



## **CALL TO BUSINESSES ON MODERN DAY SLAVERY: BECOME PART OF THE CURE AND NOT THE PROBLEM**

*45.8 Million People are Trapped in Slavery: Arco Takes Action to Raise Awareness and Promote Ethical Trading*

**Hull, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017** - [Arco](#), the UK's leading safety company, makes a call to businesses today, urging them to ask the suppliers within their supply chain about their ethical assurance measures, in particular about due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in their business and supply chains.

Continually increasing, latest figures show that there are more than 45.8 million people in a form of modern slavery\* across 167 countries today. Slavery continues to exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, perpetuating millions into a life of poverty, vulnerability and alienation.

Arco takes its ethical responsibility seriously and was the first distributor within the industry to become a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). Arco joined the ETI in 2007, forming part of an alliance of leading companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations that work in partnership to improve the lives of workers around the globe.

Arco continues to work on its ethical strategy, which first started over a decade ago, and was pleased to see amendments to company disclosure requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This motivated the company to launch its own 'Start Yours' campaign. Arco is making a number of recommendations to businesses who buy safety equipment to raise awareness and guide businesses to ensure ethical compliance:

- **Ask suppliers about their supply chain** and the factories manufacturing their products and services.
- **Ask suppliers about their ethical policy** and due diligence processes.
- **Ask to see and have explained a supplier's public statement** any company that has a UK turnover greater than £36m and falls under the Modern Slavery Act is obliged to publish a statement,
- **Be sure about your own supply chain** by using suppliers that are members of the Ethical Trading Initiative or equivalent organisations.

Danny Hobson, Ethical and Quality Improvement Manager at Arco, says: *“Arco takes its responsibilities very seriously and that is why we continue to develop and improve our ethical sourcing strategy. We welcome the introduction of the Modern Slavery act and the emphasis that this will put on transparency in the supply chains throughout the safety industry. Through collaboration and with each business taking responsibility then we can make a real difference in protecting the most vulnerable workers and improving worker welfare.”*

By working with suppliers with a robust ethical strategy, such as Arco, the task of risk assessing the supply chain is simplified and provides assurance that you are working with businesses that you can trust to do the utmost they can to address this issue. Hobson concludes: *“It’s important that companies have detailed awareness of their supply chain and continue to drive improvements where necessary.”*

Arco has created a short video raising awareness of Modern Day Slavery, speaking on behalf of people bound by the international crime. Please watch and share the [video](#). For more information, click [here](#).

#### References -

Global Slavery Index: <http://www.globallslaveryindex.org/findings/>

#### Additional resources:

Video - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwGyhSg3Oh4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwGyhSg3Oh4) (File available on request)

Images – Infographic and additional imagery available on request

Interviews – Available with Danny Hobson on request

Website - [www.arco.co.uk](http://www.arco.co.uk)

Twitter - [@ArcoSafety](https://twitter.com/ArcoSafety)

#### About Arco

Arco is the UK’s leading safety company. It distributes quality products and training and provides expert advice, helping to shape the safety world and make work a safer place. Founded in 1884 and with a heritage spanning four generations, Arco integrates traditional family values with pioneering innovation to offer a world-class range of over 170,000 quality assured, branded and own brand products, including personal protective equipment, clothing, footwear, gloves, workplace safety and hygiene products. Headquartered in Hull, Arco reaches its customers through its extensive product catalogue, interactive website and 48 strong trade counter network. The company has sales of over £268m and employs approximately 1600 people. Arco has been accredited a ‘One to Watch’ status in the Best Companies Times Top 100 Survey.

Arco is dedicated to its Corporate Social Responsibility policy and continually demonstrates its support of local business communities and charitable organisations, donating in excess of 1% of pre tax profits annually. In 2007, Arco became a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and in 2010 a member of Sedex, the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange. Going forward, Arco further demonstrates its position as the UK’s leading safety company as the exclusive supplier of PPE, footwear and workwear to the BLOODHOUND project’s support team involved with the design, build and race of a car to raise the world land speed record to 800 mph in 2015, and 1,000mph in 2016. For more information, visit [www.arco.co.uk](http://www.arco.co.uk).

**Photo Caption:** [Recent figures show that there are more than 45.8 million people in a form of modern slavery today.]