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2021 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery

October 2021



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2021 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery

October 2021

Contents

Home Secretary Foreword	6
Executive Summary	8
Chapter 1 – Modern slavery in the UK	11
Chapter 2 – UK’s Response to Modern Slavery	15
1) LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OPERATIONAL RESPONSE	15
Prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for modern slavery	
2) PREVENTION	23
Preventing people from engaging in modern slavery, either as victims or offenders	
3) TRANSPARENCY IN SUPPLY CHAINS	26
Protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and increasing safeguards and resilience against this crime	
4) VICTIM SUPPORT AND IDENTIFICATION	30
Reducing the harm caused by modern slavery through improved victim identification and enhanced support	
5) INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT	38
International responses to modern slavery and upstream prevention	
Annex A: UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery – Data Tables	41

Home Secretary Foreword

Slavery has not gone away.

It is horrendous to contemplate the fact that this despicable crime endures. Eradicating modern slavery is a moral imperative and a continued priority for the UK Government.

We work closely with law enforcement, the criminal justice system, business, civil society, local government, and the health and welfare sectors. We invest heavily in research. We have taken a lead with international partners to help end this evil trade that crosses borders. During our G7 Presidency, members agreed to joint action on forced labour in global supply chains and reaffirmed their commitment to upholding human rights and international labour standards.

Businesses as well as public bodies must take responsibility for eliminating modern slavery in their supply chains – and we have stepped up our work with businesses and the public sector to root it out. More than 21,000 organisations have uploaded statements to the Government's registry of modern slavery statements on GOV.UK since its launch on 11 March earlier this year. This is a significant step forward in transparency of supply chains.

For the first time, every ministerial government department will publish its own modern slavery statement, demonstrating our commitment to transparency.

The Home Office has invested more funds this year in the Police Modern Slavery response, bringing the total investment to £15 million since 2016. This funding has driven an increase in the number of modern slavery investigations and operations.

The Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service now covers in total two-thirds of all local authorities across England and Wales, which is a key milestone in the National Referral Mechanism Transformation Programme.

The legislative framework for our New Plan for Immigration is the Nationality and Borders Bill. Both have been introduced this year. They include new measures to ensure modern slavery victims are identified and supported as quickly as possible.

The UK has led the way on modern slavery. The first modern slavery strategy was published in 2014, followed by the landmark 2015 Modern Slavery Act, which has been emulated in several countries. Since the introduction of this ground-breaking legislation, much progress has been made, but the nature of modern slavery has changed significantly, as has our understanding.

The number of potential victims referred to the NRM has risen from 2,340 in 2014 to more than 10,000 in 2020. The profile of victims and the worst threats have also changed, with labour and criminal exploitation now the most prevalent forms of modern slavery identified in the UK.

The proportion of child and male victims has also increased.

We are already transforming our approach to modern slavery. I committed in the New Plan for Immigration to conduct a review of the 2014 Strategy, with a view to producing a new strategy in 2022, that builds on the progress we have made, is responsive to new realities, and which can take us even further in the fight to end slavery.



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary

Executive Summary

0.1 The annual report covers key developments across the UK in modern slavery in the period October 2020-end of September 2021.

0.2 Chapter 1 summarises the strategic response to modern slavery in the UK and current modern slavery trends. A review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy for England and Wales is underway to develop a revised strategy, whilst a new strategy was published in Northern Ireland in May 2021.

0.3 2020 was the first time that a year-on-year increase in the number of potential victims referred to the NRM for modern slavery was not seen, thought to be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. In total, 10,613 potential victims were referred to the NRM. 48% of those were adults, a decrease on 2020, and 47% were children, an increase on last year. As in 2019, the most common nationality of potential victims in 2020 was UK nationals, accounting for 34% (3,560) of all referrals. The most common forms of exploitation reported were labour exploitation for adults and criminal exploitation for minors.

0.4 Chapter 2 summarises the UK's response to modern slavery under five key areas of work:

- Law enforcement and operational response
- Prevention
- Transparency in Supply Chains

- Victim Support and Identification
- International engagement and upstream prevention

Highlights over the last year include:

Law Enforcement

0.5 There has been a continued uplift in operational activity and recorded crime across the UK. The number of live police operations has increased since the Modern Slavery Act became law from 188 in December 2016 to at least 3335 in August 2021. There were 8,730 modern slavery offences recorded by the police, a 5% increase from 8,354 in the year to March 2020 in England and Wales.

0.6 The Home Office has continued to fund the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme to build police capability which has made some notable progress in the last year, including training 324 Victim Liaison Officers to safeguard victims in the criminal justice system, whilst improving the chances of achieving successful prosecutions. The National Crime Agency has continued to lead nationwide multi-agency activity via Project Aidant.

0.7 In terms of prosecutions, there has been a 20% increase in referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in England and Wales, which have resulted in charge, (from 427 to 476 pre-charge decisions). Whilst the number of completed cases declined during the year, as well as the total number of completed

prosecutions due to Crown Courts being closed during the pandemic, the conviction rate of these cases increased from 71.9% in 2019 to 73.8% in 2020.

0.8 In June 2021, the Government committed to establish a Single Enforcement Body for employment rights to better protect vulnerable workers and create a level playing field for the majority of employers complying with the law.

Prevention

0.9 The Home Office continued to work with the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre to invest in research to strengthen the evidence base on what works to prevent modern slavery. Through small grants funding to Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office has funded a number of prevention activities such as social media campaigns and awareness raising activities, as well as continuing to work with the National Crime Agency (NCA) to prevent offenders from exploiting Adult Services Websites. The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) has also continued to work to prevent exploitation through standardising training, raising awareness, and increasing reporting.

0.10 The Home Office announced its intention to create a Modern Slavery Prevention Fund. The fund will support targeted prevention interventions to help build the evidence base around preventing modern slavery.

Transparency in Supply Chains

0.11 The Government has taken forward a number of significant measures to strengthen Section 54 of the 2015 Modern Slavery Act, including by committing to introduce financial penalties for organisations which fail to meet their statutory duties to publish modern slavery annual statements. These measures require legislative change and will be introduced when Parliamentary time allows.

0.12 In March 2021 the Government launched the landmark modern slavery statement registry, which is a significant milestone in the

Government's commitment to improve transparency in supply chains. Uptake has been extremely strong with over 21,000 organisations covered by the statements submitted so far.

0.13 The Government has continued to work with business to encourage best practice, including through the Business Against Slavery Forum, which the Home Secretary chaired in June 2021.

0.14 In regard to the public sector, ministerial government departments will soon publish their first modern slavery statements, setting out how they are addressing modern slavery risks in their supply chains. This is a significant step forward and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to greater transparency. The Government also launched an [e-learning course](#) for public sector commercial staff on practical steps they can take to identify and mitigate modern slavery risks.

Victim Support and Identification

0.15 Governments across the UK continued to provide specialist support and advocacy services for victims of modern slavery throughout this year.

0.16 In March 2021 the New Plan for Immigration (NPI) proposed a series of measures to ensure potential victims of modern slavery are identified as quickly as possible, whilst tackling potential misuse of the system. Following a public consultation, these measures were introduced to Parliament in July 2021 as part of the Nationality and Borders Bill. The NPI included a number of non-legislative measures including a pilot for mental health provision, and trialling ways to encourage victim engagement in the criminal justice system.

0.17 The Home Office has continued to work to strengthen the tools and resources available to First Responder Organisations, including through the development of an e-learning module focused on safeguarding child victims.

0.18 Work has continued to strengthen decision making within the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). 200 new staff have been recruited to the

Single Competent Authority (SCA) to reduce decision making times. An evaluation has also been conducted of the role of independent Multi-Agency Assurance panels, which have the role of quality assuring the SCA decision making.

0.19 With regards to children, Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) have been rolled out to cover two-thirds of local authorities in England and Wales, to provide an independent source of advice and support to victims. Data on the numbers of children referred to ICTGs is provided in the report. A pilot has also been launched to explore whether determining if a child is a victim of modern slavery within existing local safeguarding structures is a more appropriate model for making decisions for children.

0.20 Child criminal exploitation referrals to the NRM have increased in 2020. The Government is investing significantly to tackle drugs misuse, supply and county lines, with an £40m for the financial year 2021/22.

0.21 In terms of supporting Adult Victims, the new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) went live on 4 January 2021, delivered by the Salvation Army. The contract aims to deliver a service which is needs-based and better aligned to the requirements of victims in England and Wales. The contract has introduced a number of new services including journey plans, and the recovery needs assessment process, as well as an independent inspection regime provided by the Care Quality Commission.

International Engagement

0.22 The UK government has continued to demonstrate leadership on modern slavery at an international level, including through the Modern Slavery Fund and other government modern slavery programming.

0.23 The Independent Commission on Aid Impact published a review of the Government's work to tackle modern slavery in the aid programme. The Government welcomed the review and accepted all the recommendations, in whole or in part.

0.24 The UK has used its influence at the multilateral level during its Presidency of the G7, to secure commitments to addressing forced labour in global supply chains and to reaffirm commitments to upholding human rights and international labour standards. In January, the Foreign Secretary announced a package of cross-government measures to ensure that UK private and public bodies are not complicit nor profiting from the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

Chapter 1 – Modern slavery in the UK

Introduction

1.1 Modern slavery is a complex, harmful, and largely hidden crime. In England and Wales, modern slavery is used as an umbrella term that covers several different forms of exploitation which can include human trafficking, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude.

1.2 This annual report covers activities in the period October 2020 to the end of September 2021. It covers activity in England and Wales and in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The report is structured around workstreams which reflect the breadth of the work across the UK: working with law enforcement to pursue this crime, measures to prevent modern slavery occurring, addressing modern slavery in supply chains, victim identification and support, and international engagement.

UK Strategic response

1.3 Across the UK, action is being taken to address modern slavery. In England and Wales, the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy and 2015 Modern Slavery Act have framed work in this area. However, as the nature of the threat has changed, the Government has committed to review the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy in order to develop a revised strategic approach by Spring 2022. We will be engaging with a range of stakeholders to hear their views to shape the development of the strategy. This will include

seeking the views of those with lived experience of modern slavery.

1.4 The Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive have separate strategies to tackle modern slavery but all the Governments across the UK work closely to ensure a coherent response.

Scotland

1.5 The Scottish Government Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy was published in 2017 and reviewed in 2020. The Scottish Government will shortly publish its fourth annual progress report on Strategy implementation.

Northern Ireland

1.6 In May 2021 the Department of Justice published its Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy for 2021-22. It builds on previous strategies by continuing to outline shared strategic outcomes, objectives and activities which are focused on:

- enhancing the operational response to PURSUE and disrupt offenders and bring them to justice.
- putting the PROTECTION and needs of adult and child victims at the centre of our response; and
- engaging partners across key services, business, non-Governmental organisations and the wider public in PREVENTING modern slavery.

1.7 It is anticipated that a three-year strategy will be developed from 2022-23 onwards. The strategy is a multi-agency collaboration, owned and delivered by members of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Task Force and the agencies working to address modern slavery and human trafficking.

Modern Slavery Trends

1.8 This section provides a brief overview of key trends and statistics on modern slavery in the last year.

1.9 In 2020 the Office of National Statistics published a [report](#)¹ setting out the challenges of producing an accurate measure of prevalence of modern slavery in the UK, given the hidden nature of the crime, the lack of definitive data sources and identifying an accurate methodology to quantify the data. Instead, this chapter provides an overview of statistics of potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which gives an indication of the nature of this crime over the past year.

1.10 In 2020, 10,613 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM; a similar number to 2019 (10,616)². This was the first time a year-on-year increase was not seen in NRM referral numbers, which is primarily thought to be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. Referrals fell sharply in the first two quarters of 2020 in line with the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions but increased towards the end of the year as national restrictions eased. Referral rates are likely to have been influenced by several factors, including lockdown measures within the UK meaning potential victims were less likely to interact with first responders, as well as reduced travel to the UK.

1.11 Adult referrals accounted for 48% (5,087) of all referrals in 2020, a decrease compared to 2019 when they accounted for 55% (5,852). On the other hand, referrals for child potential

victims increased from 4,547 to 4,946, accounting for 47% of all referrals in 2020 compared to 43% in 2019. Male potential victims (7,826) also increased as a proportion of NRM referrals, from 68% in 2019 to 74% in 2020.²

1.12 Despite some variation in quarterly figures throughout the year, overall, location of exploitation figures in 2020 remained broadly similar to 2019; the majority (63%; 6,716) of potential victims claimed exploitation in the UK and 26% (2,722) overseas only. During 2020, whilst all types of referral fell in quarter 2, referrals for overseas exploitation dropped substantially, before increasing sharply in quarters 3 and 4 as travel restrictions eased in the UK. Quarterly referrals for UK based exploitation remained comparably stable during the year.²

1.13 A change in recording of exploitation types means it is not possible to draw direct comparisons between 2020 and previous years. However, in 2020 criminal exploitation was the most common type of exploitation reported for child potential victims, accounting for 51% of child referrals (2,544), whilst labour exploitation was most common for adult potential victims (32% of adult referrals; 1,622). Despite the plateau in overall referrals in 2020, reported county lines exploitation increased by 31% from 2019, accounting for 15% of all referrals. The majority (81%) of county lines referrals were for male children (1,247).²

1.14 As in 2019, the most common nationality of potential victims in 2020 was UK nationals, accounting for 34% (3,560) of all referrals. The second most referred nationality was Albanian (15%; 1,638), followed by Vietnamese nationals (6%; 653). UK nationals were most often referred for criminal exploitation, whilst both Albanian and Vietnamese nationals were most referred for labour and criminal exploitation. Sexual exploitation was also commonly reported for Albanian nationals.²

1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020>

2 [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2020 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Decision making

1.15 The Single Competent Authority (SCA) made 10,608 reasonable grounds and 3,454 conclusive grounds decisions in 2020, which is broadly similar to the number of decisions made in 2019, though there was a slight decrease (4%) in the number of conclusive grounds decisions. The proportion of positive reasonable grounds decisions was 92% (slightly higher than 90% in 2019) and 89% for conclusive grounds decisions (82% in 2019). The average (median) time taken from a referral to a conclusive ground's decision, for decisions made in 2020, was 339 days (slightly lower than 345 days for decisions made in 2019).²

Duty to Notify

1.16 In 2020, 2,178 adult potential victims were reported to the Home Office via the Duty to Notify (DtN) process, a similar figure to the 2,164 received in 2019. It is important to note that a change in the recording process associated with the move to a new case work system means caution should be taken when comparing 2020 DtN figures with previous years. However, the most referred nationalities in 2020 were Albanian (16%; 331), Romanian (15%; 314) and UK (12%; 266) nationals whilst in 2019, Chinese nationals were most commonly referred, followed by Albanian and Romanian nationals. The most referred exploitation types were labour (35%; 737), sexual (21%; 443) and criminal exploitation (15%; 317), and most DtN reports were submitted by either government agencies (53%; 1,133) or police (40%; 852); both sets of figures are similar to 2019.²

Scotland

1.17 Section 38 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on specified public bodies to notify the Chief Constable of Police Scotland of a person who appears to be the victim of human trafficking or of slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour. As set out in the previous annual report, following a consultation on Duty to Notify in Scotland the majority of responses expressed support for Scottish Government proposals. Once in force, it will allow for the collation and processing of wider information about trafficking activity in Scotland not currently collected through the NRM or the criminal justice system. The implementation of section 38 has been delayed due to the response to COVID-19 and the impact this continues to have on public services.

Northern Ireland

1.18 Section 13 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 allows the Department of Justice to place a requirement on specified public authorities to make a notification if they come into contact with a suspected victim of modern slavery or human trafficking. There have been some delays in implementation. Preliminary work has started to scope, as part of the development of a longer-term Modern Slavery strategy, the potential for Duty to Notify provisions to be provided for in Northern Ireland. Scoping work is beginning shortly.

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC)

Dame Sara Thornton, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, has a UK-wide remit to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences and the identification of victims. The Commissioner's [Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#)³ identifies four priority areas.

Priority 1: Improving victim care and support

Over the past year, the Commissioner continued to focus on victim care engaging regularly with NGOs and supporting survivors of modern slavery. She has worked with the University of Sheffield and Public Health England to develop a public health approach to modern slavery and recruited a paid intern, who is a survivor of slavery, to lead a project focusing on mental health. The Commissioner provided a comprehensive written response to the Home Secretary in relation to both the New Plan for Immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Priority 2: Supporting law enforcement and prosecution

Work has focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 statutory defence, the role of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) and the development of financial investigation in cases of modern slavery. The Commissioner published the report [Financial Investigation and Modern Slavery](#)⁴ in March 2021. The Commissioner also contributed to the sentencing guidelines on modern slavery and continues to encourage training across the criminal justice system.

Priority 3: Focusing on prevention

Prevention has been a priority area for the Commissioner with a follow up report on forced labour risks and responses in the UK food business, significant industry engagement and extensive work in the financial services sector. She published a joint report [Preventing Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – an agenda for action across the financial services](#)⁵ and has followed this up with CEO engagement and collaboration with the Liechtenstein Initiative 'Finance against Slavery and Trafficking'. She convened NGOs in the UK and US to write to the G7 leaders calling for action on forced labour.

Priority 4: Getting value from research and innovation

The Commissioner has sought to encourage research that will improve the evidence base on modern slavery and used her convening power as Commissioner to help bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice. She has worked closely with the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, the University of Nottingham Rights Lab, the University of Liverpool, and St Mary's University.

A full account of the Commissioner's focus, activity and outcomes over the past year is recorded at [Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2020-2021](#).⁶

3 <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1329/independent-anti-slavery-commissioners-strategic-plan-19-21-screen-readable.pdf>

4 <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1586/financial-investigation-of-modern-slavery-march-2021.pdf>

5 <https://themisservices.co.uk/msht-full-report>

6 <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1642/independent-anti-slavery-commissioner-annual-report-2020-2021.pdf>

Chapter 2 – UK’s Response to Modern Slavery

1) LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

2.1.1 UK operational activity to tackle modern slavery, human trafficking, and labour exploitation, is driven by law enforcement agencies, criminal justice partners and arm’s length bodies across England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Key partners include the Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and equivalent agencies in Northern Ireland and Scotland, the National Crime Agency (NCA), Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs – National Minimum Wage/Living Wage Team and the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME).

2.1.2 The activity entails a range of operational and strategic tasks to gather intelligence, assess the threat, pursue, and disrupt offenders and identify and safeguard victims. This includes driving work through targeted intensifications, delivering training to frontline officers, as well as working with businesses and communities, to raise awareness about modern slavery and how to address it.

2.1.3 This year, a key challenge for law enforcement has been responding to the impact of litigation and evolving case law, which has meant agencies have had to adapt their operational policy to ensure our response fits with our legal obligations. The judgments from the European Court for Human Rights in the case of VCL and AN v UK and from the Court of Appeal in Brecani v R have highlighted the importance of victim identification. [The report](#)⁷ from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (published in May 2021) following the super-complaint by Hestia also looked at the role of the police in identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. The report recognised the progress that has been made since HMICFRS inspection in 2017 and made recommendations for improvements.

2.1.4 The UK Government will continue to work closely with law enforcement agencies to improve our response to modern slavery to ensure that it reflects the evolving nature and seriousness of the crime so that victims are safeguarded, and offenders are brought to justice.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-response-to-victims-of-modern-slavery/the-hidden-victims-report-on-hestias-super-complaint-on-the-police-response-to-victims-of-modern-slavery--2>

Policing Response

2.1.5 Over the last year, the law enforcement response to modern slavery has included greater collaboration across linked crime types, such as county lines and organised immigration crime to ensure there is a joined-up approach to identify victims and offenders.

Live police investigations and recorded crime

2.1.6 There has been a continued uplift in operational activity over the last year to tackle modern slavery, involving a range of law enforcement agencies. The number of live police operations has increased since the Modern Slavery Act became law, from 188 police operations in December 2016 to at least 3,335 in August 2021.⁸

2.1.7 More potential victims are being identified and protected due to a greater awareness and improved understanding of modern slavery. In the year to March 2021, there were 8,730 modern slavery offences recorded by the police, a 5% increase from 8,354 in the year to March 2020. The force recording the highest number of modern slavery offences was the London Metropolitan Police, accounting for 26% (2,282) of all offences. This was followed by West Midlands Police 8% (740) and Greater Manchester Police 5% (477).⁸

Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme (MSOIC)

2.1.8 The Home Office continued to provide funding for the MSOIC Programme (formerly the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Programme) over 2020/21. An additional £1.4m was given to the programme in 2021/22, bringing the total investment to £15m to support specialist capability within the police to tackle modern slavery and organised immigration crime, and to strengthen the criminal justice response.

2.1.9 The Programme is responsible for leading the policing response to modern slavery and organised immigration crime by building the capabilities to enable forces to improve their response and drive up prosecutions. It is run by a dedicated unit in Devon and Cornwall Police under the leadership of Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer, National Police Chief Council lead for Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime.

2.1.10 Over the past year, the Programme has continued to build upon previous work, with its efforts focused on protecting victims and prosecuting offenders. This work has resulted in an improvement in the level of activity from forces during an unprecedented year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Full details of the Unit's work can be found in its [annual report for 2020/21](#).⁹ Some of the key achievements of the Programme include:

- an increase in the level of police referrals to the NRM, 32% in 2020 compared to 26% in 2019
- an increase of 27% in police investigations
- an increase of 20% in police referrals to the CPS in the year to December 2020
- training 324 police officers and staff as Victim Liaison Officers who aim to ensure positive continued engagement and maximise safeguarding opportunities for victims, whilst improving the chances of achieving successful prosecutions
- over 6800 interactions led by regional co-ordinators, to support forces, and partner agencies, including investigations, training, joint investigation teams (international cooperation tool) and working closely with the PCCs on preventative work to improve support for victims

2.1.11 The Programme has also developed and supported work to improve standards, safeguard children and promote the use of enforcement agencies powers to encourage increased

⁸ Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit – Live Modern Slavery Investigations in UK Policing

⁹ <https://policingslavery.co.uk/media/2930/msoicu-annual-report-2021.pdf>

collaboration. Key developments this year included:

- The development of a report focused on “Improving Modern Slavery Outcomes” which identified the operating models used by the best performing police forces
- Modern Slavery Regional Coordinators produced a [National Enforcement Powers Guide](#)¹⁰, to support the continued collaboration between law enforcement partners and non-governmental organisations
- Operation Innerste, which aimed to improve the multi-agency safeguarding response to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

National Crime Agency (NCA)

2.1.12 The NCA delivers operational activity against high harm organised crime groups and continues to lead nationwide, multi-agency activity against the modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) threat via Project AIDANT. A wide range of law enforcement agencies contributed to 2020/21 AIDANT activity, including Immigration Enforcement, Border Force, HMRC, GLAA and UK wide police forces and ROCUs. Despite setbacks due to COVID-19, a number of AIDANT activities took place. These included activities focused on child trafficking, which aimed to enhance the NCA’s understanding of exploitation of both UK and non-UK nationals under the age of 18. Further activities focused on sexual exploitation, illicit finances, and labour exploitation in the context of COVID-19. In total, all AIDANT activity across 20/21 identified 428 potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking and resulted in a total of 94 suspects arrested.¹¹

2.1.13 The national Modern Slavery Specialist Tactical Advice Team provides expert knowledge, capability, and operational support to both the NCA and UK wide police forces. During 2020/21, the Tactical Advice team received a

total of 525 requests for tactical advice and supported 64 operations.¹¹ The Team also provided a number of training sessions to raise awareness on investigative strategies and how to report potential victims via appropriate services. The team collaborated with the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) and MSOIC to design and deliver a webinar that provided training on the Section 45 defence of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

2.1.14 This year the NCA made improvements to the Agency and Partner Management Information System, the national tool for capturing information and performance data. This has enabled data capture and analysis to be automated, improving operational activity, and enabling ‘poly-criminality’ to be recorded, where offenders are involved in more than one type of serious and organised crime offending. These changes have also allowed the NCA to better analyse and understand the impact of disruptions.

2.1.15 The NCA-hosted JSTAC (Joint Slavery and Trafficking Assessment Centre) continued to develop law enforcement’s understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking through the NSA (National Strategic Assessment), which made key assessments on the threat of modern slavery to the garment industry and the impact of the UK leaving the EU on modern slavery. This understanding was used by the NCA to drive delivery against the MSHT Strategic Action Plan, which draws together law enforcement activity.

Wales

2.1.16 Welsh Police forces continue to collaborate and fund the role of Human Trafficking Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) across Wales to identify and support victims of exploitation who fall outside of the NRM process, or to ensure that NRM referrals are submitted in instances where non-First Responder Organisations suspect exploitation, for example by Probation Officers

¹⁰ <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1579/national-enforcement-powers-guide-public-version-february-2021.pdf>

¹¹ NCA-held data, unpublished

working under Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

2.1.17 The Welsh Forces, together with the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), have focused activity on sexual exploitation facilitated by means of Adult Service Websites (ASWs). The TARIAN ROCU, which covers most of Wales (apart from North Wales), has funded licences for the ROCU and its constituent forces to use a web scraping tool in the analysis of ASWs that has identified and enabled mapping of sophisticated organised crime groups. A number of proactive investigations have been launched since the purchase of this tool. Also, working in tandem with the Welsh Government Landlord registration scheme under 'Rent Smart Wales', the ROCU has produced a pamphlet for distribution to its 47,000 registered landlords to raise awareness of the criminal use of property linked to sexual exploitation.

Scotland

2.1.18 Over the past year, COVID-19 restrictions reduced border movements and the visibility of potential victims of human trafficking. Police Scotland took forward a range of actions to mitigate the threat, risk, and harm of human trafficking, including Operation PERCEPTIVE which directly targeted labour exploitation in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors fishing sectors; more information is available at 2.1.51. In the year to March 2021, Police Scotland recorded 175 crimes of human trafficking or exploitation, compared to 236 in 2020.¹²

2.1.19 Human trafficking calls received by Police Scotland increased by 62% between 2019 and 2020. It is likely that this is due to improved recording and greater recognition that situations were linked to human trafficking.

2.1.20 In recognition of the highly complex nature of human trafficking crime, Police Scotland created a National Human Trafficking Unit (NHTU), and at its inception in 2020, increased the number of officers in the unit to include a multi-disciplinary Investigation Team.

The Unit investigate complex trafficking and exploitation cases and support a network of human trafficking champions and investigators based regionally throughout Scotland.

2.1.21 Police Scotland this year confirmed the secondment of a Justice and Care Victim Navigator to their National Human Trafficking Unit. The Navigator will pilot innovative engagement and support to some of the most vulnerable and traumatised victims, many of whom do not yet consider themselves to be in exploitation.

2.1.22 Since 2014, Vietnamese nationals have been the most frequently encountered nationality in the NRM in Scotland. To help address and understand the reasons for this, two Vietnamese Police Officers were seconded to Police Scotland for a 6-month period between October 2020 and March 2021 following detailed considerations and discussions between Police Scotland, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Home Office, National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security over an 18-month period. Despite a number of challenges, including COVID-19 restrictions which limited opportunities for the officers to travel and engage with other law enforcement professionals, the insight into Vietnamese culture, travel and migration patterns provided an invaluable and unique learning experience for Police Scotland.

Northern Ireland

2.1.23 The PSNI has had a dedicated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) in place since 2015 and in this reporting period has enhanced capacity in the Unit by significantly increasing detective resources to take account of the number and type of cases being reported and investigated. The PSNI's entire approach to MSHT is victim-centred with the need to identify, locate, and recover any potential victims and offer police help and support in line with current legislation. PSNI also aim to frustrate, disrupt, or dismantle the organised crime groups (OCGs)

¹² Police Scotland, recorded crime data

involved and detain or detect people involved in the trafficking of people.

2.1.24 During 2020/21, MSHTU conducted 133 screening assessments (a process to safeguard victims through early recognition and subsequent intervention). They also conducted 5 Warrant Searches and 66 safeguarding visits/non-warrant operations.¹³

2.1.25 In October 2020, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland published its report on how the criminal justice system deals with modern slavery and human trafficking in Northern Ireland. It made a number of strategic and operational recommendations which it is anticipated will be addressed by a more comprehensive, longer term strategy.

Increasing Prosecutions

Prosecutions, Convictions and Sentencing in England and Wales

2.1.26 In the last year, there has been an increase of 20% in police case referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) including cases referred for early investigative advice, which have resulted in charge. In total, 347 defendants investigated for modern slavery offences were referred by the police during 2020, increasing from 322 the previous year. A legal decision was provided, of which 259 defendants were charged by the CPS in 2020, increasing from 239 in 2019. This represents 74.6% of all legal decisions which resulted in a charge. This data is presented in Tables 1 and 2 in the Annex.¹⁴

2.1.27 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPS and the National Police Chiefs Council introduced an interim charging protocol in April 2020, aimed at prioritising and focusing demand, so that only the most serious cases were put into the courts system immediately. Table 3 in the Annex shows that during 2020, the number of completed “flagged modern slavery prosecutions” declined from 349 to 267; this

decline is attributed to the Crown Courts being closed or holding very significantly reduced trials, leading to a backlog of more than 54,000 cases (across all crime types) in England and Wales by January 2021. Of those cases that were concluded during this period, the conviction rate increased from 71.9% in 2019 to 73.8% in 2020.¹⁴

2.1.28 Bringing increasing numbers of evidenced prosecutions against criminals who exploit, has been successful in county lines cases, where children and vulnerable victims have not provided testimony, but the prosecution has instead relied on material downloaded from digital devices and cell site analysis, as well as other forms of covert surveillance to evidence the offences. These cases have resulted in significant sentences and prosecutors have successfully obtained Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders.

2.1.29 The CPS has delivered national training on the statutory section 45 defence under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as well as other non-punishment principles. Training has also been delivered to over 200 prosecutors dealing with high volume drug crime in Youth Courts as well as training legal trainers in every CPS Area to deliver this locally.

2.1.30 Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) are an effective way of investigating and prosecuting cases where traffickers operate across jurisdictions to recruit, transport and exploit their victims in different countries. By the end of 2020, the CPS was participating in 17 live JITs on modern slavery, involving five EU member states.

2.1.31 The number of individuals prosecuted and convicted in England and Wales between 2015 and 2020, where modern slavery or related legislation was classified as the principal offence is routinely published by the Ministry of Justice.

2.1.32 In 2020, 89 defendants were proceeded against under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 on a ‘principal offence’ basis. The number of prosecutions peaked in 2017 at 132 and

¹³ PSNI-held data

¹⁴ CPS, Case Management System

decreasing to 68 in 2019. Convictions peaked in 2019 at 40 and fell to a low of 10 in 2020.¹⁵ It is important to note that the latest year's trend will have been impacted by the pandemic as courts catch up with the backlog of outstanding cases resulting in a reduced number of prosecutions and convictions in the in the latest year. Arrests and prosecutions commenced in a specific year may not result in convictions until subsequent years due to the time it takes to investigate, gather evidence, and prosecute at court.

2.1.33 In 2020, on an 'all offence' basis,¹⁶ (i.e. taking into account the total number of offences a defendant is prosecuted for – both principle and non-principle offences) the number of modern slavery offences proceeded against peaked at 331, while the number of offences convicted fell to 49. This means that modern slavery was often a non-principal offence (accompanied by a more severe offence) or a second count of the offence (more than one modern slavery offence per defendant). The most common offences to appear alongside a modern slavery prosecution in the last three years were: supply and possession with intent to supply a Class A drug, money laundering and exploitation of prostitution.

2.1.34 Since the Modern Slavery Act came into effect in 2015, of the 88 offenders sentenced where modern slavery was the principal offence, 74 (84%) received an immediate custodial sentence. Of all offenders sentenced to immediate custody for this offence in 2020, the average custodial sentence length was 36.2 months.¹⁴

2.1.35 In August 2021, the Sentencing Council published new dedicated [sentencing guidelines](#) for sentencing offenders convicted of modern slavery offences in England and Wales. The new guidelines, which come into effect on 1 October 2021, aim to promote consistency of approach in this area of

sentencing and help the courts pass appropriate sentences when dealing with modern slavery offences.

Scotland

2.1.36 In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) has maintained its structure of a national lead prosecutor for human trafficking supported by local lead prosecutors in each of the Sheriffdoms throughout Scotland. The national lead prosecutor is a senior member of Crown Counsel with extensive experience of prosecuting serious crimes in the High Court of Justiciary. All decisions in terms of the Lord Advocate's Instructions on Prosecution of Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation are made by the national lead prosecutor to ensure consistency and expertise in decision-making. Tables 4 and 5 in Annex A show the outlined number of individuals prosecuted and convicted of human trafficking offences in Scotland, broken down by the date the police report was received by COPFS.

2.1.37 In line with the commitments signed by the Lord Advocate and heads of other prosecuting authorities in 2016, COPFS has maintained its good relationships with the CPS and PPSNI. All three agencies met using video-conferencing technology in September 2020. Arrangements are being made for a meeting in 2021.

2.1.38 Since the implementation of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, eight Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Orders (TEPO) have been imposed on conviction as part of sentences for those convicted of human trafficking crimes. These orders place limitations on an offender for at least 5 years to prevent further offending and protect potential victims. A number of Trafficking and Exploitation

¹⁵ Ministry of Justice, Criminal Court Outcomes and Sentencing for Modern Slavery and related legislation

¹⁶ Basis i.e. the total number of offences a defendant is prosecuted for (principle offences plus non-principal offences).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987732/HO-code-tool-all-offence-2020.xlsx

Risk Orders (TERO) are also currently being considered for ongoing enquiries.

2.1.39 Scottish authorities continue to pursue the perpetrators of human trafficking and exploitation across national and international boundaries and have been involved in several Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) with other European Law Enforcement agencies and Europol. In one such investigation, 27 Romanian Nationals were arrested and charged with human trafficking and exploitation crimes in relation to sexual exploitation for prostitution. Over 30 victims were identified and safeguarded. Another operation resulted in the arrest of 3 Romanian Gangmasters and the rescue of 10 labour exploitation victims in North East Scotland.

Northern Ireland

2.1.40 During 2020/21, the MSHTU made 8 arrests for modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences, charged 3 persons with modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences, and reported 1 person to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences. In this financial year there were 8 convictions for human trafficking related offences and 2 persons were convicted of linked drug offences.¹⁷

Asset Recovery

2.1.41 Asset seizure is an important element of the UK's response to modern slavery, as the crime of modern slavery is often motivated by financial profit.

2.1.42 Annex A in the [Asset Recovery Statistical Bulletin](#)¹⁸ sets out data extracted from the Joint Asset Recovery Database (JARD), showing the value of the cash seizure and criminal confiscation orders relating to cases involving modern slavery in England and Wales in each of the last six calendar years.

Labour Exploitation

2.1.43 Over the last year, the Government has continued to take steps to strengthen its response to tackle serious labour exploitation.

Single Enforcement Body

2.1.44 Following a consultation, the Government committed in its response published in June 2021 to establish a single enforcement body for employment rights to better protect vulnerable workers and create a level playing field for the majority of employers complying with the law.

2.1.45 The Single Enforcement Body will provide a clearer route for workers to raise a complaint and get support, whilst also enabling the use of pooled intelligence to better target more coordinated and proactive enforcement action. We will use the experience of joint working and community engagement in Leicester to inform the development of the single enforcement body.

Leicester

2.1.46 As a result of the widespread allegations around labour exploitation in Leicester during the height of the pandemic, a multi-agency taskforce (Op TACIT) led by the GLAA was set up to co-ordinate law enforcement work to secure robust intelligence to enable appropriate enforcement activity. This year, the taskforce has continued to respond to allegations of labour exploitation and has visited over 300 premises to date.

GLAA Actions

2.1.47 Over the last year, the GLAA has for the first-time used Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders (STRO) to manage the behaviour of individuals under investigation for modern slavery offences. In August 2021, a GLAA-led case working in partnership with Leicestershire Police resulted in a prosecution. An individual was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment and was

¹⁷ Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland Case Management System

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/asset-recovery-statistical-bulletin-financial-years-ending-2016-to-2021/asset-recovery-statistical-bulletin-financial-years-ending-2016-to-2021#annexes>

issued with a 10-year STRO for modern slavery offences relating to supply chains, the individual is restricted by prohibitions including arranging or assisting in the employment, travel, or transport of another. In the last 12 months the GLAA identified 7728 potential victims, referred 92 potential victims of modern slavery into the NRM and commenced 253 investigations.¹⁹

Wales

2.1.48 The Welsh Government this year transferred the modern slavery portfolio into the Social Partnership & Fair Work Directorate as an expanded and further resourced modern slavery and workers' rights function. This move has been designed to strengthen the connections between tackling modern slavery and countering other forms of labour exploitation and societal inequalities, recognising correlations and interdependencies.

2.1.49 Work is ongoing to identify how Modern Slavery Regional Partnership Forums can be more strategically aligned with Regional Safeguarding Forums to maximise sharing of information and early identification of risks.

Scotland

2.1.50 Police Scotland launched a media campaign entitled 'Break the Chain' in March 2021. The campaign included TV advertising, national and local print media, social media, and an internal awareness raising campaign using #endlabourexploitation. The TV advert was supported by a webinar aimed at the business community hosted by SBRC and a web page ([End Labour Exploitation](https://endlabourexploitation.co.uk/)).²⁰ The campaign has so far resulted in two major enquiries into labour exploitation including Operation BARRAMUNDI which saw four arrests for labour exploitation in farming of Romanian nationals and is the largest labour exploitation safeguarding operation for Police Scotland to date. It is hoped that increased reporting of labour exploitation will continue as the campaign messages resonate with the target audience.

2.1.51 This year, Police Scotland undertook Operation PERCEPTIVE, directly targeting the Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing sectors. Officers visited over 50 premises, covering more than 5000 staff, and gathered information on 26 gangmasters with the aim of identifying potential victims of trafficking and potential exploiters. This resulted in three follow up multi-agency visits in association with the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority. The visits also served to improve the intelligence picture around labour requirements, sourcing, and human trafficking indicators. Nationwide Project AIDANT enforcement intensification periods carried this work forward into 2021.

¹⁹ GLAA-held data

²⁰ <https://endlabourexploitation.co.uk/>

2) PREVENTION

2.2.1 Prevention activity aims to stop people from becoming victims of modern slavery or committing modern slavery crimes in the first place.

Investing in research and evidence

2.2.2 This year, the Home Office has continued to work with the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre (MS PEC), an independent research consortium, funded by a government grant through UK Research and Innovation. The MS PEC has brought together academics, policy makers, NGOs and businesses to generate knowledge, improve collaboration and strengthen the UK's response to modern slavery. The Centre will increase our ability to understand and respond to modern slavery, based on evidence and research. The Home Office will continue working with the Centre and other partners to strengthen the evidence base underpinning our policy and operational response to modern slavery. This year the Centre has published eight research projects focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on modern slavery, awarded c.£1 million funding to five survivor support projects, and produced policy briefs on: access to legal advice and representation for survivors; the effectiveness forced labour import bans; and modern slavery and international development.²¹

2.2.3 Home Office officials have also participated in workshops and discussions led by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the University of Sheffield, and Public Health England on the opportunities afforded by a public health approach to modern slavery. A public health framework puts an emphasis on strengthening prevention activities and putting it at the heart of our fight against modern slavery.

Prevention interventions

Small Grants fund for Police Crime Commissioners

2.2.4 The Home Office provided funding to run a fifth round of the small grants for Police Crime Commissioners (PCC's), which was launched on 4 November 2020. The small grants fund was run through the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme and gave all PCC's in England and Wales the opportunity to bid for up to £3000 to deliver targeted prevention activity locally in response to their local threat profile of modern slavery. This opportunity was well received with 76% of PCC's applying to the grant round.

2.2.5 The majority of projects were awareness raising activities and educational initiatives, many as part of social media campaigns and all with a typology approach. Stand-out activities included online training for pharmacists to identify and report sexual exploitation, webinars for parents, carers and staff to identify child criminal exploitation with supporting resources, interactive online training for partners utilising a theatre company and an animated film for communities to raise awareness of domestic servitude.

2.2.6 This opportunity saw PCCs working together with their Regional Coordinators, Regional Single Points of Contact within their police forces, and their partnership networks to deliver innovative projects locally to make tangible impact within their communities.

Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority

2.2.7 The GLAA has continued to develop its approach to businesses to prevent exploitation by standardising training, raising awareness, and increasing reporting.

²¹ [Modern Slavery PEC | Home](#)

2.2.8 Home Office provided funding to GLAA to support the development of the Level 1 Award in Workers' Rights and Labour Exploitation to raise awareness of employment rights that are protected by UK law. The qualification, designed in partnership with Skills Education Group, offers a flexible approach for delivery in educational, community and workplace settings. An evaluation of the intervention is being conducted by the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab and the interim report is very positive. The qualification will be rolled out nationally in September 2021.

2.2.9 The Home Office also contributed funding to support the development of the Responsible Car Wash Scheme (RCWS), testing the effectiveness of voluntary licensing in a single local authority area. In June 2021, the RCWS awarded accreditation to two car wash operators in Slough. The accreditation requires the operator to consent to trade and trading standards, financial transparency, and corporate governance, providing safe and hygienic working conditions, protecting the environment, compliant and ethical employment practices, and prevention of worker exploitation. A podcast series designed to help hand car wash owners across the UK understand their responsibilities to workers has also been launched.

Adult Service Websites

2.2.10 The NCA has continued work to engage with Adult Service Websites (ASWs) to raise industry standards and prevent offenders from exploiting victims on these platforms. This has included monitoring ASWs activity and examining how offenders abuse the internet to exploit their victims and promote mitigations that can be implemented by industry.

2.2.11 The Home Office has funded prevention work to raise awareness of the risks and signs of sexual exploitation among users of Adult Services Websites. The results and evaluation from this campaign are currently being reviewed in order to understand any impact.

Modern Slavery Prevention Fund

2.2.12 As one of the non-legislative measures in the New Plan for Immigration, the Home Office announced its intention to create a Modern Slavery Prevention Fund. The Modern Slavery Prevention Fund will support organisations to deliver targeted prevention interventions that will help build the evidence base for where the greatest impact can be made.

Training and Awareness raising

2.2.13 In 2021, the Home Office has worked with the UK Modern Slavery Training Delivery Group to assist with the coordination of modern slavery training across various sectors. Home Office officials have also supported the Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse in developing their new training framework for practitioners working with child victims of human trafficking.

Scotland

2.2.14 In early 2021, the Scottish Government commissioned a fifth annual public awareness study to build on evidence from previous years on whether awareness is improving and what aspects continue to prove challenging. The survey has evolved since 2017 with additional questions added in 2018 and 2019. The continuing benefits of a public awareness survey will be assessed and, if deemed beneficial, the Scottish Government will consider whether the questions posed in the survey require a refresh.

2.2.15 During the early phase of the pandemic, the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance pivoted to ensure the provision of online training offers and these were well attended by professionals throughout Scotland. Moving the sessions online allowed a wider range of participation as they became more accessible to those in remote geographic locations across Scotland without the need for significant travel to a particular location. Learning from these sessions will support a wider assessment of training being undertaken across the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy.

2.2.16 Awareness raising among enforcement bodies, businesses, third sector partners and the public was carried out with media releases on various platforms and took place on Anti-Slavery Day and during the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.

Northern Ireland

2.2.17 Detectives from the PSNI MSHTU have delivered training to a number of public and private sector groups over this reporting period including: Northern Ireland Street Pastors; the Northern Ireland Prison Service; Financial Institutions; African Women Organization workshop; medical students at Queens University; George Best Belfast City Airport's Airport Safety Week; Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid event in Belfast; and medical staff at Downshire Hospital. These training events and engagements strengthened links with partner agencies, NGOs, and private sector businesses which in turn increases the overall level of skills, knowledge and contacts in areas that can be very relevant in identifying and investigating MSHT offences.

3) TRANSPARENCY IN SUPPLY CHAINS

2.3.1 This area of work aims to eliminate modern slavery in private and public sector supply chains to protect vulnerable people from exploitation. This activity seeks to improve the resilience of the UK and the wider global economy to modern slavery and increase awareness of and resilience against this abhorrent crime.

Strengthening section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

2.3.2 The landmark 'Transparency in Supply Chains' (TISC) provisions in section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 have driven a change in business culture, with thousands of organisations opening up about their supply chains and taking targeted action to mitigate risks.

2.3.3 In the Government response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation²², published on 22 September 2020, the Government committed to taking forward a package of changes to strengthen section 54, including extending the duty to publish modern slavery statements to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more, mandating the reporting topics that statements must cover and setting a single reporting deadline by which all modern slavery statements must be submitted to the Government modern slavery statement registry.

2.3.4 Building on this, on 12 January 2021 the Government announced plans to introduce financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements. In the Government response to the consultation on Establishing a new Single Enforcement Body for employment

rights²³, published on 8 June 2021, we announced that the Single Enforcement Body will have powers to impose the financial penalties against non-compliant organisations. Along with the wider package of changes to section 54 announced in the consultation response, the introduction of financial penalties will require legislative change and will be introduced when Parliamentary time allows.

Government modern slavery statement registry

2.3.5 On 11 March 2021, the Government launched the modern slavery statement registry, which was a key recommendation of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act and is a significant milestone in the Government's commitment to improve transparency in supply chains.

2.3.6 By submitting their statement to the registry, organisations can share the positive steps that they are taking to identify and address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. As well as submitting a link to their statement, organisations are able to provide a summary of their statement by answering [additional optional questions](#)²⁴ about their response to modern slavery.

2.3.7 Anyone interested in viewing statements can use the registry to search for organisations' statements and download the summaries they have provided.

2.3.8 Since launching, the Government has focused on encouraging organisations to publish their statements to the registry, ahead of mandating use of the registry as part of the

22 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919937/Government_response_to_transparency_in_supply_chains_consultation_21_09_20.pdf

23 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/991751/single-enforcement-body-consultation-govt-response.pdf

24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/process-for-submitting-a-government-modern-slavery-statement/process-for-submitting-a-government-modern-slavery-statement>

planned changes to strengthen section 54. In the longer term, the registry will provide a key tool for Government to monitor and drive compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act.

2.3.9 To lead the way for businesses and public bodies, the Government was the first organisation to add its statement to the registry and provide a summary of the steps it has taken to identify and address modern slavery risks in central government supply chains.

Working with businesses

2.3.10 The Government works closely with businesses to encourage best practice, understand the challenges businesses are facing and to learn from the private sector's experience in identifying and addressing modern slavery risks in supply chains.

2.3.11 Following launch of the modern slavery statement registry, the Home Office wrote directly to 16,000 organisations considered to be in scope of section 54 to invite them to submit their statements to the registry. Uptake has been exceptional, with over 6,250 statements covering over 21,000 organisations submitted to the registry on a voluntary basis so far, demonstrating organisations' commitment to transparency.

2.3.12 The Home Office is continuing its direct engagement with businesses to encourage uptake and to collect user feedback, which will be used to iterate and improve the service ahead of its use becoming mandatory.

2.3.13 On 16 June 2021, the Home Secretary and the Minister for Safeguarding met with the CEOs of the Business Against Slavery (BAS) Forum, a partnership between Government and 13 multinational businesses that are leading the way in their response to modern slavery. Ministers and business leaders discussed key issues facing businesses and potential opportunities for Government and business to work in partnership to accelerate progress in the

fight against modern slavery. The Government will continue to engage with the Forum, the wider business community, and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner as part of the ongoing development of the new modern slavery strategy.

2.3.14 To learn from the Forum's experience, in August 2021 BAS members provided feedback on Ministerial departments' draft modern slavery statements (see paragraph 2.3.16), along with civil society experts and academics, who were also invited to peer review statements.

Tackling modern slavery in public sector supply chains

2.3.15 Like businesses, the public sector has a crucial role to play in addressing risks of modern slavery in its operations and supply chains. The Government is committed to harnessing its £290bn spend on goods and services to prevent modern slavery and drive up labour standards in supply chains.

2.3.16 To meet the goals set in the Government modern slavery statement, ministerial departments will soon publish their first modern slavery statements setting out how they are addressing modern slavery risks in their supply chains. The Government has created a network of director-level anti-slavery advocates to oversee how ministerial departments are tackling modern slavery and enhance collaboration across Government.

2.3.17 The Government continues to deliver greater social value through its commercial activities and incentivising businesses to become more responsible and sustainable. Following the launch of the [Social Value Model](#)²⁵ (SVM), most new central government procurements need to take account of social value criteria in the award of contracts, including placing a minimum weighting of 10% of the total score on social value, to ensure that social value carries a significant enough score to be a differentiating factor in bid evaluation.

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>

2.3.18 The SVM includes modern slavery related questions and evaluation criteria, to help departments consider how best to assess a bidder's modern slavery due diligence processes when awarding contracts. The Cabinet Office has launched E-learning and trained over 1,500 staff in the public sector on the SVM.

Building modern slavery due diligence expertise across the public sector

2.3.19 In July 2021, the Home Office launched an [E-learning course](#)²⁶ for public sector commercial staff (at all grades) on the practical steps they can take throughout the commercial lifecycle to identify and mitigate modern slavery risks. This 2.5-hour course will help learners:

- Recognise how modern slavery can manifest in supply chains.
- Spot modern slavery risks in procurement and critically interrogate the assurances suppliers provide (such as social audits).
- Drive improvements in modern slavery due diligence to create better outcomes for workers.

2.3.20 We have also hosted and participated in virtual events reaching over 1000 public sector officials, to raise awareness and explore the key steps public sector commercial staff should take to tackle modern slavery in supply chains. To ensure we reach a wide range of public bodies, we have collaborated with NHS England, police forces, the Local Government Association and Electronics Watch, among others.

2.3.21 The Government developed the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#) (MSAT)²⁷ to help public bodies work with their suppliers to implement effective modern slavery due diligence. As of 31 March 2021, 1,877 businesses have completed the MSAT questionnaire, compared to 1,104 in March 2020.

2.3.22 The COVID-19 pandemic has led both to a surge in demand for PPE, such as gowns,

masks and eye protection, and increased awareness of modern slavery risks in the industry. The Home Office, with support from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS Supply Chain, commissioned the ethical trade consultancy, Impactt, to develop tailored [guidance](#)²⁸ for buyers and suppliers of PPE on best practice approaches to prevent modern slavery in supply chains. As part of this project, Impactt delivered training workshops with 23 PPE manufacturers and resellers to support them implement the guidance.

Wales

2.3.23 In 2017, the Welsh Government produced the Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. Since then, over 300 organisations have signed up and committed to tackling unlawful and unethical employment practices in their supply chains. Work has commenced on reviewing and refreshing the Code in preparation for it to be relaunched in 2022.

2.3.24 The Welsh Government published for consultation the draft Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. This legislation, to be introduced to the Senedd in spring 2022, seeks to ensure that public procurement in Wales is undertaken in a socially responsible manner with consideration for fair work.

Scotland

2.3.25 The Scottish Government launched an online platform in June 2020 to provide easier access for buyers across the public sector in Scotland to national sustainable procurement tools. So far over 100 Scottish public sector bodies have registered, as well as third sector and private organisations in other parts of the UK and further afield. The tools have been designed to help Scottish public bodies comply with policy and legislation, and to help them identify and achieve economic, social, and environmental outcomes through their procurement activity. The guidance for practical application of

26 <https://www.govcommercialcollege.co.uk/auth/cabinetoffice/login.php>

27 <https://supplierregistration.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/msat>

28 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buyers-and-suppliers-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

sustainable procurement is also on the platform enabling buyers to more easily access and reference information on how to take an ethical approach in their procurement activity including the consideration of human trafficking and exploitation.

2.3.26 Shan Saba, director of Brightwork Recruitment agency has formed Scotland Against Modern Slavery (SAMS) to take forward engagement in the corporate sector under Action Area 3 of Scotland's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy. Shan has hosted, recorded, and shared a series of Podcasts on the importance of businesses understanding the risks within their operations and supply chains, the negative consequences trafficking, and exploitation has on business and the benefits of joining a network of support. The podcasts have featured key figures including the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. There are now over 30 organisations signed up to be part of SAMS. One member has agreed to put a banner on their lorries to draw attention and raise awareness of trafficking and exploitation in Scotland. It is hoped that members of SAMS will become ambassadors and act as conduits between their respective organisations and the group to share best practice and intelligence. SAMS had their initial meeting in March 2021 and has met monthly since. A dedicated [website](https://www.scotlandagainstmasterslavery.co.uk/)²⁹ to inform, educate and provide help and support has also been developed.

Northern Ireland

2.3.27 The Department of Justice ran two consultations (for private sector and public sector organisations respectively) on transparency in supply chains. The proposed changes will see a strengthening of the transparency in supply chains arrangements for commercial businesses with a turnover of £36m or more and will give effect to UK-wide arrangements which the Home Office consulted on during summer 2019. The Home Office consultation did not extend to Northern Ireland as the Department instead engaged directly with affected businesses in Northern Ireland. In very broad terms, the proposed changes will mean that businesses and organisations in Northern Ireland – and anywhere in the world with a turnover of £36 million or more that also have a footfall in the UK mainland – will be impacted by the legislative changes presented by the UK Government. The changes being proposed will tighten the requirements on businesses. For those measures that require legislative change, the Home Office intention is to introduce the changes when parliamentary time allows. At that point consideration will be given to a Legislative Consent Motion to extend the provisions to Northern Ireland. These proposals are aimed at helping organisations to strengthen their procedures, to identify risks and to take measures towards eliminating slavery from their supply chain.

29 <https://www.scotlandagainstmasterslavery.co.uk/>

4) VICTIM SUPPORT AND IDENTIFICATION

2.4.1 Victim identification and support is centred on reducing the harm caused to victims of modern slavery as a result of their exploitation. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the process by which the UK identifies and supports potential victims of modern slavery.

2.4.2 The UK Government, Scottish Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive continue to provide specialist support and advocacy services for victims of modern slavery and reintegrate them into local communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken a number of steps to adapt our support services and keep victims safe.

2.4.3 Modern slavery cases are highly complex, and individual victims can have very different recovery needs linked to their exploitation. We are committed to building on the significant reforms to the NRM, to address the challenges that the system continues to face.

2.4.4 We intend the NRM to be a world-class system that effectively identifies and delivers needs-based support for victims of modern slavery; is legally robust, sustainable, and resilient to potential misuse. This is why in summer 2020 the Home Office embarked on an ambitious transformation programme, building on the legacy of the NRM Reform programme launched in 2017. The NRM Transformation Programme focuses on ensuring that:

- Victims are given certainty about their victim status as swiftly as possible.
- Victims are safeguarded and supported based on their individual recovery needs, with a focus on supporting the most vulnerable and making good use of existing access to mainstream services to avoid duplicating support services.

- Victims are empowered to report their exploitation to law enforcement and to take an active role in the prosecution of modern slavery offences.
- Victims are supported to begin rebuilding their lives with increased resilience against future exploitation.
- Public confidence in the system is upheld, and
- The NRM interacts positively with and supports related services and agencies in identifying and supporting victims.

Strengthening identification of adult victims

New Plan for Immigration

2.4.5 In March 2021, the Government launched the [New Plan for Immigration](#)³⁰ which sets out the Government's approach to immigration. Some of the measures in the New Plan for Immigration help the Government achieve objectives of the NRM Transformation Programme. The proposed modern slavery measures are designed to ensure victims are identified and supported as quickly as possible and to tackle potential misuse of the system. [The Nationality and Borders Bill](#)³¹ is the vehicle which seeks to bring legislative clarity to these policies. The Bill was introduced to Parliament in July 2021, following a public consultation.

2.4.6 The modern slavery measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill cover the following key areas:

- Introducing a definition of “public order” to enable the UK to withhold protections afforded by the NRM where there is a risk to public order.

30 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-plan-for-immigration-legal-migration-and-border-control>

31 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0141/210141.pdf>

- Placing into legislation the decision-making thresholds in line with our international obligations.
- Placing into statute the circumstances in which confirmed victims must be granted temporary leave to remain (subject to any public order exemption), including where they have ongoing recovery needs linked to their exploitation. Temporary leave to remain will also be available to enable victims to co-operate with a public authority in connection with an investigation or criminal proceedings to bring their exploiters to justice and for those seeking compensation who are required to be in the UK to do so.
- Extending the one stop notice to cover modern slavery matters and enable all grounds for protection to be raised in a safe forum, with legal support provided in advance.

2.4.7 The broader New Plan for Immigration also made commitments around support for modern slavery victims including providing funding this financial year (2021/22) to pilot specific mental health provision; piloting new approaches to stop modern slavery occurring through a Prevention Fund and trialling ways to encourage victim engagement in the criminal justice process. The New Plan for Immigration also made a commitment to bring forward further legislation around victim support when parliamentary time allows and to review the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy (as set out in Chapter 1 of this report).

Work to strengthen First Responder System

2.4.8 Potential victims of modern slavery in the UK that come to the attention of authorised ‘first responder’ organisations are referred to the NRM. Authorised ‘first responder’ organisations include local authorities, specified non-governmental organisations (NGOs), police forces and specified government agencies.

2.4.9 The Home Office has continued to work with First Responder Organisations over the past

year to strength the tools and resources available to them, and to improve communications across the system. In July 2021, the Home Office launched a new E-learning module focused on child victims of modern slavery. Building on the first responder training developed by the Home Office in 2020, this second module aims to further develop practitioners’ understanding of modern slavery from a child safeguarding perspective. The [E-learning](#)³² is hosted on the Police Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit’s (MSOICU) website and focuses on the steps practitioners should take to safeguard child victims, and the role of the NRM in these cases. The latest E-learning module has been accessed by more than 4,000 unique users in the first three months since its release and has received positive feedback from users.

2.4.10 The Welsh Government Training Group has provided multi-agency first responder training to ensure consistent communications on modern slavery in Wales.

Strengthening decision-making

2.4.11 The Single Competent Authority (SCA) is responsible for all NRM referrals and makes decisions on cases of modern slavery. Rising volumes of NRM referrals have led to lengthened decision-making times and an increased burden on NRM capacity. In response to this, the Home Office has initiated a recruitment process for over 200 new staff to join the SCA during 2021, with the intention of further recruitment to take place before year end. Whilst recruitment has taken place at a slower pace than initially anticipated during the pandemic, those already in post will make a significant impact on reducing decision-making times going forward.

Multi-Agency Assurance Panels of experts (MAAPs) – Improving victim and stakeholder confidence in NRM decisions

2.4.12 The Home Office introduced independent Multi-Agency Assurance Panels of experts (MAAPs) in 2019. The panels provide additional

³² <https://policingslavery.co.uk/transforming-our-response/training-delivery/e-learning-child-victims-of-modern-slavery/>

independent scrutiny to assure the quality of decision-making. MAAPs have been set up to review all negative conclusive grounds decisions on cases referred directly to the SCA, adding a third level of scrutiny to such cases. Over the last year, the Home Office has been undertaking an evaluation, focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the extent to which MAAPs improved the quality of decision-making and increased stakeholder confidence in the NRM process.

Updates to the Statutory Guidance

2.4.13 The Home Office published statutory guidance under section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland on 4 April 2020. Modern slavery remains a rapidly evolving area, therefore, since initial publication a Modern Slavery Guidance Reference Group has been established. This group of stakeholders with direct interest in the Guidance, have contributed to updates to ensure that it is reflective of current policy and practice, and remains useful for decision makers, first responders, and support providers.

Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities

2.4.14 To ensure housing authority staff have an awareness of the possibility that individuals who homeless may be victims of trafficking or of modern slavery, the [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)³³ was updated in July 2021. The guidance outlines how to better assess vulnerability and provide assistance to applicants who are victims of trafficking or modern slavery.

Wales

2.4.15 The Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group has reviewed and updated their Victim Support Pathway. Work is ongoing regarding adoption and changes to processes in partnership with Local Authorities. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings continue to play

an active role in identifying and safeguarding victims of modern slavery.

2.4.16 BAWSO continue to be the support provider for victims of modern slavery under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) for Wales, subcontracted by The Salvation Army (TSA). This provision includes accommodation-based support and outreach support to adults and their children who are under NRM and have been identified as a potential victim of modern slavery and exploitation.

2.4.17 Work has commenced to develop a consistent approach to Rest and Recovery Centres in Wales. Once it became apparent that there were limited accessible premises to provide multi-agency support for potential victims of modern slavery following identification, Work has commenced to develop a consistent approach to Rest and Recovery Centres in Wales. The Welsh Forces initiated partnership working with Local Resilience Forums and the Church in Wales, supported by the TARIAN ROCU regional coordinator, to map and identify suitable premises and develop local agreements and operating procedures between partners. The intention is that these measures will improve the response to initial encounters with potential victims while also building victim confidence to support investigations.

2.4.18 Recognising the complex needs of survivors, the Welsh Government is exploring opportunities for survivors of modern slavery to be provided with various forms of professional support, including mental health, education and skills, and employment opportunities.

Scotland

2.4.19 The statutory period of support for adult victims in Scotland came into force on 1 April 2018 with the minimum period of support doubling to 90 days. At the same time, support for victims of the offence under Section 4 of the Act (slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour) was also placed on a statutory footing.

33 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ef9d8613a6f4023cf12fc67/current_Homelessness_Code_of_Guidance.pdf

2.4.20 The Scottish Government continues to provide funding to Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA), which specifically supports female victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, and Migrant Help which supports all other adult trafficking victims across Scotland. Funding to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (The Anchor) has significantly increased in 2021/22 to provide a national service of psychological trauma support to victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Information on the number of potential victims of trafficking supported by TARA and Migrant Help between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 will be available when the Scottish Government publishes its fourth annual progress report on strategy implementation.

2.4.21 The Scottish Government has provided funding to enable digital connectivity for victims of human trafficking and exploitation during the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting providers to purchase smartphones/laptops/tablets and data plans to ensure victims can engage in crisis support work and psychological trauma therapy remotely while maintaining a form of face-to-face communication. This has also enabled service users to participate in wider social and physical activities and access cultural content online, thereby helping survivors to integrate with communities, aid recovery and keep in touch with family in source countries.

2.4.22 The Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy Action Area 1 implementation group, has developed a [toolkit](#)³⁴ to support first responders who may be completing an NRM referral. This is aimed particularly at individuals within First Responder Organisations who have limited or no experience of the NRM and aims to improve the quality of referrals while providing a useful, easy to access resource.

2.4.23 The toolkit was commissioned to improve the formal identification of victims through the NRM in Scotland and ensure that both frontline

staff and potential victims understand the process and possible outcomes of this pathway to identification and protection.

2.4.24 The toolkit promotes the need for a trauma informed approach to identification and support for all adult and child survivors recovered in Scotland.

2.4.25 In response to the pandemic, Police Scotland maintained close working relationships with third sector and business partners to gather intelligence, identify victims of trafficking and provide support. This included gathering information on possible displacement activities, monitoring new trends in exploitation, and responding rapidly to those trends.

Northern Ireland

2.4.26 Support for victims of human trafficking is on a statutory footing, in line with Section 18 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. Support for victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour where there is no element of trafficking is currently provided as matter of policy, and will be put onto a statutory footing subject to the passage of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill.

2.4.27 Over the last six years, a total of almost 250 potential victims have been assisted under the Department of Justice support contract. This contract is delivered by Migrant Help and Belfast and Lisburn and Women's Aid, which support adult male and adult female victims respectively. The 2020 NRM figures show that 128 referrals were made, with most potential victims falling into the category of adult males subject to labour exploitation.

2.4.28 The Department of Justice works with operational partners in the Organised Crime Task Force³⁵ and with its NGO Engagement Group to better identify victims and increase public

34 <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/National%20Referral%20Mechanism%20Toolkit%20March%202021.pdf>

35 Membership of the MSHT subgroup includes all statutory agencies working in MHST including PSNI, PPS, Border Force, NCA, Home Office, NI Departments, GLAA and HMRC

awareness of the signs and indicators of modern slavery. Recent initiatives include training for all new custodial staff joining the Northern Ireland Prison Service and accredited specialist training for police detectives on modern slavery and human trafficking. The Health and Social Care Board is responsible for supporting children who may be victims of trafficking or modern slavery. All child victims are also entitled to support by an Independent Guardian appointed to advocate for and represent their best interests.

2.4.29 Identifying and supporting victims' forms part of the Prevent strand of the Northern Ireland Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy for 2021/22. The Department will continue to prioritise this work and incorporate it into a longer-term strategic approach towards modern slavery and human trafficking.

2.4.30 The Northern Ireland Assembly launched a new All-Party Group on Modern Slavery on 23 October 2020. The organisation CARE NI is providing the secretariat to the Group. Joanne Bunting MLA chairs the group and its focus will be to work with organisations and charities to reduce modern slavery and provide effective support for victims in Northern Ireland.

Supporting individual needs for child victims of modern slavery

2.4.31 The Home Office is continuing to roll-out Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs), an independent source of advice and support for child victims of modern slavery. In May 2021, the Home Office expanded ICTGs to 11 new areas, with the Service extending to cover in total two-thirds of all local authorities in England and Wales. Updated ICTG [guidance](#)³⁶ reflects the recent expansion and impact on the service model as well as the referral process.

2.4.32 The current ICTG service model provides one-to-one support for potentially trafficked children who have no one with parental responsibility for them in the UK via an ICTG Direct Worker and an expert ICTG Regional Practice Co-ordinator, for children where there is someone with parental responsibility for them in the UK. The Regional Practice Co-ordinator role is focused on embedding good practice when working with trafficked children with a figure of parental responsibility. As a strategic and operational role, regions have flexibility to deliver a Regional Practice Co-ordinator response that compliments rather than duplicates the existing local response.

Data on Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service

2.4.33 In 2020 there were 253 children referred to Direct Workers with the largest numbers referred in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester (57 and 51 respectively). The lowest number were referred in Wales (32).³⁷

2.4.34 Regional Practice Co-ordinators received 302 referrals in 2020, with the East Midlands receiving substantially more referrals than other RPC areas (110). The second highest was Wales with 74 referrals, with the lowest number received in Hampshire and Isle of Wight. The full figures for 2019 and 2020 referrals can be found in Annex A.

2.4.35 All referrals in 2020 were in addition to the children Direct Workers and Regional Practice Co-ordinators had on their caseloads at the end of 2019.

2.4.36 To date, the Home Office has adopted a staggered approach to the roll-out with robust built-in evaluations along the way to ensure the ICTG Service meets the needs of the vulnerable children it supports.

36 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990138/Interim_guidance_for_Independent_Child_Trafficking_Guardians.pdf

37 Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG) Data

2.4.37 As part of this phase of the roll-out, the Home Office is testing the following three recommendations from the 2019 Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act in a mix of ICTG sites:

- Remove the 18-month limit for ICTG support to ensure that the support provided is based on the individual needs of the child rather than being time limited. **This change is being implemented in all ICTG sites.**
- Enable those children who need it to continue to receive ICTG support following their 18th birthday. **This change is being tested in London, West Yorkshire, and Warwickshire.**
- Allow children who have a figure of parental responsibility for them in the UK to access one-to-one support where there is an exceptional need. **This change is being tested in Wales, the East Midlands, and West Midlands Combined Authorities.**

2.4.38 An independent evaluation will be carried out to assess the added value of implementing these changes to the Service.

Devolving child decision making pilot

2.4.39 The Home Office has launched a pilot programme to test devolving the responsibility to make NRM decisions for children from the Home Office to local authorities.

2.4.40 The pilot will explore whether determining if a child is a victim of modern slavery within existing local safeguarding structures is a more appropriate model for making modern slavery decisions for children. This approach will enable decisions about whether a child is a victim of modern slavery to be made by those involved in their care and ensure the decisions made are closely aligned with the provision of local,

needs-based support and any law enforcement response. [Ten pilot areas](#)³⁸ have been identified via a competitive process, which was open to all local authorities in the United Kingdom that are responsible for children's social care. Detailed [guidance](#)³⁹ for decision makers in the Devolving Child Decision Making Pilot Programme has been published. The pilot will be subject to a rigorous evaluation which is being overseen by an independently chaired evaluation panel.

County Lines criminal exploitation

2.4.41 Reported county lines exploitation to the NRM increased by 31% from 2019, accounting for 15% of all NRM referrals. This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who are exploiting our children and have a devastating impact on our communities. This year alone we are providing £40m dedicated investment to tackle drugs supply and county lines and surge our activity against these ruthless gangs, which brings the total invested to tackle county lines and drugs supply to £65 million since November 2019. This includes expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and intensified law enforcement activity which has already seen more than 1,100 lines closed, over 6,300 arrests, £2.9 million in cash and significant quantities of drugs seized, and more than 1,900 vulnerable people safeguarded.

2.4.42 This financial year the Home Office is investing up to £1m to provide specialist support to under 25s from London, the West Midlands and Merseyside who are criminally exploited through county lines, to help them safely reduce and exit their involvement. Between July 2020 and May 2021, the St Giles' Trust supported over 170 criminally exploited young people as result of Home Office investment. In addition, the Home Office is also funding [Missing People's SafeCall service](#)⁴⁰, a specialist helpline which provides advice and support to children, young people and their parents/carers who are

38 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/piloting-devolving-decision-making-for-child-victims-of-modern-slavery/devolving-child-decision-making-pilot-programme-general-guidance-accessible-version>

39 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/piloting-devolving-decision-making-for-child-victims-of-modern-slavery/decision-making-guidance-for-pilot-sites-in-england-and-wales-accessible-version>

40 <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/get-help/help-services/exploitation-and-county-lines>

concerned about county lines, criminal exploitation and gangs.

Wales

2.4.43 Wales was an early adopter site for the Home Office-funded Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service, which is operated by Barnardo's Cymru. Work is on-going concerning early identification and safeguarding practices.

Scotland

2.4.44 In Scotland, local authorities have responsibility for providing support to child victims of trafficking under existing child protection and children's services legislation. Additional support is provided to unaccompanied and trafficked children through the Scottish Guardianship Service, which is funded by Scottish Government and delivered in partnership by Aberlour Child Care Trust and the Scottish Refugee Council. Last year the service celebrated its 10-year anniversary with a series of events to mark the occasion including a parliamentary members' debate held in November 2020 at the Scottish Parliament.

2.4.45 Work continues on the implementation of Section 11 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 to launch the statutory Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG) service for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, where there is reason to believe they might have been, or at risk of being, trafficked. As part of the commercial tendering process, an informal exercise took place in January 2021 for potential suppliers to note their interest in delivering the new service in Scotland. It has been announced as part of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government that Scotland's new ICTG service will launch in the summer of 2022. This will be a statutory service providing on-going practical help and support to refugee children and young people, replacing the non-statutory service currently provided by the Scottish Guardianship Service. The Scottish

Government will continue to fund the Scottish Guardianship Service in the interim.

2.4.46 To better understand the trafficking landscape in Scotland and inform policy development, Scottish Government published research in October 2020 on Child Trafficking in Scotland⁴¹. The research examined the routes and circumstances of children and young people who had been identified as victims of trafficking in Scotland, and the response by professionals to support and care for these children. The research included interviews with trafficked children and young people in Scotland. These first-hand accounts will inform how Scotland continues to improve the support and services available for child victims.

Supporting individual needs for Adult Victims – England and Wales

2.4.47 Following an open procurement exercise, on the 29 June 2020, the Home Office announced that the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) had been awarded to The Salvation Army (TSA). The new five-year MSVCC went live on 4 January 2021. The new contract builds on the wide-ranging support provided through the previous Victim Care Contract, to deliver a service that is needs-based and better aligned to the requirements of individual victims in England and Wales.

2.4.48 The contract adds greater prescription to existing services to better meet the needs of each victim, including those with specialist or complex needs. It continues to provide accommodation, financial support payments, translation and interpretation, transport, and access to an outreach support worker for those who are identified as a potential victim and receive a positive Reasonable Grounds decision from the SCA.

2.4.49 As part of the contract, the Home Office has worked with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to develop an inspection regime based on the Human Trafficking Foundation's updated

41 [Child trafficking: research – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/research/child-trafficking-research)

Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards. CQC were appointed to conduct independent inspections of safehouse and outreach services under the MSVCC, providing the Home Office with a tool to monitor the effectiveness and quality of the support provided. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CQC has adapted its ways of working and is now taking a hybrid approach to inspections by conducting both on-site inspections of accommodation where safe to do so and remote assessments where required. As part of this work, survivors will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of the support services they receive whilst living in safehouse accommodation and/or in receipt of outreach support.

2.4.50 The MSVCC has also introduced a number of new services, including Journey Plans which are personalised plans tailored to an individual's needs and circumstances. Journey Plans keep track of the potential victim or victim's recovery progress and detail how they will be supported to move towards independence outside of the MSVCC.

2.4.51 The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) process, introduced in September 2019 for confirmed victims, was the first step in introducing a more needs-based approach to delivering victim support by providing a tailored support package according to the individual victim's specific recovery needs.

2.4.52 In the year up to 31 July 2021, 19% of RNAs have requested all three pillars of support (accommodation, financial support, and support worker contact) from the MSVCC. The most commonly requested support pillar is support worker contact: 94% of RNAs requested support worker contact, 62% requested financial support, and 22% requested accommodation. The average length of requested ongoing support is 61 days and of the 2,318 completed RNAs, the Home Office fully agreed with recommendations set out in 21%, partially agreed with 72%, and did not agree with 7%. The number of partially agreed decisions has

increased by 34% over the last reporting year, largely due to inaccuracies in RNAs submitted and requests made contrary to the published guidance. To address this, the SCA has worked in partnership with TSA over the last year to improve RNA quality. This has included a series of drop-in sessions run by the SCA for support providers and support workers.⁴²

2.4.53 Building upon the introduction of the RNA process, we are now reviewing the end-to-end system of support as part of the NRM Transformation Programme to ensure that the victim, and their specific recovery needs, are at the centre of the support we provide from the outset.

2.4.54 Finally, following exit from the main service, the MSVCC introduced support that can be provided through a new reach-in support service. Reach-in is a post-NRM service that offers transitional support to confirmed victims who exited the main service on, or after, 4 January 2021 with a positive Conclusive Grounds decision. Assistance includes provision of information and signposting in respect of a range of services, including housing, health care, translation, employment, and support with submitting claims (for example, asylum, benefits, or legal claims).

Survivor voice

2.4.55 We remain committed to embedding the survivors' voice in future policy. We recognise the vital role survivors have in improving our understanding of and response to modern slavery. Involving survivors in policy making will help to ensure we have robust and effective policies and that allow us to react to new forms of exploitation as they arise. Through the NRM Transformation Programme we will continue to examine how best we can engage survivors to inform our response to modern slavery. Survivors were included in the consultation on the New Plan for Immigration and we are committed to seeking their views as we develop a new modern slavery strategy for England and Wales.

⁴² SCA-held data on Recovery Needs Assessments, unpublished

5) INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

2.5.1 The UK continues to demonstrate international leadership, driving action towards the long-term ambition of eradicating modern slavery, here in the UK and overseas. It is crucial that we continue to work with other countries and our international partners such as the G7, G20, the Commonwealth and the UN to make progress against our commitment to deliver Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 which focuses on combatting modern slavery.

UK Modern Slavery International Programme Portfolio

2.5.2 The UK government has committed to investing up to £200m of UK aid to combat modern slavery across the globe. To date, we have reached millions of people with action to support victims, reduce vulnerability, protect those most at risk of exploitation, and help prevent people from falling into modern slavery. This work has continued and developed over the past year.

2.5.3 The COVID-19 global pandemic increased the vulnerability of individuals at risk of, or engaged in, exploitative labour in some of the poorest regions of the world. We used UK aid to help mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic on those vulnerable individuals. Measures included:

- Support from The Modern Slavery Fund (MSF), to provide shelters to protect survivors in Malaysia and South Africa.
- Support from the Migration for Development Programme to provide £250,000 to the Freedom Fund to ensure vulnerable communities in India, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nepal, and Thailand received emergency relief in the early stages of the pandemic.
- Supporting the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) to support highly vulnerable and marginalised survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and provide vulnerable garment workers with vital information on the heightened risks of forced labour and deliver financial assistance to 1500 households.

2.5.4 Through the MSF, this year we have continued to work in Nigeria, Albania, and Vietnam to apprehend offenders, support victims and prevent people falling into slavery in the first place. We are also continuing work through Phase Two of the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund (MSIF, a subset of the MSF). The MSIF supports 8 projects covering a range of interventions, including improving workers' rights in Mauritius and Malaysia; supporting victims in India; tackling stigma as a driver of modern slavery in Ethiopia and Indonesia; and continuing to strengthen the global evidence base.

2.5.5 Our work this year has contributed to significant overall results to date. The MSF has now provided direct assistance to over 2,500 victims of trafficking; supported the prosecution of over 300 trafficking cases; engaged over 154,200 people from communities, businesses, and operational groups worldwide to reduce the harms and likelihood of modern slavery; and raised awareness of the risks among millions of people. It has also contributed to 35 anti-slavery policies in 14 countries, through support to strengthen national-level, regional and local government strategies, and action plans, and delivered over 30 evidence products helping to advance collective understanding of the problem and tackle it effectively.

2.5.6 The FCDO draws on and combines its diplomatic and development expertise to lead the Government's efforts to mobilise the international community. We focus on the targets in Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 and the UK's Call to Action to end forced labour, modern

slavery and human trafficking. Interventions include:

- The Work in Freedom Programme which prevents trafficking and exploitation of women working in domestic households and garment factories across South Asia and the Middle East. To date, the programme has helped 555,000.
- Supporting international partners to help strengthen partner government capacity, improving child protection systems, investing in community-level initiatives, building the evidence on what works to tackle child labour, and responding to the increased vulnerability of children to exploitation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funding from our Asia Regional Child Labour Programme to support UN agencies and civil society to reduce child labour in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Independent Commission for Aid Impact review on UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme

2.5.7 The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) review on the UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme was published on 14 October 2020 and the government's response on the 24 November 2020. ICAI made five recommendations on improving the effectiveness of our approach.

2.5.8 We welcomed the review's recommendations and have accepted them all in whole, or in part. The review of the UK's Modern Slavery Strategy will help us to better frame and deliver on ICAI's recommendations.

Multilateral engagement

2.5.9 The June 2021 G7 Summit hosted in Cornwall demonstrated how we are revitalising cooperation between democratic open societies to tackle the most pressing global challenges of our time.

2.5.10 Under the UK's Presidency, the G7 announced joint action on forced labour in global supply chains and reaffirmed its commitment to upholding human rights and international labour standards. Trade Ministers were tasked to identify areas for collective action and drive progress, which were discussed during a meeting with officials from the International Labour Organisation, The Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre and Government in September.

Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT)

2.5.11 The UK continues to support the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). ICAT is the lead UN mechanism to coordinate comprehensive and holistic responses to trafficking in persons, comprising of almost 30 UN entities and other international and regional organisations. With support from UK aid, ICAT developed this year an online resource to help UN agencies better access the full range of activities and expertise available. The report will enable partners to draw on shared expertise to develop activities in the field and at home to help combat modern slavery and help survivors to rebuild their lives.

Labour exploitation

2.5.12 The Government is committed to tackle labour exploitation wherever it occurs. The Government has serious concerns about the gross violations of human rights being perpetrated against minorities in Xinjiang. In January, the Foreign Secretary announced a package of cross-Government policy measures seeking to ensure that UK private and public bodies are not complicit in nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang:

- A review of export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to ensure the Government is doing all it can to prevent the exports of goods that may contribute to human rights abuses in the region.

- New, robust and detailed [guidance](#)⁴³ to UK business setting out the specific risks faced by companies with links to Xinjiang and underlining the challenges of effective due diligence there.
- Ensuring public bodies have the evidence they require to help them exclude bidders from Government contracts if bidders are complicit in human rights violations in Xinjiang.
- A Minister led campaign of business engagement to reinforce the need for UK businesses to take action to address the risk.
- The introduction of financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements.

UK Envoy

2.5.13 The UK Envoy has continued to engage partners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to advocate for further action to tackle modern slavery. On 13 June 2021 the UK Envoy announced a new UK pledge to tackle child labour and exploitation at a UN high-level event to mark the World Day Against Child Labour and launch of the new global estimates on child labour. The event was hosted by the Permanent Missions of EU and Luxembourg, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and UNICEF as part of the UN Year for the Elimination of Child Labour.

2.5.14 The Envoy continues to engage partners through our network of Embassies and High Commissions. During a virtual visit to India, the UK Envoy established a very productive dialogue with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. This will help to progress modern slavery objectives at both state and national level. Other examples include engagement with government partners in the Gulf to support labour reforms and strengthen protection of migrant workers.

43 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-china/overseas-business-risk-china#business-and-human-rights>

Annex A: UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery – Data Tables

Prosecutions Data

England and Wales

Table 1: Pre-charge legal and non-legal decisions for defendants flagged as being involved in modern slavery

	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Vol	%	Vol	%	Vol	%	Vol	%
Legal (substantive) Decisions (Charged, No Prosecution, Out of Court Disposal)	287	87.8%	249	83.6%	322	75.4%	347	72.9%
Administratively Finalised (non-Legal Decision)	40	12.2%	48	16.1%	103	24.1%	127	26.7%
Other	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	2	0.5%	2	0.4%
Pre-Charge Decisions Completed by the CPS	327		298		427		476	

Data source: CPS Case Management System.

Table 2: Pre-charge referrals and finalisations for defendants flagged as being involved in modern slavery

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Charged	237	188	239	259
No Further Action	49	61	83	88
Out of Court Disposal	1	0	0	0
Administrative Finalisation	40	48	103	127
Other	0	1	2	2
TOTAL	327	298	427	476

Data source: CPS Case Management System.

Table 3: Completed prosecution outcomes for defendants flagged as being involved in modern slavery

	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Vol	%	Vol	%	Vol	%	Vol	%
Convictions	180	67.9%	191	65.0%	251	71.9%	197	73.8%
Non-Convictions	85	32.1%	103	35.0%	98	28.1%	70	26.2%
TOTAL PROSECUTED	265		294		349		267	

Scotland

Table 4: Number of individuals where initial decision was to prosecute for human trafficking offences in Scotland, broken down by date the police report was received by COPFS⁴⁴

	Sexual	Other	Forced Labour	Aggravated	Total
2018	4	5	1	0	10
2019	2	4	1	5	12
2020	20	2	4	3	29
2021 ⁴⁵	5	0	2	0	7

Table 5: Number of individuals convicted of human trafficking offences in Scotland, broken down by the date the police report was received by COPFS. Proceedings are ongoing against a number of individuals which means that these figures may change as cases are concluded.

	Sexual	Other	Forced Labour	Aggravated	Total
2018	0	1	0	0	1
2019	1	0	0	0	1
2020	0	0	0	0	0
2021 ⁴⁶	0	0	0	0	0

⁴⁴ It is important to note that a number of the individuals included in these figures will have been prosecuted for, and convicted of, offences other than human trafficking, such as immigration offences, brothel keeping or sexual offences. Evidence secured in the cases mentioned here may have been used to support prosecutions in other countries. Proceedings are ongoing against a large number of individuals listed here.

⁴⁵ Between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021

⁴⁶ Between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021

Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG) Data⁴⁷

Table 6: Number of children referred to Direct Workers, 2020⁴⁸

2020 Quarter	Croydon	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Hampshire & IoW	Wales	West Midlands	Total by quarter
Q1	14	5	14	13	6	14	66
Q2	13	10	7	9	6	11	56
Q3	*	12	15	9	13	13	62**
Q4	*	8	15	12	7	19	61**
Total by site	35	35	51	43	32	57	253

* suppressed value due to small numbers⁴⁹

** not including suppressed value

Table 7: Number of children referred to Regional Practice Coordinators, 2020

2020 Quarter	Croydon	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Hampshire & IoW	Wales	West Midlands	Total by quarter
Q1	*	13	7	*	26	5	52**
Q2	6	43	17	*	12	27	106
Q3	*	15	*	0	22	9	48**
Q4	*	39	12	*	14	22	87**
Total by site	12	110	36**	**	74	63	302

* suppressed value due to small numbers

** not including suppressed value

Table 8: Number of children referred to Direct Workers, 2019

2019 quarter	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Hampshire & IoW	Wales	West Midlands	Croydon	Unknown	Total by quarter
Q1	*	9	*	12	13	0	0	40
Q2	7	9	8	10	17	*	1	52**
Q3	12	12	14	*	17	13	0	68**
Q4	*	38	*	8	20	6	5	84
Total by site	27	68	27	30**	67	19**	6	250

* suppressed value due to small numbers

** not including suppressed value

47 Barnardo's only collects management information on children that RPCs have directly supported through help and advice to frontline staff that are in direct contact with the child. This may include advising first responders on a child's NRM referral or advising professionals on the child's safeguarding or support options. Only children supported by RPCs in this way appear in RPC caseload data, which is the data used in the above table. It does not include children that may have been indirectly supported through the general advice and guidance RPCs provide to frontline staff. Low numbers of children on RPC caseloads in particular regions may reflect the RPC in that region adopting a more strategic approach to supporting children, which will not show up in the data.

48 Due to changes in the way data is recorded by the ICTG service from September 2020 onwards, children that are missing at the point of referral into the ICTG Service and/or are missing for more than 6 months are now counted separately from overall referral numbers, and so are not included in the above tables. The Home Office is currently reviewing how best to report this data to ensure confidentiality is protected and the data remains robust.

49 Small numbers (below 5) have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. This is in line with how data has previously been published in the ICTG evaluations.

Table 9: Number of children referred to Regional Practice Coordinators, 2019

2019 Quarter	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Hampshire & IoW	Wales	West Midlands	Croydon	Unknown	Total by quarter
Q1	*	12	0	18	*	0	0	36
Q2	19	14	0	10	16	0	1	60
Q3	26	9	*	7	14	0	0	56**
Q4	14	*	0	12	5	0	0	31**
Total by site	59**	35**	*	47	35**	0	1	187

* suppressed value due to small numbers

** not including suppressed value

