



Marshalls First to Achieve BRE Global Ethical Labour Sourcing Standard Verification

BRE Global (the certification arm of BRE) has today announced at Eco-Build 2017 that Marshalls plc is the first organisation to achieve verification against its newly launched Ethical Labour Sourcing Standard (BES 6002).

Chris Harrop, Marshalls Marketing Director, responsible for sustainability, says “We are absolutely delighted not only to achieve BRE Global’s Ethical Labour Sourcing (ELS) Standard, but to be the first to do so. This independent, third-party verification distinguishes our products and services from those of our ‘competitors’, some of whom make spurious and unsubstantiated claims about the ethics of their global supply chains. Our valued customers, suppliers, shareholders, employees and partners can continue to be rightly confident about our ongoing commitment to ethical labour standards and our day-to-day actions on the ground in pursuit of this.”

Dr Shamir Ghumra, BRE’s Director of Sustainable Products, presented the ELS verification certificate to Chris Harrop, saying, “I’m delighted to announce that Marshalls is the first organisation to achieve the new BRE Global Ethical Labour Sourcing verification Standard. The requirements of the Modern Slavery Act, underscored by the findings of the 2016 Global Slavery Index (1) which estimates that 45.8 million people are in some form of slavery in 167 countries, puts the onus on businesses to demonstrate exactly how they are taking positive action to eliminate modern slavery within their operations and global supply chains; none more so than within the construction sector. ELS verification provides organisations with a framework to verify their systems and processes in relation to the Modern Slavery Act and continuously improve their ethical labour sourcing practices. It is a credit to Marshalls that the organisation is leading the field in terms of ethical labour standards.”

The ELS standard was developed throughout 2016 with a wide stakeholder group including clients, manufacturers, NGOs and contractors. The 150 strong stakeholder group helped to shape and scope the ELS standard to ensure that it would be relevant and drive positive change within industry. The verification approach will allow organisations to develop their ethical labour sourcing practices in a manner which is risk based and relevant to them. The ELS will support those who wish to demonstrate continual improvement.

Marshalls Business & Human Rights Lead, Elaine Mitchel-Hill, added, “This independent verification regarding ethical labour standards is an extremely important aspect in terms of delivering against our Modern Slavery Statement commitments. It’s also a clear demonstration of how embedded within our organisation the issues of ethical labour, ethical supply chain and modern slavery are; it’s part of our day-to-day work across our business whatever our job title or function. Organisational commitment to ethical sourcing is crystal clear and knowledge levels of modern slavery are high and growing still further. Early signs that businesses can have a positive impact are very encouraging and I look forward to reporting on the progress that Marshalls has made in our second Modern Slavery Statement in a few months’ time. Marshalls will demonstrate how by fully engaging with an emerging business threat we can demonstrate best-practice as we drive towards transparent reporting. Increasingly it will be those organisations who continue to maintain that they remain untouched by the issues of modern slavery and who can offer no third party independent verification who will come under intense pressure to explain how this can possibly be the case in the light of this global issue.”

ENDS

Reference/Source:

- (1) Global Slavery Index 2016 – <http://www.globallslaveryindex.org/findings/>
- (2) Marshalls was highlighted as ‘best performer’ by Innovation Forum for its first Statement - <http://innovation-forum.co.uk/analysis.php?s=are-modern-slavery-statements-lagging-performance>

Editors Notes:

- Marshalls currently holds BES 6001 accreditation - http://www.marshalls.co.uk/documents/certificates/RS0008_Issue_4.pdf.
- Marshalls became a UNGC signatory in 2009 and a member of the UNGC UK Network later the same year. The organisation is required to report on its progress each year in Marshalls UNGC Communication on Progress Report (COP). You can view the most recent COP at www.marshalls.co.uk

- Marshalls was one of the first organisations to publish its Modern Slavery & Anti-Trafficking Policy Statement earlier this year - <http://www.marshalls.co.uk/documents/policies/Marshalls%20Modern%20Slavery%20Policy%20and%20Disclosure%20Statement.pdf>
- BRE Global is an independent, third-party approvals organisation, offering certification and verification of products, services and systems to an international market. Our testing and approvals are carried out by recognised experts in world-class facilities. BRE Global is part of the BRE Trust, the largest UK charity dedicated specifically to research and education in the built environment. www.bre.co.uk