

Modern Slavery



Modern slavery is often a hidden crime, which includes slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. The common factors are that a victim is, or is intended to be, used or exploited for someone else's (usually financial) gain, without respect for their human rights. The perpetrators seeking to take advantage of them could be private individuals, running small businesses or part of a wider organised crime network.

Child victims and vulnerable adults are not able to give informed consent and therefore exploitation even without any element of coercion could constitute modern slavery.

The National Crime Agency in 2013 estimated that there were 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK and the current figure is likely to be higher. In 2018 more than 5,000 potential victims were passed to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), more than 40% of these victims were children.

(Environmental Health News, March 2019)

Types of modern slavery

Labour exploitation: Labour exploitation usually involves unacceptably low pay, poor working conditions or excessive wage deductions, but is not solely about this. In order to constitute modern slavery there will also be some form of coercion meaning that victims cannot freely leave for other employment or exercise choice over their own situation.

Where the perpetrator is taking advantage of a child or vulnerable person, an offence can be committed without the element of coercion.

Sexual exploitation: Victims are coerced into sex work or sexually abusive situations. This includes child sexual exploitation. Victims may be brought to the UK on the promise of legitimate employment, or moved around the UK to be sexually exploited. In some cases, they may know they will be involved in sex work, but are forced into a type or frequency they did not agree to.

Criminal exploitation: Criminal exploitation is the exploitation of a person to commit a crime for someone else's gain. For example, victims could be coerced into shoplifting, pick-pocketing, entering into a sham marriage, benefit fraud,

begging or drug cultivation such as cannabis farming. Criminal exploitation can also include County Lines.

Signs to look out for:

Victims of modern slavery can be found anywhere. There are certain industries where they are currently more prevalent, such as nail bars, car washes, agriculture and fishing, building sites and the sex industry. Other high risk situations include when there is a need for a sudden injection of workers into the work force, such as seasonal staff or construction for a major event. However, victims may also pass through transport hubs, health services and other public places or be found in private homes.

Certain frontline staff who encounter a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking have a duty to notify the Home Office under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This requirement applies to the Police, Local Authorities, the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority.

<https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p3.html?highlight=slavery>
<https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/>