

Toolkit: Modern Slavery- Part 1

Spot, Report, Protect

(for church-based community ministries)

What does Modern Slavery mean?

“Modern slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, forced labour, child slavery, forced criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage, organ harvesting and human trafficking. It can affect men, women and children, from abroad or from the UK.

Victims are forced to work against their will on farms and building sites, in factories, restaurants, nail bars, car washes, brothels, massage parlours and private homes. Traffickers and exploiters use coercion and deception to keep control over their victims”

The Passage [Modern Slavery Handbook](#), p.2

In addition, some victims may not recognise or understand that they are being held in modern slavery. [Maya Esslemont](#) writing in the Big Issue explains this:

“Often survivors do not recognise themselves as victims because perpetrators are adept at making them believe their mistreatment is normal. Traffickers may tell victims it is normal to not receive full pay, or suffer poor working conditions, in certain industries or countries. Victims may be told that, because of their immigration status, gender or disability, law enforcement will not take them seriously if they come forward.”

It is hard to calculate true numbers of people being held in modern slavery, as it is a hidden crime – the charity [Unseen](#) gives an overview of figures, including that 50 million people worldwide are estimated to be [held in modern slavery](#).

When it is believed that someone is the victim of modern slavery, that person should be referred into the ‘[National Referral Mechanism](#)’ [NRM], a framework for identifying and supporting victims. Only ‘First Responders’¹ can refer someone into this framework, and adults must provide consent.

In the ‘Report’ section of this toolkit, it is explained how churches can report concerns of modern slavery through The Modern Slavery Helpline (part of the charity [Unseen](#), who are a listed ‘First Responder’).

¹ See section 4 on the NRM guidance page of the Home Office for an up-to-date list of charities and sectors [National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK](#)



This toolkit will take you through three responses to modern slavery we should all know: **Spot** the signs, **Report** your concerns, **Protect** your community.

SPOT the signs

Fewer than one in five of the public said they would know how to spot someone experiencing modern slavery.

Hestia - On Our Streets: The changing face of modern slavery in London (Sept 2024)

What signs are there that someone is being held in modern slavery?

Hestia outline the following indicators of modern slavery in their [Spot the Signs Toolkit](#):

- They have their ID, personal documents or belongings taken from them
- Poor living environment
- They can't confirm where they live or the general area
- Unsuitable clothing for the weather/time of year
- Presenting as fearful, e.g. not making eye contact
- Paranoia of being followed or contacted by unsafe individuals
- Fear of authorities, such as the police or Home Office
- Signs of physical abuse
- Being emotionally manipulated
- In unequal or controlling relationships
- Others are restricting their movements and/or communications

In The Passage's [Modern Slavery Handbook](#) (especially pages 2-19), different forms of modern slavery (e.g. sexual exploitation, domestic servitude) are outlined in more detail, including real-life examples and possible indicators specific to that type. This may help you if you suspect a particular type of modern slavery.

Causeway have an [Exploitation Risk Checker tool](#) on their website for criminal or sexual exploitation. You confidentially answer a series of short questions and are given a response based on your answers e.g. signposting.

The [Clewes Initiative](#) created the [Safe Car Wash app](#) to specifically audit your local car wash for signs of modern slavery, and report it.

Where might I encounter this through church-based ministries?

Being held in modern slavery can also intersect with other vulnerabilities, such as homelessness or seeking asylum. With so many of our churches working with vulnerable people, it is important to consider what church-based projects victims of modern slavery are most likely to engage with.

These can include:

- Night shelters and other homelessness services
- Foodbanks
- Drop-ins for e.g. mental health, warm spaces, cafés
- Parent/carers and child groups
- Refugee/asylum support and outreach

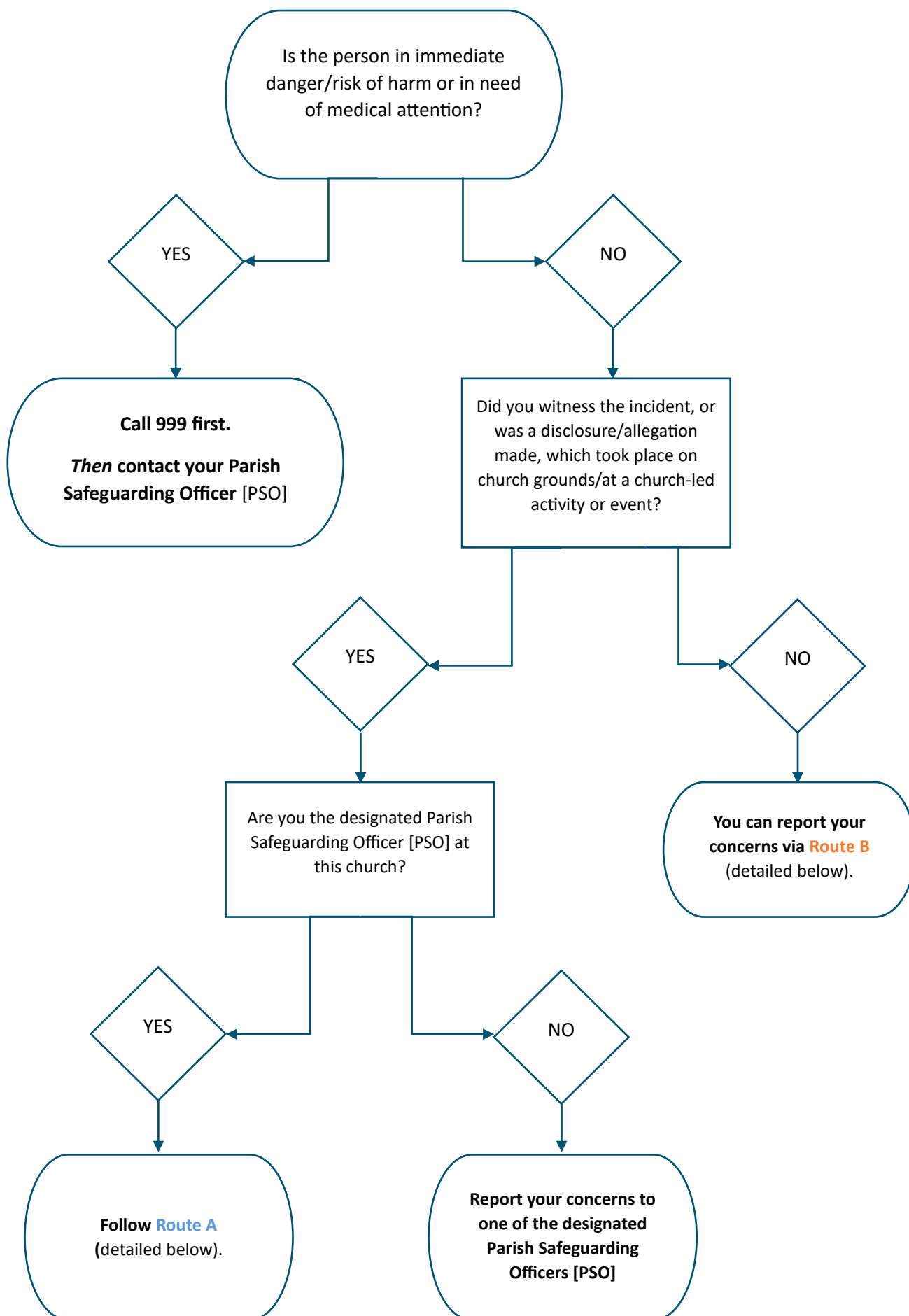
In the Part 2 of the Modern Slavery Toolkit (coming soon), you can find reports and resources to help you explore the intersection of modern slavery and some of the particular ministries outlined above.

REPORT your concerns

If you have immediate concerns about someone's safety, then please contact 999 and your Local Authority Children or Adult Social Care Services (as appropriate).

On the next page is a flowchart to use if you suspect or witness modern slavery and will help you work out the next steps – these steps are in line with Church of England safeguarding guidelines for parishes.

If you are a different organisation (i.e. not part of the Church of England) please check your own organisation's processes for reporting safeguarding concerns.



Route A for Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) – Follow the Church of England's 4R's:

1. **RECOGNISE** – Use a 'spot the signs' resource (such as those referred to in Part 1 of this toolkit) which may help you clarify what you have seen or heard, if needs be.
2. **RESPOND** – Refer to 'protect your community' section 3 of this toolkit e.g. use the case studies to think about trauma-informed care for any potential victims (especially if they are physically with you in the building).
3. **RECORD** – as with usual safeguarding processes, each party should record their own notes and steps taken.
4. **REFER** – Contact your Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) for your Episcopal Area – all contact details can be found [here](#). Work with the DSA to assess case and consider referrals to the following agencies: (NB: you may make multiple referrals)
 - You can contact the police (non-emergency) on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
 - You should also consider whether you need to involve social services (for children or vulnerable adults).
 - You can call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. You could fill out their [reporting form](#) instead (which can be done anonymously) if you're more comfortable doing that instead of making a phone call. Please be aware that the helpline may log the case, and then call you back a few days later.

Please note: if you are not a parish (e.g. a chaplaincy) then you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team directly on 020 7932 1224 or via email: safeguarding@london.anglican.org

Out of hours advice: This can be sought from the Thirtyone:eight helpline on 0303 003 1111, selecting option 2. *(Thirtyone:eight is an independent charity which works in close partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. The diocese receives notification of any advice given by Thirtyone:eight.)*

If you have immediate concerns about someone's safety, please contact the police or your local authority Children or Adult Social Care Services.

Route B (general citizen observation)

1. Refer to a 'spot the signs' resource, if needs be, for clarity or to check what you have seen/heard.
2. If you remain suspicious that you have witnessed exploitation, you can contact one of the following First Responders:
 - Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700, or via their [online form](#)*
 - If you're not sure who to contact, they can advise you
 - Police (non-emergency) on 101
 - Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111*

- Or if you suspect the mistreatment of workers, call the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) on 0800 432 0804, or email: intelligence@gla.gov.uk - you can also do this about a business
- Social care services

** Indicates that there is an option to report anonymously.*

Please be aware that First Responders may ask for as much information as you have, such as location and timings. They may also log the case, and then call you back a few days later if you choose to leave them your contact details.

Volunteer and personal safety

If you suspect that someone is being accompanied to e.g. a foodbank, or a night shelter by a trafficker/enslaver, phone the police. You must never approach or tackle a suspected perpetrator, even as part of a group of people. Instead, “we encourage you to trust your instincts and if something doesn’t look or feel right then raise the alarm if you feel safe to do so”². Always follow your church safeguarding procedures and call the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice once safe to do so.

NEVER confront a suspected perpetrator – it will put you and others, including potential victims, in danger. In an emergency, always phone the police.

Be mindful that vicarious trauma can happen as a result of hearing disclosures, and burnout when working with vulnerable people can happen often. Be sure to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing, too. Have a conversation with your team of staff/volunteers about how mental and emotional wellbeing is tended to in your social action project.

With London seeing around 40% of all the demand for modern slavery across the country, it is likely that churches which run social action projects will interact with victims of modern slavery.

Figure from Hestia: On Our Streets: the changing face of Modern Slavery in London, 2024

² <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/modern-slavery>

PROTECT your communities

Trauma-informed care

It is important to remember that victims and survivors of modern slavery will be dealing with complex trauma; in turn, our compassion ministries and social action projects should be taking a trauma-informed approach to care. But what does that phrase “trauma-informed care” actually mean?

Trauma-informed care, at its most basic level, means assisting someone *whilst being aware* of the possible triggers that could disturb their sense of wellbeing or safety, and doing our best to avoid this.

Here are three examples of simple steps to taking a trauma-informed approach in social action contexts:

Example 1: “Do sit down” at the soup kitchen

- **Situation:** You have invited a person to sit down with you, but you have taken the chair against the wall. This means the other person must now take the chair opposite, blocking their view of any exit.
- **Context:** If a person had been forced into never leaving the house, or were isolated in a room where the door was constantly locked from the outside, not being able to see an exit could panic them or cause extreme anxiety.
- **Proposed alternative:** Allow the person to choose where they sit, by seating yourself last.

NB: This potential trigger of not seeing an exit can also apply to victims/survivors of childhood abuse, sexual assault & domestic violence. It may also be triggering for refugees and asylum seekers e.g. if someone had been trafficked in a lorry.

Example 2: “You can leave your things at the back” during ESOL class

- **Situation:** The teacher asks the class to leave all belongings not necessary for study at the back of the class, by the unlocked door.
- **Context:** One member of the class was trafficked and held in modern slavery before being discovered by chance, freed and then beginning the asylum process. They have now been issued an ARC (Asylum Recognition Card). However, previously the traffickers had taken all legal documents (such as their passport), and their worldly possessions by force. The possessions this person now has on them are extremely important to them, and not being able to see where they or have them on their person at all times could be very distressing or cause anger, from fear that they might be taken away again.
- **Proposed alternative:** If bags/coats really cannot be put under the table or on the back of chairs, allow them to be stored within eyesight and/or easy reach.

Example 3: *“The local police will be visiting this morning” at the community drop-in*

- **Situation:** The leaders of the community drop-in have been working hard to connect with the local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and build good relationships; two PCSOs have offered to attend today to hear concerns from local community members over anti-social behaviour.
- **Context:** For someone who had been held in modern slavery, authority figures such as the police may have been used as a threat. They may have been told the police will not believe you, or that the police are not to be trusted; even that any interaction with the police will lead to punishment of you or your family. This means that many people who are or have been held in modern slavery are frightened of the police.
- **Alternative solution:** If you know someone is a survivor of modern slavery, give that person a heads-up that you have invited the police to come and meet people who attend the drop-in, and explain for what purpose and at what time. Explain that they may attend in uniform, and that their presence is not a threat, but you understand if they would rather not engage with the police. Give a timeframe for the police arriving and leaving, and make sure it is stuck to. That way, the person can attend before or after if they so wish.

There is a lot of training and reading available around trauma-informed care. If it is something you would like more information on, please do contact the [Compassionate Communities Team](#), who will be able to advise you of any upcoming (external) trainings relevant to your social action project.

Prevention: educate and signpost

The best thing you can do to protect people in your community from being trapped or held in modern slavery is to raise awareness, through education and signposting. In a church context, this could include:

- Ensure volunteers/staff in social action projects know how to spot the signs of modern slavery, and are trained in trauma-informed care – for example, have they completed the modern slavery module on the [C of E Safeguarding portal](#)?
- Do you need to think about modern slavery in your risk assessment?
- If you preach or give talks in church, make reference to modern slavery (perhaps during Anti-Slavery Week in October).
- Invite a speaker on modern slavery to church group e.g. small group, Mothers Union, etc.
- Run a discipleship course e.g. Clewer’s
- Display posters in your church or church hall: e.g. these from the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#) (around exploitation) or charities listed in the resource section below and church halls. These are not just about spotting the signs, but also if you believe yourself to be a potential victim (including in relevant different languages).

- Highlight resources that people can use, like the [Safe Car Wash](#) app and [Exploitation Risk Checker](#) tool.
- Work with local charities/local authorities to distribute information and resources to potential victims and vulnerable groups of people e.g. your Local Authority will have a modern slavery/exploitation team, who may do outreach events in community spaces.

Resources & Contacts

- **Crimestoppers:** 0800 555 111
- **Modern Slavery Helpline:** 08000 121 700
- [Home Office National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) Guidance](#)
- [The Passage](#) are at the forefront of research and action around the intersection of homelessness and modern slavery. Their [Modern Slavery Handbook](#) is a particularly good resource
- [The Salvation Army](#) currently hold the government contract to protect and care for all adult survivors of modern slavery in England and Wales. They also have a helpline: 0800 808 3733
- [Hestia](#) are the largest provider of modern slavery support in London and the South East. Their report gives a sobering insight into modern slavery across London: [2024 On Our Streets: The changing face of modern slavery](#)
- [Unseen](#) provide safehouses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery (and run the Modern Slavery Helpline)
- [Causeway](#) is a leading modern slavery and crime reduction charity. They recently launched the [Exploitation Risk Checker Tool](#)
- [The Clewer Initiative](#) believe that the tools to end modern slavery already exist within the local community and that the Church, which is present in all communities and at the heart of many, has a primary responsibility in leading these efforts. They also produced [The Safe Car Wash App](#)
- [Stop the Traffik](#) aim to stop human trafficking worldwide. Their [Stop App](#) can be used anonymously to report suspicious activity, and is available in 15 languages
- [The Human Trafficking Foundation](#) grew out of the All-Party Parliamentary Group [APPG] on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- [The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#) who work in partnership to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.