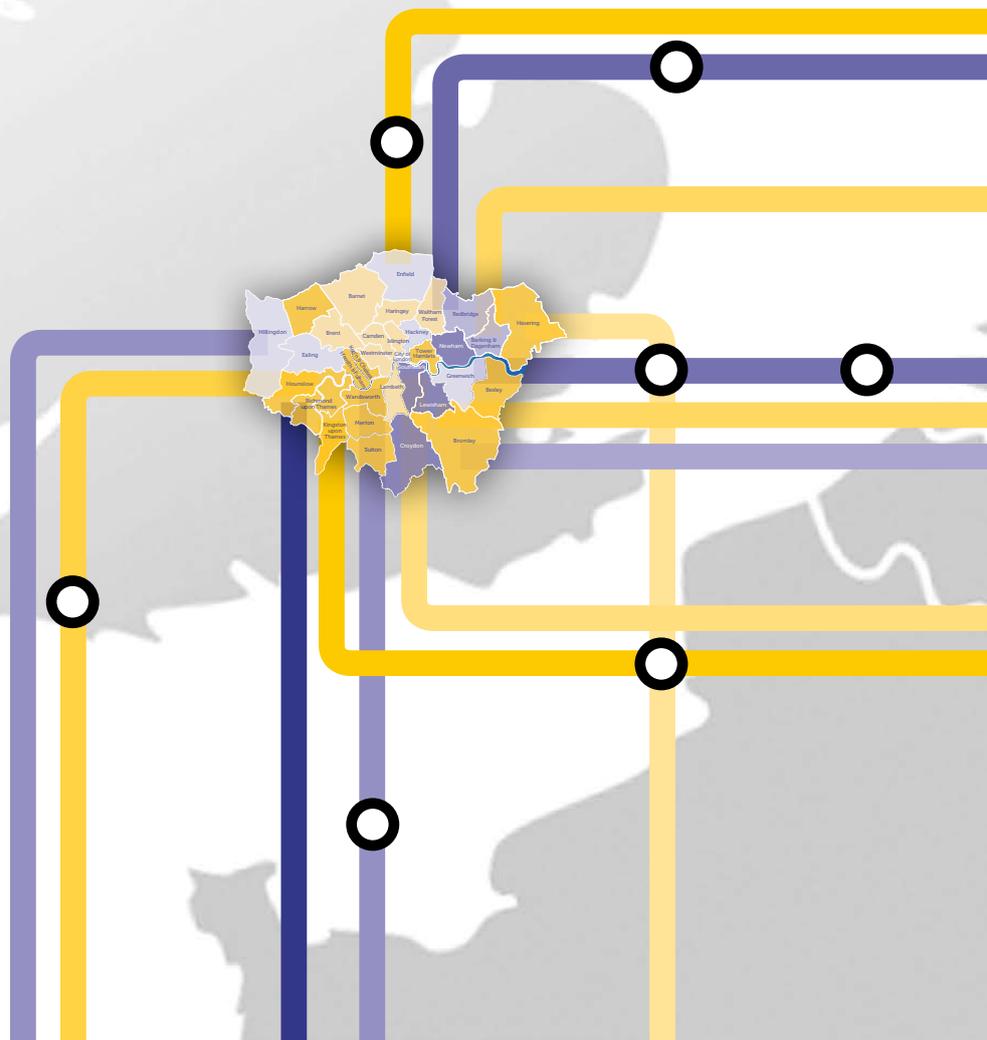




Underground Lives

The Reality of Modern Slavery in London

November 2017



Introduction

This paper gives an overview of modern slavery in London and describes the challenges that victims face. In 2016 Hestia supported 624 victims of modern slavery across London. This was an increase of over 100 victims from the previous year.

Hestia's modern slavery service started in 2011 and we have supported over 1,600 victims since then. Currently, we provide 5 safe houses in London and Kent as well as a pan-London outreach service working in every London borough. In order to raise awareness of modern slavery we also provide training to partner agencies and corporates to increase their ability to identify victims and understand pathways to support.

We work closely with The Salvation Army to deliver support to victims who have been referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is a national framework that ensures victims of modern slavery are identified and receive appropriate support.

Methodology

Several methods involving field and desk based research were used to gain a perspective of the scale and challenges faced by victims of modern slavery in London:

- Data analysis from 624 clients who were in our modern slavery service in 2016.
- Focus groups with staff to identify the main challenges which modern slavery victims face both when first identified as trafficked and later at exit from the service. One group focussed particularly on the challenges that male modern slavery victims face as there is less literature and data available for this group nationally.
- A survey developed with insight from service users and staff that explored key areas such as health and finance. 186 modern slavery clients in our London services responded.
- A review of initial assessment data of all 39 clients referred to our services in December 2016.
- Service user group consultations also took place to gain a more in-depth understanding of the issues that had arisen from the questionnaires. These meetings took place at 2 different safe houses and 10 clients participated.

What is Modern Slavery?

The UN Palermo Protocol (2000) defines that trafficking in persons shall mean the “Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”. This definition sets out three main factors that determine whether an individual is considered as a potential victim of trafficking. First, it considers if there was movement in the form of recruitment and transporting. Secondly, if coercion was used, be it by force, deception or vulnerability and finally if the purpose is clearly exploitation.

Components of Human Trafficking



In March 2015, the United Kingdom introduced the Modern Slavery Act. The term ‘modern slavery’ is broader than trafficking and encompasses sexual exploitation, debt bondage, forced labour, organ removal, domestic servitude, human trafficking, and slavery in all its forms, including descent-based and child slavery. By extending its reach, the United Kingdom (UK) government created two offences—trafficking and slavery—increasing the maximum sentences for them to life imprisonment.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in a victim’s journey

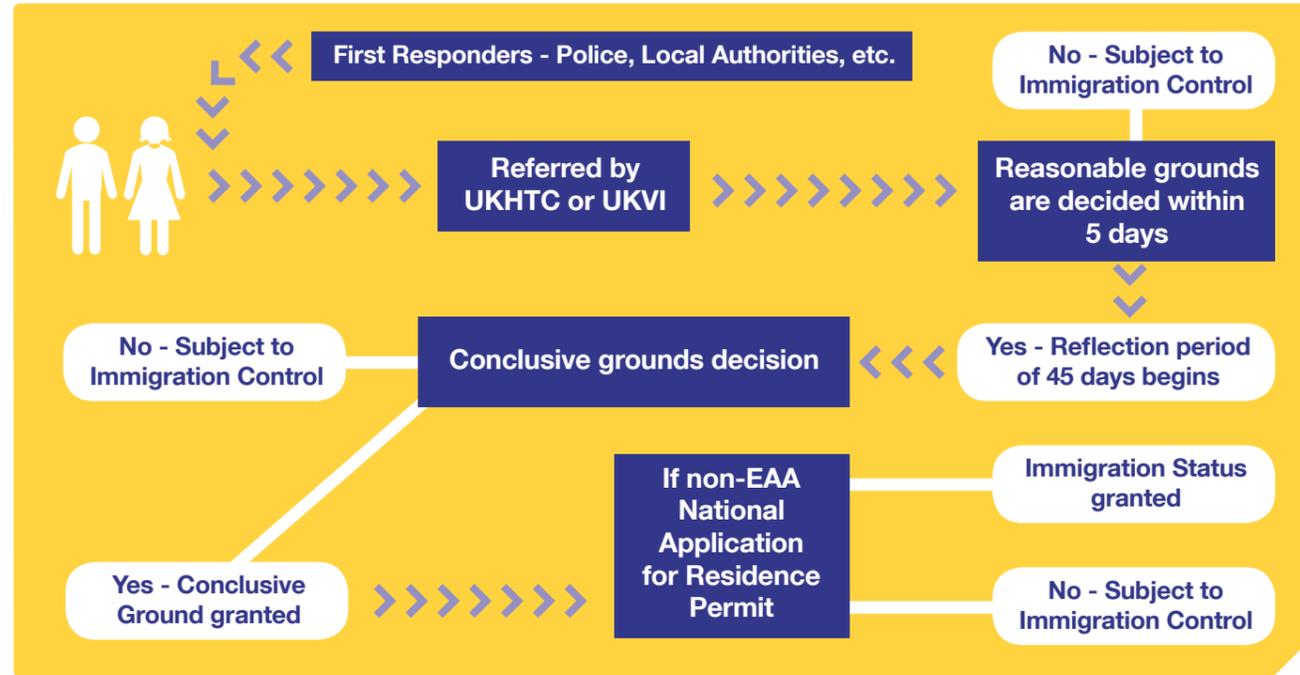
The signing of the Council Convention of Europe on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings directive led to the creation of the NRM in 2009. The NRM was designed as a victim identification process making it easier for agencies involved in the trafficking case to share information and facilitate access to support.

The Convention requires that victims are provided with a period of a minimum of 30 days for recovery and reflection, during which they will receive support, including accommodation, subsistence and access to relevant medical and legal services, but only potential

eligibility for discretionary leave if they are recognised as a victim. The UK provides this support to potential victims referred to the NRM for a period of 45 days.

When a victim of modern slavery is identified they are referred in to the NRM by one of the competent authorities: UK Human Trafficking centre (UKHTC) if they are a UK or EEA national and to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) if they are a non-EEA national. This referral is done through an authorised agency known as a ‘First Responder’. They will complete a referral which is voluntary and can only happen if the victim gives permission to do so. In the cases of minors, consent is not needed.

NRM Pathway



The Competent Authority will assess and make a decision on whether an individual is a victim of modern slavery. First, the NRM will decide if from the information provided it is 'reasonable' to believe that the victim meets the modern slavery criteria. The caseworker will have 5 days to make this assessment. If they deem that there are 'Reasonable Grounds' (RG) to believe that the victim has been trafficked, they will allocate safe accommodation if needed and grant the 45 day reflection and recovery period.

During the reflection period the Competent Authority will gather more information on the case and make a 'Conclusive Grounds' (CG) decision on whether it is more likely than not that the person was a victim of modern slavery.

There is no guarantee that the victim will be able to stay in the UK if a positive CG is reached. The victim could be granted discretionary leave for a year if they are co-operating with a police investigation, or apply for leave to remain in the UK depending on their personal circumstances. The Home Office also manages the Assistance Voluntary Return (AVR) programme which can support victims to return to their home country. If the decision is a negative CG, the individual will be subject to immigration control.

Background: Modern Slavery as a business model

Modern slavery is a profit generating business model with no moral compass. The trafficking of individuals is the second most profitable crime after the drug trade (International Labour Organisation, 2014). With an estimated profit of £110 billion each year, over 40.3 million victims were exploited (International Labour Organisation, 2017).

Modern slavery for forced labour and domestic servitude takes many forms but it is driven mainly by the greed for inexpensive labour in order to maximise profit. In the UK, the demand mainly emanates from the construction and agriculture industries as well as from the domestic sector (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014). Sexual trafficking is entirely focused on generating profit.

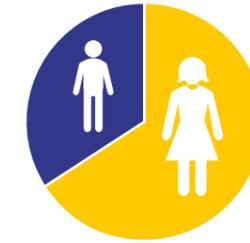
Extent of Modern Slavery in the UK

The government estimates that there are over 13,000 victims of human trafficking in the UK (Home Office, 2014). Of the total number of identified victims in 2016, 66% were adults and 34% were children (NCA, 2017).

The problem is growing in the UK. In 2016 there was a 17% increase in the number of victims referred to the NRM over the year before (National Crime Agency, 2017).

Hestia's work is exclusively with adults and this report focuses on their experience and challenges. We supported victims who have been subjected to sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, at risk of organ removal as well as to forced labour in construction, agriculture, hospitality, nail bars and car washes. 2,527 adult victims were identified in 2016, 91% of whom are in England. 27% of those victims were supported by Hestia in London.

In the UK last year there were victims from 108 different countries. More than a third of adult modern slavery victims came from Albania with the next highest numbers from Vietnam and the United Kingdom (NCA, 2017). The UK is the third highest country of origin for adults and the highest for children referred into the NRM. The majority of children are girls who are sexually exploited.



Of the total number of identified victims in 2016, **66%** were adults and **34%** were children



27%

of all adult victims in England were supported by Hestia



More than a third of adult modern slavery victims came from **Albania** with the next highest numbers from **Vietnam** and the **United Kingdom**

Modern Slavery: The Underground Story of London

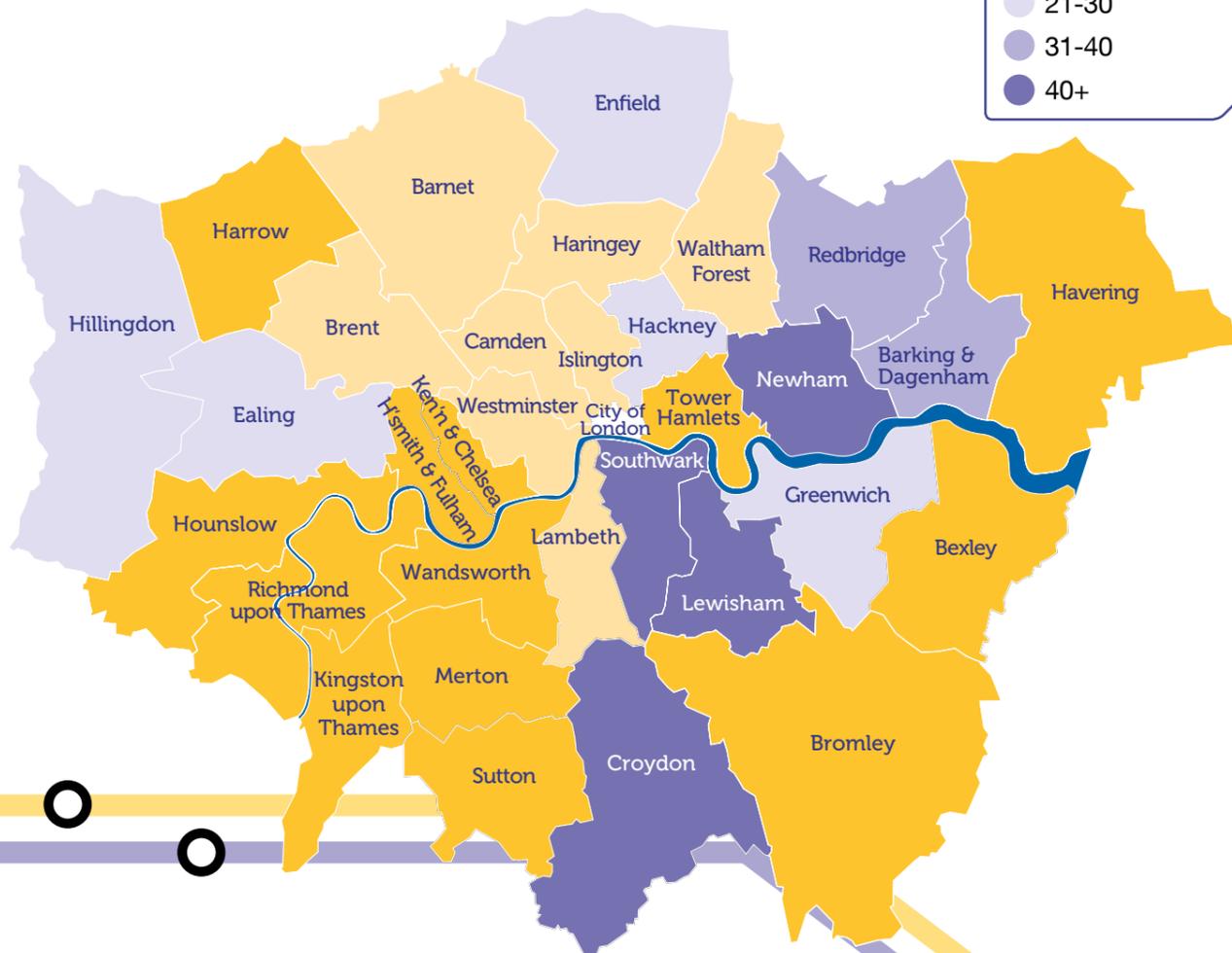
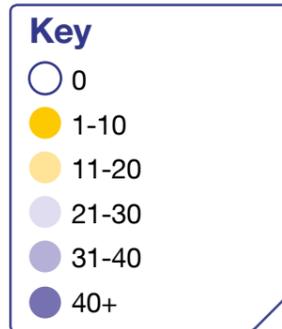
Slavery in London is not a new phenomenon. Since the 17th century slaves were taken across the Atlantic and sold to plantation owners in America and the Caribbean for sugar, tobacco, rum, rice, cotton and tea, all of which was shipped back to London. London was at the heart of the 'trade triangle' that fueled slavery. The Virginia Company of London had the first documented 'mail-order bride' trade where women were exchanged for tobacco (Eaves, 2009).

The Head of the Metropolitan Police's Anti-Slavery unit, DCI Phil Brewer, has said that the number of suspected victims in London is expected to increase by 60% to as many as 1,600 in 2017 (Guardian, 2017). Currently, there are enough victims of modern slavery in London to fill 3 Piccadilly line trains.

Geographical analysis

In 2016 Hestia supported victims in all London boroughs except the City of London.

The map below shows the areas from which victims entered our services. These areas are not necessarily where they were enslaved but show the victim's location at the time they came to Hestia for support.



Borough breakdown by gender and form of slavery

	Domestic Servitude	Sexual	Forced Labour	Domestic Servitude	Sexual	Forced Labour	Sexual	Total
Barking & Dagenham	4	24	0	0	0	6		34
Barnet	3	11	0	0	1	2		17
Bexley	3	2	1	0	0	1		7
Brent	8	9	0	0	0	1	1	19
Bromley	1	2	0	0	0	0		3
Camden	3	3	1	0	0	4		11
Croydon	5	51	2	0	1	2		61
Ealing	6	7	2	2	0	6		23
Enfield	3	18	0	0	0	1		22
Greenwich	6	15	0	0	0	3		24
Hackney	1	13	0	1	0	6		21
H&F	1	2	1	0	0	1		5
Haringey	3	12	1	0	0	1		17
Harrow	2	2	0	0	0	0		4
Havering	1	6	0	0	0	1		8
Hillingdon	4	16	1	0	0	9		29
Hounslow	2	2	2	0	0	2		8
Islington	4	8	0	0	0	1		13
K&C	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	7
Kingston	3	2	0	0	0	0		5
Lambeth	7	6	2	0	1	3		19
Lewisham	7	24	2	2	1	5		41
Merton	2	4	0	0	0	1		7
Newham	13	27	2	2	1	1		46
Redbridge	4	23	0	0	0	4		31
Richmond	0	3	0	0	0	0		3
Southwark	7	39	2	0	1	5		54
Sutton	1	2	0	0	0	0		3
Tower Hamlets	3	4	0	0	0	1		8
Waltham Forest	3	14	0	0	0	2		19
Wandsworth	0	4	0	0	0	0		4
Westminster	4	8	0	1	0	2	3	18
Homeless	0	0	0	1	0	17		19
Out of London	3	3	0	0	0	8		14
Totals	119	368	20	9	6	97	5	624

507 Women	112 Men	5 Trans	624
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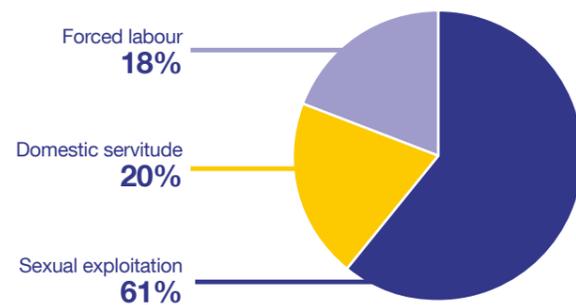
There are high concentration areas such as Southwark, Croydon, Lewisham, Newham and Barking & Dagenham. This is largely because these boroughs have National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation and many victims have been identified as trafficked whilst claiming asylum.

However the majority of London local authorities lack specific guidelines, a single point of contact and procedures or policies to assess the needs of victims of modern slavery (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015). The lack of ID documents and confirmed immigration status can make it difficult to access support at a local level.

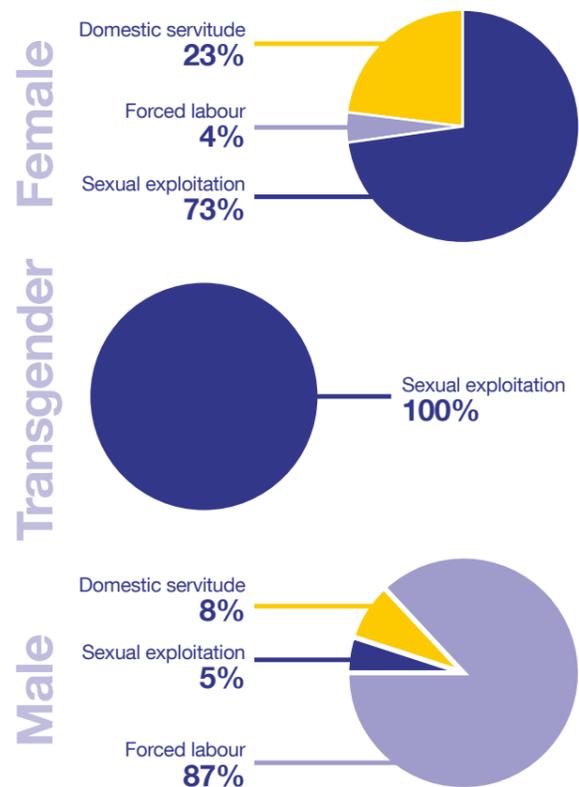
Gender, age and children

In the UK, 51% of modern slavery victims are female and 48% male (NCA, 2017). However, in London this figure is very different: 81% (507) were female, 18% (112) male and 1% (5) transgender. This mirrors the different forms of exploitation taking place. London has a higher rate of sexual trafficking (61%) than the national average in adults (38%) and this disproportionately affects women.

Forms of Modern Slavery



By Gender

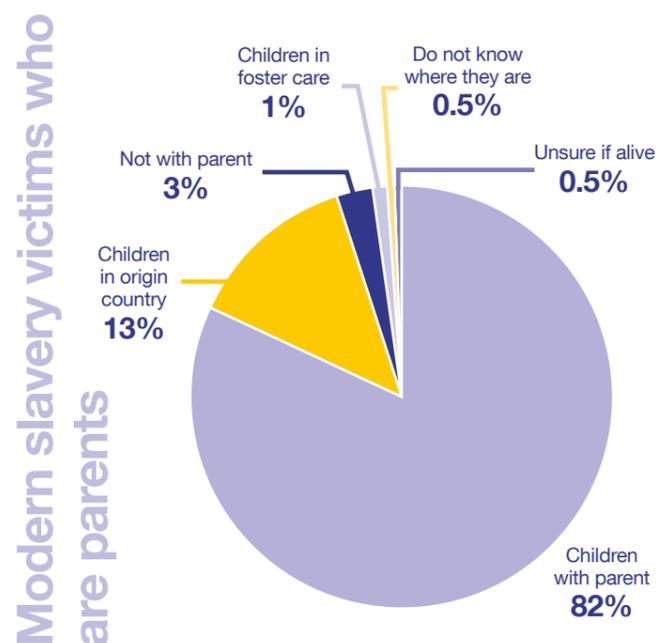


87% of our male clients were victims of forced labour or domestic servitude, and 5% were sexually exploited.

There is a real variation in the age of the people we support. The youngest was 18 and the oldest was 71 years old. However, 61% of clients who were victims of sexual trafficking are aged between 20 and 30 years of age. 27 is the most common age for those in forced labour and domestic servitude. However, the average age is 34.



41% of modern slavery victims who come to our services are parents, and of those, 82% actually come to us with their children. In 2016 we supported 329 children. Some women are also pregnant when referred into the services as a result of sexual abuse and rape. This requires victims of modern slavery to be thought about as family units.



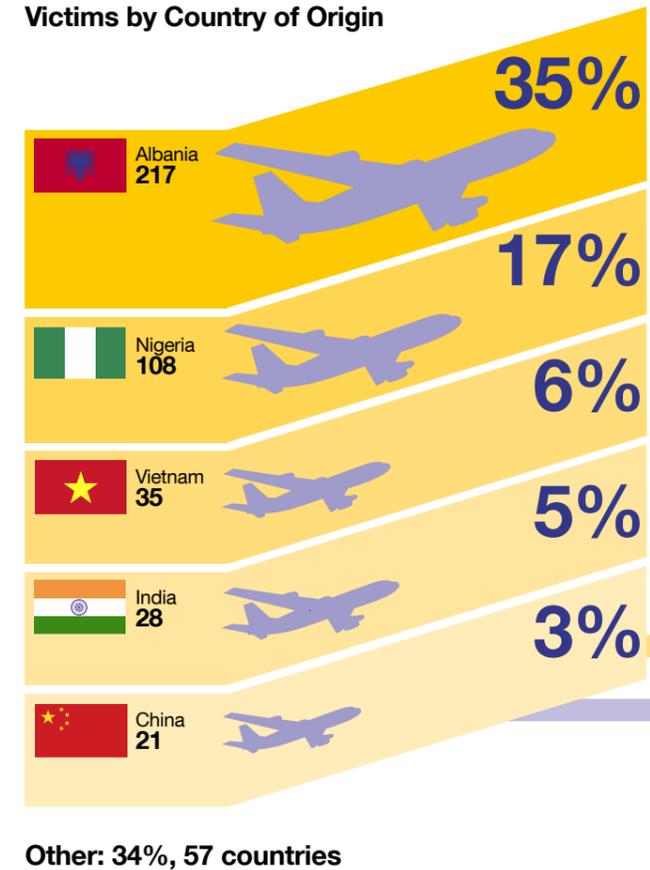
Countries of origin

In 2016, Hestia supported victims from 62 countries. However, 66% of victims were from 4 countries: Albania, Nigeria, Vietnam and India. In terms of British nationals, our figures do not match the national adult trend in which the UK is the third largest nationality of origin. We only supported 4 British victims. This indicates how London is a hub for international traffickers. In the sex industry for example, ethnic diversity in the offer is important and one of the selling points of brothels.

35% (217) of all victims referred to our services were from Albania; 207 were females trafficked for sexual exploitation. Many of the women and girls who are trafficked from Albania report fleeing forced marriages and domestic violence.

One third of our Nigerian clients have been victims of domestic servitude. Almost all were female. Vietnam had an almost equal distribution between genders—mainly female for sexual and domestic exploitation, and men for forced labour in construction or agriculture.

Victims by Country of Origin



Domestic servitude

A victim of domestic servitude usually performs household functions such as looking after the children and cooking or cleaning for little or no money. Domestic workers in London are typically female migrants, who have emigrated in order to support their families financially. Most of these workers enter the UK legally with an employer on a migrant domestic worker (MDW) visa to work in a private household. In the UK, there are an estimated 17,000 successful applications for overseas domestic workers visa each year (Home Office, 2015). In 2015, 75 allegations of domestic servitude were recorded by the London Metropolitan Police, 10 of which concerned diplomatic households (Greta, 2015).

In 2016, we supported 128 victims of domestic servitude from 35 different nationalities. Referrals were received from 31 local authorities with an average of 4 cases per borough. Typically, the victims were brought into the UK to undertake domestic work. However the frequent pattern is that once in the UK they are not paid and are physically and sexually abused. Sexual abuse and rape of MDWs is common but underreported, and the disclosure of such abuse is used as a threat by employers (Stepnitsz, 2009).

The process of identification of domestic servitude victims can be quite difficult. The trafficker might want to disguise the relationship with the victim by saying they are a 'family member' or when the victims have come with children to send them to school to validate the employment relationship. In London 47% of social workers and 33% of teachers could not recognise whether a child was being trafficked or simply doing house chores (Boff, 2013). The lack of knowledge of risk indicators by many professionals presents many victims being identified earlier.

Forced labour

Forced labour is a distorted and abusive employment relationship where a worker is subjected to severe exploitation either by their direct employer or by an intermediary such as a gang master (JRF, 2014). The main indicators of forced labour are threats or physical harm, restriction of movement, debt bondage, wage reduction, retention of identity documents and threats to go to the authorities (ILO, 2009).

London is a vibrant city, permanently in need of labour. The construction industry is an example. It is very exposed because it demands a large volume of low-skilled, low-waged manual work. The business model frequently involves a range of subcontractors. In larger projects, the scale of work provides many opportunities for exploitative employers to abuse modern slavery victims.

In 2016, we supported 97 male and 20 female victims who were trafficked into forced labour in industries such as construction, car washes, hospitality and nail bars. They came from 34 countries – with 24% from India and Vietnam.

In the UK it is estimated that forced labour affects between 3,000 and 5,000 people (JRF, 2014) mainly driven by the absorption of workers into complex supply chains that make individuals invisible.

It is important to understand that forced labour is not an issue of immigration. In our services we have had many British citizens who were being exploited. Forced labour is about reducing costs and saving money.

In January 2016, gang masters who are responsible for preventing the exploitation of agricultural workers were renamed as the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to reflect its broader functions. It has been given new police-style powers as well as powers under national minimum wage and employment agencies legislation to investigate and enforce more serious cases of labour market offences. This will have a positive impact in London as the number of forced labour cases increases.

Dinh: My story of forced labour

I was born in a small village in Vietnam. One day, there was an accident at the mine where my parents worked and they both died. My neighbours looked after me for a month but did not have enough money to support me and I ended up homeless. In order to survive, I polished shoes on the streets for over a year. A regular customer asked me if I would like to go to school, which I did. She said that she could help me by taking me to England, where I could study and have my own room with food provided for me. As I was homeless and had nothing to lose, I agreed. She told me that someone would pick me up in a few days by the bridge, where I slept.

The journey to the UK was very long and I travelled all the way inside a container. When I arrived, I was handed over to two men who said they would look after me and take me to my new home. There were three Vietnamese men already in the house and one of them could speak a little English. He told me that we had all been trafficked and sold and that we should do what we are told otherwise we would be beaten up and killed. The fourth time I tried to run away, I was found by the traffickers who put a rope over my arms and duct tape on my mouth. They beat me until I was unconscious. When I woke up, I had stitches on my head and blood on my clothes. I was then locked in the house and was never allowed to leave, even for a few minutes to get some fresh air. The traffickers were constantly watching me.

They forced me to clean and cook for them for 5 years and then sold me to some other men who made me do the same. Later on, I was told that I would start to water some plants in another house. It was here that I was arrested by the police for cannabis cultivation and spent over 7 months in prison. I was only 18 years old. When the authorities realised what had happened to me, I was found not guilty, moved to a detention centre and then transferred to one of Hestia's safe houses for support. I was malnourished, weak, scared, and suffering from depression when I arrived.

Sexual exploitation

61% of people supported by Hestia in 2016 were victims of sexual exploitation compared to 38% nationally. Whilst forced labour (47%) is the main form of adult exploitation in the UK, there is a higher demand from the sex industry in London than in other parts of the UK.

The total number of sex workers in the UK is estimated to be around 72,800, with approximately 32,000 of those working in London (Brooks-Gordon, 2015). The Association of Chief Police Officers, through Project Acumen, estimated that around 17,000 migrant women were involved in prostitution in England and Wales; of these around 15% are estimated to be trafficked (House of Commons, 2016).

There is evidence of an active sex industry in the vast majority of London boroughs (Bindel, 2013) and our service users tell us of a pattern of constant moving of victims from different brothels all over the city. In 2016, Hestia supported modern slavery victims living in all London boroughs who had been sexually exploited. They reported that it was not unusual for them to be forced to have sex with up to a dozen clients daily. Once in our service, women work with the police and identify brothels in plain sight on high streets and more covertly in residential areas. It is believed that there are over 2,100 brothels in London (Boff, 2012). In 2008, an average of 28 brothels per London borough had their services advertised in local papers (Bindel & Atkins, 2008).

In our services we supported women and men from 42 countries who had been sexually exploited. It has been reported that ethnic diversity is prized in this industry with migrant victims targeted for their ethnicity. Albanian and Nigerian women made up 70% of those who were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Anna: My story of sexual exploitation

Like all young girls in my home place I spent my time at school and hanging out with my sisters and friends. However it is the custom in my town in Albania to have an arranged marriage. Although I wanted to make my parents happy, I couldn't go through with the wedding. Not only because he was a stranger but I already had a boyfriend and we were in love. Now it hurts to say his name.

As the date approached we had no choice but to run away. I was scared but also elated. I packed a bag and we travelled to Kosovo where he had friends to stay with. However as soon as we arrived everything changed utterly. The man I loved, who made me feel safe and whom I trusted with my life, betrayed me.

I was forced into a room and locked in. Then the abuse began. They kept me locked up and I was repeatedly raped by up to ten men every day (including "him"). They were cruel and threatened to kill my family if I tried to escape.

I've tried to forget a lot from those dark days but I know I was moved from place to place. I never knew where. It was only on the day I escaped that I discovered that I was in England. I still don't know how I got away.

I was referred to Hestia for support and housing. For a long time I was terrified of everything and everyone. I couldn't trust anybody. My advocate, Meena, was my lifesaver. She was with me every step of the way. With her encouragement I started to learn English. Twelve months later I reached Level 2 in English got a place at college to study Social Care. Meena also arranged for me to have counselling; this is difficult as I have never talked about myself before. I now know that I suffer from panic attacks, anxiety and depression and even now there are days where I almost give up. I miss my family and hate what has happened to me. Other days are better and I feel that maybe I'll really get through this.

The Road to Recovery

186 victims participated in a Hestia survey that focused on how they were rebuilding their lives after slavery in London. The areas covered by the survey included:

- ① Health – mental and physical
- ② Housing and financial prospects
- ③ NRM and exit of services
- ④ Challenges for male victims of slavery

1. Health – mental and physical

“My body and senses were numb to the pain. That was the only thing I felt. My life had no sense it was just constant suffering. I felt like every bit of me was broken. I could not remember what joy felt like”.

Maria

Traffickers use extreme physical and psychological techniques on their victims. Our clients report experiences of rape, starvation, exhaustion, threats, and isolation. This level of physical and mental degradation means that victims are very vulnerable and traumatised at the point they come to Hestia for support.

Interpersonal violence is often endured intermittently and is frequently common place. It is akin to torture. Torture is intended to invade a person’s sense of privacy, intimacy and inviolability, thereby destroying their belief in their own independence. It is a situation whereby a perpetrator exerts total control over a victim who is psychologically and/or physically entrapped. The victim is therefore forced into a position of isolated helplessness (Organisation for Security and Cooperation Europe, 2013). Modern slavery victims are therefore more likely to have mental health problems, depression and anxiety, physical injuries and addiction to alcohol and drugs, with a higher risk of HIV/AIDS or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

The trafficking experience destroys the belief that a person can have control over their own actions or decisions. This explains why most victims of modern slavery become numb, passive and doubtful, and seem incapable of fighting the terrible situation in which they end up (International Organisation for Migration, 2004).

Health conditions modern slavery victims present at our service	
Mental Health	Physical Health
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Scars
Avoidance	Bruises
Numbing	Sexually transmitted infection (STI)
Depression	Pelvic pain
Anxiety	HIV
Self-harm	Pregnancy from rape
Flashbacks	Infertility from STI’s
Panic attacks	Mutilations
Stockholm Syndrome	Hearing problems
Suicidal Ideation	Respiratory issues from industries such as agriculture, sweatshops or construction
Insomnia	Vision problems
Fatigue	Malnourishment
Shock	Undiagnosed: Diabetes and Cancer
Claustrophobia	Substance abuse
Hypervigilance	High blood pressure
Low self-esteem/self-blame	Head injuries

NHS professionals face a number of diverse challenges when providing care to survivors of modern slavery. These include complex clinical cases, dealing with social and legal instability and a lack of engagement from victims who could be suspicious of the health system.

Modern slavery victims are entitled to healthcare and are exempt from NHS charging. However, not all hospital departments or surgeries are aware of this. In general, there is a systemic lack of awareness and knowledge, not only around modern slavery but also about victims’ entitlements. Positive Conclusive Grounds status is not widely acknowledged. Training and increased awareness of the issue would enable safe and appropriate responses and would also help to inform staff about the mechanisms already available to modern slavery victims.

Mental Health

Victims frequently have experienced poverty, abuse and poor health prior to exploitation. These conditions are exacerbated by their enslavement. The difference between a single traumatic experience and trafficking is that trafficking usually involves prolonged periods of trauma (Zimmerman, 2003).

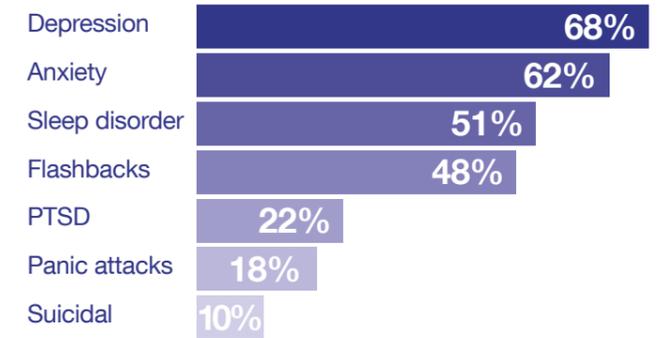
From our overall survey of 186 modern slavery victims, 91% presented with mental health symptoms but only 70% admitted to mental health issues mainly due to the stigma that it carries for many people as well as the poor trust in any professionals.

91% of clients presented mental health symptoms



In London, only 39% of our services users accessed some type of therapeutic support whilst in our services, mainly because of the waiting time to access specialist mental health services. Many victims get their first appointment after they leave the service, and some voluntary organisations have to close their waiting list to avoid giving a false sense of hope regarding their waiting time.

The main issues presented in the survey are:



Hestia also analysed the initial assessment of all the 39 victims that came to us in December 2016. Only 26% had received medical treatment but 56% were on medication. Self-medication masks the severity of the issues people are struggling to deal with.

Of those on medication only 32% were on mental health medication at arrival. However 54% of those entering the service had thought about harming themselves and 15% said they could act on those thoughts.

At referral 23% were assessed as needing to be referred to specialist services because they were at risk of suicide whilst 44% were recommended for an immediate referral into mental health services.

Interestingly, we observe that in the overall survey of clients that were already in the service, 91% disclosed mental health symptoms, which leads us to understand that clients do not disclose initially all of their concerns, but do so as trust is built.



54% of clients have thought about harming themselves with a further **29%** who would act on these thoughts

Effective mental health intervention relies on a client having a planned pathway, which modern slavery victims waiting for Positive Conclusive Grounds do not have. Social stressors, such as the risk of deportation and unstable housing, are seen to be major factors causing or exacerbating symptoms, and therapeutic interventions are postponed because of uncertainty around the person's future (Domoney et al, 2015).

We should also take into account that earlier vulnerabilities are likely to have been present in the victim's life before slavery. Our clients tell us about their past histories of poverty, isolation, family breakdown, sexual abuse, domestic violence and poor mental health. Addressing this underlying issue is crucial to ensuring that the victim recovers and the appropriate time and interventions to support recovery should be allowed.

Client anxiety levels rise when they realise they will not have the support from the individual or the agency that knows their case once they have to leave the service. Our staff report how difficult this process can be as the feeling of isolation, despair and loneliness reappears.

Physical Health



56%
of victims who arrived to our service in December 2016 were on some form of medication for a physical health issue.

Victims of labour exploitation experienced a high incidence of violence and abuse. In addition, a large proportion of them have endured unsanitary and unsafe living and working conditions. Occupational risks are associated with the industries into which people are commonly trafficked. Industries where health and safety checks can remain unregulated under subcontracting arrangements are the most hazardous sectors, posing risks such as musculoskeletal problems, acute and chronic respiratory disease, accidents and injuries, and occupational disability. Domestic servitude has been associated with musculoskeletal problems, dermatitis and other skin problems, accidents and injuries, and psychiatric morbidity (Moss, 2014).

Pregnancy is recognised as a factor that can increase an individual's vulnerability to trafficking, and will leave the person with additional support needs once they leave the trafficking situation (Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2016). Of the people we saw in December 2016, three clients were pregnant. The mental anguish that pregnancy can bring to a victim is high, due to the fact that the pregnancy is often the result of rape. Women then have to make a decision about the pregnancy along with the trauma, dilemmas, and stresses and anguish that this brings.

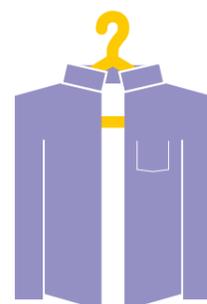
Many victims of modern slavery present physical health issues that have evolved because of the lack of care, and timely diagnosis such as sexually transmitted infections and terminal conditions like cancer. Dental problems that have been left untreated are also a common problem with our service users.

2. Housing and financial prospects

"Why can't I work? I don't want handouts; I just want to look after myself and my family".
Irina

When victims come to our service they are usually completely destitute. Of those entering our service in December 2016, 36% needed clothing and 66% had no money.

Local authorities do not have dedicated additional funding to support these high-risk and vulnerable people. Without leave to remain, a National Insurance number and access to benefits, victims have often had to beg for food or shelter. Destitution is a real prospect and particularly traumatic, given victims' high hopes for a better life once they have been recognised by the Home Office as a victim of modern slavery.



36%
of clients needed clothing when they came into our services

Of the women who participated in our survey, 51% came to the service with children. In London, if you are a single parent with no support from your partner and reliant on benefits, that child falls below the poverty threshold. On average, the subsidy given to a modern slavery victim with one child by the NRM is £55.50 per week (minus any money that they may receive from elsewhere). A client with one child entitled to NASS subsistence would receive slightly more, at the rate of £73.90 per week. This is the only income families might receive while they wait for a PCG result.

A total of 40% of our clients were placed in safe houses or NASS accommodation and 58% lived in insecure or unstable accommodation. There is no clear avenue for victims of modern slavery to be rehoused in London. Victims of modern slavery are not a special category of rehousing by local authorities. When victims obtain PCG there is no arrangement between the NRM and local authorities to meet the housing needs of the victim. PCG does not guarantee immigration status therefore local authorities will not take responsibility to house modern slavery victims because of their leave to remain entitlements. 34% of modern slavery victims supported by Hestia have been street homeless after fleeing the traffickers.

58%

live in insecure or unstable accommodation



34%

had been street homeless after fleeing traffickers



Status and the ability to access public funds is also important when assessing finances. If a victim is not granted any type of immigration status in their PCG and they are non-EU national the most likely route is to apply for asylum in order to avoid destitution. This is a lengthy, and often unnecessary, position for a victim that has already waited for months or years. In many cases it takes over a year to obtain a PCG without being able to work and move forward.

One of the only options that our clients are faced with is to go to private accommodation. However what they can afford is usually of poor quality. This does not support the process of moving on positively and rebuilding their lives and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities around physical and mental health.

Modern slavery victims are given 14 days to move on and find accommodation once they receive PCG. The timeframe is limited and falls short of the 28 days that Asylum Seekers receive to move on. This allows victims to make a safe transition into longer term support and accommodation. The 28 days should be a guideline, and victims should only be compelled to move on once they have safe and appropriate accommodation to move to.

Gaining lawful employment and housing would secure financial stability and make the integration of a victim easier. In our survey, 65% of victims expressed interest in training and further education. Our clients tell us that this would be 'a new beginning' where they can put their slavery behind them and begin to reach their aspirations.



121 (65%)

clients were interested in training or studying

3. NRM and Exit from Services

"I have been waiting for so long that I do not even care anymore. I can't look forward to anything because I am trapped in this".
Anita

The Home Office approach to supporting victims is based on the framework of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT). Under ECAT, individuals identified as potential victims of modern slavery are entitled to accommodation, access to healthcare, translation services, legal advice and other measures that assist in their recovery.

During their wait for conclusive grounds, services are still provided, however real progress and integration cannot happen when people do not know what their future holds. The quickest case at Hestia to receive a response did so in 9 days, the longest took 1,211 days. 22 clients waited for over two years, 84 waited one to two years and 52, over 6 months. The average wait was 435 days.



The average wait to receive CG was
435 days

Apart from the length of the wait for a decision, another problem occurs when each individual receives their decision from the Home Office as to whether they are deemed a victim of modern slavery. On that decision, support abruptly stops. Those receiving a positive decision have a 14 day grace period between the decision and having to exit the service while those receiving a negative decision have to leave within 48 hours. As the system has delayed the application, the reflection and recovery period dramatically merges with the waiting for a response time, which in reality has not fully allowed the victims to reassess their future and next steps, despite the length of the wait.

In line with Article 14 of the Council of Europe Convention for Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, the granting of a conclusive grounds decision should trigger a rehabilitation period which lasts a minimum of one year. During this time the individual is granted a residence permit (such as Discretionary Leave to Remain or DLR) with recourse to public funds and exemption from benefits tests, permission to work and an option for, as well as clarity around the conditions of renewal (HTF, 2017). If victims are positively identified as trafficked this does not allow them to remain automatically. They also have no entitlement to housing or finances. So ultimately, whilst getting a PCG can support a victim's case to stay, it does not guarantee a minimum stay like it does for refugees.

When a victim of modern slavery leaves the safe house because they have no status, they might have to fight to stay and be safe, but they will not have a support worker to help them in the process. There is no obligation under current arrangements to provide that support and in the face of destitution, victims become vulnerable to re-trafficking.

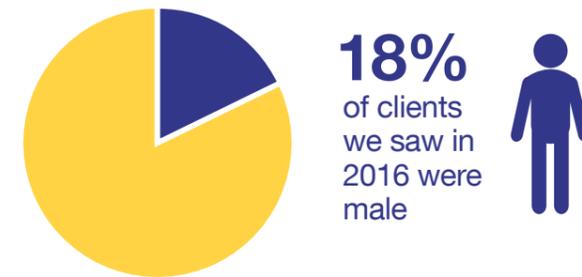
A significant issue faced by victims is that negative decisions cannot be appealed. Furthermore our evidence suggests that nationality is a factor in decision outcome. Of the 56 Albanian women who responded to our survey, 13 had a response back and 11 were negative and only two were positive. In contrast, 10 EU citizens in the same time period were all given positive grounds.

In summary, the reflection period is short and runs parallel to the wait for a decision on positive or negative conclusive grounds. The majority of our clients described this as an anxious period in which they 'cannot reflect or recover' as they do not know what the future will be like.

4. Challenges for male victims of slavery

"It is hard – every time I tell my story I feel people do not believe me because I am a man, and should not have fallen into this situation".
Juan

Men can be overlooked victims of modern slavery. Of the clients we saw in 2016, 18% (112) were male. Of these 112 male clients, 86% were victims of forced labour, 8% of sexual exploitation and 6% domestic servitude.



Rarely do the public hear about cases of male trafficking. Feelings of shame and humiliation mean that male victims are unlikely to report the crime and they are less likely to receive support services than female victims.

The focus group also highlighted anecdotally that the majority of their clients were single men who are not in any relationship. In general, they found it difficult to talk about intimacy. Some victims expressed that they were not interested in connecting emotionally when their immigration status was unclear.

Male modern slavery victims may have a harder time understanding that they have been 'trafficked'. They are more likely to believe they have fallen into the hands of bad employers and that many of their peers are going through the same experience.

Isolation is a big factor for all male modern slavery victims and in London this is exacerbated by the cost of public transport which negatively impacts the opportunities to meet and get support from others from the same community or interest groups. Building social networks is difficult for the men who were in our services.

Men are also less likely to share their full story out of shame and staff members have to break down masculinity stereotypes. Our staff members report that even providing their weekly stipend can be challenging because 'as a man' they do not want to accept money.

Conclusions

Modern slavery is a fact of life in 21st century London. It is humiliating and degrading for those who are victims. It also tears at the fabric of the city. Evidence suggests that as yet we are dealing only with the tip of the iceberg of this underground world. Increased victim identification means that more people are getting some help.

Victims come from across the world and the country. Traffickers prey on those who are vulnerable due to poverty, abuse and other risk factors. They are sold dreams which turn into nightmares. It is a cold and calculating business model focused on low costs and high profits. It is indiscriminate in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. It has no moral compass. Many are so battered they do not know what has been done to them and many contemplate taking their own lives.

The current NRM model was a good start but now more is needed. The 45 day reflection period is inadequate to allow recovery from complex trauma and delays in the system mean that it is ripe for review. Recent Home Office announcements suggest that we may move some way in that direction. A positive conclusive decision that someone is the victim of modern slavery ought to come with the entitlement for timely access to services, support and benefits as well as the opportunity to rebuild their life. The entitlement to appeal a negative conclusive grounds decision must be a right.

Timely and immediate mental health and trauma support is essential and currently inadequate. London is a great city. It is diminished by those who seek to profit by this trade of people. The scale of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women is particularly acute in London. The trafficking of men is sometimes overlooked. All victims pay a very high price for another's profit.

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How can you help?

You can support our modern slavery service in several ways:

1) **Volunteering** your time can provide an opportunity to support survivors of modern slavery and help them become an integral part of their local community. Working together with survivors will allow them to feel empowered, improve their overall wellbeing and build confidence and self-esteem.

2) **Donate** at www.hestia.org/donatenow

£10 per month can provide essential toiletries when victims first arrive at a safe house.

£25 per month can help contribute to travel cards to attend higher education classes to rebuild their lives.

£120 per month can support survivors gaining employment by attending ESOL and IT classes to build their skills.

To find out more about Hestia please visit us at:

www.hestia.org/how-we-help/modern-slavery

About Hestia

At Hestia, we support adults and children in times of crisis and risk every day across London. We use almost 50 years of experience to work with people when they most need our help. In 2016, we provided services to 9,000 people across 32 London boroughs to change their lives.

Hestia has supported survivors of modern slavery since 2011 through a partnership with The Salvation Army. Initially, we set up a safe house for five women and a small outreach project. Since then we have supported more than 1,600 victims of modern slavery. Today we are the largest provider of accommodation and outreach support to male and female survivors of modern slavery in London. In 2016, we opened our doors to 624 survivors in our five safe houses and pan-London outreach programme.

Our team work to ensure that our clients receive the best possible support by securing them a safe home, assisting with their finances, taking care of their health, helping to access work, training or education, as well as providing emotional and practical support to help them succeed in their daily lives.

We also deliver a range of other services for people across London. We offer practical and emotional support to victims of domestic abuse, ex-offenders, and people with mental health needs, older people and young adults.

In 2016, Hestia launched UK SAYS NO MORE, a national partnership initiative that raises awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault.



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