

Multi-agency modern slavery guidance

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Introduction

This guidance is intended to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking amongst partner agencies of the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), and ensure that agencies can recognise modern slavery and have the confidence to report suspected cases.

It is intended to be used in conjunction with each agency's internal pathways and procedures, and with regard to the [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](#). The Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a type of abuse, as well as being a serious crime, therefore, managing cases of modern slavery is closely linked to safeguarding adults procedures.

Modern slavery can be hidden making it hard to recognise potential victims and, as a consequence, people can become desensitised to the scenarios in which it might present. Victims can be any age, gender, ethnicity or nationality. It is important that the indicators are recognised so that safeguarding concerns can be raised appropriately.

This multi-agency guidance will highlight how effective partnership working between agencies may create better outcomes for adults.

The aim of the guidance is to:

- Support agencies to identify victims of modern slavery.
- Provide advice on what to do when modern slavery is suspected.
- Provide clarity of roles and responsibilities for all agencies, and key agencies.
- Emphasise the importance of partnership working.
- Provide information and additional resources in order to raise awareness and aim to prevent modern slavery.

What is modern slavery?

The term modern slavery captures a whole range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

- sexual exploitation,
- domestic servitude,
- forced labour,
- criminal exploitation,
- organ harvesting, and
- human trafficking.

[The Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) categorises offences of ‘slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour’, and ‘human trafficking’ which includes knowingly holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them during or soon after.

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

The commonly used definition of human trafficking is often referred to as the [Palermo Protocol](#). According to the Palermo Protocol, human trafficking is made up of three elements, known as ‘action’, ‘means’ and ‘purpose’.

Action refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer or a receipt of a person, either domestically or across borders.

Means refers to how the trafficker achieves this, ie. by abduction, deception, coercion, threats or actual use of force, by use of their power or the potential victim’s vulnerability.

Purpose refers to the type of exploitation, eg. forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, slavery or removal of organs.

Slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour

Slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour is made up of two elements known as ‘means’ and ‘service’.

Means refers to being held to work via threats or actual use of force, by deception or fraud, coercion, by use of the perpetrator’s power or the potential victim’s vulnerability.

Service refers to what the victim provides, ie. manual labour, sexual services, domestic services.

Although we often think of human trafficking as crossing borders, it can take place within a country and does not require the victim to be moved across borders for the purpose of exploitation.

How can you identify potential victims of modern slavery?

The [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) guidance](#) and accompanying [referral form](#) provides the following indicators that someone could be a victim of modern slavery:

- Distrustful of authorities.
- Express fear or anxiety.
- Show signs of psychological trauma (including post-traumatic stress disorder).
- The person acts as if instructed by another.
- Injuries apparently a result of assault or controlling measures.
- Evidence of control over movement, either as an individual or as a group.
- Found in or connected to a type of location likely to be used for exploitation.
- Restriction of movement and confinement to the workplace or to a limited area.
- Passport or documents held by someone else.
- Lack of access to medical care.
- Limited social contact or isolation.
- Limited contact with family.
- Signs of ritual abuse and witchcraft (known as juju).
- Substance misuse.
- Person forced, intimidated or coerced into providing services.
- Doesn't know home or work address.
- Perception of being bonded by debt.
- Money is deducted from salary for food or accommodation.
- Threat of being handed over to authorities.
- Threats against the individual or their family members.
- Being placed in a dependency situation.
- No or limited access to bathroom or hygiene facilities.

There are also some indicators that are more specific to the type of exploitation, such as forced or compulsory labour, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

Forced or compulsory labour

Forced labour is any work in which people are employed against their will under the threat of penalty, including detention, violence including death, destitution or other forms of extreme hardship to either themselves or members of their family.

Indicators of forced or compulsory labour

- No or limited access to earnings or labour contract.
- Excessive wage reductions, withholding wages, or financial penalties.
- Dependence on employer for a number of services, for example, work, transport and accommodation.
- Any evidence workers are required to pay for tools, food or accommodation via deductions from their pay.
- Imposed place of accommodation.
- Found in poor living conditions.
- Evidence of excessive working days or hours.
- Deceived about the nature of the job, location, or employer.
- Employer or manager unable to provide record of wages paid to workers.
- Poor or non-existent health and safety equipment or no health and safety notices.
- Any other evidence of labour laws being breached.

Sexual exploitation

This is when someone is deceived, coerced or forced to take part in sexual activity.

Indicators of sexual exploitation

- Adverts for sexual services offering individuals from particular ethnic or national groups.
- Sleeping on work premises.
- Movement of individuals between brothels or working in alternate locations.

- Individuals with very limited amounts of clothing or a large proportion of their clothing is ‘sexual’.
- Only being able to speak sexual words in local language or language of client group.
- Having tattoos or other marks indicating ‘ownership’ by their exploiters.
- Person subjected to crimes such as abduction, assault or rape.
- Someone other than the potential victim receives the money from clients.
- Health symptoms (including sexual health issues).

Domestic servitude

Domestic servitude is the practice of exploiting, and exercising undue control over, a person to coerce them into performing services of a domestic nature in unacceptable conditions.

Indicators of domestic servitude

- Living with and working for a family in a private home or place of accommodation.
- Not eating with the rest of the family or being given only leftovers, or inadequate food.
- No private sleeping place or sleeping in shared space, for example, the living room.
- Forced to work in excess of normal working hours or being ‘on-call’ 24 hours per day.
- Employer reports them as a missing person, or employer accuses person of theft or other crime related to the escape.
- Never leaving the house without permission from the employer.

Other types of exploitation which may amount to an offence of slavery, servitude, forced work or human trafficking include financial exploitation, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

Financial exploitation

This can be present in many types of exploitation and it can take a range of forms.

Debt bondage is a tactic used by perpetrators to maintain control and compliance of their victims. Debts may arise out of the exploitation itself, for example, in relation to accommodation or travel fees, with victims having little or no control

over their debt and little or no way to pay it back. Costs may be deducted from their wages, leading to further debts being accrued. A person may be forced to work to pay off the debt.

Criminal exploitation

This is where a victim of modern slavery is compelled by the perpetrator to commit offences. This could include drug trafficking, drug cultivation or other criminality such as forced begging or shoplifting.

It could also include the criminal tactics of county lines and cuckooing. County lines is a term used for groups from cities who are supplying drugs to suburban areas, and market and coastal towns. These groups often use violence to drive out local dealers, then use children or vulnerable adults to move drugs and money.

Cuckooing is a crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for criminal activity.

Organ harvesting

This is the trade of human organs (typically kidneys or the liver), tissues, or other body products, where victims are trafficked for these organs to be harvested for transplant.

The person may agree to sell but are either not paid as agreed or not paid at all, or they could be deceived into being treated for an ailment that does not exist, or kidnapped and extorted having organs removed without consent.

Please note Indicators can be generic and present in different situations. It is important to remember that some people will exhibit different signs, or no obvious signs at all. Therefore, caution should be exercised in applying these too rigidly, and they should not be a substitute for professional judgement and professional curiosity.

Modern slavery: the local picture in East Sussex

In 2020, council leaders in East Sussex pledged their commitment to become a slavery-free community by 2030.

Sussex Police recorded a total of 663 offences between 2019 – 2020, an increase of 377 (132%) from the previous year. Overall reporting dropped by 23% between April 2020 and June 2020, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on referrals. Concerns were raised around exploitation in the car washing and nail bar industries, the fraudulent use of the furlough scheme and delays in the criminal

justice system. British nationals were the most likely to be exploited in relation to forced labour, with men and under 18s most at risk.

Between January 2018 and January 2021, 149 individuals from at least 20 countries were reported to Discovery, an East Sussex multi-agency partnership tackling modern slavery and human trafficking. Of those referred, 75 were men and 39 women, and in 18 referrals both were identified as potential victims. Forced labour across a number of sectors accounted for 73 referrals, 39 were linked to domestic servitude, and 29 to sexual exploitation.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics show that of those referred to the Single Combined Authority (SCA) following an NRM referral, victims from Albania, Vietnam and the UK were the highest within East Sussex. However, other data since 2018 highlights the increased prevalence of trafficking and sexual exploitation from Romania, and an overall increase in sex trafficking. This may be why referrals from Romanian and Chinese nationalities are currently higher in East Sussex.

Further information about UK modern slavery statistics is available on the GOV.UK website: [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, Quarter 2 2021](#).

Roles and responsibilities

Duty to notify

Under [Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), designated organisations, known as first responders, have a duty to notify the Secretary of State of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking.

The duty to notify provision applies to:

- Police forces.
- Local authorities ie. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) and district and borough councils.
- Gang Masters and Labour Abuse Authority.
- National Crime Agency.
- Border Force, UKVI and Immigration Enforcement
- Certain non-government organisations, which in East Sussex are The Salvation Army and Migrant Help.

The Home Office also encourages non-designated organisations to consider a voluntary 'duty to notify' as best practice.

Responsibilities of non-designated organisations

Certain agencies, such as the NHS, fire and rescue services and non-governmental agencies such as advice centres, charitable housing services and homeless charities are classified as non-designated organisations.

In order to meet the voluntary duty to notify, these organisations should convey suspicions about a potential victim to agencies which are designated, such as the police or local authority.

In addition to reporting their concerns directly to the police, non-designated organisations should always notify the local authority as well to raise a safeguarding concern.

Practitioners can call the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice on 0800 0121 700 or [report their concern online](#).

Responsibilities of designated first responders

First responders work for [designated organisations](#) and help identify and support potential victims of modern slavery.

First responder organisations have the following responsibilities:

- Recognise the indicators of modern slavery, and identify potential victims.
- Gather information in order to understand what has happened to the potential victim.
- If there are credible reasons to suspect a modern slavery offence, they should refer potential victims into the NRM via the online process (in England and Wales this includes notifying the Home Office if an adult victim doesn't consent to being referred).
- Provide a point of contact for the Single Competent Authority (SCA) to assist with the reasonable and conclusive grounds decisions, and to request a reconsideration where a first responder believes it is appropriate to do so.
- Update the SCA with any new information that comes to light via nrm@modernslavery.gov.uk, citing the NRM reference in the email subject.

How to make a referral – duty to notify (DtN) and National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

When a first responder organisation has reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking, it must notify the Home Office. You do not need to be certain that the person is a victim in order to make a referral.

There are two routes of referral to the Home Office under the Modern Slavery Act duty to notify. They are the NRM where consent is obtained and the DtN for situations in which the adult does not consent.

Please note, where the potential victim is, or appears to be, under the age of 18, consent is not required. Children's Services should be notified **immediately** to safeguard the child and an NRM should be made afterwards, once the child has been safeguarded.

The online portal process allows first responders to submit an NRM referral or DtN through a single online form, whether the victim is an adult or child. The form has been designed to adapt depending on the options selected, including identifying whether a case is an NRM or DtN referral.

For further information and to start the online form, see [Report modern slavery](#).

Obtaining the consent of the adult to enter the NRM

For an adult to provide their **informed** consent to enter the NRM you must explain, and you yourself must understand:

- What the NRM is.
- What support is available through it.
- What the possible outcomes are for an individual being referred.

You should also make it clear that information may be shared with or sought by the Single Competent Authority (SCA) which is the part of the Home Office which identifies and supports potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery through the NRM. The SCA gathers information from within the Home Office and from external organisations to decide if a person is a victim of modern slavery. Where an individual asks for support, the SCA may provide support for adult potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery in England and Wales through the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) which is currently held by The Salvation Army.

You should be aware that some potential victims may be unwilling to consent to a referral to the NRM initially. This could be for a range of reasons, including fear of authorities, fear of the unknown, or that the person may not immediately recognise themselves as a victim of modern slavery. There should be scope within your intervention for a referral to be revisited with the potential victim.

Some potential victims may be unable to consent to a referral because they lack capacity to do so. Where there is a concern that the individual may lack capacity to consent, you should follow appropriate safeguarding procedures and carry out an assessment of the individual's capacity under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. If the assessor agrees that the potential victim lacks capacity to consent, then a decision will be made in the best interests of the adult. The assessor will be asked to

confirm the best interest decision in writing if they consider that they should be referred to the NRM.

Initial needs and risk assessment

Designated first responders and non-designated organisation frontline workers, should aim to assess the initial risks and take immediate steps to safeguard the potential victim.

Risks to consider:

- Is the potential victim housed?
- Do they have an income?
- Are they still being, or likely to be, targeted or contacted by their trafficker?
- A potential victim may suffer from a wide range of health needs, physical and / or mental; do they require immediate medical attention (GP, NHS 111, A&E)?
- Might they have care and support needs requiring local authority intervention?

You should consider what immediate steps need to be taken to ensure their safety or meet their immediate needs. In all cases of suspected modern slavery, this should include swift notification to the police and local authority. In an emergency, call 999. Where the potential victim is not at immediate risk of harm, but remains at risk and in need of safeguards, you should contact 101.

The role of the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) in East Sussex

This role is undertaken within a variety of agencies in East Sussex including East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police and district and borough councils. Non-designated organisations, such as the NHS, also have a SPoC-trained modern slavery lead.

The SPoC role includes being a named contact within the organisation, understanding the relevant internal and external pathways, policies and procedures, and providing advice, guidance and signposting.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

By referring a case to the NRM, the potential victim may get access to support, and a formal decision will be made regarding whether they are a victim of modern slavery on the balance of probabilities. The NRM ensures victims receive

appropriate protection and support. This is provided by public bodies such as law enforcement agencies, the Home Office and local authorities who work together.

All referrals to the NRM should also be referred to the police. This is because a potential victim of modern slavery is a potential victim of a criminal offence.

Designated investigators, such as the police, are responsible for investigating the case. Agencies with additional information are expected to update the Single Competent Authority (SCA). The SCA will collect, collate and comment on material supplied to them and provide a determination based on that material.

Decisions are made in two stages:

- **Stage 1** Reasonable Grounds (RG) decision – suspected but not proven.
- **Stage 2** Conclusive Grounds (CG) decision – on the balance of probabilities.

Stage 1 – Reasonable Grounds (RG) decision

For RG decisions, a caseworker will look at the potential victim's case within five working days, whenever possible, and decide if there are reasonable grounds to believe they are a victim.

Cases that do not meet the criteria will be closed at this stage unless there is a request for a reconsideration. No further accommodation or support will be available through the NRM. This is why the SCA must be provided with the most accurate and comprehensive material available. An incomplete referral or one submitted with assumptions can result in the wrong determination being made.

You should contact The Salvation Army on 0800 808 3733 if accommodation is required. However, please be aware that the potential victim may need to be found safe interim accommodation by the local authority whilst the RG decision is being made. This is because it can take on average 14 days for an RG decision to be made and The Salvation Army is not obliged to provide accommodation before then. The exception to this is where the potential victim is destitute or is in urgent need, subject to an assessment by The Salvation Army, they may be able to provide accommodation sooner.

If there are reasonable grounds, the case will be investigated in more detail before the SCA decides if there are conclusive grounds.

Stage 2 – Conclusive Grounds (CG) decision

A CG decision is made (at least) 45 calendar days after the RG decision was made. This is to allow the potential victim a period of recovery. They are eligible for support through the NRM during this time.

If a CG decision is positive, the victim will receive support for a further 45 calendar days so they can transition into other services. If the CG decision is negative, the potential victim will receive support for nine working days after the decision.

Guidance on working with adults who are at risk or a victim of modern slavery

When first working with a potential victim of modern slavery, it is important to consider the impact of trauma, and trauma-related practice. Responses to traumatic events can present in different ways and individuals who have experienced repeated complex trauma may not be able to recognise ongoing risk of harm to themselves or others. This, alongside possible symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other factors, can result in delayed disclosure or non-disclosures.

These individuals will need time to develop a trusting relationship through partnership working and the sharing of information, and be provided with the tools they need to work through and understand their trauma. The [Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct](#) is a resource to assist professionals to work with victims of modern slavery and human trafficking in a trauma-informed way.

The [statutory guidance for modern slavery](#) states that anyone interviewing a victim or potential victim of modern slavery should be aware of the impact of trauma on the interviewee, and consider the following:

- Victims of modern slavery should be interviewed in an appropriate way to avoid re-traumatisation. Interviewers and decision makers must not automatically draw negative assumptions if a victim cannot recount details of their experience when assessing credibility.
- It is not uncommon for traffickers and exploiters to provide stories for victims to tell if approached by the authorities. Errors, omissions and inconsistencies may be because their initial stories are composed by others and the victim is acting under instruction. They can also arise due to the impact of trauma, which can, for example, lead to delayed disclosure or difficulty recalling facts.
- Victims may have problems in dealing with direct interviewing, especially in contexts which seem to them to be adversarial.

The following is not an exhaustive list but can be effective when working with an adult at risk or a victim of modern slavery:

- Clear communication and use of interpreters when required.
- Active listening and building trust.

- Continuity, rapport, empathy, persistence and respect. Provide a consistent sense of calm, security and safety.
- Assessment and review of the adult's mental capacity in relation to modern slavery, if there is any doubt about the adult's ability to make specific decisions.
- Openness, honesty and communication about risks.
- Proactive working to engage and co-ordinate agencies with specialist expertise to contribute towards shared goals. Explain and be clear on professional roles and responsibilities.
- Professional judgement to establish who is the best placed person(s) to engage with the adult.
- Minimise the risk of re-traumatisation.

How to engage, assess or interview someone who is at risk of or is a victim of modern slavery

When agencies are in a position to talk to a potential victim, the following examples of questions may be helpful.

In any conversation with a potential victim, agencies should be trying to get a bigger picture of what has happened taking into consideration the whole situation.

- Are you forced to do things that you don't want to do?
- Are you worried that someone may hurt you or your family if you don't do what they want?
- Where are you living and who are you living with?
- If you wanted to, could you leave when you choose to? If you left with me today would there be any consequences?
- Do you know where your identity documents are kept and do you have free access to them?
- Before you arrived here what were you told you would be doing? Do you owe money for your trip?
- Is the work you are doing the type of work you expected to be doing before you arrived here?
- How did you arrive in the UK, and who did you come with and what is their relationship to you?

The Human Trafficking Foundation [Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards](#) provides further guidance on good practice regarding interactions with a potential victim.

The role of Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)

ASCH is a designated first responder organisation with the associated duties as described in [Responsibilities of designated first responders](#). In addition, ASCH will need to consider its duties under the Care Act 2014 and other relevant legislation.

Under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, ASCH has a statutory duty to co-ordinate enquiries into allegations of neglect or abuse of adults who meet the three key tests:

- an adult who has care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- may be experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse.

Modern slavery is a serious crime and, where the statutory criteria appear to be met, the Section 42 duty is triggered.

Where the adult does not meet the statutory criteria under Section 42 of the Care Act, the local authority is not required by law to carry out a safeguarding enquiry. However, the local authority may do so at its own discretion if it believes it is proportionate to do so, and it will promote the adult's wellbeing and support a preventative agenda. An allegation of modern slavery would warrant a response under safeguarding procedures due to the significant risk level.

Enquiries into modern slavery

A safeguarding enquiry into modern slavery will need:

- To recognise the sensitive nature and issues involved in working with adults who are potential victims of modern slavery, and who may be best to respond.
- To identify the person or organisation responsible for modern slavery, and enable the person experiencing modern slavery to achieve resolution and recovery.
- A shared and effective multi-agency approach between all relevant agencies, which includes the police, around co-ordination of risk, safety planning and criminal investigations.

- All agencies to uphold their duty of care responsibilities which includes fulfilling their statutory responsibilities under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- To work with the person at risk of modern slavery to identify, support and manage their expectations and focus on their desired outcomes. To consider welfare and prevention alongside any enquiry actions.
- To consider the breadth of remedies available to the person at risk of modern slavery. This includes a multi-agency approach to achieve a place of safety for the adult, once the NRM process has concluded or where the adult did not or cannot consent to the NRM (see [How to make a referral – duty to notify \(DtN\) and National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) for more details).

The role of Sussex Police

Sussex Police should **always** be informed about modern slavery cases, whether or not the adult has consented. This is because modern slavery crimes are serious organised crimes which the police are obligated to investigate where there are credible grounds.

When completing the NRM form, the first responder or frontline worker should explain to the victim that their case will be passed on to the police as they are a potential victim of crime. A referral to the police should routinely be done by the first responder organisation, and in the event the first responder omits to do this, the SCA will notify the police. The police will review the information and determine whether there is evidence to suggest that a criminal offence has been committed.

The potential victim is under no obligation to cooperate with the police to receive support through the NRM. However, the police may still contact them regarding the allegation, as well as the person who made the referral.

Sussex Police will assess an adult's vulnerability at the first point of contact through a face-to-face visit and visual assessment. A scored risk assessment is also completed, and this is graded as standard, medium or high. This assessment is recorded on the Single Combined Assessment of Risk Form (SCARF) and, where appropriate, usually in cases identified as medium or high, the SCARF is forwarded to ASCH for information and / or intervention. It is important to establish if the police have already completed an NRM referral when reviewing this information and seek their specialist support if required.

To report a crime or suspected crime to the police, please call 101, online at [Sussex Police – Report a crime](#) or by email: 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk.

In an emergency situation, call the police immediately on 999.

The role of the Cuckooing Multi-agency Partnership

Cuckooing is not a criminal offence under the Modern Slavery Act. However, it is a tactic used by those involved in the drug trade to keep their activities hidden, and it is a mechanism by which someone may be exploited. This could amount to modern slavery if the householder is being exploited by the person(s) using their address.

A multi-agency partnership has been developed to tackle cuckooing in East Sussex. The partnership includes Sussex Police, ASCH, the NHS, district and borough councils, the National Probation Service and a variety of provider services. Its aims and objectives include helping vulnerable adults by promoting their safety and wellbeing, preventing cuckooing, sharing information and promoting joint working between agencies.

Sussex Police aims to hold a strategy meeting within 48 hours for 'red' cases, which are those assessed as high and / or immediate risk of harm. Cases referred to this meeting, by the police or partner agencies via 101, will be discussed by the Cuckooing Multi-agency Partnership monthly. The meeting will:

- provide updates on actions taken and discuss any risks to the health and wellbeing of the occupants and neighbouring residents, and
- whether the occupants would benefit from further multi-agency support to address any underlying unmet care and support needs that are making them more vulnerable to exploitation.

These cuckooing meetings take place once a month in Hastings, which covers the east of the county, and once a month in Eastbourne for the west of the county. The meeting will usually be chaired by the respective locality Police Inspector in the Prevention Team.

The role of Discovery

Discovery is an East Sussex multi-agency partnership which aims to identify and share information about hidden crimes, including modern slavery, in the local area. The partnership, led by Sussex police and jointly funded, has 21 partners on board including non-government organisations.

Good sharing of intelligence and free discussion is one of the strengths of Discovery's multi-agency working.

The role of organisations providing healthcare

Whilst organisations providing healthcare (OPH), such as the NHS, are not designated first responders, CCGs and NHS providers have a duty to be alert to indicators of modern slavery and act in line with national guidance.

The NHS may be one of the first agencies to come into contact with potential victims of modern slavery. Therefore, health providers play a crucial role in the identification, treatment and sensitive management of potential victims. All staff should be aware of the signs of modern slavery and know how to refer their concerns to the police and ASCH.

It is expected that each OPH will have a Safeguarding Lead, and this individual will also be a contact for issues relating to modern slavery and will promote awareness locally. **Any notification to a local Safeguarding Lead does not negate the requirement to notify a designated first responder and / or 999 in the case of an emergency.**

Spotting the signs of modern slavery within a healthcare setting is not always easy. The potential victim may attend a healthcare setting independently, or they may be brought by the person who is exploiting them.

It should be acknowledged that many potential victims struggle to access the healthcare services they need. Barriers to access might be their lack of documentation to register for primary care, language barriers, the presence of the exploiter, lack of autonomy or practical ability to access 9.00 am to 5.00 pm services. If the potential victim does manage to access a healthcare setting, it is possible that they may not be able to return to the same setting or be able to return at all. Providers should be aware of these issues and seek to mitigate these risks by attempting to address the potential victim's immediate clinical needs at the time they attend.

Further guidance and principles for NHS workers can be found in Annex C, section 12.43 of the [Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance](#).

The role of The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army currently holds the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract to manage the support of adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales.

The Salvation Army coordinates the specialist support for adult victims of modern slavery who:

- (a) consent to being referred into the NRM, and
- (b) receive a positive 'reasonable grounds' decision, or
- (c) are awaiting a 'reasonable grounds' decision but are destitute and in immediate need of support.

It is good practice for the lead practitioner to immediately alert The Salvation Army to the fact they have identified a potential victim and may be in touch at a later date if the victim agrees to being referred into the NRM. This helps The Salvation Army to prepare their services as effectively as possible.

Their confidential referral helpline **0800 808 3733** is available 24/7.

Further information about The Salvation Army's role in relation to modern slavery is available on their website: [The Salvation Army – Modern slavery](#).

The role of district and borough councils

A person who is a victim of trafficking or modern slavery may have a priority need for accommodation if they are assessed as being vulnerable according to section 189 (1) (c) of the Housing Act 1996. When assessing the victim, the housing authority should take into account advice from specialist agencies providing services to the person.

Section 188 (1) of the Act requires housing authorities to ensure that accommodation is available for an applicant if they have reason to believe the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need. If housing authorities believe an individual may be vulnerable as a result of being a victim of modern slavery following a referral to the NRM, they should ensure that accommodation is available while they are waiting for an initial 'reasonable grounds' decision.

There will be a number of accommodation options for victims of modern slavery. Housing authorities should consider which is most appropriate for each person on a case-by-case basis taking into account their specific circumstances and needs. This will include any special considerations relating to the person or their experiences that might affect the suitability of accommodation.

When there is no other option but to accommodate the person in an emergency hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation, the accommodation may need to be gender-specific as well as have appropriate security measures depending on the person's needs and circumstances, alongside any risks which include risk of violence, racial harassment and risk of being re-trafficked.

Authorities should, as far as is practicable, aim to secure accommodation within their own district, but also recognise there can be benefits for the person to be accommodated outside of the district. This could occur in cases of modern slavery or trafficking where the person, or a member of their household, is vulnerable to further exploitation and needs to be accommodated outside the district to reduce the risk of further contact with the perpetrator(s).

The government has produced a [homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#) which provides further guidance.

Recourse and no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

You should ensure the immediate safety and welfare of a potential victim irrespective of their immigration and NRPF status.

Primary care and emergency NHS treatment is not classed as a public fund for immigration purposes and can be accessed by a person regardless of their immigration status, including a person who is subject to NRPF. Most types of secondary and community NHS healthcare are chargeable to people who are considered to be ‘overseas visitors’, unless an exemption applies. A person identified or suspected as being a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking comes under these exemptions. This is also extended to the potential victim’s children, if they are under 18, and their spouse or civil partner, as long as they are lawfully present in the UK.

For more information about how a person’s immigration status affects their entitlement to NHS primary and secondary care in England, see [Public Health England’s comprehensive migrant health guide](#).

In relation to safeguarding concerns, ASCH has a safeguarding duty under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, irrespective of a person’s eligibility for care and support under the Care Act. It also has a duty to undertake a Section 9 needs assessment, where there is an appearance of need.

Support for potential victims with recourse to public funds

If a potential victim has recourse to public funds, is not at risk remaining in the area and is using services in the local community, then the local authority should seek to house the victim in the borough.

Support for potential victims with no recourse to public funds

If the potential victim has no recourse to public funds, and has agreed to go into the NRM, then accommodation and services may be provided by The Salvation Army. In certain cases of clear destitution or urgent need, this can be prior to a ‘reasonable grounds’ decision, subject to an assessment by The Salvation Army.

However, if the potential victim has NRPF and doesn’t want to go into NRM accommodation or needs more time to agree to a referral into the NRM, then accommodation can still be provided by the local authority using its powers.

If an adult who appears to have care and support needs, including those with no recourse to public funds, presents to ASCH with an urgent need, the department will consider meeting those needs in line with Section 19(3) of the Care Act 2014 whilst assessments are carried out. ASCH will also assess whether it is necessary to provide accommodation and / or subsistence in order to meet the potential victim’s eligible needs.

The [NRPF Network](#) provides more information about how immigration status affects eligibility for public funds and other services.

Appendix 1: Case example

Adina, a Romanian woman in her late 20s, arrived in the UK on her own initiative. Adina was recruited by an employment agency for which she had to pay a joining fee. The agency moved her to Croydon, and took her passport to send to the Home Office for registration. After several months she hadn't received her passport back and without it she was unable to prove her identity in order to claim benefits, and therefore she felt unable to leave the agency.

Adina regularly worked 16 hour shifts in factories, and was threatened with losing her job and accommodation if she refused shifts. She was driven to work in East Sussex with other men and women. She was paid poorly, or not at all owing to frequent deductions from her wages for transportation and other unknown charges. When she queried this, she was again threatened with losing her job and accommodation, which she shared with several others. She was accommodated in a run-down property and shared a bedroom with several men and women.

Adina felt trapped by her circumstances, her English was limited, and she did not know how to access support. Consequently, her mental wellbeing was adversely affected, and her physical state deteriorated due to the poor living conditions.

Following a serious accident at the factory, Adina presents to a local Accident & Emergency department. She was accompanied by a male who aroused the suspicions of the nursing staff as he appeared to be controlling and unwilling to leave her, and was keen for her to be 'patched up' quickly so they could leave. Adina appeared to be unkempt and malnourished, and afraid of the male.

Nursing staff sought to see Adina alone and contacted security to assist when the male refused to leave. Realising her English was poor, they arranged for an interpreter. Following discussions with Adina, the nursing staff felt that she appeared to be a potential victim of modern slavery. Adina presented as very scared, and oscillated in her views about whether she wanted the involvement of support services.

Examples of actions that could be taken (this is not exhaustive):

- Nursing staff to meet the immediate health needs of Adina and consider other immediate safety concerns.
- Nursing staff to report their concerns about modern slavery to the police, a first responder organisation.

Note Adina's consent is not required to make this report.

- Nursing staff to contact ASCH to raise a safeguarding concern given Adina appears to be a potential victim of modern slavery.
- The police to arrange to visit Adina on the ward and, with the support of an interpreter, to interview her. If they have credible grounds to do so, they

should discuss a referral to the NRM with Adina. If consent is not obtained, a DtN should be made. The police will take the lead on any criminal investigation.

- ASCH to undertake a Section 42 safeguarding enquiry and consider any other duties under the Care Act.
- ASCH or nursing staff to fulfil their duty, under the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#), to refer Adina to the local housing department to notify them that she is homeless. Housing to undertake an assessment to ascertain her priority need.
- Housing or ASCH to consider accommodating Adina whilst a 'reasonable grounds' (RG) decision is being made.
- The Salvation Army to accommodate Adina following a positive RG decision.

Appendix 2: Key contacts

East Sussex County Council

To report a safeguarding concern for an **adult** you suspect to be a potential victim of modern slavery, contact **Health and Social Care Connect**:

- Tel: 0345 60 80 191
- Email: HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Online: [East Sussex County Council – Report a concern about an adult](#)

To report modern slavery, or any safeguarding concerns for a **child**, who is or appears to be under the age of 18 years, you should immediately contact Children's Services through the **Single Point of Advice (SPOA)**:

- Tel: 01323 464222
- Online: [East Sussex County Council – Contacting the Single Point of Advice](#)

Sussex Police

Sussex Police should be contacted in the first instance on 101.

- Tel: 101
- Email: 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk

For additional safeguarding concerns, consultation with MASH may be required.

Discovery – East Sussex

- Email: Discovery@sussex.pnn.police.uk

This email is only monitored Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm.

Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority

- Report problems: 0800 432 0804
- General office enquiries: 0345 602 5020
- Email: intelligence@gla.gov.uk

The Salvation Army confidential referral helpline

- Tel: 0800 808 3733 (24 hours)
- Email: MST@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Online: [The Salvation Army – Modern slavery](#)

Migrant Help helpline

- Tel: 01304 203977
- Out-of-hours: 07766 668781

Modern slavery helpline

- Tel: 08000 121 700 (24 hours)

Sophie Hayes Foundation

- Website: [Sophie Hayes Foundation](#)

The Links Project

- Website: [Hastings Voluntary Action – Links Project](#)

Trading Standards

- Tel (public number): 0345 6080197 (Monday – Friday 9.00 am to 5.00pm)
- Email: trading.standards@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Online: [East Sussex County Council – East Sussex Trading Standards](#)

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

- Tel (in an emergency): 999
- Tel (non-emergency): 0303 999 1000
- Email: enquiries@esfrs.org

Appendix 3: Additional resources

Human Trafficking Foundation and Anti-Slavery London Working Group: [Adult Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities](#)

University of Nottingham Rights Lab and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner: [Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit](#)

Home Office: [Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales](#)

Home Office leaflet for victims of modern slavery: [Support for victims of modern slavery](#)

Home Office: [Modern slavery awareness booklet](#)

Local Government Association and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner: [Modern slavery: a council guide](#)

Modern Slavery Act: [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

Human Trafficking Foundation: [The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards](#)

Royal College of Nursing: [Modern slavery and human trafficking](#)

[Sophie Hayes Foundation](#)

Sussex Police: [Modern slavery](#)

Stop the Traffik: [Human trafficking](#)

Helen Bamber Foundation: [The trauma-informed code of conduct for all professionals working with survivors of human trafficking and slavery \(TiCC\)](#)

University of Nottingham: [Rights Lab](#)