

## STANDING UP TO MODERN SLAVERY

### A film resource for public authorities in the South East

#### Modern Slavery Act 2015: Public authority obligations

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 gives public authorities a duty to notify the Home Secretary about suspected victims of Modern Slavery. This came into force on 31 July 2015.

Public sector staff are a huge resource and can play an important role in identifying signs of slavery. Consistent, effective reporting of potential slavery is vital to help the police clamp down on criminals who are making immense profits from exploiting their victims.

To help authorities respond to the new duty, the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration and South East England Councils have produced a 2-minute film aimed at public authorities. The film – accredited by the UK’s Independent Anti Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland OBE – aims to raise awareness among staff, stimulate their professional curiosity and highlight some of the warning signs they may encounter in their everyday working lives.

Slavery exists in the South East as it does in all other parts of the UK. (We include some examples on page 3). We hope you will use the film and training notes below to introduce your staff to the new legal duty and create a starting point for more in-depth training using existing materials that detail the reporting process and impacts of slavery.

#### Modern Slavery: the basics

Most of you have heard the terms ‘**Modern slavery**’ or ‘**human trafficking**’ but what does your mind’s eye suggest that these issues look like? Do you know what signs to look out for?

There are numerous methods of exploitation. Victims may be transported a few miles within a town or across continents to be forced into jobs they do not want.

Unimaginable despair and harm are being caused by groups of exploiters who are making almost limitless criminal profits from their victims. They do this knowing that a widespread lack of knowledge and understanding of their crimes reduces the chances that they will be caught.

Slavery is second only to drugs in terms of illegal revenue generation. **It happens here in the South East and you can help to spot the signs.**

#### Objectives of the film

This film does **NOT** seek to train you as Modern Slavery experts, but asks you all – whatever level you work at – to take the subject seriously.

In many instances the film will be used to set a base level for understanding Modern Slavery but it will also act as a starting point to support more in-depth training for those staff that need a greater level of expertise.

The film is designed to raise awareness of the issue and stimulate the professional curiosity of public authority staff who are well placed to see many of the signs of Modern Slavery in their everyday work.

Many people could come across clues or signposts to victims, or those responsible for their misery, in their daily work. The signs may be subtle and may generate a feeling that something is not quite right, some things are hidden in plain sight!

The film's key message is to use professional curiosity and report what looks odd quickly and simply through your authority's identified slavery lead. The job title of the lead person will be different in different authorities, so make sure your staff know who provides this function in your authority.

**Quick notification of suspicions to the identified point of contact in your authority is what's needed.** By reporting potential incidents of slavery you will help your authority discharge its legal duty to notify the Home Secretary about suspected victims.

The ideal internal reporting process is clear, simple and recognises that – on top of the day job – people in public authorities need to be the eyes and ears for other things such as safeguarding, child sexual exploitation and counter terrorism.

### **Where could Slavery be happening?**

Be clear – Modern Slavery is happening here and now but it is almost certainly under-reported. It is typically associated with a number of areas, including but not limited to:

- Agriculture
- Hospitality
- Care sector
- Nail bars
- Car washes
- Cannabis factories
- Brothels
- Multiple benefit claims from the same address have led to victims being uncovered living in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions.

### **After the film: Questions to discuss with staff**

- What clues and signposts to victims or exploiters could be sitting directly, or in the periphery, of your daily work?
- Can the suspicious information you spot be cross-referenced against other material?
- Should you work with other agencies to cross-check and make best use of information on possible slavery?
- Is the internal process for reporting suspicions of slavery clear?
- Who is the lead person for slavery in your authority? Do staff know how to contact them?

### **Next steps**

Please seek out more detailed material from other organisations for those who need more training on Modern Slavery. The SESPM and SEEC [Modern Slavery web page](#) lists our latest recommendations on resources and materials for you to access.

### **More information and contacts**

This film is a joint project from the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) and South East England Councils (SEEC). SESPM is funded by the Home Office to ensure 2-way dialogue between public authorities and Government on migration issues. SEEC is a voluntary membership organisation, representing democratically elected councillors from all tiers of local government across the South East.

For more details on this project contact Roy Millard at SESPM: [roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk](mailto:roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk)

We would like to thank [@Voytek](#) and the Regional Organised Crime Unit for their work on the project.

## Examples of slavery in the South East

**Modern Slavery is a national priority supported by an Act of Parliament.** The South East Regional Organised Crime Unit has provided the following mini case studies to illustrate instances of Modern Slavery in the South East.

We hope you will use them to draw attention to real cases in the South East and encourage staff to think about signs they may see that could uncover slavery. Control measures used by traffickers can be very severe, so this puts the onus on other people to report tell tale signs.

### **Vice and sex trade**

Very few customers of the vice trade would voluntarily engage with the police, even if they thought a sex worker was underage or being controlled.

Organised exploitation of vulnerable young women in the vice trade is prevalent everywhere, including the South East. One example is the brutal physical, financial and mental abuse used by a gang to control 53 women trafficked from Hungary and put to work in brothels in **Eastbourne, Folkestone, Margate and Brighton**. The gang used private dwellings and even student accommodation in Sussex University to ply their illegal trade.

**Questions:** *What signs of illegal sex trade activity could be visible to local authority staff in their daily work? For example what could indicate premises used by gang members as homes or locations for their criminal operations? Could you help spot their local footprint?*

### **Crime and drugs**

Some traffickers threaten and coerce their victims into committing crime, for example street crime, rogue trading, handling drugs, bank or benefit fraud.

In **Kent**, the number of cannabis farms found in people's homes has risen dramatically. Kent Police found more than 300 in 2014, a third more than 2009. Police say cannabis production is highly profitable for organised crime gangs seeking to finance other crimes. Anti-slavery campaigners say many people arrested have been trafficked into the UK and forced to work.

Children have been found in cannabis factories used as gardeners. They are often locked in and forced to work in very unsafe environments as the people running the factories often drill huge holes across the house to meet the cannabis plants' extensive water and hot air needs.

**Question:** *What could public authority staff see that might be able to indicate a person or gang controlling such activity?*

### **Slavery and domestic servitude**

The national press has reported many cases of people treated as forced labour or slaves in traveller sites, nursing homes and private dwellings. Sometimes they have been held in servitude for years or decades, with their belongings and identification documents removed.

In **Oxford**, Operation Rague raided three locations, including private properties and a travellers' site. This led to at least two people being charged with slavery offences.

**Question:** *Could any part of your work provide opportunities for you to reveal this?*

### **Forced labour**

Some staff at cleaning, catering or care companies are 'debt bonded' and forced to work very long hours for very low incomes while they attempt to pay off ever-increasing amounts they 'owe' their traffickers for travel to the UK and living costs.

In **Worthing**, care home bosses have been ordered to pay back £500,000 after illegally employing immigrant workers on 90p an hour. A husband and wife team flew in 4 workers from Mauritius, then made them work in their two care homes for up to 90 hours a week.

**Questions:** *Would you know if contractors' staff are working double shifts trying to pay off never-ending debt bonding? Are there clues that would identify unscrupulous employers?*