



UNDERGROUND LIVES

Male victims of modern slavery

OCTOBER 2018

FOREWORD

Modern slavery is a brutal and violent crime which last year saw 218 men referred to our modern slavery support services across London and the South East. These men were forced to work in farms, construction sites or cannabis farms, sold for sex or used as slaves in people's homes. Their experiences are horrifying. Psychological manipulation, violence and rape were regularly used by their abusers to break their spirits and stop their escape.

It is only recently that the true magnitude of the exploitation of men for modern slavery has begun to emerge. However, the availability of support still fails to recognise and address the needs of these highly traumatised men.

More than half of the men had slept rough before coming to us for support. Many ended up on the streets after escaping their traffickers while others were homeless men who had been targeted again and again for exploitation. Nearly half of the men who came to us had no living family. We have heard grueling stories of orphaned children targeted by traffickers and exploited for years or even decades. These men lost the opportunity for an education or a childhood.

These vulnerable men face a precarious journey to recovery. The risk of homelessness remains even after they have been positively identified as victims of modern slavery. Poverty also forces them into situations of exploitation. Our report uncovered instances of men working for scraps of food or for a few pounds a day just to survive. Many men told us they survive on cheap biscuits. Despite the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act, men can spend time in prison for offences related to their exploitation.

The support provided to these men as part of the Home Office's Victim Care Contract is vital to improve their outcomes. However, this report highlights that we all – Government, Local Authorities, the NHS, the police, the legal system and civil society – need to do more to ensure their recovery and their protection from re-exploitation.

Last year more men than women were referred into the National Referral Mechanism for the identification of victims of modern slavery. Yet far fewer men seek support under the Victim Care Contract. Only 1 in 4 of the people we support in our modern slavery response team are men.

The men who do accept support struggle to express or understand their trauma when they first come to us. Yet as this report highlights, nearly all experience mental health issues as a result of their ordeal. Shame about what happened to them and reluctance to show vulnerability stops them from asking for help. We should not confuse this reluctance for absence of need. Across London there are still far fewer services targeted at the needs of male victims of modern slavery. Without access to support, these men remain vulnerable to exploitation.

Yet despite these challenges, there is a huge opportunity for us to build on and improve what we do. We are grateful to all the men who shared their stories for this research and for the support of their advocates in gathering them. I would also like to thank all the professionals who so generously gave up their time too, in particular our corporate partner Hogan Lovells for their help with the report. This display of cooperation is a beacon of hope. Through collaboration between the public, private and third sector we can ensure these men have the right support to enable them to go on and live the lives they dream of.



Patrick Ryan,
Chief Executive, Hestia

UNDERGROUND LIVES: MALE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

KEY FINDINGS

54% of men had slept rough after escaping from modern slavery.

50% of men had spent time in prison or in detention before being identified as a potential victim of modern slavery. Where detail was provided the reason was related to the victims' exploitation.

47% of men had no living family.

92% of men displayed a range of mental health issues yet less than half of those had accessed mental health support.

METHODOLOGY:

The following methods were used:

- ▶ Analysis of Hestia's initial assessment forms for existing male clients;
- ▶ Interviews with 34 men supported by the modern slavery response team;
- ▶ Interviews with 8 key professionals from the modern slavery sector including the Head of the Metropolitan Police's Anti-Slavery Unit, two solicitors at ATLEU providing legal aid for victims of modern slavery, the Director of Legal Policy at Hope for Justice, the Head of Counter-Trafficking at the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Modern Slavery Children and Young Men's Practitioner at Children's Society, a Coordinator working for a London homelessness charity and the Project Leader of the Human Trafficking Foundation;
- ▶ Consultation with Modern Slavery Response Team (MSRT) advocates and team leaders.
- ▶ Hogan Lovells has contributed to the legal research.

HESTIA'S MODERN SLAVERY RESPONSE TEAM

Hestia's modern slavery response team started in 2011 and since then Hestia has supported over 2,500 victims of modern slavery and their dependents. Currently Hestia provides 5 safe houses in London and Kent, as well as a pan-London outreach service working in every London borough. In 2018, we expect to reach 1,200 adults and 500 dependent children.

We work closely with The Salvation Army to deliver support to victims who have been referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and who have chosen to be supported by the Home Office funded Victim Care Contract. In 2018, Hestia also launched the Phoenix Project in partnership with the British Red Cross to provide volunteer-led, long-term support to victims of modern slavery.

THE PROFILE OF MALE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

218

men

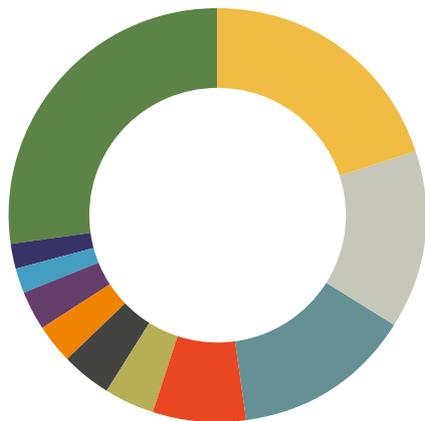
supported in 2017 – 18 (24% of total victims of modern slavery supported for this period)

Primary Exploitation:

82%	forced labour (industries incl. construction, agriculture, car washes, cannabis farms)
12%	sexual exploitation (forced to work as prostitutes)
6%	domestic servitude (forced to work as cleaners and carers in people's homes)

Although labour exploitation is the most common type of exploitation for men, it often masks other forms of abuse. For example, many men have been exploited both sexually and for forced labour or for forced labour and domestic servitude.

TOP TEN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:



- China: **20%**
- Vietnam: **14%**
- India: **14%**
- Nigeria: **7%**
- Albania: **4%**
- Poland: **4%**
- Romania: **3%**
- Bangladesh: **3%**
- Britain: **2%**
- Russia: **2%**
- Other: **27%** (34 countries)
- Total: 44 countries



Youngest victim:

18



Oldest victim:

60



Average age

34

MALE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

According to the National Crime Agency, 52% of all potential victims of modern slavery referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2017 were men (2688 men). In 2017, for the first time more men were referred into the NRM than women.

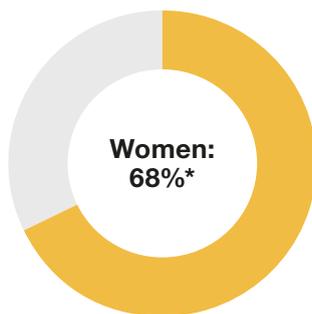
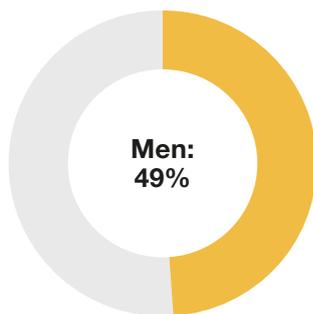
In popular discourse and public policy women are perceived to be the victims of violence (British Journal of Criminology 2017). This is reflected in the development and delivery of support provision for male victims of modern slavery in the UK and in the dearth of published literature on the support needs of male victims (The Salvation Army, 2013). The mapping of support services for victims of modern slavery conducted by the Human Trafficking Foundation in

2018 reveals a skewed picture across the country, with more accommodation, advice, support and health services being geared to the needs of female victims.

“Many councils still have trafficking under the Violence against Women and Girls agenda which means men are completely missed out.”

London Project Leader
Human Trafficking Foundation

The men we work with struggle to articulate their needs and recognise their vulnerabilities. This barrier may account for the lower numbers of men accepting help under the Victim Care Contract.



Men and women in the NRM accepting support under the Victim Care Contract:

* Data from the National Crime Agency and The Salvation Army reports during 07/16 – 06/17



Tomi's story



Tomi grew up in Nigeria with his mother and younger sister. His abusive father left when he was nine. His mother turned to prostitution to provide for her children. One of the men who visited his mother always brought with him toys and treats for the children. Tomi called him "Uncle". When Tomi turned thirteen, Uncle offered to take him to London where he could study and find a better future. Reluctantly, his mother agreed.

Tomi was excited to leave and at the prospect of building a new life and supporting his mum and siblings. However, the minute he landed in London, he realised something was wrong. His Uncle stopped being nice. They got in a car with three other men and Tomi was driven to a flat. That was the last he saw of Uncle. From then on, Tomi was driven from house to house where he was forced to sleep with older women and to take drugs and alcohol. Tomi was subjected to regular beatings and rape for six years.

One of the women Tomi visited promised to help him if he agreed to live with her. Tomi cooperated in order to escape. Whilst travelling with the woman, Tomi pretended he wanted to use the toilets at a petrol station. From there, he managed to run away and started to sleep rough. Begging for work, Tomi was offered a floor to sleep on at a shop in exchange for cleaning.

Tomi attended a Nigerian church where he first found the strength to share his story. His pastor helped him go to the police from where he was referred to The Salvation Army and Hestia. Since being referred, Tomi has been volunteering to support homeless children and people addicted to drugs at his local church.

THE NEEDS OF MALE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

MENTAL HEALTH

During initial assessments with The Salvation Army, 56% of men reported a mental health condition including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, as identified by The Salvation Army in 2013, this self-reporting is likely to underestimate the breadth and depth of mental health issues.

One man reported that he was not experiencing any mental health problems. However, he also said that he couldn't sleep, suffered with anxiety, was worried the traffickers would find him again, often felt overwhelmed whenever he thought of the past, he was becoming very upset "for no reason" and could not express his emotions.

This lack of self-recognition can stop men from asking for support when they are first referred into the NRM. Hope for Justice told us that men don't engage as well with traditional recovery models and that it is important to identify creative solutions to overcome that barrier, for example, by creating therapeutic environments in places that are important to men.

When interviewed by their advocates, 92% of men reported signs of suffering from mental health issues.

64%	experienced flashbacks often or all the time
58%	experienced long periods of sadness often or all the time
50%	struggled to sleep on most nights
36%	had frequent or constant feelings of agoraphobia or claustrophobia
30%	thought about self-harming often or all the time with half of those acting upon those thoughts
30%	felt they had little or no worth often or all the time
20%	felt there was no point to life

All professionals agreed that men struggled considerably more to express emotional vulnerability and to seek help.

"Men suffer more silently because they've been trained to do that, and they are not used to showing their injuries – especially injuries that are not visible. As a man it can be very humiliating that mentally you don't 'have it together' and are not able to make a living."

Head of Counter-Trafficking,
Helen Bamber Foundation

Only 40% of men had accessed mental health support services, including psychiatric support and medication, PTSD therapy, counseling and improving access to psychological wellbeing services (IAPT). Of those, only one had accessed therapeutic support geared to the needs of male victims. Although fewer male victims ask for psychotherapeutic support, there are also far fewer gender-specific services available.

Advocates often find that statutory provision such as IAPT can be too generic and not suitable to meet the needs of highly traumatised men. GPs usually recommend that, as a first step, victims of modern slavery self-refer to IAPT. When the men do access mental health support they are overwhelmingly diagnosed with PTSD. At that point, IAPT services will often reject clients due to the complexity of their support needs. Providers that offer culturally sensitive models of therapy for men can have a waiting list of nine months until referral and a further nine months to take on the men into their service. By then, the men we support have often exited the NRM and left our service.

When advocates manage to identify a specialist provider that has the capacity to take on a client, they often have to source funding to pay for the therapy, or the specialist treatment is very far away due to the scarcity of available support.

10% of men who are classified as victims of labour exploitation have reported being sexually exploited (either raped or sold for sex) at some time during the course of their abuse. However, the percentage is likely to be higher due to the difficulty of revealing this type of abuse.

“The incidence of sexual violence and rape is very common amongst men who have been trafficked for labour exploitation – rape is such an effective tool of subjugation, it breaks your spirit so effectively, that traffickers use it a lot.”

Head of Counter-Trafficking,
Helen Bamber Foundation

Professionals told us that the needs of male victims change in the years after they escape their traffickers. For example, according to Hope for Justice, the focus for many men who were exploited for forced labour is to be able to work and support their families. These men often believe that the issues they experience are related to the fact they cannot work and, therefore, mental health support is not going to improve their circumstances. However, when they do find work, they realise that their circumstances are not improving and that they are still struggling to deal with what has happened to them. At that point, many men experience deterioration in their mental health and ask for support. However, as they have exited the NRM, support is much more scarce. The ability to accept and address mental health trauma can take a long time and the availability of services at the point these men are ready for them is key to their recovery.

Nearly all professionals highlighted that independent advocates were crucial to support these men during their recovery. However, that support is much more limited outside the NRM.

Access to mental health provision for men is further compounded by the need for interpreters. Language barriers affect 86% of male victims, compared to 56% of female victims of modern slavery (The Salvation Army, 2013). It is not uncommon for appointments to be cancelled due to lack of access to a suitable interpreter.

The choice of interpreter can be equally important. Confiding traumatic experiences becomes even harder when there are two strangers in the room. The Helen Bamber Foundation told us they work with their clients to identify the right interpreter who will make their clients feel confident enough to disclose their experiences; for example, for young Vietnamese men, the right interpreters are often elderly Vietnamese women, as their “grandmotherly presence” allows the men to feel safe and not judged, making it easier to share their trauma. Statutory providers often do not have access to a wide choice of interpreters, either because they are responsible for supporting a much wider client base or due to limited resources.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

“It’s cheap to bring people over from the EU. Traffickers work these men to the ground because it’s easy to replace them. Without a doubt we see the physical impact of exploitation. They live and work in squalor. Otherwise, exploiters would need to spend money on equipment or decent accommodation and they’re not willing to do that. Victims are used and used till they fall down.”

Head of Anti-Slavery Unit,
Metropolitan Police

Men often experience physical health problems related to their experience of modern slavery. These issues include loss of mobility on some limbs and enduring pains from beatings and torture as well as back pain resulting from intense physical labour. They have often had no access to health services for years. As a result, extensive dental problems are common. Half of the men were not registered with a GP when they arrived with us and had to be supported by our advocates to do so.

Pain that may be related to anxiety or psychosomatic reasons, such as stomach pain and headaches, was also common. Below are some of the most frequently identified issues:

Headaches	23%
Back problem	20%
Pain or loss of function / mobility from injuries (this included injuries sustained during torture or whilst homeless and, on one occasion, from a suicide attempt. Broken or missing limbs, hearing loss and loss of cognitive function due to blows to the head were recorded)	17%
Cardio vascular disease	13%
Dental problems	10%
Malnutrition	7%
Breathing difficulties (resulting from circumstances of exploitation)	7%
Hepatitis B	3%
Cancer	3%

There were also men who were forced to consume drugs, such as of men sold for sex being forced to take Viagra.

Overwhelmingly, men denied having any substance abuse issues both during initial assessment interviews and during the interviews conducted for this research. However, advocates regularly support men with both alcohol and drug abuse problems to access suitable support services. Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs is a common coping mechanism for men who have escaped modern slavery. The under-reporting of substance abuse was also identified by The Salvation Army in 2013.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

 Where men supported by Hestia's Modern Slavery Report Team live	
68%	live with friends and family
25%	live in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation
7%	live in our safe houses

Advocates encourage vulnerable clients to take up safe and secure accommodation. However, such accommodation is very limited in London and the need is growing as more victims of modern slavery are referred into the NRM every year. Men often refuse any option for accommodation that is not in London where they have support networks such as friends and family, community centres and places of worship. Choosing accommodation with friends and family can make men vulnerable to sofa surfing.

Unstable accommodation can undermine the recovery journeys of victims of modern slavery who require stability in order to learn how to manage the symptoms of the trauma they have endured.

“Going into trauma-focused therapy is very difficult because it’s very painful. (...) Victims of modern slavery need to be in a stable situation and that is often missing. It’s very difficult for people to get to the right services. They move a lot, they are very transient so they don’t have quality of care.”

Head of Counter-Trafficking,
Helen Bamber Foundation

76% of men told us they were satisfied with their accommodation. However, when they elaborated, they revealed a number of concerns. For example, some men told us they were happy “as long as there’s somewhere to live,” but men also told us they struggled to sleep due to the noise, they never had privacy, they were worried about being asked to leave and they wished they had their own place. Lowest satisfaction was recorded amongst men who lived in NASS accommodation (20%) and highest satisfaction recorded amongst men who lived in NRM accommodation provided by Hestia (90%).

54% of men slept rough after escaping from their exploiters.

It is now recognised that homeless men are at an increased risk of targeting by traffickers (The Passage, 2016) therefore, these men are at a risk of re-exploitation.

The Government has highlighted the link between homelessness and modern slavery in the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy and has committed to invest in training for frontline staff to enable them to identify victims of modern slavery amongst rough sleepers.

“Men are exploited in farms or for cleaning jobs. They are being collected from London by traffickers and taken outside of London to work in farms. They disappear for a few days, then they run away and return.”

Service Coordinator,
London-based homelessness charity

Professionals confirmed that homelessness remains a risk for victims of modern slavery before, during and after exit from the NRM. Hope for Justice receives referrals of victims of modern slavery from homelessness charities “on a daily basis,” including for clients who had a positive conclusive grounds (CG) decision and had exited the NRM (these referrals were primarily outside London). Overwhelmingly, these clients are men.

When victims of modern slavery receive their conclusive grounds decisions they have 48 hours to leave the service when this decision is negative, or 14 days to leave the service when this decision is positive. The Government has committed to extending this period in its current review of the NRM. This extension would allow more time for advocates to ensure move on support and secure accommodation. A report by City Hearts found that 76% of victims exited the NRM

into “unknown circumstances” (Fresh Start Report, 2017). Until the NRM reforms are implemented, Hestia seeks to secure extensions to this period of move on support whenever move on accommodation has not been identified.

Legislation requires that a housing authority provide accommodation for an applicant if the authority has reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a “priority need”. Government guidance issued to supplement the legislation recognises that victims of modern slavery may have a priority need by virtue of being “vulnerable” but the guidance discourages housing authorities from applying blanket policies to categories of individuals.

Specific guidance emphasises the issues victims of modern slavery face in terms of mental health problems and a lack of support structures. It also notes that homelessness increases the risk that victims of modern slavery and trafficking will be re-trafficked or subjected to further exploitation. However, housing authorities have been granted discretion in determining whether an applicant is “vulnerable.”

The recent case of R (on the application of GS) v London Borough of Waltham Forest, demonstrates that housing authorities are likely to have a lack of understanding of what constitutes “vulnerability” in the case of victims of modern slavery. In the case of GS, the housing authority highlighted the fact that the victim was not “in receipt of any medications or treatment which would normally be associated with someone who has a severe or unstable mental health diagnosis” as a reason to suggest that she was not vulnerable. As previously discussed in this report, shame and reluctance to show vulnerability for male victims of human trafficking and forced labour can result in under-reporting of mental health problems in this group and therefore is likely to lead to challenges in demonstrating vulnerability and therefore priority need.

Mike's story



Mike's first job was at his local supermarket when he was sixteen. He planned to save money so he could train as a plumber, but when his single mum died a few years later, he found himself in debt. Mike struggled with grief and his relationship with his girlfriend broke down. Soon after, Mike lost his job and became homeless.

On his third night on the streets, Mike was approached by a man who offered to help him out with a job and a place to stay. Mike was grateful to have someone care for him. At twenty-one he had no other family and had lost all his friends. The man drove Mike to a warehouse and showed him to a dark room with a mattress on the floor. This became Mike's life. He worked on average 12 hours a day, sometimes even doing 24-hour shifts of strenuous labour. The man paid him £150 a week but kept £100 for rent. Mike was never given protective gear and often injured himself at work. At nights, he often lay awake, unable to sleep from the cold in the unheated warehouse.

The man was never physically abusive towards Mike but he had a bad temper and he would regularly shout at him and put him down in front of others. Mike came to believe he wasn't worthy of anything better. He was also terrified of finding himself back on the streets.

After fifteen years, a member of the public noticed that he never left the premises and reported his exploitation to the police. The police visited the premises and asked Mike to follow them to the station. When he was referred to Hestia, Mike was covered in scars, suffered from severe back pain, he was underweight and he was not registered with a GP. Mike's greatest fear when he arrived with us was that he wouldn't be able to raise the money he needed to pay the rent he “owed” his exploiter.

POVERTY

61% of men in our service come from a background of poverty

39% have only completed primary education

All professionals mentioned poverty and limited education as an indicator of vulnerability to exploitation. Traffickers take advantage of these men's desire to make a living for themselves or for their family to trap them into situations of exploitation (The Salvation Army 2013).

Potential victims of modern slavery are eligible to varying levels of subsistence dependent on whether this is being paid through the Victim Care Contract or National Asylum Support Service. Currently, the maximum amount a victim can receive is £65 per week and the minimum rate is £35.

88% of men relied on food banks, donations, support from their local church or handouts from friends in order to survive.

70% of men never had money to buy clothing

55% of men can never afford to buy food.

One of the men who told us he could afford food explained *"I just have to eat a little less"*.

Lack of cooking skills amongst men can further exacerbate their food poverty. Sourcing food from food banks requires being able to cook. Wherever possible, our advocates try to identify cooking classes for these men, however, these are very few and travel costs to them can be prohibitive. Men often report that they are surviving on cheap biscuits for sustenance. Instances of men at the lower subsistence rates found to be working at restaurants in exchange for leftover food have also been reported by our team.

The men living in our service who received the higher subsistence rates suffered less from poverty with all saying they could afford to buy food. They were also less likely to report being dependent on food banks and donations to cover daily essentials. However, even at the higher subsistence rates these men struggled to afford clothing.

The professionals we spoke to agreed that reliance on food and clothing selected by others can be especially problematic for victims of modern slavery who have spent so long in a situation of exploitation where their choices and agency was removed.

Victims of modern slavery are currently expected to cover £10/week of their travel costs to access their entitlements under the Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT). Expenses over that are covered under the Victim Care Contract. However, £10 can represent over a quarter of the weekly subsistence for some victims of modern slavery.

During interviews, we asked men if they ever had to resort to illegal work in order to get by. Two men who volunteered that information said that they had done, with one getting paid £4.50 an hour and one getting paid £4 a shift. Both of these men were on the lowest subsistence rates (£35/week). It is not common for such cases to be identified in our service. Our advocates always provide emergency support when this happens, including making referrals to the police when clients are found to be re-exploited for slavery or helping clients move to alternative accommodation and supporting them via applications to statutory or hardship funds whenever possible.

Poverty, therefore, risks driving victims of modern slavery to new situations of exploitation at a time when they should be receiving protection and focusing on their recovery.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

47% of the men we support have no living family

The men in our service often disclosed losing their primary carer - usually their mother or, in some cases, both parents - while they were children. Many of the men we support are orphans. Often, these men have been exploited by traffickers as children and remain trapped in exploitation through to adulthood. The death of one or both parents has previously been identified as a vulnerability to exploitation for both male and female victims of modern slavery by The Salvation Army.

Social isolation is also exacerbated by poverty. Even for men who have living families, poverty can prevent them from contacting loved ones overseas. Many men told us that they have lost contact with their family because they do not have a phone and cannot afford the cost of a call.

“I cannot even telephone my mother otherwise I wouldn’t have enough to live on.”

Lithuanian man
supported by Hestia

Lack of access to a phone and the costs of participating in social activities mean that many men are cut off from social networks.

64% of the men said that they only had their advocate, their counselor or their pastor to speak to.

“The work that Hestia’s male advocates do is invaluable. It’s so important for men who have escaped slavery to have the friendship and acceptance of your advocates that for the clients of ours who do, I actually don’t want them to get their (Conclusive Grounds) decisions too soon so they can benefit from those friendships for a little longer.”

Head of Counter-Trafficking,
Helen Bamber Foundation

Often men will also cut contact with their families as a result of shame for what has happened to them.

“The kids don’t know about my situation. I wouldn’t know what to tell them.”

Romanian man
supported by Hestia

The men we support often tell us that they are bored and have nothing to do. Even when social activities do exist, travel costs can be prohibitive. Access to social activities is not recognised as an ECAT entitlement, and therefore, victims of modern slavery are expected to cover their own travel costs. The asylum fund and other support funds such as the Victim Care Fund or the Human Trafficking Foundation fund do not recognise social activities as a priority and applications are frequently turned down. For many men, being able to access their local faith group is their only way to socialize. Being housed away from their local

community church was cited as a key cause of dissatisfaction with their accommodation by the men in our service who were unable to afford the travel costs.

The Head of Counter-Trafficking at the Helen Bamber Foundation told us that male victims of modern slavery can often be a lot more isolated than women. For example, there are communal aspects around having babies or children but men do not benefit from these commonalities.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

“I fear every day they will take me. I would prefer to be in prison than returned to them. If that would happen my hope would be lost.”

Nigerian man supported by Hestia

70% of men choose not to co-operate with police investigations. When men expressed their reasons for not cooperating, it was always down to fear of their exploiters finding out and recapturing them. In our interview with the Coordinator of a London homelessness charity we were told that the traffickers regularly threaten their victims by telling them that the police work with them and that if they try to report them, the traffickers will find out and punish them for it. This psychological manipulation can act as a very strong barrier to prevent victims from speaking to the police even after their escape. Other reasons cited included shame over what had happened to them and a desire to “get on with their lives.”

“Men are far harder to engage than women in terms of reporting and supporting prosecutions. The shame and embarrassment of not being able to provide for their families is “condensed” in the process of supporting a prosecution. This is why most men will refuse to engage in the process. (...) They just want to move on and provide support for their families. So they go back to searching for work.”

Head of Anti-Slavery Unit,
Metropolitan Police

Lack of cooperation with the police can reduce a victim's chances of being granted discretionary leave to remain in the UK, as discretionary leave can be granted for the purpose of supporting a police investigation.

Despite the barriers to cooperating with the police, 30% of the men we support in our service choose to do so. These men often have a strong desire to see their exploiters punished for what they have done to them.

“The business model seems to have become more elaborate. Employers use different practices to protect themselves – for example, it is becoming very difficult to identify a direct connection to the transfer of individuals who end up being exploited.”

Head of Anti-Slavery Unit,
Metropolitan Police

The failure of prosecutions can be devastating for the men who have co-operated with investigations. At that point, our advocates can see a deterioration in the mental health of the men they support brought on by the feeling of injustice – they continue to suffer from what happened to them on a daily basis, while their exploiters walk free.

50% of men had spent time in prison or in detention. For the five men who gave us the reason for spending time in prison or detention, the offences were related to their trafficking. These included theft, driving offences (for driving traffickers without a license or insurance), working with illegal documents or immigration offences. This is despite the fact the Modern Slavery Act provides a statutory defense against imprisonment for offences that are attributable to slavery or to relevant exploitation.

“Sometimes having been through the criminal justice system can be an indicator of exploitation. For example, if there are men who have convictions from around the country for low-level crime, that may be an indicator of being coerced into criminal activities. (...) Police forces are getting better at spotting the signs but they can still get it wrong. There is compulsory modern slavery training by the College of Policing, but no governance to check whether officers complete it. There is also no time set aside for officers to complete the training.”

Head of Anti-Slavery Unit,
Metropolitan Police

There are few legal aid solicitors in London with expertise in modern slavery. It can take three months of extensive efforts by our team to identify suitable legal representation for victims of modern slavery. The greater risk is referring potential victims of modern slavery to a legal aid solicitor without expertise in the field.

“There’s a problem over well-meaning solicitors with poor knowledge of the Modern Slavery Act, poor ability to pick up indicators, often encouraging their clients to plead guilty because it will lead them to a reduced sentence.”

Trafficked boys and young men’s practitioner,
Children’s Society

Although offences relating to exploitation should not be affecting the legal rights of male victims of modern slavery, in practice they do.

“Criminals are not expected to get discretionary leave. However, it is not clear from the (DLR) guidance if convictions associated with trafficking are excluded. People who have convictions that are related to their exploitation may not be able to argue effectively and that can affect their chances of being granted leave to remain.”

Immigration Solicitor,
ATLEU

New guidance for EEA nationals is also complex and very difficult to navigate for victims who are expected to make their own applications.

Lack of cooperation with the police, not reporting offences to the police and having a criminal conviction can also result in having a compensation award reduced or withheld, through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). Even if convictions charges later become spent or are quashed, the relevant date for a compensation claim is the time of the application. If a victim is not granted discretionary leave to remain and does not go through the NRM, it can also prevent them obtaining compensation.

Victims of forced labour may be able to claim compensation through the employment tribunal, but there are many challenges including a three month deadline for bringing claims.

The ability of men to recognise themselves as victims and to request support can also affect their legal rights. Disclosing such information often brings about feelings of shame or can trigger flashbacks. For that reason, victims can hold back on crucial information and undermine their chances of being granted a positive CG decision.

“Male victims often regard accessing support as an indulgence they are not worthy of. This can affect their legal rights in the sense that clients don’t often volunteer relevant information to support their cases.”

Immigration Solicitor,
ATLEU

APPROACHES TO FORCED LABOUR IN THE ENGLISH COURTS

“Psychologically it can be very difficult for these men to escape. As an outsider it’s not always easy to see why they don’t walk away. The holding factor is psychological and comes down to the shame associated with failing your family. Very often we see people who are not being paid go back to their traffickers hoping they’ll get paid in the future.”

Head of Anti-Slavery Unit,
Metropolitan Police

In the case of R (on the application of Said Abdelmoneim Ahmed Saadawi) v The Secretary of State for the Home Department, the High Court emphasised the requirement that for there to be “forced labour”, the work must be carried out under “menace of penalty”. However, this can be a high threshold to prove for a potential victim of forced labour.

In that case, the claimant, Said, was working for a powerful Qatari man named Abdullah from 6am until the early hours of the following morning, having no days off and receiving only minimal and irregular pay. Said felt that he needed to provide for his family in Egypt since his father had died and he was the eldest son. Following an argument, Abdullah threatened to report Said to the Egyptian authorities and have him arrested and hit him in the head with a shoe. Said left Abdullah’s flat and subsequently became homeless. The court found that on the facts, Abdullah was not a victim of forced labour because he had been able to walk out of Abdullah’s flat.

The court pointed to guidance stating that working for low wages or in poor conditions, in situations of economic necessity, cannot be equated with forced labour. It found that despite being transported into the UK whilst in a position of vulnerability and working in poor conditions, there had not been a sufficiently high level of harm and control or coercion in the claimant’s relationship with his employer for a finding of trafficking for the purposes of forced labour or domestic servitude.

This demonstrates that the bar to prove exploitation and forced labour is high in the English courts. In the above example, the fact that the claimant was able to escape his employer was sufficient for a finding that he was not a victim of forced labour, even though the alternative was homelessness.

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE OF SURVIVORS

“I fear the unknown. Fear returning to slavery or any other unknown awaiting me.”

Chinese man
supported by Hestia

We asked men which of the following would have improved their experience since escaping.

Leave to remain	78%
Greater financial support	78%
Better housing	71%
Earlier access to health services	67%
Feeling safe	64%
Earlier access to mental health support	61%
Access to better legal advice	50%

Worries over immigration were linked to fears of their exploiters with several of the men telling us they feared for their lives if they are returned. Men regularly expressed fear of their exploiters and uncertainty about the future.

Many of the men expressed feelings of shame for not being able to support their families and frustration for not being allowed to work whilst in the NRM.

The men also made their own suggestions, including access to English language classes, access to social activities and being able to work.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

The men who took part in this research shared a lot of the same hopes. They spoke of their hope for “a better life, a normal life” but also a life without fear. Men told us they hoped they would be allowed to stay in the UK and be able to work.

For the many men who had no family, the desire was that one day they would have a family of their own. For those who had lost contact with loved ones, the desire was that they would be able to reunite with them.

For many still, their hope was that they would reach a position where they would be able to repay those who helped them along the way and even help others who have suffered similar trauma.

*“When I have my leave to remain,
I want to work and get married
and have my own family and help
people who are in need as well as all
the people of your organization for
standing beside me.”*

Ghanaian man
supported by Hestia

CONCLUSION

In the past few years, there has been greater recognition of male victims of modern slavery, as evidenced by the increased number of referrals of men into the NRM. However, men continue to be perceived as more resilient and less traumatised by the experience of modern slavery and thus less in need of support. In London, there are still considerably fewer services for men who have escaped modern slavery, and less long-term support.

Not fully recognising men as victims can also lead to failures in the justice system. Men are more likely to be forced into criminality whilst exploited for labour and thus more likely to spend time in prison or in detention for offences they were forced to commit. Despite greater awareness of modern slavery in recent years, both the police and legal professionals can miss the signs of modern slavery and penalise victims.

More than half of male victims of modern slavery have been homeless. The links between homelessness and modern slavery have been identified before, though this is the first time there has been an attempt to assess the scale of the problem. Failing to protect victims of modern slavery from homelessness and homeless people from traffickers will only lead to the cycle of exploitation being perpetuated. It is crucial that homelessness charities are seen as a key partner in all anti-slavery partnerships and support pathways in London.

If we continue to ignore the vulnerabilities of men who have experienced modern slavery we take away their right to recover. Ignoring the needs of men plays into the interests of the criminal gangs who take advantage of their victims’ vulnerabilities to re-exploit them for profit.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Access to mental and physical health support

- NHS should develop specialist mental health services for men who have escaped modern slavery; and
- prioritise access to culturally sensitive therapy for victims of modern slavery.
- Government should ensure that future service models consider and meet the needs of men, including men who are not ready to accept support via the Victim Care Contract; and
- ensure the availability of support for victims of modern slavery after exit from the NRM to minimise the risk of re-exploitation in accordance with the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill;
- Civil Society should develop gender-sensitive wellbeing and support interventions at places that are accessed by male victims of modern slavery, such as community centres and places of worship, to engage men who are not ready to accept support via the Victim Care Contract;

2. Safe and secure accommodation

- Government should ensure all statutory provided accommodation adheres to the Trafficking Survivor Care Standards for accommodation developed by the Human Trafficking Foundation;
- Local Authorities should recognise, for the purpose of their legal obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act all victims of modern slavery as a vulnerable group and persons who are homeless and are vulnerable to exploitation as having priority needs; and
- comply with the Government's Homelessness Code of Guidance for providing homelessness services to victims of modern slavery;
- Housing authorities should establish local, joint working arrangements with NRM support providers and homelessness charities to ensure the early identification and protection of victims of modern slavery who are homeless and of homeless people who are at risk of exploitation.
- Homelessness charities should capture and share data on modern slavery and understand how to identify and refer vulnerable individuals; and be recognised and resourced in identifying victims of modern slavery and those at risk of exploitation;

3. The means to live in safety and dignity and to recover

- Government should use the planned review of the National Referral Mechanism to recognise and address the impact of poverty on the recovery journeys of victims of modern slavery and on the risk of re-exploitation;

4. Social integration and connectedness

- Civil Society should develop community solutions to enhance the integration, social connectedness and safety of men vulnerable to exploitation, particularly focusing on increasing access to smart phone technology.

5. Protection and competent representation

- National Police Chiefs Council should ensure that all police forces adopt compulsory training on modern slavery that adheres to the standards of the College of Policing.
- All police forces should actively set aside time for their staff to complete training on modern slavery.
- NHS, Local Authorities, Home Office and the Police should resource effective data collection and information sharing to identify instances of re-exploitation and facilitate the early identification and protection of vulnerable individuals;

At Hestia, we support adults and children across London in times of crisis. Last year we worked with more than 9,000 people, including victims of modern slavery, women and children who have experienced domestic abuse, young care leavers and older people. Hestia's modern slavery response team started in 2011 and since then Hestia has supported over 2,500 victims of modern slavery and their dependents. Currently, Hestia provides 5 safe houses in London and Kent, as well as a pan-London outreach service working in every London borough. We work closely with The Salvation Army to deliver support to victims who have been referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and who have chosen to be supported by the Home Office funded Victim Care Contract. In 2018, Hestia also launched the Phoenix Project in partnership with the British Red Cross to provide volunteer-led, long-term support to victims of modern slavery.

For more information, please contact us at:
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To make a donation, please visit:
[Hestia.org/appeal/modernslavery](https://hestia.org/appeal/modernslavery)

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