a culture that enacts it. Confidence in a process is not the same as knowing what is happening to the person at the end of it. Closing that gap between belief and reality starts with how leadership responds to bad news.

The most dangerous question a leader can ask is 'who's responsible?'. The most important question is 'what in how we operate made this possible?'. The first question sidesteps responsibility, allocates blame and closes off learning. The second question demonstrates curiosity, a growth mindset and accountability. These are traits of good governance, and of a good culture.

Your commitment to preventing modern slavery is tested when two desirable things conflict. 'We are committed to preventing modern slavery in our business' is easy when your normal supply chain is functioning as it should. What happens when there is disruption in that supply chain, you are weeks behind schedule and are under pressure to source a new supplier?

Answering the question 'are we as good as we think we are?' starts with assurance. Good assurance should do more than tell you your processes exist. It should tell you whether they are working, and whether workers are better protected as a result. That means focusing effort where the risk to people is greatest, listening to workers alongside the audit data, and measuring outcomes rather than activity.

After reading this report ask yourself three questions:

- Where are we creating risk for someone else?
- Whose voice aren't we hearing?
- How would we know if we're wrong?

The answers will reflect not only your approach to modern slavery, but your overall governance and culture."

Kate Field, Global Head of Human and Social Sustainability, BSI

The message from CIPS

"For procurement leaders, the message from this research is clear: activity is not the same as assurance, and compliance is not the same as impact. The next stage of maturity must be a shift from activity to effectiveness.

Procurement is where ambition becomes execution. It is where an organization's human rights commitments become real commercial decisions: which suppliers we select, what we ask of them, how we contract, the prices and lead times we set, what information we require and, critically, how we respond when something goes wrong.

That gives our profession enormous influence, but also enormous responsibility.

For procurement, that means moving from compliance-led due diligence towards outcome-led procurement. The goal cannot simply be to demonstrate that an organization has completed the right processes or removed a problematic supplier from its supply chain. It must be to demonstrate that those processes and decisions are making people less vulnerable to exploitation.

That is the shift from confidence to credibility and it is where procurement must lead."

Maxfield Weiss, Global Head of Sustainability, CIPS

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