

SANDWELL ANTI-SLAVERY NEWSLETTER

Shining a Beacon of Hope and Unity Against Modern Slavery



Welcome to the latest edition of the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Newsletter. As we transition into the vibrant hues of autumn, we are reminded of the ever-changing landscape of our mission to combat modern slavery and human trafficking. In this issue, we bring you a wealth of insights, experiences, and actions taken over the past month in our collective effort to create a slavery-free Sandwell.

In this issue, we explore some crucial themes that underscore our commitment to this cause. We delve into the intricacies of modern slavery, unmasking the myths that often shroud this heinous crime. Our myth-busting series offers a deeper understanding of the issue at hand and empowers us all with knowledge to confront exploitation head-on.

We'll also take you through our enlightening collaborative chats with various teams and organisations, highlighting the power of working together towards a common goal. These discussions have not only broadened our perspectives but also reinforced our belief that unity is our most potent weapon against modern slavery.

In each section of this newsletter, you'll find stories of determination, collaboration, and resilience. Together, we are making progress towards a safer, slavery-free Sandwell. We invite you to explore, engage, and join us in this vital mission.

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Unmasking the Reality of Modern Slavery

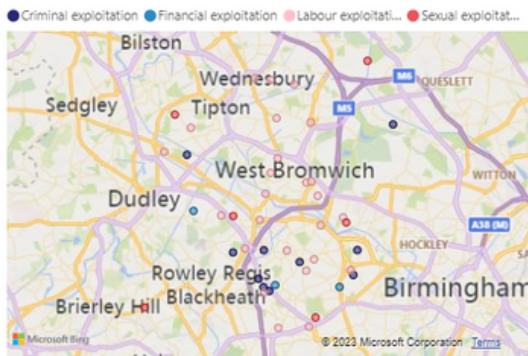
In this quarter, our commitment to combatting modern slavery remains unwavering. We've been diligently tracking and responding to cases with the aim of achieving a slavery-free Sandwell. Here's a snapshot of our efforts:

- **Referrals:** A total of 62 referrals were received. These referrals are crucial in identifying and assisting potential victims of modern slavery.
- **Types of Exploitation:** Within these referrals, we observed various forms of exploitation. These included 25 cases of labour exploitation, 11 cases of criminal exploitation, 6 cases of sexual exploitation, and 3 cases of financial exploitation.
- **Locations:** Our efforts extended across various settings. Notably, 41 cases were identified in private dwellings, 8 in council accommodation, 4 within care agencies, and 7 in businesses.
- **Demographics:** Our screening efforts reached 67 males and 52 females, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the victims involved.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** We carried out 61 multi-agency visits, highlighting the importance of collaboration among different agencies in addressing modern slavery effectively.
- **Interventions:** A total of 91 interventions were made by different agencies, reflecting our collective commitment to providing support and assistance.
- **Disruption:** We successfully disrupted activities in 24 locations, further demonstrating our resolve to dismantle modern slavery networks.

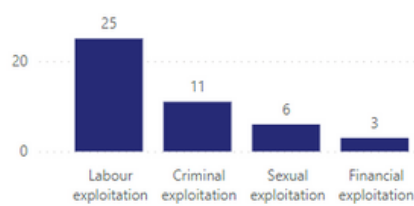
These statistics reveal the dedication and determination of the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership in our ongoing mission. We continue to work tirelessly, striving towards a society free from the scourge of modern slavery

Overview

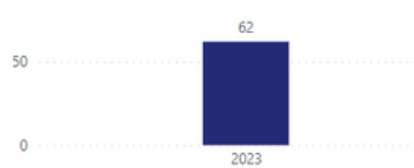
Modern Slavery Locations



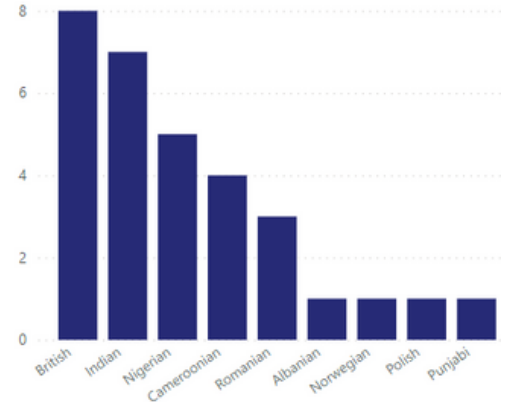
Referral by modern slavery type



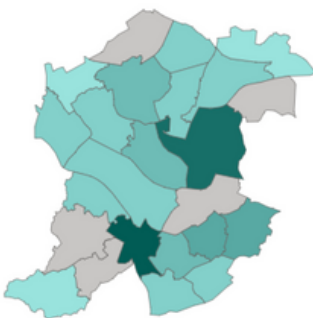
Referrals by year



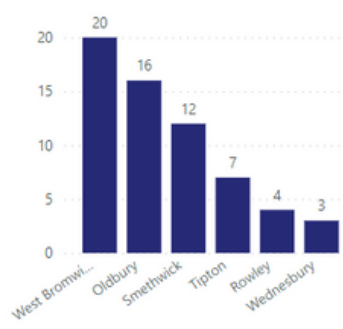
Nationality of potential victim



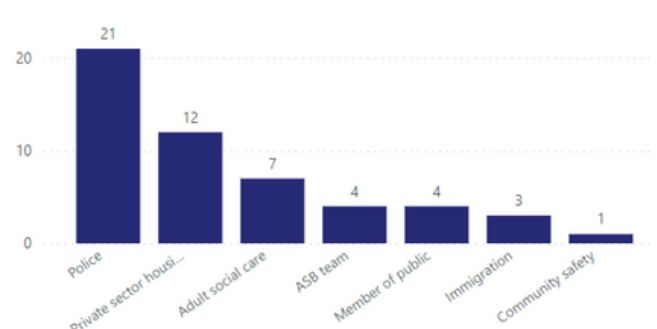
Modern slavery concerns by ward



Referral by town



Referral from



Empowering Change: Collaborative chats and training

In the relentless battle against modern slavery, knowledge is a formidable weapon. This quarter, a remarkable 206 individuals from various teams and organisations have been equipped with the tools and insights needed to identify, combat, and prevent this heinous crime. These dedicated individuals represent a diverse range of sectors, each playing a crucial role in the fight against modern slavery.

Safeguarding Leads Stand Vigilant

The Safeguarding Leads from the Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) are at the forefront of protecting vulnerable individuals in our community. Their training equips them to recognise the signs of modern slavery and to take swift and effective action to safeguard those at risk.

Creating Safe Spaces

The Safe Spaces initiative is an essential resource for individuals who have experienced modern slavery or are at risk. The training provided ensures that these safe havens are not only physically secure but also equipped with the knowledge and empathy needed to support survivors on their journey to recovery.

Empowering the Care Sector

Care workers are often the first to encounter signs of exploitation. This quarter, the National Network of coordinators Forum (NNCF) and the Sandwell New Arrivals Partnership (SNAP) received specialised training on identifying and responding to modern slavery within the care sector. This knowledge is instrumental in protecting both care workers and vulnerable service users.

Collaborative Chats for a Safer Community

Collaborative chats are a cornerstone of our approach. This quarter, a multitude of teams engaged in these vital conversations. From the Community Navigators and Domiciliary Care Providers to Income Management, Safeguarding Teams, Welfare Rights Teams, and Community Partnerships, these chats foster a deeper understanding of modern slavery's nuances and provide strategies for effective prevention and intervention.

The Power of Knowledge

Each of these 206 individuals now possesses the knowledge and skills to become a formidable force against modern slavery. Their training not only empowers them to protect our community but also contributes to a network of vigilant individuals ready to identify and report exploitation.

As we celebrate the training of 206 dedicated individuals, we acknowledge that the fight against modern slavery is a collective effort. Each person trained represents a commitment to ending this crime and protecting the vulnerable. The knowledge they have gained is a beacon of hope, illuminating the path towards a future where modern slavery is eradicated, and all individuals can live free from fear and exploitation.

Collaborative Chat Focus

Our collaborative chats have been a highlight of our efforts. These interactive sessions unite professionals and stakeholders, fostering dialogue and action against modern slavery. Stay tuned for updates on our collaborative chat focus in this month's newsletter

Teams who have engaged in the modern slavery Collaborative chats to date include

- **Community Navigators**
- **Income Management**
- **Safeguarding Adults Team**
- **Welfare Rights Team**
- **Community Partnerships**
- **Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB)**

Housing and West Bromwich and Wednesbury neighbourhood teams are booked in for this week

Invite the modern slavery team to your team meeting for a collaborative chat

modern_slavery@sandwell.gov.uk

Discover the Latest on "Sandwell's Spotlight on Modern Slavery" Blog

In the relentless pursuit of a slavery-free world, knowledge is our most potent weapon. Our blogs are windows into the complex and ever-evolving landscape of modern slavery. They are narratives of hope, resilience, and action. Join us on this insightful journey, where data unveils hidden truths, trauma-informed care fosters healing, Anti-Slavery Day sparks unity, and the voices of overseas care workers demand attention. Together, we unravel the intricate web of modern slavery and empower change.



Unmasking Modern Slavery - Insights from Data

"Numbers can tell stories, and in the fight against modern slavery, they reveal much. Explore our latest findings, uncovering the hidden truths of exploitation that demand our attention."



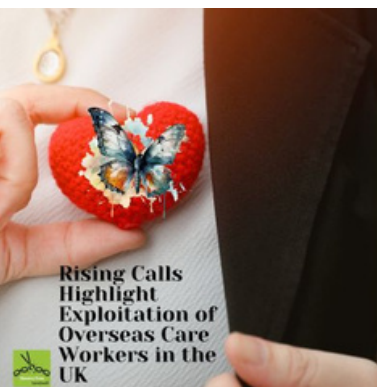
Trauma-Informed Welfare Hub

"In the safe embrace of our Welfare Hub, survivors find solace. Journey with us through the stories of resilience and healing, where compassion is the guiding light."



Empowering Change

"Anti-Slavery Day is not just a date on the calendar; it's a beacon of hope and unity. Revisit the moments that inspired action and reminded us that together, we can make a difference."



Rising Calls Highlight Exploitation of Overseas Care Workers in the UK

"Behind each call lies a story of courage and vulnerability. Explore the stark realities faced by overseas care workers and the urgent need for change in the care sector."

'Sandwell's Spotlight on Modern Slavery' has had 593 views and 28 insightful posts since it was launched in August.

It's more than just a blog; it's a movement. Join us in unravelling the intricacies of modern slavery, empowering change, and uniting a community dedicated to eradicating exploitation.

Explore the stories, insights, and actions that are lighting up the path to a slavery-free world. Dive into the heart of our mission and be part of something bigger than yourself. Together, we can make a difference

Most read posts

The Alarming Rise of modern slavery in the care sector



Sandwell Councils Transparency statement



Our mission against modern slavery



Reporting modern slavery in Sandwell

In our collective mission to combat modern slavery and human trafficking, reporting is the cornerstone of our efforts. It's through your expertise and diligence that we can uncover and respond to instances of exploitation effectively. That's why we're introducing you to the **Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP)**, a crucial initiative designed to streamline the reporting process for modern slavery concerns within Sandwell.

The Role of SHOP

SHOP operates as a central hub for receiving reports related to modern slavery. It serves as a virtual scoping mechanism, bringing together key agencies to comprehensively assess and respond to every report. Reporting to SHOP is not just a recommendation; it's a professional duty that ensures the most efficient and effective response to modern slavery cases.

Why Report to SHOP?

When you report to SHOP, you initiate a well-structured, three-stage approach to address modern slavery concerns:

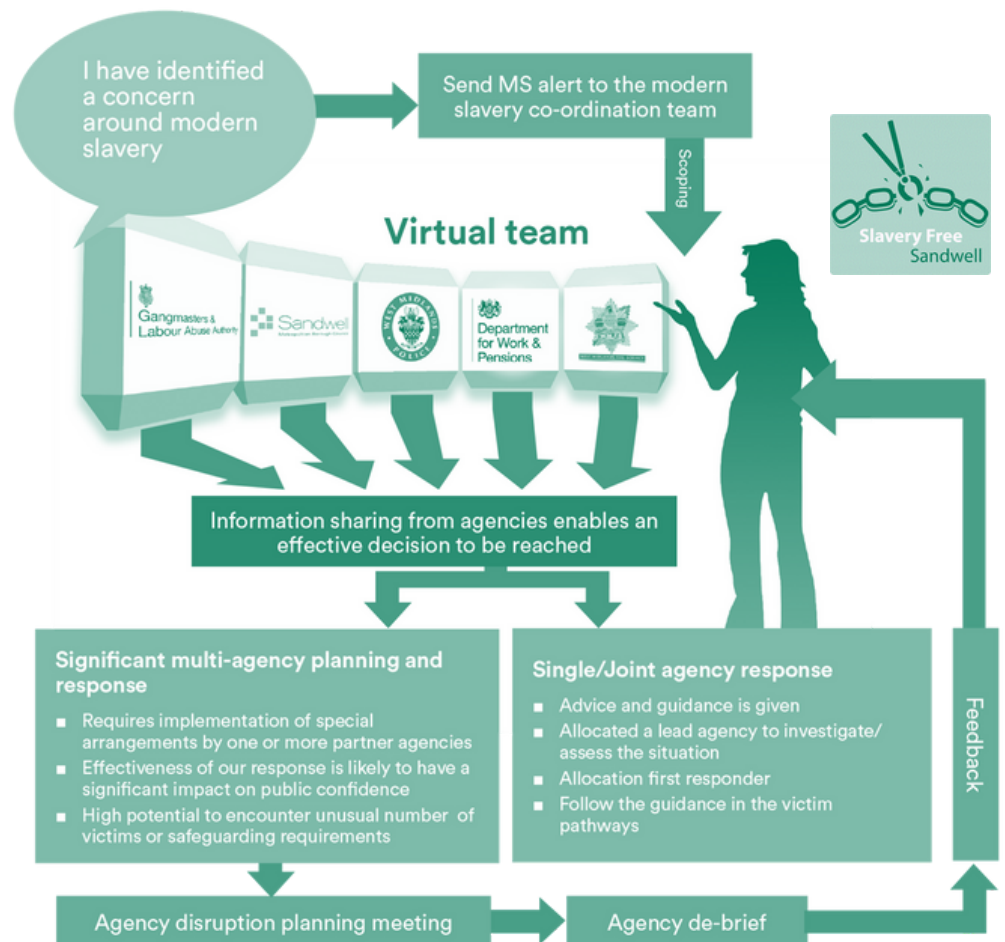
- 1. Support Victims:** Your report sets in motion the process of identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. We place paramount importance on their well-being and ensure they receive the necessary assistance and care.
- 2. Pursue Perpetrators:** Your information is invaluable in our efforts to pursue those responsible for modern slavery crimes. We gather evidence, collaborate with law enforcement, and take legal action against perpetrators to bring them to justice.
- 3. Disrupt Locations:** Your reports empower us to disrupt the locations used for exploitation. By intervening in these places, we prevent further harm, safeguard potential victims, and dismantle the networks that perpetuate slavery.

[Read the first responder guidance for further information](#)

How to Report

Reporting to SHOP is a straightforward and confidential process. If you come across any suspicion of modern slavery or human trafficking within Sandwell, please fulfill your professional duty and contact SHOP. Send an email to modern_slavery@sandwell.gov.uk with your concerns.

Your timely and accurate reports play a pivotal role in our shared goal of building a safer, slavery-free Sandwell. By collaborating through SHOP, we strengthen our response to this critical is



FIRST RESPONDER GUIDANCE
READ NOW

Putting welfare first

In recent years, the UK has witnessed a concerning surge in the exploitation of skilled care workers, many of whom have arrived on its shores with dreams of providing compassionate care to those in need. However, they soon find themselves entangled in a web of deceit, high debts, and challenging working conditions.

In this article, we'll shed light on this alarming trend and explore a beacon of hope – the Welfare Hub – as a shining example of best practice in supporting exploited care workers.

A Growing Crisis: Exploitation of Skilled Care Workers

The care sector in the UK has long been grappling with staffing shortages. In an effort to bridge this gap, overseas workers have been recruited, offering their skills and compassion to support vulnerable individuals. However, as the demand for care workers surged, so did the instances of exploitation.

Skilled care workers, who often arrive with high hopes and aspirations, have been subjected to exorbitant fees for travel and sponsorship certificates. Some unscrupulous employers and agents charged workers up to £25,000, leaving them trapped in insurmountable debt. With passports confiscated and gruelling work schedules, these individuals find themselves caught in a cycle of exploitation, far from the dignified and compassionate work they aspired to provide.

The Welfare Hub: A Ray of Hope

In the midst of this crisis, the Welfare Hub emerged as a beacon of hope for exploited care workers. This innovative initiative brought together over 20 agencies and services, all united in their commitment to support those in need.

During the Welfare Hub event, which saw the participation of 69 skilled care workers from various agencies, attendees received comprehensive assistance, including advice, assessments, and access to a wide range of essential services. From housing and health support to immigration guidance, human rights advocacy, exploitation screenings, and financial advice, every effort was made to understand the workers' situations and address their immediate needs.

An Ongoing Commitment

The Welfare Hub's success underlines the power of unity and collaboration in addressing complex issues. It serves as a testament to what can be achieved when agencies, organisations, and communities come together to support vulnerable individuals.

While this initiative provides much-needed immediate relief, it also highlights the urgent need for systemic change in the care sector. The exploitation of skilled care workers is a stark reminder that improvements in pay, working conditions, and recruitment practices are essential to ensure that vulnerable individuals are cared for by a workforce that is not itself exploited.

As we continue to shine a light on this issue and advocate for meaningful change, we stand in solidarity with skilled care workers, upholding the values of dignity, compassion, and fairness that should define their work in the UK.

Welfare Hub

The Welfare Hub brought together over 20 agencies and services.

A dedicated team of over 50 professionals and volunteers came together to provide comprehensive support.

69 Attendees from 9 Care Agencies.

Participants represented diverse locations across the UK, from London to Scotland, highlighting the national scale of the issue.

Attendees received immediate relief, including food, clothing, and supermarket vouchers.

The event identified potential victims of modern slavery, with several workers disclosing exploitative practices.

Anti-Slavery Partnership

Join in the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership: Unite Against Exploitation

At the heart of every successful initiative against modern slavery and human trafficking is a community of dedicated agencies and professionals working together. In Sandwell, we've established the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership, a collaborative force committed to eradicating modern slavery from our community.

Who We Are

The Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership is a collective effort that brings together various agencies, organisations, and individuals who share a common goal – putting an end to modern slavery. We firmly believe that together, we are stronger. Our partnership spans across sectors, from law enforcement and social services to local authorities and community organisations. We leverage each other's strengths and expertise to build a united front against exploitation.

Our Mission

Our mission is simple yet profound: to create a safer, slavery-free Sandwell. We are dedicated to raising awareness, empowering action, and providing support to victims while pursuing justice against perpetrators. We work tirelessly to disrupt the locations used for exploitation and to prevent further harm.

Why Join Us?

Joining the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership means becoming part of a dynamic, collaborative network that makes a real impact. By aligning with us, you'll have the opportunity to:

- **Make a Difference:** Your agency's involvement can directly contribute to our mission of eradicating modern slavery from Sandwell. Your expertise and resources can help bring about meaningful change.
- **Collaborate:** Joining the partnership opens doors to valuable collaborations with a diverse range of professionals and organisations. You'll have the chance to work alongside experts in the field and leverage collective knowledge to address complex issues.
- **Raise Awareness:** Together, we can amplify our message and educate our community about the realities of modern slavery. By joining us, you'll be at the forefront of raising awareness and driving change.

How to Join

Joining the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership is easy. If your agency shares our commitment to ending modern slavery and wants to be part of this critical initiative, we encourage you to get in touch.

Simply send an email to modern_slavery@sandwell.gov.uk, expressing your interest and providing some information about your agency.

Together, we can create a safer, more compassionate Sandwell. Together, we can make a difference. Join the Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership and be part of the solution.

Modern slavery news

Unseen Report - Who Cares? A Review of Reports of Exploitation in the Care Sector

Unseen's latest report delves into labour exploitation within the care sector. It exposes a staggering 606% surge in reported modern slavery cases among care workers, particularly those from overseas. In 2022, the Unseen Helpline registered 712 potential victims, a substantial increase from the previous year's 106. Read the full report [here](#).

IOM Mid-Year NRM Data Briefing

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has released a mid-year briefing for 2023, analysing the UK Data Service NRM data, with a focus on changes introduced through the Nationality and Borders Act. This report uncovers significant variations in positive Reasonable Grounds (RG) decisions by nationality, with a notable 86% for UK nationals compared to 40% for foreign nationals. Explore the briefing [here](#).

Hestia Report - Underground Lives: Albanian Survivors of Modern Slavery

Hestia's report delves into the experiences of Albanian survivors of modern slavery, a prevalent nationality supported by their response team. The report highlights fears of re-exploitation among these survivors, revealing that only 46% had reported their experiences to the police. Out of those who did, merely 22% received updates regarding the investigation. Read the report [here](#).

Salvation Army Annual Report 2023

The Salvation Army has issued its Annual Report for the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC), covering the period from July 2022 to June 2023. This report offers insights into the demographics of service users and the types of exploitation faced, along with updates on MSVCC developments. Read the report [here](#).

Government County Lines Guidance Updates

The government's guidelines for frontline professionals dealing with criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults across county lines have been updated. The guidance defines county lines, highlights signs to look for in potential victims, and outlines appropriate actions. A Welsh translation of the document has also been added. [here](#).

OSCE Report: Sexual Service Websites

A comprehensive report mapping the online landscape of human trafficking risks on sexual services websites across OSCE regions has been published. The study covers almost 2,900 sex service websites and more than 3 million ads, representing the most extensive research ever conducted on this topic. It reveals that platforms facilitating exploitative sexual activity are prevalent in the vast majority of the 40 OSCE participating States analysed. [here](#).