



Home Office

**The Home Office response to the
Independent Chief Inspector of Borders
and Immigration's report:**

**A re-inspection of Border Force's
identification and treatment of Potential
Victims of Modern Slavery**

September-November 2017

The Home Office thanks the Independent Chief Inspector for his report.

Tackling modern slavery is a top priority for the UK Government. The Government has an ambitious Modern Slavery Strategy in place, to identify and protect victims and pursue and bring to justice those who exploit them. The Government is committed to improving the support offered to victims of modern slavery and in October 2017, announced reforms to the National Referral Mechanism, including trebling the minimum period of 'move-on' support for confirmed victims. Over the last year, law enforcement agencies have increasingly used the tools and powers in the world-leading Modern Slavery Act 2015 and Border Force has contributed to a significant uplift in law enforcement activity against the criminals behind modern slavery.

This report reflects both the progress that has been made since the last inspection of Border Force's identification and treatment of Potential Victims of Modern Slavery (PVoMS) and also the ongoing focus required in this area. Border Force is committed to continuing to work with partners across government, both at a strategic and an operational level, to provide better support to potential victims of modern slavery and to tackle the criminal activity behind this. This will include ongoing regular operational intensification exercises working with partners to identify PVoMS and potential traffickers. Border Force has a unique chance of intervention to help victims at the border. However, it is recognised that not all victims will accept help at that juncture. Border Force is therefore piloting at a few locations a mechanism for referral to relevant inland agencies for welfare checks to be made at a later stage if needed and justified.

The seven recommendations that this report confirms have been implemented are a reflection of significant progress to date. This includes work to improve the awareness of risk profiles and our programme of industry and public awareness. The campaign to have visible modern slavery awareness material in all UK ports is ongoing and a recent joint Border Force/Unseen initiative has seen Modern Slavery Helpline information being posted on arrival points in the UK. The aim is for all Border Force Primary Check Point desks to display this information within the coming months. The UK Charity Unseen and Border Force now also have a formal referral procedure whereby any calls to the Modern Slavery Helpline relevant to Border Force are recorded and routed promptly to the relevant port.

We also note the broader improvements required in the open recommendations, especially in relation to data quality. To address this a new approach will roll out from April 2018 with the aim of enabling the creation of dashboards to monitor trends and emerging profiles.

Training for frontline staff is key. Border Force will continue to ensure that all frontline officers have received the training necessary to their role in identifying PVoMS. All new Border Force staff undertake a four-hour classroom based module on protecting the vulnerable. As the report suggests, we will need to monitor carefully the impact of new training to ensure operational benefit. A review of training relevant to the management of PVoMS cases therefore will be carried out over the course of 2018.