



THE CLEWER
• INITIATIVE

MODERN SLAVERY AWARENESS TRAINING: Participant's guide

This guide accompanies the **Modern Slavery Awareness Training** delivered by **The Clewer Initiative**. It contains the **key information, case studies, diagrams** and **resources** covered during the session. It is intended as a **reference document** to support your practice after the training and can be **shared within your organisation**.

SEE THE SIGNS? TAKE ACTION.



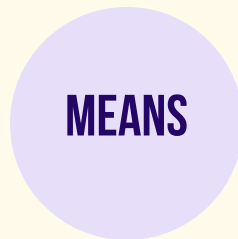
WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term covering a wide range of exploitation. Human trafficking sits underneath that umbrella.

The Palermo Protocol – a UN Treaty adopted in 2000 that defines, prevents, and combats human trafficking outlines that for someone to be recognised as a victim of human trafficking, there have to be 3 elements:



WHAT is done (recruiting, selecting, transporting, transferring, harbouring a person)



HOW it is done (force, fraud, coercion, deception, psychological control etc)



WHY it is done - ie for the purpose of exploitation (For forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or removal of organs)

For exploitation to be classed as human trafficking, the person needs to be moved from one location to another.

For children under 18, the “means” element is not required; any act of recruitment or transfer for exploitation qualifies as trafficking



IS IT THE SAME AS PEOPLE SMUGGLING?

People smuggling

- Voluntary travel (although many people fleeing war or persecution have no choice but to pay extortionate amounts of money to a smuggler and make a dangerous journey)
- Crime against the state as it involves violating immigration laws.
- Free to leave on arrival

Human Trafficking

- Involuntary exploitation
- Crime against the person as it violates human rights laws
- Not free to leave on arrival

Smuggling is for the person's (hopeful) safety. Human trafficking is always for the purpose of exploiting the person.



THE UK PICTURE: WHAT ARE THE NUMBERS?

122,000
TRAPPED

IN MODERN SLAVERY IN THE UK.*

23,411
TRAPPED

IN MODERN SLAVERY
IN THE UK.

22%
BRITISH

13%
ERITREAN

70%
ADULTS

74%
MALE

*The Global Slavery Index estimates that there are around 122,000 people in slavery in the UK at any one time. In 2025, Home Office statistics showed that 23,411 people were identified as potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking – the highest annual number since they began tracking this in 2009. The most common nationality referred in 2025 was British (22%; 5,110), the second most commonly referred nationality was Eritrean (13%; 3,083) and third was Vietnamese (9%; 1,998). 70% adults, 30% children 74% male, 26% female.



TYPES OF SLAVERY

Forced labour: Being forced to work without being paid or paid very small amounts. It can be found in farms, construction sites, nail bars, car washes, cleaning, hospitality and the care sector. Sometimes living arrangements are tied to the employment and these can be very squalid living conditions.

Sexual exploitation: Men, women and children are exploited for sexual acts and includes brothels, pop up brothels, massage parlours, unsafe sex work and 'sex for rent' arrangements. Found in both cities and rural areas.

Domestic servitude: Usually private employers use people as unpaid or very low paid servants to do cleaning, childcare, cooking and other household jobs. People exploited in this way are often subject to coercive control and abusive behaviours from their employers. Some may be brought over on a worker visa which ties people to a single employer and is then used to control wages, restrict movement and push people into debt with illegal recruitment fees.

Criminal exploitation: Includes cannabis farms, forced begging, using someone else's benefits or other financial exploitation, county lines (young people are groomed to take weapons or drugs from one place to another) and gang related exploitation. This affects mostly young people.

Organ harvesting: People are promised payment for an organ and this is removed but the payment does not materialize and the surgical environment is unhygienic. Sometimes this procedure is done without consent. This can cause lifelong physical harm.

Cuckooing: Recently been made illegal which is a great step forwards. Cuckooing occurs when vulnerable people are targeted by criminals and gangs who use their homes for illegal purposes. This often affects elderly people or people with learning disabilities who believe the gangs to be their friends.

In 2025, forced labour was the most common type of slavery reported by adult victims whereas for under 18's it was criminal exploitation.



SPOTTING THE SIGNS



APPEARANCE

- Looks underfed
- Tired or untidy
- Acts tense, jumpy or withdrawn
- Clothing is repeatedly the same or not appropriate for work role
- May use alcohol and drugs
- Untreated injuries



LIVING CONDITIONS / ISOLATION

- Dirty, confined, or overcrowded accommodation
- Lives and works in the same location
- Possesses few or no personal belongings
- Appears unfamiliar with the local surroundings
- Does not attend appointments independently
- Seems to be under the control or influence of others
- Maintains relationships that are atypical, such as with a significantly older partner



TRAVEL

- Lacks official identification documents / may have been confiscated.
- Frequently dropped off or picked up during very early or late hours.
- Exhibits unusual travel patterns, with children being dropped off or picked up in private cars or taxis at odd times and locations.
- Seldom permitted to travel independently



RELUCTANT TO SEEK HELP

- Avoids making eye contact and may seem frightened.
- Hesitant to engage in conversation with strangers.
- Holds a fear of police or authority figures
- Uncertain about whom to trust or where to seek assistance
- Anxious about the possibility of deportation or violence against themselves or their family
- Limited proficiency in the English language



HOW DOES TRAUMA IMPACT PEOPLE?

Someone who has experienced exploitation may appear distrustful, anxious, forgetful or reluctant to engage. These behaviours are often survival responses rather than a lack of motivation or cooperation. Rather than asking 'What's wrong with this person?', trauma-informed practice encourages us to ask, 'What might this person have experienced, and how can I respond in a way that helps them feel safe?'

Trauma changes the way people think, feel and respond to the world around them. It is important to remember that there is no "typical" response to trauma – everyone reacts differently.

EMOTIONS

Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, numb, angry, sad or helpless

RELATIONSHIPS

Difficulty trusting others, withdrawing, avoiding relationships or support

THINKING

Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, confusion, negative thoughts

BEHAVIOUR

Changes in behaviour, difficulty coping, risk-taking, withdrawal or agitation

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Headaches, fatigue, sleep problems, digestive issues, chronic pain



HOW TO RESPOND IN A TRAUMA INFORMED WAY

“

Spend less time trying to figure out whether I'm telling the truth or not. Just listen to me and my story cos at that moment I just want to pour my heart out and hope that someone will believe me. I just want to know one person in the world will believe me. Ask me what I need. Don't act like a detective.

Lived Experience Contributor

”

✓ DO'S

Start from a point of belief

Follow Safeguarding processes

Make notes

Research

Gather information if safe

Listen

Offer choices

Call Modern Slavery Helpline:
08000 121 700

✗ DON'TS

Panic

Ask invasive questions

Over promise "Over promising causes another dent in the person's trust."

Use their accompanying person as an interpreter or approach employer

Give resources without context

Assume they know their surroundings

When you call the Modern Slavery Helpline you will speak to a trained advisor who will take down the details. You can give these details anonymously and in confidence. The advisor will check you or the person you are with are safe, will ask some questions about the situation and support you or them to find the next steps. It is free, confidential, open every day and available in 200 languages. If necessary, they will pass the information on to the police or other agency to investigate further.



HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR PROJECTS SAFE, INCLUSIVE SPACES?

“

I once walked into a foodbank and there was 3 men that was helping out people, they had scary faces I was the first in the row but they kept helping the people in the back and a lot of memories came back and I had to leave without a word, the way they looked at me scared me.

“Trust is built on actions not words.”

Lived Experience Contributor

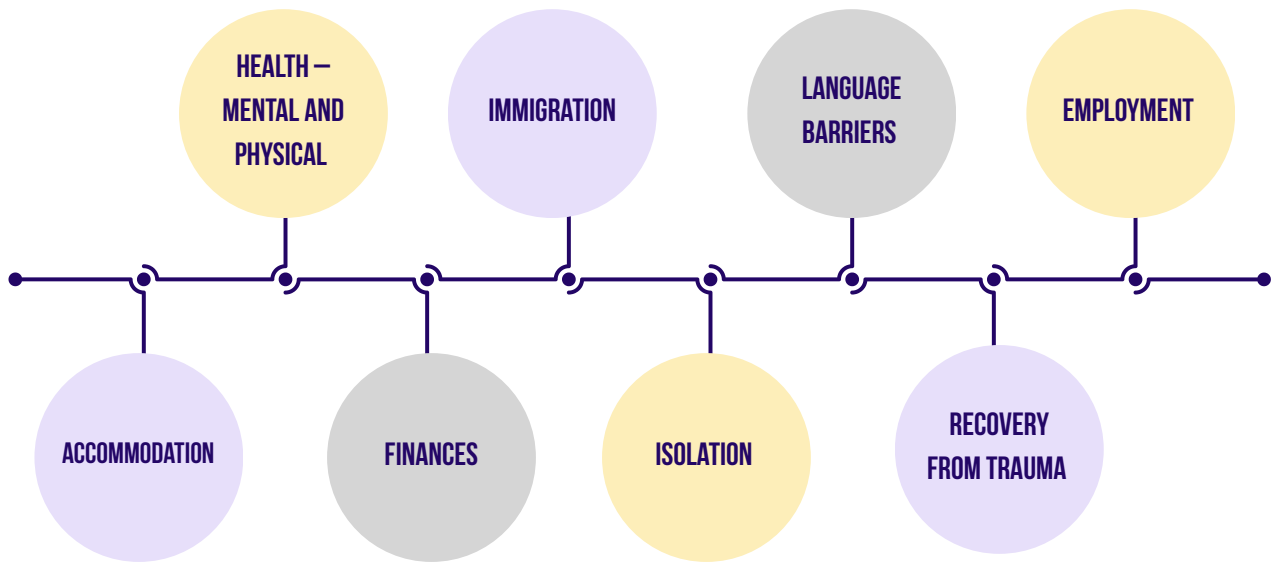
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- Treat every service recipient equally and with dignity
- Give space and time in recognition of barriers to seek help
- Recognise that English may not be their first language. Speak slowly, clearly and with simple language. Confirm information is understood.
- Recognising the gender of volunteer may impact if/how people share e.g. men may be more reluctant to share at all or women may not want to share anything with a male member of staff.
- View people as people first, and their exploitation experience as secondary
- Listen. Without blame or judgement or follow up questions.
- Avoid rushing people or completing (online) forms when talking. Give person dignity and respect, recognise that they are the experts in their own experience.
- Start from point of belief. Don't fact check or question their experience.
- Have a basic understanding of modern slavery and exploitation, what signs might be, where to go with concerns: 'it shouldn't be up to service users to explain the system'
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- Have a basic understanding and acceptance of other cultures and beliefs. Some service users may adjust their beliefs and cultures when they have lived in UK for long time, many won't. Cultural identity is very important and may be all a service user has.
- Recognise trust takes time and is relational. Service users may look at actions rather than words as have been let down by words and promises previously:
- Consistency – all people are treated equally and treatment the same each time
- Physical touch, such as a hug or pat on hand, can be appreciated, however for some people the opposite is true. Do not touch without permission.
- Allow service users to ask for what they want or need. For example, they may not always need show gel or might need extra milk.
- Avoid expectation that service users should be grateful for what they are offered. It might not be what they want or need. They may not feel grateful!
- Don't ask invasive questions to justify need for food
- Respect confidentiality



SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS (WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?)

For most people, leaving slavery and exploitation is just the start of their journey.



There is support available from charities across the UK but this, as like most charities, is limited. Some are location dependent and some are national charities. Egg Hope for Justice, Snowdrop Project, Ellas, Justice & Care, Hope at Home. They all offer different services and work hard to support the survivors they work with.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a government framework for identifying and supporting people who have experienced exploitation. It is a complex system but if someone is suspected to be a victim of trafficking they can be referred into the NRM by certain organisations called First Responders.

They will then be entitled to support such as medical care, legal support, a small amount of money each week, support to register with GP, claim benefits etc and sometimes accommodation in a safe house. This support continues until the Home Office have made a decision on whether they believe that person to be a victim of trafficking or not.

For many survivors, recovery and rebuilding their lives can take years and the best support is long term.



SUPPORT FOR YOU

If we work alongside people who have experienced trauma, we are vulnerable to experiencing vicarious trauma (also known as compassion fatigue and secondary trauma) ourselves.

“ Survivors can tell their stories more readily and comfortably if staff and volunteers are well supported.
Lived Experience Contributor ”

This can show up in different ways but can include:

EXHAUSTION

LOW MOOD

LOSS OF
CONFIDENCE

FEELING
ISOLATED

FEELING
DISILLUSIONED,
HOPELESS

CHANGES IN
WORLDVIEW

BYSTANDER
GUILT

INCREASED
SENSITIVITY TO
VIOLENCE



It is important we recognise this and look out for it in ourselves and each other.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

EMERGENCIES: 999

NON-EMERGENCY: 101

MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE: 08000 121700

www.modernslaveryhelpline.org