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### **World Anti-Trafficking Day**

Modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) is one of the greatest human rights concerns of our time. The figures for victims far outnumber even the transatlantic slave trade of the 16th and 19th centuries. Currently, worldwide there are 40.3 million men, women and children in slavery and servitude, with potentially 136,000 or more of them in the UK, and this number is likely to increase in 2020.

It is a common misconception that people being trafficked are only foreign nationals or that this issue only happens in other countries or in urban areas. The UK has a huge issue of MSHT, be it in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas. Figures for the UK show that the highest nationality by far, for both victims and perpetrators, is actually British, for both adults and children.

The latest figures show an increase of 72% in exploited British nationals between 2018 – 2019 (Unseen). This article aims to explain the current situation, raise awareness, and educate professionals.

### **What is modern slavery and human trafficking?**

“Human trafficking involves the recruitment, harbouring or transporting of people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and they are forced to work against their will.”

*It can be broken down into the following categories:* • Forced labour., • Sexual exploitation, • Child sexual exploitation, • Forced criminality, • Domestic servitude, • Organ harvesting.

Modern slavery is a serious crime where the criminals and organised crime groups (OCGs) committing it have no regard for age, nationality or gender. They will exploit anyone they can to make a profit and any vulnerable adult or child is at risk of being groomed. These criminals know who they are looking for to manipulate or force into dangerous situations. The damage caused to people and communities caught in slavery is extreme and the profits from exploitation are often used to fund other serious crime streams. The profits remain high, while the risks remain staggeringly low. For example, a kilo of cocaine can be cut and sold once; however, a female can be sold for the purposes of sexual exploitation repeatedly. She can also be sold for sham marriage, forced to groom others into exploitation, used to perform domestic tasks and her children can even be used in application for benefits. The opportunities to exploit one individual are endless. OCGs will utilise everything they can to make money from their victims; this can include organising benefits, obtaining bank accounts and credit consequently, and building up debts in victims' names.

They use victims to commit crimes such as shoplifting, drug cultivation, forced begging, county lines drug dealing, pickpocketing and sexual exploitation in brothels, cars, hotel, Air b`n`b and domestic properties.

Modern slavery revenues are second only to drugs trafficking which is currently the most profitable crime type in the world. However, MSHT is quickly catching up and could look to overtake drug trafficking profits in the near future. The cost of investigating this complex crime type is second only to murder.

### **Why does the UK have such an issue of MSHT?**

The issue is simple: supply and demand. Modern slavery and human trafficking is a business model.

The UK is a cash rich country and people in Britain want cheaper goods and services, such as a clean car for £5.00, nice nails for £10.00, and as recently reported – cheap clothing. An investigation by the National Crime Agency has been launched into Leicester's textile factories last week after a report has emerged of people working in slave-like conditions. Leicester's deputy mayor says this has been `an open secret` for a number of years and as many as 10,000 individuals are subjected to such conditions of modern day slavery in Leicester alone.

The most well-publicised industries/sectors are car washes and nail bars; however, victims can be trafficked to and exploited within: • Construction/sites, • Factories, • Fishing industry, • Fast food/restaurants, • Agriculture/fruit picking, • Hotels. • Livestock, • Shipping, • Domestic services, • Cleaning, • Textile Industry.

Victims may also be re-sold to other OCGs both nationally and internationally, and they are likely to have little knowledge of their location or where they have been. They can be trafficked using any method of travel including walking, trains, cars, buses, planes, and boats – the distance is not important. A person can be moved two meters or two counties; if it is for the purpose of exploitation, they are being trafficked. It is also important to note that the victims do not have to be chaperoned for the entire journey.

This is clear in cases of children forced into county lines or when people are moved by trains around the country for the purposes of sexual exploitation. People can be moved using any method of transport, this includes into and out of the UK.

### Human Trafficking v Human Smuggling.

Human trafficking is a crime committed against a person; they have been forced into that situation.

Human smuggling is a crime committed against the state; the people have paid a smuggler to move them clandestinely across borders. It is important to note that, what starts as human smuggling can quickly become human trafficking, especially when people find themselves in debt bondage.

Furthermore, people who are trafficked may later pay to be smuggled out of or into a country.

### What are the signs and indicators?

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to signs and indicators of trafficking. People can be trafficked into multiple industries and often are unaware that they are even a victim or they are too scared to speak out. They or their families will have been threatened and the violence and long-term trauma these people suffer is life threatening. Therefore, any number of indicators could be present, it is important to take each situation on its own merit and look at what is presented.

### How to report MSHT?

- POLICE – immediate threat to life-call 999
- Submit intelligence to your local police force via their online portal
- Modern Slavery Helpline 0800 121 700 (confidential and open 24/7)
- Crime stoppers 0800 555 111 or submit information via their anonymous online Form
- Victim Support can be called on 0808 16 89 111 or contacted via an online form
- Migrant Help can be called on 0808 8010 503
- The Salvation Army have a 24/7 confidential referral helpline, which can be called on 0800 808 3733.

### Useful apps and websites:

- The STOP app – produced by anti-slavery charity STOP THE TRAFFIK. This was the first app of its kind to enable people anywhere in the world to report suspicious incidents of human trafficking anonymously and securely.
- Unseen app – produced by the national Modern Slavery Helpline. This free app provides a simple guide to recognising the signs of modern slavery and reporting concerns in confidence.
- Safe Car Wash app – produced by The Clewer Initiative. Focusing on car washes only, this app asks a series of questions related to indicators of modern slavery and if there is a high likelihood that modern slavery is occurring in the hand car wash, you will be asked to report your concerns to the Modern Slavery Helpline.

The data is the anonymised and shared with the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

- [www.stophetraffick.org](http://www.stophetraffick.org)
- [www.unseen.org](http://www.unseen.org)
- [www.justiceandcare.org](http://www.justiceandcare.org)
- [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)