

# **Researching the extent and nature of Modern Slavery in Oxford**



**Elmore**  
Community Services

## Foreword

Slavery isn't something that happens in some faraway country, it's happening right here. Slavery doesn't belong to some distant past, it's happening right now. And, as this research shows, slavery may be happening in far greater numbers than we thought.

Using an innovative approach, this research has found that the 123 cases of modern slavery in Oxford recorded by Thames Valley Police in a recent four-year window was, indeed, the tip of the iceberg. There may have been between 319 and 442 'possible' or 'very likely' cases of modern slavery in Oxford in a recent four-year window. Modern slavery has many faces, and they can all be seen in this report published by Elmore.

There is a diverse range of local agencies that come into contact with potential victims of modern slavery. As the recommendations of the report show, we can all do something to stop slavery and exploitation. Slavery isn't something that is so secret that it cannot be detected: much of it can take place in plain sight – people obviously undernourished and working on building sites or farms; nail bars where people are working for excessively long shifts; car-wash operations that feel exploitative and wrong. Prevention is key and a public health approach can be critical.

Elmore is proud to have been commissioned to carry out this research and utilise our expertise in supporting survivors of modern slavery. Elmore's excellent team learned many things about the needs of exploited people and how to meet them, based on years of innovating and delivering an Independent Trauma Advisory Service to support survivors of exploitation and modern slavery across Oxfordshire from 2014 to 2017. This service has been positively evaluated and it is estimated that for every pound spent on the service, £2.88 would be saved from the public purse. We also deliver the New Beginnings service for adult survivors of child sexual exploitation, which has similarly been positively evaluated.

As a co-chair of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, Elmore is passionate about playing our role in the multi-agency response. Clearly the longer-term support and trauma informed services which we deliver will continue to be important for supporting survivors, alongside the excellent provision of services locally.

Vulnerability is the dominant feature of modern slavery, and it is the unacceptable exploitation of that vulnerability that we must join together to end. The tragedy of slavery is that it's a condition of human making, driven by greed and inhumanity. But, together, we can implement the recommendations of this report and put the city into a stronger position to spot it, stop it, and drive slavery from Oxford.

**Tom Hayes,**  
**Chief Executive of Elmore Community Services and**  
**Co-Chair of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network**



## Foreword

Slavery isn't just something that happens outside the UK; it is happening right here in Oxford. It may come as a surprise to many, but a lot of the identified victims of modern slavery and exploitation in Oxford, and across the UK, are British nationals.

Oxford City Council is proud to have commissioned and supported this report by Elmore Community Services following their provision of an Independent Trauma Advisory service to survivors of modern slavery and exploitation. The report provides new and important information about the extent and nature of modern slavery in our city.

It finds there is a considerably higher number of cases of modern slavery between April 2016 and January 2020 than Thames Valley Police had recorded. The use of a case-based methodology highlights the value of working with local service providers and agencies in addition to law enforcement to identify and support victims, but also put in place disruption strategies. We are committed to exploring, alongside partners, the locally relevant recommendations of the report on how to respond.

Oxford City Council has supported and led on anti-slavery measures across the city for many years. In 2016, the City Council supported Thames Valley Police in setting up Hotel Watch, which trains hoteliers in how to spot the signs of exploitation, including child sexual exploitation and modern slavery, and what to do if they believe something suspicious is happening on their premises.

The City Council has also introduced mandatory safeguarding training for all taxi drivers that it licences to operate in Oxford and worked with neighbouring districts to roll this training out to all taxi drivers across Oxfordshire.

As co-chair of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, alongside Elmore, Oxford City Council has convened a roundtable on modern slavery for leaders from across the county with insights contributing to this research. We are committed to holding a second in February 2022 in order to reflect on and take forward the recommendations of this report.

Our city has great areas of poverty, areas where modern slavery can take hold. Ten of Oxford's 83 neighbourhood areas are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, experiencing multiple levels of deprivation – low skills, low incomes, and relatively high levels of crime, and we are working with others to address this deprivation and inequality.

Alongside partners we are tackling this issue by identifying and offering support to victims. Throughout the city and beyond, we want citizens to be able to access information about, and spot the signs of, modern slavery and exploitation. Working together with our partners across the county we aim to raise awareness of these horrendous crimes against the most vulnerable in our communities.

**Cllr Susan Brown,**

**Leader of Oxford City Council and  
Cabinet member for Economic Development**



## Foreword

As the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, I have a UK-wide remit to encourage good practice in the detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences and the identification of victims. My [Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#) refers to the need to encourage better identification and referral of victims, to improve the quality of victim care and support, and emphasises the importance of working in partnership; all of which are key themes highlighted by this report.

Accurately assessing the prevalence of modern slavery in the UK is extremely difficult, with estimates ranging from 10,000-13,000 by the Home Office in 2013 to 136,000 by the Walk Free Foundation in 2018. This research sought to generate a stronger evidence base for those responsible for community safety across Oxford City to better assess the threat, risks and harm posed by modern slavery to adults and children, and develop more effective responses to identify, protect and support victims. I welcome this work and the commitment to taking an evidence-based approach to tackling modern slavery.

The research suggests that there may have been between 319 and 442 ‘possible’ or ‘very likely’ cases of modern slavery in Oxford City from April 2016-January 2020. This is considerably higher than the 123 cases recorded by Thames Valley Police and therefore demonstrates the rich data held by a range of agencies outside of law enforcement. It is clear that the range of organisations that may come into contact with a potential victim of modern slavery is diverse, so it is essential that they know how to report concerns and are aware of the various support pathways that exist. I support, and encourage, the recommendations made in the report to further enhance data sharing across the partnership landscape and to improve the co-ordination of multi-agency operational responses.

The research identifies a number of vulnerable groups to be at particular risk including: child victims of criminal and sexual exploitation; adults with complex needs; unaccompanied asylum seeking children; Albanian women who are victims of sexual exploitation; and Asian and African women who are victims of domestic servitude. It also offers reflections on where further work is needed based on the valuable insight offered by frontline practitioners. Many of the challenges identified in relation to support for victims and survivors, including the need to access safe accommodation, longer-term support and trauma informed mental health services are also gaps nationally, so it is vital that any good practice developed is shared to help inform what works.

Finally, I am pleased to see this research recognise the importance of prevention and highlight the merits of a public health approach. There is a need to ensure that such activity includes primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention to immunise the population, protect those at risk and support those affected to reduce further harm. My office has recently worked with the University of Sheffield and Public Health England to produce a [framework](#) for a refined public health approach to modern slavery, including a guide for anti-slavery partnerships, which I hope will be a useful tool for multi-agency partners in Oxford.

**Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM**

**Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (2019-22)**



# Researching the extent and nature of Modern Slavery in Oxford

## Final Report

February 2022



**Fiona Gell, Jane Shackman,  
and Amanda Webb-Johnson**

On behalf of



Commissioned by



## Acknowledgements

This research was commissioned by Oxford City Council. It was funded by the Controlling Migration Fund of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the initial 15 months of research and by Oxford City Council for a 6-month project extension. We are grateful to Richard Adams, Community Safety Service Manager, and Linda Ludlow, then-Strategic Lead for Human Exploitation, of Oxford City Council for their guidance and expertise on the issue of modern slavery throughout the project.

Elmore Community Services was commissioned to carry out the research on the basis of its expertise in supporting survivors of modern slavery built up since being funded to run an Independent Trauma Advisory Service to support survivors of exploitation and modern slavery across Oxfordshire from 2014 to 2017. The authors were recruited by Elmore Community Services to carry out the project and are grateful for the support received from the organisation: from Tom Hayes, Chief Executive, for his commitment to the issue of modern slavery and insightful comments on the text; to Adrian Childs, Team Manager, for project managing the research with great patience, flexibility, and support in overcoming the many methodological hurdles; and to all the staff for their orientation early on in the research and sharing their deep understanding of the issues based on many years of working with survivors.

Sincere thanks are due to all those across the third sector and statutory organisations who supported the research with their knowledge and concern for the issue of modern slavery. Many spent considerable time searching for client data. Others shared, anonymously, harrowing stories of survivor experiences. It was their concern and commitment to improve the lives of those at risk of slavery and of survivors that have enabled us to compile a substantial knowledge base on this issue for Oxford. We are particularly grateful to the two survivors of modern slavery and one family member of a survivor who were willing to share their personal experiences of slavery with us.

We are grateful to our lead contacts in each statutory organisation who gave invaluable support with orientation and opening doors: April McCoig, Victoria Butler, Moira Gilroy, Caroline Heason, Richard Webb, Delia Mann, and Melanie Pearce. Thanks also to all those who reviewed and commented on sections of the report, and to the Project Reference Group whose expertise was much appreciated in giving the initial steer for the project.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the tireless and meticulous work of Joshua Margulies, our data analyst, who volunteered his time over almost two years to input and analyse the quantitative data with great expertise and goodwill.

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### Image on Front Cover:

Looking Westward by the Big Orange M  
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### Image on Front Page:

Mural in Temple Cowley by Tommy Watkins

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Commissioned by Oxford City Council

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## Acronyms

|       |                                                                   |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BAMER | Black, Asian, minority ethnic, and refugee                        |
| CCE   | Child Criminal Exploitation                                       |
| CDE   | Child Drug Exploitation                                           |
| CGD   | Conclusive Grounds Decision (National Referral Mechanism)         |
| CSE   | Child Sexual Exploitation                                         |
| FGM   | Female Genital Mutilation                                         |
| GDPR  | General Data Protection Regulation                                |
| ITA   | Independent Trauma Advisory Service                               |
| MASH  | Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub                                     |
| MSI   | Form for the notification of a potential victim of modern slavery |
| NRM   | National Referral Mechanism                                       |
| NRPF  | No Recourse to Public Funds                                       |
| OASN  | Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network                                  |
| OCG   | Organised Crime Group                                             |
| OMSP  | Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership                            |
| OSAB  | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board                             |
| OSCB  | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board                           |
| OSCP  | Oxford Safer Communities Partnership                              |
| OUH   | Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust                  |
| RGD   | Reasonable Grounds Decision (National Referral Mechanism)         |
| TVP   | Thames Valley Police                                              |
| UASC  | Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children                             |

## Executive Summary

This is the final report of a three-year research project to establish better estimates of the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford.

Modern slavery is now widely recognised as being one of the great scourges of our time. It includes the crimes of Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Servitude, Forced Labour, Forced Criminality, and Organ Harvesting. These are brutal crimes involving ownership, restriction of freedoms, and control by physical and powerful psychological means. Exploiters prey on the most vulnerable in our societies. Victims are forced into it by many factors, including poverty, deprivation, low educational opportunities, limited choices and opportunity, and unstable political, economic, and social climates and war.

The complexity of the crime of modern slavery makes it a particularly challenging one to measure. The most widely accepted estimate for the prevalence of modern slavery in the UK was produced by the Home Office in 2014 and suggested between 10,000 and 13,000 victims. However, this is widely seen to be the tip of the iceberg and the extent is now widely thought to be far higher.

In response to growing concern in the statutory and third sectors about modern slavery in Oxford, and with the city increasingly being targeted by organised crime groups trafficking and exploiting vulnerable individuals, various city and county-wide organisations responsible for community safety, led by Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP), have been tackling modern slavery and leading efforts to identify and support victims and put in place disruption strategies. Between April 2016 and April 2019 Thames Valley Police recorded 123 cases of potential victims of modern slavery occurring in the city of Oxford (population 152,450). The city has great areas of poverty, areas where modern slavery can take hold. Ten of Oxford's 83 neighbourhood areas are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, experiencing multiple levels of deprivation – low skills, low incomes, and relatively high levels of crime.<sup>1</sup>

Elmore Community Services is deeply committed to supporting survivors of modern slavery. As a registered charity supporting marginalised and disenfranchised people in Oxfordshire, particularly those with multiple and complex needs, Elmore received funding from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner in 2016 to support victims of exploitation and modern slavery by developing an Independent Trauma Advisory (ITA) Service across Oxfordshire. From 2014-2017 the ITA service worked with 50 victims, or suspected victims, of modern slavery.

Alongside Elmore's ITA service, statistical modelling produced an estimate of between 533 and 2,462 potential victims of modern slavery across the Thames Valley. Given the wide range of this estimate, with the increasing concerns about the rise in modern slavery in the city, and on the basis of a shared felt need for a more accurate understanding of the scale, nature and risks associated with modern slavery in Oxford, this research project was conceived.

The research has explored the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford. The aim has been to generate a stronger evidence base on which those responsible for community safety across Oxford can better assess the threat, risks and harm posed by modern slavery to adults and children in the city, and develop more effective responses to identify, protect and support victims. The intention has been to build on the systematic knowledge base already built up by Thames Valley Police on

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/public-health/PublicHealthAnnualReportMay2020.pdf> Accessed 4/2/21

modern slavery and bring it together more coherently with the combined knowledge and expertise of a wide range of other organisations.

The project began in April 2018. It was commissioned by Oxford City Council and was conducted by Elmore Community Services which recruited three part-time researchers for the purpose (1 full-time post for a period of 21 months). It was funded for a period of 15 months to July 2019 by the Controlling Migration Fund of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Due to project delays caused by a protracted process of obtaining information-sharing agreements with statutory agencies, Oxford City Council provided additional funding for a 6-month project extension from October 2019 to March 2020. From February 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and the unprecedented nature of the crisis that ensued, significantly impacted on the final phase of data analysis and report writing. The project end date was therefore extended to January 2021. The final report was submitted to Oxford City Council in February 2021.

**The key research questions for the study were:**

1. ***Extent and nature of modern slavery:*** How many cases of modern slavery have occurred in Oxford City since April 2016: what type of slavery, where, to whom, by whom, and who is at risk?
2. ***Support for Survivors:*** What are the challenges in supporting survivors, and what is needed to provide more effective support?
3. ***Organisational awareness and capacity:*** How much understanding is there amongst support services of how to identify, report, refer and support survivors? What are the challenges and what are the support needs?

The methodology adopted was to collect case-based information on modern slavery from a wide range of frontline service providers across the statutory and third sector sectors. This approach marks this research out as different from many studies of the prevalence of modern slavery which use statistical projections. The case-based methodology was challenging on many fronts including the negotiation of data sharing agreements with organisations; the difficulty of identifying double counts of cases when data protection limits the personal data that can be collected; myriad ambiguities and different thresholds in identifying what 'counts' as modern slavery; different systems for documenting potential cases between organisations; and the limited time that busy frontline service-providers had to engage with the research.

The main participant organisations included Thames Valley Police, Oxford City Council, and Oxfordshire County Council. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and a wide range of third sector organisations including homelessness and housing organisations. Interviews were also held with a number of other statutory and private sector organisations as well as academics.

Quantitative data regarding service-users who had potentially been exploited as modern slaves between April 2016 and January 2020 (for an average of 3.5 years) was provided by 42 teams of service providers from across these organisations. 148 interviews were carried out, mostly with front-line service providers, to explore the nature and types of exploitation seen by these organisations, factors that made victims vulnerable or at risk, support provided to them, impact on their lives, and information about suspected perpetrators. Other interviews were carried out with team managers to explore organisational awareness and practice on the identification, referral, reporting and support for victims of modern slavery. Two interviews were with survivors of modern slavery, and one with a family member. In addition, 16 focus group meetings were held with individual teams of service providers in the City Council, County Council, Oxford Health and third sector organisations, involving

the participation of 142 people. In total, the perspectives of 290 people contributed to this research. On behalf of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, Elmore co-chaired a Roundtable on modern slavery for leaders from across the county with insights contributing to this research.

Due to the focus on listening to the experiences of service-providers, we acknowledge that survivors' experiences were mostly heard indirectly through the organisations that offer services to them. Any future work arising from this report in Oxford would benefit from the participation of survivors, for example, in giving feedback on their experiences of the support they are offered in response to the challenges and risks they face.

## **The extent and nature of modern slavery**

The study identified a range of between 319 and 442 'possible' or 'very likely' cases of modern slavery in Oxford City between April 2016 and January 2020 (i.e., over a 3.5-year period). 69% of the cases were assessed as 'very likely' to be cases of modern slavery; 31% as 'possible' (to be added) cases over a 3.5-year period.

The range indicates uncertainty due to the potential for double counting cases from different sources. This is a significant methodological challenge in estimating the prevalence of modern slavery due to data protection restricting the use of identifiable characteristics in data collected. The higher estimate of 442 is the total number of potential cases of modern slavery reported after eliminating all identifiable duplications. The lower estimate of 319 denotes a potential scenario where all cases identified by Thames Valley Police (123 cases) were also identified by another source, so all of these are removed so as to minimize the possibility of double counting. All statistics presented in the report are based on the total number of potential cases after removing known duplications (i.e., 442).

The estimated of 319-442 potential cases of modern slavery, identified by collating data from 42 teams of service providers across the city, is between 2.5 and 3.5 times higher than the 123 cases identified by Thames Valley Police in the same period. This demonstrates the importance of putting in place processes to consolidate and monitor, on an on-going basis, the data and intelligence collected by this wide group of concerned and knowledgeable service-providers across the statutory and third sectors. This would better inform strategies for prevention, protection, support, and enforcement. In addition, organisations participating in the research had diverse knowledge and insights about different facets of modern slavery. This attests to the value of partnership in building a coherent understanding of the way the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford is evolving.

### **The analysis of the cases was as follows:**

- The predominant types of modern slavery identified were Forced Criminality (36%) and Sexual Exploitation (34%), followed by Forced Labour (21%) and then Domestic Servitude (9%). This reflects a higher proportion of Sexual Exploitation and a lower proportion of Forced Labour in Oxford than for the national context.
- Women just outnumbered men in terms of potential victims identified. There was a clear and expected gender pattern with a huge over-representation of women and girls amongst those experiencing Sexual Exploitation (90%) and Domestic Servitude (84%). To a lesser extent, men were over-represented amongst those experiencing Forced Labour (76%) and Forced Criminality (69%).
- 29% of potential victims were children. Of particular note, 29% of all males were aged 16-18, constituting a very high-risk group.

- Of those for whom nationality was known, 146 were British and 190 were foreign nationals. The predominant nationalities after British were Albanian, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Romanian, Sudanese, Indian and Chinese, in that order of prevalence.
- All the potential victims of modern slavery identified had either lived in, and/or been supported in, Oxford at some point since April 2016. However, the actual exploitation could have occurred elsewhere. The vast majority occurred in Oxford (83%), a significant number occurred abroad (11%), and a few occurred in the UK but outside of Oxford (5%). In all cases the exploitation occurred since April 2016.
- 154 (35%) of the potential modern slavery cases identified were referred into the National Referral Mechanism. Only 24 (5%) were reported to the Home Office under the Duty to Notify using an MS1 form.

**The research suggests that the following groups are at particular risk and warrant specific attention in terms of strategies for prevention, protection, and support:**

- a) Children and young people in vulnerable circumstances forced into criminality and sexual exploitation
- b) Adults with multiple and complex needs
- c) Foreign nationals including those trafficked from abroad, exploited as modern slaves abroad and/or in the UK, or married into servitude abroad and in the UK. Three groups are highlighted as at particular risk: asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants, particularly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC); Albanian women who have been sex trafficked; and women of Asian and African heritage held in Domestic Servitude.

Given the methodological challenges and complexities inherent in researching the prevalence of modern slavery, the limitations on the accuracy of any such data have to be acknowledged. It is possible that even within the lower estimate of 319 cases there are duplicated cases in the data set. However, it is much more likely that, given the ‘dark figure’ of cases hidden from public and professional view that all the statistical projections are based on, even the upper estimate of 442 may be a considerable under-estimate of the true extent of modern slavery in Oxford. These challenges were understood at the outset of the project and the findings are therefore presented tentatively. The aim has been to improve the current intelligence picture for Oxford, bringing new sources of information to the intelligence gathered by Thames Valley Police, and pointing to risk areas that warrant closer investigation and action.

## **Data and intelligence**

The wealth of information on modern slavery shared by the many respondents in this research demonstrates the rich knowledge base that exists in the city about modern slavery. The challenge is how to collate that intelligence into a coherent picture on an on-going basis, across all forms of modern slavery, for both adults and children, and to ensure it is accessible to all actors involved in prevention, protection, support, and enforcement action. The report therefore makes two recommendations on data and intelligence.

1. That the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) considers creating a joint partnership data sharing project to build on this research by engaging local partners across statutory, third and private sectors in data sharing. The aim would be to provide on-going mapping, analysis, and insight on the incidence of modern slavery across the city, including risks, threats, and trends.

2. That consideration is given to extending the research to four areas: to gathering the views of **survivors of modern slavery** about their experiences of support and ongoing challenges and risks; to the **private sector** to improve understanding of modern slavery occurring in local services and businesses in Oxford; **to the public** via different forms of consultation which aim to reach survivors of slavery and those at risk, their families, and others concerned with the issue; and to **rural areas of Oxfordshire** to explore modern slavery occurring in large residential properties and farms.

## Prevention and Support for survivors

The report acknowledges the incredibly challenging work being done by very dedicated staff across statutory and third sector organisations in Oxford, protecting those at risk of modern slavery and supporting survivors. It highlights the following issues and challenges that were raised by respondents and makes the following recommendations. These relate to all potential victims of modern slavery, but in particular the groups highlighted as at particular risk.

- **Prevention:** community engagement programmes to reach the most vulnerable through outreach into communities which raises awareness of risks and support available, and provides alternative pathways for those at risk by engaging them in other activities; translation and distribution of printed and digital information on the signs, risk and support available; education with all children and young people, and particularly those most vulnerable, about the risks and signs of modern slavery; continued efforts to raise public awareness, particularly targeting users of local services where modern slavery may occur.
- **Support services:** attending to the urgent need for better provision of emergency and long-term safe housing for those at risk of, or fleeing, slavery; focused programmes on long-term engagement and sustained relationships with survivors, particularly with young people; provision of safe interpreting services; and trauma-informed mental health support for survivors.
- **Operational inter-agency cooperation:** the setting up of an Oxford, or Oxfordshire, multi-agency operational partnership to share intelligence and coordinate inter-agency response to adult victims of *all forms* of modern slavery, and those at risk, possibly emulating the Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership. The aim would be to improve the agile sharing of intelligence and coordination of response to potential victims. Built into this, smaller response teams providing multi-agency operational wrap-around care for adult survivors and their, often complex, needs.
- **Groups at particular risk:** analysis of the specific issues, and a series of recommendations, for the prevention of slavery and support for survivors for each of these groups.

## Strengthening organisational capacity and leadership

In order to sustain the development of work on the prevention of modern slavery and support to survivors described above, staff capacity, systems and information resources need to be in place for them to be able to effectively identify, report, refer and support potential victims of modern slavery. Most importantly, in order to create a step change in tackling modern slavery in the city, change needs to be led from the top in partner organisations, and organisational cultures nurtured so that spotting the signs of modern slavery and acting on it becomes part of the role of every staff member in every organisation. The report makes the following recommendations to the OSCP on how to support partner organisations in this work.

- **Leadership:** Promote leadership on modern slavery by creating spaces for leaders of organisations across the statutory, third and private sectors to come together to strategize on how to tackle modern slavery most effectively across the city by promoting change within

their own organisations and as a city-wide partnership. This could build on the Modern Slavery Roundtable for leaders convened by the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network in 2019. Set up a system of Modern Slavery Champions networked across the partnership.

- **Information resources:** Create a local information hub on modern slavery to resource the capacity of staff across the partnership to identify, report, refer and support survivors.
- **Training:** Continue to ensure effective training provision on modern slavery is available across the city, in particular continuing to run trainings of the type delivered by the Willow Project during the course of this research which were widely appreciated.
- **Systems and tools:** Carry out joint technical work to develop sector-specific checklists for identifying signs of modern slavery, and shared systems for documenting cases.

The process of the research itself had many positive benefits. It raised awareness of the issue of modern slavery amongst participating organisations; it motivated some to enrol in training and others to ask about where to signpost survivors for support; it offered managers a space for reflection with their teams about an issue sometimes rarely discussed; and it cross-fertilised ideas between organisations. We hope that the interest generated will strengthen the network of organisations engaged in the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, and that those who contributed to this research will engage in further dialogue and efforts to implement the recommendations proposed. Most importantly, we hope that the findings and recommendations of this research will assist the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership in its efforts to prevent modern slavery, disrupt perpetrators, and protect and support survivors across the city.

# 1. Introduction and background

This is the final report of a two-year research project to establish better estimates of the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford. There is widespread recognition that official figures understate the extent of modern slavery, and the report seeks to bring the crime into sharper and clearer focus.

The project began in April 2018. It was commissioned by Oxford City Council and was carried out by Elmore Community Services. It was funded by the Controlling Migration Fund of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Oxford City Council provided additional funding to support a 6-month project extension.

The aim of the research was to generate a stronger evidence base on which those responsible for community safety across Oxford could better assess the threat, risks and harm posed by modern slavery to adults and children in the city, and develop more effective responses to identify, protect and support victims.<sup>2</sup> The intent was to build on the systematic knowledge base which Thames Valley Police has already built up around modern slavery and bring together more coherently the combined expertise of a wide range of other organisations.

The **key research questions** for the study were:

1. *Extent and nature of modern slavery:* How many cases of modern slavery have occurred in Oxford City since April 2016: what type of slavery, where, to whom, by whom, and who is at risk?
2. *Support for Survivors:* What are the challenges in supporting survivors, and what is needed to provide better support?
3. *Organisational awareness and capacity:* How much understanding is there amongst organisations and services of how to identify, report, refer and support survivors? What are the challenges, and what are the support needs?

The interest of **Elmore Community Services**<sup>3</sup> in carrying out this research is rooted in the history of its service provision. Elmore is a registered charity which provides high quality services for marginalised and disenfranchised people in Oxfordshire. It develops innovative solutions to support those with multiple and complex needs including those with personality disorders, mental health problems, learning disabilities, offending behaviour, anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy and child protection, homelessness, sex working, drug and alcohol problems, and relationship breakdown. In 2016 Elmore received funding from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to support victims of exploitation and modern slavery, by developing an Independent Trauma Advisory (ITA) Service across Oxfordshire. The service carried out assessments and offered support with emotional needs, accessing substance misuse services, finances/benefits, housing etc., and attended police exploitation raids to provide immediate support to survivors. The ITA service worked with 50 victims, or suspected victims, of modern slavery up to 2017. Since February 2016 Elmore has also supported adult survivors of Childhood Sexual Exploitation.

In response to increasing concern about modern slavery in Oxford, various city and county-wide bodies responsible for community safety, led by Oxford Safer Communities Partnership, have been tackling modern slavery by leading efforts to identify and support victims, and put in place disruption strategies. Resources in this area have been strengthened in the past three years through

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<sup>2</sup> The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' are used interchangeably throughout this report

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'Elmore'

the formation of the Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership Group (a statutory body strategy group) and the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network (an information-sharing network of third sector and statutory organisations currently co-chaired for the statutory sector by the Strategic Lead for Human Exploitation for Oxford City Council and for the third sector by the CEO of Elmore Community Services). In terms of specialist support services for survivors of modern slavery, from 2014-2017 the ITA service was run in Oxford by Elmore; from September 2018 – April 2020 a similar service was run by the Victims First: Willow Project in Oxford; and since May 2020 this has been recommissioned as the Victims First Specialist Service.

Alongside Elmore's ITA service, estimates of the extent of modern slavery across the Thames Valley were calculated using statistical modelling.<sup>4</sup> This produced an estimate for the number of victims across the Thames Valley in 2016 of between 533 and 2,462 (see section 3.1. for an explanation of these figures). Given the wide range of this estimate, with the city increasingly being targeted by organised crime groups trafficking and exploiting vulnerable individuals, and on the basis of a shared felt need for a more accurate understanding of the scale, nature and risks associated with modern slavery in Oxford, this research project was conceived.

**Project time frame.** The original time frame for the project was 15 months, from April 2018 to July 2019. During this period, data was gathered from a large number of third sector organisations and from Oxford City Council. The process of obtaining information-sharing agreements with the other statutory bodies was protracted, with agreements not in place until between 11 and 15 months into the project due to the complex bureaucracy involved. A funded project extension of 6 months was therefore agreed by Oxford City Council from October 2019-March 2020 which enabled a strong body of data to be collected from these organisations. As much of it was towards the end of the 6-month extension, this left insufficient time to complete the analysis and report. This, together with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in February 2020 and the unprecedented nature of the crisis that ensued, significantly impacted on the final phase of data analysis and report writing. The project end date was therefore extended to January 2021. The final report was submitted to Oxford City Council in February 2021.

This final project report reports fully on the analysis of quantitative data, and partially on the analysis of qualitative data. In the future, the knowledge base set out here could be augmented by further reporting on the practices and challenges faced by each of the five participating statutory organisations and the third sector in tackling modern slavery, and further analysis on the experience of slavery for the different types of exploitation, including case-studies.

**The research team** comprised one full-time post (covered by 3 researchers) for a period of 21 months, a volunteer data analyst, and project management over-sight by a Team Manager from Elmore Community Services. The researchers were freelance consultants contracted by Elmore to carry out the project.

**A Project Reference Group** was convened at the outset of the project to advice on the direction of the project. This comprised staff from Thames Valley Police, Oxford City Council, Elmore Community Services, Slough Borough Council and Oxford Brookes University.

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<sup>4</sup> Wager, N. and Wager, A., *Estimating the extent of modern slavery: Proposed Model for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner* (2017).

## 2. National context for modern slavery in the UK

*“Slavery is what slavery’s always been: one person controlling another person using violence, and then exploiting them economically, paying them nothing. That’s what slavery’s about”.<sup>5</sup>*

Kevin Bales, Professor of Contemporary Slavery

### 2.1. What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery is now widely recognised as being one of the great scourges of our time. It involves the illegal exploitation of people in which they are used as commodities for personal, commercial, or criminal gain. It is a crime of brutality involving ownership, restriction of freedoms, and control by physical and powerful psychological means. It preys on the vulnerable. Victims are driven into it by poverty, limited education, limited choices and opportunity, unstable political, economic, and social climates, and war. Modern slavery thrives on threat, coercion, and deception. Sometimes victims are lured into it by the false promise of a better life.

It is a complex crime and thus a particularly challenging one to measure. It is also a hidden crime of indeterminate duration, made up of a series of different events, often involving multiple victims and offenders, often across international borders, but also between neighbouring streets. It tends to take place alongside a wide range of other abuses and criminal offences such as grievous bodily harm, assault, and rape or child sexual abuse. Not all cases that may involve modern slavery are prosecuted as such, especially if the other offences involved carry similar, or more severe, sentences.

Modern slavery takes a number of different forms. The four major types are Labour Exploitation, Domestic Servitude, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation. These may be defined as follows: <sup>6</sup>

- **Labour Exploitation** (also known as Forced Labour and referred to in this study as such) – victims are forced to work directly for offenders in businesses and sites that they own or control. The main method of exploitation is to not pay, or illegally underpay, the victims.
- **Domestic Servitude** – victims are forced to undertake household chores and childcare for partners, or partner’s relatives, or others, and confined to the house.
- **Sexual Exploitation** – victims are forced into sex work or work in the commercial sex industry (pornography, lap dancing, telephone lines etc.). It includes those manipulated or coerced into sexual activities of any kind for another person’s gain.
- **Criminal Exploitation** (also known as Forced Criminality, and referred to in this study as such) – victims are manipulated, coerced or trafficked for the purposes of any illegal activities (e.g., drug trafficking and County Lines (transportation of illegal drugs often by children or vulnerable people coerced into it by gangs); cuckooing (taking over a person’s property); forced street crime (shoplifting, begging etc.); cannabis cultivation; and sham marriages).

A further category, uncommon but important, is that of **Organ Harvesting** in which an individual’s organs or eggs are surgically removed for sale on the black market.

**Cultural Exploitation** is sometimes added (including by Oxford City Council) as a further form of modern slavery in which victims are manipulated or coerced using religious, social or cultural beliefs e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalisation or forced marriage.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://sohtis.org/human-trafficking/>

<sup>6</sup> As cited on the Oxford City Council website

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community\\_safety/1328/modern\\_slavery\\_and\\_exploitation](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community_safety/1328/modern_slavery_and_exploitation)

Within the four major categories, the Home Office has defined 17 crime types (2017) <sup>7,8</sup> as follows:

| Category                     | Offence                                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Labour exploitation</b>   | Victims exploited for multiple purposes in isolated environments |
|                              | Victims work for offenders                                       |
|                              | Victims work for someone other than the offender                 |
| <b>Domestic Servitude</b>    | Exploited by partner                                             |
|                              | Exploited by relatives                                           |
|                              | Exploiter not related to victims                                 |
| <b>Sexual Exploitation</b>   | Child Sexual Exploitation – by a group                           |
|                              | Child Sexual Exploitation – by a single exploiter                |
|                              | Forced sex work in fixed location                                |
|                              | Forced sex work in changing location                             |
|                              | Trafficking for personal gratification                           |
| <b>Criminal exploitation</b> | Forced gang-related criminality                                  |
|                              | Forced Labour in illegal activities                              |
|                              | Forced acquisitive crime                                         |
|                              | Forced begging                                                   |
|                              | Trafficking for forced sham marriage                             |
|                              | Financial fraud (including benefit fraud)                        |

These forms of modern slavery may or may not involve **human trafficking** which is defined as the recruitment, harbouring or transport of people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception, or coercion, and forced to work against their will. It should be noted that trafficking is different from smuggling, which involves a voluntary payment for a service, though the huge debts incurred by smuggling can lead to modern slavery and/or human trafficking.

Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, violence, coercion and/or deception. Often, they do not recognise themselves as being exploited or victims of crime, and do not disclose their situation or seek support. Barriers to this include a fear and distrust of authorities, a lack of awareness that support is available, or a perception of being in debt to those exploiting them.

<sup>7</sup> Home Office. A typology of modern slavery offences in the UK: Research Report 93. October 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The reason Organ Harvesting was not included in this Home Office typology is only because there were no cases in the data set from which the typology was derived (Home Office, 2017).

### Difference between labour abuse and labour exploitation (*also known as Forced Labour*)

“Labour abuse is at the lower end of the spectrum but can be equally traumatising for the individual concerned. Issues such as non-payment of minimum wage, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), few or no breaks, belittling of workers and long hours are all signs of labour abuse.

Forced Labour and labour exploitation are at the higher end of the spectrum and defined as modern slavery. They involve the control, force or coercion of an individual to perform work. This is serious and high (level) harm, and signs include restrictions on movement, debt-bondage, removal of identity documents, psychological manipulation and threats of, or actual violence.”

<https://www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery>

The difference between abuse and exploitation or modern slavery is illustrated well by the following example of Forced Labour.

The complexity of the crime of modern slavery is recognised in the Palermo Protocol (2000) on human trafficking, a key piece of international anti-trafficking legislation, now widely used, which identifies three elements of human trafficking – the act, the means, and the purpose.

- The **‘act’** of human trafficking includes the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt (movement) of victims.
- The **‘means’** (methods) refers to the ways in which offenders carry out the act of human trafficking (i.e., through the threat or use of force, fraud, deception, coercion, abuse of power or vulnerability, for the purpose of exploitation).
- The **‘purpose’** is the exploitation of victims. This can take many different forms, such as Sexual Exploitation, Labour Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, Domestic Servitude or Organ Harvesting. Some victims may be subject to more than one form of exploitation.

All three of the above elements are required for the case to be confirmed as adult trafficking. The ‘means’ is not required for child trafficking cases as a child cannot give informed consent. For a crime to be confirmed as one of modern slavery, the elements of ‘Means’ and ‘Purpose’ must be present. The act of trafficking does not have to be involved.

## 2.2. The extent of modern slavery in the UK

**Globally**, the Walk Free Foundation has estimated that there are 40 million people trapped in modern slavery. 15 million in Forced Marriages, and 25 million on Forced Labour. Two-thirds of these are women and girls. Debt bondage affects half of all victims of Forced Labour imposed by private actors.<sup>9</sup> The International Labour Organisation has calculated that Forced Labour in the private economy generates US\$ 150 billion in illegal profits per year.<sup>10</sup> According to Unseen, modern slavery is now the second fastest growing international crime, second only to the illegal arms trade. It has overtaken the drugs trade because of the simple fact that people can be bought and sold more than once.<sup>11</sup>

**Nationally**, the estimate of the prevalence of modern slavery in the UK which is most widely accepted as the best available was produced by the Home Office in 2014. It suggested that in 2013 there were between 10,000-13,000 potential victims.<sup>12</sup> This figure was arrived at by using the method of Multiple Systems Estimation, starting with the 2013 National Crime Organisation Strategic Assessment figure of 2,744 potential victims of human trafficking actually encountered<sup>13</sup>, and estimating an additional 'dark figure' of cases that had not come to attention. Since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act (2015), year on year there has been a steady increase in the number of potential victims identified and referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) - see section 2.3. In 2018, 6,985 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM, a 36% increase from 2017. Yet it is widely accepted that modern slavery remains a significantly under-reported crime partly due to the complexity of its detection. Six years on from the Home Office's estimate in 2014, the figure is thought to be much higher than 10,000: "*The police believe the real figure may be ten times that number, with victims of modern slavery remaining hidden and silent*".<sup>14</sup>

**The proportions of different types of modern slavery exploitation** for referrals into the NRM nationally are illustrated in the table below. This shows the number of *types of exploitation* recorded for all referrals into the NRM during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019, adult and children combined (this exceeds the number of victims referred as significant numbers reported several types of exploitation). The most prevalent forms of exploitation in NRM referrals were Forced Labour (35%) and Forced Criminality (33%) in almost equal measure, both heavily dominated by male victims. Next was Sexual Exploitation (19%), then Domestic Servitude (7%), both heavily dominated by women. Finally, 13 (0.3%) cases of Organ Harvesting were referred, mainly male victims.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/highlights>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_243201/lang--en/index.html](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang--en/index.html)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.Unseenuk.org/news/61>

<sup>12</sup> Silverman, B. Home Office. Modern Slavery: an application of Multiple Systems Estimation. November 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Sources used were the NCA, police forces, NGOs, Government organisations, local authorities and general public

<sup>14</sup> Human Trafficking Foundation, *Taking back control of our borders? The impact on modern-day slavery*. November 2020 p3.

**Table 1: Number of *types of exploitation* for all referrals into the NRM during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019**

| Type of exploitation | Female | Male  | Total | As a % of referrals for all exploitation types |
|----------------------|--------|-------|-------|------------------------------------------------|
| Domestic Servitude   | 164    | 112   | 276   | 7%                                             |
| Sexual Exploitation  | 620    | 130   | 750   | 19%                                            |
| Forced Labour        | 234    | 1,148 | 1,382 | 35%                                            |
| Forced Criminality   | 169    | 1,099 | 1,268 | 33%                                            |
| Organ Harvesting     | 3      | 10    | 13    | 0% (0.3%)                                      |
| Unknown              | 57     | 158   | 215   | 6%                                             |
| All types            | 1,247  | 2,657 | 3,904 | 100%                                           |

**Source:** extracted from Table 3: 'Number of NRM referrals by age group at exploitation, exploitation type and gender'. In Home Office, *National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK, End of Year Summary, 2019*. The data is for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019. The reason for using this data is that only from October 2019 was criminal exploitation (Forced Criminality) split from labour exploitation (Forced Labour) in NRM data, giving us a national comparison for this study. The total number of NRM referrals for the quarter was 3,350.

## 2.3. National level support for survivors of modern slavery in the UK

In 2014 the UK Government published its **Modern Slavery Strategy**<sup>15</sup> (covering England and Wales), and in 2015 passed the **Modern Slavery Act**. This was the first of its kind in Europe, and one of the first in the world, to specifically address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century.<sup>16</sup> It introduced a number of measures to combat slavery and human trafficking. In addition to creating new criminal offences, powers of enforcement, and measures to protect victims, it introduced requirements intended to eliminate slavery and trafficking in global supply chains.

The Modern Slavery Strategy focuses on identifying, supporting, and protecting the victims of modern slavery, disrupting perpetrator behaviour, prosecuting perpetrators, and addressing the conditions that foster trafficking. It has 4 components:

1. **Pursue:** prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for modern slavery.
2. **Prevent:** preventing people from engaging in modern slavery.
3. **Protect:** strengthening safeguards against modern slavery by protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and increasing awareness and resilience against this crime.
4. **Prepare:** reducing the harm caused by modern slavery through improved victim identification and enhanced support and protection.

The Modern Slavery Act requires commercial organisations with a turnover of £36 million or more to publish an annual statement setting out the steps taken to prevent modern slavery in their business and supply chains.<sup>17</sup> To date there have been no penalties for breaches. However, in September 2020 the government set out new measures for transparency in supply chains, holding businesses and public bodies more accountable, with more robust guidance for due diligence on sourcing, fines, and barring from government contracts any companies which do not comply to procurement rules.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.3.1. National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

Since 2009, the NRM, based in the Home Office, has been the UK's mechanism for identifying, referring, and supporting potential victims of modern slavery.<sup>19</sup> It is also the mechanism through which the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) collects data about victims. For those identified as potential victims of modern slavery, support is theoretically available through the NRM for a minimum of 45 days including safe accommodation, outreach support, counselling, legal advice and more. The client can accept full support, outreach support or no support. For adults this is a consent-based system. All minors under the age of 18 must be referred automatically. NRM referrals can also be made for individuals exploited as minors but who are now adults. Only designated first

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<sup>15</sup> Home Office (2014) Modern Slavery Strategy. London: Home Office.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/383764/Modern\\_Slavery\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_DEC2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/383764/Modern_Slavery_Strategy_FINAL_DEC2015.pdf). Accessed June 2020

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/historic-law-to-end-modern-slavery-passed>

<sup>17</sup> Section 54 (Transparency in Supply Chains)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tough-measures-to-tackle-modern-slavery-in-supply-chains>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>

responder organisations can make referrals. The current statutory and non-statutory first responder organisations for England and Wales are: police forces; certain parts of the Home Office; UK Visas and Immigration; Border Force; Immigration Enforcement; National Crime Agency; local authorities; Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA); Salvation Army; Migrant Help; Medaille Trust; Kalayaan; Barnardo's; Unseen; NSPCC (CTAC); BAWSO; New Pathways; and the Refugee Council.

A First Responder will assess a potential victim of modern slavery, and (if appropriate) complete an NRM referral form summarising the evidence for believing that person to be a victim of trafficking and/or modern slavery. Once referred to the NRM, there are two stages to the decision-making process. The Single Competent Authority (SCA) - the UK's decision-making body within the Home Office - makes Reasonable Grounds decisions and Conclusive Grounds decisions regarding individuals referred as potential victims of modern slavery. The SCA replaces the two competent authorities that existed before April 2019.

At Stage 1, the SCA is responsible for making a **Reasonable Grounds Decision (RGD)** to determine whether the individual is a potential victim of human trafficking or modern slavery. The test for a RGD is that the SCA 'suspects but cannot prove' this. The target timescale for a decision is within 5 days. Adults who are given a positive RGD have access to support (including accommodation, subsistence, legal aid, and counselling) during a 45 day 'reflection and recovery period' until a Conclusive Grounds decision on their case is made. Minors are supported by local authorities.<sup>20</sup>

At Stage 2, the **Conclusive Grounds Decision (CGD)** will be made as soon as possible following day 45 of the 'reflection and recovery period'. The test for a CGD is that on the balance of probabilities "it is more likely than not" that the individual is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery.<sup>21</sup> In practice, however, the timescale for making a CGD is often far longer than 45 days. This study provided evidence of this period lasting up to 2 or 3 years. Other evidence from the migrant domestic workers sector highlights that during these long delays some potential victims are arbitrarily denied permission to work which risks pushing them into destitution and/or informal working which is often degrading and exploitative.<sup>22</sup>

Since February 2019, adults with a positive CGD are entitled to at least a further 45 days of support to enable them to 'move on' from NRM support, whilst those with a negative decision receive nine days of support. Following a positive CGD, where the victim does not have the right to remain, both European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and non-EEA nationals are automatically considered for a grant of Discretionary Leave. This is not however guaranteed.<sup>23</sup>

Several improvements to the NRM have been committed to as part of the NRM Reform Programme and are in the process of being implemented.<sup>24</sup> These include independent Multi-Agency Assurance Panels (MAAPs) to scrutinise negative CGDs in order to provide greater transparency to the decision-making process; introduction of places of safety for those rescued by law enforcement

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<sup>20</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/950690/January\\_2021\\_-\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_E\\_W\\_Non-Statutory\\_Guidance\\_\\_S\\_NI\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950690/January_2021_-_Modern_Slavery_Statutory_Guidance_E_W_Non-Statutory_Guidance__S_NI_v2.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Presentation by Kalayaan at Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network meeting, 28 April 2019

<sup>22</sup> Sedacca, N. 'International Domestic Worker's Day 2019: the rights of domestic workers in the UK need far-reaching and urgent reform'. Blog for Focus on Labour Exploitation. 13 June 2019 <https://www.labourexploitation.org/news/international-domestic-workers%E2%80%99-day-2019-rights-domestic-workers-uk-need-far-reaching-and-urgent-reform>

<sup>23</sup> Gov UK Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance, 2021

<sup>24</sup> 'NRM Statistics UK, End of Year Summary, 2019', Home Office, 2 April 2020

bodies before entering the NRM; post-NRM support to help victims transition to the next phase of their lives; and improvements to support for children.

### **Decision outcomes for referrals in 2018<sup>25</sup>**

In 2018, 6,985 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM. This was a 36% increase from 2017. 55% reported that they were exploited as adults, with 45% referred for exploitation as children.

Not all individuals referred to the NRM will ultimately be assessed to be victims of modern slavery. As of July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the decision outcomes for potential victims referred to the NRM in 2018 were as follows:

- 21% (1,453) received a negative RGD
- 11% (767) received a positive RGD followed by a negative CGD
- 24% (1,648) received a positive RGD followed by positive CGD
- 44% (3,105) received a positive RGD and were awaiting a CGD decision (pending)

Therefore, overall, 79% of referrals to the NRM received a positive RGD. Of these:

- 30% (1,648) went on to receive a positive CGD
- 8% (450) went on to receive a negative CGD
- 56% (3,105) were awaiting a CGD decision (pending)
- 6% (317) were suspended or withdrawn (these are included in the 767 cases which received a positive RGD followed by a negative CGD in the paragraph above)

These figures suggest that the vast majority who receive a positive RGD go on to receive a positive CGD - almost 4 times as many as negative decisions - although this is only an estimate as over half the decisions were still pending when these figures were drawn up. If the 317 suspended or withdrawn cases are included with the 450 negative CGD decisions, these still amount to less than half of the number of positive CGD decisions.

### **2.3.2. *Duty to Notify* referrals to the Home Office**

If an adult is suspected of being a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking and does not wish to enter the NRM, or wishes to remain anonymous, the Modern Slavery Act confers on specified public authorities the statutory *Duty to Notify* the Home Office of the potential victim by submitting an MS1 form. This applies to all police forces and local authorities and is designed to gather better data about modern slavery. Other organisations, including NGOs, are encouraged to put forward notifications but do not have a duty to do so.

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<sup>25</sup> Home Office, 2019 UK Annual report on modern slavery. October 2019 p.8,9  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>

### 2.3.3. Key national third sector organisations for modern slavery

Oxford City Council's website hosts very helpful signposting links to the main national resources working in this field. A few of these resources are outlined here.<sup>26</sup>

The **UK Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre** is a phone service which can be used by potential victims, the public, statutory agencies, and businesses to report concerns in confidence, seek advice, and access support services on a 24/7 basis.<sup>27</sup> The Helpline is run by Unseen UK. Support can also be accessed via the Unseen App which provides a guide to recognising the signs of modern slavery.

**Unseen UK** also offers ongoing support, practical and emotional assistance to victims of slavery and trafficking including safe houses for men, women and the first safe house for trafficked children.

The **Salvation Army and its Helpline** provides specialist support for all adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales through a new and extended Government contract, the Modern Slavery Victim Care and Coordination Contract (MSVCC), which came into force on 4th January 2021. Its confidential referral helpline is available 24/7. In the south-east, including Oxford, the Salvation Army sub-contracts this service to Migrant Help.

The **Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF)** shapes policy and legislation by equipping parliamentarians and policy makers, lead government departments, local authorities, police, and statutory agencies to better understand the extent and nature of human trafficking, and the need to adjust rapidly to changing trends. It also provides an advocacy role amongst NGOs, civil society, and third sector organisations fighting modern day slavery so that shortcomings in current policy can be addressed; and identifies opportunities for new and different types of intervention within the rapidly evolving landscape of modern slavery and human trafficking. The HTF developed the **Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards** which have been incorporated into the Government's victim care contracts and were updated with partners in 2018.

**Anti-Slavery** was the first organisation to campaign against slavery in modern-day Britain. It lobbied for basic legislation to tackle slavery and to protect those enslaved, as well as raising awareness on forms of slavery among both the public and authorities. It also founded and still chairs the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG), a leading coalition of human rights organisations.

Several other national organisations offer advice, information, support, and advocacy to specific groups affected by modern slavery and trafficking. These include: **Kalayaan** (migrant domestic workers and Domestic Servitude), **ReACT** (child victims of trafficking), **Love 146** (trafficked young people) and the **Poppy Project** (trafficked women).

The **Safer Car Wash App**, developed by the Clewer Initiative and others, encourages the public to report suspicions of modern slavery at car washes.<sup>28</sup> The app goes through the most obvious indicators of modern slavery, asking users questions to determine whether those signs are present or not. The data is anonymised and shared with the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. This study found some local concerns about the app's potential for wrongly labelling people as modern slaves.

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<sup>26</sup> For full list see

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community\\_safety/1328/modern\\_slavery\\_and\\_exploitation/3](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community_safety/1328/modern_slavery_and_exploitation/3)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.unseenuk.org/what-we-do/helpline-resource-centre>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/safercarwash>

## 2.4. Convictions for modern slavery in the UK

Modern slavery cases are among the most challenging and complex to prosecute. Nationally, these challenges arise primarily in relation to the evidence of victims who are frequently vulnerable. This finding was confirmed by several respondents in this study.

Since its inception in November 2016, the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit (MSPTU) programme has supported a ten-fold increase in modern slavery police operations. The 188 active law enforcement investigations in November 2016 had increased to 1,845 by June 2020.<sup>29</sup>

There was a total of 322 prosecutions for modern slavery-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, a 13% increase from the previous year. 84% of defendants were male and 16% were female. In 68% of the cases the modern slavery prosecution resulted in a conviction. 58% were because of a guilty plea and 42% secured a conviction following a trial.<sup>30</sup> However, these figures are likely to include cases of conspiracy to commit an offence or other serious criminal offences as well as defendants prosecuted for a Modern Slavery Act offence.<sup>31</sup>

The largest and most significant UK modern slavery case to have been prosecuted under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and one of the largest Labour Exploitation cases ever to have been prosecuted in Europe, was Operation Fort.<sup>32</sup> In July 2019 eight members of a Polish criminal gang were convicted of slavery, trafficking and money laundering offences in the West Midlands with victims forced to live and work in appalling conditions on farms and in factories, waste recycling centres, parcel sorting offices and construction sites. The case involved more than 80 victims with many others (400+) identified as potential victims. The defendants were convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 3 to 11 years. It was the first case where two defendants were successfully prosecuted for breach of interim Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders. What is particularly disturbing about this case is that the criminal gang were able to operate for many years since it began in 2012 and were not convicted until 2019.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/927111/FINAL-\\_2020\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Report\\_14-10-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927111/FINAL-_2020_Modern_Slavery_Report_14-10-20.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Office for National Statistics. *Modern slavery in the UK: March 2020*

<sup>31</sup> UK Government. Modern Slavery Report 2020

<sup>32</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/840059/Modern\\_Slavery\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840059/Modern_Slavery_Report_2019.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. *Operation Fort: What businesses should learn from the UK's largest anti-slavery prosecution*, June 2020.

### 3. Local context for modern slavery in Oxfordshire

#### 3.1. Baseline information on the extent of modern slavery in Oxfordshire

This section sets the situation in the city of Oxford within the context of the surrounding areas of the county of Oxfordshire, and the whole of the Thames Valley.

**Thames Valley:** Recent data from the Thames Valley Police shows that for the whole of the Thames Valley, 345 cases of modern slavery were recorded in the year October 2019 to September 2020. Of these, 53 cases (15%) were in the city of Oxford.<sup>34</sup> Given that the population of Oxford (152,450)<sup>35</sup> is only 6.5% of the population of the Thames Valley (2.34 million)<sup>36</sup>, the number of potential cases of modern slavery is considerably over-represented in Oxford compared to the rest of the Thames Valley. This is to be expected in an urban area.

The earlier modelling that had been done in 2017 by Wager and Wager to estimate the extent of modern slavery across the Thames Valley used statistical projections to account for the number of unreported and hidden cases.<sup>37</sup> This produced an estimate for the number of victims across the Thames Valley in 2016 of between 533 and 2,462.

- The lower figure of 533 was based on *criminal justice figures* and was extrapolated from actual cases recorded by the police and extended to include *presumed* cases (based on the rate of sexual assault incidents not being recorded as crimes) and *assumed* cases (the ‘dark figure’ of hidden cases based on shared characteristics of modern slavery with domestic violence and missing persons).
- The higher estimate of 2,462 was based on *service provider data* and calculated by using a combination of the number of referrals to the NRM from the region, the proportion of positive Conclusive Grounds decisions made nationally, the proportion of potential victims identified by Elmore’s ITA service who chose not to enter the NRM, the proportion of missing persons who go missing due to reasons that might be associated with modern slavery, and a doubling of this to guesstimate the number of victims not identified by First Responders.

This modelling gives a sense of the potential under-estimation that the numbers of actual recorded potential cases of modern slavery may represent.

**Oxfordshire:** The number of victims of modern slavery and trafficking recorded by Thames Valley Police in Oxfordshire for the year of 2019 was 168.<sup>38</sup> This had risen from 144 in 2018, a rise due in part to an increase in NRM referrals generally, and in part due to a change in recording practices with police forces now being required to classify every NRM submission they receive as a crime, both from their own officers and external organisations. Of the 168 cases in 2019, almost half of them (78) were in Oxford City.

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<sup>34</sup> TVP quarterly infographics for the whole Thames Valley for October 2019-September 2020

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20131/population/459/oxfords\\_population](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20131/population/459/oxfords_population)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/police-forces/thames-valley-police/areas/au/about-us/who-we-are/about-thames-valley-police/>

<sup>37</sup> Wager, N. and Wager, A., *Estimating the extent of modern slavery: Proposed Model for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner* (2017).

<sup>38</sup> Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2020, April 2020.

<https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2020Apr20FINAL.pdf>

## 3.2. Local structures for tackling modern slavery in Oxfordshire

There is a well-developed structure of strategy, operational and networking groups tackling various aspects of modern slavery across Oxfordshire. The diagram in Appendix 1 illustrates how they relate.

The **Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP)** was established in 1998 with the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act, making statutory authorities responsible for tackling crime and disorder. The partnership works together to address local community safety concerns.

The **Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Strategy Group (OMSP)** was set up in 2018 as a subgroup of the OSCP. It brings together the key organisations in the county which have a role in tackling modern slavery and supporting victims, primarily statutory organisations with some representation from the third sector. It has a strategy and supporting delivery plan. The partnership seeks to tackle all forms of modern slavery that do not fall within the scope of another strategic partnership in the county.

The **Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network (OASN)** is a network of organisations linking to the national group of anti-slavery networks. Its role includes sustaining communication with all organisations concerned with modern slavery in order to increase reporting and referrals of potential victims of modern slavery. Its membership is wider than the OMSP as it includes third, statutory and private sectors, as well as academics.

The **OSCB Child Exploitation Sub-group** oversees the multi-agency partnership for exploited and missing children across Oxfordshire. Its lead themes are Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Slavery and Child Drug Exploitation. Its two operational forums are the Children at Risk of Exploitation Network, and the Children Missing or Exploited Panel.

The **Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Group** is tasked with reducing the threat, risk and harm of Class A drug dealing in Oxfordshire. Their Violence and Vulnerability Plan 2020 sets out how the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership, in liaison with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards, and the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, will address the drug exploitation of vulnerable adults and children in the county, focusing on the people who are posing the greatest threat, harm and risk to local communities.

The **Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit** is a TVP team which brings together key partners to provide a co-ordinated response to tackling serious violence across the region, particularly in under 25-year-olds. Its priorities include preventing young people and vulnerable adults from falling prey to those who deal drugs through diversion and early intervention, protecting them from the harm caused by drugs, pursuing those causing the most risk, and preparing communities to help them in achieving these objectives.

**Specialist support services for survivors of modern slavery** have been provided in Oxford as follows:

- From 2014-2017 the Independent Trauma Advisory Service was run across Oxfordshire by Elmore and supported 50 suspected victims of modern slavery.
- From September 2018 to April 2020 a similar service was run by the Victims First: Willow Project across the Thames Valley. This is the service that was operating during the phase of data collection for this study and was therefore the source of specialist service data for the research.
- Since May 2020 the Willow Project has been recommissioned as the Victims First Specialist Service under the Thames Valley Partnership.

## 4. Methodology

### The approach

The methodology adopted was to collect case-based information on modern slavery from a wide range of frontline service providers across the statutory and third sectors. This approach marks out this research as different from many studies of the prevalence of modern slavery which use statistical projections. The research team aimed to contact as wide a range as possible of frontline service-providers who were likely to have come into contact with victims/survivors of modern slavery and seek from them both quantitative and qualitative information pertaining to the three key research questions. Every case counted in this study therefore has a specific reference number and associated data.

A three-pronged approach was used:

- i. A set of quantitative data was requested from all organisations for any clients or service-users they believed may have been exploited as a modern slave since April 2016. This included the following variables: the likelihood of modern slavery ('possible' or 'very likely'); the type of exploitation; the gender, age, and nationality of the victim; the location of exploitation; and whether there was a referral to the NRM, Home Office, the police, or other organisations. See Appendix 2 for a copy of this data form.
- ii. Detailed semi-structured interviews were then carried out with front-line service providers in order to explore individual cases recorded on the data sheets. A small number of survivors of modern slavery and family members were also interviewed directly. These interviews explored the victim's experience of exploitation, factors that made them vulnerable or at risk, support provided to them, outcomes in terms of impact on their lives, and information about suspected perpetrators. These could provide the basis for several case-studies illustrating different aspects of modern slavery.
- iii. Interviews with team managers, and focus group meetings with individual teams from across the statutory and third sector organisations, to explore organisational awareness and practice on the identification, referral, reporting and support for victims of modern slavery. If required, a short awareness-raising talk on the types and signs of modern slavery was given at the start of focus group meetings and a Modern Slavery Information Sheet, produced for the research, distributed (see Appendix 9).

### Scope of data collected

- Data was sought on the five main categories of modern slavery: Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Servitude, Forced Criminality, Forced Labour and Organ Harvesting.
- Quantitative data on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Drug Exploitation (CDE) was collected, and several interviews were held to explore these issues. However, these did not go into great depth as there are already well-established mechanisms to prevent, support and disrupt these forms of exploitation, led by the OSCB Child Exploitation Subgroup of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, and the Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Group.
- The geographical area of the research was defined as the area within the Oxford City administrative boundary. See map in Appendix 3.

## Sources of data

### Data was gathered from the following organisations:

- Thames Valley Police.
- Oxford City Council.
- Oxfordshire County Council.
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
- One G.P. practice.
- A wide range of third sector organisations (including 7 housing associations/hostels).

### In addition, interviews were held with:

- Members of 8 other statutory organisations including the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Academics at 6 universities.
- 2 private sector organisations.
- See Appendix 4 for a full list of contributing organisations and teams.

Organisations, teams, and interviewees were identified by Snowball Sampling<sup>39</sup> with research participants being asked to recommend others within and beyond their own team or organisation who were likely to be able to provide information on modern slavery. The wide variety of institutions consulted enabled information to be triangulated on certain issues and cases. For the purpose of the analyses, the respondent organisations were grouped into the following institutional blocks: Third sector, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford NHS Foundation Trusts, and Thames Valley Police.

### Number of informants reached:

- 42 teams of service providers from across these organisations provided a quantitative data set on clients or patients who had potentially been exploited as modern slaves since April 2016.
- 148 interviews were held. The vast majority of these were held with front line staff or team/department managers in the service provider organisations listed above. Interviews were also held with others such as data analysts and academics. See Appendix 4 for all teams interviewed.
- 16 focus groups meetings were held with service providers, with the participation of 142 individuals. These included 5 Oxford Health teams of health visitors and nurses, 8 third sector organisations including 3 from the housing and homelessness sector, the Oxford City Council Enforcement Team, an Oxfordshire County Council children's services team, and the Project Reference Group which comprised modern slavery experts.
- In total the perspectives of 290 people were captured.

Due to the focus on listening to the experiences of service-providers, we acknowledge that survivors' experiences were mostly heard indirectly through the organisations that offer services to them. Any future work in Oxford arising from this report would benefit from the participation of survivors, for

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<sup>39</sup> Snowball sampling is often used where potential participants are hard to find or difficult to select until the research is underway (once the ball is rolling it picks up more snow along the way and becomes larger and larger).

example, in giving feedback on their experience of the support they are offered in response to the challenges and risks they face.

Organisations had very different capacities to respond, largely depending on the sophistication of their system for documenting these cases and time available. Therefore, the methodology was adapted appropriately to suit the needs of each respondent. For example, some interviews were 10-minute phone calls, while others were 2-hour interviews. Some were with individuals, others with large teams. Some organisations completed their own datasheets methodically drawing on databases, while others worked from memory; the data sheets of others were completed by the researchers based on interviewing staff. Where teams of staff were interviewed with a focus group approach, and when this was felt to be helpful, a brief awareness-raising session on modern slavery was given at the start of the meeting. Awareness-raising about modern slavery was one of the positive impacts of the research, often leading teams to seek further training on this topic and, in some cases, to engage with the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network.

In addition to interviews, insights were gained from a Roundtable on modern slavery for leaders from across the county which was hosted by the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network in October 2019.

### **Period of data collection**

Initially organisations were asked to provide data on any possible cases of modern slavery where they had supported a client during the 3-year period from April 2016 to April 2019. With the project extension of 6 months, this time period was extended to keep the data as current as possible, with organisations engaging later providing data up until the date they were interviewed, with the latest date of January 2020. In practice this meant that most organisations provided data for a period of 3 to 3.5 years, with a few extending some months beyond that. However, some organisations were unable to retrieve cases back as far as 2016 as documentation did not always exist, relevant staff had left the organisation, lack of time to search for data, or cumbersome databases that would have taken hours to search. For analytical purposes, it is therefore fair to say that the data was drawn from the period April 2016 to January 2020 with an average span of 3 years and 6 months.

### **Location of exploitation**

Cases identified included those where the exploitation may have happened in Oxford, elsewhere in the UK or abroad. The criteria for inclusion were that the exploitation had happened since April 2016, and that the person was living, and/or being supported, in Oxford at some point since April 2016.

### **Anonymity of source of information and cases of potential modern slavery**

With respect to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) considerations, in order to protect the safety and privacy of the clients and patients whose information was shared, and to enable respondents to talk openly about their cases, all interviews were conducted on a confidential basis. Quotes in this report are not attributed to specific teams or organisations unless permission has been given to do so. Quantitative data is provided for each of the five main statutory institutions as a whole, but not for individual teams. Similarly, data is reported for the third sector as a whole, but not by individual organisation.

**Methodological challenges** encountered included:

- The length of time it took to achieve information-sharing agreements with statutory organisations to enable them to share case-level data which was between 11 and 15 months after the start of the project for 4 of the 5 organisations. This was due to the complexity of the GDPR issues, and the bureaucratic processes involved in such large organisations.
- Very different organisational capacities to identify and document clients who may have been victims of modern slavery: systems for documentation sometimes varied within teams, let alone between organisations; some had to recall cases from the previous 3 years from memory if there was no time to trawl records, or no system for doing so; front-line service staff had very limited time to engage (but were mostly very helpful and engaged if they did have the time on the margins of their day to day work)
- Needing to identify duplicated cases between organisations but with little identifiable personal information given data protection considerations.
- There are myriad ambiguities in this field including: the lack of consistently used and widely understood definitions of modern slavery and therefore the use of different thresholds of what constitutes modern slavery; whether a victim or a perpetrator or both; whether coerced or forced into committing a crime or entering into it with a degree of agency; whether refusing to engage with support service and protection organisations through fear or because they do not identify as a victim and have chosen to enter and remain in the situation as their best alternative.
- As predicted, it was extremely difficult to obtain information about suspected perpetrators of modern slavery crimes as support organisations had very partial, if any, such information, or were reluctant to share it for fear of compromising the safety of their client or patient.

# FINDINGS

## 5. The nature and extent of modern slavery in Oxford

This section responds to Research Question 1 on the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford. How many cases of modern slavery have occurred in Oxford City since April 2016? What type of slavery, where, to whom, by whom, and who is at risk?

### 5.1. Estimating the overall number of potential cases of modern slavery

#### Numbers of victims identified

Thames Valley Police recorded 123 cases of potential modern slavery from April 2016 to April 2019. This is the only organisation that was systematically recording (on a quarterly basis) its data on modern slavery cases. The number of victims identified by Thames Valley Police and those identified within other organisations will differ due to the fact that a large number of victims will be supported by third party organisations without making any reports to law enforcement. This happens due to a number of reasons such as a victim not feeling ready to speak to police, not identifying themselves as a victim and previous experience with law enforcement in other countries. These victims will seek support without consenting to the NRM at the time and so law enforcement may not be notified.

By seeking data from a much wider range of organisations, this study identified between 319 and 442 'possible' or 'very likely' cases of modern slavery in Oxford City between April 2016 and January 2020 (i.e., over a 3.5-year period).

This makes the total number of cases found by this study from 2.5 to 3.5 times higher than the numbers identified by TVP<sup>40</sup> indicating the importance of other sources of data for monitoring levels of modern slavery in the city. It also suggests the importance of putting in place processes to consolidate and monitor, on an on-going basis, the data and intelligence collected by service-providers across the statutory and third sectors.

The range of 319-442 was calculated as follows. The number of individual reports of cases was 464. A search for duplicated cases identified 22 which were definitely, or very likely, to have been reported by two or more different organisations. The duplicates were removed from the data set leaving 442 reports of cases.

Avoiding the double counting of cases is a significant methodological challenge in estimating the prevalence of issues such as modern slavery where data protection restricts the use of identifiable characteristics. Despite the stringent care taken to handle the data confidentially by the research team, many of the respondent organisations understandably did not feel able to share names, initials, or dates of birth for clients. Others were able to offer this data: initials of the victim were provided for 34 cases, names for 44 cases, and dates of birth for 113 cases. Most case data included an age, although the accuracy was sometimes in question. Analysing age alongside nationality, type

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<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that the period of data collected from TVP was 3 years (April 2016-April 2019) which was slightly shorter than the average of 3.5 years for all sources together.

of exploitation, location of exploitation, referrals to the NRM or another organisation, enabled the researchers to eliminate some probable duplicates.<sup>41</sup>

There will certainly be more duplicates in this data set than we were able to identify. In particular there will be duplication between cases reported by TVP and those reported by other organisations. This could occur for two reasons:

- 123 cases were reported by TVP and 341 by other organisations. In almost half of the cases recorded by other organisations (163) there had been a referral to, or contact with, the police. Without dates of birth or initials for the TVP cases, we were only able to identify a likely match for 5 of these, but we assume there could be considerably more.
- 41 cases were identified by non-TVP organisations where the client was referred to the NRM but without known contact with the police. However, once a case from Oxford is referred into the NRM, the Single Competent Authority notifies TVP so that the case can be recorded as a crime. Therefore, any such cases should have been included in the TVP data set causing a potential double count.

To remove the risk of the above cases being duplicated between TVP and other organisations, we have calculated a range of 319 - 442 'possible' or 'very likely' cases. This was derived as follows:

- The maximum of 442 comprises all the cases reported to the research team (having removed very likely or definite duplicates).
- The minimum of 319 assumes that all 123 TVP cases could be duplicated elsewhere in the data set and therefore reduces the maximum number by 123.

*All statistics presented in the report are based on the total number of cases identified (i.e., 442).*

## **Degree of certainty about modern slavery**

286 cases (69%) were assessed as 'very likely' to have been victims of modern slavery, and 128 (31%) as 'possible'.<sup>42</sup> Sometimes the respondent made this categorisation themselves. In other cases, the researchers used the information available to surmise the most accurate categorisation: cases categorised as 'possible' included those that were logged on safeguarding consultation lines with little information, and a few cases reported as 'at very high risk' of modern slavery.

There was most clarity about the likelihood of modern slavery amongst the cases of Forced Criminality and Sexual Exploitation, and least for Domestic Servitude, reflecting the challenges of identifying this form of slavery.

All the TVP cases were classified by the researchers as 'very likely' as all were either referred into the NRM (105) or reported to the Home Office with an MS1 form (18). It is not known exactly how many of these were eventually proven by the NRM to be victims of modern slavery as no information on the outcome of the Conclusive Grounds decisions was available. However, the following gives a good indication. Of the 105 referrals to the NRM where the outcome of the Reasonable Grounds decision was known, 81 cases (77%) received a positive decision, 8 received a negative decision, and 11 were pending at the time of the data collection. The 81 cases which received a positive Reasonable Grounds decision, will not all have gone on to receive a positive Conclusive Grounds decision and be confirmed as cases of modern slavery. However, data from national referrals to the NRM suggests

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<sup>41</sup> These were identified by matching names or initials (5 cases), dates of birth (1 case), and nationality plus age plus other corroborating factors (6 cases).

<sup>42</sup> For 28 cases the degree of certainty was unknown

that the majority of positive RGDs do go on to receive a positive CGD.<sup>43</sup> See section 7.2. for further interpretation of the accuracy of the data relating to these NRM referrals.

## Data limitations and assessing the validity of the findings

The methodology adopted aimed for the greatest accuracy possible by ensuring that the data derived from specific known cases of potential modern slavery, rather than from statistical projections. This appears to be unusual in studies of the prevalence of modern slavery. With a few exceptions, it is thought that most of the key statutory and third sector service providers likely to support survivors of modern slavery in the city engaged in and contributed data to this research.

However, bearing in mind the methodological challenges inherent in estimating the prevalence of modern slavery as described in section 4, factors causing a possible over- or under-estimation of numbers of cases of modern slavery need to be considered.

### Possible over-estimation

- It is certainly possible that some cases of modern slavery remain double-counted in this dataset, though we have sought to offset this risk by giving a range of estimates as discussed above. In addition, attention needs to be paid to the fact that of the 442 potential cases of modern slavery identified, 128 were thought to be only ‘possible’ cases, with the remaining 286 (69%) categorised as ‘very likely’.
- It is likely that some of the ‘possible’ cases identified by searches of organisational databases were logged as such following initial concerns expressed by professionals or the public, but may, on further assessment, have turned out not to be modern slavery. However, this conclusion may not have been picked up in the database search which in some organisations scanned only initial assessment pages.
- Regarding TVP cases (i) the TVP referrals to the NRM which received a negative Reasonable Grounds Decision have been proven not to be cases of modern slavery  
(ii) not all of the cases with a positive Reasonable Grounds Decision will have gone on to receive a Conclusive Grounds Decision and thus be confirmed as modern slavery cases.

### Possible under-estimation

- While the data captured was all from within the period April 2016 to January 2020, the data available was not always complete for this period. Records did not always go as far back as April 2016. Sometimes cases were recalled from memory if no documentation was available or easily accessible. The figures from each organisation are therefore likely to represent the minimum number of possible victims of modern slavery supported during that period.
- There were a number of teams from both third and statutory sectors that are believed to have held key data sets on modern slavery that we were not able to obtain.
- Time and resources did not enable us to collect data from private sector organisations and businesses such as construction sites, hotels, and guest houses, nor the views of the public. Both avenues may have led to the identification of more potential victims.

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<sup>43</sup> Of all national referrals to the NRM in 2018 which received a positive RGD, by July 2019 30% had received a positive CGD, 8% had received a negative CGD, 56% still had pending cases, and 6% were suspended or withdrawn. These figures suggest that the vast majority go on to receive a positive CGD (almost 4 times as many as negative decisions), although this is only an estimate as the number of pending cases awaiting a decision was so high. Source: Home Office. *2019 Annual report of modern slavery*, October 2019.

- Finally, there will always be a large and undetermined ‘dark figure’ of modern slaves that are hidden from professional and public view. Statistical projections are often used to determine this dark figure, but it was not the explicit aim of this project to do so.

Given the complexities of the above, the limitations on the accuracy of the data are acknowledged and the findings presented tentatively. However, weighing up the possible over or under-estimation, we would suggest that the range of 319 to 442 potential cases identified are likely to considerably *under-represent* the reality of the extent of modern slavery being perpetrated in Oxford.

More important than exact quantitative data on cases has been our aim to *improve the current intelligence picture* for Oxford, bringing new sources of information to the intelligence gathered by Thames Valley Police, and pointing to risk areas that may warrant closer investigation.

## 5.2. The extent of different types of exploitation

Data was collected on what type of exploitation clients had suffered - Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Servitude, Forced Criminality, Forced Labour or Organ Harvesting.

The figures in Table 2 represent the *number of reports of the different types of exploitation* experienced. This exceeds the *number of victims* given that some individuals experienced more than one type of exploitation. It is therefore more helpful to focus on percentages for each type of exploitation rather than number of reports. **This needs to be borne in mind when interpreting all subsequent analyses concerning reports of types of exploitation in this report.**

The predominant types of modern slavery indicated were:

- Forced Criminality (36%) and Sexual Exploitation (34%)
- Then Forced Labour (21%)
- Then Domestic Servitude (9%)
- There was one case of Organ Harvesting

**Table 2: Number of *reports* of modern slavery by type of exploitation, gender, and age**

|                | Sexual exploitation | Domestic Servitude | Forced Criminality | Forced Labour | Organ Harvesting | Unknown type | Total No. of reports |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| FEMALE         |                     |                    |                    |               |                  |              |                      |
| 0-17 years     | 41                  | 1                  | 10                 | 5             | 0                | 0            | 57                   |
| 18-30 years    | 56                  | 16                 | 11                 | 6             | 0                | 7            | 96                   |
| 31-50 years    | 26                  | 10                 | 21                 | 5             | 0                | 5            | 67                   |
| 51+ years      | 1                   | 2                  | 0                  | 2             | 0                | 1            | 6                    |
| Unknown age    | 12                  | 3                  | 6                  | 4             | 0                | 2            | 27                   |
| Total          | 136<br>(57%)*       | 32<br>(14%)        | 48<br>(20%)        | 22<br>(9%)    | 0<br>(0%)        | 15           | 253                  |
| MALE           |                     |                    |                    |               |                  |              |                      |
| 0-17 years     | 8                   | 0                  | 31                 | 19            | 1                | 11           | 70                   |
| 18-30 years    | 4                   | 3                  | 31                 | 24            | 0                | 14           | 76                   |
| 31-50 years    | 2                   | 0                  | 29                 | 18            | 0                | 4            | 53                   |
| 51+ years      | 0                   | 1                  | 6                  | 1             | 0                | 1            | 9                    |
| Unknown age    | 1                   | 2                  | 9                  | 8             | 0                | 4            | 24                   |
| Total          | 15<br>(8%)          | 6<br>(2%)          | 106<br>(54%)       | 70<br>(35%)   | 1<br>(1%)        | 34           | 232                  |
| Unknown gender | 1                   | 1                  | 3                  | 2             | 0                | 8            | 15                   |
| Total          | 152<br>(34%)        | 39<br>(9%)         | 157<br>(36%)       | 94<br>(21%)   | 1<br>(0%)        | 57           | 500                  |

*\*Percentages are the number of reports of exploitation as a % of total number of known exploitation types*

There is an interesting difference in the frequency of types of exploitation when comparing this data from all sources of information, with that of the Thames Valley Police only. Data from all sources showed much higher proportions of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude, and much lower proportions of Forced Criminality than for the TVP data set. See Table 2b. This is because most cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude in the study were reported by the third sector, and to a lesser degree by the NHS Trusts, making these sectors important additions to the TVP knowledge base.

**Table 2b: Comparison of exploitation types identified by TVP with those identified by all sources**

|                     | TVP cases | Cases from all sources |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Sexual Exploitation | 21%       | 34%                    |
| Domestic Servitude  | 4%        | 9%                     |
| Forced Criminality  | 55%       | 36%                    |
| Forced Labour       | 20%       | 21%                    |

50 people experienced two types of exploitation. These were as follows:

- 8 cases of Forced Labour and Domestic Servitude.
- 9 cases of Forced Labour and Forced Criminality.
- 6 cases of Forced Labour and Sexual Exploitation.
- 7 cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude.
- 20 cases of Sexual Exploitation and Forced Criminality.

3 people experienced three types of exploitation, as follows:

- 2 cases of Sexual Exploitation, Forced Labour and Domestic Servitude (1 was a forced marriage)
- 1 case of Sexual Exploitation, Forced Labour and Forced Criminality

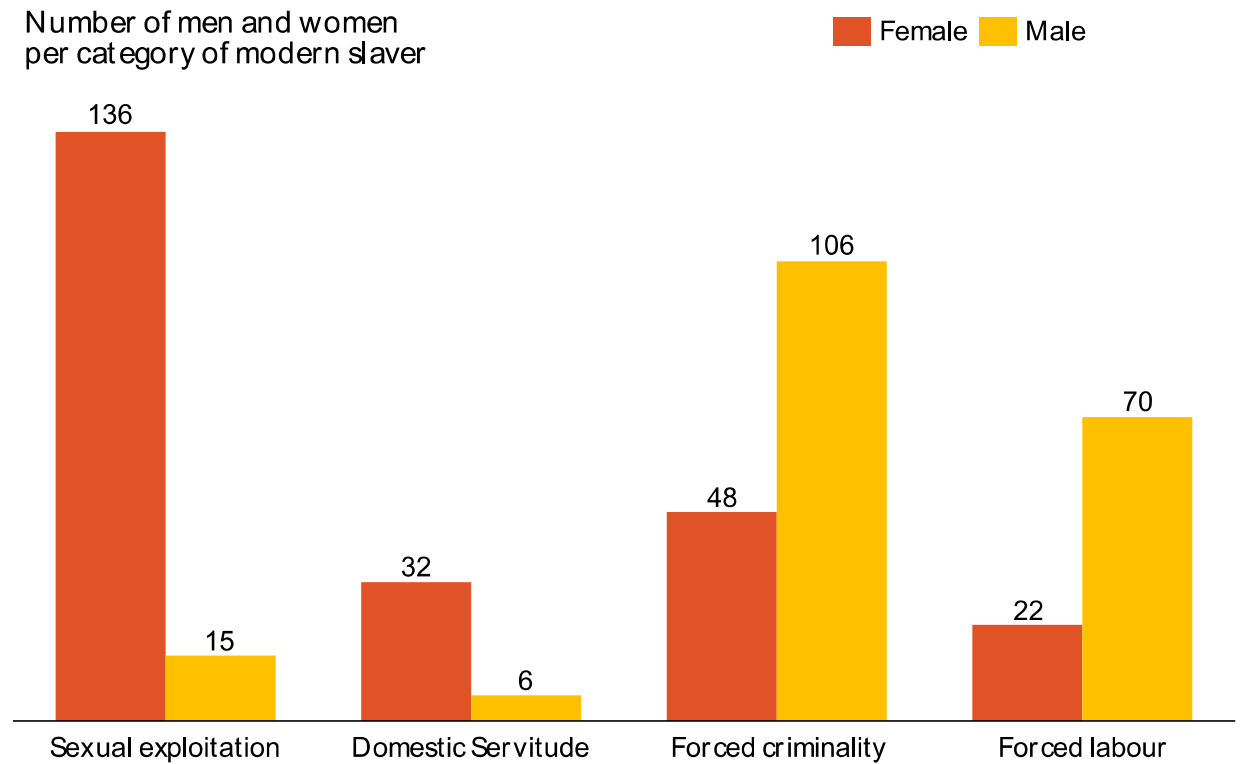
There was a clear and expected gender pattern. Overall, there were slightly more women than men amongst the potential victims: 225 (53%) women and 203 (47%) men. The gender split is interesting given that nationally NRM referrals for 2019 were only one third female and two-thirds male.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Home Office. National Referral Mechanism Statistics. UK, end of Year Summary, 2019

Women were hugely over-represented amongst those experiencing Sexual Exploitation (90%) and Domestic Servitude (84%). To a lesser extent, men were over-represented amongst those experiencing Forced Labour (76%) and Forced Criminality (69%). This is illustrated in the two charts below, the first showing the gender split for each type of exploitation.

## Type of exploitation by gender

Number of men and women per category of modern slaver



Of particular concern are:

- The 39 cases of Domestic Servitude identified by all sources (32 female, 6 male, 1 unknown), compared to only 4 cases identified by TVP.
- The 34% of all types of slavery reported by all sources that were Sexual Exploitation compared to only 21% of cases reported by TVP.

Half of the evidence on Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude came from the third sector organisations<sup>45</sup>, and approximately one third of the evidence came from the NHS <sup>46</sup>, indicating that these sectors are important sources for identifying and supporting these victims.

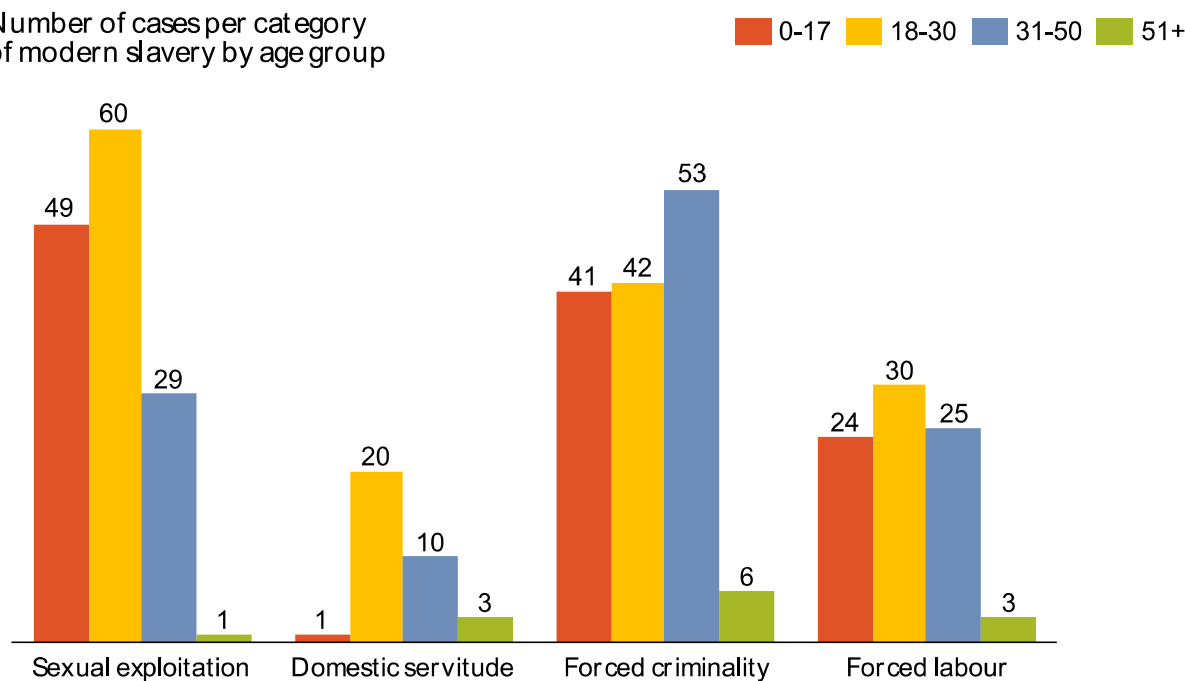
<sup>45</sup> 72 of the 152 cases of Sexual Exploitation, and 19 of the 39 cases of Domestic Servitude were from the third sector.

<sup>46</sup> 44 of the 152 cases of Sexual Exploitation, and 15 of the 39 cases of Domestic Servitude were from the NHS.

The chart below shows the distribution of cases across the age groups for each type of exploitation, as explained in the next section which looks at each type of exploitation.

## Type of exploitation by age

Number of cases per category of modern slavery by age group



## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Drug Exploitation (CDE)

This research did not set out to investigate CSE and CDE in any depth given that much is already known about these types of exploitation in Oxford, and the support infrastructure is well developed. However, there are indications that the figures for Sexual Exploitation and Forced Criminality, based on our case-level data, may considerably under-estimate the problem. This study identified:

- 49 children potentially subjected to Sexual Exploitation: 41 girls and 8 boys
- 41 children potentially subjected to Forced Criminality: 31 boys and 10 girls. The majority of these appeared to be drug related.

In addition to these cases, the Oxfordshire County Council database indicated that there may be a much larger number of children who are at risk of CSE and/or CDE. They recorded 200 children in Oxford with a risk factor for CSE, CDE and/or having been trafficked, for the period April 2016 to March 2020. 160 of these were at risk for CSE, 33 for CDE, and 14 for having been trafficked (some were at risk of more than one type of exploitation). Caution is needed in interpreting these figures as 'risk factors' do not equate with potential cases. The figures were drawn from initial social worker assessments where a risk was identified. However, no information was available as to whether the outcome of the assessment confirmed possible modern slavery or not. No case-specific details were available for these 200 children, so we were not able to include them in our database or quantitative analyses. Some are likely to duplicate cases reported to us by other teams within Oxfordshire County Council<sup>47</sup> or elsewhere. However, it is possible that a number, possibly many, may be additional,

<sup>47</sup> Some of those with risk factors related to having been trafficked could be amongst the 20 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children we have documented.

indicating a significantly higher level of Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Drug Exploitation than we found. Perhaps more importantly, the figures indicate the scale of the risks involved for children in Oxfordshire.

## Comparison to national prevalence of each type of exploitation

Comparison of the prevalence of different types of exploitation locally in Oxford with the national situation is most easily undertaken by looking at the distribution of NRM referrals between exploitation types nationally, and the distribution of reported exploitation types identified in this study for Oxford. This study indicates that a much higher proportion of potential modern slavery cases in Oxford are Sexual Exploitation, and a much lower proportion Forced Labour. See Table 3. The latter may be partially explained by the fact that the scope of this study meant that it did not engage directly with the private sector and businesses such as construction, hotels, restaurants, car washes etc., where Forced Labour is widely understood to be found.

**Table 3: Types of exploitation at national and local levels**

|                     | Number of referrals to the NRM nationally as a percentage of all types of exploitation* | Number of reports of exploitation types for Oxford as a % of all types of exploitation |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sexual Exploitation | 19%                                                                                     | 34%                                                                                    |
| Domestic Servitude  | 7%                                                                                      | 9%                                                                                     |
| Forced Criminality  | 33%                                                                                     | 36%                                                                                    |
| Forced Labour       | 35%                                                                                     | 21%                                                                                    |
| Organ Harvesting    | 0% (0.3%)                                                                               | 0% (0.2%)                                                                              |
| Unknown             | 6%                                                                                      | **                                                                                     |

*\*Source: Data extracted from Table 3: 'Number of NRM referrals by age group at exploitation, exploitation type and gender'. In Home Office, National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK, End of Year Summary, 2019.*

*\*\* Unknown exploitation types were removed for this analysis*

## Location of exploitation

All the potential victims of modern slavery recorded had either lived in and/or been supported in Oxford at some point since April 2016. However, the actual exploitation could have occurred in Oxford, elsewhere in the UK, or abroad. Of the 323 cases where the location was known, the vast majority, **83% occurred in Oxford** (269 cases), **11% occurred abroad** (35 cases), and **5% occurred in the UK but outside of Oxford** (17 cases). In 1% (2 cases) the exploitation occurred both abroad and in Oxford. For 119 cases no information on location was given.

The 12% of cases where the exploitation had occurred abroad appears to be considerably lower than that found at national level. Of the cases referred to the NRM nationally in 2019, one third of the

exploitation took place abroad<sup>48</sup>. However, since the majority of cases found in this study did not enter the NRM, this may simply indicate that foreign nationals who have been exploited abroad are more likely to enter the NRM than British victims.

**Location within Oxford:** For cases where the location of exploitation was within Oxford, little information was obtained on the specific location. Of the 269 cases for whom exploitation occurred in Oxford, the location (first part of postcode) was provided for only 25 cases. 18 of these were in OX4 which comprises Cowley, Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, and Headington Hill.

## **Suspected perpetrators**

Very little information on suspected perpetrators was able to be collected by this research, and that documented was not comprehensive enough to be able to report on in any meaningful way. In many interviews the respondent had no information about the suspected perpetrator(s) of the alleged exploitation against their client. In some interviews, the respondents were extremely nervous to disclose any information that could potentially compromise the safety of their client. In other interviews, the question about perpetrators was not asked as it was felt to be inappropriate. In still others, including with police officers, limited interview time precluded exploration of this as enquiry about victims' experiences was prioritised. However, the research did identify some patterns in the recruitment of Albanian women for Sexual Exploitation and the experience of some unaccompanied asylum-seeking children going through detention in Libya. The issue of the profile and ways of working of suspected perpetrators could be an area for future research, but it was beyond the scope of this study to address systematically.

## **Thresholds for defining modern slavery**

One of the methodological challenges was the different conceptions and definitions of modern slavery used by different organisations, and sometimes different individuals within one organisation, and therefore the thresholds they used to decide whether a case may have been modern slavery or not. Cases ranged between a 'hard' end of absolute captivity, brutality, abuse, violence, and lack of freedom of movement, to a 'softer' end of more low-level coercive exploitation involving cuckooing, inadequate pay and poor working conditions. Those assessed in this study as 'very likely' and those assessed as 'possible' cases of modern slavery probably broadly correlate with the different ends of this spectrum.

Those where the likelihood was hard to categorise were sometimes where the motivation of the person concerned was in question (i.e., whether s/he was forced or coerced against their will into the situation of exploitation, or whether there was an element of freewill or agency). This sometimes applied to cuckooing situations where it was not clear if it suited the potential victim (for company or support), or whether they were being exploited against their will. In other cases, there was a concern about exploitation based on worrying patterns of behaviour but insufficient hard evidence.

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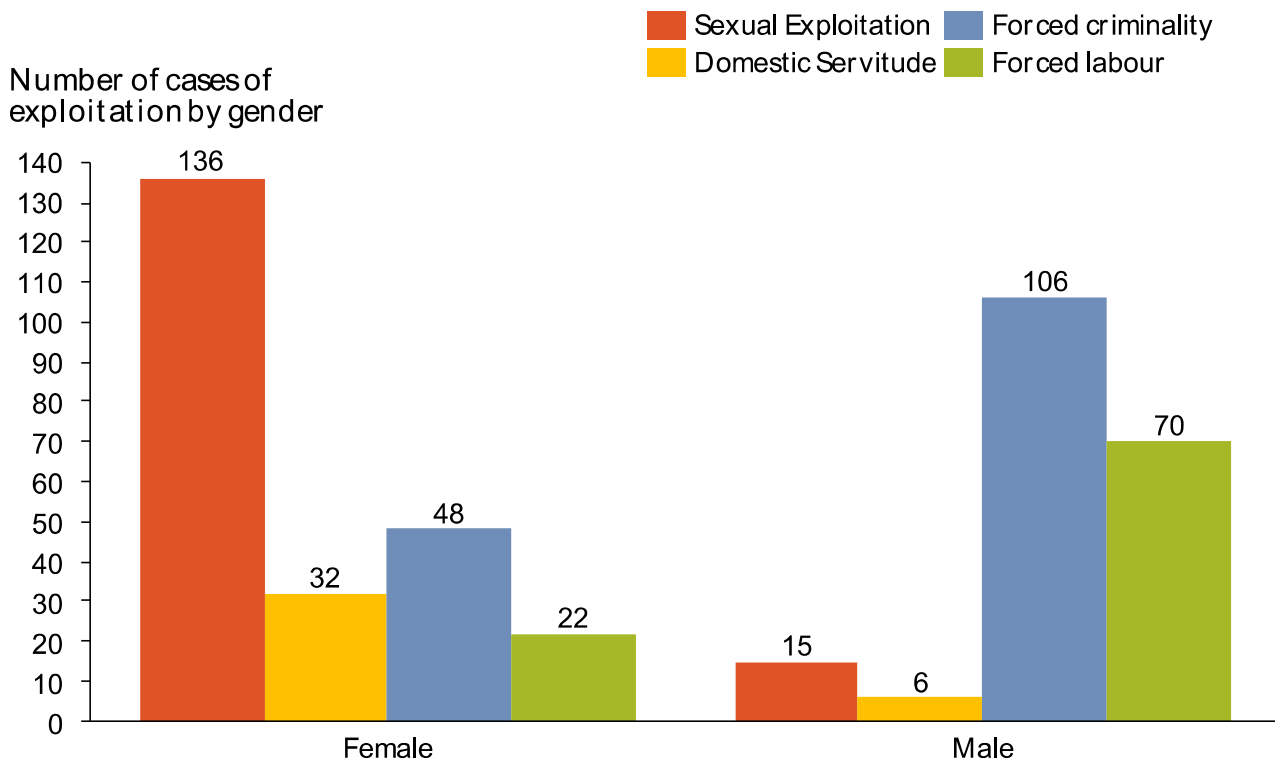
<sup>48</sup> Home Office. National Referral Mechanism Statistics. UK, end of Year Summary, 2019

## 5.3. Demographic analysis of potential victims

### Age and Gender

The different experience of females and males in relation to modern slavery is illustrated in the chart below. While both genders are exposed to all 4 types of exploitation, by far the most prevalent is Sexual Exploitation for females and Forced Criminality and Forced Labour for men.

### Type of exploitation by gender



Either Age or Date of Birth information was requested for each case. Dates of birth were provided for 113 cases. Most other cases included an age, although the accuracy was sometimes in question. For only 14 cases there was no information on age. For the purpose of analysis, cases have been grouped into 4 age categories.

Table 4 shows how females and males were affected in each age group. In addition, Table 2 shows which forms of exploitation each age group was mainly subjected to.

- 0-17 years: boys predominated slightly, with Forced Criminality and Forced Labour as the main forms of exploitation.
- 18-30 years: women predominated considerably, with Sexual Exploitation the main form of exploitation
- 31-50 years: women predominated. Both women and men were subjected to high levels of Forced Criminality. Women were more likely to be subjected to Sexual Exploitation. Men were more likely to be subjected to Forced Labour.
- 51+ years: men predominated, with Forced Criminality the main form of exploitation.

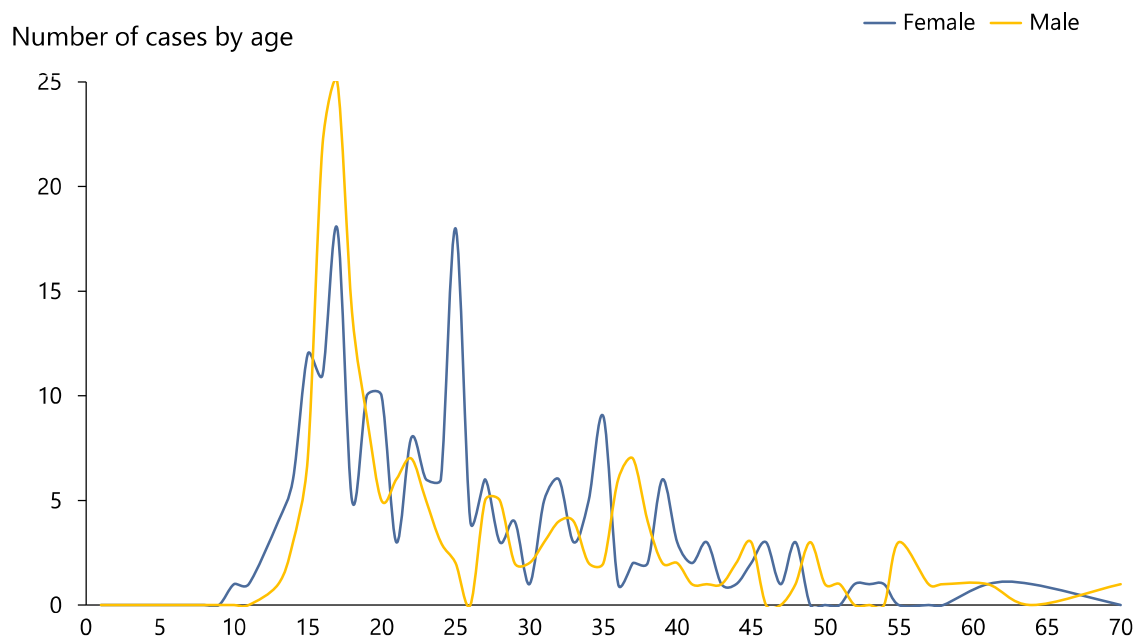
**Table 4: Number of cases of potential modern slavery by Age and Gender**

| Age group | Female |     | Male |     | Unknown | Total |      |
|-----------|--------|-----|------|-----|---------|-------|------|
| 0-17      | 53     | 48% | 58   | 52% | 4       | 115   | 100% |
| 18-30     | 84     | 56% | 65   | 44% | 2       | 151   | 100% |
| 31-50     | 58     | 54% | 49   | 46% | 6       | 113   | 100% |
| 51+       | 5      | 38% | 8    | 63% | 0       | 13    | 100% |
| Unknown   | 26     | 38% | 23   | 62% | 2       | 50    | 100% |
| Total     | 225    | 53% | 203  | 47% | 14      | 442   | 100% |

*Percentages are given for females and males as a percentage of all those in each age category with known gender*

The following graph shows the distribution of cases by age and gender. The age range of potential victims was 10-70 years.<sup>49</sup> 29% of potential victims were minors, aged 10-17 years. This is considerably higher than the 24% of the Oxford population that were aged 0-20 years in 2011.<sup>50</sup> This indicates that modern slavery could be an issue disproportionately affecting children aged 10-17 in relation to adults aged 18+ in Oxford.

## Distribution by age and gender



<sup>49</sup> As the youngest victim recorded was 10 years old, this age group is sometimes hereafter referred to as 'victims of 10 to 17' rather than '0-17' years

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/1081/population\\_by\\_gender\\_and\\_age](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/1081/population_by_gender_and_age)

Of particular note is the clustering of cases around the following age bands:

- The yellow spike indicates that 29% of all male victims (61 cases) were 16-18 years old. Most of these were 16 and 17 years old, constituting a very high-risk group. These cases were predominantly Forced Criminality and Forced Labour. The high numbers for Forced Criminality echo Thames Valley Police data showing that 30% of those arrested for supplying Class A drugs in 2017-18 were 16- and 17-year-olds.<sup>51</sup>
- The two blue spikes indicate that 48% of all females (107 cases) were aged 15-25. Most of these women experienced Sexual Exploitation.

## Nationality

The data form sent to each organisation requested 'nationality' for each case. Nationality was prioritised over ethnicity in this study as, while both are important, with limited information able to be requested, nationality was felt to give the more pertinent information as country of origin and immigration issues are significant factors in understanding modern slavery. However, for 34 cases ethnicity was given instead of nationality and had to be classified as of 'unknown nationality' since it was not systematically categorised.

Potential victims were of 38 different nationalities. **43% were British (146 cases) and 57% were foreign nationals (190 cases)**. Given that there was a very large number of unknown nationality - 106 cases - these proportions should be taken as an indication only.

The map below shows the numbers of cases *for the predominant nationalities only*.

The predominant nationalities were **British at 43%** (146 cases), **Albanians at 16%** (54 cases) and then **Vietnamese at 6%** (21 cases). This is a very close reflection of the national situation in 2019 as measured by the number of referrals to the NRM where the most common nationalities of potential victims were British 27%, Albanian 16% and Vietnamese 8%.<sup>52</sup>

Then came Pakistan (14 cases), Romania (9), Sudan (8), India (6) and China (6).

The other nationalities were:

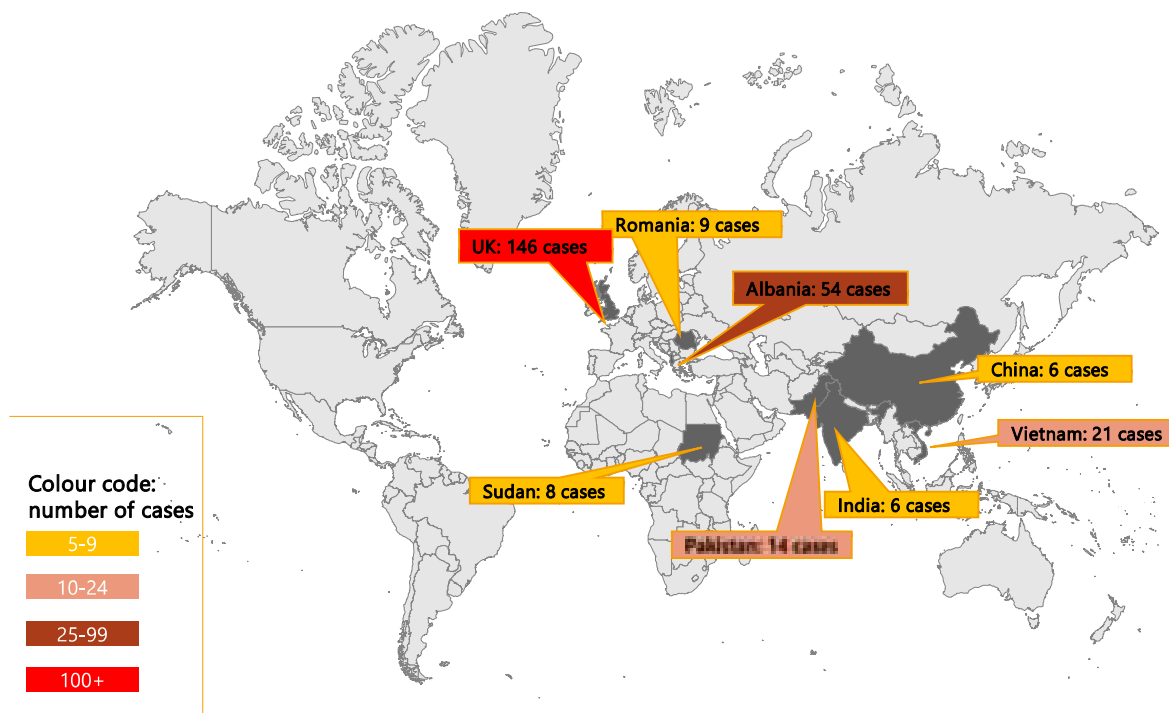
- 4 cases from each of Afghanistan, Poland, and Syria
- 3 cases from each of Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Kurdistan, Zimbabwe, 'Timor'/East Timor
- 2 cases from each of Eritrea, Ghana, Gambia, Estonia, Iraq, Malaysia, Uganda
- 1 case from each of Brazil, Bangladesh, Australia, Greece, Indonesia, Namibia, Nigeria, Myanmar, Philippines, Portugal, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, and Italy

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<sup>51</sup> Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Plan 2000 p1

<sup>52</sup> Home Office. National Referral Mechanism Statistics. UK, End of Year Summary, 2019

## Country of origin of cases as indicated by data on 'nationality'



Only the most common nationalities are shown

The **types of exploitation** reported by females and males for each of the 8 most prevalent nationalities are presented in Table 5. Of particular note is the following (figures in bold in the table):

- British cases - men and boys at risk of Forced Criminality are very prevalent. There were 91 British reports of Forced Criminality making up 59% of all British reports of modern slavery. This is significantly higher than the percentage for Forced Criminality for all nationalities (36%). Two-thirds of the British reports were male.
- Albanian cases – 29 female reports of Sexual Exploitation; 15 male reports of either Forced Criminality or Forced Labour.
- Vietnamese cases – 12 of the 17 reports were of Forced Labour, 10 of them male.
- Pakistani cases – 8 of the 13 reports were Domestic Servitude; all of them female.
- Romanian cases – half of the reports were of female Sexual Exploitation, and half male Forced Labour.
- Sudanese cases – 7 of the 10 reports were of male Forced Labour.

**Table 5: Nationality of potential victims by number of reports of types of exploitation (most prevalent nationalities only).** *Reminder: the number of reports of exploitation is higher than the number of cases as some victims experienced more than one type of exploitation.*

|          | Sexual Exploitation |   |    | Domestic Servitude |   |    | Forced Criminality |    |    | Forced Labour |    |    | Total number of reports of exploitation |
|----------|---------------------|---|----|--------------------|---|----|--------------------|----|----|---------------|----|----|-----------------------------------------|
|          | F                   | M | Un | F                  | M | Un | F                  | M  | Un | F             | M  | Un |                                         |
| UK       | 35                  | 2 | 1  | 2                  | 0 |    | 33                 | 58 | 3  | 5             | 19 | 2  | 160                                     |
| Albania  | 29                  | 1 |    | 3                  | 1 |    | 0                  | 7  |    | 2             | 8  |    | 51                                      |
| Vietnam  | 1                   | 0 |    | 0                  | 1 |    | 0                  | 3  |    | 2             | 10 |    | 17                                      |
| Pakistan | 0                   | 0 |    | 8                  | 0 |    | 0                  | 0  |    | 4             | 1  |    | 13                                      |
| Romania  | 4                   | 0 |    | 0                  | 0 |    | 0                  | 0  |    | 1             | 4  |    | 9                                       |
| Sudan    | 0                   | 2 |    | 0                  | 0 |    | 0                  | 1  |    | 0             | 7  |    | 10                                      |
| India    | 0                   | 0 |    | 0                  | 0 |    | 0                  | 3  |    | 0             | 1  |    | 4                                       |
| China    | 1                   | 1 |    | 0                  | 1 |    | 0                  | 1  |    | 0             | 2  |    | 6                                       |

*Un = unknown*

*Cases with unknown type of exploitation are not shown*

The age of potential victims from the main nationalities is shown in Table 6. Of particular note is the high proportion of minors amongst the Sudanese cases (7 of the 8 cases) and Vietnamese (10 of the 21 cases).

**Table 6: Nationality of potential victims by Age (most prevalent nationalities only)**

| Age      | 0-17 | 18-30 | 31-50 | 51+ | Unknown | Total |
|----------|------|-------|-------|-----|---------|-------|
| UK       | 28   | 39    | 70    | 6   | 3       | 146   |
| Albania  | 14   | 32    | 2     | 0   | 6       | 54    |
| Vietnam  | 10   | 7     | 4     | 0   | 0       | 21    |
| Pakistan | 0    | 4     | 4     | 0   | 6       | 14    |
| Romania  | 1    | 5     | 2     | 0   | 1       | 9     |
| Sudan    | 7    | 1     | 0     | 0   | 0       | 8     |
| India    | 0    | 4     | 2     | 0   | 0       | 6     |
| China    | 0    | 3     | 1     | 2   | 0       | 6     |

## 5.4. Comparison of data identified by different institutions

The different sources of data and information were grouped into the following 5 institutional blocks for ease of analysis: Thames Valley Police, third sector organisations<sup>53</sup>, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and NHS Foundation Trusts (Oxford Health and Oxford University Hospitals). This section looks firstly at how each institutional block compares. It then looks at how Thames Valley Police data compares with the overall findings.

### 5.4.1. Comparison between institutions

Table 7 compares the number of reports of different types of exploitation between the different institutions. Of note is that:

- TVP has a much higher proportion of cases of Forced Criminality than all other sources.
- The NHS has a significantly higher proportion of cases of Sexual Exploitation than other sources, closely followed by the third sector.
- Both NHS and the third sector are the main sources of cases of Domestic Servitude.

**Table 7: Number of reports of types of exploitation for each institution**

|                                                  | Sexual Exploitation | Domestic Servitude | Forced Criminality | Forced Labour | Organ Harvesting |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Thames Valley Police                             | 22                  | 4                  | 58                 | 21            | 0                |
| Third sector organisations                       | 72                  | 19                 | 68                 | 37            | 0                |
| Oxford City Council                              | 10                  | 1                  | 9                  | 2             | 0                |
| Oxfordshire County Council                       | 4                   | 0                  | 4                  | 23            | 0                |
| NHS: Oxford Health & Oxford University Hospitals | 44                  | 15                 | 8                  | 7             | 1                |

*Figures only given where type of exploitation was known*

Table 8 compares the institutions across a number of variables. Of note is that:

- The majority of ‘very likely’ cases of modern slavery are from TVP. This is because all their cases were either referred into the NRM or reported under the Duty to Notify, both of which the researchers interpreted as a ‘very likely’ sign of modern slavery<sup>54</sup> (see section 7.2.1 for further discussion on the challenges of this approach). The other sources are more balanced in their split between ‘very likely’ and ‘possible’ cases (i.e., there is a much greater degree of uncertainty).
- The NHS had by far the highest proportion of females (79%) amongst its cases of potential modern slavery - perhaps expected given their much greater links to women through maternity services, Health Visitors etc. For the third sector, 56% of cases were female. TVP

<sup>53</sup> Third sector organisations are referred to as an ‘institutional block’ here simply for ease of reference

<sup>54</sup>The TVP data was not provided to the researchers with data on degree of certainty so the researchers used the NRM referral as the best approximation available

and the Oxfordshire County Council had notably much lower proportions of females amongst their cases (36% and 23% respectively).

- Oxfordshire County Council had the highest proportion of minors amongst its cases at 39%. This is to be expected given the involvement of the Children's Services teams in the research.
- NRM referrals and MS1 reports were very low for Oxford City Council and the NHS. The proportion of NRM referrals in relation to all cases was notably high for the County Council (20 out of 31 cases).
- In terms of foreign nationals, Albanians, and Vietnamese feature prominently across TVP, third sector, County Council and NHS cases.

Throughout this section, it is important not to generalise the data presented on specific nationalities, nor to form negative stereotypes about these nationalities as a result.

**Table 8: Comparison of institutions on likelihood of modern slavery, gender, age, nationality, NRM referrals and MS1 reports**

|                                  | Thames Valley | Third sector organisations | Oxford City | Oxfordshire County | Oxford Health |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------|
|                                  |               |                            |             |                    |               |
| Total number of cases            | 120           | 170                        | 35          | 31                 | 85            |
| Number of 'very likely' cases    | 120           | 101                        | 13          | 13                 | 39            |
| Number of 'possible' cases       | 0             | 45*                        | 22          | 15*                | 46            |
|                                  |               |                            |             |                    |               |
| Number of male victims           | 70            | 74                         | 17          | 24                 | 18            |
| Number of female victims         | 39*           | 95*                        | 18          | 7                  | 66*           |
| % of all cases which were female | 36%           | 56%                        | 51%         | 23%                | 79%           |
|                                  |               |                            |             |                    |               |
| Number of NRM referrals          | 102           | 24                         | 4           | 20                 | 4             |
| Number of MS1 reports            | 18            | 0                          | 4           | 2                  | 0             |
|                                  |               |                            |             |                    |               |
| Number of minors                 | 39            | 36                         | 0           | 12                 | 28            |
| % of all cases which were minors | 33%           | 21%                        | 0%          | 39%                | 33%           |

*\*Unknown data means that these figures don't add up to totals*

### 5.4.2. Thames Valley Police cases

Given that Thames Valley Police (TVP) have the most systematic process for documenting potential cases of modern slavery, they provided the most comprehensive dataset in this study. A more detailed analysis for TVP is therefore presented here, and a fuller account in Appendix 5.

TVP recorded 123 potential cases of modern slavery for its Local Policing Area (LPA) of Oxford City from April 2016 to April 2019. The types of exploitation were Forced Criminality (58), Forced Labour (21), Sexual Exploitation (22), and Domestic Servitude (4). No cases of Organ Harvesting were recorded. See Table 10 in Appendix 5. Some cases involved more than one type of slavery.

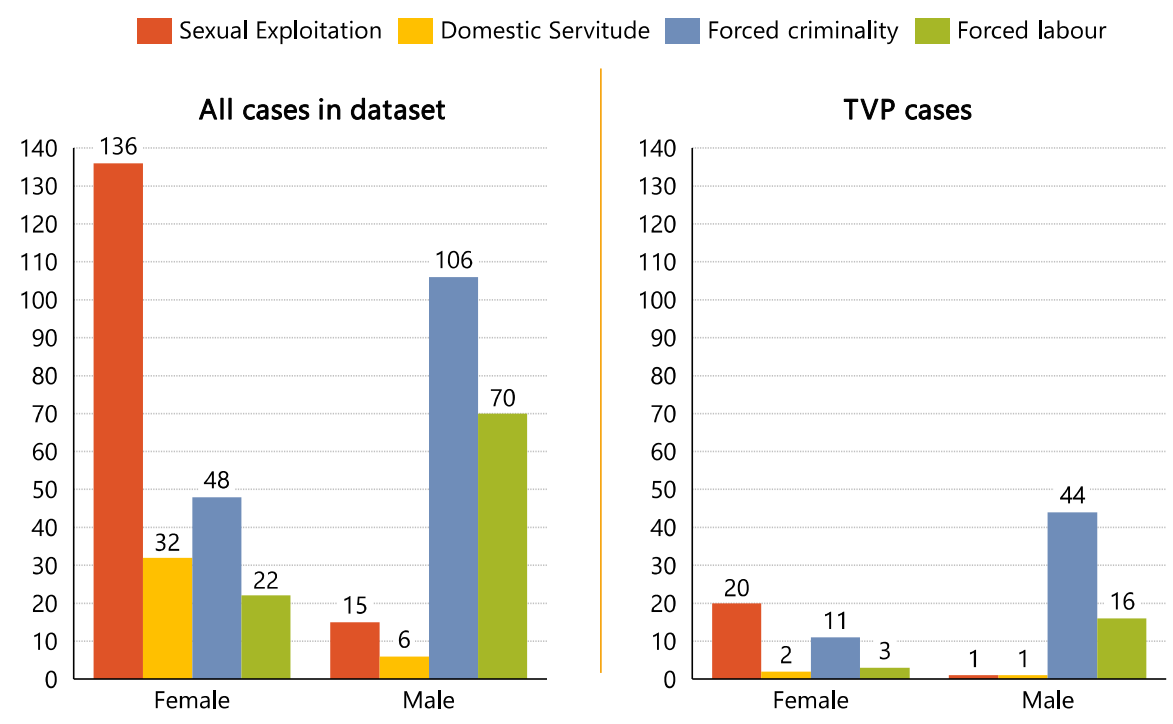
The proportion of cases which were Forced Criminality (55%) was considerably higher than the proportion of cases from all sources in the study (36%). Conversely, the proportion of cases that were Sexual Exploitation (21%) and Domestic Servitude (4%) was considerably lower than the proportion from all sources (34% and 9% respectively). There was little difference for Forced Labour.

Speculating on the reason for these discrepancies, most cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude were reported by the third sector (72 and 19 cases respectively), followed by the NHS (44 and 15), as compared to TVP (22 and 4), and fewer than that from the City and County Councils. The higher numbers reported by third sector organisations is likely to be due to the capacity they have to build longer-term relationships with such clients which facilitates the trust needed to share in confidence, and to do so independently from police or Home Office. It may reflect the fact that funding cuts to statutory services have led to increasingly high thresholds for social, practical, and mental health support, so that victims of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude find their way instead to third sector organisations offering basic need support. The research also indicated that health professionals can offer important avenues for identifying these types of exploitation.

In line with national data, the type of exploitation was strongly gendered with males predominating amongst cases of Forced Criminality and Forced Labour, and females accounting for almost all the cases of Sexual Exploitation. However, it is important to recognise the men and boys who are victims of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude, and the women and girls who are victims of Forced Criminality and Forced Labour. One respondent noted how damaging gender stereotyping can be if it obscures the needs of these minorities and makes their exploitation harder to identify. Gender stereotyping of this kind could warrant further exploration in Oxford.

Overall, there were twice as many male victims (65%) as female (35%). This is markedly different from the cases reported by all sources (male 47%; females 53%). This is accounted for by the much lower proportion of cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude amongst the TVP cases, both heavily female dominated. The bar chart below illustrates this by comparing the distribution of types of exploitation between women and men for the TVP dataset with that for the dataset from all sources.

## Type of exploitation by gender: comparison of TVP cases and all cases in dataset



All cases identified by TVP were either referred to the NRM or reported under the *Duty to Notify* via an MS1 form: 105 to the NRM; 18 MS1 forms. No categorisation was provided as to the likelihood of them being victims of modern slavery but given that all were referred either to the NRM or reported under the *Duty to Notify* we recorded all as 'very likely'.

Other points of note, further detailed in Appendix 5, are:

- The vast majority of the cases were under 24 years old. 49% of all females were aged 17-23, mostly Sexual Exploitation. 29% of all males were aged 16-17, mostly Forced Criminality
- One third of all cases were minors
- There were 59 (48%) British victims and 64 (52%) foreign nationals. The proportion of foreign nationals was slightly lower than for cases from all sources (43% and 57% respectively)
- The two nationality sub-groups of most concern were:
  - Albanian females. 11 out of the 12 female cases were due to Sexual Exploitation.
  - British men and, to a lesser extent, women who had been forced into criminality.
- For NRM referrals from TVP see 7.2.1.

### Trends in Oxford in the last year (October 2019-September 2020)

The case-level dataset provided by TVP for this study ran until April 2019. More recent, but less detailed, data is available from the TVP quarterly modern slavery infographics (see Appendix 6). This data covers the period April 2019 to September 2020 and brings the TVP data collected by this study up to date. Indications of changing trends for the past year are given below by comparing this 2019-2020 infographic data to the 2016-2019 case-level data from this study. Unfortunately, data for the

quarter July-September 2019 was not available, so comparisons are made with data for the most recent year, October 2019 - September 2020, only. In the year October 2019 to September 2020:

- There were 54 referrals to the NRM. This was high in comparison to 2016-2019 during which only 105 cases were referred to the NRM by TVP over 3 years. The increase was likely due in part to an increase in referrals to the NRM, and in part due to a change in recording practices with police forces now being required to classify every NRM submission they receive as a crime, both from their own officers and external organisations.<sup>55</sup>
- **57% of the NRM referrals (31 cases) were minors.** This is a huge increase on the 37% of NRM referrals who were minors during 2016-2019.
- There were 22 MS1 submissions to the Home Office during the past year. This is a significant increase on the 24 MS1 submissions during the 3 years of 2016-2019.
- The proportion of cases of Forced Criminality increased (from 55% to 60%) while the proportion of cases of Sexual Exploitation decreased (from 21% to 15%). This is reflected in an increase in the proportion of men (65% to 70%) and decrease in women (35% to 30%).
- Frequencies of different nationalities were not given for the 2019-2020 infographic, only the names of the source countries for the whole group. However, a notable difference was the absence of any Vietnamese victims, and the appearance of Cuba as a source country. This was only the second Latin American case to appear in the whole study.

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<sup>55</sup>As explained earlier for similar trends in data for the county of Oxfordshire the previous year which showed the number of victims of modern slavery and trafficking recorded by TVP rising from 144 victims in 2018 to 168 in 2019. **Source:** *Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2020, April 2020.*  
<https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2020Apr20FINAL.pdf>

## 5.5. Recommendations on data and intelligence

The following are proposed as recommendations to the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

### 5.5.1. A Joint OSCP Partnership Data Sharing Project

Create a joint partnership project to engage local partners in data sharing and to provide on-going mapping, analysis, and insight on the incidence of modern slavery across the city, including risks, threats, and trends. The aim would be to inform prevention, protection, support, and enforcement action. The TVP Violence Reduction Unit already leads such a project to reduce the threat, risk and harm of Class A drug dealing in Oxfordshire. This could be extended to other types of modern slavery exploitation in Oxford City. It would require the following:

- The consistent and structured engagement of a wide range of third sector as well as statutory organisations across the city, starting with those who actively engaged in this research. In addition, the engagement of private sector actors to help shed light on modern slavery occurring in local businesses such as construction companies, and the engagement of the safeguarding scheme Hotel Watch.<sup>56</sup>
- Shared systems in place for identifying and documenting potential cases of modern slavery, including agreed definitions and thresholds of what constitutes modern slavery. It is suggested that the definitions used by Oxford City Council form the basis for this (Appendix 8) with the inclusion of Organ Harvesting.
- Building awareness across the partnership of the statutory *Duty to Notify* potential cases of modern slavery to the Home Office (MS1 forms). This applies to all police forces and local authorities. Other organisations, including the third sector, are encouraged to submit reports but without a duty to do so.
- Information-sharing agreements and reporting mechanisms in place to ensure agile sharing of intelligence between partners, especially between statutory and third sector organisations, particularly important due to rapidly changing patterns of exploitation. Such agreements could build on those developed for this research by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to share information with Elmore.
- Analytical capacity within the partnership to collate intelligence on an on-going basis.
- Analytical and briefing materials to be developed and disseminated providing clarity on what types of exploitation are occurring where, who the victims and perpetrators are most likely to be, risks, threats, and trends. These could be invaluable resources to support the work of the Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Strategy group and the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network.
- Such a project would draw on best practice locally and from elsewhere, as well as aiming to create models of best practice itself. This is a resource intensive process so there would need to be dedicated financial and human resources allocated to the project.

### 5.5.2. Initiatives to further investigate the extent and nature of modern slavery

- **Private Sector:** Extend this research to work with the private sector on deepening understanding of modern slavery occurring in Oxford in local businesses, and to motivate joint action on prevention and protection. This could include the construction industry; hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and short lets; restaurants and takeaways; food processing; car

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<sup>56</sup> Hotel Watch is a partnership between hoteliers, police and City Council to promote public safety and safeguard customers. It is supported by more than 80 hotels, guest houses, bed & breakfast and short-let establishments. It aims to raise the awareness of staff on spotting the signs of exploitation, including Child Sexual Exploitation and modern slavery, and the measures to take if they believe something suspicious is happening on their premises.

washes and nail bars. This will build on initiatives by TVP, and also Oxford City Council's collaboration and experience with the private sector in setting up Hotel Watch.

- **Public consultation:** Extend this research to investigate the knowledge of the public on the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford, aiming to reach survivors, those at risk of slavery, their friends and family, and others concerned about potential victims. This will provide a different perspective from that provided from the service providers in this study. Consultation methods might include the Oxford City Council Residents' Panel, convened by IPSOS Mori, which comprises a representative cross-section of the population; posting in the 'Your Oxford' community newsletter for residents of Oxford which could potentially link to a website to complete a survey; or some form of on-line or social media consultation. Any such approach would need to consider translation into other key languages, particularly including Albanian and Vietnamese. Wager and Wager (2016) have devised a questionnaire for use in an anonymous randomised community survey via an on-line survey targeting households, care-leavers and those experiencing homelessness.<sup>57</sup>
- **Rural areas of Oxfordshire:** Some of those consulted were disappointed that this research did not extend to rural areas of Oxfordshire where some large residential properties are known to employ women and men suspected of living and working under modern slavery conditions. Community health staff could be a key group to work with here as they have access to such properties and knowledge. Farms would be another key area for investigation.

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<sup>57</sup> Wager, N. and Wager, A. 'Estimating the extent of modern slavery: proposed model and formula for Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner', 2016

## 6. Groups at particular risk

The analysis of types and experiences of exploitation, histories of vulnerability, and demographic profile of those found by this research to have been actual or potential victims of modern slavery led us to highlight three groups as at particular risk:

- Young people in vulnerable circumstances forced into criminality or Sexual Exploitation
- Adults with multiple and complex needs.
- Foreign nationals including those trafficked from abroad, exploited as modern slaves abroad and/or in the UK, or married into servitude in the UK.

All three groups include people who have been exploited in Oxford, as well as those who have a history of modern slavery preceding their arrival in Oxford. We suggest that strategies to prevent, protect and support those at risk of modern slavery in Oxford focus particularly on these three groups.

This section details the nature of exploitation experienced by those identified in this study for each group and the type of support they have received in Oxford. It makes recommendations on how prevention and support can be strengthened.

### 6.1. Children and young people forced into criminality and sexual exploitation

There has been a historical focus on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Oxford since 2011 when Operation Bullfinch uncovered the sexual abuse of teenage girls in Oxford from 2004 to 2012 by a gang of men who were convicted of 59 offences including rape, trafficking, and arranging or facilitating prostitution. A strong infrastructure has been developed since that time to prevent Child Sexual Exploitation and support survivors.

In the last 2 or 3 years the focus has shifted to the increasingly worrying problem of Child Drug Exploitation (CDE). This is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), a term increasingly used to describe situations in which children are forced to carry out a criminal activity. CCE is defined as “where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual”.<sup>58</sup>

In 2018 one frontline service provider described CDE increasing at a high rate. In that year the referral rates to the Kingfisher Team (Oxfordshire’s Child Sexual Exploitation Team set up after Operation Bullfinch) had risen by 27% due to cases of CDE. Since that time initiatives have focused on tackling this rapidly growing crime in Oxford. In addition, there is a developing recognition of the way different types of child exploitation inter-link, leading to efforts to integrate the response to CSE, CDE and other forms of child exploitation. This has resulted in the establishment of an integrated Youth Justice and Exploitation Service (YJES) in the County Council Children’s Service since 2020. This team’s remit includes for CSE, CDE and all forms of child exploitation.

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<sup>58</sup> Home Office. ‘Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults’, 2018  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines)

Given the recent strong focus on child exploitation in the city, which has yielded insights into its nature and extent, and the need to focus on other areas of modern slavery in Oxford, this study has not focused in-depth on this issue. However, it did estimate the prevalence levels from 2016-2019, and carried out some analysis of the issues and challenges in preventing this crime and supporting victims. The findings confirm that young people in vulnerable circumstances who are forced, or at risk of being forced, into criminality and Sexual Exploitation, need targeted interventions to support and protect them from further exploitation.

### 6.1.1. The extent of CSE and CDE in Oxford

29% of all potential victims (53 girls and 58 boys) identified in this study were aged 10-17 which is an over-representation compared to this age group in the Oxford population (see section 5.3).

Sexual Exploitation and Forced Criminality made up the vast majority of the exploitation of Oxford's children and young people. The reports of exploitation<sup>59</sup> includes 49 of Sexual Exploitation, 41 of Forced Criminality and 24 of Forced Labour.

In total, 111 children and young people were identified as being potential victims of modern slavery. These included 127 reports of exploitation.

**For Girls:** 53 girls were identified as being potential victims of modern slavery. These included 57 reports of exploitation. **The vast majority (72%) of these were for Sexual Exploitation.** There were 10 reports of Forced Criminality. The balance of British to non-British is not clear as 40 were of unknown nationality.<sup>60</sup>

**For Boys:** 58 boys were identified as being potential victims of modern slavery. These included 70 reports of exploitation. Where type of exploitation was known, 53% (31 reports) were Forced Criminality, 32% (19 cases) Forced Labour, and 14 % (8 reports) Sexual Exploitation. All cases of Forced Labour and Sexual Exploitation, where nationality was known, were to boys of foreign nationality.

Of the **boys forced into criminality** there are two points of note:

- Of the 24 reports where nationality was known, 17 were British (71%).
- All of the reports of British boys being exploited were for Forced Criminality (mainly County Lines)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> This is not the number of cases. Some cases reported more than one type of exploitation.

<sup>60</sup> This was largely because one source of information recorded 24 female cases but without nationality

<sup>61</sup> County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one areas to another, often across police and local authority boundaries, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (where drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

**Table 9: 0-17-year-olds: Number of reports of Types of exploitation by nationality and gender**

|                       | <b>Sexual exploitation</b>                           | <b>Forced criminality</b>                                                  | <b>Forced Labour</b>                                                  | <b>Other</b>                       | <b>Unknown type</b>                                                                   |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Girls</b>          | 4 Albanians<br>1 British<br>1 Romanian<br>35 Unknown | 6 British<br>4 Unknown                                                     | 2 British<br>1 Albanian<br>1 Horn of Africa<br>1 Unknown              | 1 Albanian                         | 0                                                                                     |
| <b>Boys</b>           | 3 Horn of Africa<br>5 Unknown                        | 17 British<br>4 Albanians<br>2 Vietnamese<br>1 Horn of Africa<br>7 Unknown | 6 Vietnamese<br>3 Albanian<br>8 Horn of Africa<br>1 Iraqi<br>1 Syrian | 1 African<br>(nationality unknown) | 3 Vietnamese<br>2 Iranians<br>1 Syrian<br>3 Horn of Africa<br>1 Albanian<br>1 British |
| <b>Unknown gender</b> | 0                                                    | 0                                                                          | 0                                                                     |                                    | 3 Albanian<br>1 British                                                               |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>49</b>                                            | <b>41</b>                                                                  | <b>24</b>                                                             | <b>2</b>                           | <b>15</b>                                                                             |

In section 5.2, it was noted that data from the centralised Oxfordshire County Council database (which was not used in the prevalence estimates in this study) indicates that the 49 children found by this study to have been potentially sexually exploited and the 41 potentially subjected to forced criminality may under-estimate the real extent of the problem. The OCC database recorded 200 children in Oxford with a risk factor for CSE, CDE and/or having been trafficked for the period April 2016 to March 2020: 160 children for CSE, 33 for CDE, and 14 having been trafficked. Section 5.1.2. explains why caution is needed in interpreting these figure as ‘risk factors’ do not equate with potential cases, but the numbers do give an idea of the scale of the risks involved for children in Oxford and the scale of the response that is needed.

### **6.1.2. The nature of CSE and CDE in Oxford**

The research indicates that children and young people in Oxford who are at risk of, or engaged in, CSE and CDE are characterised by living in vulnerable circumstances linked to social isolation, chaotic families, often single-headed households, exclusion from school, Pupil Referral Units, those leaving care, homelessness and rough sleeping, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), former UASC, adverse childhood experiences including attachment and trauma-related issues, and friendships with other children and young people being cuckooed into or involved in the County Lines drugs trade into the city. The risks and threats to, and the vulnerability of, those who have suffered CDE and CSE are explored below.

## Child Drug Exploitation

76% of the victims of Forced Criminality in this study were boys (31 cases) and 24% were girls (10 cases). Interviews indicated that almost all of the Forced Criminality was related to Child Drug Exploitation.

Both the County Drugs Lines (CDLs) operations which bring drugs into Oxford from outside of the county and the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) which operate within Oxfordshire use Child Exploitation (CE) to deal their drugs. The Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Group's 2020 plan reports that *"This results in Oxfordshire children dealing in the county or running drugs to other areas, and children from other parts of the country coming to Oxfordshire to deal for these OCGs... Of all people arrested for supplying drugs from June 2017 to June 2018, 30% were 16 or 17- year-olds".... "Risk factors for CE include school exclusions; not being in education, employment or training; parental drug use, domestic abuse, Sexual Exploitation and other Adverse Childhood Experiences; and contact with the youth justice system"*.<sup>62</sup>

The Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service Substance Misuse and Exploitation Team offer the following analysis:<sup>63</sup> *Over recent years there has been a notable change in offending patterns of young people in our local authority. Offences related to the possession, supply and distribution of heroin and crack cocaine were a rarity. From 2015 onwards there has been a significant (215%) increase in offences relation to class A drugs. Research is ongoing into the cause of these presenting issues. Some of the reasons may include: expansion of London & Birmingham "drug lines" into Oxfordshire; changes in the structure of local Organised Crime Groups; Organised Crime Groups moving into Oxfordshire; and reduction in street-based youth work and early intervention services."*

In response to the data request for this study, one organisation working with young people who are being, or at risk of being, exploited, identified 25 cases of child exploitation in the three years between April 2016 and April 2019 and all were related to Child Sexual Exploitation. In the following year (2019-2020), the type of child exploitation had extended to drug exploitation and Domestic Servitude. They have also seen an increase in the number of referrals where there is a cross-over between CDE, CSE, sexual harm, domestic abuse, and modern slavery.

One front-line support worker noted that while most of the children and young people criminally involved are male, their girlfriends and mothers can act as 'facilitators', for example as drivers to facilitate the movement of drugs and money. Many of the children engaged in CDE get involved at a young age, some before 11 or 12 years old, the so-called 'juniors' often acting as 'runners' to deliver the drugs. Another said: *"Children are all victims, but they are hard to help. They are on the streets and vulnerable."* Those who are excluded from school are very vulnerable to exploitation, particularly as the type of drugs sold keep changing. It is not just children from deprived backgrounds who are vulnerable to CDE, *"well-heeled kids are getting involved now - and girls too. Perpetrators know both these groups will not be seen as obvious perpetrators of crime."*

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Although the victims of Child Sexual Exploitation were overwhelmingly girls in this study (41 girls to 8 boys), two respondents warned against the gender stereotyping which associates girls with sexual exploitation and boys with drugs exploitation. Prior to 2017 there was little understanding of the

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<sup>62</sup> Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Group plan 2020 p1

<sup>63</sup> Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service Substance Misuse and Exploitation Team. *Child Drugs Exploitation: A toolbox for building resilience*, 2018

vulnerability of boys to sexual exploitation, but this is changing now. The number of boys referred to the Kingfisher team was said to have doubled from 2017 to 2018, and girls are now being exploited to carry drugs.

Amongst the UASC in this study, there was evidence of Sexual Exploitation occurring before arrival in the UK. See section 6.3.1. for more detailed information.

Oxford has developed significant expertise in CSE through the Kingfisher Team and Donnington Doorstep's Step Out project. The lessons learnt from these successful interventions could be disseminated more widely.

In terms of historical CSE, since 2016 Elmore has been commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to work alongside adult survivors of CSE to support them in making positive changes to their lives. Elmore has also worked with the Kingfisher Team to support several women through court cases brought as a result of police investigations into historical CSE in Oxford.

### 6.1.3. Supporting survivors of child exploitation: challenges and strategies

#### Challenges

**The main barriers to identifying modern slavery** with children is that self-identification is often very difficult for victims. They often do not view what they have experienced as exploitation and may see it as social norm. They struggle with understanding the difference between choice and coercion. They find it very hard to talk about grooming. They may reject support and attempts to engage them away from the lifestyle they are getting drawn into. Barriers to recognising their abusive situations may be due to a mixture of fear and desire or need. One service manager said: *"Young people like quick wins, the money – and they are very frightened of disclosure to their families"*. It is hard for them to break the cycle because of the lack of viable, or attractive, lifestyle alternatives for them, and the difficulty of breaking away from their friends. One support worker found that encouraging his young male clients away from the exploitative situations they were in with drugs gangs was rarely successful, so his aim had become to stay alongside them and accompany them until they were mature enough to understand how they were being exploited.

**Victim or offender?** For children coerced into selling drugs a major challenge is that they are often both victim and offender. The same is true of CSE where the children can be used to recruit new victims.<sup>64</sup> It makes dealing with these children appropriately very complex. Due to this, and their fear of disclosure, the Youth Justice Team works closely with the police to support the young person whilst sharing intelligence, and sometimes engaging in joint interventions and disruptions. NRM referrals are made in recognition of the child being a victim of modern slavery and is taken into account when sentencing by the judiciary. Receiving a sentence may result in a child being less attractive for exploitation, but this is not always the case.

**Re-exploitation.** Those who manage to free themselves from their exploiters remain vulnerable to being exploited again. When they leave the NRM, even if they move away, *"it is easy to go back to the people who gave you attention"*. If they do move away, they remain susceptible to being picked up by other Organised Crime Groups as their details may have been sold on by their original exploiters, or the young people themselves gravitate towards other OCGs.

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<sup>64</sup>Wager, N. Personal communication, 2021.

## How the response to Child Exploitation is becoming integrated

With the increasing recognition of the interwoven relationship between County Lines, localized drug exploitation, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and the requirement to develop a more integrated analysis and robust responses to these changing risks and needs, support services are becoming more integrated.

During the course of this study (2020) the statutory Youth Justice Team (which supports young people going through the criminal justice system on court orders and works with them to reduce risk) merged with the Kingfisher Team (which supports young people who are at risk of CSE or of being drafted into criminal exploitation) to form an integrated Youth Justice and Exploitation Service. The new service supports medium to high end risk cases (i.e., those being exploited, or at high risk of being exploited), and deals with all forms of exploitation.

The OSCB Child Sexual Exploitation subgroup has also developed into the OSCB Child Exploitation Subgroup, as a result of the increasing recognition of the broader risks and safeguarding concerns for children experiencing CSE, in particular the links with CDE, trafficking (in UK and international), and modern slavery (including Domestic Servitude). The Child Exploitation Subgroup oversees the multi-agency partnership for exploited and missing children across the county.

One third sector organisation raised the concern that despite the above developments, in response to high level/high risk cases, there is no planned coordinated response to those 'at risk' of, or survivors of, CDE and CSE (i.e., for those that do not meet the threshold for statutory services, or those who are exiting statutory support). They called for the need for an integrated service that can develop trusting and compassionate relationships with these children, young people and their families, and the ability to offer relationships that are not based on disclosure and prosecution, but on holistic healing support.

## Prevention of Child Exploitation

Oxfordshire County Council has developed **an early warning system** for a child identified as 'at risk' in order to plan an early intervention before the child gets too involved in criminal activity. This response might be appropriate when a child is first arrested and taken into custody as this can act as an opportunity to divert them to other activities, something which becomes much harder once they are earning money and deeply involved. The involvement of the Youth Justice Team can help young people who are charged with an offence and convicted, serve a sentence appropriate to level and offence of crime committed in line with sentencing guidelines. The point was made that for those working in children's services with young people involved in County Lines and drug trafficking, safeguarding is paramount, and this will run alongside criminal justice where a crime has been committed. Multi-agency risk management plans are developed to identify the right measures to safeguard the child and for public protection.

The importance of working with the **whole family context** was emphasised. This approach is taken with Child and Family Assessments in what was the Kingfisher team. During the process of building trust with the family and trying to understand the sequence of events that have occurred, modern slavery-related risks for adults in the family may also emerge. Two support organisations noted the impact of attachment issues and early neglect on the vulnerability of young people, and the

increasing awareness of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)<sup>65</sup> on vulnerability to exploitation. Several respondents noted that in identifying risk, different teams have different ‘risk registers’ (i.e., they see the signs of exploitation and types of risk that their speciality calls for, underlining the importance of working across professions and understanding the whole family context).

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board’s **Child Exploitation Screening Tool** is designed to help identify possible risks of exploitation, including criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation, and is for use where there are such concerns about any child.<sup>66</sup>

One particular preventive intervention that was felt to be very effective was the robust **training for taxi drivers and hoteliers** by Oxfordshire County Council’s Safeguarding Team and Oxford City Council acting as the licensing authority for Oxford’s taxi and hospitality trades. One third sector organisation proposed that more training of this kind needs to be rolled out widely to all those working with, and coming into contact with, children and young people.

There was a felt need for more **long-term interventions to offer young people alternative and sustainable pathways** to divert their focus and interest away from exploiters attempting to groom them. These could include building social networks, activities to create a sense of purpose, and economic livelihood support, and interventions with long-term exit strategies for getting away from and staying away from the exploitation. There were calls from several respondents to stop doing short-term interventions (e.g., 6 weeks of support, as they are ineffective, give children hope and connection, and then let them down, crushing their feelings of self-worth).

The **Willow Project’s** support for young people caught up in drug exploitation attracted high praise from many respondents: *“Willow are fantastic. There is a willingness to engage, and they are passionate about what they do. They are very flexible. I’ve never had a ‘no’ from them. Their tailored training is the best in years. This is how we’ll open people’s eyes to the problem”*. The Youth Justice team has tried to enable young people leaving their service to build a relationship with the Willow Project which could provide them with longer-term accompaniment and support. There was hope from many respondents that a service of this kind would continue.

## **Protection of children being exploited**

Structures and measures used to protect children at risk of CDE and CSE are as follows.

**The Multi-Agency Drug Exploitation partnership group (MADE)**, involving the Police, County Council and third sector organisations, meets regularly to share information on different crime groups (OCGs, CSE, County Lines), on-going operations, individuals at risk, and discuss what kind of support and who should be involved in responding to specific cases.

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<sup>65</sup> Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring before age 18, including all types of abuse and neglect as well as parental mental illness, substance use, divorce, incarceration, and domestic violence. ACEs are strongly linked to negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor physical and mental health, substance abuse, and risky behaviours. Prevention activities are therefore crucial, and when children do experience trauma, trauma-informed interventions can help to mitigate negative outcomes.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resources/ace/> Accessed 30.01.21

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Child-Exploitation-Screening-Tool.pdf>

**The National Referral Mechanism.** The Children and Families Services refer children into the NRM, particularly those who are caught up in County Lines and debt bondage, since it provides a protective measure for their clients, can ‘help to preserve their childhood’, and to indicate numbers to the Home Office. Of the 115 children who were identified as potential victims of modern slavery in this study, 39 (34%) were referred into the NRM, the majority having experienced CSE or CDE.<sup>67</sup> Concern was expressed by three respondents in the study about the lack of support offered by the NRM to children at the time where they had conclusive grounds. This reflects wider concerns raised by multiple organisations nationally.<sup>68</sup>

**Other interventions** used to protect victims of CDE or CSE included Child Abduction Warning Notice (which stop the person named associating, visiting, or having any contact with the child), Criminal Behaviour Orders (which prohibit the offender from doing anything described in the order, and can separate young victims from negative peer influences), Closure Orders (allowing police to quickly close premises being used to commit disorders for up to 3 months), or Closure Notices (which prohibit access to a premises for certain persons for a specified period). Oxford City Council’s Community Safety Service and the Willow Project were often involved alongside the police for these interventions.

#### 6.1.4. Recommendations

- Reprioritise the focus of support to children and young people. Move away from commissioning short-term interventions with young people at risk of Child Exploitation. Respondents say they are not effective given the level of need involved and let young people down. Instead, invest in **long-term sustainable interventions** (economic, social, creative) that build the trust of young people and recognise the complexity of their need, and provide them with sustainable pathways to get away and stay away from exploiters, as well as make positive changes to their own lives. This includes interventions to prevent the potential transition from victim to perpetrator. Develop sustained capacity within projects such as Step Out (run by Donnington Doorstep) which have developed this type of expertise.
- Promote and sustain actions toward **integrated services** that recognise the overlapping nature of CSE, CDE and other forms of exploitation. These should aim to foster trusting and compassionate relationships with children, young people, and their families, and support the development of relationships that are not based on disclosure and prosecution, but on holistic healing support and the adoption of a whole family approach.
- Training and awareness-raising:
  - Provide training and support for *all parents and carers of young people*, in particular those from vulnerable backgrounds, about how to identify signs of modern slavery, drawing upon a shared and defined understanding, and clearly signpost to support services.
  - Provide training to educational settings to support the identification of cases of CSE and CDE. This would involve guarding staff against the gender stereotyping that associates girls with sexual exploitation and boys with drugs exploitation, highlighting the particular vulnerability of children from deprived backgrounds to CDE (while also recognising that children of all social, economic, and other backgrounds can be criminalised too), and communicating that victims likely will not self-identify because they do not see what they are experiencing as exploitation.

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<sup>67</sup> This is an assumption based on the fact that 78% of the reports of child exploitation were either for CSE or CDE - see Table 9

<sup>68</sup> On-line forum: *The voice of British survivors of human trafficking. The challenges faced before, during and after the NRM*, organised by the Human Trafficking Foundation 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

- Increase the access of third sector organisations, particularly community organisations, working with young people to training on modern slavery with a focus on CSE and CDE. The training provided by the Willow Project during this study was a very good example. Training should focus on contextual Safeguarding and trauma-informed practice.
- Build on the success of the preventative intervention, assessed as very effective, which provided robust training for taxi drivers and hoteliers on modern slavery. Oxfordshire County Council's Safeguarding Team and Oxford City Council are recommended to increase the supply of training of this kind to other such service providers who come into contact with children and young people.

## 6.2. Adults with multiple and complex needs

Adults who have multiple and complex needs are at particular risk of modern slavery. This group includes adults experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, substance misuse and offending, significant mental ill-health, personality disorder, learning disability, autism, and those from complex, troubled or dysfunctional family backgrounds. Often over-lapping, these needs and challenges can make it hard for them to fit easily into services, and to engage with local services generally and with modern slavery support services particularly. This difficulty can lead to a spiral of chaotic lifestyles, poverty and stigma which puts the individual at high risk of exploitation and slavery. This link was borne out by many of the cases identified by this research, particularly from the housing and homelessness sector, substance misuse services, Adult Social Care, Thames Valley Police, and those supporting clients with multiple and complex needs such as Elmore Community Services and the Willow Project. Despite the involvement of many statutory and third sector services, these clients can fall through the cracks. Many had such high support needs that they continued to be at risk of exploitation including Forced Criminality, Forced Labour and Sexual Exploitation in spite of the support they received. This section looks at two of the predominant factors that cause vulnerability in this group: rough sleeping and substance misuse.

### 6.2.1. Homelessness and rough sleeping

Fifty potential victims of modern slavery were identified by 5 housing and homelessness organisations/teams in this study. These cases make up 11% of the cases identified by the whole study. 21 (42%) of them were 'very likely' victims of modern slavery, and 29 (58%) 'possible'. Only 4 (8%) were referred to the NRM: the rest (92%) were either not referred to the NRM or the staff did not know if they had been.

Sexual Exploitation (20 cases), Forced Labour (19 cases) and Forced Criminality (23 cases – including possible County Lines and cuckooing) were all equally represented. One case of Domestic Servitude was found. Other types of exploitation included possible financial exploitation/money laundering and use of property for accommodation and financial exploitation related to begging. Exploitation was reported to have occurred to some living in Gypsy and Traveller communities. 12 clients suffered more than one form of exploitation, most commonly Forced Criminality in addition to either Sexual Exploitation or Forced Labour.

There were 28 men and 22 women identified by the homelessness and housing services. The age range was 19-55, with the majority being in their 30s. Most were white British (40), one British Asian, and only 5 foreign nationals. The vast majority (44) of the cases of exploitation took place in Oxford, 1 in Kent and 1 in Swindon.

**The main vulnerability factors** were substance abuse, significant mental health issues, complex needs, and an inability to manage daily living (e.g., paying rent). Additional factors included falling out with the family, an abusive husband/partner, and learning disability. One hostel worker highlighted that:

*“While all these (homeless) clients are targeted because they are vulnerable, an additional vulnerability for women is the risk of sexual exploitation. Often women in hostels sleep out on the streets to accompany their partner who may have been excluded from the hostel (e.g., for violence). Women are probably emotionally manipulated to do so (“don’t leave me out here on my own”), and are then more at risk on the streets, especially if their partner is*

*violent, and can't be overseen by our staff. In this case we may then try to bring them both back inside".*

One respondent noted the lack of safe houses or refuges for vulnerable women. Another noted that *"Many are complex cases who go in and out of homeless pathways, short and then long-term accommodation, sometimes rough sleeping. 17 out of 29 cases have been 'chronic returners' for a good few years".*

**Identifying if modern slavery is taking place**, and what form it is taking, was said by several staff supporting clients with complex needs to be challenging. Sometimes staff felt clients were 'at risk' of being exploited rather than knowing for sure that they were. It was not always clear if they were being exploited as modern slaves or engaging without threat, coercion, or force. For example, in one case there was concern that a man was being exploited for Forced Labour while the person insisted he was engaging willingly, happy to be paid mostly in alcohol and cigarettes, *"at least I get a drink"*, and it got him out of the house. *"He said he liked it, he was making money, and it was something to do"*. This raises the important issue of who decides if someone is a modern-day slave if they say they are not. Similarly, one support worker questioned whether women who appear to be exploited by men for sex work are slaves if there is no apparent coercion or force and they want the money to buy drugs: *"We try to offer alternatives but often they refuse to take options that are offered to them"*. Services have to try to ascertain what level of agency these women have in deciding whether to engage in sex work.

**Chains of exploitation:** another issue is identifying whether an apparent victim of modern slavery is also a perpetrator. One housing officer said, *"It's very complex – people forcing others to commit crimes and being exploited themselves."* And of one female client, *"We think other people may have been using her to sell drugs, but she never said so, and we had no proof. She was living well and she's using people too."* When assessing a new client and trying to ascertain if they had been forced into labour or an exploitative situation, one staff member said most clients would answer 'no' to both questions *"because of the culture of not grassing, or to be seen to be grassing, in the homeless community"*.

**National Referral Mechanism support.** There is a question as to how the 'modern slavery' label helps many of the street homeless in Oxford who fall victim to exploitation, especially those with complex needs such as drug and alcohol addiction and/or mental health issues who are already well-known by, and long-term users of, support services and for whom support under the Modern Slavery Act may not prove very helpful. Of the 50 cases logged by housing organisations, only 4 were said to have been referred to the NRM (though TVP may have referred others on), and even then, some did not want to go through with it, or did not see themselves as modern-day slaves, or entered it and then returned to Oxford only to be re-exploited. One support worker noted the importance of taking time to build a bond with someone who appears to be suffering from exploitation, especially if they are traumatised, disoriented, and have lost memory, as their story will gradually unfold, and with it perhaps their willingness to consider the option of the NRM.

### 6.2.2. Substance misuse

One organisation said modern slavery involving drug exploitation is *'a hugely hidden problem for us in drug services'* and that many of their service users are at high risk of being targeted. They suspect that there is much more happening than they hear about from their service users, mainly because clients do not give consent for the organisation to intervene and act on their behalf - cases cited included Forced Criminality, Sexual Exploitation, and cuckooing.

This organisation reported that gangs from London, Birmingham, and Milton Keynes recruit people from one area to go into new areas such as Oxford. These are often young people sent to find out which geographical areas and types of drugs are being covered by drug dealers. For example, they might pick out a homeless person in a new area and give him/her £20 to find out who the drug dealers are. At times the organisation has seen a spate of overdoses, signalling that a new gang is bringing in stronger drugs. As people start to score their drugs, the new gang asks questions including those aimed at finding out who has a property. When the drug users move into a property, neighbours may start to complain about disturbing behaviour and alarms are then raised about the activity at the property. There are also drug users who are hardened to this way of life and look for gangs themselves, sometimes using the drugs they are meant to be selling. This organisation viewed debt bondage as a huge issue which causes immense fear for the clients.

Drug users who have their own properties will be targeted. They may succumb to letting people into their homes to deal drugs through loneliness, desperation or to gain regular access to drugs. When people feel it is too much, they talk to their support workers. Those living in hostels have some protection from this. The following is a case of one such client:

*The adult relative of a young person found himself in a situation where a large gang of men came to their home. The gang members started to recruit the young person (the client) to drop drugs off, through the use of veiled threats in a humorous manner (e.g., mention of knives and being cut). The client was given drugs on one day and had to pay back the money on the same day. The dealers then added a zero on the amount owed to them. When his benefits were paid, the dealers wanted his money. The client was thus forced to become a drug runner and to commit crime to get drugs. The organisation managed to work confidentially with the client to change the client's prescription and pharmacy and transfer him to a relative's house. The organisation offered the client support to report to the police. What helped was having a direct number for the person on the task force team. The criminal justice lead and police worked with the client to make the transfer to the relative's home happen smoothly.*

The challenges of supporting drug users with multiple and complex needs to escape exploitation are illustrated by the following case from a police officer.

*A vulnerable woman with mental health issues, a drug user who had committed petty crime, eventually revealed to the police that she was being forced to deal drugs and asked for their help. Every time she sold drugs and gave the suspected perpetrator the money, he said she had not given him enough and so she was forced to continue selling. A referral was submitted to the NRM, and she was referred to the Willow Project. She refused a Salvation Army offer to move her out of area. So, it was felt she would be safer if she moved elsewhere within the city, but the local authority was not able to do that. In the end TVP officers provided the NRM support locally in partnership with other agencies including the Willow Project. They helped with new locks on her doors, safety advice and regular patrols from a Police Community Support Officer. She told the police that several local people had been recruited by the same suspect, but all refused to make a complaint about him or ask for any support.*

Many drug users are both victim and exploiter, and this is a very hard cycle to break, as this case from another police officer illustrates:

*A 17-year-old boy was charged with intent to supply. His parents were drug dealers, he'd grown up around drugs, and he was a victim of CSE when younger. His dad used him to deal drugs from a young age. He moved up the ranks of an OCG and became an offender. He was*

*forcing other kids to deal drugs, and girls were raped. He was then dealing for several OCGs. He denied everything, and in court said it was 'forced modern slavery'. He claimed he was a victim previously, which he certainly had been, and had been given Positive Reasonable Grounds Decision in the NRM when younger. So, he had been a victim previously, and he was an offender, and it was right he should have been tried for that. He was convicted. But how do you break the cycle?*

Another main challenge in supporting drug users at risk of modern slavery is the very limited housing options for this client group as their use of drugs or alcohol bars them from some accommodation options. They can be housed with family members, emergency accommodation through Oxford City Council or, for women, a refuge. They cannot stay in shared houses because of children, risks of overdose, or infection. If they end up on the streets, they face increased risk of further exploitation.

Drug users who are victims of modern slavery may need access to suitable accommodation with wrap-around services. Local organisations can quickly respond to changes. For example, if someone is fleeing modern slavery in another area and arrives in Oxford, they can get them same day treatment and also access to a hostel bed. One organisation said it requires “*all of the services pulling together... and Oxford is amazing at pulling people together*”. This study identified a need for more out-of-county refuges with prescribing services and wrap-around support for more complex cases.

### 6.2.3. Recommendations

#### Strengthen the response of housing and homelessness support services

- Better access to safe and good quality accommodation, in particular, more refuges or secure and supported accommodation for women with complex needs, many of whom will be trying to flee relationships of domestic violence.
- Multi-year funding for housing teams to be able to provide longer-term support ideally by a dedicated specialist worker to assist clients with high level or entrenched issues and needs, including to address issues such as the on-going impact of traumatic experiences of exploitation and abuse on their well-being.
- Awareness-raising sessions on modern slavery for homeless clients (e.g., open sessions on the signs of becoming a victim of modern slavery and how to seek support).
- Replicate the Modern Slavery Navigator project for Homeless people ‘The Passage’, currently running in London, in which navigators take potential victims of modern slavery step by step through the victim support process until they are in a safe place.<sup>69</sup> Investigate whether this could build on the work of St Mungo’s’ Navigator workers who work with longer-term with chronic rough sleepers.

#### Strengthen the response of substance misuse services

- Training on modern slavery for all service providers working with substance misuse and in the homelessness and housing sector, as well as for clients with multiple and complex needs (joint and/or separate training).
- Establishment of Modern Slavery Champions - a small group of individuals from different organisations working closely together to share learning, provide mutual support, and work on preventive strategies to protect clients against the risk of modern slavery.

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<sup>69</sup> <https://passage.org.uk/services/>

- Housing with multi-agency wrap-around support services for clients as part of a person-centred and flexible approach.
- Out-of-county refuges with prescribing services and wrap-around support embedded.

### 6.3. Foreign nationals including those trafficked from abroad, exploited as modern slaves abroad and/or in the UK, or married into servitude abroad and in the UK

This group is characterised by several factors. Immigration status may be uncertain or unstable. They may have been trafficked from abroad. They may have been victims of modern slavery abroad, in the UK, or both. They may have married into servitude, abroad or in the UK.

They are likely to be vulnerable due to their 'low' status, poverty, and control by others they are dependent upon. They may have No Recourse to Public Funds.<sup>70</sup> They may fear accessing support services such as the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or police. They may face language barriers with English not being their first language.

Of particular concern are the following 3 groups:

1. Asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants, particularly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
2. Albanian women who have been sex trafficked.
3. Women of Asian and African heritage held in Domestic Servitude.

Throughout this section, it is important not to generalise the data presented on specific nationalities, nor to form negative stereotypes about these nationalities as a result.

#### 6.3.1. Asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants, particularly UASC

Asylum-seekers are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery because of lack of secure immigration status, low income from Government subsistence support or No Recourse to Public Funds. They are vulnerable to debt bondage. The term 'precarity' has been used to describe their lived experiences that are characterised by uncertainty and instability.<sup>71</sup> Dependence on their social networks also makes them easy targets for Forced Criminality and Forced Labour. Of particular concern, as identified in this study, are those who were exploited as slaves en route to the UK, in particular young people (especially young men) from the Horn of Africa who have been held in detention in Libya or stayed in refugee camps in Sudan after fleeing from war zones in their home countries. Their narratives included harrowing experiences of being exploited by smugglers, sold to slave traders, or kidnapped by traffickers.<sup>72</sup>

We did not collect information on immigration status so cannot say how many asylum-seekers there are in our dataset. In particular, we do not know how many of the adult foreign nationals may have been asylum-seekers. However, given the sources of information, we do know that **about half of the foreign national children identified were asylum-seekers.**

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<sup>70</sup> There are ongoing campaigns to highlight the severe risks of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy. Evidence in this report reflects these risks too. <https://www.unity-project.org.uk/research>

<sup>71</sup> Precarious Lives: Forced Labour, Exploitation and Asylum, Lewis et al, 2015  
<https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/precarious-lives-1>

<sup>72</sup> Often reported in the UK to lawyers or Social Care (e.g. UASC team) as part of the asylum process

## Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children (UASC)

### Prevalence and nature of modern slavery for UASC

There were at least 40 foreign national children in the dataset including 14 Albanians, 10 Vietnamese and 7 from the Horn of Africa.<sup>73</sup> At least 20 of these were UASC, the vast majority of whom were male. There were 6 Vietnamese, 5 Albanians, 6 from the Horn of Africa region, 2 from the Middle East and 1 unknown. UASC, and former UASC, are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery. Those considered by respondents as at particular risk are some Vietnamese, Albanian, Horn of Africa young men, and the dataset bears this out. They had been subjected to modern slavery in their countries of origin, in transit in different countries, and in Oxford. Some had experienced modern slavery at one, two or all three of these stages.

Table 9 shows that of all 10 to 17-year-old boys in this study, every report of Forced Labour came from a foreign national. This exploitation appears to have mainly occurred abroad.

**Vulnerabilities to modern slavery:** All respondents who worked with this group highlighted the particular vulnerability of both current and former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. These vulnerabilities included lack of family support and protection, insecure immigration status, poverty, social exclusion, previous experiences of modern slavery and trauma, and negative influences in their local communities. In some cases (e.g., with unsuccessful asylum claims, UASC had no recourse to public funds, and lack of work and education opportunities). They had to fend for themselves. Those 'age assessed' as over 18 would be supported in Home Office accommodation, but there are cases where previous support has been withdrawn then reinstated following legal challenge.

**Types of modern slavery:** 20 UASC had been referred into the NRM. 85% (17) were granted a Reasonable Grounds Decision on their NRM application. Of these, 18% (3 cases) had been awarded a Conclusive Grounds Decision at the time of data collection. 15% of the NRM referrals had been refused, and the rest were pending or unknown. Most of these had experienced Forced Labour abroad, for example, where young people had been forced into agricultural work by a family member, or into smuggling alcohol and tobacco over a border. There was also evidence of Sexual Exploitation in detention camps and prisons (e.g., in Libya and Sudan) or on the trafficking route. It was suspected that Sexual Exploitation is under-reported.

The main form of exploitation identified for UASC and former UASC living in Oxford was Forced Criminality involving drugs. One respondent stated, *"A lot of the young people are smokers and get into weed. They have very little choice and are dependent on the support of older men."* Cuckooing was an issue for older people who had their own accommodation. Exploitation of UASC occurred across all ages and affected some ethnic groups in particular.

### Types of modern slavery by country of origin

This study identified three main groups of victims of modern slavery from across the statutory, third sector and private sector organisations which provided data on UASC.

**Vietnamese boys and girls:** One respondent reported that there had been several Vietnamese under 18s in Oxford who were trafficked into the UK. Most were boys aged 15-17, with a small number of girls the same age (not included in the dataset as no case-level details were provided). The

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<sup>73</sup> 44 children were of unknown nationality.

vulnerability factors for these young people were domestic abuse, death, or absence of one or both parents. The respondent explained:

*“Sometimes these victims are picked up in Vietnam as orphans and promised a better life in the UK, but that they will need to work off their debts. They then travel either through Russia and Europe and then into the UK; sometimes they fly into a European country and are then moved into the UK. Working to pay off their debts will often mean working in cannabis houses tending to the plants or working in nail salons. These children come to the attention of social care following a police raid. In some cases, the Vietnamese children have family that owe debts and flee Vietnam as a result of this. Services in Oxford have seen 3-4 cases of missing Vietnamese young people, sometimes for two years, before returning to Oxford.”*

**Eritrean, Ethiopian and Sudanese (Horn of Africa) boys and girls:** Two organisations identified the particular vulnerabilities of some UASC from north-eastern Africa, drawing on their work mainly with boys aged 15-17 and a few girls aged 15-18. Many were smuggled through the route Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya, Italy, and France to the UK by foot, lorry, and ferry. Their experiences of forced labour became part of their asylum claims in the UK. The extreme abuse that some experienced and witnessed led to great difficulty for many of these boys and girls in trusting others. It is vital that service providers recognise the profound impact of these experiences on their mental health and provide trauma-informed responses in their service delivery.

**Albanian boys:** The third most common group of UASC victims of modern slavery is Albanian boys who have been victims of trafficking within Albania. Only 1 in 10 Albanians get refugee status so many stayed illegally with their appeals rights exhausted and no recourse to public funds. Some of these boys were targeted by Albanian gangs at 18 when they lost their rights to remain in the UK and did not want to return home. One respondent working with UASC commented, *“Their last hope is people from their own community, so they don’t burn bridges.”*

**Impact of modern slavery:** The impact on these young people is the huge trauma of leaving their families at a young age, post-traumatic stress disorder, gynaecological and physical illnesses, anxiety and depression, and difficulty in trusting others. They are vulnerable to exploitation from some older members of their communities who are more established in Oxford. They may be working in restaurant kitchens to supplement their benefits for as little as £2.50 an hour or they may be recruited to sell drugs, deterring some from speaking to the police.

**Barriers to identifying UASC as victims of modern slavery:** The main issue highlighted is that a UASC may actively hide indicators of trafficking. One respondent explained that:

*“the UASC may sometimes give a false story about their reasons for coming or about their journey to the UK. Smugglers will sometimes tell UASC to tell a story in order to support an asylum claim. This asylum claim is sometimes very weak/lacks credibility and will stop the client from getting a referral into the NRM. In these circumstances, the issue is identifying the exploitation, having the child identify exploitation.”*

Other challenges are that these young people may not see themselves as victims of modern slavery (e.g., if they are offered work in the UK and are paid to travel, they may expect to have to pay off the debt). At other times, the perception of risk differs between organisations and young people. For example, being out in Oxford in the early hours of the morning may not be perceived as a risk by a young person who has previously lived on the streets.

### 6.3.2. UASC - Support for survivors

**Age assessment:** A statutory sector respondent explained that UASC in the Oxford area are often first picked up by police, taken to the police station and age assessed. If they claim to be under 18 but look older, they could be treated as an adult. If there is uncertainty or they seem to be the age stated, they are taken back to the UASC Team and provided with accommodation and clothing. The UASC Team will then do a thorough child and family assessment over a period of 45 days to understand their story and why they left their country of origin. If there is no reason to question their age, they do not carry out an age assessment.

Third sector organisations have cases where age assessments have been successfully challenged. The statutory sector stand by their processes of age assessments (e.g., separating the role of age assessor from the case worker who holds the case). Following the recent successful legal challenge against Wirral County Council for unlawful age assessment by a 17-year-old asylum-seeker (January 2021), there are calls for all local authorities to review their age assessment practices.<sup>74</sup>

UASC aged under 15 go into foster care and most over 15s, following an assessment of their needs, access the semi-supported young person housing pathway. Whilst the housing provider tries to move them through in six months, it is not always possible and there is a challenge in accessing accommodation as young people mature. If a UASC receives a negative asylum decision and lose all their appeal rights, they usually have to leave their local authority funded accommodation. This can make them vulnerable to exploitation. The Local Authority has a duty to house UASC until their 18th birthday regardless of the outcome of their case. For young people over 18 with a former relevant care leaver status, who have all appeal rights exhausted, they will continue to receive support from the local authority to fund accommodation and subsistence until an appropriate human rights assessment is completed to assess their needs. Depending on the outcome of this assessment, this will determine the next steps and young people will be referred back to the Home Office for accommodation and to manage the next steps.

It is after this that they can become destitute.

**National Referral Mechanism (NRM):** There were a range of views about the benefits and disadvantages of the NRM system for UASC. Two organisations commented that referral to the NRM can significantly slow down their asylum claim and can be counterproductive. An NRM referral can help when it might strengthen an asylum claim (i.e., with a Conclusive Grounds Decision) – conversely a negative NRM decision might weaken the asylum claim. One respondent commented that there were issues with the NRM for different ethnic groups. Concern was expressed that First Responders sometimes recognised exploitation but did not always deem it appropriate for an NRM referral because the exploitation was historic and had happened abroad (e.g., sexual exploitation in Libyan detention camps).

There was a view expressed by both statutory and third sector organisations that the NRM is not providing the necessary support for UASC. Overall, respondents expressed a lack of confidence that the NRM process is working well for UASC, and a concern that it is being over-used and can have a detrimental impact on the young person's asylum claim. Another respondent raised the problem of when a positive NRM decision does not lead to a positive asylum claim and can leave people vulnerable, especially while they are going through the asylum appeals process. A concern was also highlighted that the greater emphasis and information on making NRM referrals means that other

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/25/teenage-asylum-seeker-in-uk-wins-legal-battle-over-unlawful-age-assessment>

lower level, but significant forms of coercion, labour and financial exploitation are not being adequately addressed.

**Supporting UASC:** This study found many positive examples of support being provided to UASC by the County Council's UASC Team and third sector organisations. One organisation commented that support services for UASC in Oxford were better than in other cities in the UK. There is also the Oxfordshire UASC interagency group that meets to coordinate services for UASC and highlight issues and challenges. Churches and mosques were found to be helpful; positive shared cultural experiences and positive role models in their communities can be a comfort. Another organisation highlighted the importance of the small window of opportunity of 72 hours in the National Trafficking Protocol to swiftly put a plan and extra provision in place.

A respondent explained that UASC continue to receive support from the Local Authority post-18 if they have status or are still in the asylum-seeking process. If they have become appeal rights exhausted (ARE) before 18, the Local Authority will stop their support at 18. If they become ARE after 18, the Local Authority will also stop the support. There was a call for continued support for UASC after they lose many of their support structures.

Social workers and foster carers encourage young people to build links in their communities, although on occasion they may disconnect from support especially if they are at the end of the asylum process with a negative Home Office decision. There was a shared view from front line staff that organisations need to understand the experiences and the trauma and brutality that these young people have suffered.

*"They need support in building trust. They need people from the same culture and community to offer comfort and understanding of their cultures and traditions; and they need role models. The young are lost."*

These staff also expressed that organisations need to know who they are in contact with and keep sustaining a relationship with the young people, sometimes over a very long time. Life can settle down for the young people and they can then take advantage of the support being offered. A case work model with dedicated 1:1 support was recommended by two respondents as particularly beneficial.

One interviewee said:

*"It is important for organisations not to give up trying to sustain these relationships, giving them a message of support, and sometimes looking at their options.... Time does help. We are going to keep offering that support."*

Another said:

*"For the UASC, because they are already in social care, they do not access the support set out by the 'recovery period' when a Reasonable Grounds Decision is made. In Oxford, UASC are able to access their in-house psychologist and a specialist support service offers a very helpful/effective specialist counselling service. UASC can also sometimes access independent psychologists through a CAMHS referral. In terms of accessing mental health support, I have noticed that often UASC, particularly male, decline to/are reticent to using the services available."*

Referral to mental health services to address the impact of underlying traumatic experiences was considered important. The UASC Team refer to their in-house UASC psychologist, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and specialist support services.

**Organisational Capacity:** Most of the organisations contacted in this study providing direct services to UASC have organised recent staff training in modern slavery. Two services identified a need for their wider teams to have greater awareness in this area and, for one, staff turnover meant an even greater need for updated training.

### **6.3.3. UASC - Recommendations**

- Address the urgent need for a safe house for UASC requiring temporary accommodation and housing solutions after move on from supported accommodation.
- Consider how to include third sector organisations in information sharing that commonly happens between statutory organisations, especially in crisis and other high-risk situations (e.g., where there is knowledge or suspicion about an older member of a community). This needs deeper exploration as the third sector's independence is highly valued by victims and enables them to be trusted sometimes more than statutory organisations.
- Develop a multiagency approach to exploring alternative sources of support, protection, and pathways for UASC including after they turn 18. This could involve a model of modern slavery champions who could offer genuine understanding and recognition of the reality of UASC experiences.
- Support and fund access to training and employment opportunities for UASC and former UASC.
- Support and fund community initiatives for UASC building on previously successful work by the UASC Team (e.g., through reliable and trusted links with churches and mosques, and diversionary activities such as those provided by youth theatre companies).
- Ensure access to good legal representation for UASC especially those who have had poor representation in the past.
- Support specialist therapy services with a focus on trauma-informed practice for UASC.
- Training on modern slavery including drugs and exploitation would be beneficial for:
- UASC, on gangs and drug trafficking (e.g., OSCB training run by someone with in-depth understanding of how gangs operate, or Birmingham based Connect Futures which recently ran a training for third sector organisations working with UASC).
- for all organisations, on the vulnerability of UASC to gangs and drug trafficking, and for some, signs of modern slavery.
- for foster carers, on modern slavery.
- for interpreters, on safeguarding and modern slavery.
- Make leaflets widely available with effective visual information about modern slavery in key languages (e.g., Vietnamese, Albanian, and Arabic).
- Interpreters to receive Safeguarding and Modern slavery and exploitation training. Use of interpreters should be conducted in adherence to Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board advice.

### **6.3.4. Albanian women who have been sex trafficked**

Of all foreign national potential cases of modern slavery, Albanians are the highest in number. There were 54 individuals making up 12% of all cases in this study: 34 women, 17 men, and 3 of unknown gender. For men and boys, the main type of exploitation was Forced Labour and Forced Criminality. However, the major issue of concern for this nationality was the scale of the Sexual Exploitation of women and girls. 29 out of 34 reports of potential exploitation for Albanian females (where type of exploitation and age were known) were Sexual Exploitation (see Table 5).

## **The nature of exploitation for Albanian women**

**Recruitment in Albania:** This analysis is based on the cases of eight women who were trafficked and forced into prostitution. They were all aged in their 20s. They were trafficked within and from Albania to work as sex workers in different European countries (Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands) before escaping to the UK. Some reported escaping en route while being trafficked to the UK. They were forced into sex work for periods ranging from six months to several years.

They were all identified as victims of sexual exploitation on referral, primarily by specialist agencies and health professionals. There were similar patterns of recruitment. Some had entered what they thought were genuine relationships with Albanian men while studying at university but were then taken into situations in Albania and other countries and raped by this person and forced into sex working; sometimes the trafficker, posing as a boyfriend, persuaded the woman to run away with him in secret; sometimes they were trafficked by a husband or fiancé after an arranged marriage, with the father consenting to her being taken abroad for a new life, sometimes against her will. Exploitation started as soon as they arrived in another country, usually with rape by multiple men before forced prostitution.

Women were kept in locked warehouses or shared houses where they were forced into sex working, frequently with several men a night. Some were kept in rooms in the same location, but they did not have contact with each other. The methods used to control them included repeated beatings, showing weapons, threats to kill them and to find them through their extensive networks if they ever escaped, threats to harm family members and beatings of family members by traffickers and police, denial of food, and collusion with the local police.

**The impacts of sexual exploitation** for these women include physical health problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleeping difficulties, self-harm, suicide attempts, anxiety and depression, lack of concentration, difficulties in trusting people, loss of agency, loss of hope for the future and fear of never escaping their past. They remain vulnerable in terms of their mental health, lack of long-term secure housing and risk of re-exploitation. They are heavily dependent on both informal and formal support in Oxford. They are terrified of being located by traffickers and taken back into sex trafficking. They also fear being sent back to Albania by the UK government, associating return to Albania with certain location by traffickers, punishment and further forced prostitution.

**On-going risks:** There were concerns from two third sector organisations about an increase in Albanian women in their services who had either escaped sex trafficking situations or arrived at hospitals pregnant for whom there were questions over their freedom of movement.

### **6.3.5. Albanian women who have been sex trafficked – Support for Survivors**

**Informal Support:** Some of these women were housed by relatives, or friends of relatives, in Oxford. Others reported meeting Albanians shortly after arrival in Oxford, some hearing Albanian spoken on the street, asking for help, and being offered accommodation while resolving their asylum claim. Respondents raised substantial concerns about the risk of re-trafficking for these women and stressed the need to make careful judgements as to whether their informal supporters, who also house them, are genuinely helping or exploiting them. They also recognised patterns in some of the stories they hear, for example, how the women have escaped their traffickers. Respondents were also aware of the importance of hospitality in Albanian culture, so this is a complex issue for service providers.

**Housing:** The lack of long-term housing solutions for these women in Oxford is a real concern, as is their high level of mental health needs including severe traumatisation and suicidality. They also form attachments to Oxford but without the prospect of long-term housing solutions in the city. In general, these women do not reach the thresholds for high level needs or having no recourse to public funds, and the informal housing situations where they live make it difficult for them to access council housing because they are not homeless.

**National Referral Mechanism (NRM):** Six out of the eight women had been through the NRM. Where the outcome of the decision making was known, all received Reasonable Grounds decisions, two received Conclusive Grounds decisions and subsequently refugee status. This reflects the fact that of the 19 Albanians identified by this study who were referred by TVP to the NRM, all received Reasonable Grounds decisions.

The length of the NRM decision making process was a major concern for third sector organisations. For example, one woman received a Reasonable Grounds decision; 14 months later, she was still waiting for a Conclusive Grounds decision and had been told by her support worker to expect that it could also take another 1-2 years to receive a decision on her asylum claim. On the other hand, one case was reported where a positive decision was found, on subsequent police investigation, not to be modern slavery and the woman's story of being forced into prostitution in Italy and brought to the UK where she escaped from a lorry, was not borne out. The situation with regard to Albanian women in Oxford reporting fleeing sex trafficking situations is complex and warrants further exploration. At the time of publication, respondents were aware, in some instances, of wait times of 3 years for a Conclusive Grounds decision.

**Support available in Oxford:** The organisations supporting Albanian women in Oxford are mainly provided by the third and private sector. At a national level, the Shpresa programme was mentioned as being a useful resource for supporting Albanian-speaking refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants to integrate into UK society.<sup>75</sup>

**Outcomes of support:** The support offered to these women has been effective. They have been accompanied to appointments (e.g., solicitors, housing, with some successful outcomes captured in the data: two securing refugee status, two engaged in studies, several learning English and accessing volunteering opportunities, substantial reduction in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidality, gradual increase in confidence and hope for the future; one secured a paid job). Notably, only one secured independent accommodation in Oxford. Inter-agency support has been crucial. A particularly strong partnership developed between three third sector organisations. This started after crisis intervention with a client and has further developed to provide coordination on access to education, housing, letters of support, shared risk assessments, transition after refugee status, and liaison prior to periods of staff absence. This provides an excellent model for a wrap-around support plan for each survivor of modern slavery with good coordination of services.

#### **Challenges for providing support:**

- There was a lack of suitable Albanian interpreters. One respondent commented on the need to ensure interpreters do not bring their personal opinions into the situation through the provision of relevant training.
- Making sure that the women engage with their GP and seek help with mental health problems as early as possible, so that solicitors can evidence any mental health problems at the appropriate point in their case. Engagement with the GP depends very much on the level

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.shpresaprogramme.com/>

of support from their support worker.

### 6.3.6. Albanian women who have been sex trafficked - Recommendations

- Continue inter-agency efforts to build intelligence about the situations in which these women are living and the risks of re-exploitation for them.
- Consider appropriate contextual safeguarding measures (e.g., a support worker visiting the women in the NRM in their homes if they are not living in Home Office accommodation).
- Address the housing needs of sex trafficked Albanian women and recognise their specific vulnerabilities when assessing mental health needs and risk assessing their safety.
- Develop inter-organisational wrap-around support for each woman, encompassing housing, engagement with GPs, mental health, education, training and employment, advice/advocacy, and social support.
- Address the availability of interpreters trained to work with victims of sex trafficking.
- Conduct further study into the issues related to Albanian women in Oxford reporting fleeing sex trafficking situations.

### 6.3.7. Women of Asian and African heritage held in Domestic Servitude

#### Prevalence and nature of exploitation in Oxford

This study found Domestic Servitude to be the least understood and known about form of modern slavery in Oxford, with the least resources dedicated to eradicating it and supporting survivors - Thames Valley Police recorded only 4 cases over the 3-year period 2016-2019. Yet there was concern that its invisibility - with victims often locked away behind the closed doors of a household - may be widespread. In addition, as is often the case with modern slaves, victims are often unaware that the conditions in which they live amount to the crime of slavery.

Of the 39 potential cases of Domestic Servitude identified in this study, 32 were women, 6 were men and 1 was of unknown gender.

For the females:

- most were either aged 18-30 (16 cases) or 31-50 years (10 cases), with 1 girl, and 2 cases over 50 years<sup>76</sup> (See Table 2).
- 16 of the women were of Asian heritage and 10 of African heritage.

#### The nature of Domestic Servitude

The Home Office typology of modern slavery distinguishes 3 categories of Domestic Servitude: exploited by partner; exploited by relatives; and exploiter not related to victims. Many examples of 'exploitation by partner' and 'exploiter not related to victim' were found in Oxford. There appeared to be few cases of 'exploitation by relatives', a type often involving child victims, and this is reflected in the fact that few child victims were identified. Examples of each of the types from the Oxford cases are given below.

Health staff talked about how often they see Domestic Servitude during home visiting in East Oxford, especially Blackbird Leys, given its ethnic diversity and with many families living in poor conditions. This reflects the indication - from the study's very limited quantitative data on location of exploitation within Oxford - that the OX4 postcode is an area of particular risk for modern slavery. A health worker said: "*Often they are women from Pakistan or Afghanistan, sometimes Europe. They*

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<sup>76</sup> 3 were of unknown age

*may have been trafficked. It's unclear if the relationship is consensual. There is often a man in control, often in charge of dealing with doctors. He may cancel her appointments. Then sometimes the woman disappears. What do we do?"*

Some of the women were subjected to domestic abuse, Sexual Exploitation or Forced Labour in addition to Domestic Servitude. Respondents said it was often hard to distinguish whether it was domestic abuse or Domestic Servitude.

### **i) Exploitation by a partner**

Many of the women of Asian heritage are in this category. Several cases cited the scenario of young wives living with their extended families, exploited by both husband and his family, as the following two cases illustrate. The first case was logged on a health service safeguarding database; the second was from a third sector support worker.

*A woman of Asian heritage was "imprisoned in her home in squalid conditions with her three malnourished children. All were viewed as house slaves". She had been brought to the UK to be a wife and servant. Her husband was arrested.*

*An Asian woman married and came to live with her in-laws in the UK. She was treated as a household slave, was beaten and slapped daily, and not allowed to leave the house for many years. She was controlled by physical violence, not being allowed to leave the house, or have access to the phone or contact with her family abroad. This woman was granted refugee status; it was not known whether any action was taken against her abusers who were her in-laws. Through access to practical advice, counselling, support from a women's group and a charity volunteering programme, she was able to regain confidence and self-esteem, build social connections and a sense of belonging, learn English, and develop employability skills.*

There were several cases of forced marriage. One organisation who reported two such cases said the means used to coerce the women into the relationship and control them in their home country were gifts to the family, promises of a good life in the UK, and threats of deportation once in the UK. What made them vulnerable to this form of slavery was poverty in their country of origin. This organisation added, *"Even if a woman is well educated, in some countries that does not mean work can be found. The hope in marriage also lies in gaining support for aging parents who will die without this."* Women living as domestic slaves in a marriage situation worked in at least one job with all the money going to the husband and his family. Impacts of Domestic Servitude were the women's loss of confidence and despair.

Forced Marriage is sometimes described as a form of cultural exploitation- victims are manipulated or coerced using religious, social, or cultural belief. Some regard this as a form of modern slavery.<sup>77</sup> Cases of polygamy involving forced marriage occurring in the Thames Valley have been reported where *"Only one of the marriages was registered in the UK and unregistered marriages took place and their wives are made to work for their in-laws. In many cases this would amount to modern slavery, and potentially also trafficking in the UK"*.<sup>78</sup> In 2019, of the nationalities being referred to

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<sup>77</sup> [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community\\_safety/1328/modern\\_slavery\\_and\\_exploitation](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community_safety/1328/modern_slavery_and_exploitation). Other examples of cultural exploitation are given as female genital mutilation (FGM) and radicalisation

<sup>78</sup> Poudyal, A. *Thames Valley BAMER Project*, October 2020, p46. The report also describes the complexity of how forced marriages often occur in the UK *"Women who are forced to marry have no agency to decide on what they would like to do with their lives. In some cases, traditions are more*

the UK's Forced Marriage Unit, 41% were linked to Pakistan and 11% to Bangladesh.<sup>79</sup> In this Oxford study, Pakistan was the predominant nationality connected to Domestic Servitude with 21% of the cases (8 women) being of Pakistani heritage. Further discussion is needed to explore how those working in the community can be supported to respond when this form of exploitation is identified.

## **ii) Exploitation by relatives**

In this type of Domestic Servitude, women are exploited by their own family members for whom they are forced to work. A third sector organisation described an example:

*A woman was brought to the UK from Africa by her extended family with the promise of a good life in the UK. She was vulnerable because she was poor. Indications of Domestic Servitude were that she talked of never going out alone, staying in the house all the time and doing all the housework. She had been in this situation for over 20 years and had no legal status. The client did not consent to being referred into the NRM because she was afraid of being deported. The main outcome of successful partnership work between three agencies was that the client secured indefinite leave to remain in the UK. The support worker reported that "she has lost decades of her life and now needs to learn to live independently".*

## **iii) Exploiter not related to victim**

The women who fell into this category - forced to undertake domestic chores for offenders not related to them, sometimes having been trafficked - were mostly amongst the 10 women of African heritage identified as being forced into Domestic Servitude.<sup>80</sup> Some young women had accepted offers of coming to the UK for a better life, education and/or accommodation, in exchange for childcare and domestic work, and then became trapped in exploitative situations. One arrived as a nanny, another as an au-pair. One was a destitute asylum-seeker who was taken in by a household that gave her shelter in exchange for cleaning and childcare work. Several organisations reported cases where people were offered accommodation in exchange for childcare, gardening, cleaning, or running errands. Questions were raised about what a reasonable exchange is, and when does this kind of arrangement become exploitation and modern slavery.

Some respondents pointed out that had the study extended beyond the city boundaries into the affluent and low-income areas of rural and farming communities of Oxfordshire, many more cases of domestic workers in servitude, both male and female, would have been found engaged in the maintenance of large properties (cleaners, gardeners, farm hands etc.), often in poor working conditions and living in substandard accommodation with young babies and children.<sup>81</sup>

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*strictly observed in the diaspora than they are in their countries of origin, and many forced marriages take place under the pretext of arranged marriage which is a cultural norm for many minority ethnic communities, the social and emotional duress to comply being interpreted as consent".*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

<sup>80</sup> It is not possible to give an exact number as the detail of what type of domestic servitude had occurred was not requested as part of the systematic quantitative data collected from all teams, but came to light during interviews about specific cases.

<sup>81</sup> No detailed interviews were carried out to explore this scenario - it was raised in two separate focus group meetings - but the indication was that poor working conditions included excessively long hours, poor accommodation, poor treatment, low pay.

## **The impact of Domestic Servitude on survivors**

Respondents reported the emotional impact of Domestic Servitude on survivors as fear, anxiety, sleep deprivation and depression, marital difficulties, loss of confidence and agency, and poor health outcomes. In addition, children and babies bear the brunt of their mother's servitude by being unwillingly neglected. There were several reports of Child Safeguarding being raised. Domestic Servitude often comes to light because of the condition of a baby. Having worked 18 hours a day through pregnancy and postnatally (cooking, cleaning, car washing), one woman was forced to work again so soon after a difficult birth that she suffered complications and had to be rushed back into hospital; eventually she followed a Domestic Abuse pathway out and escaped. Another woman was forced to work so hard in the family catering business straight after the birth that she had no time to visit her new-born baby in intensive care in hospital – initially it appeared to be an attachment issue but was then found to be caused by Domestic Servitude. Another woman was forced to work such long hours that she neglected her baby for hours at a time resulting in a failure to thrive.

Physical health disparities caused by domestic servitude due to delayed or non-attendance at routine health appointments, included low maternal BMI, babies and young children delayed or not taken to immunisations, dental caries, behaviour, and toileting challenges. Domestic servitude may be suspected where Community nursery nurses are unable to improve these and other health outcomes due to the mother not able to implement them including low access to age-appropriate toys, with children demonstrating delayed development even though previous children in the family had numerous interventions. Poor weaning routines and poor nutrition (e.g., drinking high volumes of milk, can result in the child not being interested in or offered food). Limited suitable clothing can impact on the child's development.

## **Challenges for survivors**

Barriers to women escaping these situations of servitude include lacking economic independence and having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) if on a spousal visa. NRPF means they cannot flee to a refuge, so their options are to go to the police or social services, or if there is a baby, a health visitor. If they manage to escape from home, they often return to an abusive husband for lack of any other options. They often speak little or no English, decline translators or a family member tries to translate and refuses the translator on the woman's behalf. Usually access to money is limited with no access to a bank account and the child benefit is being paid to the husband. Their passport or documents may be held by their husband or someone else. They may be caring for a baby, or other children unrelated to them. They are very often nervous to report their exploiter and go to a safe house because they may later have to return to their exploiter and end up worse off. If they manage to escape, they fear being found by their abusive relatives, and they may fear deportation. Concern was also expressed about the vulnerability to this kind of exploitation of those with learning disabilities.

There is often low engagement in the community, and a lack of support networks due to being isolated from family and friends. Victims fear disclosure due to not trusting agencies, understanding British processes or the law.

### 6.3.8. Domestic Servitude - Support available in Oxford

19 of the women were identified and had been supported by third sector organisations, and 15 women by the health service. However, there appears to be little coordinated inter-agency action to try to eradicate this type of slavery and support survivors. In response to its members raising this concern, the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network requested a visit from Kalayaan in 2019 (see next section) to provide expert advice on migrant domestic workers trapped in Domestic Servitude.

Frontline health practitioners reported regularly visiting mothers of young children who they suspected of living in Domestic Servitude amongst extended family. They struggled with identifying when a young woman's heavy burden of work and low status actually constituted Domestic Servitude and were often concerned but felt powerless to act. They lacked clarity about their role and responsibility in supporting these women and did not know where to seek advice on how to help. They struggled with how to support a victim who feels unable to disclose her exploitation. CCTV cameras in homes are not uncommon. This is an area that needs intervention and support.

For those adult survivors who are not parents and would not be picked up by health agencies, the psychological impacts of being enslaved may be identified by frontline practitioners such as adult mental health workers who can offer trauma-based support.

A checklist of indicators of possible Domestic Servitude would be very helpful and might include early neglect and low stimulation of a baby (developmental delay, fluctuating weight, flattening of the head [plagiocephaly], lack of attention seeking) despite a nurturing and protective mother, due to her being forced to work long hours away from the baby. If, despite evidence of this physical and emotional neglect, the mother is also missing health appointments, suspicion should be raised. Other indicators include evidence of some women undertaking many jobs within and outside the house, with no time and no money. One third sector organisation commented that a potential barrier to professionals recognising indicators may be accepting perceived cultural norms (e.g., not expecting women from certain cultures to leave the house). This can hide exploitative practices.

There are some inspiring success stories which need to be shared and learnt from. One health practitioner linked developmental delay and neglect in a baby to the mother's forced servitude. Allowed into the baby's bedroom, she found the baby in a crib below a CCTV camera which allowed the mother to monitor it from the kitchen where she worked (still in pain, having not fully recovered from an operation). Her husband was being forced by his family to make her work these long hours, and in a sense was a victim as well. Eventually the health worker persuaded him that change was needed to protect his baby, and he in turn persuaded the family to reduce the pressure on their daughter-in-law.

### Support at national level

The Modern Slavery Helpline was used in at least two cases.

Kalayaan<sup>82</sup> is a small London based charity working with migrant domestic workers in the UK to help them access their rights. One area of their work is to identify, support and advocate for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery trapped in Domestic Servitude and Forced Labour. They advise on immigration and employment rights, support access to health care, offer free English classes, and campaign on migrant domestic worker issues and rights with the UK government. They have produced a list of the signs of migrant domestic workers enslaved in Domestic Servitude. They

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<sup>82</sup> <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/victims-of-trafficking-and-modern-slavery/>

have First Responder status for making referrals into the NRM and supporting potential victims through the process.

**NRM:** migrant domestic workers found to have been subjected to Domestic Servitude and in receipt of a Conclusive Grounds Decision from the NRM have two options. They can apply for a Grant of Discretionary Leave to Remain for 1 year (extendable) if there are compelling personal circumstances (including pursuing a claim against traffickers). Or they can apply for an Overseas Domestic Worker visa for up to 2 years. In the case of a negative NRM decision, Kalayaan may offer support in requesting a review of the decision. However, sometimes potential victims distrust the NRM for fear of deportation as this case-study from a third sector organisation demonstrates:

*An African woman accepted the offer of marriage after being told promises of a better life in the UK and gifts offered to her family. Once in the UK, she found that the marriage was not a proper marriage and that she was being used to work in the house and bring in money. She was controlled in this situation by her legal husband by the threat of deportation. The client did not consent to a referral to the NRM but agreed to be referred for and to make contact herself with local support services. The barrier to getting help in this case was the client's lack of trust about whether if she sought help, she would ultimately be deported by the Home Office. The main outcome of the work with the support services was the client's recognition that she had choices.*

In some organisations dealing with Domestic Servitude there was little knowledge about the NRM, the *Duty to Notify*, the Modern Slavery helpline, or the specialist Willow service.

### 6.3.9. Domestic Servitude - Recommendations

OSCP to consider setting up a **working subgroup on Domestic Servitude**, as the type of modern slavery least known about in Oxford, in order to develop a strategy for tackling this issue in Oxford. The following remit is proposed:

- Deepen understanding of the nature and extent of this form of exploitation in Oxford, how to identify and support it, by sharing knowledge and experience across partner organisations, particularly focusing on community health practitioners and third sector organisations
- Set up a local specialised modern slavery consultation line for confidential discussions about Domestic Servitude cases to support frontline staff
- Develop a checklist to help professionals spot the signs of Domestic Servitude – separate ones may need to be developed for each profession (e.g., health worker, teacher, police officer) as each will have a different window into the problem
- Investigate other approaches for reaching women trapped in Domestic Servitude in order to share information on protection and support, for example through social media, on-line approaches or promoting hotlines, by drawing on the experience of the domestic abuse sector
- Identify how frontline staff can best support survivors (e.g., what to do if a suspected victim feels unable to disclose her exploitation). Develop case-studies of success stories. Clarify the role of professionals in supporting survivors, particularly midwives, health visitors, district nurses, social workers, and anyone with access to households. Emphasize that it is professional curiosity rather than expertise in modern slavery that is needed, watching for signs, alerting Safeguarding if needed, and not shying away from action for fear of causing cultural offence. Develop and deliver a bespoke training on Domestic Servitude for those likely to come across it often
- Better access to emergency refuges and shelters for women fleeing Domestic Servitude

- Identify steps to change community and cultural attitudes that condone Domestic Servitude in family contexts in specific communities, including working with community and religious leaders from Pakistani and other community groups, translated posters in places where survivors may have access (e.g., GP surgeries, baby and child health clinics, maternity wards, children, and family centres).
- Work in partnership between agencies as the needs of survivors of Domestic Servitude are complex and multi-faceted, and exploiters benefit from support organisations not sharing information on their victims
- Draw on national experts such as Kalayaan, and local domestic abuse experts, to support this work
- Build on the learning from the Thames Valley BAMER Project about how to support women from ethnic minority communities who are subjected to abuse or violence.<sup>83</sup>
- Build on work to train up FGM ambassadors to develop similar ambassadors for Domestic Servitude.

We suggest the working group includes: survivors of Domestic Servitude; professionals whose home-visiting role brings them into contact with survivors (e.g., community health staff and social workers); third sector organisations working with refugees, asylum-seekers, and vulnerable migrants; individuals identified by this research as having experience of and insight into the issues; the local authority domestic abuse leads; and domestic abuse service providers.

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<sup>83</sup> Poudyal, A. Thames Valley BAMER Project Final Report. October 2020 (BAMER denotes Black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee communities).

## 7. Prevention of slavery and Support to survivors

This section responds to Research Question 2: What are the challenges in supporting survivors, and what is needed to provide better support?

### 7.1. Local support services in Oxford

#### 7.1.1. Existing services and the pathways to support

Much of the initial support provided to survivors of modern slavery, and those at risk, is provided by the frontline teams in statutory services and by the caseworkers of third sector organisations. It is these organisations who are often the first to identify and make contact with people suspected of being, or at risk of being, exploited. Most of these services, and their teams, which play leading roles in combatting modern slavery in Oxford, engaged in some form with this research project.

##### Statutory services

- Oxford City Council: in particular, Accommodation and Sustainment, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, the Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness team, and Financial Services.
- Oxfordshire County Council: in particular, Adult Social Care and Safeguarding teams, Children and Families Service, Gypsy and Traveller Service, Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards.
- Oxford Health: in particular, Safeguarding teams, Children Services, Community Health Services, Mental Health Services, Community Learning Disability team.
- Oxford University Hospitals: in particular, Safeguarding teams, Emergency Department, Gynaecology, Sexual Health.
- G.P. practices.
- Thames Valley Police.

##### Third sector organisations

- Victims First: Willow Project which has now become the Thames Valley Partnership's Victims First Specialist Service (see next page).
- Migrant Help (NRM referrals, advice, advocacy, access to local services).
- Elmore Community Services (multiple and complex needs, mental health, domestic abuse).
- Turning Point (drug and alcohol treatment).
- Step Out Project Donnington Doorstep (child sexual exploitation).
- Citizens Advice Oxford (benefits advice, debt counselling, employment, housing etc.).
- The housing and homelessness organisations including St Mungo's Outreach Service, Homeless Oxfordshire, Connection Homeless Housing, Mayday Trust, GreenSquare Housing, Crisis Skylight Oxford, Catalyst Housing, Simon House.
- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (support workers, domestic abuse champions).
- Those supporting refugees, asylum-seekers, and vulnerable migrants (see below).

**Organisations supporting vulnerable migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees** and which are all engaged in supporting those who have been exploited as modern slaves include:

- Key2: supports unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Sanctuary Hosting: matches destitute asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants with people in the community with spare rooms where they can stay rent free for a period of time, and offers support and informal mentoring for practical issues.

- Refugee Resource: provides counselling and trauma therapy, mentoring, access to advice and advocacy including through Citizens Advice Oxford surgeries, women's group, and English language classes.
- Asylum Welcome: provides legal rights support, advice, practical support including accessing further education and volunteering opportunities, lunch club and youth club.
- Turpin and Miller solicitors: specialised in immigration, asylum and nationality law, and represent clients with asylum claims and appeals.
- British Red Cross: makes referrals to Asylum Welcome, Refugee Resource and Sanctuary Hosting so that it can support other areas in the Thames Valley where there is less resource. Provides hardship support to clients supported by these organisations, family reunification and case work.

## Pathways for support

These services, alongside those of many others, provide an essential range of local frontline services to support survivors of modern slavery, and protect those at risk of becoming enslaved.

**If there are concerns about modern slavery** and the person is thought to be at **immediate risk of harm**, organisations are advised to refer the client to the Thames Valley Police.

**If there are concerns about mental capacity, or care and support needs**, referrals are made to Oxfordshire County Council Adult and Children's Social Care teams for safeguarding support.

**If there is no immediate risk of harm**, organisations were, until April 2020, able to refer to the **Victims First: Willow Project** for an assessment of risk and need. Many respondents in this research had used this service. It ran from September 2018 to April 2020 as a Thames Valley-wide Exploitation and Complex Needs service commissioned by the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner. The setting up of this service followed the positive evaluation of a pilot project of Elmore's Independent Trauma Advisory service for modern slavery survivors. The Willow Project's remit was to identify and support victims, or possible victims, of exploitation, including those being held as modern slaves, providing prevention, crisis intervention and on-going long-term support. It supported children and adults and made referrals to the NRM. It provided advice to third sector organisations, took referrals from them, and delivered a strong programme of training to raise awareness of modern slavery. This research found that many respondent organisations had referred clients to the Willow Project and that there was widespread appreciation of both the support offered to victims of modern slavery and their families, and the training it delivered. Despite this, many respondents were not aware of this specialist service, particularly in the health service.

In May 2020 the service was re-commissioned by the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner as the **Victims First Specialist Service** working under the Thames Valley Partnership and in partnership with Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC) and Trust House Reading. The new service continues to provide specialist support to victims of exploitation and modern slavery but to adults only. The service helps those with longer term or more complex needs. Support is provided by exploitation specialists, independent sexual violence advisers and others. This support includes trauma-informed interventions in individual or group settings, advocacy support including help to access mental health or drug and alcohol services, restorative justice conferencing, practical and emotional support to navigate the criminal justice process, and help with housing, benefits, immigration status, education, and employment.

Children who are potential victims of modern slavery are, as of 2020, supported by the Oxfordshire County Council's Youth Justice & Exploitation Team, other teams such as the UASC team, and third sector organisations such as Donnington Doorstep's Step Out project (CSE); Safe! (young people

affected by crime); Key 2 (UASC); and Aquarius (support children and young people affected by substance misuse).

The other specialist modern slavery service operating in Oxford is **Migrant Help** which holds a subcontract with the Salvation Army to support adult clients in the south-east of England through the NRM process, provide advice and advocacy, and support access to local services. Unfortunately, their views are not represented here as they did not have the capacity to engage with the research.

In general, there was markedly low awareness of the existence of the specialist migrant support services across statutory organisations.

### Other support initiatives:

- **Faith-based work** to combat modern slavery includes the Clewer Initiative which supports the Church of England dioceses to identify modern slavery in their communities and support victims, provides training, and developed the Safer Car Wash app.<sup>84</sup> Anti-Slavery Initiative Oxford (ASIOX) is a small Christian community group supporting the ending of slavery and trafficking by raising awareness of the issues and hosting survivors.
- **Hotel Watch** is a partnership between hoteliers, police, and Oxford City Council to promote public safety and safeguard customers. It is supported by more than 80 hotels, guest houses, bed & breakfast and short let establishments. It aims to raise the awareness of staff on spotting the signs of exploitation, including child sexual exploitation and modern slavery, and the measures to take if they believe something suspicious is happening on their premises.

### 7.1.2. Issues, challenges, and recommendations in the provision of local support

This section looks at issues and challenges in the:

1. Prevention of modern slavery
2. Support to survivors
3. Operational inter-agency coordination

It addresses *all potential victims* of modern slavery *but with a particular focus on groups identified as at greatest risk* by this research. These groups are defined by social group, nationality, exploitation type, and location as follows.

#### Groups defined by social or immigration issues

- Young people in vulnerable circumstances<sup>85</sup> forced into criminality and sexual exploitation.
- Adults with multiple and complex needs including homelessness and rough sleeping, substance misuse and offending, significant mental ill-health, personality disorder, learning disability, autism, and those from complex or dysfunctional backgrounds.
- Foreign nationals including those trafficked from abroad, exploited as modern slaves abroad and/or the UK, or married into Domestic Servitude in the UK.

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/safe-car-wash-app>

<sup>85</sup> For example, social isolation, chaotic families, often single parent-families, exclusion from school, Pupil Referral Centres, those leaving care, homelessness, and rough sleeping, UASC and former UASC, those with adverse childhood experiences, and friendships with other children and young people being cuckooed into or involved in the County Lines drugs trade

## Nationality groups

- Albanian women and men, boys, and girls.
- Vietnamese community: mainly young men and boys, with some girls.
- Young men who have fled from the Horn of Africa.
- Young Pakistani women.
- Others from Eastern Europe, South, and SE Asia.

## Exploitation type:

- Domestic servitude (highlighted as least is known about this type of modern slavery in Oxford).

## Location:

- The very limited quantitative data collected on locations of modern slavery occurring within Oxford<sup>86</sup>, backed up by evidence from interviews, indicates that the OX4 area may have a higher percentage of modern slavery cases.

## (i) The prevention of modern slavery

Prevention work is about identifying and engaging groups and individuals at risk of modern slavery and reducing their vulnerability to prevent them falling into the hands of perpetrators. The key areas for action identified by this research were:

- Outreach through community engagement projects.
- Translation of printed and digital information.
- Education on modern slavery for children and young people.
- Engaging the public to spot the signs.

## Outreach through community engagement projects

The research did not identify examples of outreach work into high-risk communities that specifically target the prevention of modern slavery. The extension of this research to community level organisations and the City Council Communities Team would identify examples if they exist. Community engagement projects focussing on groups at particular risk, and which aim to identify and engage those most vulnerable to modern slavery, would be a key means of prevention.

These would aim to build awareness of the risks and threats of modern slavery, how to keep safe and protect oneself, and to raise awareness of where to get support and report concerns. For young people in particular they could provide diversionary interests and activities to help them escape grooming situations following the model of the Blueprint Project run by Safe!, Youth Ambition and others.<sup>87</sup> Ideally, projects would be developed alongside and co-produced with those with lived experience of different types of exploitation to ensure that they are better able to engage people at risk. Good examples of trainings were the trainers used in the gang awareness training in Oxford in

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<sup>86</sup> Of the 25 cases where location of exploitation in Oxford was provided, 18 cases (75%) were in OX4.

<sup>87</sup> The Blueprint Project is a preventative programme targeted at young men in Oxford who are facing increased risk of drug exploitation.

January 2020.<sup>88,89</sup> The focus would be on listening to the needs and concerns of those most vulnerable to exploitation, drawing on this information to continually review and update practice, building their awareness of risks, threats, and support services, and involving them in the development of prevention plans.

Projects would aim to build public awareness in these communities as to how to spot signs of modern slavery, and how and where to report concerns. They could focus on different faith groups, work with respected religious leaders, as well as engaging both trusted community leaders and others with leadership potential to help shape the projects. Some community level groups may not easily access information through statutory organisations (for example, refugee community groups and faith groups) and would benefit from this targeted approach. Use of properly screened interpreters would be needed with funding made available for its provision.

Potentially, the Oxford City Council Communities Team could be resourced to take on such a project using infrastructure such as the Community Partnership programmes already established in Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill, The Leys, Wood Farm, Cutteslowe and Northway. The Oxfordshire County Council's Family Solutions Team may also be well placed to support this.

## **Translation of printed and digital information**

57% of the potential modern slavery cases identified in this study (where nationality was known) were foreign nationals, so it is strongly suggested that translated printed and digital information on the signs of modern slavery, risks and threats, and support services (Modern Slavery Helpline, TVP, Victims First Specialist Service, NRM etc.) are made available. This would include the distribution of printed material in high-risk areas on an on-going basis. Given that 16% of the foreign national cases were Albanian and 6% were Vietnamese, these would be the priority languages for translation. A second tier of translation might include Urdu, Romanian and Arabic, according to prevalence levels found in this study. Although these language groups are not the most prevalent in Oxford, the fact that these communities appear to be at highest risk may warrant investment. Expertise will need to be sought to identify the most effective approaches of distributing such translated material to targeted groups and advising them on how to store it without exploiters being alerted to its existence. Some translated material already exists at national level. Another approach is to add key points on modern slavery to existing translated printed or digital material which is being regularly accessed (e.g., health information, youth activities).

## **Education about modern slavery with children and young people**

This was identified as potentially one of the most effective strategies for reducing vulnerability to slavery in children as they get older. In particular, children who are very vulnerable, and will be vulnerable in the future, such as those leaving the care system. One frontline worker asked: "*Do children realise that when they're given a cigarette it may be laced with heroin*"? Preventative work that is adequately funded is felt to be crucial, for initiatives from awareness-raising to youth programmes. The reduction of funding for youth clubs and other youth initiatives in recent years is believed to have negatively impacted on this work to protect children and young people. There was also a call for training and support for the parents and carers of young people about how to identify

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<sup>88</sup> <https://www.connectfutures.org/training-courses/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://training.oscb.org.uk/event-detail/%3D%3DQNwgzN/Gang-awareness-and-County-Lines-Tackling-Child-Criminal-Exploitation>

signs of modern slavery and who to contact if there is a concern about a young person. Although the school system was not addressed directly in this research (for lack of time and capacity), a very good example was cited of awareness-raising work undertaken by TVP officers in one secondary school on issues such as drugs exploitation. Such initiatives would do well to extend to all areas of modern slavery.

## **Engaging the public to spot the signs**

Various campaigns call on the support of the public to spot suspicious signs of modern slavery and report them as this can help the police and others to disrupt perpetrators, support survivors and keep communities safe. Recent public campaigns led by Thames Valley Police, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, and others, particularly around Anti-Slavery Day on October 18th have been innovative in attempting to raise awareness and engage the public in a call to action to look out for and report signs of modern slavery. Despite this, one respondent noted that the level of public awareness-raising on modern slavery was low when compared with that on Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) due to a high level of public focus on these in recent years. It is proposed that the findings from this study on risks and vulnerabilities, and success stories for supporting survivors, are incorporated into these on-going and annual public campaigns. There were also calls from some respondents for more effective use of social media to spread awareness about modern slavery.

## **(ii) Support to survivors**

**The challenge of identifying modern slavery.** Many respondents spoke of how hard it often is to identify if modern slavery is happening or not. Cases are often complex. Sometimes there is no evidence of coercion or threat, and the client denies there has been any, but the support worker remains concerned that their client is under duress or threat not to speak out. Clients are frequently reluctant to accept support and engage with services. For example, a client who may have been subjected to forced labour said he was paid £100 per day but his worker said:

*“We could not assess whether he wasn’t able to say anything, or whether there were just no threats or coercion involved. We really don’t know what he’s involved with and whether it’s possibly modern slavery. It may be something or it may be nothing. He wouldn’t consent to the NRM, so we did an MSI. The Safeguarding team had previous involvement with him, but he refuses to engage. He didn’t engage, so therefore it was very difficult to identify if it was modern slavery, or to work out where to go next, what the next steps are”.*

Several such examples were cited. Safeguarding and other organisations keep trying to engage with these clients. One support worker said, “*we just hope that one day they will be ready to engage*”. A further challenge felt by one social worker was that the types and locations of exploitation are constantly changing so it is hard to keep up. There was a call from frontline workers in different sectors for training on what to do when there is a concern about exploitation and yet the client does not wish, or is not able, to disclose.

**Safe short-term and long-term housing solutions.** Concern was frequently mentioned about the risk of survivors who have escaped their perpetrators being re-trafficked. One of the major problems cited was lack of safe and appropriate housing for survivors, both emergency/short-term and long-term local solutions. The extensive efforts of those involved in the homelessness and housing sector to prevent homelessness and support rough sleepers from sleeping on the streets through the

homeless pathway<sup>90</sup> does not always reach those at risk of modern slavery. The needs of the following groups were highlighted:

- **Women with complex needs fleeing violence** who need more refuges or secure supported accommodation.
- **Asylum-seeker and migrants:** Support organisations reported that some clients do not want to go to the safe houses outside Oxford and lose support networks they may have in Oxford. Yet there were concerns about their reliance on informal hosting settings which may or may not be safe, and reliance on accommodation with supportive hosts, but cannot offer stability or permanence as guests often move between hosts every few weeks/months.
- **British survivors of modern slavery:** Concerns have been raised nationally by survivors and service providers that the NRM does not sufficiently consider the needs of British survivors of modern slavery in considering safe houses or in moving them far enough away from locations where they were trafficked. In some cases, individuals have been recognised by traffickers. Systems are in place for domestic abuse but not for victims of trafficking. It would be beneficial to explore to what extent these national experiences are reflected in Oxford where relocation is involved.
- **Children:** Two Respondents from child support teams noted a pressing concern for the Housing Department providers to look into alternative housing for children being exploited, or at risk of being exploited, for whom the safest option may be moving the whole family, perhaps out of area. This enables the child to remain in what is usually the safest place - with their family - and would help to protect younger siblings who may be threatened. This requires cross-county Local Authority cooperation between housing departments.

**Safe interpreting services:** Based on experiences in London, concerns were expressed about the safety of using interpreters and whether traffickers might infiltrate into interpreter roles, with interpreters being recruited by traffickers in order to help re-traffic the victims. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's advice on this needs to be widely disseminated across organisations employing interpreters, and frontline staff trained in how to spot the signs of suspicious activity involving interpreters and clients.<sup>91</sup>

**Referral pathways:** At the time most data were collected for this study, no referral pathway had been published and there was a definite perceived gap. Part way through the research, in July 2019, the *Thames Valley Modern Slavery Adult Referral Pathway* was published<sup>92</sup> which will help to meet this need and would benefit from being widely publicised and disseminated. A recent online conference<sup>93</sup> on the experience of British survivors through the NRM system also identified the importance of a strong focus on pathways including (i) better understanding of needs and risk assessment which is often undertaken in a generic way (e.g., as survivors of trafficking) rather than what makes someone uniquely at risk or their individual needs, and (ii) shared risk assessments.

**Long-term engagement:** Short-term client support with high thresholds for intervention, and projects with short-term funding, rarely work for those who are very vulnerable, with long-standing complex needs and mental health issues, and who may keep returning to the same situation where they will be re-exploited. This was strongly voiced by those working in the homelessness sector: *"Many are complex cases who go in and out of homeless pathways, short and then long-term*

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<sup>90</sup>[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20019/homelessness/1242/what\\_we\\_do\\_to\\_tackle\\_homelessness/5](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20019/homelessness/1242/what_we_do_to_tackle_homelessness/5). Accessed 29.01.21

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.oscb.org.uk/recruitment-of-interpreters-for-the-purpose-of-re-trafficking-victims/>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1406/thames-valley-adult-modern-slavery-referral-pathway-july-2019.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> Online forum: 'The Voice of British Survivors of Human Trafficking', 2021

*accommodation, sometimes rough sleeping. A majority of possible modern slavery cases have been chronic returners for a good few years.*" Many survivors of modern slavery, and those at risk, may need services which offer long-term engagement and sustained relationships with dedicated 1:1 support work, where trust can be built over time. This applies particularly, but not exclusively, to young people. It was noted by some respondents that provision of long-term support to clients with complex needs is mainly provided by third sector organisations, as most statutory support is shorter-term work to assess and reduce risk, and that it would be beneficial for the Local Authority to consider developing longer-term well-funded integrated services. Three teams providing child support mentioned that one of the great strengths of being able to refer children to the Willow Project (until 2020) alongside the NRM was that they were able to work with the young person over the longer-term and thereby build up the necessary trust for the person to gradually begin talking to them.

**Mental health support:** Organisations supporting asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants voiced both the need for a high level of mental health support for survivors, and the challenge of doing so given the unwillingness of many clients to engage in mental health support and cultural stigma around experiencing mental health problems. Some of the challenges that need recognising are the impact that clients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression have on frontline third sector staff, and on hosts who are providing accommodation in the community; on-going safety concerns of guests and their hosts of being found by traffickers; and threats and fears of threats to relatives back home. There is also fear of engaging with the police, though where survivors have met with police through referral from trusted professionals, this can be reassuring and strengthen their sense of safety. Embedding or widening access to mental health workers in local authority housing teams may be a route forward.

**Supporting clients with learning disabilities** poses a particular challenge. Respondents reported that, often, they are competent to make decisions for themselves but do not fully understand what is happening to them, and keep putting themselves at risk (e.g., not wanting to move to safer housing in unfamiliar areas).

### **(iii) Operational inter-agency coordination**

Despite many support workers recounting responses to *individual victims* of modern slavery where inter-agency coordination had worked very well, there was also a concern that Oxford lacks an operational forum to share intelligence and coordinate response to *all adults* affected by *all types* of modern slavery. A housing officer, echoed by a service manager in the statutory sector, said:

*"There is no forum or way of agencies working properly together. There are lots of brilliant services, but support workers are run ragged trying to put support packages together. No proper resources, short-term funding, everything gets siloed and fragmented. A coordinated way of agencies working effectively together would really help."*

Clear and common protocols and pathways between agencies for referrals, reporting and support (including NRM referrals) are needed, and a single point of contact to 'hold the case' for each individual. Frustration was also voiced, particularly by third sector organisations, about restrictions on information-sharing about clients, especially between third sector and statutory agencies, which perpetrators stand to benefit from.

The partnership structure on modern slavery in Oxfordshire has developed enormously since 2018: the Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership has developed an overall strategy and delivery plan for tackling modern slavery across the county, and the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network provides an

information-sharing network for third sector and statutory organisations. Some organisations feed intelligence into the Thames Valley Police, and, in turn, TVP provides quarterly updates to the various partnerships on overall numbers of victims identified, referred to the NRM or reported under the *Duty to Notify*. However, there is no forum for all agencies to feed intelligence into the system in a coordinated on-going way, nor to plan coordinated inter-agency response to individual adults subjected to, or at risk of, modern slavery. There are a number of operational groups and meetings in place. For example, MADE (drugs exploitation), SWIP (sexual exploitation), and CACHE (cuckooing and criminal homelessness exploitation). However, there is a concern that each of these focus on individual exploitation issues leading to a siloed approach to modern slavery, and that this does not cover the full range of types of exploitation including Forced Labour, Domestic Servitude, Forced Criminality, Sexual Exploitation, Organ Harvesting and the related issues of Forced Sham Marriages and financial fraud.

There are a few good regional examples of strategic and operational partnerships working together in an overarching response to tackle modern slavery and exploitation. One such example is the Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) in the West Midlands, which works closely with the Sandwell Anti-slavery Strategic Partnership. The partnership focuses on protecting victims, prosecuting offenders, and disrupting locations. Working with a multi-agency approach, intelligence is gathered into one central point and quickly shared. All operational activity, both proactive and reactive, is coordinated centrally, with effective models in place to deal with all forms of slavery, and all action is directed by a virtual group. The focus is on partner agencies working together with common aims and promoting constant multi-disciplinary interactions that enhance information and communication flow.

In Oxfordshire there is a similar approach for supporting children. The OSCB Child Exploitation Subgroup oversees the multi-agency partnership response to CSE, CDE, CCE and Child Slavery and has two operational forums, the Children at Risk of Exploitation Network, and the Children's Missing or Exploited Panel. However, at this time, Oxfordshire does not have a similar structure for adults. The Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) enables the early identification of risks for children and vulnerable adults so that coordinated inter-agency response can be planned, but the information sharing, and referral pathways appear to be better established for children. There was a view – expressed by respondents from both statutory and third sectors, including housing – that support for adults was lagging some way behind support for children in this regard, and needs strengthening.

We recommend the setting up of an Oxford, or Oxfordshire, multi-agency operational partnership to share intelligence and coordinate inter-agency response to all adult victims of modern slavery, and those at risk. The Sandwell SHOP model is a good example of working practices that could be emulated in Oxford/Oxfordshire.

Within this overall structure we recommend that smaller response teams are convened to provide multi-agency coordinated support at an operational level for individual adult survivors of modern slavery using a model of wrap-around care which is being successfully established in Oxford to support the often-complex needs of survivors of modern slavery. These would build on the existing informal contacts which often exist between organisations supporting clients with complex needs. They would aim for better coordination of services, information-sharing (with client consent), longer-term planning including housing solutions, more sustained support for complex cases, and involvement of the survivor in the creation of any plans. These would need to encompass provision for mental health, engagement with GPs, education and training, advice, advocacy, and social support. This model builds on the work being established between three third sector organisations to

support refugees, asylum-seekers, and vulnerable migrants. It could be built on and further developed with consideration of bringing statutory organisations into such partnerships. See Appendix 7 for details of how the model has worked in practice.

## 7.2. National level Support

### 7.2.1. National Referral Mechanism

35% of potential modern slavery cases identified in this study (154) were referred into the NRM.

137 of these were deemed ‘very likely’ cases of modern slavery, and 14 ‘possible’ cases. This would seem a reasonably expected ratio.

**Nationality of referrals:** Of the 150 people of known nationality referred to the NRM, one third were British.

- 57 were British (38%).
- 93 were foreign nationals (62%).

**Age of potential victims referred:** Of the 105 cases referred by TVP to the NRM, 39 (37%) were minors.

**Source of referrals:**

- 105 of the referrals into the NRM were made by Thames Valley Police.
- 52 cases<sup>94</sup> were referred by a non-TVP source. The respondents who provided this information were:
  - 20 from Oxfordshire County Council
  - 4 from Oxford City Council
  - 24 from third sector organisations
  - 4 from the NHS Foundation Trusts.

However, not all of these would have actually made the referrals themselves. Neither third sector organisations, other than the Victims First Willow Project (VFSS), nor the NHS Foundation Trusts, have First Responder status and therefore cannot make referrals themselves. They would have to refer to a First Responder such as Local Authority, Police or Migrant Help to do this. On the other hand, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are First Responders and can refer into the NRM directly.

**Those not referred to the NRM:**

With 286 cases in the whole dataset assessed as ‘very likely’ victims of modern slavery, one might have expected a greater number of referrals into the NRM. Reasons given for not referring a potential victim to the NRM were very long waiting times for decisions (could be 1-2 years) and lack of protection while waiting; agencies not knowing about the NRM, or not being sure enough of their modern slavery concern (“Is cuckooing modern slavery?” “Does being at risk count?” “We don’t know if there was threat, force, or coercion”); the potential victim not regarding themselves as a victim or at risk, not wanting to move away from support networks in Oxford, not wanting the support, or fearing intrusive questions;<sup>95</sup> uncertainty about the benefits of referral to the NRM, especially if a negative decision could be detrimental to an asylum claim. There were some reports of

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<sup>94</sup> 3 cases were common to both TVP and other referrals

<sup>95</sup> One woman who had been sexually exploited refused a referral to the NRM and a safe house. This happened at the point when she learnt what questions she would be asked as part of the referral process as she wanted to put the past behind her.

unaccompanied asylum-seeking children not being well supported by the NRM, and concerns that the NRM process sometimes delayed asylum decisions.

#### **NRM decisions for cases referred by TVP:**

The data from TVP was the only comprehensive set of data we received on NRM referrals and MS1 submissions to the Home Office, including how many received Reasonable Grounds decisions. Very limited information on Conclusive Grounds decisions was received. This was because many respondents for other organisations who were not First Responders did not have this data. For this reason, only TVP data is broken down here by NRM decision.

#### **For those where the outcome of the Reasonable Grounds Decision (RGD) was known:**

- 81 referrals from TVP received a positive decision. This included all the 19 Albanians who were referred.
- 8 received a negative decision. Most were foreign nationals: 4 Vietnamese, 1 Iranian and 1 Somali, with only 2 British.
- 11 cases were pending a decision.

#### **The implications of the above for the number of potential cases of modern slavery identified by TVP and logged in this study are as follows:**

- The 8 cases which received a negative RGD were categorised in this data set as ‘very likely’ because all TVP cases referred to the NRM were logged as such, but arguably could have been removed from the data set, thus reducing the overall numbers of potential cases identified in the study by 8.
- The 81 cases which received a positive *Reasonable Grounds* Decision, will not all have gone on to receive a positive *Conclusive Grounds* Decision and be confirmed as cases of modern slavery. However, data from national referrals to the NRM suggests that the majority do go on to receive a positive CGD.<sup>96</sup>
- The numbers of positive RGDs are also likely to over-inflate the actual number of confirmed cases of modern slavery to some extent as it is known from interviews that at least some of those who received positive decisions from the NRM were proven by subsequent police investigations not to be victims of modern slavery, and yet their status as NRM referral was retained on the TVP system.

**Impact of the NRM process and decisions on the victim’s life** was very hard to ascertain through this research as few respondents had access to this information. Sometimes frontline support workers did not even know if their clients had been referred into the NRM by another organisation. Tracking down this outcome data was beyond the scope of this research project: it could be a subject for further research as many agencies collect outcome data for clients while they remain in the service, but it would be a time-consuming exercise.

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<sup>96</sup> Of referrals to the NRM in 2018 who received a positive RGD, by July 2019 30% had received a positive CGD, 8% had received a negative CGD, 56% still had pending cases, and 6% were suspended or withdrawn. These figures suggest that the vast majority go on to receive a positive CGD (almost 4 times as many as negative decisions), although this is only an estimate as the number of pending cases awaiting a decision is so high. Source: Home Office. *2019 Annual report of modern slavery*, October 2019.

**Other issues raised about the NRM:** A recent on-line forum<sup>97</sup> to discuss British survivors of human trafficking in the NRM raised the following challenges:

- While a huge amount of work has been undertaken to improve professional understanding of the NRM, more needs to be done to help staff work out what interventions to put in place for survivors. Work needs to be undertaken to share successful interventions across organisations.
- There is still a perception that survivors of trafficking have been trafficked from abroad and not locally. As British survivors speak English well and can access services perhaps more easily, their voices and their needs tend to get overlooked. For example, the need for access to safe houses is not always recognised.
- The needs of people in the NRM tend to be very often analysed in relation to trafficking, while their longer-term issues are often not addressed including understanding what longer term recovery looks like and how support systems can be shaped to address that.

### **7.2.2. *Duty to Notify* reports to the Home Office (MS1 form)**

MS1 forms were submitted to the Home Office under the *Duty to Notify* for only 5% of potential cases in this study (24). 19 of these were ‘very likely’ cases of modern slavery and 5 considered to be ‘possible’ cases.

Almost all of these (18 cases) were reported by TVP. 2 cases were reported by Oxford City Council, and 4 cases by Oxfordshire County Council. Respondents in the NHS Foundation Trusts and third sector organisations were not aware of MS1 forms having been submitted for any of their suspected cases.

Of the cases reported by TVP, 13 were British, with 5 from non-British nationalities.

There was very little knowledge about the *Duty to Notify*, particularly amongst much of the third sector and across NHS staff. However, this is perhaps not surprising as the NHS and most voluntary organisations are not bound by this duty but are rather encouraged to make voluntary notifications. Some respondents reported little motivation to report cases as their client stood to gain nothing from the process. Awareness-raising on the rationale for reporting would be important.

Interestingly there were 9 cases of ‘very likely’ modern slavery in the whole data set where there was no NRM referral and no MS1 reports submitted. Possible explanations for why these cases were not referred or reported raises some of the wider challenges in this area:

- the ‘very likely’ appraisals were made early on in contact with clients, and concerns were allayed as the relationship developed.
- the foreign nationals may have had immigration or related concerns about entering the NRM (7 of the cases were from Libya, Romania, Myanmar, Pakistan, Nigeria, Yemen, and Zimbabwe), although in this case MS1 forms should have been submitted.
- it may reflect a lack of awareness about the role and process of NRM referrals and MS1 reports on the part of service providers.

### **7.2.3. National third sector organisations**

There was a fairly widespread knowledge about the Modern Slavery Helpline and take up of the support and advice that it offers. Some used The Salvation Army Helpline as a first port of call if

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<sup>97</sup> Online forum: ‘The Voice of British Survivors of Human Trafficking – the challenges faced before, during and after the NRM’, 25th January 2021

concerned, and it was reported that the Salvation Army had taken a small number of referrals from Oxford prior to subcontracting its service out to Migrant Help. There was only very occasional mention of contact being made with the other lead national organisations offering support on modern slavery such as Kalayaan. Some specialists in modern slavery, including from TVP and the Willow Project, attended the national Human Trafficking Foundation meetings which focus on providing a collective voice for shaping policy on human trafficking.

## 8. Organisational awareness and practice

This section responds to Research Question 3: How much understanding is there amongst organisations and services of how to identify, report, refer and support survivors? What are the challenges, and what are the support needs?

### 8.1. Understanding the nature of modern slavery

Specialist teams focusing on exploitation and modern slavery had a strong body of knowledge on what modern slavery is, and how to identify, report, refer and support victims. Non-specialist teams and organisations often had minimal understanding of modern slavery and generally felt the need for more training and, in particular, clarity about their roles in relation to identification and support. Feedback was received from several organisations that this research project increased their awareness of modern slavery, facilitated access to training, and encouraged better documentation of potential cases.

In terms of child exploitation, issues with high public profile such as County Lines were increasingly understood as modern slavery, whereas other issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation were not always seen as modern slavery. Despite this, Children's Services reported that there was now a much clearer understanding amongst service providers of child exploitation and how its different forms overlap and co-exist, including a better understanding of the escalating risks to young people from exploitation. One challenge noted was the widespread assumption that trafficked children needing NRM support are asylum-seekers from abroad. As an example, after Operation Bullfinch<sup>98</sup> none of the children from the UK were referred to the NRM, only asylum-seeking children. Trafficking for CSE is often understood as just international. Efforts are being made to dispel this myth through the Oxfordshire County Council's CSE training which emphasises that it also occurs within the UK and often between one road and the next.

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<sup>98</sup> Operation Bullfinch was the investigation into suspected organised sexual offences against teenage girls in Oxfordshire during 2004-2012 resulting in convictions for rape, trafficking and arranging or facilitating prostitution.

## 8.2. Identifying modern slavery

Although some good checklists for spotting the signs of modern slavery are available<sup>99</sup>, there was scant use of these. Suspensions were not always acted on for lack of knowledge or confidence, including uncertainty as to whether the person was a victim or perpetrator, or perhaps both, and whether they were coerced/threatened into a situation or exercised free will, particularly if the victim was reluctant to disclose information. There was sometimes a lack of certainty about one's responsibility to act. Some would like to have seen greater professional curiosity from colleagues. Consultation helplines staffed by specialists in some organisations, such as Oxford Health, work well and were called for more widely. There were some innovative ideas for developing checklists of signs relevant to different professional roles. For example, one health visitor found that lack of development in an otherwise healthy baby with a caring attentive mother could signal Domestic Servitude, with the mother having to work extensive hours while leaving the baby alone and unstimulated. It was noted by one third sector staff member that the hardest to reach survivors of modern slavery are the ones not being identified, and that training can start the process of raising awareness and what to look for so that, with experience, patterns can start to be identified.

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<sup>99</sup> <https://nbcc.police.uk/news/there-is-no-one-type-of-modern-slavery>

### 8.3. Systems for recording potential cases of modern slavery

Some organisations systematically record cases, others not. Several were beginning to tag cases as ‘modern slavery’ on databases. Lack of agreement about what constitutes modern slavery and how it overlaps with other forms of exploitation was a challenge (e.g., when is CSE and CDE modern slavery? Is cuckooing modern slavery? Is forced marriage modern slavery?). The facts of a case emerge over time so modern slavery may not appear in initial assessment notes - which tend to be used in data searches - or, conversely, early suspicions of modern slavery may appear in assessment notes but later be disproven but remain on the client’s record and be counted amongst potential modern slavery cases erroneously.

## 8.4. Reporting, referring, and supporting victims

While there were staff in most organisations with some knowledge about services available to support potential victims of modern slavery, this knowledge often did not seem to be widely shared. Concerns would often be referred to Adult and Child Safeguarding teams, but there was markedly little awareness about the NRM system, the Modern Slavery Helpline, the *Duty to Notify* the Home Office, and the local specialist modern slavery support available.

One specialist team noted that the awareness of non-specialist teams about procedures for reporting and referring potential cases of modern slavery is lagging well behind those for Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation which have received profile and publicity recently.

It was also noted by several organisations that greater expertise is needed in approaches that would help clients to disclose if they were involved in modern slavery (e.g., lines of questioning and checklists).

## 8.5. Building staff capacity

A significant number of organisations had received a half day training from the Willow Project which was widely appreciated. Oxford University Hospitals had rolled out an e-learning training to 86% of their staff.<sup>100</sup> The Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board had offered an on-line modern slavery training since October 2019.<sup>101</sup> Some Oxford City Council staff had attended internal awareness-raising sessions. Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network has produced a detailed training slideshow. At least two third sector organisations had received training in modern slavery and gang awareness.<sup>102</sup>

National resources: Nottingham University Rights Lab's Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit has a wealth of resources and training materials.<sup>103</sup> A number of powerful trainings using role plays and drama are emerging including a County Lines awareness-raising session delivered in 2019 by the educational theatre company Alter Ego Creative Solutions<sup>104</sup> for NHS England staff in Oxford, and Justice in Motion's theatrical performance about modern slavery in the construction industry.<sup>105</sup>

Staff will ideally be trained on a rolling basis to keep up with changes in the nature of modern slavery and support systems, and because of staff turnover. Safeguarding trainings need to be refreshed regularly so updates on modern slavery can be included. Trainings will best have a strong focus on practical scenarios of different types of exploitation and how to react to them. A number of case-studies illustrating the experience of modern slavery could be developed from this research which could then be used for training. There were calls for lists of FAQs and practical 'how to' documents. Some organisations (e.g., Oxford City Council) have a formal SPOC (Single Point of Contact) for modern slavery – a staff member with a central coordination and information role. Others may find this helpful. In addition, there was a call for a system of Modern Slavery Champions across organisations to educate, support and advocate on the issue, similar to the domestic abuse champion model.

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<sup>100</sup> By October 2019, 8,630 of their 9,680 staff had completed this training which was well received although they felt there was more to be done to fully equip their frontline clinicians.

<sup>101</sup> <https://booking.osab.co.uk/elearning-detail/%3D%3DgN3QzN/Modern-Slavery>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.connectfutures.org/training-courses/>

<sup>103</sup> <https://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk/uk-training-library/>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.alteregocreativesolutions.co.uk/about-us/>

<sup>105</sup> <https://justiceinmotion.co.uk/>

## 8.6. Leadership

A Roundtable on modern slavery, co-hosted by Elmore Community Services and Oxford City Council on behalf of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network in 2019, brought together leaders from across the statutory and third sectors. It aimed to identify how awareness on modern slavery could be raised, barriers to identification highlighted, and support for victims improved.

## 8.7. Organisational awareness and practice - Recommendations

**Promote leadership on modern slavery across the partnership by:**

- Creating spaces for leaders of organisations from across the statutory, third and private sectors to come together to discuss and strategize on how to create a step change in tackling modern slavery across the city by promoting change both within their own organisations and as a city-wide partnership. This would build on the leadership and infrastructure already offered by OSCP and OMSP, and on initiatives such as the Modern Slavery Roundtable for leaders convened by OASN in 2019. A Modern Slavery summit is set to take place in February 2022, convening leaders, to review this report and its recommendations.
- Supporting leaders of individual organisations to ensure they have in place the policies, strategies, human and financial resources, technical systems, staff capacity, roles and responsibilities, and organisational culture to ensure that tackling modern slavery is part of the core business of their organisation
- Setting up a Modern Slavery Champions network – similarly to the Domestic Abuse Champions - with individuals across organisations working together to motivate and support staff, advocate internally on the issue, and network across organisations.

**Create a Local Information Hub on modern slavery** in order to resource the understanding of staff in statutory, third sector and private sector organisations of how to identify and respond to modern slavery. This would draw on the expertise of the many national level policy-practice modern slavery networks, as well as local knowledge and resources. Its role would be to:

- Collate existing resources on how to identify and respond to modern slavery, including examples of best practice, and keep this updated on a rolling basis. This should include practical 'how to' and 'what works' guidance documents
- Share these widely amongst statutory, third sector and private sector organisations
- Create a system for capturing and sharing learning between organisations on what works to prevent and respond to modern slavery, including case-studies and examples of what has worked successfully
- Share information on the different training initiatives being used across the city
- This would require dedicated human and financial resources for coordination

**Continue to ensure effective training provision on modern slavery is available** in order to resource partners in the city such as that currently provided for the whole of the Thames Valley by The Victims First Specialist and the Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB).

- The half day training offered by the Willow Project (now the Victims First Specialist Service) was universally well-received and appreciated. It is strongly recommended that this be continued and extended to reach new audiences including, potentially, the health sector.
- Many training materials already exist. There is no need for further creation of materials. What is needed is engaging staff to attend training sessions, or on-line training, with opportunities to review with colleagues and managers what they have learnt
- Buy in initiatives pioneering creative theatrical performances to raise awareness about modern slavery which have proved very effective.
- Consider how tailored training could be delivered to individual organisations to meet the needs of their different client groups. The Willow Project and the TVP Anti-slavery Coordinator had successfully done so with some third sector organisations.

#### Joint technical work on systems and tools:

- **Develop sector-specific checklists** for identifying signs of modern slavery, but only where there is a felt need (e.g., Domestic Servitude), as many general checklists already exist. Promote the use of such checklists by all frontline staff – almost no respondents in this survey used such checklists.

## 9. Wider issues

Two issues currently the subject of debate amongst academics and practitioners involved in work on modern slavery are the prevention of the root causes of modern slavery and taking a public health approach to tackling modern slavery. They are both relevant to the broader context in which this research project has been conducted.

### 9.1. Prevention of the root causes of modern slavery

There is a current debate led by academics and developing world activists that, whilst absolutely recognising the suffering of those who are exploited, questions the use of the term ‘modern slavery’, and considers it important to look at and address the underlying causes of exploitation. They consider the term ‘*modern slavery*’ does not take into account the agency that people have to seek ‘freedom’ from intolerable conditions, oppression, or poverty at home, and who may well not define themselves as slaves. They draw interesting parallels with slaves escaping from plantations as described by O’Connell Davidson (2018):

*“One thing is for certain. If good white citizens of American whaling ports concerned about the appalling working conditions aboard whalers in the 1850s had somehow managed to develop a “Safe Whaler App” and reported John Thompson [an escaped slave] as a “potential victim of modern slavery”, he would not have been grateful. This is because, subject as they were to the Fugitive Slave Act 1850, the authorities would simply have deported him back South to his owner. Are things much different for hand car wash workers in the UK today?”<sup>106</sup>*

These academics and activists feel the current main focus on ‘*catching the criminals, disrupting their activities, and rescuing the victims*’ ignores the real social, economic and trade issues that underlie and are causing the exploitation, and indeed avoids and detracts from focusing on and dealing with the underlying structural and global inequality issues, and the burgeoning multi-million-dollar industry that modern slavery has become. The current modern slavery discourse fails to challenge the structural inequalities that restrict rights and freedoms and lead to the conditions where people can be exploited.<sup>107</sup>

Research presented at Oxford Brookes University in March 2019 comes to similar conclusions: that the modern slavery agenda is too narrowly conceived, and may be a distraction from a myriad of complex and difficult issues relating to migration, exploitation, labour markets and North-South relations; that the idea of clear distinctions between ‘freedom vs slavery’ and ‘voluntary vs forced migration’ are fallacies; and to help victims of exploitation we need to better understand their broader experience: conditions of origin, everyday life, migratory aspirations and their subjectivity.<sup>108</sup> According to Barber (2020), *“We need to be very cautious about focusing on smuggling rings and the criminal networks. We need to think about global wealth disparities and the lack of open borders and possibility for economic mobility around the world which is what is needed when you have countries*

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<sup>106</sup> O’Connell Davidson, J. Why marronage, not slavery? The case of UK hand car washes, 2018., <https://mmpf.wordpress.com/2018/11/28/why-marronage-not-slavery-the-case-of-uk-hand-car-washes/>

<sup>107</sup> Personal communication with Dr Angelo Martins, Junior Research Associate, School of Sociology, Politics & International Studies (SPAIS), University of Bristol,

<sup>108</sup> Barber, T., Nguyen, P, and Vuong, T. *Vietnamese ‘modern slaves’? agency & precarity in nail bars, cannabis farms and the UK immigration system.*

*like Vietnam who are developing nations.... They're coming (to the UK) to work hard. They don't see themselves as being exploited.*"<sup>109</sup>

Whilst disrupting criminal activity and increasing identification of and support for victims is vital, these interventions by themselves do not address the root causes of modern slavery and may even divert attention and funds needed to tackle the underlying issues that are contributing to modern slavery. Therefore, strategies to protect and support victims of modern slavery need to go alongside broader strategies to recognise and tackle the root causes.

These global debates are acknowledged by this research project as important to consider in taking forward work to prevent modern slavery in Oxford.

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<sup>109</sup> Barber, T. Quoted in <https://news.sky.com/story/essex-lorry-deaths-why-do-thousands-of-vietnamese-migrants-risk-their-lives-to-come-to-the-uk-12164246>, 2020

## 9.2. Public Health approach towards modern slavery

Public health approaches to challenging complex social issues such as violent crime and drug misuse have shown promise, particularly because of their preventative ethos, and could be equally effective in tackling modern slavery.

There has been considerable recent discussion about adopting a public health approach to address the challenges of modern slavery, a human rights violation with severe consequences for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of survivors, as well as implications for public health. Taking a broad preventative approach using public health knowledge and principles could complement the dominant global criminal justice response to modern slavery. The latter focusses on the detection and prosecution of criminal perpetrators and is often tied to issues of migration status. Evidence is emerging of how solely taking this approach can constrain meeting the support and protection needs of survivors, fail to address individual and population health impacts, and limit the adoption of preventative measures.<sup>110</sup>

A public health approach, on the other hand, involves interventions at multiple levels and is guided by a rights-based and survivor-centred approach. Its elements broadly align with the central anti-slavery goals recognised nationally and internationally: prevention, protection, and prosecution (the 3 P's), and include a 4<sup>th</sup> P – partnerships. The UK Government's public health approach to modern slavery is underpinned by research which describes the 4 Ps as follows:<sup>111</sup>

- **Prevention** – this goes beyond intervening when individuals become victims of exploitation to develop individual and community awareness and capacity to resist situations that give rise to slavery. It also recognises the upstream determinants (or root causes) of modern slavery – especially poverty and forced migration – and highlights the need for policy level and global system change to reduce the demand for and supply of exploited labour.
- **Protection** from a public health perspective focuses on victims' needs to access appropriate care and security in a post-slavery situation, and on developing a coherent health system and social care response.
- **Prosecution** – a more balanced approach to criminal justice and law enforcement which better meets the needs of survivors and addresses population health impacts.
- **Partnerships** – working across agencies to, for example, coordinate health professional training, distribute public health intelligence, initiate research, and identify improved systems of care for survivors. This enables success across the other 3 'Ps'. Public Health is well placed to provide leadership across partners, especially in the coordination of services, as advocates for survivors, and in terms of public health intelligence.

Finally, a public health approach aspires to a more holistic understanding of modern slavery which highlights the need to view it as a 'constituted cycle' of phases, often across different geographies,

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<sup>110</sup> Laurent, C., Salway, S., and Such, L. A public health approach to modern slavery. Nov 2019 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339644300\\_A\\_public\\_health\\_approach\\_to\\_modern\\_slavery](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339644300_A_public_health_approach_to_modern_slavery) This describes a joint project between the University of Sheffield and Public Health England to critically evaluate the potential for a public health contribution to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.

<sup>111</sup> Such, E. and Salway, S. Research and Analysis. Modern slavery and public health. Public Health England. 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-and-public-health/modern-slavery-and-public-health>

across which health risks and opportunities to intervene accumulate. This presents a challenge to services but one in which Public Health is well placed to lead the way in designing and testing interventions.

This approach is worth considering in the context of efforts in Oxford toward the prevention of modern slavery, and the protection and support of survivors. In particular, it highlights the unique role that Public Health has to play in the various partnerships working toward these aims.

## 10. Impact of the research

It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this research will assist the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership in its efforts to prevent modern slavery, disrupt perpetrators, and protect and support survivors across the city, and that an action plan will be drawn up to take forward the recommendations.

We hope that the interest generated will strengthen the network of organisations engaged in the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network. The engagement of the 42 teams who provided quantitative data, and the many others who were interviewed for this research, could form the basis of a partnership to engage in further dialogue and efforts to implement the recommendations proposed.

In addition to generating evidence to underpin the set of recommendations proposed, the process of research itself had many positive benefits. The engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in the research meant that the project:

- Raised awareness of the issue of modern slavery amongst participating organisations.
- Motivated some to enrol in training and others to ask about where to signpost survivors for support.
- Facilitated referrals of potential cases of modern slavery to the Willow Project.
- Offered managers a space for reflection with their teams about an issue sometimes rarely discussed, and an opportunity for continuous learning for others.
- Cross-fertilised ideas between organisations.

## 11. Recommendations to the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership Board

This section summarizes the recommendations that appear throughout all sections of this report. They are brought together here so as to facilitate the development of an action plan for taking forward the findings of the research. Recommendations are proposed in the following areas:

- Data and intelligence
- Groups at particular risk
- Prevention of slavery and Support to survivors
- Strengthening organisational capacity to respond

### 11.1. Data and intelligence

#### 11.1.1. A Joint OSCP Partnership Data Sharing Project

Create a joint partnership project to engage local partners in data sharing and to provide on-going mapping, analysis, and insight on the incidence of modern slavery across the city, including risks, threats, and trends. The aim would be to inform prevention, protection, support, and enforcement action. This requires:

- The engagement of a wide range of third sector, statutory and private sector actors.
- Shared systems for identifying and documenting potential cases of modern slavery.
- Building awareness of the statutory *Duty to Notify*.
- Information-sharing agreements and shared reporting mechanisms.
- Analytical capacity to collate intelligence on an on-going basis.
- Analytical and briefing materials to be developed and disseminated.
- Drawing on best practice locally and from elsewhere and aiming to create further models of best practice.
- Dedicated financial and human resources.

#### 11.1.2. Further investigate the extent and nature of modern slavery in the following areas

- **Private Sector:** Extend this research to work with private sector actors on deepening the understanding of modern slavery occurring in local businesses in Oxford (construction, hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, short lets, restaurants, takeaways, food processing, car washes, nail bars), and motivating joint action on prevention and protection.
- **Public consultation:** Extend this research to investigate the knowledge of the public on the extent and nature of modern slavery in Oxford, aiming to reach survivors, those at risk of slavery, their friends and family, and others concerned about potential victims. Methods could include Oxford City Council Residents' Panel; a 'Your Oxford' community newsletter for residents of Oxford linking to a web survey; or on-line or social media consultations. Translation would need to be considered.
- **Rural areas of Oxfordshire:** to explore modern slavery occurring in large residential properties, farms, and other locations. Engage the participation of community health staff who have access to residential properties and are knowledgeable about this issue.

## 11.2. Groups at particular risk

### 11.2.1. Children and young people in vulnerable circumstances forced into criminality and sexual exploitation

- **Long-term interventions:** Reprioritise the focus of support to children and young people. Move away from commissioning short-term interventions with young people at risk of Child Exploitation to long-term sustainable interventions (economic, social, creative) that provide young people with sustainable pathways away from exploiters and prevent the transition from victim to perpetrator.
- **Integrated services:** Promote and sustain actions toward integrated services that recognise the overlapping nature of CSE, CDE and other forms of Child Exploitation.
  - **Training and awareness-raising:** provide training on modern slavery (how to spot the signs of CSE and CDE, and where to seek support) for parents and carers of young people, in particular those from vulnerable backgrounds; educational settings; and third sector organisations, particularly community organisations, which work with young people. Oxfordshire County Council's Safeguarding Team and Oxford City Council are recommended to replicate the successful training for taxi drivers and hoteliers with other service providers who come into contact with children and young people.

### 11.2.2. Adults with multiple and complex needs

- **Housing:** improve access to (i) short-term emergency safe housing including out-of-county refuges with prescribing services, particularly for women with complex needs, many of whom will be trying to flee domestic violence, (ii) safe and good quality long-term housing with multi-year funding to enable provision of longer-term support with specialist workers who can assist clients with high-level or entrenched needs. Both require provision of wrap-around multi-agency support services as part of a person-centred and flexible approach.
- **Training** on modern slavery for all service providers working with substance misuse and in the homelessness and housing sector, as well as for their clients with multiple and complex needs (joint and/or separate training).
- **Modern Slavery Champions.** Establish a small group of individuals from different organisations working closely together to share learning, provide mutual support, and work on preventive strategies to protect clients against the risk of modern slavery.
- **Modern Slavery Navigators.** Consider replicating the Modern Slavery Navigator project for homeless people 'The Passage' to guide and accompany survivors of modern slavery through the victim support process.

### 11.2.3. UASC and former UASC

**Housing:** Address the urgent need for a safe house for UASC requiring temporary accommodation and housing solutions after move on from supported accommodation.

**Community support:** Develop a multiagency approach to providing support, protection, and pathways for UASC, including after they turn 18: community initiatives, training and employment opportunities, and diversionary activities (music, theatre) for UASC and former UASC. It could include Modern Slavery Champions offering support.

Ensure access to **good legal representation** for UASC.

**Support specialist therapy services** with a focus on trauma-informed practice for UASC.

**Training for UASC** on gangs and drug trafficking; for all statutory and third sector organisations on the vulnerability of UASC to gangs and drug trafficking; for foster carers, on modern slavery; and for interpreters on safeguarding and modern slavery.

**Make leaflets widely available** with effective visual information about modern slavery in key languages (e.g., Vietnamese, Albanian and Arabic).

Consider how to include third sector organisations in information sharing that commonly happens between statutory organisations, especially in crisis and other high-risk situations.

#### 11.2.4. Albanian women who have been sex trafficked

**Continue inter-agency efforts to build intelligence** about the situations in which these women are living; the risks of re-exploitation for them; and issues related to reports of Albanian women fleeing sex trafficking situations.

Consider appropriate contextual **safeguarding measures** (e.g., a support worker visiting the women in the NRM in their homes if they are not living in Home Office accommodation).

**Address the housing needs** of sex trafficked women recognising their specific vulnerabilities.

**Develop inter-organisational wrap-around support** for each woman, encompassing housing, engagement with GPs, mental health, education, training and employment, advice/advocacy, and social support.

**Address the availability of interpreters** trained to work with victims of sex trafficking.

#### 11.2.5. Women of Asian and African heritage held in Domestic Servitude

Set up a **working subgroup on Domestic Servitude**, as the type of modern slavery least known about in Oxford, with the following remit, in order to develop a strategy for tackling this issue in Oxford.

- Deepen **understanding** of the nature and extent of Domestic Servitude in Oxford, and how to identify and support survivors, through partnership work especially with third sector and community health practitioners.
- Set up a local specialised modern slavery **consultation line** to support frontline staff.
- Develop **sector specific checklists** to help diverse professionals spot the signs of Domestic Servitude.
- Investigate approaches for reaching women trapped in Domestic Servitude (e.g., through social media, on-line, hotlines), learning from the Domestic Abuse sector.
- Identify how frontline staff can best support survivors, especially when there is no disclosure; clarify the role of professionals in supporting survivors; develop and deliver a bespoke training on Domestic Servitude for frontline workers.
- Better access to emergency refuges and shelters for women fleeing Domestic Servitude.
- Identify steps to shift community and cultural attitudes that condone Domestic Servitude in specific communities.
- Develop ambassadors for Domestic Servitude building on the training of FGM ambassadors.

## 11.3. Prevention of slavery and Support to survivors

*Groups and communities of focus for prevention and support work:*

*This section addresses all potential victims of modern slavery but with a particular focus on groups identified as at greatest risk by this research including:*

- Young people in vulnerable circumstances forced into criminality and sexual exploitation.
- Adults with multiple and complex needs.
- Foreign nationals including those trafficked from abroad, exploited as modern slaves abroad and/or the UK, or married into Domestic Servitude in the UK.
- Albanian women and men, girls, and boys.
- Young Vietnamese, mainly boys and some girls.
- Young men who have fled from the Horn of Africa countries.
- Women trapped in Domestic Servitude, of African and Asian heritage.

### 11.3.1. Prevention of modern slavery

- **Outreach through community engagement projects** which aim to identify and engage those most vulnerable to modern slavery, provide awareness-raising about modern slavery and diversionary activities for those at risk; and work with community leaders to develop projects. Explore whether the Oxford City Council Communities Team could be resourced to take this on through the Community Partnership programmes.
- **Translation of printed and digital information** on the signs of modern slavery, risks and threats, and support services (e.g., Albanian, Vietnamese, Urdu, Romanian and Arabic. Draw on expertise to identify effective approaches of distributing such translated material to targeted groups without exploiters being alerted to its existence).
- **Education on modern slavery for children and young people**, for their parents and carers, and through the school system.
- Continue work to **engage the public** to spot the signs of modern slavery and report it by campaigns.

### 11.3.2. Support to survivors

- **Training for frontline workers** on supporting survivors, particularly what to do when there is a concern about modern slavery but the person at risk does not want, or is not able, to disclose.
- **Provision of safe emergency/short-term and long-term housing solutions** considering the specific needs of: women with complex needs fleeing violence in need of refuges or secure supported accommodation; asylum-seekers and migrants for whom moving out of areas to safe houses would break local support networks; British survivors of modern slavery whose safe housing needs are thought not sufficiently considered by the NRM; children being exploited, or at risk of being exploited, for whom the safest option may be moving the whole family, perhaps out of area.
- **Provision of safe interpreting services** which avoid the risk of traffickers infiltrating into interpreter roles, a particular concern for the Albanian and Vietnamese communities.
- **Referral pathways:** if not already happening, widely disseminate the *Thames Valley Modern Slavery Adult Referral Pathway*.
- **Long-term engagement.** Ensure there are services to provide long-term engagement and sustained relationships, when needed, with people at risk of modern slavery, where trust can be built over time.
- **Mental health support**, particularly for asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants. Also recognise the impact that clients with PTSD and depression have on frontline third sector

staff, and on hosts who are providing accommodation. Embedding or widening access to mental health workers in local authority housing teams may be a route forward.

- **Supporting clients with learning disabilities:** how to support them when they are competent to make decisions for themselves but may not fully understand what is happening to them, and continually put themselves at risk.

### **11.3.3. Operational inter-agency coordination**

- Set up an Oxford, or Oxfordshire, multi-agency operational partnership to share intelligence and coordinate inter-agency response to all adult victims of modern slavery, and those at risk. The Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) is a good example of working practices that could be emulated in Oxford/Oxfordshire.
- Within this overall structure we recommend that smaller response teams are convened to provide multi-agency coordinated support at an operational level for individual adult survivors of modern slavery using a model of wrap-around care for individual adult survivors to meet their, often complex, needs.

## 11.4. Strengthening organisational capacity to respond

### 11.4.1. Promote leadership on modern slavery across the partnership by:

- Create spaces for leaders of organisations from across the statutory, third and private sectors to come together to discuss and strategize on how to create a step change in tackling modern slavery across the city by promoting change both within their own organisations and as a city-wide partnership. This would build on the leadership and infrastructure already offered by OSCP and OMSP, and on initiatives such as the Modern Slavery Roundtable for leaders convened by OASN in 2019.
- Support leaders of individual organisations to ensure they have in place the policies, strategies, human and financial resources, technical systems, staff capacity, roles and responsibilities, and organisational culture to ensure that tackling modern slavery is part of the core business of their organisation.
- Set up a Modern Slavery Champions network – similarly to the Domestic Abuse Champions – with individuals across organisations working together to motivate and support staff, advocate internally on the issue, and network across organisations.

### 11.4.2. Create a local information hub on modern slavery

To resource the understanding of staff in statutory, third sector and private sector organisations of how to identify and respond to modern slavery. Its role would be to:

- Collate existing resources on how to identify and respond to modern slavery, including examples of best practice, and keep this updated on a rolling basis.
- Share these widely amongst statutory, third sector and private sector organisations.
- Create a system for capturing and sharing learning between organisations on what works to prevent and respond to modern slavery using case-studies and examples of what has worked successfully. Include work to listen to the voices of survivors and involve them more in shaping services.
- Share information on the different training initiatives being used across the city.
- Allocate dedicated human and financial resources for coordination.

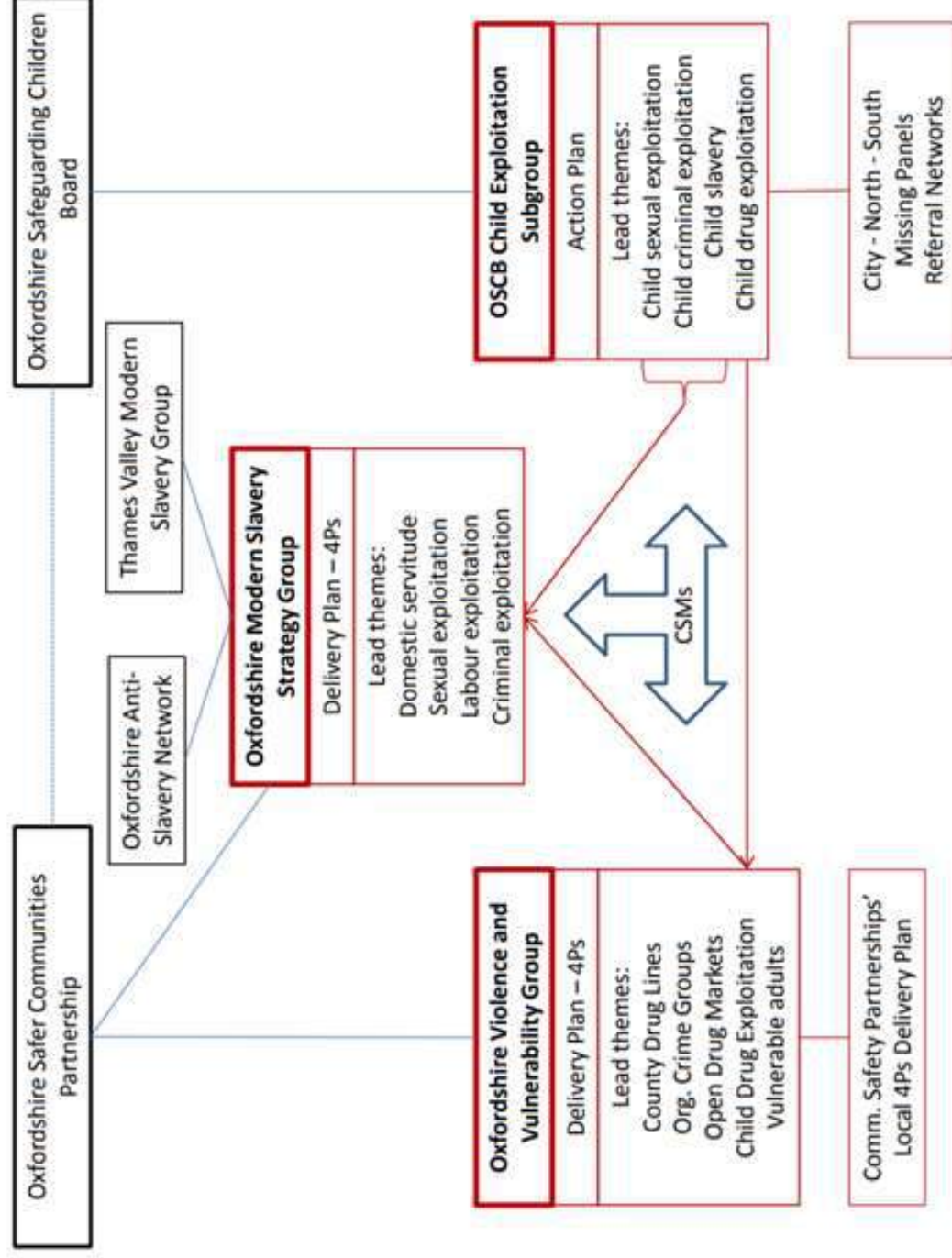
### 11.4.3. Continue to ensure effective training provision on modern slavery is available

To resource partners in the city such as that currently provided for the whole of the Thames Valley by the Victims First Specialist Service and Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding Adults Board. Consider initiatives pioneering creative theatrical performances to raise awareness about modern slavery which have proved very effective and consider how tailored training could be delivered to individual organisations to meet the needs of their different client groups.

### 11.4.4. Joint technical work on systems and tools

**Develop sector-specific checklists** for identifying signs of modern slavery, but only where there is a felt need (e.g., Domestic Servitude), and promote their use.

# Appendix 1: Modern slavery partnership structure in Oxfordshire



# Appendix 2: Data Form

## DATA FORM: Cases of modern slavery in Oxford City since April 2016

Name of Organisation ..... Name of Team .....  
 Name of person providing data ..... Job title .....  
 Email ..... Phone .....

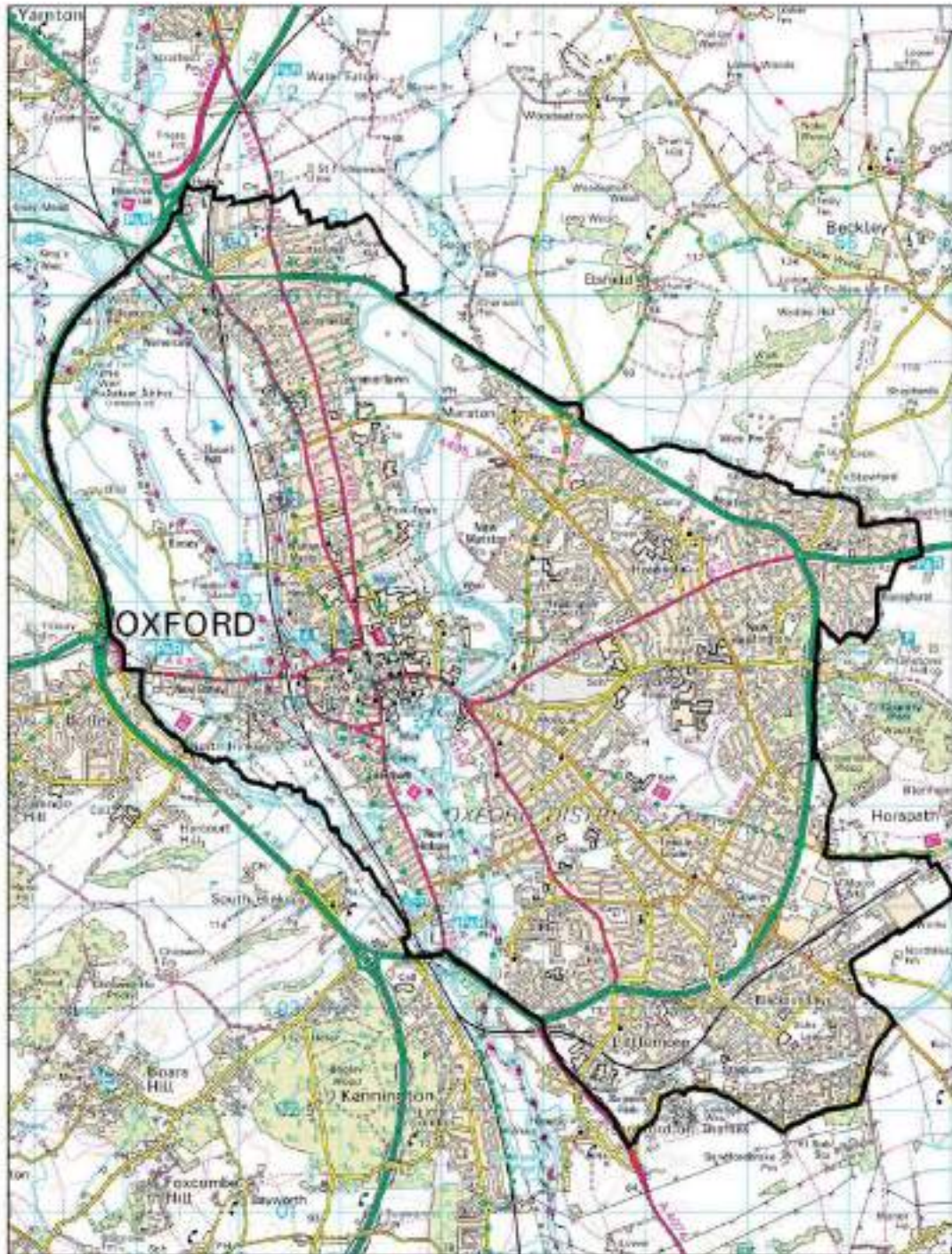
Are you willing to be interviewed for further details about the cases you have identified below?    Yes .....    No .....

| Name or<br>Unique<br>Reference<br>Number<br><br>for each survivor | Degree of<br>certainty<br>about<br>modern<br>slavery |          | Type/s of exploitation<br>(tick all those relevant) |               |                                               |                    |                 | Location of<br>exploitation |                       |        | Gender |        |       | Date of<br>Birth<br>or<br>Age | Nationality | Referral or report<br>(tick)         |                      |                         |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
|                                                                   | Very likely                                          | Possibly | Sexual Exploitation                                 | Forced Labour | Forced Criminality<br>(inc. drug trafficking/ | Domestic Servitude | Other (specify) | Oxford                      | UK but outside Oxford | Abroad | Male   | Female | Other |                               |             | National Referral<br>Mechanism (NRM) | Home Office MS1 form | Referral to/from police |  |
|                                                                   |                                                      |          |                                                     |               |                                               |                    |                 |                             |                       |        |        |        |       |                               |             |                                      |                      |                         |  |
|                                                                   |                                                      |          |                                                     |               |                                               |                    |                 |                             |                       |        |        |        |       |                               |             |                                      |                      |                         |  |
|                                                                   |                                                      |          |                                                     |               |                                               |                    |                 |                             |                       |        |        |        |       |                               |             |                                      |                      |                         |  |
|                                                                   |                                                      |          |                                                     |               |                                               |                    |                 |                             |                       |        |        |        |       |                               |             |                                      |                      |                         |  |
| Totals                                                            |                                                      |          |                                                     |               |                                               |                    |                 |                             |                       |        |        |        |       |                               |             |                                      |                      |                         |  |

Please continue for as many survivors as you are aware of in Oxford City

Please send queries and completed forms by secure Egress email to .....  
 Many thanks indeed for your time and willingness to support this research

### Appendix 3: Map showing the area of focus for the research: the administrative boundary of Oxford City



Oxford city map with administrative boundary  
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## Appendix 4: Organisations that contributed to the research

### STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS

#### Thames Valley Police

- Oxford Local Police Area
- Neighbourhood Policing Team
- Proactive teams
- Criminal Investigation Department
- Preventing Vulnerable people
- Force Intelligence

#### Oxford City Council

- Accommodation and Sustainment
- Financial Services
- Regulatory Services and Community Safety
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Team
  - Community Response Team
  - Environmental Health
  - HMO Enforcement
  - Private Sector Safety
  - Business Regulation
- Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Team
- Sex Worker Intervention Panel
- Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

#### Oxfordshire County Council

- Adult Social Care and Safeguarding Teams
- Children and Families Service
  - Family Solutions team
  - Kingfisher team
  - Leaving Care team
  - Looked After team
  - Youth Justice Service
  - Unaccompanied Asylum-seeker Children team
- Oxfordshire Gypsy & Traveller Service
- Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Trading Standards

#### Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

- Children Services
  - Children's Services Directorate
  - Looked After Children Team
  - Family Nurse Partnership
  - Health visitor leadership team
  - Health visitor teams
  - Phoenix Team
  - School Health Nursing Team
- Community Health Services

- Community Nursing Leadership Team
  - Luther Street Medical Centre
  - Urgent Ambulatory Care
- Corporate Services
  - Oxford Health Safeguarding Service
- Mental Health Services
  - Mental Health Services, Littlemore Hospital
  - Adult Mental Health Services, Warneford Hospital
- Specialised Services
  - Community Learning Disability Team

### **Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

- Adult Safeguarding
- Child Safeguarding
- Emergency Department
- E-learning for healthcare
- Gynaecology Ward
- Sexual Health team

### **Other statutory organisations interviewed**

- Crown Prosecution Service Thames and Chiltern Area
- HMS Prison and Probation Service
- Immigration, West Midlands
- Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England Modern Slavery Network Group
- Slough Borough Council
- South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCCO)
- South & Vale of White Horse District Council

## **THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**

Anti-Slavery Initiative Oxford (ASIOX)

Asylum Welcome

British Red Cross

Catalyst Housing

Citizens Advice Oxford

Connection Homeless Housing

Diocese of Oxford

Elmore Community Services

Green Square Housing

Homeless Oxfordshire

Human Trafficking Foundation (national)

Kalayaan (national)

Key2

Mayday Trust

Oxfordshire MIND

Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC)

Refugee Resource

Restore

Safe!

Sanctuary Hosting

Simon House (now known as Matilda House)

Sovereign Housing

St Mungo's Outreach Service

Step Out Donnington Doorstep

Trauma Recovery Centre

Turning Point

Victims First: Willow Project

## PRIVATE SECTOR

Hotel Watch scheme

Turpin and Miller solicitors

## ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Brookes University

De Montfort University, Leicester

Huddersfield University

London School of Economics

Oxford University

University of Bristol

## OTHER

Oxford and District Trades Union Council

### Participants at the Roundtable on modern slavery hosted by Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network, Oct 2019

|                                                                            |                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chief Executive and OxASN Chair                                            | Elmore Community Services |
| Human Trafficking and Exploitation Coordinator and OxASN Co-Chair          | Oxford City Council       |
| Cabinet Member for Safer Communities                                       | Oxford City Council       |
| Anti-Slavery Coordinator                                                   | Thames Valley Police      |
| Investigations Advisor/Intelligence Development Officer for Modern Slavery | Thames Valley Police      |
| Crime Manager – South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse              | Thames Valley Police      |
| Manager, Victims of Slavery Support Service                                | Migrant Help              |

Programme Manager

Chief Executive

Deputy PCC

Head of Housing, Environment and Community  
Safety

Assistant Director Regulatory Services and  
Community Safety, Oxfordshire Modern Slavery  
Partnership Chair

Lead Member for Health and Well-Being

Oxfordshire Senior Operations Manager

Chief Immigration Officer

Senior District Crown Prosecutor

Non-Executive Director

Chief Medical Officer

Private Sector Lead

Victims First: Willow Project

Thames Valley Partnership

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District  
Council

Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District  
Council

Cherwell District Council

Turning Point Drug & Alcohol Service

Immigration Enforcement

CPS

Oxford University Hospitals

Oxford University Hospitals

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Office

## Appendix 5: Detailed analysis of cases identified by Thames Valley Police

Thames Valley Police recorded 123 potential cases of modern slavery for its Local Policing Area (LPA) of Oxford City from April 2016 to April 2019. The types of exploitation were Forced Criminality (58), Forced Labour (21), Sexual Exploitation (22), and Domestic Servitude (4). No cases of Organ Harvesting were recorded. Some cases involved more than one type of slavery.

The proportion of cases which were Forced Criminality (55%) was considerably higher than the proportion of cases from all sources in the study (36%). Conversely, the proportion of cases that were Sexual Exploitation (21%) and Domestic Servitude (4%) were considerably lower than the proportion from all sources (34% and 9% respectively). There was little difference for Forced Labour.

Speculating on the reason for these discrepancies, most cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude were reported by the third sector (72 and 19 cases respectively), followed by the NHS (44 and 15), as compared to TVP (22 and 4), and fewer than that from the City and County councils. The higher numbers reported by third sector organisations is likely to be due to the capacity they have to build longer-term relationships with such clients which facilitates the trust needed to share in confidence, and to do so independently from police or Home Office. It may reflect the fact that cuts to statutory services have led to increasingly high thresholds for the social, practical and mental health support, so that victims of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude find their way instead to third sector organisations offering basic need support. The NHS offers crucial avenues for identifying these types of exploitation, for example, Health Visitors visiting women in their homes, and confidential hospital-based discussions. While hospital contacts are very short-term, Health Visitors have several opportunities to visit homes following the birth of a child. This study highlights the very important role Health Visitors could play in identifying and supporting victims of Domestic Servitude if well supported given the very challenging nature of this work.

As expected, the type of exploitation was strongly gendered with males predominating amongst cases of Forced Criminality and Forced Labour, and females accounting for almost all the cases of Sexual Exploitation. See Table 10.

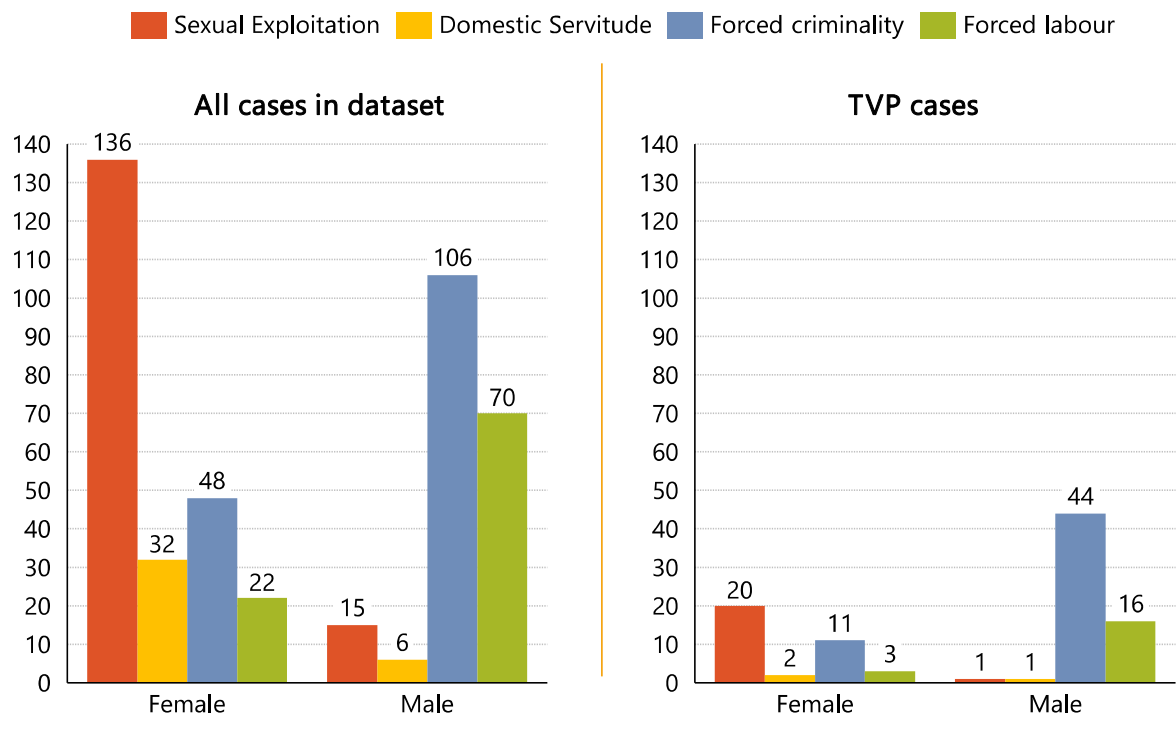
**Table 10: TVP cases - Type of exploitation by gender**

|                     | Male | Female | Unknown gender | Total number of cases | % of all cases with a known type  |
|---------------------|------|--------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Organ Harvesting    | 0    | 0      | 0              | 0                     | 0                                 |
| Forced Criminality  | 44   | 11     | 3              | 58                    | 55%                               |
| Forced Labour       | 16   | 3      | 2              | 21                    | 20%                               |
| Sexual Exploitation | 1    | 20     | 1              | 22                    | 21%                               |
| Domestic Servitude  | 1    | 2      | 1              | 4                     | 4%                                |
| Unknown type        | 9    | 3      | 6              | 18                    |                                   |
| Totals              | 71   | 39     | 13             | 123                   |                                   |
|                     | 65%  | 35%    |                |                       | 100% (of known types and genders) |

Overall, there were twice as many male victims (65%) as female (35%). This is markedly different from the cases reported by all sources (male 47%; females 53%). This is accounted for by the much lower proportion of cases of Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Servitude amongst the TVP cases,

both heavily female dominated. The graph below illustrates this by comparing the distribution of types of exploitation between women and men for the TVP dataset with that for the dataset from all sources.

## Type of exploitation by gender: comparison of TVP cases and all cases in dataset



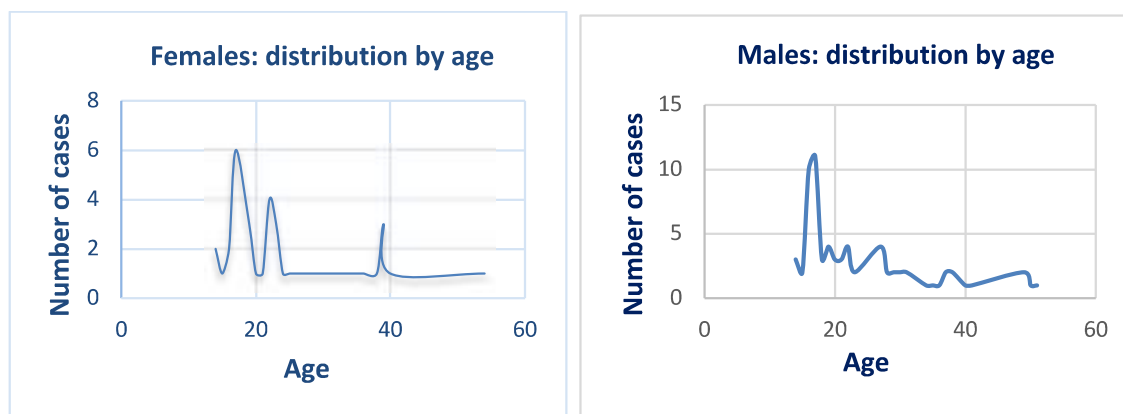
All cases identified by TVP were either referred to the NRM or reported under the *Duty to Notify* via an MS1 form: 105 to the NRM; 18 MS1 forms. No categorisation was provided as to the likelihood of them being victims of modern slavery, but given that all were referred either to the NRM or reported under the *Duty to Notify* we recorded all as ‘very likely’.

### Age

The age range of victims was 14-54. The vast majority of the cases were under 24 years old, as seen in the graphs below. Of particular note:

- 49% of all females (19 cases) were aged 17-23. The majority were Sexual Exploitation.
- 29% of all males (21 cases) were aged 16-17. The majority were Forced Criminality.

## TVP cases: Distribution by age and gender



Most worryingly, one third of all cases were minors (41 cases). The majority of these were boys forced into criminality, mostly British with some Vietnamese and Albanians. 5 boys had been forced into labour and 3 girls had been sexually exploited.

## Nationality

There were 59 British victims (48%) and 64 foreign nationals (52%). The proportion of foreign nationals was slightly lower than for cases from all sources (43% and 57% respectively).

Of the foreign nationals, 22 were Albanian, 9 Vietnamese, 6 Chinese, and 5 Indian. The rest were Iranian, Romanian, Sudanese, Zimbabwean, Polish, Pakistani, Greek, Iraqi, Kenyan, Ethiopian, Malaysian, Afghan, Ghanaian, and Somali.

The 18-30 age group was disproportionately dominated by foreign nationals (33:16) whereas the 31-50 age group was disproportionately dominated by British (20:9). See Table 11.

**Table 11: TVP cases: Nationality by age**

|                    | 0-17 | 18-30 | 31-50 | 51+ |
|--------------------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| <b>British</b>     | 21   | 16    | 20    | 0   |
| <b>Non-British</b> | 20   | 33    | 9     | 2   |
| <b>Total</b>       | 41   | 49    | 29    | 2   |

The two nationality sub-groups of most concern (see Table 12) were:

- Albanian women who had been sexually exploited (11 out of 12 Albanian women recorded had been sexually exploited).
- British men and, to a lesser extent, women who had been forced into criminality.

**Table 12: TVP cases: Nationality by Type of exploitation**

|            | Sexual Exploitation |    | Domestic Servitude |   | Forced Criminality |    | Forced Labour |   |
|------------|---------------------|----|--------------------|---|--------------------|----|---------------|---|
|            | M                   | F  | M                  | F | M                  | F  | M             | F |
| British    | 0                   | 5  | 0                  | 0 | 30                 | 11 | 4             | 2 |
| Albanian   | 1                   | 11 | 0                  | 0 | 4                  | 0  | 2             | 1 |
| Vietnamese | 0                   | 1  | 0                  | 0 | 3                  | 0  | 1             | 0 |
| Chinese    | 1                   | 1  | 0                  | 0 | 1                  | 0  | 2             | 0 |
| Indian     | 0                   | 0  | 0                  | 0 | 3                  | 0  | 0             | 0 |

*Only the most common nationalities are shown*

The 3 cases of Domestic Servitude were from Somalia, Zimbabwe and Poland.

**Location of exploitation:** All 123 cases were recorded as ‘Oxford LPA’ (Local Policing Area). This predominantly, but not exclusively, means that the location of exploitation was Oxford. In a few cases, however, it is likely that the exploitation occurred abroad or elsewhere in the UK and that the victim was either residing in, or had presented to a First Responder, in Oxford.

**Referrals to the NRM and Home Office (MS1).** The TVP data was the only comprehensive set of data we received on NRM referrals and MS1 submissions to the Home Office as many respondents for other organisations, not being First Responders, did not have this information.

105 cases were referred by TVP to the NRM. 39 of these (37%) were minors.

**For those where the outcome of the Reasonable Grounds Decision (RGD) was known:**

- 81 referrals from TVP received a positive decision. This included all the 19 Albanians who were referred.
- 8 received a negative decision. Most were foreign nationals: 4 Vietnamese, 1 Iranian and 1 Somali, with only 2 British.
- 11 cases were pending a decision.

The numbers of positive RGDs are likely to over-inflate the actual number of confirmed cases of modern slavery, as it is known from interviews that at least some of those who received positive decisions from the NRM were proven by subsequent police investigations not to be victims of modern slavery and yet their status as NRM referral was retained on the TVP system.

18 MS1 forms were submitted by TVP to the Home Office: 13 British, and 1 each of Greek, Indian, Vietnamese, Albanian and Chinese.

## Appendix 6: Thames Valley Police potential cases of modern slavery for Oxford from April 2019 to September 2020

Source: Quarterly TVP infographics

These figures update the detailed case-level data in the study data set (April 2016-April 2019)

Because of missing data for one quarter, the percentages for each type of exploitation are calculated on the basis of the 4 quarters from October 2019 to September 2020

| Dates                          | Type of exploitation (NRM referrals only) |               |                     |                    |                    | Gender (NRM cases) |        | NRM referrals |          | MST submissions | Age range | Nationalities                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|---------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                | Total Cases                               | Forced Labour | Sexual Exploitation | Forced Criminality | Domestic Servitude | Male               | Female | 18 or over    | Under 18 |                 |           |                                                                                                   |
| July-Sept 2020                 | 11                                        | 2             | 0                   | 8                  | 0                  | 9                  | 2      | 7             | 4        | 6               | 16-25     | Albanian, British, Cuban, Indian                                                                  |
| April-June 2020                | 13                                        | 0             | 4                   | 9                  | 0                  | 7                  | 6      | 5             | 8        | 8               | 14-48     | Albanian, British, Kenyan, Romanian                                                               |
| Jan-March 2020                 | 11                                        | 3             | 3                   | 4                  | 1                  | 6                  | 5      | 9             | 2        | 5               | 16-58     | Albanian, Australian, Bangladeshi, Belgian, British, Burmese, Chinese, Iranian, Jordanian, Kenyan |
| Oct-Dec 2019                   | 19                                        | 5             | 1                   | 11                 | 2                  | 16                 | 3      | 10            | 9        | 3               | 13-49     | Albanian, British, Eritrean, Kenyan, Nigerian                                                     |
| Total for year                 | 54                                        | 10            | 8                   | 32                 | 3                  | 38                 | 16     | 31            | 23       | 22              | 13-58     |                                                                                                   |
|                                |                                           |               |                     |                    |                    |                    |        | 54            |          |                 |           |                                                                                                   |
| % of all cases                 |                                           | 19%           | 15%                 | 60%                | 6%                 | 70%                | 30%    |               |          |                 |           |                                                                                                   |
| July-Sept 2019 – not available |                                           |               |                     |                    |                    |                    |        |               |          |                 |           |                                                                                                   |
| April-June 2019                | 8                                         | 3             | 0                   | 5                  | 0                  | 7                  | 1      | 6             | 2        | 2               | 17-40     | Albanian, British, Egyptian, Iranian, Vietnamese                                                  |

NB: TVP figures for type of exploitation, gender and age refer only to NRM referrals, and not MST submissions. This is in contrast to the rest of the study where MST submissions are included in the figures.

## **Appendix 7: Case-study of a partnership approach to wrap-around client support**

A survivor of modern slavery was being supported primarily by three third sector organisations working in Oxford. Migrant Help provided support, advice, and advocacy through the legal process, including the NRM and, through liaison with a local solicitor's firm, the asylum system, general casework, and financial support. A housing organisation provided accommodation with local volunteer hosts and support in accessing and maintaining engagement in educational courses and emerging practical and emotional issues. An organisation from the third sector who specialise in working with refugees and asylum seekers offered trauma therapy through the use of an interpreter.

After a serious incident of self-harm, these three organisations agreed to build a stronger interagency support partnership around this client. This consisted of regular email communication, occasional conference calls, and a one-off in person meeting. The communication was used for updates on changing situations, comprehensive partnership approaches, for example, to advocacy on housing or legal processes, expressions of concern, consulting on safeguarding issues and shared risk assessments, and requests for additional support from the other organisations, e.g. when one staff member went on annual leave.

All three member organisations of the partnership spoke highly of its success and effectiveness. The partnership approach was considered effective in sharing the responsibility for the client, drawing on the strengths of different organisational resources and expertise for the client, clarifying roles and reducing duplication of services. The benefits of the communication far outweighed the time put into this. Outcomes for the client of this approach included better safeguarding from risks, access to the organisations' combined resources, and access to education and volunteering opportunities. An aspect of the model's success was Migrant Help's overall coordinating role combined with the level of ownership for the partnership from the other two organisations, and crucially the strength of relationships developed between colleagues working with the client. The client also valued this approach and was regularly consulted about their consent to share information within the partnership. In particular, partners understood and respected that content from confidential therapy sessions would not be shared (other than in exceptional safeguarding circumstances).

This model of partnership working could be built on and further developed for other survivors of modern slavery.

## Appendix 8: Oxford City Council webpage on Modern Slavery and Exploitation

### What is modern slavery?

The London Anti-Slavery Working Group's Adult Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities helpfully explains the commonly used terminology: modern slavery, human trafficking, and exploitation. It is important to provide a common understanding for partners organisation involved in addressing these crimes.

### Human trafficking

Defined by the Palermo Protocol, all three elements below are required for adult trafficking cases. The 'means' is not required for child trafficking cases as a child cannot give informed consent.

1. The Act (Movement of people)
2. The Means (Coercive behaviour)
3. The Purpose (Exploitation)

### Modern Slavery

Defined by the Modern Slavery Act 2015, it encompasses human trafficking and all forms of exploitation.

- The Means (Coercive behaviour)
- The Purpose (Exploitation)

### Definitions

1. **The Act** Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons
2. **The Means** threat or use of force, withholding documents, ritual oaths, financial control, debt bondage, abduction, blackmail, abuse of power over a vulnerability, deception, 'Stockholm syndrome', grooming, restriction of movement, threats to friends or family, social stigma.
3. **The Purpose** including but not limited to Sexual Exploitation, labour exploitation and bonded labour, Domestic Servitude, criminal exploitation, forced fraud, forced marriage and Organ Harvesting.

### Types of modern slavery in the UK

- **Labour Exploitation** – forced to work directly for offenders' in businesses and sites that they own or control. The main method of exploitation is not to paying or illegally underpaying the victims.
- **Domestic Servitude** – forced to undertake household chores and childcare for partners/partner relatives/others and confined to the house.
- **Sexual Exploitation** – forced sex work or working in the commercial sex industry (pornography, lap dancing, telephone lines etc.); those manipulated or coerced into sexual activities of any kind for another person's gain.
- **Criminal Exploitation** – victims are manipulated or coerced or trafficked for the purposes of any illegal activities (i.e., County lines, drug trafficking; cuckooing (taking over a

person's property); forced street crime (shoplifting, begging etc.,) cannabis cultivation and sham marriages).

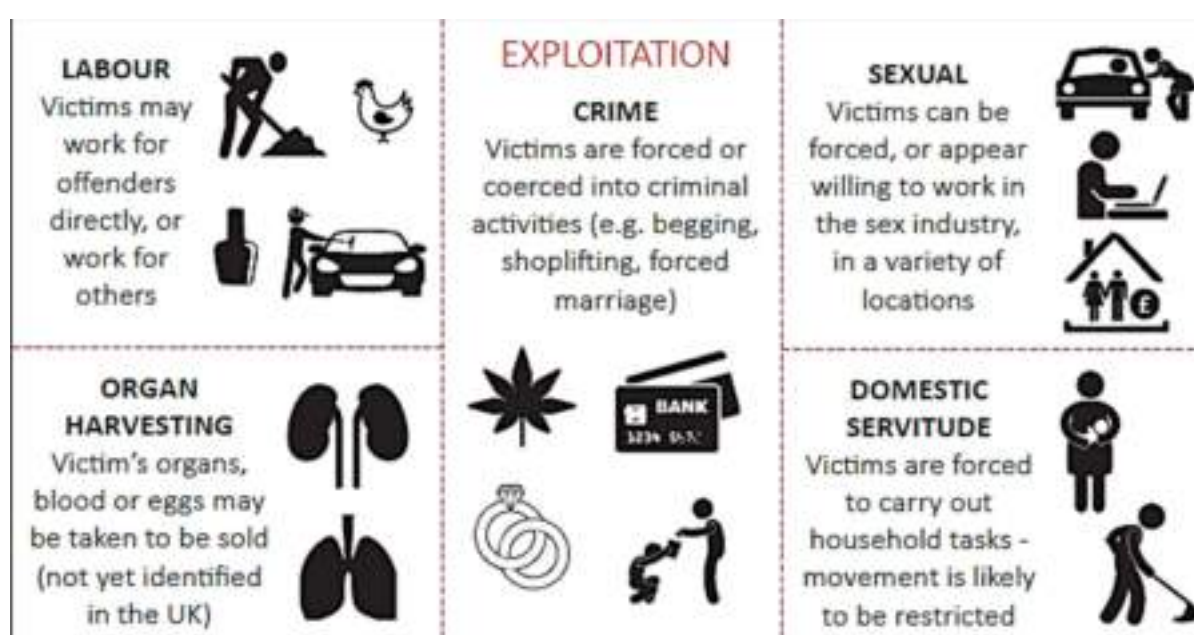
- **Cultural Exploitation** - those manipulated or coerced using religious, social, or cultural beliefs (e.g., female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalisation, forced marriage).

The anti-slavery commissioner has recently identified 17 types of modern slavery

## Appendix 9: Modern Slavery Information Sheet<sup>112</sup>

### What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. The main types are sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and forced criminality (including drug trafficking/county lines)<sup>113</sup>. These may involve human trafficking - the recruitment, harbouring or transport of people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion, and forced to work against their will (NB this is different to smuggling which involves a voluntary payment for a service<sup>114</sup>). Those exploited cannot leave their situation but may not see themselves as victims of a crime.



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### Indicators of modern slavery

- **Behaviour** – withdrawn, unwilling to make eye contact, fear of engaging with authorities.
- **Appearance** – unkempt, malnourished, few possessions, untreated injuries, lack of medical care

<sup>112</sup> Produced by Elmore's modern slavery research team

<sup>113</sup> Detailed descriptions can be found in 'A typology of modern slavery offence in the UK', Home Office, 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-typology-of-modern-slavery-offences-in-the-uk>

<sup>114</sup> [www.stopthetraffik.org/smuggling-trafficking-knowing-differences/](http://www.stopthetraffik.org/smuggling-trafficking-knowing-differences/)

<sup>115</sup> Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit, 2018

- **Work** – long hours, little or no pay, few, or no days off, inappropriate clothing/equipment for the job.
- **Debt bondage** – in debt to, or dependant on someone else.
- **Accommodation** – overcrowded, poorly maintained accommodation, curtains always drawn
- **Control** – restricted freedom of choice and/or movement, control over access to ID/travel documents/bank account, always accompanied, deprived of water/food/sleep, limited contact with family or friends.

### Five questions that may help identify a potential victim<sup>116</sup>

1. Are you currently living a life that is what you expected and were told prior to coming to this area?
2. Do you know where your personal identity documents/passport are? Can you access them freely?
3. If you no longer wanted to continue doing this job could you leave and get another job?
4. Have you ever had threats made to you or against your family if you do not do what you are told?
5. Are you able to make contact with your family and friends?

### Facts about Modern Slavery<sup>117</sup>

3 modern slavery crimes are recorded every week in the Thames Valley. Many more go unreported.

**Myth:** *Slavery is a thing of the past.*

**Reality:** There are currently an estimated 45.8 million victims of slavery worldwide (*Source: Global Slavery Index 2016*).

**Myth:** *People from the UK aren't victims of modern slavery.*

**Reality:** Last year, UK nationals were the most common victims in the Thames Valley.

**Myth:** *There isn't anything I can do about modern slavery.*

**Reality:** Victims are often working in the heart of our communities. If you suspect it, report your concerns. Suspect it. Report it. Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700.

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<sup>116</sup> Source: Victims First: Willow Project, 2018

<sup>117</sup> Source: Thames Valley Police

## Reporting and Referral



To report concerns about Modern Slavery, contact Thames Valley Police on 101, or 999 if there is a crime in action or immediate threat

Call the Modern Slavery Helpline confidentially 24/7 to seek advice or report a suspicion. Or download the free UNSEEN UK modern slavery app – a simple guide to recognising the signs of modern slavery, and a way to report concerns confidentially

The Victims First: Willow Project is the Thames Valley service for anyone affected by any form of exploitation and/or those with complex needs.

Contact 07538 241045 or [enquiries@vfwillowproject.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@vfwillowproject.org.uk)

**The National Referral Mechanism** is the national framework used to identify and support victims of modern slavery. For adults, this is a consent-based system. All children should be referred automatically. Where an adult victim does not wish to be referred to the NRM, specified public authorities have a statutory *Duty to Notify* the Home Office that they are a potential victim by submitting an **MS1 form**.



**Elmore**  
Community Services

**[elmorecommunityservices.org.uk](http://elmorecommunityservices.org.uk)**

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