

Tackling Homelessness for Women Survivors of Modern Day Slavery

Literature Review



Introduction

Tackling Homelessness for Women Survivors of Modern Slavery (TILI)

Crisis' 2018-23 strategy set out a commitment to ending the homelessness of the most vulnerable people in Britain, including homeless people who are excluded from services because of their nationality or high needs. For this reason, in 2019 Crisis embarked on a two-year project, Tackling Homelessness for Women Survivors of Modern Slavery (TILI), funded by the Tampon Tax Fund.

The TILI Project aims to gather evidence to understand the links between homelessness and modern slavery. This will be used to develop a model for the identification, support, recovery, accommodation and integration of women who have escaped modern slavery and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This project is a partnership between Crisis, Hestia (London), BAWSO (Wales), Belfast Women's Aid (Northern Ireland) and Shared Lives Plus. Together, these organisations are working together to:

- Develop and deliver training to homelessness charities to identify, protect and support female victims of modern slavery.
- Improve our understanding of homelessness and modern slavery affecting women across England, Wales and Northern Ireland through development of a database.
- Help more women affected by modern slavery and homelessness to get the specialist support that they need.
- Test out new ways of providing safe housing for women who are homeless after surviving modern slavery.

This literature review, conducted by AVA (Against Violence and Abuse), sets out to provide a comprehensive overview of these issues and to provide recommendations to guide the project work going forward.



Background

Modern Slavery: Definition

The term modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour as set out in the different anti-slavery legislation in place in the four UK countries (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). These are defined in the 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Guidance for homelessness services'¹ as:

- **Human trafficking** involves the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation. Traffickers may use deception, coercion, threats, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability to exert control over their victims.
- **Sexual exploitation** involving any non-consensual or abusive sexual acts performed without the victim's permission. This can include prostitution, escort work and pornography, and victims can be men, women and children.
- **Domestic servitude** involving the victim being forced to work in private households with restricted movement, no or very low wages and no or minimal privacy and comfort.
- **Criminal exploitation** involving a victim being forced to partake in criminal activity such as begging, shoplifting, theft, cannabis cultivation and benefit fraud.
- **Forced labour** involving victims being compelled to work against their will, often in conditions akin to slavery. Victims will work very long hours with very little pay, often in dangerous or unpleasant conditions. People can be forced to work in any industry, however common industries that victims are trafficked into in the UK include: agriculture, factories, tarmacking/paving, construction, food processing, restaurants/hospitality, nail bars and beauty salons, and car washes.

The report 'A Typology of Modern Slavery Offences in the UK'² sets out 17 types of modern slavery offences in the UK under four main headings:

Labour Exploitation
Victims exploited for multiple purposes in isolated environments
Victims work for offenders
Victims work for someone other than offenders
Domestic Servitude
Exploited by partner
Exploited by relatives
Exploiters not related to victims
Sexual Exploitation
Child sexual exploitation – group exploitation
Child sexual exploitation – single exploiter
Forced sex work in fixed location
Forced sex work in changing location

¹ Homeless Link (2018) Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Guidance for homelessness services

² Cooper, C. et al (2017) A Typology of Modern Slavery Offences in the UK: Home Office.

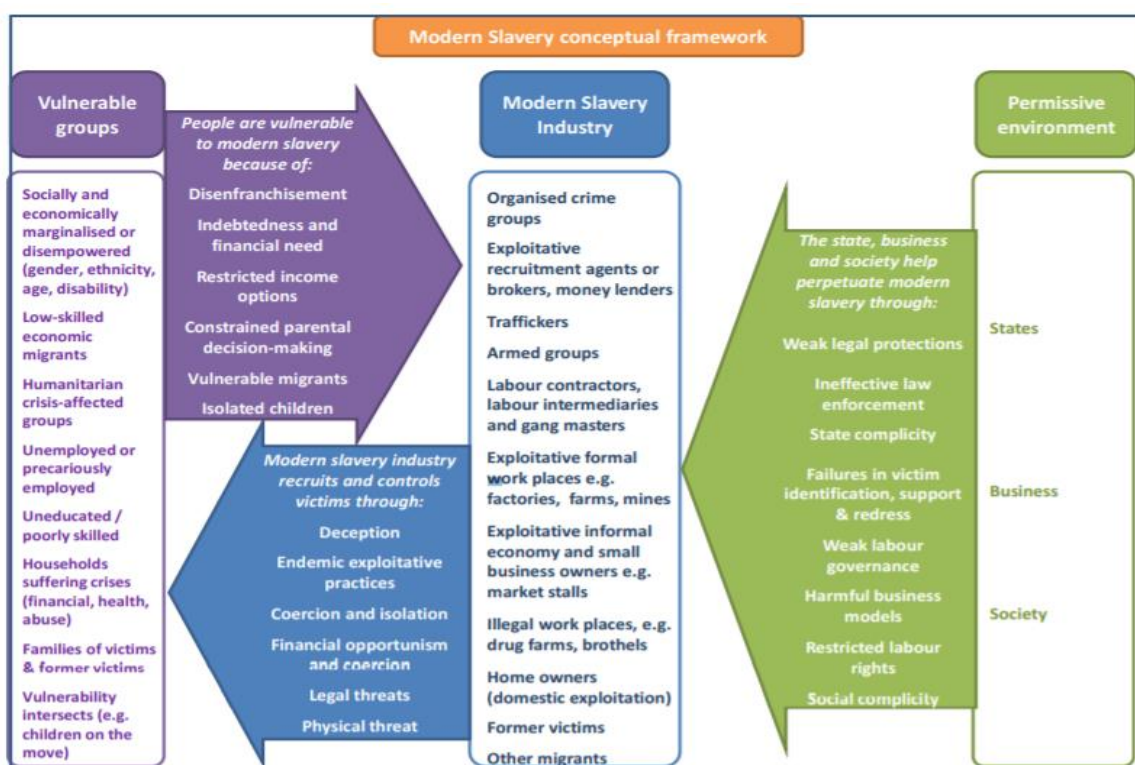


Trafficking for personal gratification
Criminal Exploitation
Forced gang-related criminality
Forced labour in illegal activities
Forced acquisitive crime
Forced begging
Trafficking for forced sham marriage
Financial fraud (including benefit fraud)

Underpinning the offences are the concepts of recruitment, organisation, profit and control which recognise the many ways in which victims are targeted, deceived, exploited, threatened and controlled.

It is important to note that modern slavery often takes place alongside other offences and forms of abuse including rape, assault, child sexual exploitation and grievous bodily harm. There are also multiple victims and offenders often covering a wide (sometimes international) geographical area.

Below is a framework developed by DFID³ to help improve understanding of the key drivers of modern slavery:



³ DFID: How do we currently understand Leave No One Behind in the context of modern slavery? Morag Patrick, Migration and Modern Slavery Department



Modern Slavery: Global Prevalence

An estimated 40.3 million men, women, and children were victims of modern slavery on any given day in 2016. Of these, 24.9 million people were in forced labour and 15.4 million people were living in a forced marriage⁴⁵. These figures equate to 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 people in the world. 1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children (approximately 10 million), with 37% (or 5.7 million) of those forced to marry being between the ages of five and 17.

Modern Slavery in the UK

Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Modern Slavery Act (2015)⁶ is the principal legislation in the UK designed to combat modern slavery and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery. The act extends to England and Wales, with the Northern Ireland and Scottish Assemblies also passing their respective Human Trafficking and Exploitation Acts in 2015.

The act contains a number of provisions:

- The consolidation of the existing slavery and trafficking offences
- The introduction of two new civil orders to enable the courts to place restrictions on those convicted of modern slavery offences, or those involved in such offences but not yet convicted
- The establishment of an independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to encourage good practice on the prevention of modern slavery offences and the identification of victims
- The provision of mechanisms for seizing traffickers' assets and channelling some of that money towards victims for compensation payments
- The creation of a new statutory defence for slavery or trafficking victims compelled to commit criminal offences
- The provision of child trafficking advocates

Although this was seen as a historic piece of legislation in the UK, a main criticism of the act from modern slavery organisations was its focus on law enforcement and failure to address the needs of victims of modern slavery⁷.

In June 2017, Lord McColl introduced a private member's bill in the House of Lords to "*make provision about identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery*". The Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill⁸ was presented to the House of Commons in May 2018. The Bill amends the period of assistance and support offered to victims with a

⁴ International Labour Office (ILO) & Walk Free Foundation 2017, Methodology of the global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage, ILO.

⁵ These 2016 statistics are the most recent global estimates.

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

⁷ <https://www.antislavery.org/analysis-modern-slavery-act/>

⁸ https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/021/5801021_en_2.html#l1g5



positive conclusive grounds status⁹ to 12 months after the period of reflection and recovery ends. The bill was re-introduced for a first reading in the House of Lords in January 2020, with a second reading to be announced in the coming months.

The inclusion of modern slavery in the Care Act 2014 as a form of abuse means that it is also now included in the remit of adult safeguarding in England.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The NRM is the UK's central framework for identifying and referring potential victims, and ensuring they receive appropriate support. The NRM was introduced by the government in 2009 in order to meet the UK's obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The NRM has been subject to considerable criticism from both research and support organisations¹⁰¹¹¹², and members of parliament¹³¹⁴. In 2018, only 16% of people referred into the NRM were given a positive decision¹⁵. Currently, of the people who received a positive decision in 2018, only 12% also received a residence permit to remain in the UK, usually for a period of 12-30 months¹⁶. Prior to February 2019, confirmed victims were given support for only two weeks after their case was held. This has been challenged and has now been made more 'flexible', but still minimal, leaving victims of modern slavery vulnerable and unsupported by the state.

⁹ The threshold for a Conclusive Grounds decision (CG) is that on the balance of probability "it is more likely than not" that the individual is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery. A positive CG decision means that the State has conclusively determined that they are a victim of modern slavery.

¹⁰ <https://eachother.org.uk/slavery-victims-slipping-through-uk-safety-net/>

¹¹ Unseen (2016). *The National Referral Mechanism Pilots: A Review of the Training*. Bristol: University of the West of England, Unseen.

¹² <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/national-referral-mechanism>

¹³ <https://www.thenews.coop/128409/topic/politics/mps-criticise-governments-strategy-tackling-modern-slavery/>

¹⁴ House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2017). *Victims of modern slavery: Twelfth Report of Session 2016-17*. London: House of Commons

¹⁵ NCA (2018). *National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018*. London: National Crime Agency.

¹⁶ <https://www.antislavery.org/win-uk-slavery-survivors/>



Methodology

The review included both academic, peer-reviewed papers and grey literature, as well as government policy, relevant newspaper articles, book chapters and toolkits. These were mostly found via database searches and relevant charity websites. Due to the small-scale nature of this review and limited access to academic databases, this report does not constitute a systematic review, as the evidence was not graded or limited to findings from randomised controlled trials (RCTs). Most of the literature analysed is from the UK, although international studies have been included where the findings are relevant to the UK.

The free text search terms used were chosen to mirror the terms used in the project plan and those most commonly used in service delivery and policy. These terms included:

- *Modern slavery OR Human Trafficking OR Exploitation OR Sexual Exploitation OR Forced Labour OR Domestic Servitude*
- *AND Homelessness OR Gender OR Support OR Recovery*

In light of Covid-19, the search was expanded to reflect the impacts of the pandemic and lockdown on victims of modern slavery and on the support available to them.

The review included general overview documents relating to modern slavery (in all forms) in the UK but prioritised those linking these to the other key issues of homelessness, gender and recovery. Child exploitation and trafficking has also been included considering many young women are trafficked and face homelessness, and a number of victims of trafficking are mothers whose children are born into exploitation.

All relevant literature was saved in a spreadsheet and coded according to key words and search terms. Over 70 forms of literature were included and analysed. Most documents are from 2017-2020. Interestingly, Covid-19 has resulted in several new studies and insights into modern slavery in the UK and the additional impacts and disadvantages faced by victims.

A feminist research methodology was adopted for this review in order to adequately reflect the gendered nature of modern slavery and reflect women's experiences¹⁷. This approach was taken in accordance with the focus of Project TILI on women. In addition, by not just analysing peer reviewed papers but also including grey literature and research undertaken by charities (often working with women with lived experience), the voices of women and children who are more likely to be marginalised can be amplified and help to guide the work of this project.

The results of the literature review have been coded thematically and will be presented below according to these core themes, which link back to the overall objectives for the project.

¹⁷ Kaur, Ramandeep and Nagaich, Sangeeta, Understanding Feminist Research Methodology in Social Sciences (March 15, 2019).



Presentation of findings

Section One: Modern slavery in the UK

A. A national picture of modern slavery

Analysis of literature available evidences that, despite a developing awareness of modern slavery, there is still a patchy response across the UK in terms of identifying and supporting victims.

All data on trafficking is published on the National Crime Agency (NCA)¹⁸ website and in annual reports from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), however, much of this data is compiled from disparate sources with different data collection methods. This means that there is a general lack of consensus regarding accurate figures about modern slavery in the literature.

In the year ending March 2019, there were 5,144 modern slavery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 51% from the previous year (ONS, 2020)¹⁹. The number of potential victims referred through the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased by 36% to 6,985 in the year ending December 2018 (ONS, 2020)²⁰. In relation to this report from the ONS (2020), the authors of this report note:

“Because of its hidden nature, producing an accurate measure of prevalence is difficult. Currently, there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK”.

A 2013 report by the Centre for Social Justice²¹ found:

“a large proportion of cases are never recognised or reported, and do not appear in any statistics or measures of the size of the problem. There is no consistent grip on the numbers; agencies charged with such responsibility are groping in the dark for a sense of scale”.

This highlights that like many other forms of gender-based violence, understanding the true prevalence and scale of the issue is compounded by a lack of recognition, reporting and consistent recording.

Illustrative of the difficulties quantifying modern slavery in the UK is the disparity in government figures, and those of specialist organisations. For example, the government's 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery²² states that:

¹⁸ www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk

¹⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020>

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ The Centre for Social Justice (2013) *It Happens Here: Equipping the United Kingdom to fight modern slavery*.

²² HM Government (2019) *UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery* October.



“The most robust estimate to date of the scale of modern slavery in the UK was produced by the Home Office in 2014, which suggested that there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in 2013”.

This figure has been criticised, with the Centre for Social Justice (2020) suggesting a figure in excess of 100,000²³.

B. A rise in cases

As the available data from ONS (2020) illustrates, there has been a stark rise in reported cases of modern slavery in the UK. Unseen run the Modern Slavery Helpline (the only modern slavery helpline in the UK). Their 2019 annual review²⁴ found that during 2019, the Helpline received 7,073 calls and 2,163 webforms and App submissions. This represents an 18% increase in calls and a 54% increase in web reports from 2018. During 2019, the percentage of potential victims calling themselves increased from 10.7% in 2018 to 11.5% in 2019. This rapid increase in reported cases is apparent throughout the statistics in recent years.

This, the ONS report (2020) suggests, is related to better police reporting and identification. Others link this to the rise in cases of child exploitation, for example, data from the National Crime Agency also shows the number of modern slavery cases involving children is rising. Referrals for minor exploitation categories increased 48% to 3,137 in 2018, compared to 2,118 in 2017²⁵. This increase, they suggest, is due to a continued increase in the recorded NRM referrals related to ‘County Lines’, a criminal business model of exploiting vulnerable individuals and other forms of criminal labour exploitation.

C. Prevalence of exploitation tactics

Unseen’s 2019 annual review²⁶ provides a useful insight into the nature of modern slavery across the UK. Their contacts found:

- 2,338 referrals sent to law enforcement agencies and safeguarding teams
- Potential exploiters from 54 different nationalities
- 219 cases of sexual exploitation, of which 86 involved potential exploitation through adult services websites
- 886 labour exploitation cases
- 104 cases of domestic slavery or servitude indicating 144 potential victims (88% of victims were female)
- 179 cases of criminal exploitation indicating 299 potential victims. Of those potential victims, 16% were children.

²³ The Centre for Social Justice (2020). *It Still Happens Here: Fighting UK Slavery in 2020s*. London: CSJ.

²⁴ Unseen (2019) *Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline Annual Assessment*.

²⁵ National Crime Agency, 2019. *National Referral Mechanism Statistics – end of year summary 2018*. London: NCA.

²⁶ Unseen (2019) *Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline Annual Assessment*.



- 179 cases related to criminal exploitation (the two most prevalent types being criminal exploitation for drugs and for begging)
- 93% of victims of sexual exploitation were female and 20% were children

It should be noted that a large proportion of calls into the Helpline were related to forms of abuse and exploitation, wider than modern slavery.

D. Child victims of modern slavery²⁷

Child trafficking is defined as the “*recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt*” of a child for the purpose of exploitation. This definition comes from the United Nations Palermo Protocol, which has been adopted by the UK. Children account for nearly half of all trafficking victims discovered in the UK²⁸.

The research suggests that many children will have experienced exploitation and abuse before arriving in the UK, but many victims are also British nationals. In 2018, of 3,137 potential victims identified, British children represented the largest group (45%)²⁹. These children were exploited in the following ways: labour exploitation (63%), sexual exploitation (20%), domestic servitude (3%), and organ harvesting (1%). However, it must be noted that children are rarely trafficked for a single form of exploitation/slavery and are subject to many instances of abuse. Trafficking affects children of all ages, although research indicates that most children are aged over 12 when they are identified³⁰.

Unaccompanied children are at a particularly high risk of exploitation and it is thought that at least 10,000 of these children across Europe have gone missing, with many feared to be exploited and abused for sexual or labour purposes³¹. In the UK the number of children who disappear soon after arriving as asylum seekers has increased over the last few years, with concerns these vulnerable children have been targeted by traffickers.

Where trafficked, children face abuse and exploitation of many different forms. These are summarised by ECPAT³² as:

- **Labour Exploitation** – working long hours for very little, if any money, with documents withheld, subjected to violence and often living in over-populated dwellings
- **Child criminal exploitation** – including pick-pocketing, shoplifting, burglary, cannabis cultivation and county lines (the exploitation of children by urban gangs to sell drugs to suburban areas, market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines)

²⁷ Many victims of modern slavery are recruited as children hence this review includes literature on child victims to represent this fact.

²⁸ National Crime Agency. (2018) 2018 NRM statistics: <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referralmechanism-statistics/2018-nrm-statistics>.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ ³⁰ CTDC. 2018. *Age of Victims: Children and Adults*. [online] <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/age-victims-children-and-adults>

³¹ Townsend, M, (2016) ‘10,000 refugee children are missing, says Europol’, The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees>

³² ECPAT (2019) FAQs on Child Trafficking



- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** - a form of sexual abuse that involves the grooming and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity
- **Domestic servitude** - whereby the child is being exploited in private households and made to perform household tasks, childcare etc for very long hours with little or no pay.
- **Forced begging** - Children, including babies, are used as tools for begging and may also be forced to beg alone, with the money handed to adults and gangs controlling them.
- **Illegal adoption and forced marriage** can also be considered forms of child exploitation.

In 2018, 62% of children identified as potential victims of trafficking were male, compared to 38% of victims who were female³³.

³³ECPAT UK, 2018. *Child Trafficking In The UK 2018: A Snapshot*. London: ECPAT.



Section Two: Modern slavery and gender

A. Women and girls' experiences of modern slavery

Women and girls are vastly over-represented, making up 71% of victims of modern slavery³⁴. The literature repeatedly shows how women are disproportionately affected by some forms of slavery, with trafficking and domestic servitude in particular being highly gendered issues whereby patriarchal systems and gender oppression are both root causes of trafficking³⁵. In the commercial sex industry, women and girls account for 99% of victims and 58% in other sectors of forced labour³⁶. Data from the Modern Slavery helpline found approximately 48% of potential victims indicated in 2019 were male, 29% were female, 22% were unknown, with 0.4% reported as transgender or gender non-conforming³⁷.

According to the 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery³⁸, there are nearly 30 million female victims of modern slavery worldwide. This landmark research also found that when statistics are broken down, women and girls are over-represented in several key areas:

- In 2016, 3.8 million adults were victims of forced sexual exploitation and one million children were victims of commercial sexual exploitation, with 99% of victims being women and girls.
- 88% of victims of forced marriage were women and girls.
- 9.2 million victims of forced labour were female, half of whom were in debt bondage (where personal debt is used to forcibly obtain labour).

In the book 'Gender, Trafficking and Slavery'³⁹, the editors argue that trafficking of women and children into the sex industry:

"raises the issues of gender discrimination and oppression and the ways in which gendered power converges with poverty to drive or lure women and girls into situations where they are subjected to extreme forms of violence. It also raises questions about women's agency and empowerment and tests the hypocrisies of moral judgements and double standards in relation to men and women's sexuality and identity".

This is exemplified by the research that suggests forms of exploitation are highly gendered where men and boys are more likely to be exploited in construction,

³⁴ International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation, 2017. *Global Estimates Of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour And Forced Marriage*. Geneva: International Labour Office (ILO).

³⁵ CTDC. 2018. *Human Trafficking And Gender: Differences, Similarities And Trends*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/human-trafficking-and-gender-differences-similarities-and-trends>> [Accessed 24 August 2020].

³⁶ <https://www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery/facts-and-figures#:~:text=In%202016%2C%20at%20any%20given,1%2C000%20people%20in%20the%20world.>

³⁷ Unseen (2019) Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline Annual Assessment.

³⁸ International Labour Office (ILO) & Walk Free Foundation 2017, Methodology of the global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage, ILO.

³⁹ Masika, R. (2002) *Gender, Trafficking, and Slavery*. Oxfam.



manufacturing and fishing, and women more likely to be exploited in domestic servitude, food and accommodation services and sex work⁴⁰.

Referring back to the conceptual framework proposed by DFID (see diagram in the introduction to this report), research shows a high prevalence of women and girls in many of the vulnerable groups listed. For instance:

- **Socially and economically marginalised or disempowered** – of the 750 million people still living in extreme poverty, girls and women are disproportionately affected and access to education is still unequal in many areas⁴¹.
- **Unemployed or precariously employed** - Globally, only one in two women aged 15 and over is in paid employment compared with about three in four men. In many countries approximately 30% of female young people are “not in employment, education or training” (NEET), compared with 10% of young men⁴².

Vulnerabilities to exploitation are therefore gendered. Not only this, but research suggests the ways of coercing people into slavery are also dependent on gender. Females are much more likely to be subjected to sexual violence, whereas males tend to experience other forms of physical violence, threats of violence, or use of threats against the family⁴³.

Considering the evidence above, The Modern Slavery Act (2015) has been criticised for being gender-blind with reference in particular to Section 54(5) where there is no reference to adopting gender-sensitive due diligence processes or collecting gender-disaggregated data⁴⁴. Furthermore, according to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, “*gender-based inequalities are the primary causes of slavery*”. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, (speaking at the same event⁴⁵) said:

“trafficking is primarily a human rights violation that should be addressed within a human rights framework. Yet, it is mostly apprehended as a security issue and often overlooked in conflict and post-conflict responses. Women must be seen not only as victims or potential victims of trafficking but also as agents of change... Preventive measures should therefore be considered as both life-saving interventions and a means of stemming violence against women”.

A large number of those identified as victims of modern slavery in the UK are young women/girls under the age of 18⁴⁶. Many female victims are trafficked well before adulthood. The forms of exploitation in which children find themselves are also heavily gendered, for example, research suggest female children are considerably more likely to

⁴⁰ CTDC. 2018. *Human Trafficking And Gender: Differences, Similarities And Trends*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/human-trafficking-and-gender-differences-similarities-and-trends>> [Accessed 24 August 2020].

⁴¹ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>

⁴² Powell, A., 2018. *NEET: Young People Not In Education, Employment Or Training*. Briefing Paper. London: House of Commons Library

⁴³ <https://plan-uk.org/blogs/global-estimates-of-modern-slavery-we-need-to-talk-about-gender>

⁴⁴ <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/gender-blindness-of-current-modern-slavery-laws-must-change-says-surya-deva/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gashc4244.doc.htm>

⁴⁶ Home Office, National Referral Mechanism Statistics: UK, End of Year Summary, 2019



face forced marriage. For example, in the UK, 75% of cases reported to the Forced Marriage Unit in 2018 involved female victims⁴⁷.

Research regarding 'County Lines' also evidences a substantial number of young women under the age of 18 being groomed and trafficked. The Crown Prosecution Service County Lines Typology (2018)⁴⁸ is informative here. The document outlines how 'County Lines' gangs often groom and traffic young women in order to secure a location for drugs to be stored in a new area. Furthermore, the document highlights;

"Females who have entered into relationships with gang members are often controlled, coerced and subject to domestic abuse. Females may also be sexually assaulted or threatened with sexual assault and prostituted for sexual favours in payment for drugs. Females may also be used against their will to initiate younger males into gangs through sexual activity."

This suggests a substantial overlap between the trafficking of young women, and other forms of gender-based violence.

⁴⁷ Forced Marriage Unit; Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (2020). *Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2018*. London: Home Office.

⁴⁸ Crown Prosecution Service, (2018). *'County Lines' typology*.



Section Three: Modern Slavery and Homelessness

Evidence of connections between modern slavery and homelessness

Although the literature is scarce in this area, where research *has* taken place, there is evidence of a substantial overlap between homelessness and slavery. According to research by Hestia (2019), nearly 1 in 10 rough sleepers in London over the past year experienced modern slavery (based on conservative estimates of the prevalence of modern slavery)⁴⁹.

Studies regarding the link between modern slavery and homelessness highlight that this is not a one-way causation. Statistics from the Modern Slavery Helpline⁵⁰ highlight how individuals identified as victims of modern slavery disclosed periods of homelessness before, during or after exploitation or at multiple points. The factors that increase the risk of modern slavery are very similar to those that increase risk of homelessness.

Research from Hestia (2019) found those who are homeless are often 'recruited' by traffickers/gangs/individuals and find themselves in situations of exploitation and slavery. At the same time, those leaving/escaping situations of slavery (especially those who have been trafficked from abroad) face homelessness when leaving their perpetrators.

Analysis of databases collated by support services in the UK further evidences the overlap between the two. For example:

- The Combined Homeless and Information Network (CHAIN) database⁵¹ found in 2019–2020, 10,726 people were recorded as having been rough sleeping in London. Of these, 39% had drug support needs, 39% had alcohol support needs, and 47% had mental health support needs. These combined support needs amongst the homeless population make them vulnerable to being targeted by traffickers. The majority of rough sleepers in London are male (83%), however these figures need to be understood in relation to the hidden homelessness experiences of women who may not be included in rough sleeper counts. For women, sofa surfing seems to be a more common form of homelessness meaning they are less visible to services⁵².
- The modern slavery helpline⁵³ worked on 276 cases linking modern slavery and homelessness (7% of the Helpline's total modern slavery cases) between 2016-19. 48 people experienced homelessness before exploitation, 86 reported homelessness during exploitation and 234 after exploitation. Of those who were homeless prior to being exploited, 6 had been recruited at homeless shelters, and 13 on the street or in parks.

⁴⁹ Hestia, 2019. UNDERGROUND LIVES Homelessness And Modern Slavery In London. London: Hestia.

⁵⁰ Modern Slavery Helpline (2019) Modern Slavery and Homelessness

⁵¹ Mayor of London (2020). CHAIN Annual Report Greater London. London: CHAIN.

⁵² <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Article%20Womens%20Homelessness%20Nov%202017.pdf>

⁵³ Modern Slavery Helpline (2019) Modern Slavery and Homelessness.



- Between January and March 2019, The Greater Manchester Homelessness and Exploitation Survey⁵⁴ was carried out with 180 people who were rough sleeping, homeless, or accessing homeless services across Greater Manchester. The survey was designed by STOP THE TRAFFIK in consultation with Street Support and The Passage.

The survey found that:

- 29% had experienced being offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work
- 32% had witnessed or heard of it happening to someone else
- 21% had concerns over how safe or genuine these offers were

A female respondent commented: “[People offer food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol to me] all the time - everyone who is rough sleeping gets asked to sex work or prostitute themselves.”

The survey report concluded that it is crucial for agencies to regularly and systematically collect and share information regarding homelessness and modern slavery in order to build a true picture of prevalence, risk and need.

- Research by the Passage (2017)⁵⁵ asked homelessness organisations if they came into contact with victims of modern slavery, 39% said that they did. In response to the question: “Does your information management system record whether or not a client or guest has been a victim of trafficking or modern slavery?” 54% responded yes. 49% of respondents said they would like some/more training. When asked, “Have any of your staff received any training in working with victims of trafficking or modern slavery?” only 52% had. Similarly, only 44% were aware of internal guidance, policies or procedures on working with victims of trafficking or modern slavery.

The lack of consistency in recording, training and guidance highlights a need for standardised practices, training and tools across support services. The lack of awareness regarding the intersection between modern slavery and homelessness amongst homelessness organisations as explored by the Passage (2017) is also suggestive of a lack of identification and reporting. This means there are likely to be higher numbers of individuals experiencing both modern slavery and homelessness who are not being identified as such.

B. Causation in the link between modern slavery and homelessness

Recent studies evidence that the vulnerability of becoming homeless after leaving/escaping slavery is also exacerbated by the very minimal state care provided to

⁵⁴ Flint, H., 2019. *HOMELESS PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCES OF FALSE AND DANGEROUS JOB OFFERS IN GREATER MANCHESTER REPORT ON THE GREATER MANCHESTER HOMELESSNESS AND EXPLOITATION SURVEY AUTUMN 2019*. Manchester: Stop The Traffik, Challenger, GMCA.

⁵⁵ The Passage, 2017. *Understanding and Responding to Modern Slavery in the Homelessness Sector*. London: Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner.



victims of modern slavery (now 45 days), leaving many of those who have escaped vulnerable to re-exploitation. Prior to February 2019, confirmed victims were given support for only two weeks after their case was held; this was increased to 45 days, but many victims who have been in slavery for years are not ready to move on so quickly from specialist support. Reports evidence that such time limited access to support can lead to people being re-victimised and exploited again⁵⁶.

The Modern Slavery Helpline⁵⁷ data evidences that where homelessness was a factor prior to exploitation, poverty, substance abuse and immigration status were found to be the most common additional vulnerabilities. The helpline data also showed that some victims were specifically targeted and recruited at homeless shelters, on the streets, parks and stations.

This is also gendered. For example, Hestia (2019)⁵⁸ found 16% of pregnant victims of modern slavery whom they supported had slept rough after escaping their exploiters. They surmised that pregnant women may make the difficult decision to attempt to flee their exploiters in order to protect their unborn child and, *“as a result, the rate of rough sleeping amongst pregnant women is likely to be higher than the rate of rough sleeping amongst female survivors of modern slavery as a whole”*.

There is also evidence in a recent rise of ‘sex for rent’ arrangements whereby house owners (primarily male) allow individuals (primarily female) to stay in their house in exchange for ‘sexual favours’. As a Shelter-commissioned YouGov survey⁵⁹ indicates, around 250,000 women in the UK have been offered free or reduced rent in exchange for ‘sexual favours’ in the last five years. This has been linked to exploitation and domestic servitude, meaning homeless women face particularly gendered vulnerabilities to exploitation.

There are also more complex links that can be drawn between modern slavery and homelessness. For example, research suggest links between the imprisonment of women for non-violent offences which are likely linked to exploitation and slavery. Research by the Prison Reform Trust (2018)⁶⁰ found that in the UK, the offences for which foreign national women are imprisoned are overwhelmingly nonviolent - fraud (18%), theft (18%) and false document offences (10%). These crimes, this research suggests, are all indicator offences for trafficking and coercion. When foreign national women are released from prison there is often very little support for resettlement⁶¹. With no recourse to public funds and no right to work, the danger is that women may be vulnerable to homelessness, and re-exploitation.

C. Patterns in experiences of homelessness and exploitation

Literature shows that the exploitation of homeless people can play out in particular ways.

⁵⁶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/modern-slavery-home-office-victim-support-budget-funding-human-trafficking-a8567871.html>

⁵⁷ Modern Slavery Helpline (2019) Modern Slavery and Homelessness

⁵⁸ Hestia (2019) UNDERGROUND LIVES Homelessness and Modern Slavery in London

⁵⁹ Shelter UK (2017) Tenant survey: sex for rent question. Unpublished. See also the Times article on the research: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/250-000-tenants-were-asked-for-sex-hkb36glvc>

⁶⁰ Prison Reform Trust (2018) Still No Way Out: Foreign national women and trafficked women in the criminal justice system

⁶¹ Ibid



The Modern Slavery Helpline⁶² (2019) data of 276 cases linking modern slavery and homelessness (7% of the Helpline's total modern slavery cases) evidences that the most common type of exploitation where homelessness was a factor was labour, with 161 victims recorded by the helpline. Further findings from this analysis includes:

- The majority (61%) of these were reported as homeless following exploitation. Although men were overwhelmingly the primary victims (91% of total figures), 83% of female victims were homeless post exploitation.
- 88% of victims of domestic servitude were homeless following exploitation, with 76% of these victims being female.
- 89% of victims of sexual exploitation were homeless following exploitation, with 97% of these victims being female.
- Criminal exploitation was the only form of modern slavery in which victims were more likely to be homeless *during* exploitation (64%).
- Victims are often recruited/befriended using drugs and alcohol – meaning those with previous substance misuse issues are more vulnerable.

In accordance with the last bullet point above, the link between homelessness and modern slavery must be viewed from the perspective of multiple disadvantage. The research suggests that the vulnerability of homeless individuals to exploitation is often exacerbated by other factors in these individuals' lives; substance misuse, mental health issues, refugee status, learning difficulties and limited support networks⁶³.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Hestia (2019) UNDERGROUND LIVES Homelessness and Modern Slavery in London



Section Four: Mental Health and Trauma

A. An understanding of trauma

There is little mention in the literature about the impacts of modern slavery on mental health and the intersections with other forms of multiple disadvantage. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is referenced across the literature as a common impact of exploitation, and experiences prior to exploitation and after leaving have been found to also affect a victim's mental health. Despite this, the evidence is scarce, and there is inconsistency regarding how best to adopt a clear trauma-informed approach to supporting those who have been exploited⁶⁴.

B. Traumatic impacts

In a review of the evidence around the mental health needs of victims of modern slavery, The Freedom Fund and Helen Bamber Foundation (2015)⁶⁵ found significantly higher rates of mental health disorders amongst victims of trafficking, especially those facing sexual exploitation. Higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal ideation, substance use and PTSD are also identified across the literature – as well as evidence of individuals with co-morbidity of these disorders. Abas et al. (2013)⁶⁶ identified several risk factors for mental disorders: childhood sexual abuse, unmet needs, a lack of social support post-trafficking, and the duration of time spent in exploitation, were associated with increased risk for the development of a mental disorder.

Crucially, there is no research that looks at whether individuals who have faced mental health problems are at greater risk of exploitation as a result of this fact. Considering the evidence above regarding the link between homelessness and modern slavery, it is likely that many individuals are suffering from mental ill health prior to exploitation, as well as as a result of exploitation itself.

The inclusion of modern slavery in the Care Act 2014 as a form of abuse means that it is now included in the remit of adult safeguarding in England. This has highlighted the need for safeguarding to consider different ways of conceptualising risk, prevention and response and to think more globally as well as to broaden the focus from mainly social care and health services.

C. Children's experiences

ECPAT explain the many psychological and emotional impacts of the trauma of exploitation and slavery on children⁶⁷. These include, but are not limited to:

⁶⁴ Salvation Army, (2013). Support Needs of Male Victims of Human Trafficking: Research Findings

⁶⁵ <https://d1r4g0yivcc7lx.cloudfront.net/uploads/2015-Addressing-the-Mental-Health-Needs-in-Survivors-of-Modern-Slavery.pdf>

⁶⁶ Abas et al. (2013) The Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID)

⁶⁷ ECPAT UK, 2018. *Child Trafficking In The UK 2018: A Snapshot*. London: ECPAT



- Physical abuse and physical disorders, such as skin diseases, headaches, backaches and/or general pains
- Drug and alcohol addiction (particularly if the child has been given these in order to subdue them)
- Disorientation and isolation, loss of trust, low self-esteem, depression and/or suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Psychological distress/sense of powerlessness
- Dependent relationships with abusers
- Loss of ability to concentrate and/or memory loss
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety attacks, stress and/or nervous breakdowns
- Anti-social behaviour, anger and/or fear of authorities
- Sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and/or damage to reproductive health
- Malnutrition, physical and/or sensory deprivation

These are all normal responses to a very abnormal and traumatic situation and should be seen via a trauma-informed lens. As one child in the ECPAT report (2019) stated;

“My inner world has changed. The things around me have a different colour; everything seems to be dark grey...” (A child victim of exploitation, ECPAT, 2019)



Section Five: Support

A. Recommendations for service delivery and support models

After the NRM 45-day period of reflection and recovery, financial support and assistance ends with little support to prevent re-exploitation. Recent changes to extend move-on support for six months have been welcomed by many organisations and agencies, but also criticised as not being sufficient to fill the gaps in support. Life Beyond the Safe House⁶⁸ describes the challenges faced post the 45-day time period, and proposes seven recommendations:

1. Safeguarding under the Care Act, 2014
2. Provision of advocacy
3. Move-on care plan
4. Case transfer protocols
5. Outcomes-based support model
6. Research and monitoring of reintegration/re-trafficking
7. An independent cost analysis

Every individual's journey will be different, and will require different forms of support at different stages. Despite this, research from the IOM (2009) has found that survivors' psychological recovery generally involves three key stages⁶⁹:

1. To restore an individual's sense of safety and personal control over decisions and events
2. To address their traumatic experience and its impact on their mental health
3. Receiving support reintegrating into their original or adopted community

The anti-slavery commissioner therefore recommends that:

*"A Model of Advocacy is introduced and made available to adult survivors of modern slavery beyond the duration of the 'recovery and reflection period'. Each potential victim referred into the NRM should have the opportunity to benefit from the help of a specialist advisor until a settled solution is reached. Lessons could be learnt from other support models for vulnerable groups, i.e. domestic violence, the homeless sector and alcohol and drug rehabilitation support services."*⁷⁰ (2015, p.5)

The link made between modern slavery and other forms of abuse is important here, highlighting the need for information sharing and the transfer of learning between sectors.

⁶⁸ Human Trafficking Foundation (2015) Life Beyond the Safe House: For Survivors of Modern Slavery in London

⁶⁹ IOM, LSHTM, UN GIFT (2009) Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Providers

⁷⁰ Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015. *Life beyond the safe house for survivors of modern day slavery*. London.



B. Minimum standards

Supporting adult survivors of slavery to facilitate recovery and reintegration and prevent re-exploitation⁷¹ highlights the minimum standards needed for a sustainable support system which can facilitate recovery as outlined by the IOM (2009). This paper makes five key recommendations:

1. There should be multiagency involvement in decision making. This should inform on-going support.
2. A positive Conclusive Grounds (CG) decision must carry status.
3. Legal advice and representation must be offered early to all potential victims of trafficking or modern slavery.
4. Individual caseworkers should be available to each trafficked or enslaved person to deliver casework support and individual advocacy following a positive Conclusive Grounds decision.
5. Safe house accommodation move-on timetables should be more flexible with support diminishing gradually according to need.

The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards⁷² provides an even more comprehensive overview of the essential care needed for victims of modern slavery in the UK. This document highlights the need for an empowering, victim-centred and trauma-informed approach to support and care. Listening to survivors and supporting them to identify their own needs is shown to be the most important step to aiding them on their journey of recovery. As the document states:

“It is not empowering to end support for survivors before they are ready or to push them to take decisions without advice, support and information. Individuals are likely to need to rebuild their independence and initiative in gradual stages which they can manage at their own pace, taking account of the hierarchy of needs and their individual circumstances” (2015, p.5)

This demands a long-term, tailored approach to support in order to meet the variable needs of survivors and support recovery. In response to evidence of the need for greater identification of and support for victims of modern slavery, The Helen Bamber Foundation has also produced The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct⁷³ for all professionals working with Survivors of Human Trafficking and Slavery, a resource now included within The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards.

As one advocacy worker is quoted elsewhere⁷⁴:

“Survivors of trafficking must begin a new life—but of course they don’t start from zero. They carry along baggage from their previous lives. Exploitation and violence leave their marks: fear, panic attacks, sometimes a tendency to hurt

⁷¹ <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1261/long-term-support-recommendations.pdf>

⁷² <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1235/slavery-and-trafficking-survivor-care-standards.pdf>

⁷³ Helen Bamber Foundation (2018) The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct

⁷⁴ FIZ Advocacy and Support for Migrant Women and Victims of Trafficking, ‘The New Life: Construction sites and mine fields’, AntiTrafficking Review, issue 10, 2018, pp. 156–159



oneself, mistrust of other people and so on. Also, before they were trafficked, many women had experienced abuse, deprivation and traumatisation.... It is in this situation that survivors have to build their future."

In this way, the literature calls for an approach that can accommodate the cumulative nature of trauma and ensure support is tailored to the needs of each individual.

C. Support for children

The most important aspects of care for children who have experienced trafficking have been found to be: support with boundaries and trust issues, stability, and a sense of belonging and family. This highlights the need for these children to have access to appropriate and specialist services, education, healthcare, trained social workers, peer support and social integration options⁷⁵.

Work from Unseen (2019)⁷⁶ found that where children are removed from situations of exploitation, the initial 72 hours after a child is placed in accommodation are the most crucial. During this time the push and pull factors of the perceived need to return to their trafficker are strongest. They also found that much of the accommodation offered to these children is unsuitable, with untrained carers or staff. In response to the apparent gaps in provision and support for these children, Unseen ran the UK's first Ofsted registered children's home for non-UK national children who have experienced trafficking as detailed in their evaluation report⁷⁷.

D: Barriers to Help Seeking

As with all forms of abuse and multiple disadvantage, there are numerous barriers to seeking help⁷⁸. For victims of modern slavery who are facing homelessness, the literature suggests these can include: fear of what will happen to them; lack of information about how to get support; being turned away from charities due to a lack of address; information only being available in English; fear of deportation; shame; low self-esteem and mental-health issues^{79 80}.

As one victim is quoted in Hestia's 2019 report on modern slavery and homelessness:

"It really depends who you are to how you can get help. If I had status in the UK, I would have told anyone and everyone about what had happened to me but I was too scared to speak to the above (police, council etc) because I thought I would

⁷⁵ Chester, H., Lummert, N. & Mullooly, A. 2015. Child Victims of Human Trafficking: Outcomes and service adaptation within the U.S. Unaccompanied Refugee Minor programs. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

⁷⁶ https://www.unseenuk.org/resources/unseen_childrens_report.pdf

⁷⁷ Unseen (2019) Missing Home: Providing Safety to Trafficked Children.

⁷⁸ AVA & Agenda, 2019. Breaking Down The Barriers: Findings Of The National Commission On Domestic And Sexual Violence And Multiple Disadvantage. London.

⁷⁹ The Passage, 2020. Understanding And Responding To Modern Slavery Within The Homelessness Sector. London: Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

⁸⁰ Hestia, 2020. Underground Lives: Criminal Exploitation of Adult Victims. London.



be deported. That's what my traffickers had told me and I was too scared." (Victim quoted in Hestia [2019] report)

E. Availability of services and funding contexts

Cuts to funding during the period of fiscal austerity introduced by the UK government in 2010 (otherwise known as 'austerity') have impacted the availability of support for victims of modern slavery. In 2018, the government cut the financial support it provides to victims of slavery in the UK by nearly 50%⁸¹. This move was heavily criticised by individuals working in support services, as one support worker from the Helen Bamber Foundation is quoted as saying:

*"We have seen people's mental health deteriorate as a result of being in hotels with no choice about what they eat, where they go, if they have enough money on their phone to call a friend or their GP or therapist or access to the internet"*⁸².

The cuts were also criticised for leaving a considerable number of victims at risk of homelessness and re-exploitation⁸³. These cuts were subsequently ruled unlawful, with the judge calling the Home Office's actions '*irrational and perverse*'⁸⁴.

Cuts to funding for children's services have also had severe implications for vulnerable children. According to a study of the impact of tax and benefit policy by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, austerity will have put an extra 15 million children into poverty by 2021⁸⁵. The situation is so concerning that the United Nation's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that the UK Government's austerity measures and social security reform are in breach of their obligations to human rights, and had a particularly adverse impact on child rights⁸⁶.

In this way, the funding context in the UK has left individuals both more vulnerable to (re)exploitation, and more likely to fall through gaps in support where individuals are victimised.

⁸¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/02/cuts-support-slavery-victims-uk-pose-mega-risk-of-homelessness>

⁸² <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/human-trafficking-coronavirus-pandemic-money-support-modern-slavery-a9635126.html>

⁸³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/02/cuts-support-slavery-victims-uk-pose-mega-risk-of-homelessness>

⁸⁴ <https://www.matrixlaw.co.uk/news/government-cuts-to-support-for-victims-of-human-trafficking-ruled-unlawful/>

⁸⁵ Austerity will have cast an extra 15million children into poverty by 2021' The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/mar/14/austerity-will-have-cast-an-extra-15m-children-into-poverty-by-2021>

⁸⁶ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016. *Report On Austerity Measures And Economic And Social Rights*. Geneva.



Section Six: Training

A. A need for training

Training for professionals on modern slavery varies across the UK. A 2015 survey of NHS professionals, mainly in the London area, found staff would welcome information and training on human trafficking. Ross et al. (2015)⁸⁷ recommended that the content of training programmes should include:

- How to identify and respond to human trafficking
- What questions to ask
- Risk assessment and referrals to support providers and criminal justice systems.

The study highlighted that as well as professionals working directly in the field of modern slavery, training was particularly relevant to practitioners in maternity services, mental health, paediatrics and emergency medicine. While evaluations of training programmes on modern slavery undertaken to date suggest what can be effective in terms of delivery and content (see section B below), there is no consensus on which kind of training programme would be most effective.

B. Evaluating training packages

There have been several reports and evaluations of training programmes on modern slavery.

The Welsh Government commissioned Cordis Bright to conduct an evaluation of two key anti-slavery work streams in Wales⁸⁸: anti-slavery training and the survivor care pathway (SCP). The anti-slavery training package consists of five courses (including anti-slavery awareness, child sexual exploitation, organised crime and first responder roles). The evaluation report sets out the model, including the accompanying referral and support pathway found the model to be very effective. The evaluation found certain aspects of this training package to be particularly effective:

- A particular strength of the training was the tiered model of training to deliver appropriate content to a wide range of different audiences.
- Positive participant feedback was mostly centred on the impact of the training in increasing attendees' awareness of modern slavery and how to refer support potential victims/survivors for support. In particular, a number of attendees mentioned that DVDs incorporating the stories and voices of victims/survivors were emotionally impactful.
- The 'organised crime and modern slavery' course was considered very effective by attendees as it mirrored a real case and brings together the key agencies involved in investigating and prosecuting a course for joint training.

⁸⁷ Ross, C. et al (2015) Human trafficking and health: a cross-sectional survey of NHS professionals' contact with victims of human trafficking

⁸⁸ Cordis Bright (2016) Effectiveness of anti-slavery training and survivor care pathway. Welsh Government.



The Passage (2017)⁸⁹ report on modern slavery and homelessness also summarises key recommendations around training and awareness raising, including (but not limited to):

- Homelessness organisations need to ensure that adequate training on modern slavery is provided, including: how to spot the signs, how to report it and what support to offer. Staff need to be aware of the risks of their organisations potentially being targeted as sites where traffickers may try to recruit vulnerable victims. As part of organisations' continued development, homelessness organisations should keep up-to-date with changes to legislation and best practice in working with victims of modern slavery.
- Homelessness and anti-slavery organisations that are working with local communities, should raise awareness among the public that a homeless person can be a victim of modern slavery, and equally that a homeless person is at risk of becoming a victim of modern slavery.

The Homeless Link 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Guidance for homelessness services'⁹⁰ presents practical steps for service providers which would help to form the basis of a training programme. This includes;

- The need to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst service users: leaflets and factsheets about trafficking in relevant languages, discussing trafficking / forced labour regularly in support sessions, encouraging service users to report suspicious behaviour, and running awareness raising events.
- The need to raise awareness of the link between modern slavery and homelessness amongst colleagues, volunteers and partner organisations: ensuring modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation feature on agendas of team meetings and handovers, considering appointing a 'lead worker' or 'team champion' on modern slavery, accessing training, and creating clear safeguarding plans where suspicion is raised.
- The need to raise awareness of the link between modern slavery and homelessness in the community: running awareness raising events, setting up a community group, displaying posters with available support in shops and public spaces.

The guidance then lays out key information around spotting the signs of abuse, how to report a suspected case of exploitation, and working in partnership with other organisations.

⁸⁹ The Passage (2017) Understanding and Responding to Modern Slavery within the Homelessness Sector: A report commissioned by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

⁹⁰ Homeless Link (2018) Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Guidance for homelessness services



Section Seven: The Impact of Covid-19

A. Understanding impacts

This review was written during the Covid-19 global pandemic and associated lockdowns. This has had additional impacts on victims of modern slavery due to:

- Closures of homeless shelters and drop in services
- Local Home Office buildings closed resulting in delays to interviews
- Charity staff being furloughed or working remotely
- Travel restrictions
- Lockdown rules and increased isolation/reduced opportunity for identification or support
- School closures meaning children are less visible and separated from a key source of shelter, support and food

Early research suggests the pandemic is making the task of identifying victims of modern slavery even more difficult. Preliminary findings from the UNODC⁹¹ highlight how the underground nature of these crimes is now even more hidden, with victims being potentially more exposed to contracting the virus and having less access to healthcare and support.

North Wales Police⁹² have reported that even though more traditional forms of labour exploitation have closed due to lockdown (nail bars, car washes, etc.), there is a concern that victims may be moved to less public facing roles such as agriculture and food processing. They also warned that with threats of a recession, more people could be forced into modern slavery. Many support services have had to move online, but with limited access to Wi-Fi and internet credit, distanced support is not always an option for victims of modern slavery.

Meanwhile, reports are emerging of victims being left without support in the midst of the pandemic⁹³. A legal caseworker at the Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit (ATLEU) commented: *"They're completely invisible. They've been completely forgotten. Their needs have just gone unnoticed."* A report from the Independent (2020)⁹⁴ cites support being unavailable or terminated in the midst of the pandemic, and the closing of necessary services like foodbanks – as creating risks of re-exploitation.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime⁹⁵ has stated that:

⁹¹ UNODC (2020) Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic On Trafficking In Persons

⁹² <https://www.north-wales.police.uk/news-and-appeals/labour-exploitation-concerns>

⁹³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-home-office-modern-slavery-trafficking-support-cuts-a9563566.html>

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ *ibid*



“Recovering from the pandemic offers a unique opportunity to look at deeply entrenched inequalities in our economic development model that feed marginalization, gender-based violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons”.

Although research suggests the current situation for victims is dire, this statement offers that out of crises may come new realities and possibilities for change.



Conclusion

Despite some significant steps to address modern slavery in the UK by establishing new legislation and guidance, there are still substantial gaps that allow many victims, especially women and children, to be left without support and become even more invisible.

The links between modern slavery, homelessness and gender are clear. However, despite the evidence presented in this report, there are still huge gaps in the literature around trauma informed approaches, gender, the intersections of multiple forms of disadvantage and exploitation, and what best practice looks like. Crucially, there is also a dire lack of survivor's voices to guide this work.

Research shows a huge need for political, organisational and structural change in responding to victims of modern slavery. The TILI project objectives appear to fill these gaps by developing a model which aims to help with identification, support, recovery and accommodation.

Learning from this project will provide important and indispensable knowledge around the needs, experiences and hopes of victims of modern slavery and homelessness. The dissemination of this knowledge should prove useful for service delivery and provision.

