



Home Office

Modern slavery:

how the UK is leading the fight



Modern slavery: the context

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

In 2013 the National Referral Mechanism, the UK's victim identification and support process, received 1,746 referrals of potential victims of trafficking – almost a 50 percent increase on 2012 figures. The 1,746 referrals comprised 1,122 female (64%) and 624 male (36%) [potential] victims. 1,295 (74%) were adults and 450 (26%) were children. But these are just the victims that we know about. Modern slavery is a largely covert crime: victims tend to be controlled and hidden away.

A global crime

Modern slavery is an international crime involving a substantial number of source and transit countries. Organised crime groups systematically exploit large numbers of individuals by forcing and coercing them into a life of abuse and degradation.

Potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism in 2013 were reported to be from 112 countries of origin. The five most prevalent countries of origin of potential victims were Albania, Nigeria, Vietnam, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Poverty, limited opportunities at home, lack of education, unstable social and political conditions, economic imbalances and war are the key driving forces that contribute to the trafficking of victims into and through the UK.

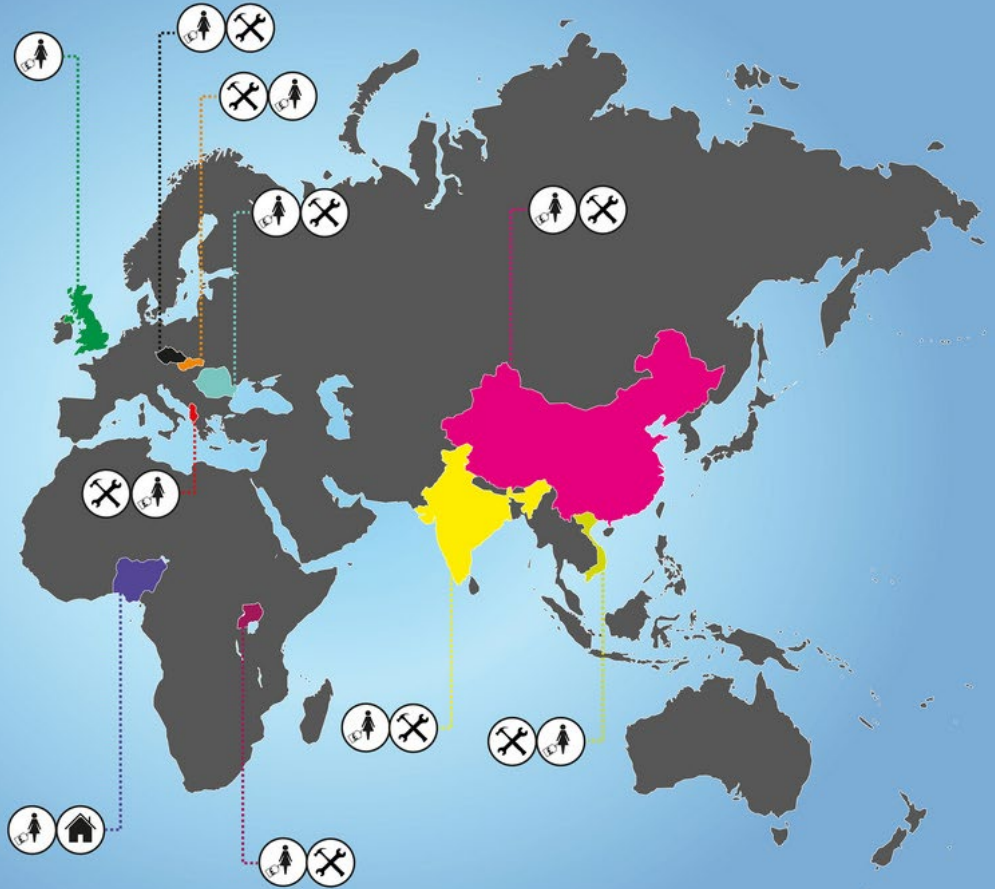
MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR POTENTIAL VICTIMS TRAFFICKED INTO THE UK AND EXPLOITATION TYPES*

*Based on information from the NRM - National Referral Mechanism - the UK's victim identification system



PREDOMINANT EXPLOITATION TYPE

Sexual Exploitation Labour Exploitation Domestic Servitude



Modern Slavery Bill

The Government is committed to stamping out this abhorrent crime. The new Modern Slavery Bill will be amongst the first Acts in the world specifically tackling modern slavery and reflects the Government's determination that the UK lead the global fight against this evil.

To enable law enforcement to more effectively fight this crime, the Bill will:

- Consolidate and simplify existing modern slavery offences into one Act to provide clarity and focus when prosecuting traffickers and slave masters.
- Increase the maximum sentence available for offenders to life imprisonment.
- Create an independent Anti-slavery Commissioner to drive improvements and a better coordinated law enforcement response, working in the interests of victims.
- Strengthen powers to recover the sizeable profits that traffickers and slave masters make from this appalling crime.
- Introduce vital new tools to restrict the activity of criminals who have been convicted of modern slavery offences.
- Provide powers to enable police and Border Force to act where it is suspected that human trafficking or forced labour is taking place on board vessels at sea.

To enhance protection for victims, the Bill will:

- Create a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery so that those forced to commit an offence as a direct consequence of their slavery are not treated as criminals by the justice system.
- Empower courts, where the convicted trafficker or slave master has assets, to order that victims receive reparations.
- Provide statutory guidance that sets out how victims of modern slavery can be identified and supported effectively.
- Extend special measures so that all victims of modern slavery can be supported through the criminal justice process.
- Place a legal duty on public bodies, including the police, local authorities and borders and immigration, to notify the National Crime Agency about potential victims of modern slavery.
- Ensure that where the age of a victim of modern slavery is uncertain and there are reasons to believe that the person is a child, they are presumed to be one.

“We are taking steps to ensure slave drivers never think the UK is a safe space to operate in, and that victims of slavery are not ignored. To anyone involved in slavery let me be clear – we will track you down, prosecute you and lock you up, with your assets seized and confiscated.”

The Home Secretary, The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

A comprehensive focus on tackling modern slavery

Legislation is only one part of the solution. The Government is also taking forward a comprehensive programme of activity, which includes: trialling child trafficking advocates; establishing safeguarding and trafficking teams at the border; working with the private sector to address modern slavery in supply chains; and a review of the National Referral Mechanism. This programme of activity will be set out in a new modern slavery strategy which will be published in the autumn.

Ensuring all partners play their part

Modern slavery is a hidden, pervasive crime and we need to ensure that our partners have the skills to respond effectively wherever it is exposed. Recent Government activity includes:

- making modern slavery a priority for the National Crime Agency (NCA). The NCA is now leading an enhanced and coordinated response to targeting trafficking gangs;
- transferring the sponsorship of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority from DEFRA to the Home Office to improve collaboration with policing agencies for its enforcement activities;
- making training on modern slavery available to all front-line police officers, so they know how to spot the signs of exploitation and take effective action;
- providing a toolkit to help healthcare professionals identify and respond to victims of trafficking; and
- establishing mandatory training for all UK Visas and Immigration staff to spot the signs of exploitation and take effective action.

Working with the private sector

The Government is committed to working collaboratively with business to stamp out modern slavery in supply chains in a number of ways:

- in October 2013 we amended the Companies Act so that listed companies are now required to report information about human rights issues;
- in 2016 an EU directive on non-financial reporting will come into force. This will build on the UK's existing framework and require companies to include even more detailed information, including on their supply chains;
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has recently announced that it will work with the British Retail Consortium to develop guidelines for business on tackling modern slavery in supply chains.
- we are holding dedicated workshops with business to identify what more we can do together to tackle supply chain issues; and
- we have committed to working with business to develop guidance and training for those involved in supply chain management.

Victim identification, protection and support

This Government is determined to ensure that victims receive the support they need to move on with their lives after the horrors of modern slavery. To make this a reality we are:

- reviewing the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to make sure that it works as effectively as possible;
- reviewing and re-tendering the victim care contract, to ensure we provide the most effective support for victims;
- developing National Occupational Standards to improve the skills of those who identify and work with victims; and
- forming a specialist UK Visas & Immigration NRM Hub, which considers cases with an active immigration dimension (e.g. an asylum claim) swiftly and sensitively.

A tailored approach for child victims

The Government is fully committed to safeguarding child victims of modern slavery and recognises they have specific needs. Recent activity includes:

- announcing trials of specialist independent advocates for victims of child trafficking;
- introducing new safeguarding and trafficking teams at the border to help identify and protect victims of modern slavery;
- revising statutory guidance and regulations to strengthen support arrangements for child victims of trafficking; and
- working with front-line professionals to help them better identify and support potential victims.

Raising public awareness of this crime

It is difficult to accept that modern Britain is home to slavery and trafficking. We are determined to bring this hidden crime out into the open. We will:

- launch a national communications campaign to improve understanding of modern slavery amongst the public, and small and medium sized businesses, and encourage them to take action;
- set up a helpline, in partnership with the NSPCC, so that child and adult victims, professionals, and members of the public can call for support, advice and information. This helpline will be launched as part of the wider communications awareness-raising campaign this summer; and
- work with a range of partners and organisations (including the police, Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, charities and other frontline services) to help them spot the signs of modern slavery and better understand how to report and/or make appropriate referrals.

Developing the international response

Modern slavery is an international issue and we are committed to working with other countries to prevent individuals from being exploited. Key activities have included:

- The Home Secretary's launch of the 'Santa Marta Group', a group of senior international law enforcement chiefs, who will work on joint practical measures to strengthen and coordinate our response to tackling modern slavery globally;
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) coordinating work to tackle modern slavery overseas to help prevent individuals from getting involved in trafficking and slavery and disrupting routes coming into the UK. For example, as part of a joint FCO/Home Office project in December 2013, the NSPCC trained UK and Nigerian officials to better identify trafficked children;
- FCO working with other Governments and local NGOs to ensure safe return of victims to their home countries, including establishing a specific voluntary return and assistance package for Albania and a shelter for female victims trafficked from Vietnam to China;
- Department for International Development (DFID) contributing to combating trafficking in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly, including through support for the Ethical Trading Initiative; and
- DFID working with the International Labour Organisation, helping girls and women in South Asia avoid being trafficked to work in the domestic worker and garment manufacturing sectors in the Middle East.

