Modern Slavery Training - Handout

Overview

Modern slavery is a serious crime where a person is exploited for someone else's benefit. It includes situations where a person is **held**, **controlled**, **coerced**, **manipulated**, or **deceived** into providing labour, services, or other forms of exploitation.

The definition of modern slavery used in the UK is found in the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Modern slavery happens when an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes, but is not limited to, human trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage.

Modern slavery can take many forms, including:

- **Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour**
- **Human trafficking**
- **Sexual exploitation**
- **Criminal exploitation** (e.g. forced drug cultivation, forced begging, forced shoplifting)
- **Domestic servitude**
- **Organ harvesting**
- **Cuckooing** (criminals taking over someone's home)

A person may be physically prevented from leaving, or they may be **held in a situation** through threats, coercion, debt bondage, grooming, or abuse of vulnerability (e.g. poverty, addiction, learning difficulties, immigration status).

Many victims do not recognise what is happening to them as exploitation. Others may fear authorities, be isolated, or be prevented from seeking help.

Modern slavery affects people of all ages, genders, nationalities, and immigration statuses. It occurs across the UK and globally.

Types of modern slavery

- **Forced labour**: Individuals are compelled to work against their will under threat of punishment. This can occur in industries with minimal regulation, such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, or in state-run institutions like prisons. Victims may face physical or psychological coercion, and their freedom of movement is restricted.
- **Debt bondage**: People are forced to work to repay debts, often with manipulated or inflated obligations that make repayment impossible. This form of slavery can be generational, trapping children in the same cycle.
- **Cuckooing**: Involves a criminal taking over the home of a vulnerable person in order to establish a base for illegal activity such as sex work or drug dealing, often as part of a county lines operation. This can also often involve financial, physical, mental and emotional abuse of a vulnerable resident.
- **Domestic servitude**: Victims work in private households or their own family home, performing tasks such as cleaning, cooking, or childcare, often with little or no pay and under constant control. Because these situations occur in private homes, they are difficult to detect.
- **Sexual exploitation**: Individuals are coerced into prostitution, pornography, or other sexual services. They may be threatened, abused, or have their freedom restricted to ensure compliance.

- **Descent-based slavery**: Individuals are born into slavery due to their family lineage, inheriting a status of servitude.
- **Criminal exploitation**: Victims are compelled to commit illegal acts such as drug trafficking, theft, or fraud under threat of punishment.
- **Organ harvesting**: People are trafficked for the purpose of removing organs for transplant, often without consent.

Law

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 defines two main offences:

1. Slavery, Servitude & Forced or Compulsory Labour (SS+FCL)

A person is held in a place or situation and forced to provide a service.

This may involve:

- physical restraint
- threats or intimidation
- debt bondage
- withholding wages
- controlling movement
- exploiting vulnerabilities

2. Human Trafficking (HT)

This offence has three elements:

- Act – recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring, receiving
- Means – threats, coercion, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability
- Purpose – exploitation (labour, sexual, criminal, domestic servitude, organ harvesting)

Key legal points:

- Exploitation does not need to have occurred — only the *purpose* is required.
- For children, the *means* element is not required.
- Consent is irrelevant if any coercion or abuse of vulnerability is present.
- Organ harvesting is trafficking even though no "service" is provided.

Indicators and Signs

- Appearing fearful, anxious, withdrawn, or overly submissive
- Someone else speaking for them or controlling their movements
- Signs of physical abuse, untreated injuries, or poor health
- Lack of identity documents, or documents held by someone else
- Not knowing their home or work address
- Limited freedom of movement or always being accompanied
- Working excessively long hours or in unsafe conditions
- Being paid little or nothing for their work
- Living in overcrowded, unsafe, or employer-controlled accommodation
- Sudden changes in behaviour, mood, or appearance
- Debt bondage — owing money they cannot realistically repay
- Fear of authorities or reluctance to seek help
- Confusion about their immigration status or misinformation given to them

Specific indicators:

Labour Exploitation

- Long hours with no breaks
- Withheld wages
- Poor or dangerous working conditions
- Transported to and from work in groups
- Living at the workplace or in employer-controlled housing
- No employment contract or understanding of rights

Domestic Servitude

- Living with employer
- Not allowed to leave the house alone
- No access to phone or money
- Expected to be "on call" at all times
- Treated as a family possession rather than an employee

Sexual Exploitation

- Signs of sexual trauma or STIs
- Being moved between locations frequently
- Being forced to perform sexual acts for money
- Controlled by a "boyfriend", "controller", or "manager"
- Addiction used as a method of control

Criminal Exploitation

- Forced to cultivate cannabis, steal, beg, or transport drugs
- Found in "trap houses" or criminal locations
- Carrying multiple phones or unexplained expensive items
- Fear of police or reluctance to engage with services
- Children travelling long distances alone (County Lines)

Organ Harvesting

- Unexplained medical procedures or scars
- Being transported for unclear reasons
- Being held for the purpose of medical exploitation

Cuckooing

- Home taken over by criminals
- Unusual visitors at all hours
- Victim appears frightened in their own home
- Property used for drug dealing or exploitation

Safeguarding

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

If you are concerned that a child or adult is at risk of modern slavery or exploitation, you must make a safeguarding referral to **Children's Social Care**, **Adult Social Care**, or your local **MASH**.

When speaking to a victim:

- Find a private space
- Use independent translators (never family or community members)
- Avoid judgemental language
- Maintain a clear record of your conversation
- Do not promise not to share information
- Do not approach exploiters
- Follow the **one chance rule**

Remember!

A person may not feel safe even when they *are* safe. Explore both safety and the *feeling* of safety.

Tips for professionals

- Listen to and believe survivors
- Use the same terminology as the survivor
- Maintain accurate records
- Minimise who information is shared with
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not approach exploiters and family
- Keep an open-door policy
- Create a safety plan
- Share information about support agencies
- Link with your Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Always follow up safeguarding referrals

Tools:
Modern Slavery Self Identification Tool (SIT)</p> — Human Trafficking Foundation
Exploitation Risk Checker | Causeway Charity

Statutory responses

- National Referral Mechanism (NRM)
- Children's Social Care (Section 17 / Section 47)
- Adult Social Care (Care Act)
- Police safeguarding and criminal investigation
- Immigration advice
- Modern slavery legislation

Specialist support

Unseen
08000 121 700
Modern Slavery Helpline
Run the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline and work with individuals, communities, business, governments, other charities and statutory agencies tackling modern slavery.

Salvation Army (Modern Slavery Support)

0800 808 3733
What is Modern Slavery | The Salvation Army

Migrant Help
01304 203977
Slavery and human trafficking | Migrant Help
Advice and support to asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants across the UK.

Local:

ASIOX- Anti Slavery Initiative Oxford
office@asiox.org
End Human Trafficking | ASIOX | Oxford
Provides support to people who have experienced exploitation but not modern slavery, were refused by NRM, declined being referred to NRM or need support before entering or after exiting NRM.

Local safeguarding contacts:

- Nicola Bell 01865 252406 nbell@oxford.gov.uk
- Martha Edwards 07720207317 Martha.Edwards@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk