Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

NHS England South East Safeguarding

NHS Safeguarding Newsletter

Issue 2: November 2024

Anti-slavery week
14th—20th October 2024
Anti-slavery day 18th Oct 2024

WELCOME

to the second edition of the quarterly newsletter focusing on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) for safeguarding and other professionals in the NHS.

PLEASE NOTE: This newsletter is for reference purposes and to enhance understanding of MSHT issues for professionals working in the NHS. The various views and research findings shared are from experts working in this area but do not necessarily represent the policy or position of nor are they attributable to NHSE.

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ABOUT

Modern Slavery affects adults, children and those who are pregnant. It affects UK citizens and migrants and has accompanying legislation to tackle it including Children Act 1989, 2004. Care Act 2014, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Health & Care Act 2022 and Article 4 of the Human Rights Act 1998

It is a safeguarding issue that involves the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation and / or abuse of power and control over another person

It is an umbrella term including human trafficking, forced labour, bonded labour and forced marriage.

Traffickers target vulnerable members of our society and use force, fraud, or coercion in order to financially benefit from them.
Victims and survivors often suffer from physical and mental health conditions - the NHS may be one of the few agencies they come in to contact with. Modern slavery is also an inclusion health issue with a growing evidence base documenting victim and survivors poor physical health, high risk of physical injury, high risk of exposure to communicable diseases, high suicide risk, poor and/or restricted access to healthcare and a considerable burden of serious mental health problems including trauma and PTSD. Healthcare professionals encounter victims and require the support to know what to do and how to go about providing appropriate care including safeguarding.

1) Anti Slavery Week 2024

A huge thanks to all our presenters at the two half day seminars for anti-slavery week. A wide range of relevant topics across the lifespan were covered, the recordings and slide decks can be accessed via this link to the events section of our South East Safeguarding FutureNHS page: Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking half day Seminars 15th & 17th October 2024 - NHS Safeguarding Workspace - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform

2) Anti Slavery Day Awards

Cathy Sheehan, Vikki Gray, Marino Latour and Donna Love were honoured to represent NHS safeguarding at the Human Trafficking Foundation awards held in Speakers House on 15th October. Awards were presented for outstanding contributions to tackling slavery and trafficking including those with lived experience, statutory partners and the media.

3) Online Conference 'Trafficking in Persons for Organ Removal'— by the Modern Slavery Team of the Metropolitan Police.

Friday 6th December 2024 10.00-14.00

This conference builds on the previous event, which was held at City, University of London in January this year. This was developed from R vs Obeta, the first trial for Trafficking for the purpose of Organ Removal in English legal history. This case highlighted the need for healthcare, regulatory bodies, law enforcement and researchers to work together to combat this type of modern slavery. This case was investigated by the Metropolitan Police Modern Slavery team under the name Operation MANOA.

The conference will detail the achievements in this area since then, as well as provide an opportunity to consider where we can work together more effectively.

As before, we are delighted to be joined by a distinguished list of speakers—find out more on the South East Regional team Safeguarding page here

Or click here to join the event on Friday 6th Dec via Teams. Please get in touch with iain.ross@met.police.uk if you need further details

LOOKING UP

Find out more about the policies, governance and research shaping action on modern slavery

4) Our Streets Report

This report was commissioned by Hestia to identify what modern slavery looks like in London today. The report findings centre on adults, capturing lived experiences and views of the public and can be applied to inform thinking beyond London. hestia.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d609982e-3626-4763-9f49-d46fba8a8f8f

5) Cultural Competence Report

Research findings related to the barriers to support for victims and survivors of modern slavery, created by a lack of cultural competence at different structural levels. The paper also highlights efforts made to remove these barriers. A helpful read to summarise for health inequalities discussions. Click the following link to go to the Modern Slavery & Human Rights Policy & Evidence Centre website: Modern Slavery PEC | Cultural competency in UK responses to modern...

6) Safeguarding Minister Pledges Modern Slavery is a Top Priority

Alongside a recent House of Lords report recommending updates to the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Safeguarding minister Jess Philips has announced plans to tackle the backlog of decisions on modern slavery cases and that supporting victims while driving up prosecutions of perpetrators is a top priority. Read more here Modern slavery victims to be supported in fresh measures - GOV.UK and House of Lords - The Modern Slavery Act 2015: becoming world-leading again - Modern Slavery Act 2015 Committee

7) Human Trafficking Foundation: Modern Slavery Newsletter for Statutory Authorities October 2024

Click the following link to read the October 2024 newsletter: HTF Modern Slavery Newsletter for Statutory Authorities October 2024

8) SAFEGUARDING IN FOCUS

First in a series of articles by Bonita Sparkes, Safeguarding Adults Lead at West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, overseeing the district general hospital and its satellite sites in St Albans and Hemel Hempstead.

From the frontline: Addressing Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Healthcare

When I started working in Watford in 2016, modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) were often perceived as distant threats, confined to urban hospitals or dramatized on television. For frontline nurses and doctors, the reality of MSHT seemed almost mythical. Despite the introduction of the Modern Slavery Strategy in 2014 and the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, secondary care services were slow to recognise MSHT as a significant safeguarding risk.

On reviewing safeguarding training at local, regional, and national levels, I noted MSHT was acknowledged but without much depth, likely due to the number of other competing safeguarding topics to cover. Watford General Hospital sees an annual footfall of over 1.4 million people, making it a crucial point for identifying and supporting victims of trafficking. Given its proximity to London, the region acts as a corridor for trafficking, leading to increased gang violence, county lines activities, criminal exploitation, and notably, the exploitation of women in the sex trade.

In early 2018, I attended an operational meeting with Hertfordshire Police to assess the risk of MSHT in the region. It became clear that not only was the risk present in West Hertfordshire, but there was also immense potential for frontline health services to play a critical role in identifying victims, assessing their risks and needs, and addressing immediate safeguarding concerns. This had a profound impact on me and prompted the safeguarding team to consider how we could proactively support the police and improve our approach to safeguarding. Arguably, safeguarding services in healthcare can often be reactive, but we proposed a more proactive, innovative approach.

NHS England South East Safeguarding

Our team began participating in tactical police operations engaging with potential victims of MSHT, particularly focusing on sexual exploitation. This initiative led to the development of several work streams, including the creation of a national SOP for multi-agency responses to MSHT, localised resources to help staff recognise risks, and the "Every Contact Counts" initiative. We also secured funding for onsite independent sexual violence advocates, among other resources.

In the next issue, I will delve deeper into these initiatives, sharing operating models, case studies and survivors' voices. Please join us online for the MSHT webinar event on October 12th and 17th, where I will discuss our work in detail.

Thank you for your dedication to safeguarding and your commitment to making a difference.

Bonita Sparkes Safeguarding Adults Lead, West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

If, like Bonita, you would like to contribute anything to future bulletins then please contact Victoria.gray3@nhs.net

Special feature from Border Force UK

Border Force ending modern slavery in the UK fishing industry

Have you ever thought about what goes on at sea?

Hidden in plain sight, in our harbours…hidden out of sight, miles offshore...

Modern slavery by labour exploitation in the UK commercial fishing industry.

There's mostly legitimate employers in the UK commercial fishing industry.

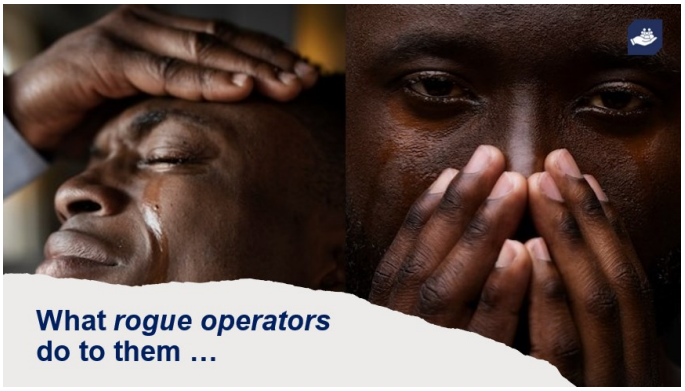
There's those who pay a fair wage for British and foreign workforce to operate in safe conditions.

And there's some who don't.

They want to undercut the competition. To make a criminal profit by enslaving their foreign workforce. To pay them a wage which works out at about £2/hour for the excessive hours they coerce. To leave them with un-hospitalised injuries with life-changing effect.

And worse. Discarding them ashore and leaving them destitute to find local charity…over the Christmas holidays.

And worse still. Real threats to kill, *"If you don't like it, you can get off – now."* in the middle of the Irish Sea. In front of other foreign crew. To coerce further into criminal control.



Thousands of miles away from loved ones and home. Tricked into a criminal 'contract' that a rogue agent has fixed in criminal conspiracy with a rogue operator.

Victims trapped in modern slavery.

In the United Kingdom. In this day and age.

Border Force secures the border, facilitates economic prosperity and protects the vulnerable.

We do this onshore and offshore. We look. We find. We invite compliance through cooperation. We enforce against those who don't want to comply.

We work with other agencies. We provide evidence for police investigations. We use our own and other regulatory sanction for rogue operators who think they can escape prosecution.

And those rogue agents? They're not safe either. It's not much good having all that 'bling', is it? If you don't have the visas to match.

Special feature from Border Force UK

Border Force ending modern slavery in the UK fishing industry

We cover 140 ports and airports

North, south, east and west

We work night and day …

… wind, rain, sun or snow

We're trained to identify exploitation

We look; we find; we support; we hunt

We work with social services, NHS and charities

We protect the vulnerable

We safeguard those at risk

We work with law enforcement partners

We prevent exploitation

We stop those who harm

We give people the help and protection they need

We save lives

We stay focused

We support each other

We are a human face at the border

Every day; 24/7; 365 days a year

This … is Border Force

And that … is National Safeguarding.