

Modern slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced and compulsory labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

A large number of active organised crime groups are involved in modern slavery. But it is also committed by individual opportunistic perpetrators.

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist.

Someone is in slavery if they are:

- forced to work – through mental or physical threat;
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property';
- physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, gender and races.

Human trafficking involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them.

If an identified victim of human trafficking is also an adult with care and support needs, the response will be co-ordinated under the adult safeguarding process. The police are the lead agency in managing responses to adults who are the victims of human trafficking.

There is a national framework to assist in the formal identification and help to coordinate the referral of victims to appropriate services, known as the National Referral Mechanism.

Possible Indicators:

Signs of various types of slavery and exploitation are often hidden, making it hard to recognise potential victims. Victims can be any age, gender or ethnicity or nationality. Whilst by no means exhaustive, this is a list of some common signs:

- Adult is not in possession of their legal documents (passport, identification and bank account details) and they are being held by someone else;

- The adult has old or serious untreated injuries and they are vague, reluctant or inconsistent in explaining how the injury occurred.
- The adult looks malnourished, unkempt, or appears withdrawn
- They have few personal possessions and often wear the same clothes
- What clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work.
- The adult is withdrawn or appears frightened, unable to answer questions directed at them or speak for themselves and/or an accompanying third party speaks for them. If they do speak, they are inconsistent in the information they provide, including basic facts such as the address where they live
- They appear under the control/influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work. Many victims will not be able to speak English
- Fear of authorities
- The adult perceives themselves to be in debt to someone else or in a situation of dependence

Environmental indicators

- Outside the property- there are bars covering the windows of the property or they are permanently covered on the inside. Curtains are always drawn. Windows have reflective film or coatings applied to them. The entrance to the property has CCTV cameras installed. The letterbox is sealed to prevent use. There are signs the electricity may have been tacked on from neighbouring properties or directly from power lines?
- Inside the property- access to the back rooms of the property is restricted or doors are locked. The property is overcrowded and in poor repair

Who should you tell?

If a professional becomes concerned that an individual is being exploited or is at risk of exploitation then they should act immediately. Raise the issue with your line manager and they will be able to provide you with some advice regarding your own agency's/service's procedures in this area. Complete the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking checklist – this will help you in your decision making and conversations with your line manager in terms of next steps. This is also helpful for the Safeguarding Service when sending through a safeguarding concern and for contact with TVP.

If you believe the alleged victim to be a child you should make an immediate safeguarding referral to the area Children's Safeguarding service/ Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). If in any doubt about age you should always treat the victim as a child if there is any reason to think the victim might be under 18 years of age.

If the alleged victim is an adult you complete an adult safeguarding concern identifying “modern slavery” as the abuse type which will be sent to the Safeguarding Service for consideration. Consider whether you can have a conversation with the alleged victim in private.

You should not discuss your concerns with them other than in private. Other persons, including those they appear to know or trust or who may claim to be family members, might be exploiting the suspected victim and discussing your concerns with them might put the victim or others at risk.

Generally, if you believe that there may be other alleged victims involved you should inform TVP because of the wider duty of care to the other alleged victims. If it is not possible to refer them to TVP and you are able to speak to the alleged victim in private, ask their consent to refer them to the Independent Trauma Advice service, Elmore Team on 01865 200130 and ask to speak to a member of the Trauma Team or email info@elmorecommunityservices.org.uk marked for the attention of the Trauma Team..

Referrals to the Police should be made by calling 101. Only calls to 999 should be made if you suspect immediate risk of harm.