

**LEWISHAM**  
**MODERN SLAVERY &**  
**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
**NETWORK**

**Partnership Strategy**

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**Version One:** September 2022

## 1. Why do we need a Partnership Strategy?

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) is occurring in Lewisham with children, young people and adults being physically, sexually, psychologically and financially abused and exploited.

The Centre for Social Justice reported<sup>1</sup> on research conducted in 2020 that concluded that there were an estimated, and conservative figure, of 100,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK each year. However, there is still some way to go before both the public and professionals are fully aware of the signs, know how to help victims, and know how to report this serious form of criminal exploitation.

No single agency can hope to solve these complex crimes, bring perpetrators to justice or help victims and survivors on their own. By working and planning together, organisations from all sectors can improve effectiveness, drawing on a range of powers that can be used to complement each other.

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner has highlighted multi-agency partnership working as an *‘essential factor in implementing a comprehensive response to modern slavery within and beyond UK borders,’* and a range of partnerships such as the one in Lewisham, which is still in its early stages of development, are being created all over the UK.

## 2. Mission Statement

*“We will robustly tackle all forms of MSHT in Lewisham through effective and collaborative partnership working, and by identifying, protecting and supporting potential victims. We will help to empower people to move on safely and successfully from exploitation, and proactively target and pursue criminals”.*

## 3. What is Modern Slavery?

The term ‘Modern Slavery’ encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Human trafficking consists of three basic components:

1. Action
2. Means
3. Purpose of exploitation.

All three components must be present in an adult trafficking case; for child trafficking the ‘means’ component is not required.

In human trafficking cases, exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation; forced labour; slavery; servitude; forced criminality and removal of organs. Some people may not be victims of human trafficking but still victims of modern slavery if they have been subject to slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Human trafficking is not the same as human smuggling. There are common myths about modern slavery, such as misconceptions that UK nationals cannot be victims and that a person cannot be a victim if they reject offers of help.

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<sup>1</sup> [It still happens here: Fighting UK Slavery in the 2020s - The Centre for Social Justice](#)

Modern slavery can affect anybody of any age, gender or ethnicity. It is often **‘hidden in plain sight’**, making it hard to recognise victim-survivors. People are often unable to escape because of fear for their own lives, or for the lives of their family, or because they don’t know who to turn to and trust.

Modern slavery is caused by someone taking control of another person. Poverty, abuse and conflict can make people more vulnerable to being controlled as these factors may lead to precarious journeys, people seeking asylum, homelessness, substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental ill-health.

Anyone can be an exploiter, and in most cases money, greed and power are the drivers. However, there are also cases where people become exploiters to avoid abuse because they are being exploited themselves. Exploiters may act alone, or be part of an organised crime gang, and businesses can also exploit individuals.

Modern slavery may cross over with other forms of abuse such as Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and more generically Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). This should be considered when thinking about the support options available for survivors, and especially in relation to safeguarding children. It can also be useful when thinking about the power dynamics between exploiters and victim-survivors, and ensuring this is not replicated by agencies who are trying to help.

When working with survivors of any form of abuse, it is important to keep in mind the whole picture and recognise that minoritised groups may face additional barriers. For example, someone’s race, ethnicity, gender, disability or sexual orientation can make it harder to leave a situation of exploitation due to the fear of stigma and the response they may receive.

Seeing someone as a whole person and responding to their diverse and individual needs is paramount, and responses should be tailored to an individual’s needs as a whole person, rather than solely as a victim-survivor of exploitation.

**Example 1:**

Tyrone is told by a person posing as a ‘recruitment consultant’ when he enters the UK that he is going to be working 40 hours a week at a factory and paid the National Minimum Wage. But this turns out not to be true.

Tyrone works 7 days a week at the factory and for 12 hours a day without a proper break. The money he earns goes into the ‘consultant’s’ bank account and he is only given a small amount of cash. He doesn’t see a way out as he **fears his family will be threatened** in his home country if he reports this abuse.

**Example 2:**

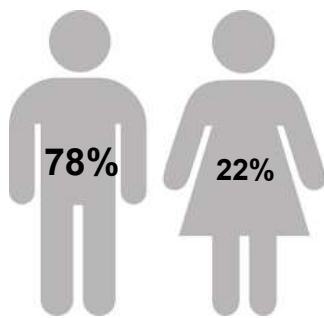
Linh came to the UK after a family dispute in Vietnam and is introduced to a woman via a ‘friend of the family’ when her tourist visa expires, who offers her a job and a place to stay above a nail salon. Linh is required to work from 8am to 6pm, 7 days a week, and the accommodation provided by the employer is one small room shared with three others.

She is handed a pay packet of cash at the end of her first two weeks which contains £200, and in the next one even less. When Linh challenges the employer she is told that she can leave if she does not like the work, but if she complained the government would deport her. Linh is worried as she has no alternative accommodation, and that if she seeks advice or complains she **will be detained and or deported**.

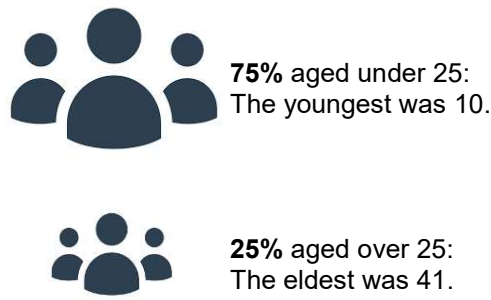
## 4. The Local Picture

The following statistics are drawn from the **National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data in 2021**, which helps to provide an overview of modern slavery in Lewisham, although this one strand of information only provides a part of the overall picture.

As the Lewisham MSHT Network develops, a priority is to improve the collection of wider intelligence, which will further improve the understanding of the local dynamics, challenges and risks.



**Gender of Victims**



**Age of Victims**

54 Total	Top Nationalities
30	United Kingdom
7	Albanian
4	Chinese
4	Jamaican



**Types of Offence**

The majority of this was linked to 'County Lines' and other forms of drug dealing.

**Example:**

The young person was taken off the street and told that a friend's debt was now his, and that he was expected to work for dealers. He was taken to a drug house in Greenwich and told to conceal drugs, and driven by a "Minder" to Somerset. They then moved him into South Wales where he was subsequently arrested and placed on remand.

## 5. Local Strategic Priorities 2022-24

This strategy sets out the local approach to tackling modern slavery and the contributions expected from partners. The local priorities are underpinned by the national 4Ps approach (Prevent, Protect, Prepare, Pursue) which is a recognised framework to counter modern slavery and serious organised crime.

### Priority 1

#### **Our Objective: Help to Prevent Exploitation**

The Actions We Must Take:

1. Raise awareness of the issues so local citizens understand the signs and risks related to modern slavery, and their legal rights in relation to this subject.
2. Promote the need for local employers and agencies to eliminate the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains and services.
3. Continue to build the intelligence picture locally so there is a better understanding of the risk factors in Lewisham, which will improve the delivery of all other actions.

### Priority 2

#### **Our Objective: Ensure Victims are Identified**

The Actions We Must Take:

1. Deliver the necessary training interventions that are needed across the Borough to enable professionals to identify victims and respond to the issues effectively.
2. Engage members of the public and victim-survivors in helping to improve our understanding of this subject, and in doing so better identify victims.
3. Ensure local citizens know how to report modern slavery related issues and how to seek help.

### Priority 3

#### **Our Objective: Support Victims**

The Actions We Must Take:

1. Partners should follow the [Lewisham Modern Slavery Victim Care Pathway](#) and other national guidance signposted in this Partnership Strategy.
2. Help to further develop networks of support and improve the local understanding of 'what works' to improve service delivery.
3. Ensure relevant agencies who respond to modern slavery issues, and support victims, take a trauma informed approach.

### Priority 4

#### **Our Objective: Bring Exploiters to Justice**

The Actions We Must Take:

1. Statutory partners must ensure that exploiters are appropriately investigated and relevant interventions are delivered effectively.
2. Statutory partners must ensure that victims are supported effectively to give evidence in criminal investigations and local authority safeguarding enquiries.

## 5.1 Priority One: Help to Prevent Exploitation

**We are all responsible for preventing exploitation.**

By buying items or using services that involve someone who has, or who is being exploited, then we contribute to the problem. As do businesses who do not interrogate their supply chains and make sure where the materials that make their products have come from, or how the people involved in are treated.

Many survivors of modern slavery state that they were looking for a way out of poverty when they were exploited, that they did not understand the risks of modern slavery, and that there were missed opportunities where people could have helped, but didn't.

Survivors also state that not having the legal right to work in the UK whilst waiting for decisions on their case can cause further exploitation as survivors feel forced to work illegally to have enough money to live. Exploiters take advantage of this by not paying the minimum wage and threatening to tell the immigration authorities if workers complain.

By investigating exploitation in businesses and empowering individuals to know and exercise their rights, we can prevent exploitation and demand that our borough is free from modern slavery.

What Does This Look like?	What Difference Will it Make?
Partners will promote awareness of MSHT within their workforces and with their service users, and encourage other agencies they work with to do the same.	The profile of this subject will improve across Lewisham helping to build understanding, and ensure the risk of exploitation is reduced.
Employers pay their staff at least the London Living Wage and provide fair and safe working conditions. Employers also require the same working conditions throughout their supply chain and proactively investigate this to ensure this is the case.	Workers will not experience exploitative conditions. Exploiters will find it harder to make money, and all businesses will proactively ensure they provide fair and safe working conditions.
Everyone considers where their products and services come from and demand they have been made free from exploitation.	Companies will meet the demand and work to ensure their goods and services are free from exploitation.
Adults and children are treated equally with respect and dignity, allowing them to exercise their human and workers' rights.	Everyone will be able to exercise Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'no one shall be held in slavery or servitude'.

See here for: [Leaflets and Resources](#)

## 5.2 Priority Two: Ensure Victims are Identified

It is vitally important we can all spot the signs of modern slavery and know what to do.

Often people, and especially children, do not recognise themselves as having been exploited or are too fearful to come forward and ask for help.

When discussing how we can make sure victims are identified, survivors recommend increasing awareness of modern slavery in the community and with organisations they could have come into contact with. They also say how important it is that kind strangers had approached them to express care.

Importantly, survivors emphasise the need to be patient and gain trust, allowing time for them to open up or make decisions about the future.

We are asking everyone to know the signs of modern slavery and know how to respond. We are also working towards removing barriers so that victim-survivors know where to go to ask for help and feel able to do so.

What Does This Look like?	What Difference Will it Make?
Everyone knows that modern slavery is happening here and knows the signs to look out for.	It will be harder for exploiters to operate undetected in our neighbourhoods.
The barriers stopping victims coming forward and seeking support are removed. Victims know their rights and the support available for them, and feel able to ask for help.	More survivors will come forward and feel confident disclosing their situation knowing that there is support available to them. We will be able to improve our approach based on the voice of the victim.
Everyone knows what to do if they suspect modern slavery.	More survivors can access support and more exploiters can be brought to justice. This will make our communities high-risk and low-profit for exploiters.

### Training

Individual partner agencies should build the response to this subject into their corporate learning, training and development strategies. Inter-agency training will also be supported and delivered by the Lewisham MSHT Network.

The following online training courses are also useful resources:

[The Home Office Training Module for National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) First Responders](#)

[e-Learning: Child Victims of Modern Slavery](#)

[Training for Healthcare Professionals: Safeguarding Victims of Modern Slavery](#)



### 5.3 Priority Three: Support Victims

It is vital that survivors are provided support that is trauma-informed.

Victim-survivors of modern slavery can have a range of immediate needs linked to the exploitation they have suffered from, but they may also have other longer-term support needs.

Survivors state that mental health support and therapy are vital in their recovery journey and that time-limits on support have damaging effects. Survivors also state that having the right to work would have a positive impact on their recovery journey, providing autonomy and purpose, enabling them to support their family and contribute to the economy.

Children and young people may require additional support, especially in recognising that those they believed to be friends were exploiting them, and in finding new social networks to prevent further exploitation.

It is important that professionals and volunteers act without judgement or prejudice and are mindful of their own mental health, and the effects of secondary trauma.

What Does This Look like?	What Difference Will it Make?
Agencies are aware of their duties in relation to modern slavery and respond appropriately, often going beyond the minimum requirement, to give survivors the maximum support. Best practice examples are shared and adopted.	Survivors can access support from the very first time they come into contact with an agency.
Appropriate referrals for each survivor are made in a timely manner. This may be to the National Referral Mechanism (with informed consent for adults) or to agencies able to provide tailored support to meet a survivor's needs.	Survivors will be able to access services they need without falling through the gaps. The risks of re-exploitation will be reduced.
All interactions with survivors are trauma informed and holistic long-term support is available to meet varying needs.	Survivors will be supported throughout their recovery journey. It will be understood what it means to meet the diverse needs of victim-survivors.

#### Examples of Immediate Needs

- Hot food
- Clothes
- Hygiene products
- Appropriate accommodation
- Physical and mental ill-health support
- Qualified interpretation services
- Legal advice
- Safe transport

#### Examples of Longer-Term Needs

- Building community support networks
- Help claiming Asylum
- Making contact with family
- Education and employment
- Repatriation if requested
- Learning English
- Legal aid
- Substance misuse support

Read the: [Lewisham Modern Slavery Victim Care Pathway](#)

Read the: Human Trafficking Foundation: [Directory of Survivor Support Services](#)

## 5.4 Priority Four: Bring Exploiters to Justice

Modern slavery is a crime, and justice must be served to prevent further exploitation.

It is not only the police that are responsible for this objective. All partner agencies and the public must work together to deliver and utilise all available interventions.

It is important that victim-survivors of modern slavery are first and foremost treated as such, even when crimes have been committed.

Survivors state that criminal proceedings are only one aspect of justice, and that their stories of exploitation are believed, and used to help deliver justice.

What Does This Look like?	What Difference Will it Make?
All agencies are involved in sharing information to build the intelligence picture, and allegations are investigated thoroughly to ensure exploiters are held to account.	Survivors feel listened to and believed.  Exploiters will not be able to operate undetected.
Victims are supported throughout the criminal justice process and beyond, with their mental health at the forefront of considerations.	Survivors will be more likely to testify in court, leading to more convictions.  Exploiters will know that they will be held to account.
Survivor needs are put at the heart of any action and agencies collaborate to use the tools at their disposal to take a zero-tolerance approach.	Survivors will feel safe and vindicated.  Exploiters will be unable to exploit further victims.

*“You get interrogated, or asked the same questions over and over again by different people, and you feel like you have done something wrong, when you are the victim”.*

**Victim-Survivor**

## 6. Partnership Strategy Benchmarks in 2022-23

To help the Lewisham MSHT Network track progress with the delivery of the priorities outlined in the previous section of the strategy, the following benchmarks have been developed for the next 12 months:

Priority	Action	Benchmark	By When
1.1 2.1	The Network will deliver a minimum number of multi-agency training sessions that will reach local professionals working in Lewisham	4 Sessions 120 Attendees	September 2023
1.3	The Network will monitor local NRM reporting against London and national trends. At present this is increasing so we would expect to see the same in Lewisham	To see increasing volumes of NRM reports in Lewisham	September 2023
1.3	The Network will also monitor the reporting trend for NRM's within each relevant council department. As outlined above this should increase, and particularly within Adult Social Care	To see increasing volumes of NRM reports in: Children's Social Care Adult Social Care Youth Offending Service	September 2023
1.1 1.3 2.3	The Network will monitor police MSHT incident reporting trends in London and nationally. At present this is increasing so we would expect to see the same in Lewisham	To see increasing MSHT incident reports to local Police in Lewisham	September 2023
1.3	The Network will start to monitor the number of Safeguarding Concerns submitted to Children* and Adult safeguarding teams in relation to MSHT	To see increasing volumes of Safeguarding Concerns in Lewisham	September 2023
1.3	The Network will start to monitor the number of Safeguarding Enquiries conducted by Children* and Adult Social Care teams in relation to MSHT	To see increasing volumes of Safeguarding Enquiries in Lewisham	September 2023
2.1	The Network will start to monitor and track the training delivered internally by the Metropolitan Police, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, the London Borough of Lewisham and South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust to ascertain if targets are being met	As set out by each Individual agency	December 2022

\* The Lewisham Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MASE) Sub-Group, as part of the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership, will contribute to the monitoring outlined.

## 7. Summary Statement

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is happening in Lewisham, and although we are still building an accurate intelligence picture, it is likely to be a much bigger issue than many organisations and members of the public realise. However, there is much more we can do to tackle this problem by working together to help prevent exploitation, better support victim-survivors, and bring exploiters to justice.

All partner agencies should work to deliver an approach which is collaborative, coordinated, and trauma-informed, by seeking to put survivor voices at its heart.

## 8. Sources of Further Information

This strategy has been developed within the context of the law and guidance that seeks to protect victims of modern slavery and human trafficking:

1. [The Modern Slavery Act 2015 & Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales](#) (July 2022)
2. [Immigration and Asylum Act 2016](#)
3. [Care Act 2014 & Care Act 2014 Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#)
4. [Localism Act 2011](#)
5. [Gangmasters \(Licensing\) Act 2004](#)
6. [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)

In addition there is also the following relevant guidance and websites:

1. [Modern Slavery - A Council Guide](#)
2. [London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol](#)
3. [Home Office - A Typology of Modern Slavery Offences](#)
4. [Homelessness Code of Guidance For Local Authorities](#)
5. [Home Office - National Enforcement Powers Guide](#)
6. [Nottingham University: Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit](#)
7. [Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board](#)
8. [Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)