



ANTI-SLAVERY PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

COVID-19 AND MODERN SLAVERY

The coronavirus crisis has affected the most vulnerable in our society the most, which includes those who are trafficked and exploited. The crisis will exacerbate some conditions under which Modern Slavery operates and we must give extra vigilance to these areas.

Whilst intelligence reports may be down during this period, exploitation is still occurring.

- Modern Slavery will become even less visible under social distancing measures - the public are no longer using businesses and services, or travelling, and statutory agencies have in places reduced routine visits to premises where exploitation may occur.
- Some sectors are seeing shortfalls in available staff, which may encourage traffickers to target them. Agriculture, horticulture, social care, construction and food processing may especially be susceptible.
- Covid-19 may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and make individuals more susceptible to exploiters – economic hardship and job loss, eviction, and domestic violence may contribute.
- Social distancing measures may make children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and they may have limited access to peer groups and school support.
- Victims of trafficking may be moved to more risky forms of exploitation as 'legitimate' placements end due to lockdown.
- Victims of trafficking are less likely to have access to healthcare, and may be unable to control their travel or living arrangements.
- Survivors of Modern Slavery may return to exploiters due to economic hardship created by Covid-19 or due to the emotional strain of the crisis.
- Organised crime groups may move to more risky migration routes as legitimate routes are closed. Migrants similarly may use unregulated routes to travel and become vulnerable to traffickers.
- Exploiters may move to private transport such as taxis and minibuses as a means to move victims - including for County Lines drug dealing.
- Victims of trafficking may be made destitute as their 'employment' ends and be housed in hotels, where they may be further targeted by traffickers.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The National Referral Mechanism is still accepting referrals.

The Modern Slavery Helpline is still open 27/4 **08000 121 700** to frontline staff, the public, and victims.

RESOURCES

Below are a range of resources that may be of use during the Covid-19 outbreak.

[Supporting people with no recourse to public funds](#)

[Working with migrants and refugees during the Covid-19 crisis](#)

[NHS Covid-19 Modern Slavery factsheet](#)

[The Children's Society blog on abuse and neglect during Covid-19](#)

The Human Trafficking Foundation has launched a website dedicated to gathering resources about Modern Slavery during Covid-19. Updated regularly at <https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/covid-19-resources>.

[Unseen elearning](#)

Unseen's elearning will be available from Monday 4th May. The cost advertised online is £65 per individual. Group discounts offering significant savings are available for small and large organisations. Contact training@unseenuk.org for a quote for your organisation.

Individual enrolments can be purchased here: <https://unseen.learnworlds.com/>

[Supporting homeless people](#)

Shiva Foundation Training for Hotel Staff (noted as particularly important with hotels being used to house homeless populations who potentially have been trafficked). They provide a free training package for hotel staff specifically: <http://www.shivafoundation.org.uk/blueprint/training/>.

REFRESH

What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term encompassing slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion and deception.

This might be labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation or organ harvesting.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, anxious/agitated or appear withdrawn and neglected. They may have untreated injuries.

ISOLATION Rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.

POOR LIVING CONDITIONS Be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and/or living and working at the same address.

RESTRICTED MOVEMENT Have no identification documents, have few personal possessions and always wear the same clothes day in and day out. What clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work.

UNUSUAL TRAVEL TIMES Be dropped off/collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night.

RELUCTANT TO SEEK HELP Avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers and fear law enforcers for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation, fear of violence to them or their family.