



*“There are tens of thousands of victims of modern slavery hiding in plain sight in the UK. Modern slavery has severe consequences for the health and mental wellbeing of survivors. The NFWI calls on Government to protect victims of modern slavery in the first instance and deliver longer term support to help them rebuild their lives. We call on our members to raise awareness of the prevalence of modern slavery throughout society and to campaign to defeat it”*

Gloucester Road WI, Avon Federation

## What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is used as an umbrella term to encompass slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking.

Someone is in slavery if they are:

- Forced to work through mental or physical threat.
- Owned or controlled by an ‘employer’, usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse.
- Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as ‘property’.
- Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom.

Human trafficking is defined as *‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit’* (United Nations).

Modern Slavery and human trafficking are the trading of human beings as commodities and exploiting them for profit or personal benefit.

Modern Slavery is a complex crime and is outlined in the [Modern Slavery Act \(2015\)](#). It takes a number of different forms including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour exploitation (also known as forced labour), organ harvesting and criminal exploitation. In the UK, over 17 different types of modern slavery have been [identified](#).

# Busting the myths and getting the facts

## 1. *Modern Slavery doesn't happen in my neighbourhood*

Modern slavery is referred to as a 'hidden crime' and is happening in towns, cities and rural communities across the UK. [Most recent figures](#) show over 10,000 potential victims were identified in 2020. A victim of modern slavery could be someone working in a private home on your street, at your local car wash in town or the cleaner who empties your office bin every evening.



## 2. *Victims are all foreign nationals*

For the last two years the most common nationality of all referrals to the National Referral Mechanism was UK nationals, accounting for 34% (3,560) of all potential victims. The second most commonly referred nationality was Albanian (15%; 1,638), followed by Vietnamese nationals (6%; 653).



## 3. *People pose as victims of modern slavery to be allowed to stay in the UK*

Being identified as a victim of modern slavery and being offered support does not mean any automatic right to remain and reside in the UK. Non-UK nationals under Home Office policy are automatically considered for [discretionary leave](#) to remain in the UK. This is a temporary form of leave afforded to those identified as victims if they are assisting the police, are making a compensation claim or if there are other personal circumstances that mean the individual needs to remain in the UK. There is **no guarantee of any leave to remain in the UK**, even for people positively identified as trafficked and grants of discretionary leave remain low.



## 4. *Surely victims of modern slavery could just leave their situation if they wanted to?*

There are many reasons why someone may not be able to escape an exploitative situation. Traffickers use a range of control mechanisms (physical and psychological) to threaten, deceive and coerce people into doing what they want them too. People may be worried about fear of repercussion to themselves or their family, of being reported to the authorities, of being detained or deported and traffickers use these fears to maintain control. Some victims may be extremely vulnerable and experiencing mental health issues, reliance on drugs and alcohol, and Stockholm syndrome (psychological dependency on, and empathy for, the person exploiting them). Victims may be traumatised and unable to report their exploitation.



# The Current Situation

The true extent of modern slavery is unknown. Current estimates suggest that there are around 40 million victims worldwide whilst a recent report believes the number of people in slavery in the UK might be in excess of 100,000.

Modern slavery is happening all across the UK. Victims of modern slavery and human trafficking have been identified in many different sectors including, factories, on construction sites, in the hospitality industry, farmers' fields, brothels, nail bars and even within people's homes.

There is no typical victim of modern slavery – victims can be men, women, or children of all ages and nationalities.

Key drivers that contribute to someone's vulnerability in becoming a victim of modern slavery include:

- Poverty
- Limited opportunities at home
- Lack of education
- Unstable social and political conditions
- Economic imbalances
- War
- Discrimination
- Inequality

Traffickers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment, which can last for weeks, months or years at a time. Victims may be sexually exploited, forced to work in poor conditions for little or no pay or forced to commit criminal activities against their will. Victims may be transferred from one exploiter to another, and may be unaware of their rights, entitlements and options and may be too afraid to consider leaving their situation.

**We may all, unknowingly be involved in helping exploitation to exist.**



# Types of Modern Slavery

**Domestic Servitude:** the seemingly normal practice of live-in help that is used as cover for the exploitation and control of someone, usually from another country. The victim is usually expected to work around a person's home every day and be 'on call' for 24 hours a day.

**Forced Labour:** any work or services people are forced to do against their will under threat of punishment (cases of forced labour have been identified in the car wash industry, fisheries, agriculture and construction).

**Sexual Exploitation:** the forcible or deceptive recruitment for forced prostitution or sexual exploitation. This is predominantly (but not only) a type of slavery that impacts women and girls and is considered to be a form of gender-related violence.

**Criminal Exploitation:** occurs when a person takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive someone (often a child or young person but not always) into a criminal activity (a) in exchange for something they need or want, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the exploiter and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

**Organ Harvesting:** forcing or deceiving victims into giving up an organ that is then used for transplant (most often kidneys).

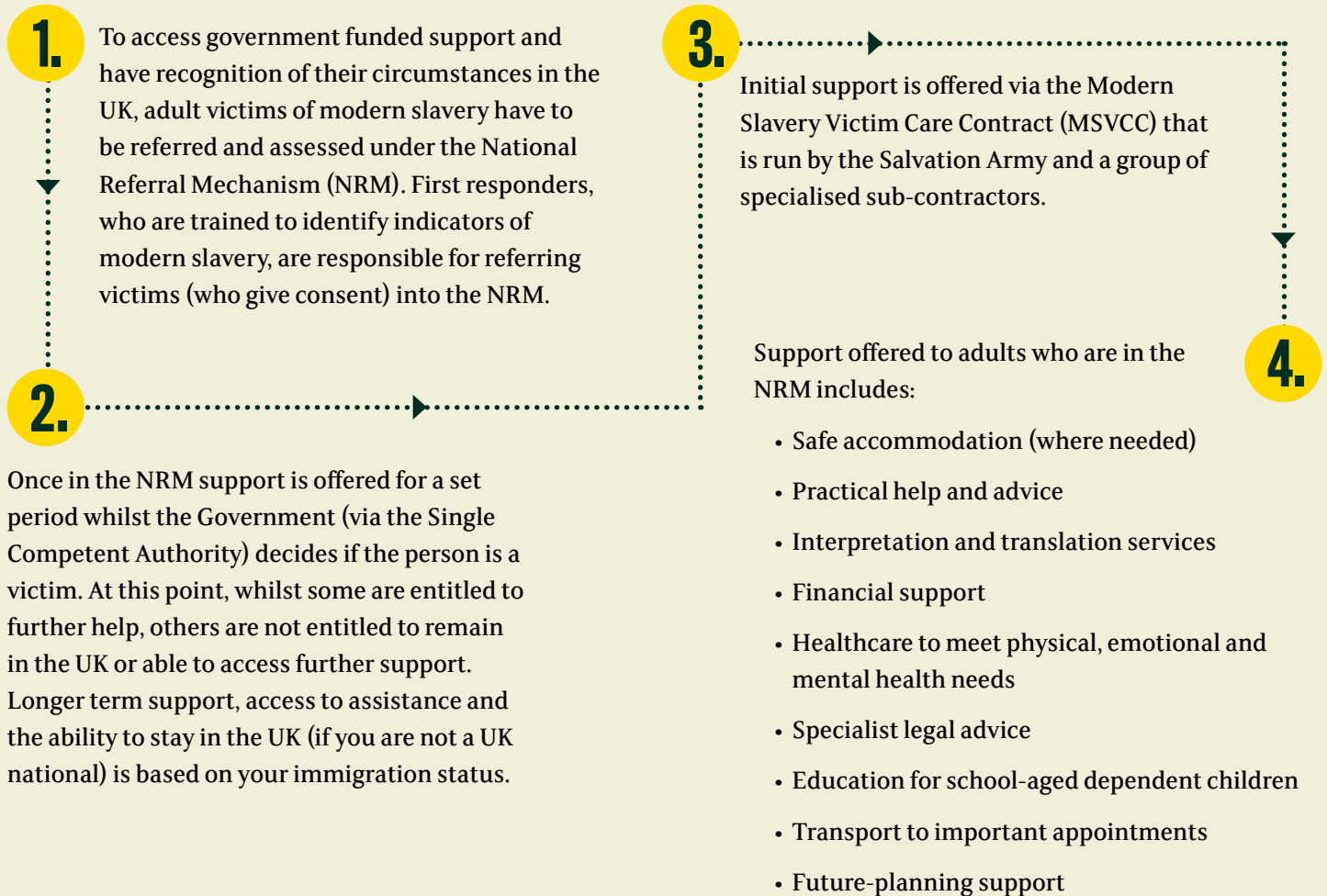
People can experience **more than one** form of modern slavery. Often the types of modern slavery include an element of *debt bondage*. This is when victims are trapped in their situation and end up borrowing money (for food, transport or accommodation) and are then forced to work to pay this off, losing control over both their employment conditions and the debt.

# Victims of Modern Slavery

Victims may:

- be any age, gender, nationality and ethnicity,
- be subjected to physical, economic and psychological abuse,
- be unaware they are a victim or that help is available,
- have language barriers,
- have their movement controlled,
- fear repercussions (for themselves or their families),
- always be accompanied by their trafficker/exploiter,
- be isolated,
- have fears over their immigration status and what will happen if they present to the authorities or ask for help,
- believe the situation they are in is their fault and blame themselves,
- be suffering from the effects of trauma.

# Supporting Victims



Children who are thought to have experienced modern slavery do not need to enter the NRM to receive support but they should still be entered into the NRM to capture important data about their experiences. The Local Authority and Children's Services are the agencies responsible for safeguarding, accommodation and ensuring the needs of children who have experienced slavery are supported (regardless of their nationality or immigration status).

# The Modern Slavery Act

In 2015, the UK government passed the [Modern Slavery Act](#), the first piece of domestic legislation focusing on the prevention and prosecution of modern slavery and the protection of victims.

The Modern Slavery Act:

- gives law enforcement agencies the tools to tackle modern slavery, including protection for victims and maximum life sentences for perpetrators.
- created the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to improve and co-ordinate modern slavery responses
- introduced a defence for those forced into criminal activity because of their exploitation,
- introduced Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs)
- introduced transparency in supply chains, requiring large businesses (annual turnover above £36 million) to report on how they prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

In July 2018, the Government commissioned an Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the Act. On 22 May 2019, the [Final Report](#) from the independent cross-party review was laid before Parliament. You can read Governments response to the recommendations [here](#).

The Modern Slavery Act has been criticised for focusing too heavily on policing and criminality, whilst having too little focus on protection for victims and preventing exploitation. Currently, individuals identified as victims of modern slavery are entitled to a minimum recovery and reflection period of 45 days, in which they may receive safe housing, counselling and financial support. However, organisations that provide victim support have said that victims need a minimum of 12 months of support, as well as permission to be in the UK, to give them a stable foundation for recovery and that cutting of support for victims after 45 days could leave them open to destitution and re-trafficking.

In 2017, Lord McColl of Dulwich introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill, which would give victims in England and Wales a guaranteed right to support during the initial period of time when the decision about status is being made, as well as support for a further minimum of 12 months afterwards.

Whilst the Bill passed through the House of Lords, it ran out of time in the House of Commons. However, organisations continue to push for further support for victims of modern slavery and extend the support offered to victims of modern slavery.

Since the review in 2019, the Government have announced their intention to transform the NRM and extend the support survivors receive. In March 2021 they launched the [Modern Slavery Statement registry](#), an online database which stores all modern slavery statements published by organisations.

# Modern Slavery and other issues - the connections

Modern slavery is a complex issue that often intersects with other issues occurring across society. The key drivers that are considered to put people at risk of being trafficked are often exacerbated by other external factors. Below you will find an overview of some current issues that intersect with modern slavery.



## COVID-19

The impact of Covid-19 on modern slavery is yet to be fully understood but research projects are underway.

There are suggestions that the measures used to control the Covid-19 pandemic have affected sectors in which victims of modern slavery may be working. According to the Modern Slavery Policy & Evidence Centre, worker abuse during the pandemic has been reported. This has included no provision of PPE (personal protective equipment), being forced to live in crowded and unsanitary conditions, and in some cases workers having contracts terminated before they even started working, leaving them stranded abroad with no means to return home.

Lockdown measures have also raised concerns about the visibility of potential victims and the ability to seek support being reduced, as support agencies were unable to offer the same face to face contact during lockdown.

Further concerns have also been raised about the potential for changes to the ways in which exploitation happens. For example, there may be many cases where sexual exploitation has moved 'online', and, as nail bars and car washes have been predominantly closed for this past year, questions around where those victims have gone have also arisen.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Victims of modern slavery can be men, women and children.

However, 71% of victims of modern slavery globally are women and girls.

In the UK, figures from 2018 revealed that 90% of reported victims of sexual exploitation were women. In the same year, it was revealed that 72% of adult victims of domestic servitude were women.

As reported by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2018) women and girls have historically been placed at a disadvantage as a result of unequal power relations between women and men. Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender inequalities and affects women disproportionately. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is one example of the consequences of this.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

Research has begun to try and understand the linkages between slavery and environmental change.

Following natural disasters, communities can lose livelihoods and be put in positions where they must use informal, dangerous or risky migratory channels and, as a result, are more susceptible to being exploited by traffickers.

Increasing evidence, including [this article](#), has demonstrated how climate change can further act as a driver of modern slavery. An example of this would be the use of slave labour in the fishing sector. Unsustainable production practices in fisheries have led to a reduction in fish stocks. This reduction has increased economic pressure, which in turn has led to an increase in the prevalence of slave labour in the fishing sector, and fuelled the use of debt-bonded labour.

## BREXIT

There are concerns that the removal of freedom of movement previously afforded to EU citizens will mean people being more susceptible to exploitation and trafficking.

According to the Chartered Governance Institute, those from EU countries, identified as victims via the NRM, will no longer have the legal right to remain in the UK after they stop receiving support. Victims, still in situations of exploitation, may be less likely to seek help if visas have expired or their work conditions are exploitative as they fear the risk of deportation or detention. Traffickers may use this fear as a control mechanism to keep them working in exploitative conditions and believing there are no alternatives.

Those with no status or who remain in the UK on expired visas are also more vulnerable to exploitation because they have nowhere to turn when things don't go to plan. This means people become susceptible to re-trafficking and re-exploitation.

Many industries and sectors in the UK rely on low-paid and low-skill labour from Europe, without a clear low-skilled migration route it is unclear how these roles will be filled. As the pressure to find alternative low-skilled labour increases the potential for exploitation increases for all workers (UK nationals and non-UK nationals). There is concern that the alternative migration pathways being proposed by Government will not a) fulfil the shortage of workers post Brexit and b) may in fact promote conditions that facilitate exploitative practices.

## NEW PLAN FOR IMMIGRATION

In March 2021, the UK Home Office published its 'New Plan for Immigration'. For many organisations, seeing Modern Slavery included in an immigration plan was surprising. The Home Office has claimed that changes to the immigration system, including making it harder for people who have been identified as trafficked to leave immigration detention, are motivated by an 'abuse of the Modern Slavery system'. As part of the New Plan for Immigration, the Government has introduced the Nationality and Borders Bill. Part 4 of the Bill addresses modern slavery and human trafficking and relates directly to the provision of support for survivors.

Modern Slavery is not purely an immigration issue and the figures for referrals into the NRM show that UK nationals are often identified as victims. Since the enactment of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) the UK government has established itself as a world leader in eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking, yet many are concerned that the human consequences and impact of proposals in the immigration plan and in the Nationality and Borders Bill may push people into precarious and potentially exploitative situations - the very situations the UK seeks to take global leadership in eradicating.

## What the WI's Stop Modern Slavery campaign is calling for

**National level:** The NFWI will work with expert stakeholders to improve the strategic long-term support and protection available to victims.

**Regional level:** WIs and federations will be supported to hold awareness days in their communities to increase understanding of the issue and the prevalence of modern slavery.

**Local level:** WI members will be encouraged to think about the potential areas of modern slavery in their local areas, and raise awareness of how to spot the signs and safely report it.

Please note, the campaign has been divided into two phases. This first phase will focus on the protection of victims. The second phase of the campaign will be launched next year and will focus on prevention and the issue of transparency in supply chains.

## Get involved- things you can do:



### 1. Look out for the signs of modern slavery and report it

Modern slavery can be present in many settings that you will encounter in your everyday life – hotels and restaurants, nail bars, car washes, office cleaners, care homes and in many other settings.

By looking out for the signs amongst people working in these places you can help the authorities identify victims of modern slavery so that they can access the support they need.

### Think: ACT

*Share this acronym with others to raise awareness of the signs to spot.*

- **A:** Do they have scruffy/unkempt **Appearance**? Are they **Anxious**?
- **C:** Is their **Clothing** inappropriate for their work or the same every day?  
Are they **Cautious** when being spoken to?
- **T:** Do they only **Travel** with others and/or are picked up at the same **Time** every day?

Take a photo of the box above, memorise it or make a note of it and share it as widely as possible (social media, groups chats, in conversations) to raise awareness of the signs to spot. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. For further indicators and signs click [here](#).

## Report it:

Members of the public can report suspicions or concerns about individuals, premises or locations in a number of ways. Please do not confront the situation yourself as this may lead to increased harm for them and put you at risk. Instead, report it to the relevant authority or organisation.

You can contact:

- The Modern Slavery Helpline by calling 08000 121 700. This number is free to call and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The helpline is confidential but you can remain anonymous should you wish. Alternatively, you can use an online form available at [www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report](http://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report).
- The Police - 101, or if you believe someone to be at immediate risk – 999
- Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111
- The Salvation Army's 24/7 referral advice line on 0800 303 3733 and they can provide specialist support and, where needed, a safe place to stay while people begin their journey of recovery.

You can also [download the Unseen App](#): the app makes reporting to the Modern Slavery Helpline even easier. Simply go into the app store on your phone and search 'Unseen UK'. The app provides a simple guide to recognising the signs of modern slavery and reporting concerns in confidence to help more victims of slavery.



## 2. Hold an awareness day in your local community

We are encouraging federations and WIs to hold awareness days in their local communities to promote the campaign. This will encourage members and the public to think more about how they can spot the signs of modern slavery in their local communities and encourage them to report it.

As part of the day you could:

- Ask a local organisation to come and speak about modern slavery  
*Some organisations you may wish to contact include Unseen UK, Hope for Justice and Haven of Light.  
 A map of specialist support organisations you may wish to contact can be found [here](#).*
- Display posters on the day and on community noticeboards  
*Posters about spotting the signs in different settings can be found [here](#).*
- Print, cut and share wallet cards for people to keep in their wallets, reminding them of what signs to look out for for modern slavery and how to report it.  
*The wallet cards can be found [here](#).*

### Guidance on the use of responsible imagery

According to the University of Nottingham, particular images used to represent modern slavery can create an inaccurate portrayal of what it looks like and risks harming anti-slavery work by creating mis-information. For this reason, we would advise you to think carefully about using images and what they may portray about the topic and those who have experienced exploitation. If you are unsure please get in touch with us using the contact information on page 13.



### 3. Produce care packages for survivors in your local area

If you would like to volunteer your time and/or produce care packages for survivors, you can get in touch with safe houses and support services in your local area to find out what they need and how you might be able to help. Care packages can include entry and move-on packs, items for children and food parcels.

- A map of support services for survivors of trafficking in the UK can be found [here](#).
- Support agencies that you can get in touch to donate care packages can be found [here](#).



### 4. Volunteer

Volunteering your time can be extremely rewarding and can make a tremendous difference to survivors of modern slavery and to those specialist organisations working to help victims. There are many volunteering roles and opportunities you can choose from. Some examples are:

- Volunteer chaperone
- Volunteer driver
- Volunteer first responder
- Volunteer mentor
- Volunteer CV-writing and interview skills
- Family drop-in volunteer
- Volunteering craft sessions
- You can find a list of organisations where you may be able to volunteer in your area [here](#).

If you would like more information on any of the roles above, as well as further ideas for volunteering, please email us at [publicaffairs@nfwf.org.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@nfwf.org.uk).



### 5. Add your support to campaigns that are being run by specialist modern slavery organisations

Help raise awareness of child exploitation through Unseen's End Child Exploitation campaign. You can download a bespoke information guide designed to help parents and carers keep their children safe from County Lines, including how to spot it and where to go for help [here](#).



## 6. Write to your MP

We are asking members to write to your local MP on the issue of modern slavery and on the provision of support for survivors. We have a template letter you can send to your MP. Please contact the Public Affairs Department if you are interested in receiving the template using the contact details below or visit the Stop Modern Slavery campaign page of My WI.

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## 7. Save the date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Anti-slavery day takes place on the 18<sup>th</sup> October each year. We would encourage you to keep this date in your diary each year to show your support for this campaign.

For 2021 the WI will be putting our support behind 'Time to Stop Slavery', a campaign run by Hope for Justice and other leading modern slavery charities and organisations. The goal is to join our voices to raise awareness about slavery in the UK and inspire people to take action.

NFWI will also be hosting a webinar with expert speakers on the topic of modern slavery on 15<sup>th</sup> October for you to join, where you will also have the opportunity to ask questions. To sign up for the webinar visit [www.thewi.org.uk/stop-modern-slavery](http://www.thewi.org.uk/stop-modern-slavery)

Further information will follow on our social media pages, on My WI and in WI Life.

**FB:** @thewi **Twitter:** @WomensInstitute

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## REFERENCES/LINKS

Modern Slavery Act 2015: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/part/1/crossheading/offences/enacted>

Typology of modern slavery offences in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-typology-of-modern-slavery-offences-in-the-uk>

Modern Slavery NRM Statistics (End of 2020):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/970995/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-year-summary-2020-hosb0821.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970995/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-year-summary-2020-hosb0821.pdf)

Discretionary leave consideration for victims of modern slavery:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/941844/dl-for-victims-of-modern-slavery-v4.0ext.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/941844/dl-for-victims-of-modern-slavery-v4.0ext.pdf)

ILO- Modern Slavery Global Context:

<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

The Centre for Social Justice Report (July 2020)- Fighting UK slavery in the 2020s:

<https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/It-Still-Happens-Here.pdf>

National Referral Mechanism (NRM):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

First Responders: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-modern-slavery-as-a-first-responder>

Single Competent Authority- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales#access-to-support>

Salvation Army- New 2021 Victim Care Contract:

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/modern-slavery/new-victim-care-contract>

Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015- The Final Report:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803406/Independent\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Act\\_-\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803406/Independent_review_of_the_Modern_Slavery_Act_-_final_report.pdf)

UK Government Response To The Independent Review Of The Modern Slavery Act 2015:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/815410/Government\\_Response\\_to\\_Independent\\_Review\\_of\\_MS\\_Act.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815410/Government_Response_to_Independent_Review_of_MS_Act.pdf)

Modern Slavery Statement Registry: <https://modern-slavery-statement-registry.service.gov.uk/>

Report by the European Institute for Gender Equality: [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/read\\_the\\_report\\_gender-specific\\_measures\\_in\\_anti-trafficking\\_actions.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/read_the_report_gender-specific_measures_in_anti-trafficking_actions.pdf)

Covid-19 and Climate Change: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2514848619887156>

Covid-19 and Brexit: <https://www.cgi.org.uk/blog/brexit-uk-modern-slavery>

New Immigration Plan: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2021/5/6097bce14/unhcr-deeply-concerned-at-discriminatory-two-tier-uk-asylum-plans-urges.html>

Further indicators and signs of Modern Slavery:

[http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1400/sf20\\_spot-signs.pdf](http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1400/sf20_spot-signs.pdf)

Download the Unseen App: [http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1400/sf20\\_spot-signs.pdf](http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1400/sf20_spot-signs.pdf)

Map of Specialist Support Organisations: <https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/support-services>

Ethical Trading Initiative- Modern Slavery Framework: <https://msframework.ethicaltrade.org/>

Slavery Footprint: <https://slaveryfootprint.org/>

Fashion Transparency Index 2020: <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/>

Support services for survivors: <https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/support-services>

Support agencies to donate care packages:

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/news/salvation-army-welcomes-partners-supporting-slavery-victims>

NFWI Public Affairs Digest- Subscribe: <https://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns>

NFWI Stop Modern Slavery resources: [www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns/key-and-current-campaigns/stop-modern-slavery](http://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns/key-and-current-campaigns/stop-modern-slavery) and My WI: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/public-affairs-and-campaigns/current-campaigns/stop-modern-slavery>