



University of  
Nottingham

Rights Lab

# Partnerships for freedom

**Improving multi-agency collaboration  
on modern slavery**



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# Foreword

Modern slavery is a brutal crime whereby criminals subject their victims to exploitation and servitude. Driven by financial gain, these criminals treat our fellow human beings as a commodity to be traded, violating their freedom and basic human dignity.

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. In my Strategic Plan 2019-2021, I underline the importance of working in partnership to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling this devastating crime.

This report reveals the extent and scope of anti-slavery partnership working across the UK. It builds on earlier work to map such partnerships and the development of a wide body of resources to share best practice in partnership working, including a comprehensive toolkit which I am pleased to promote and support on my website. It also reveals how anti-slavery partnerships continue to grow and adapt, and this is essential to tackle the ever-changing nature of exploitation.

The report highlights the growing sophistication of anti-slavery partnerships in the UK. Whilst it is good to see how many are embedded in regional and local policing structures, modern slavery is a complex phenomenon and the experiences of modern slavery survivors are as multi-faceted as the people whom it affects. It is essential that we draw on the breadth of expertise and understanding from statutory bodies, NGOs, businesses and survivor organisations to inform our response and develop new approaches to preventing this crime.

In particular, the increasing participation of local authority functions in anti-slavery partnerships reflects their increasing role in supporting victims and survivors. They have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and are key to effective local service delivery. As their role increases it is vital that they are funded for this important work.

I am convinced that local partnerships involving a wide range of players are best placed to ensure that victims are supported and equipped to become survivors and become sustainably independent.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sara Thornton'.

Dame Sara Thornton  
Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

# Executive summary of findings

1. For frontline practitioners, multi-agency partnership working continues to play an essential role in delivering an effective response to modern slavery: the majority of police forces in the UK are working with an anti-slavery partnership at strategic or operational level. Many partnerships also have thematic or geographical sub-groups tailoring their work to the particular geography or concerns of local areas. 98 partnerships or sub-groups were identified in total. This includes a number of partnerships that operate UK-wide or across the devolved nations. Co-location, established in Greater Manchester, and also now present in Sussex and London, provides a further model for partnership co-ordination.
2. There has been diversification in the membership of anti-slavery partnerships, although most partnerships continue to be led or co-ordinated by police officers. Different local authority functions are starting to participate, particularly housing, safeguarding, public health, and social care, reflecting the range of responsibilities across this agenda. There is also an increase in the involvement of non-statutory members, although business involvement remains difficult to secure.
3. Overall, findings demonstrate that partnership work is still focused on 'input' focused activities, such as the development of training and awareness raising campaigns, rather than outcomes such as victim/survivor experiences or prosecutions.
4. Gaps in performance monitoring and management still hamper partnerships' ability to deliver significant changes and demonstrate impact from their work. Action research in 2018 indicated that an absence of shared vision, a lack of resources to collect data, and concerns about data sharing limited partnerships' capacity to build an evidence base for their work. These areas still appear to be significant barriers to consistent monitoring and evaluation.
5. Some improvements have been observed. Partnerships have developed stronger collaborative structures, instigated multi-agency approaches to enforcement and regulation, improved victim identification and support, and mobilised wider constituencies through – for instance – faith or business involvement.
6. However, partnership working is frequently seen as a voluntary endeavour, undertaken on top of existing workloads and responsibilities. Individuals and organisations are often reluctant to undertake additional responsibilities and commitments.
7. Where dedicated funding does exist, such as from Police and Crime Commissioners, it usually covers only secretariat and hosting costs, leaving a significant funding gap that hinders service delivery and other activities. In some areas, member organisations have worked together to apply for specific funding to target their local needs, but this ad-hoc approach does not provide the stability needed for consistent, long term action.

# 1. Introduction

It is three years since the research report ‘Collaborating for Freedom: Anti-slavery partnerships in the UK’ was published by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the University of Nottingham’s ‘Rights Lab.’<sup>1</sup> The report was designed to highlight the essential work of multi-agency partnerships in responding to modern slavery, and to identify the conditions that facilitated their success. This report provides an update on that research approximately three years on, aiming to highlight and understand the changing landscape of partnerships across the UK, and to share promising and effective practices. This changing landscape means that many activities, roles, and responsibilities continue to shift and evolve, and as such this report provides a snapshot of practices identified during the research.

Over those last three years, we’ve seen a continued rise in the number of victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism, with 10,627 referrals during calendar year 2019<sup>2</sup> – a 52% increase on 2018, which was in turn a 36% increase on 2017.<sup>3</sup> There has been a continued upward national trend in exploitation involving domestic victims from the UK, coinciding with a significant rise in the number of child referrals (4,550 in 2019), in part due to the ongoing proliferation of child criminal exploitation linked to ‘county lines’ drug distribution. Overall, victims from the UK accounted for 2,836 of those identified in 2019, with other commonly referred victims originating from Albania and Vietnam, followed by China, Sudan and Eritrea.

The need then for a cohesive and comprehensive response to modern slavery is more vital than ever, and multi-agency partnerships continue to play an active and important role in that. These partnerships, like the exploitation and offending they are working against, are not static. They have continued to grow and change; incorporating new partner organisations, revised structures and sub-groups, and evolving to undertake a wider remit of activities. Our research has uncovered a vibrant network of partnerships all over the country, at varying stages of development, undertaking a broad variety of interventions and developing under a range of different models and structures.

Since our initial research in 2017, partnerships have benefitted from much deeper exchanges of ideas and effective practices between themselves, and have access to a greater range of guidance and support. This includes Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services’ (HMICFRS) review into the policing response to modern slavery in 2017; the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss; and practice and resource sharing via the University of Nottingham and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner’s partnership toolkit (<https://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk/>).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alison Gardner, Claire Brickell, and Tatiana Gren-Jordan, “Collaborating for Freedom: Anti-Slavery Partnerships in the UK,” *University of Nottingham / Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner*, 2017, <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1186/collaborating-for-freedom-anti-slavery-partnerships-in-the-uk.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2019. *Home Office* – <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2019>

<sup>3</sup> National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018. *National Crime Agency* – <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/282-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2018/file>

<sup>4</sup> HMICFRS, “Stolen Freedom: The Policing Response to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking”; Frank Field, Maria Miller, and Baroness Butler-Sloss, “Independent Review Of The Modern Slavery Act 2015,” *Secretary of State for the Home Department*, 2019, [https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/Independent\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Act\\_-\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/Independent_review_of_the_Modern_Slavery_Act_-_final_report.pdf); Local Government Association, “Tackling Modern Slavery: A Council Guide,” 2017, <https://www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery-council-guide>; University of Nottingham, “Anti-Slavery Partnerships Toolkit.”

Partnership work is driven by the desire for ‘collaborative advantage’. By working in partnership organisations are able to pool their expertise and resources, and work together to overcome gaps in service provision and address wicked and pervasive challenges. Through our research, we’ve come to believe that partnerships are a vital element of place-based anti-slavery work at the local level. The collective efficacy afforded by the police, local authorities and non-governmental and community organisations working together has meant that partnerships have taken a lead on raising awareness, delivering practitioner focused training, implementing tailored and locally appropriate victim care pathways, and more.

Despite an increase in access to partnership resources, and a homogenisation of some approaches, it is evident that the needs and priorities of different regions and local areas can vary greatly. Different methods and approaches are still needed to address the variety of specific issues that each area faces, particularly given the variance in financial resources currently available. In the original ‘Collaborating for Freedom’ report, the models, activities and relative successes of some of the more mature partnerships were highlighted, and this follow-up research continues to indicate that, in many respects, these partnerships continue to lead the way. However, there are also some new and emerging partnerships and models, and the approaches in some areas have developed significantly since our initial report. We therefore present a summary of those changes and highlight some of the resulting promising and effective practices.

The necessity of partnership working has been widely supported by practitioners from across the statutory, non-statutory and third sectors, providing opportunities for collaborative advantage. Partnerships in many areas continue to develop and operate without direct funding and without direct statutory guidance, but have shown their utility across all four elements of the 4P’s framework: prevent, prepare, protect and pursue. Partnerships have contributed to efforts focused on prevention by conducting awareness raising activities and spot the signs training for practitioners. Multi-agency approaches to intelligence gathering and enforcement are common. There is also a strong link between effective prosecution and survivor support,<sup>5</sup> and partnerships contribute by pooling resources – facilitating emergency accommodation, both within and outside of the NRM, and sharing effective process and practice through the victim referral journey. Finally, they have proven useful in encouraging civic leadership and – through schemes such as the Co-op charter – are starting to develop sustainable business practices and work towards a slavery-free economy.

Anti-slavery partnership work across the UK continues to be locally diverse and multi-layered, and it is clear that frontline actors still put multi-agency partnership working at the centre of their response to modern slavery. Despite this they have received little assistance in facilitating collaborative activity or building sustainable long term approaches to co-operation. The recommendations made in the original report are still of significance and in many cases remain unaddressed. As such, this report reiterates many of those recommendations (see section 11), in particular the need for greater attention to leadership, engagement, accountability, and funding, which remain essential to building an effective multi-agency response to modern slavery.

<sup>5</sup> Ward, E and Gardner, A (2018) *Measuring success in anti-slavery partnerships: building the evidence base through action research*, University of Nottingham, p.5, available at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/mseu/mseu-resources/2018/december/measuring-success-in-anti-slavery-partnerships.pdf>

## 2. Research methodology

In order to highlight the essential work of multi-agency partnerships in responding to modern slavery, and to identify the conditions that facilitated their success, we undertook three stages of research. Firstly, we revisited the original survey, conducted in April 2017, and disseminated through police force modern slavery Single Points of Contact (SPOCs). This involved conducting short, semi-structured interviews with the identified partnership chairs, co-ordinators, or highlighted contacts, and reviewing the information originally collected for the 2017 report to identify the major changes. The research was undertaken by telephone survey in January and February 2019 and included 52 individuals covering 69 discrete partnerships.

Secondly, we compared new data to the original responses, generating updated quantitative statistics to compare with those presented in the first report. This process required rationalising the data that was collected originally, in order to facilitate a better comparison, and to enable future updates of this activity to be conducted more systematically. For example, a number of partnerships identified back in 2017 were found to be a series of bilateral discussions following further research. These arrangements either did not materialise into a structured partnership or became amalgamated into one formal multi-agency arrangement. This data was therefore re-categorised and a hierarchy of partnerships identified. This more qualitative analysis helped to highlight the strength, depth and structure of multi-agency partnerships across whole regions, as well as the value of denser geographic and thematic sub-groups at the sub-regional level.

The final part of this research involved a focus group with fifteen partnership co-ordinators from across the UK, and which was designed to highlight success stories and challenges; examples of good practice; and some forward planning and needs analysis to understand requirements for long term support to partnerships. This was incorporated into the case studies and recommendations at the end of this report, along with feedback gleaned from the presentation of interim findings at the National Network Co-ordinators' Forum (NNCF).

In addition to this report, the outputs include an updated online partnership map – which can be viewed at <http://iascmap.nottingham.ac.uk> and a toolkit of resources that demonstrates good practice in establishing new, and developing existing, multi-agency partnerships (see box one).

### Acknowledgements

This report was authored by Dr Phil Northall, Research Fellow on Antislavery Resilient Cities at the Rights Lab, University of Nottingham, with assistance from Dr Ben Brewster, Rights Lab Research Fellow in Antislavery Policy and Communities, and Dr Alison Gardner, Rights Lab Associate Director. Special thanks also to the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, in particular Jenna Teasdale, Research and Innovation Lead, April McCoig, Victims and Partnership Lead, and Katherine Lawson, Communications Officer.

### Box one

#### The anti-slavery partnership toolkit and map

The anti-slavery partnership toolkit offers resources, guidelines and checklists for anti-slavery partnership work. These include:

- A partnership checklist, helping organisations to review partnership needs, highlighting other relevant resources on the site.
- A governance library, encouraging partnerships to think about accountability, action planning and performance management, including examples that might help.
- Resources on key aspects of partnership work, including enforcement activity, engaging with different partners and reviewing victim care pathways.
- A repository of the latest reports, legislation and guidance from around the country.

Any partnership can submit materials for inclusion in the toolkit, and new resources are added monthly and publicised via a newsletter. The toolkit also includes training materials including specialist resources aimed at the aviation industry, hotels, and universities, plus specific issues including county lines and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), in addition to more general materials. The resources range from awareness-raising posters, and 'lunch-and-learn' courses to presentations.

Aligned with the toolkit is an interactive map. This provides information on all 98 partnerships identified in this research. Details on objectives, members, and activities are included, along with contact details for the partnership co-ordinator. This allows you to find out more about what is happening in your area, or to get in touch with a representative of any of the partnerships featured in this report.

The toolkit can be accessed at <https://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk> and the map is available at <http://iascmap.nottingham.ac.uk>.

# 3. Mapping of partnerships

As highlighted in the methodology, the research presented here is a continuation of previous research that led to the development of the online partnerships map and interactive toolkit, and provides an update on the changes and progress made in the last two years since that initial mapping exercise. Of the 98 partnerships identified within this update 41 partnerships were new to the mapping, while 14 partnerships were removed either due to inactivity, the amalgamation of multiple groups, or an explicit decision to cease activity – usually integrating that activity into a broader strategic group. Respondents came from the full range of anti-slavery partnership organisations, including police, charities or NGOs, local authorities, government agencies, offices of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and an independent consultant. In total, the anti-slavery partnership mapping now identifies the presence of 98 discrete partnerships or multi-agency networks around the country. These were collated regionally and categorised according to their primary focus. This resulted in seven categories, defined below:

- **Strategic:** top-level partnership which various sub-groups feed into, concerned with the broader overview on modern slavery approaches. Comprised of a mix of statutory and non-statutory partners, and usually organised at the force, county, or regional level.
- **Operational:** refers to delivery or tactically focused partnerships, usually co-ordinated by the police and comprised primarily of statutory partners.
- **Sub-group (geographic):** lower level of partnership usually organised at local authority level and feeding in to a broader strategic partnership.
- **Sub-group (thematic):** lower level of partnership organised around an identified local theme such as homelessness, training, or health, and often led by a relevant statutory or non-statutory organisation.
- **Unit:** refers specifically to the unique co-located modern slavery co-ordination units, as seen as part of Programme Challenger in Greater Manchester, and being established in Sussex and London.
- **Virtual:** relates to developing partnerships that organise joint activities, but which are not yet formalised nor meet physically (often due to difficult to traverse geographies).
- **UK-wide:** refers to partnerships focused on bringing together activity and resources across the whole of the UK, such as the National Network Co-ordinators' Forum (NNCF).

Figure 1 opposite shows the breakdown of the identified partnerships in the UK. The overwhelming majority of partnerships were strategic (35) or geographic sub-groups (34), followed by operational partnerships (15), and thematic sub-groups (8). There are then three co-located units, two UK-wide groups, and a virtual partnership.

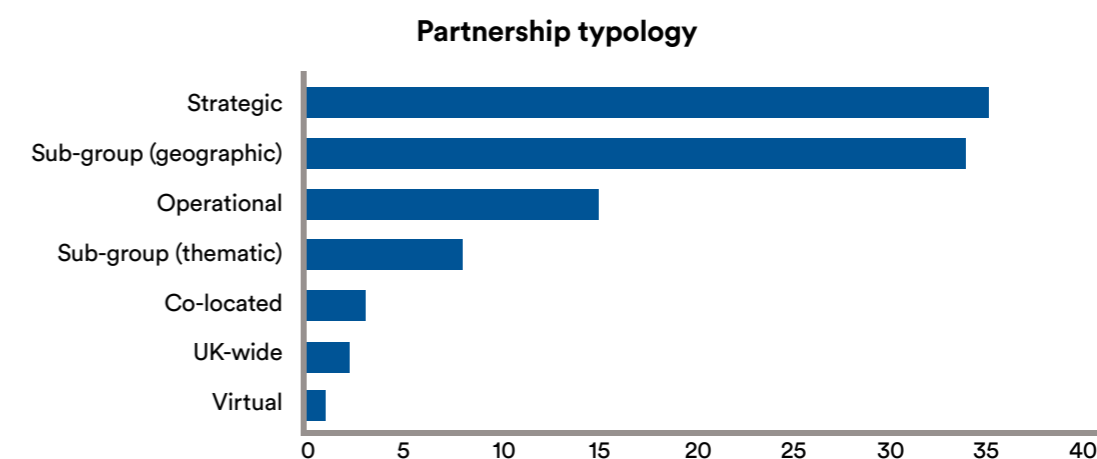


Figure 1: Breakdown of partnership types

The results of the spring 2017 survey that informed the original ‘Collaborating for Freedom’ report indicated that most areas of the UK had in place some form of multi-agency partnership tasked with responding to modern slavery. Since then, our follow-up research shows that partnerships are continuing to evolve around the country. A number of police force areas that lacked partnerships in 2017 have now established them, while the nature and structure of partnerships in other areas has developed and been augmented; taking on effective practices and lessons learned from other areas. In total, the anti-slavery partnership mapping now identifies that partnerships are in place covering 43 of the 45 territorial police force areas in the UK<sup>6</sup> (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Partnership coverage by police force area: 2017 -2019

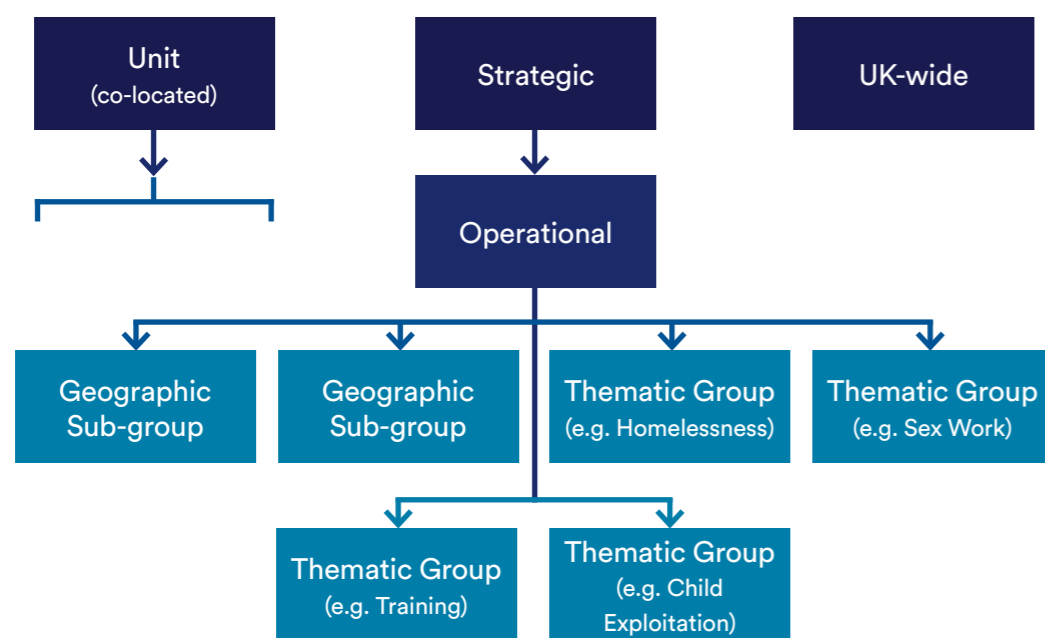
Sub-regional partnerships sometimes crossed police force boundaries; such as in the West Midlands, Kent and Essex, and the South West. Partnerships are however still most commonly organised along police force or county boundaries. Devolved nations i.e. Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, primarily have in place national-level partnerships. However, in this update we have seen that six sub-regional groups have

<sup>6</sup> This takes into account the counting of four discrete force areas in Wales, with Scotland and Northern Ireland both counted as single areas.

been implemented across Wales in addition to the thematic groups that were already in place to cover specific issues, such as sex work, training, casework, operational delivery, and leadership.

The original 'Collaborating for Freedom' report used partnership density, as well as overall coverage, in order to show the inconsistency of approaches across the UK, and areas where there was minimal activity. Our updated mapping shows coverage only – reflecting that partnership density or quantity is not necessarily an indicator of quality or co-ordination. Instead, we reflect upon a number of case studies later in this report that show how different location conditions (size, population, and prevalence of different issues) shape the formation of partnership structures that are geographically appropriate.

It is the emergence of these structures that has driven much of this analysis, the results of which can be seen in figure 3. We have outlined how partnerships are typically organised. Most follow a very similar framework with sub-groups feeding into either a single, or multiple, strategic partnerships. The operational groups then either feed into the strategic partnership as well or operate alongside them. Most strategic partnerships are formed at the county/force level geography, but in a few instances, such as the East Midlands, there is also an additional overarching regional partnership, used to share practice and co-ordinate activity and resources across county boundaries. In addition, the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) each have a set of multi-agency Strategic Governance Groups (SGGs) that include a focus on modern slavery. However, most of these groups are on hold whilst they undergo a national restructure, which is likely to involve modern slavery being adopted under a broader remit related to 'vulnerability'. Regional Co-ordinators, currently funded by the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit (MSPTU), provide a further option to collate a regional picture, based on their involvement in the many partnerships and single-agency meetings across each region.



**Figure 3: Typical partnership group structure**

Whilst there are many similarities in how these regional structures have emerged, it is necessary to highlight that comparing the approaches being employed in one region to another is difficult. The economic, social and geographic characteristics vary significantly, so it is not necessarily possible to prescribe a one-size-fits-all model. Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Devon and Cornwall are large geographic areas, where the West Midlands, Merseyside and Cleveland are relatively small by comparison. In

population terms however, the West Midlands has a larger population than both Devon and Cornwall, and Northern Ireland. Similarly, Cumbria suffers from connectivity issues, which necessitated the implementation of a 'virtual' partnership. Whilst not a formally established partnership, the ability to co-ordinate multiple agencies by phone and email enables them to deliver similar activities to that of the strategic partnerships.

The specific issues faced in these differing geographies will therefore vary significantly. However, we can report on a number of models of working that exhibit some areas of effective practice. For instance, Thames Valley (see box two) and Wales have a number of local geographic sub-groups, reflecting the wider area covered. In other areas, sub-groups have been implemented to focus on pervasive local issues; such as around homelessness or sexual exploitation.

## Box two

### Formalised framework (Thames Valley and Hertfordshire)

One of the key areas of development that have been observed is the creation of clear partnership structures in a number of areas; defining roles and responsibilities for different sub-groups. Two areas which demonstrate this well are Thames Valley and Hertfordshire both which have in place multi-layered partnerships with objectives and terms of reference. These examples reflect a wider trend towards the development of multiple thematic and geographic sub-groups that feed into higher-level structures in areas where the focus on partnership working has been more evident.

In Thames Valley three layers of partnership are currently in place across many parts of the police force area, while a number of other locations are currently in the process of setting up partnerships. At the top level, a force-area wide network group meets bi-annually feeding strategic input from the police and exchanging practices and information between localised networks. The top-level group consists primarily of co-ordinators and community safety managers from across the locality, alongside police. The local networks are formed around individual counties and urban areas within the region – reflecting the large geographic area of Thames Valley and the varying degrees of rurality within it. These partnerships meet more frequently, typically bi-monthly and consist of a variety of the statutory organisations operating in each area. Police, community safety managers, healthcare, safeguarding and immigration authority representatives are fairly ubiquitously involved across the board, and are focused on developing policy and procedure and have responsibility for local action plans. The third tier groups are intended to be more inclusive networks incorporating NGOs, faith and community groups who may have a role to play in identifying or supporting potential victims, with the purpose to raise awareness and share information around emerging themes and trends.

To assist in co-ordination between the groups in this large geographic area, the top-level group has produced an organisational structure that helps to situate each group in context (see figure 4). The value of this diagram is enhanced through the identification of gaps where they are looking to establish new groups. Development of all groups has been supported by an Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator within Thames Valley Police. This person attends all sub-groups, producing group specific intelligence reports and who has been praised for helping to direct activity and providing vital support to the groups. This structure was developed in order to accommodate the complex partnership

landscape in the Thames Valley, but that work is ongoing to ensure that the groups have the right focus and are attended by the right people within the right organisations. Whilst this structure is still a work in progress, and like much partnership work is subject to frequent change and reorganisation, it still highlights the value of mapping local partnerships and partners, and thinking about what gaps still exist.

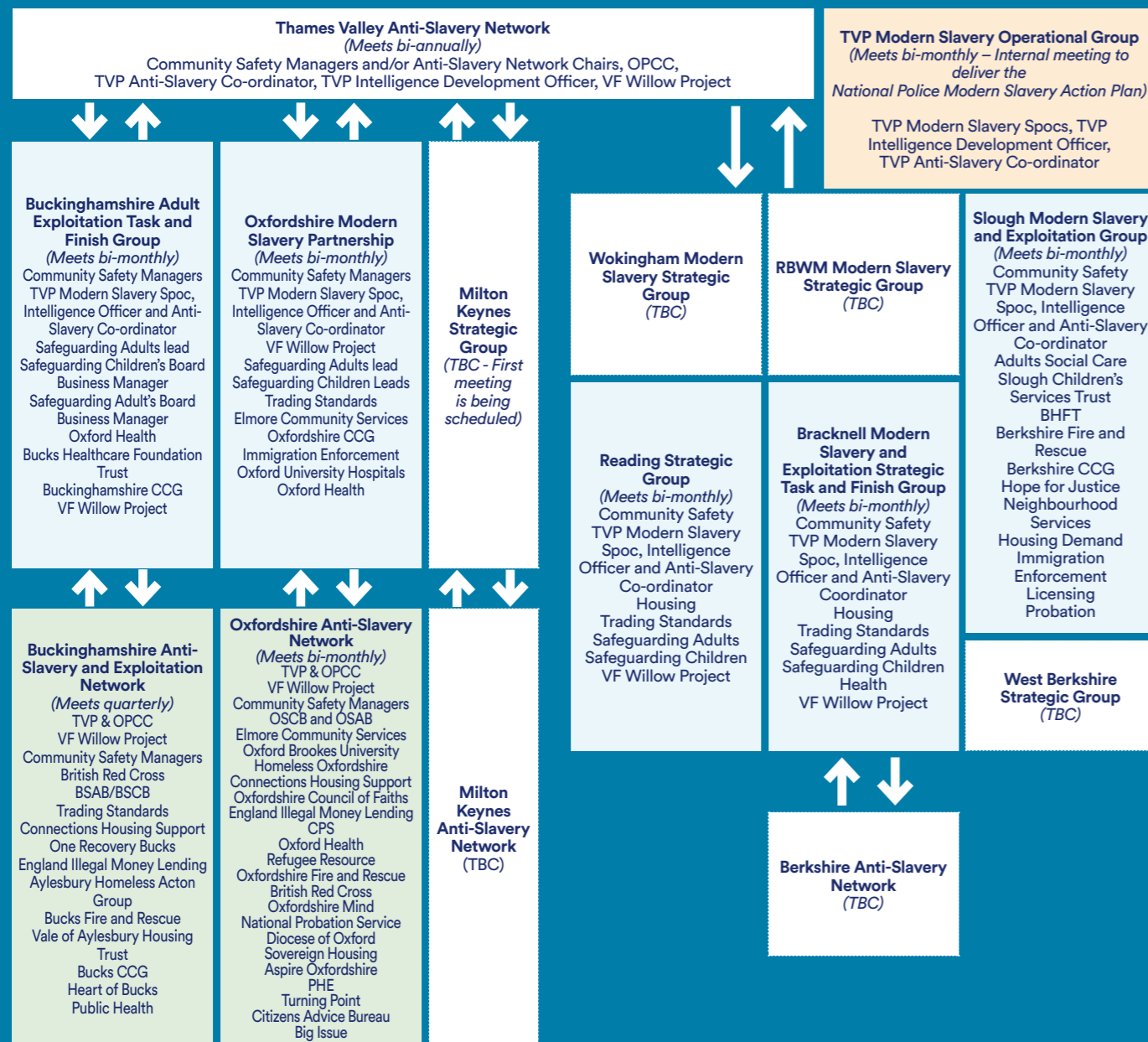


Figure 4: Thames Valley Anti-Slavery Network structure diagram

Improved understanding of modern slavery across many partnerships and their members has enabled this more evolved picture of intra-partnership organisation and collaboration to emerge. However, difficulties still arise at the regional and national levels as multiple agencies are given overlapping remits to tackle modern slavery, or serious organised crime more broadly. The exact role and activities of regional partnerships is also unclear indicating a need to better understand what should, or could, be taking place at the different scales. Similarly, existing regional bodies, such as the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) and Strategic Migration Partnerships, are grappling with the appropriate structures needed to ensure that the multi-dimensional aspects of modern slavery are adequately addressed. These difficulties are exacerbated by an unclear line of accountability at the national scale, where multiple agencies are attempting to develop policy and guidance. Where funding is being made available, it has been found to be temporary and ‘single-threat’ focused, forcing organisations into more siloed approaches, and away from the holistic partnership approach that is required.

## 4. Who leads and co-ordinates?

Following the trend of the 2017 report, partnerships are still overwhelmingly chaired and co-ordinated by police (see figures 5 and 6). With the emergence of more partnerships, particularly the geographic sub-groups aligned to local authority boundaries, we have seen an increase in the number of partnerships chaired and co-ordinated by local authorities and NGOs. The high proportion of police representation continues despite concerns raised in the 2017 report that a tendency for police leadership can be symptomatic of a high level of emphasis on enforcement, and not enough on victim identification and survivor support, reflecting some wider criticisms of the overall national agenda. This is also a view that has been reiterated by some police forces themselves, citing the potential benefit of others – particularly local government representatives and mayors – taking a lead in order to increase buy-in from a broader spectrum of organisations.

“Where it is police chaired, it’s police-led, all the comments tend to be kept from the police and actually it’s quite a struggle to get buy-in from the, often, very strapped organisations. So, in our county the anti-slavery partnership is chaired by the county council chief exec, which is good [...] He doesn’t necessarily drive that work, but the fact he chairs it causes people to turn up, so I’ve got an audience to get the work to be done.”<sup>7</sup>

Which organisations chair multi-agency partnerships

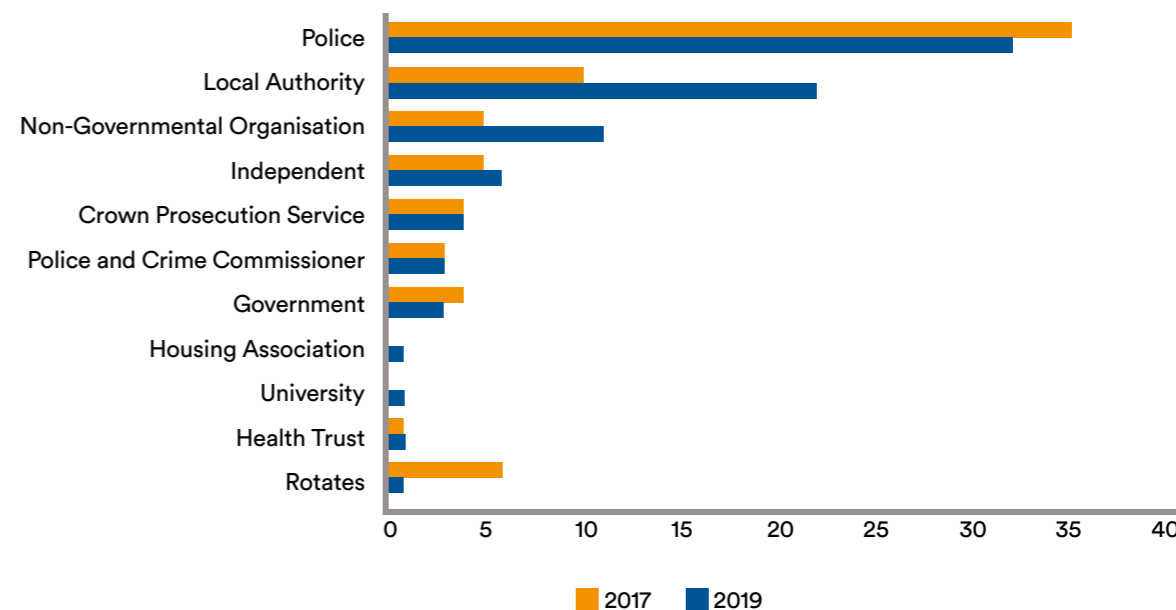


Figure 5: Which organisations chair multi-agency partnerships?

<sup>7</sup> Interview with a police Detective Chief Inspector, 9th March 2018.



Which organisations co-ordinate multi-agency partnerships

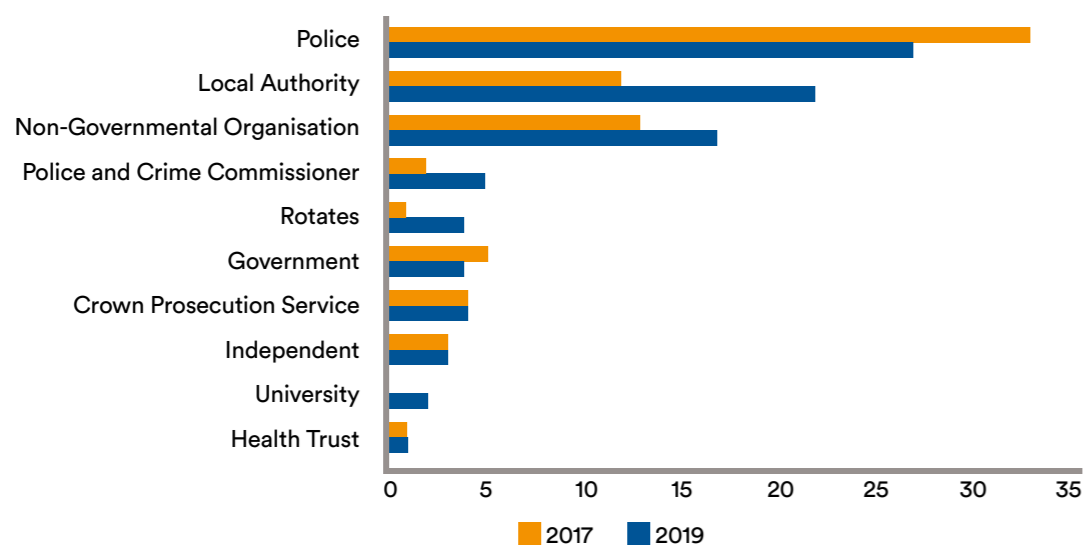


Figure 6: Which organisations co-ordinate multi-agency partnerships?

The prevalence of police as both chairs and co-ordinators of multi-agency partnerships perhaps reflects that the initial ‘push’ of the modern slavery agenda came from the perspective of enforcement; triggered by the passing of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015. But this also reflects, in part, a policing acknowledgement that modern slavery is not a problem that can be managed effectively through enforcement alone. And in this respect, the policing drive for partnerships, and the involvement of other statutory and non-statutory organisations can be considered as a recognition of the need for a joined-up and victim-focused response.

The continued pervasiveness of police officers as core convenors of anti-slavery work may also be symptomatic of funding gaps around partnership work. Because of this the continuity of partnerships has often proven reliant on the enthusiasm and commitment of a few local ‘policy entrepreneurs’,<sup>8</sup> and in cases where these individuals have changed job roles or moved on to new organisations, partnership work has often stalled – or ceased entirely. Some areas have mitigated against this issue through funded partnership co-ordinators. However, the dedicated funding is sparse, and reliant on the commitment of PCCs or fundraising work conducted by local charities and authorities.

<sup>8</sup> Gardner, A (2018) An idea whose time has come? Modern Slavery, Multiple Streams Approach and Multi-Layer Policy Implementation, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 10 (3), 461–481, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huy022>

## 5. Which other organisations are involved?

As expected, the general membership of the partnerships is also dominated by the police, but is much more closely matched by NGOs and local authorities – see figure 7. The majority of the remaining members listed are other government agencies, in particular Immigration, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Member categories (abridged)

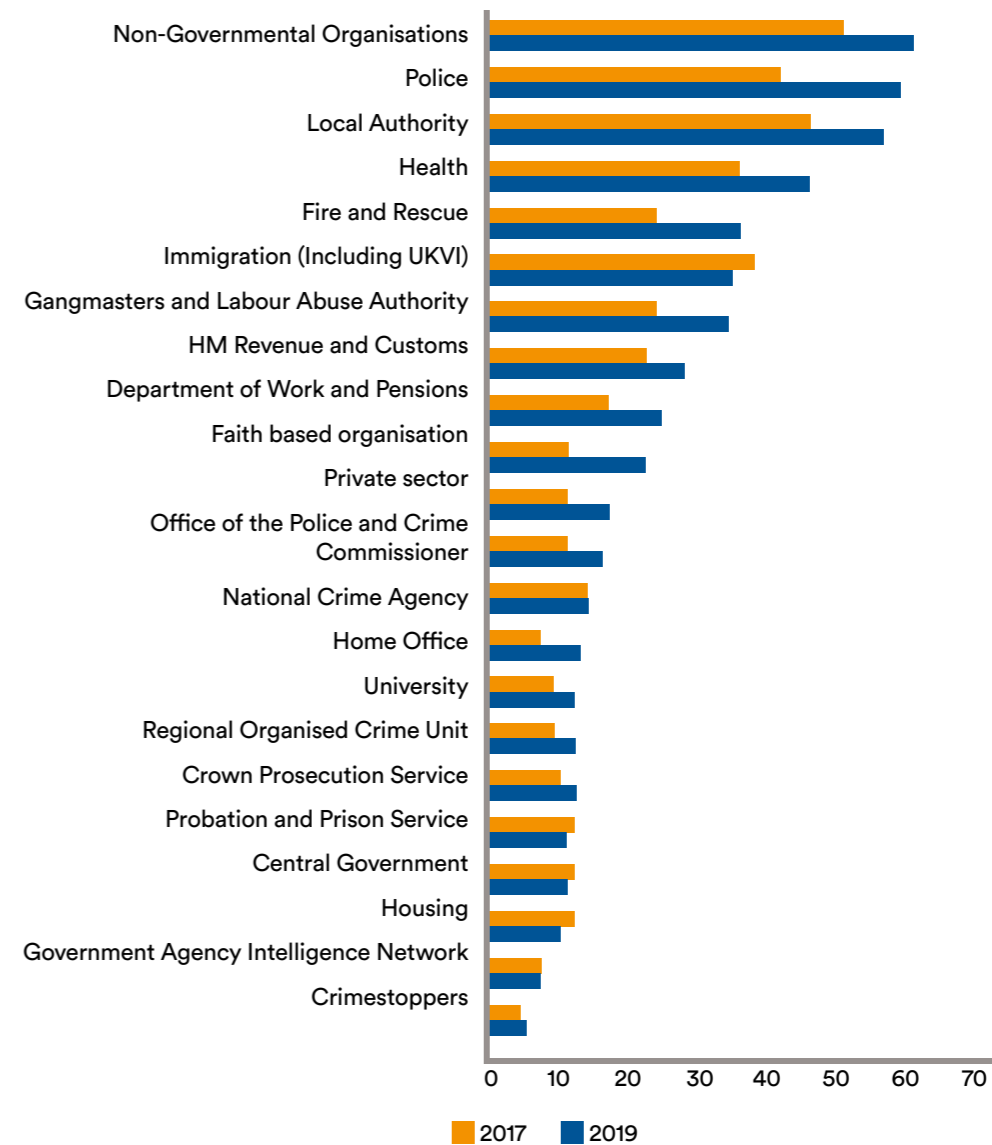


Figure 7: Categorized list of members of modern slavery partnerships<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Chart abridged to include only organisations with three or more occurrences recorded.

Looking closely at the breadth of local authority involvement in modern slavery we can see many of the different local authority departments that are involved, in particular safeguarding, community safety, trading standards, public health, and social care – see figure 8. This broader engagement of local authorities emphasises the awareness of wider factors influencing modern slavery, and underlines the need for a multi-agency, and preventative (rather than just prosecutorial) approach.



Figure 8: Local authority departments involved in partnerships

## 6. What do partnerships do?

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of activity their partnership engaged in, derived from a list used in the original 2017 survey. The types of activity being undertaken by partnerships were generally identified as being similar to those identified in 2017, with areas such as community outreach, the delivery of training to frontline practitioners and intelligence remaining the most common (see figure 9).

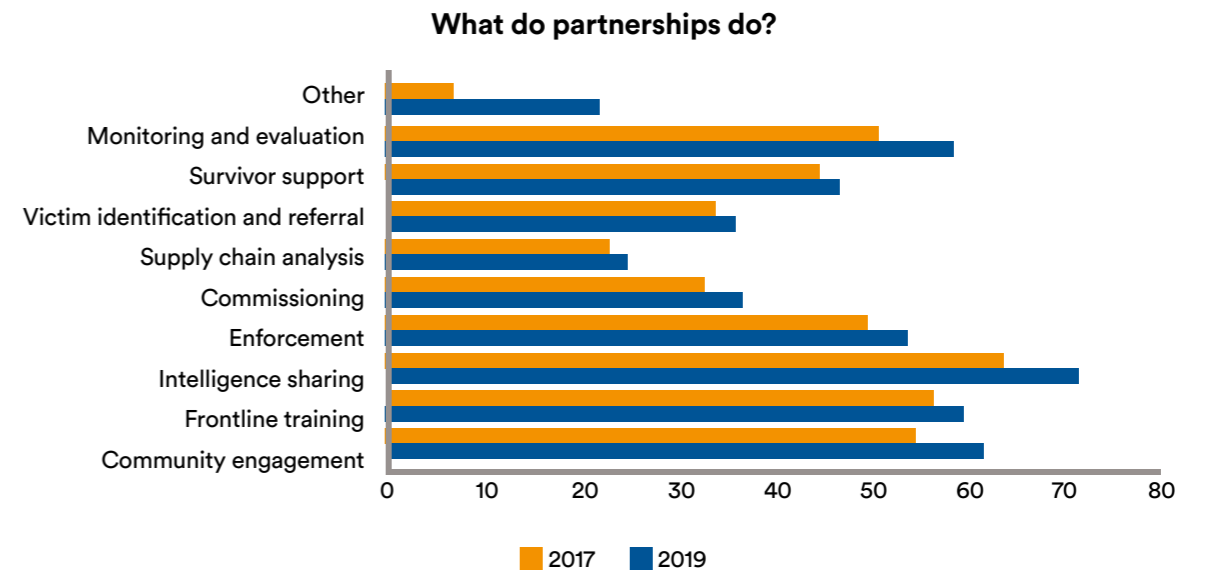


Figure 9: Activities undertaken by partnerships

More partnerships are developing or engaging in strategies for victim identification and support. Recent innovations include victim navigator support schemes from both Hope for Justice and Justice and Care, working alongside a number of police forces. In the West Midlands a pre-NRM support service called Safe Place has been developed, due to a recognised gap in accommodation and support provision pre-NRM. Some local authorities have also engaged in learning about long term statutory provision for survivors via a Home Office pilot scheme. However, this area remains in flux due to uncertainty over commissioning processes for the victim care contract, and inconsistent funding streams.

It was interesting to note that two years on from our original research, trends in the types of activity being undertaken remained consistent. Like 2017, most partnerships stated that they were undertaking to monitor progress, however most also reflected that this was not systematic and was often limited to counting the numbers of people trained or exposed to awareness-raising materials – rather than more robust evaluation regarding the impact or success of undertaking different activities.

Work around supply chains remains the most infrequently undertaken category of work, mirroring our findings from 2017 and reflecting that business engagement as a whole was still limited – despite increasing acknowledgement of the role business can play (see box three), and continued enthusiasm for business engagement in work, particularly related to that around prevention.

### Box three

## Engaging businesses in anti-slavery activities

Successful engagement of businesses in partnership activity has been very limited. Whilst some partnerships showed promising signs of activity – including expanding frontline staff training across private sector businesses (Swindon and Wiltshire), securing sponsorship to support community awareness raising campaigns (Lancashire), a business focused newsletter and podcast (East Midlands) and the creation of a high-level and active business sub-group (Greater Manchester) – an inability to secure long term involvement of local business was reported across a large number of partnerships. This was considered to be a barrier to impact, and wasn't just centred around adherence to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act and the completion of a transparency statement. Concern was more focused on the lack of strategic involvement in community-wide activities and in the longer-term support of survivors – specifically to address the need for employment opportunities. The approach of City Hearts' integration support programme, which includes employment opportunities provided in partnership with the Co-op's 'Bright Future' initiative, continued to be referenced as vital in delivering sustainable survivor futures. This programme was highlighted in the 2017 report, and has since expanded to include more companies, but many partnerships still lack this kind of engagement from businesses.

## 7. How do partnerships measure progress?

Partnerships are showing increasing signs of maturity and formality. The number of partnerships with formalised action plans showed an increase of just over 10% when compared with figures from 2017 (see figure 10). Similar trends are evident for governance documentation, where just over 70% of partnerships now have in place governance documentation, up from just under 65% in 2017 (see figure 11).

While on the surface, partnership working appears to be developing and becoming more formalised, these figures show that by early 2019 almost one third of partnerships still did not have basic governance documentation in place, and a significant number still did not have action plans in place.

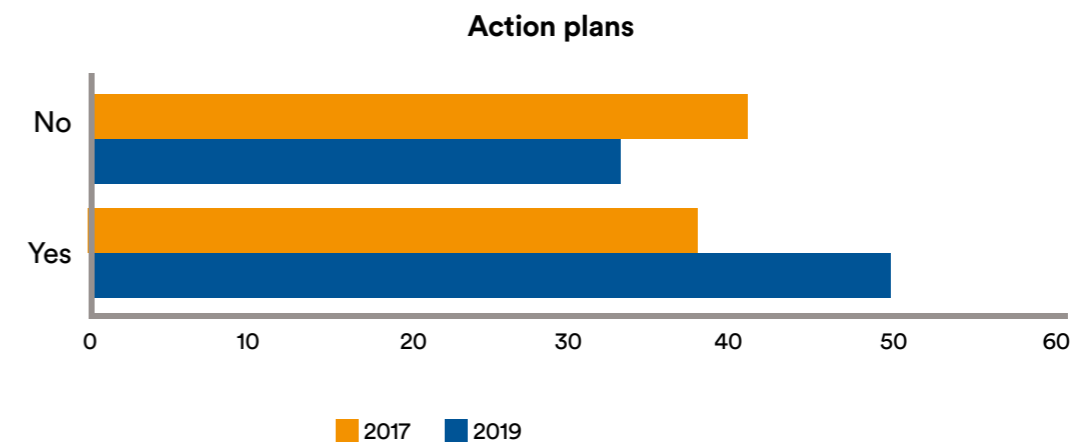


Figure 10: Action plans

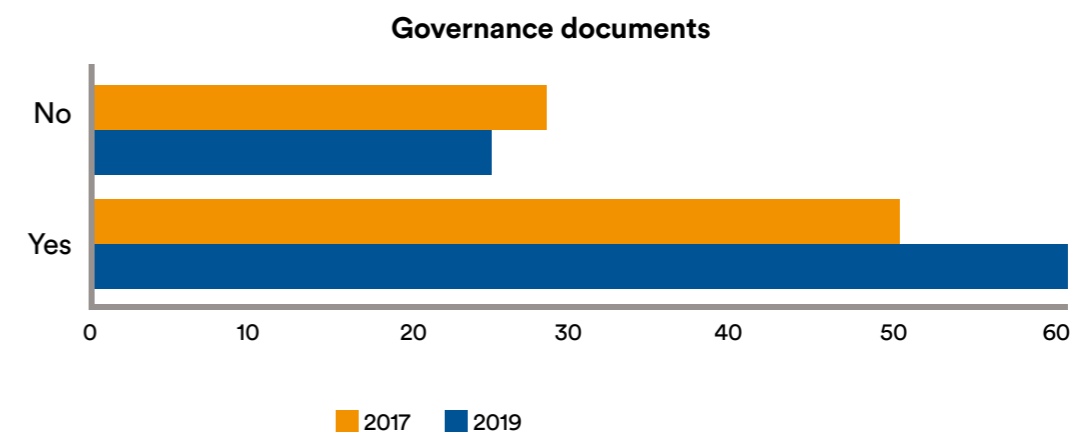


Figure 11: Governance documentation

Monitoring and evaluating the progress of anti-slavery efforts is an increasingly prominent topic, and one that has emerged frequently throughout the research. But despite being singled out as an important area, and one where work was needed, efforts to develop means and measures to evaluate the progress of partnerships have shown little change since 2017 (see figure 12).

## Box four

### Delivering outcomes and performance measurement

Since the initial partnership mapping in 2017, the University of Nottingham has developed a short guide on performance management for anti-slavery partnerships to encourage partnerships to think in more depth about how progress can be monitored.<sup>10</sup> The guide builds upon an action research report, which highlighted deficiencies in shared vision, lack of resources to collect data, and concerns of data sharing, and these areas still appear to be significant sticking points for partnerships.

The guide itself provides a number of tools to assist with assessing partnership performance and contains a number of resources to help partnerships to set and articulate clear goals, to identify and disseminate areas of strength and good practice, identify areas for improvement and to monitor and evaluate performance to inform decision making and future planning.

As identified in the 2017 report, and again in 2019 above, only a small number of partnerships are able to measure their progress. When they do measure activity, it is usually only a measure of what outputs have taken place. This can be linked back to the need for stable funding and the provision of a dedicated co-ordinator, who can successfully gather the intelligence required and carry out appropriate monitoring and evaluation. Without this resource it is not realistic to expect intensive performance measurement activity to be achieved on top of partners' existing responsibilities.

To try to overcome this challenge, elements of the short guide to performance management, highlighted above, are also included in section 10.3 of this report, focussing on what a good partnership looks like. But to support performance management of partnerships, there also needs to be more guidance on what success looks like. Given the complexity of modern slavery, it is an understandably difficult topic to address. Many people working in partnerships, and anti-slavery work more broadly, understand that there is no single vision of success, making the production of guidance on the subject hard to achieve. However, an outline (informed by practice) of what common objectives could, or should, be pursued, and how progress might be measured, would be a useful piece of guidance that could be provided by government.

<sup>10</sup> Errolinda A Ward and Alison Gardner, "A Short Guide to Performance Management for Local Anti-Slavery Partnerships," 2018, <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/publications/2018/november/performance-management-guide.pdf>.

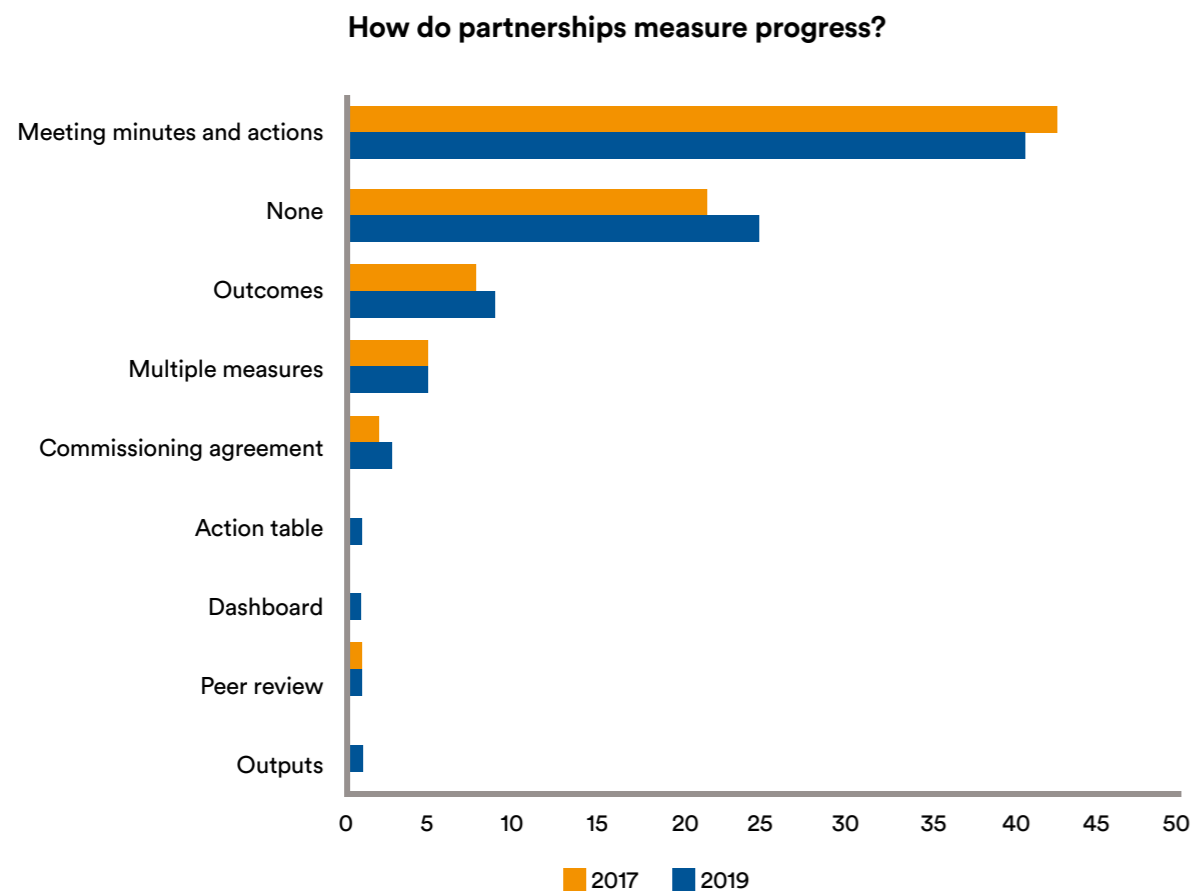


Figure 12: Means to track progress

In this area we see that the recording of meeting minutes and recording of actions remained the primary method of creating individual accountability, while a significant number of partnerships continue to report that they had no formal way of monitoring progress or actions within their partnership. Responses seem to indicate generally that although many are willing to acknowledge the importance of the need to monitor progress, most are hesitant to add additional layers of work or responsibility to already resource and time-stretched organisations. In areas that did have some type of progress measuring approach in place, their formality and rigour varied significantly across the board.

This continues to be a significant area of interest and with the emphasis and continued vitality of local partnership working, the need to better understand the work of anti-slavery partnerships is as important as ever (see box four).

## 8. How is work funded?

Resourcing, as with almost all public and third sector activity, is a constant topic of discussion. Concern was raised in the original ‘Collaborating for Freedom’ report that the majority of partnerships, and their activity, are currently funded out of individual budgets and staff time of participating organisations – referred to here as ‘mainstream’ funding – and this continues to be the case (see figure 13). Whilst many still see this activity as part of their role, the lack of specific resources for partnership activity continues to make it very difficult for any identified needs to be addressed and activities delivered. This has contributed to a common theme across the interviews that without resources partnerships risk becoming a series of regular meetings, with little or no actual activity in between them.

Our research from 2017 showed a divide between respondents that saw partnership working as everyday business for the organisations involved, and therefore not something that required specific funding, and those which saw a lack of specific funding as a barrier limiting the co-ordination of making partnership work and rendering it vulnerable to funding cuts and changes in organisational priorities.

Where dedicated funding does exist, such as from Police and Crime Commissioners, NGOs, or the police, the majority of this is only for secretariat and meeting hosting costs, still leaving a significant funding gap that hinders service delivery and other activities, much of which continues to be done in good faith, because it is linked to existing statutory remits, or is believed to contribute to existing organisational objectives. In some areas, partnerships’ member organisations work together to apply for funding to target their local needs, but this ad-hoc approach does not provide the stability needed for consistent, long term action.

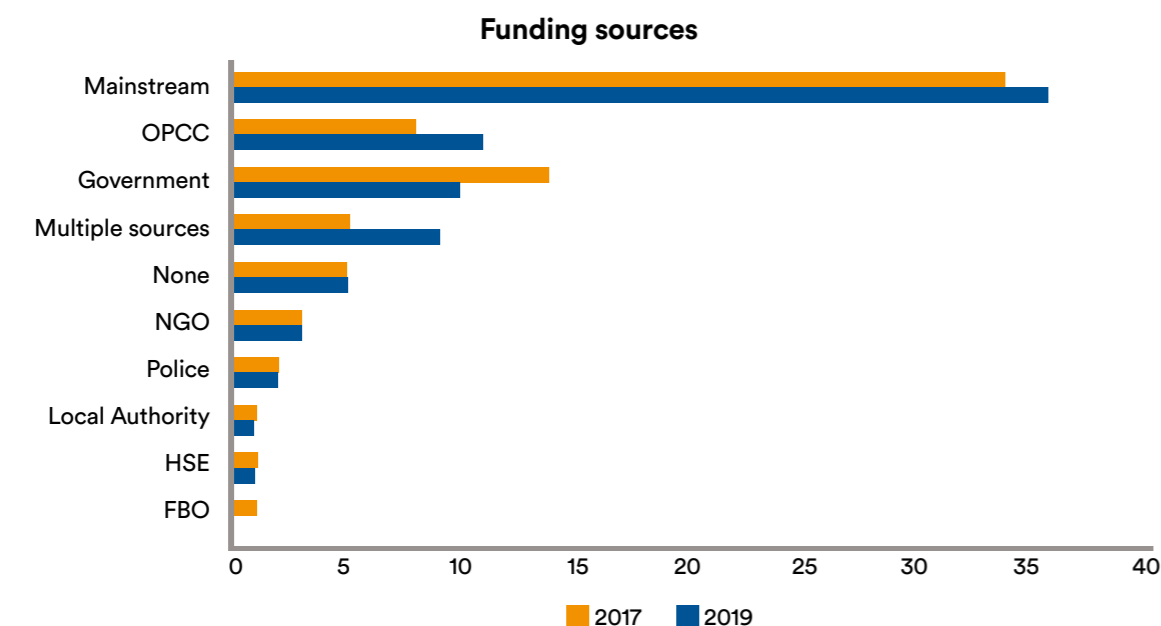


Figure 13: Sources of partnership funding

The value of having a dedicated co-ordinator with stable and secure funding is outlined below (see box five). Despite an absence of dedicated resource however, there are a number of things partnerships can achieve, and implement. A number of these areas of promising practice are presented in section 9.

### Box five

#### The value of a dedicated co-ordinator

There is a notable increase in the activities of partnerships if they are able to put into practice the action plans and activities that are discussed during partnership meetings, and have a budget with which to fund their delivery. The majority of examples of good practice highlighted throughout this report emanate from those partnerships with such a resource because they have greater freedom to develop ideas and to strengthen relationships with the partners who can deliver on those ideas.

More partnerships are securing the funding needed, usually via their local Police and Crime Commissioner, to provide a dedicated partnership co-ordinator, with many contracting their co-ordinator from an experienced NGO for example, Shiva in Hertfordshire, Stop The Traffik in Greater Manchester, Unseen in the South West, Hope for Justice in West Yorkshire, or Ashiana in South Yorkshire.

The ability to fund a co-ordinator for a sustained period of time is also vital. Six month and one year roles can help kick-start activity, but for this to be maintained, and for long term anti-slavery resilience to be achieved, a longer commitment is needed. Humberside recently demonstrated this commitment with the appointment of a three-year co-ordinator, which provides the necessary time to engage, develop, deliver, evaluate, and refine a programme of activities that can start to build that resilience. Where resources remain difficult to secure, the provision of at least a part-time dedicated co-ordinator in Southend, still enabled the good practice highlighted below in section 9.3.

In other partnerships, activity – including even the arranging of partnership meetings – has been delayed due to a lack of consistent administrative support, or has stalled awaiting the appointment of a new co-ordinator.

# 9. What good work is happening right now?

Since 2017, a wide variety of new areas of good practice have emerged (see figure 14). The most common response to our question of what good practice is taking place was still 'none'. This may reflect a lack of confidence in highlighting work as 'good', and underscore the relative infancy of anti-slavery partnership work. However, a new trend of more output-focused areas of good practice were highlighted by respondents. The 2017 survey focused heavily on input successes, such as awareness raising schemes, the rollout of training and improved intelligence gathering processes. While these areas are still pervasive, the 2019 results do begin to show the emergence of output-focused successes. Areas such as improvements to survivor support, prosecution and victim identification indicate that the time and resources invested over the last two years are beginning to show some tangible impact.

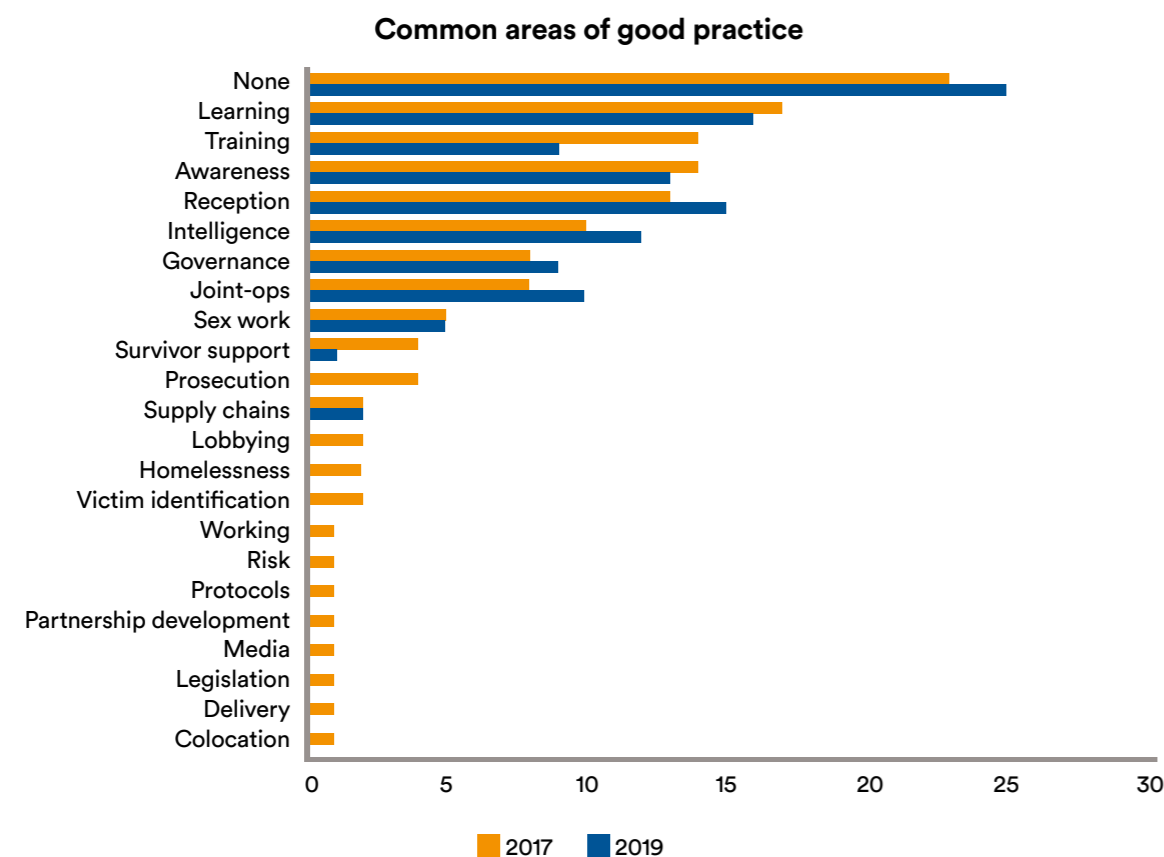


Figure 14: Areas of good practice

It is not possible to detail all the good practice that is currently taking place, but the examples below represent a cross section of both strategic and operational work, as well as activity that is being delivered in areas with and without dedicated resources. Whilst we acknowledge that the examples requiring more resources will not be possible everywhere, it is important to highlight what can be delivered with dedicated funding. Conversely, there is evidence that strong outcomes can still be achieved by aligning and mobilising partners around clear objectives. We believe that the following case studies represent areas of effective, and often innovative, practice across these spectrums of

partnership working, but would reiterate that this list is by no means exhaustive of all the good practice that is currently taking place.

## 9.1 Victim and survivor support

In Thames Valley, a new initiative entitled Willow Project has been launched as a mechanism to provide enhanced support across the region for victims and those at risk of modern slavery and other forms of vulnerability-based exploitation. The project covers sexual exploitation, other forms of modern slavery, financial exploitation, and criminal exploitation (such as county lines). The Willow Project predominantly sits outside of the NRM pathway and provides support pre-NRM, post-NRM or for those who do not wish to be referred into the NRM.

Funded for an initial two years by the PCC,<sup>11</sup> the project launched in September 2018 aiming to provide much-needed specialist support, providing crisis intervention services, advocacy and long term practical and emotional support; including provisions for carers, family members and community groups. The Willow Project undertakes to provide both practical and emotional support, in both helping victims to come to terms with what happened to them, and by providing access to housing, benefits, education and employment, assistance through court processes, advocating at meetings, to hospital visits and arranging food and clothes parcels.

Thames Valley covers three counties; Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Within Willow, each county has a separate hub with a 'Crisis and Support Co-ordinator' and two support workers who are specifically tasked with supporting anyone affected by any form of exploitation. The service was developed to support adults, but they have provided support for cases involving children where required and there has been a gap in service provision. The scheme is offered as part of the Thames Valley 'Victims First' programme which aims to provide free emotional and practical support to all victims and witnesses of crime or abuse, as well as family members of victims; regardless of whether crimes have been reported to or are under investigation by the police.

## 9.2 Co-located anti-slavery work: Programme Challenger

Perhaps the most developed example of anti-slavery infrastructure comes from Greater Manchester, and Programme Challenger. Although Challenger itself targets all forms of serious and organised crime, modern slavery forms a dedicated work stream with dedicated resource within the programme. Since 2015, challenger has hosted a multi-agency modern slavery co-ordination unit; covering the full spectrum of activities related to victim identification, awareness raising and training and the development and implementation of operational strategies to prevent and respond to modern slavery.

At the heart of Programme Challenger is a co-located, multi-agency team whose role is to oversee and co-ordinate activity to tackle organised crime – including modern slavery – across Greater Manchester (see figure 15). This team undertakes to gather information and intelligence, to map suspect groups and where they operate, and to put strategies in place to target, disrupt and prosecute the organised criminal gangs responsible. Embedded within each of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester there is an operational Challenger team, whose role is to manage the organised crime threat on a local level through neighbourhood-based partnership arrangements using various overt and covert tactics.

<sup>11</sup> Thames Valley PCC has committed to funding a force wide Adult Specialist Support service for three years from April 2019, which will include the Willow Project.

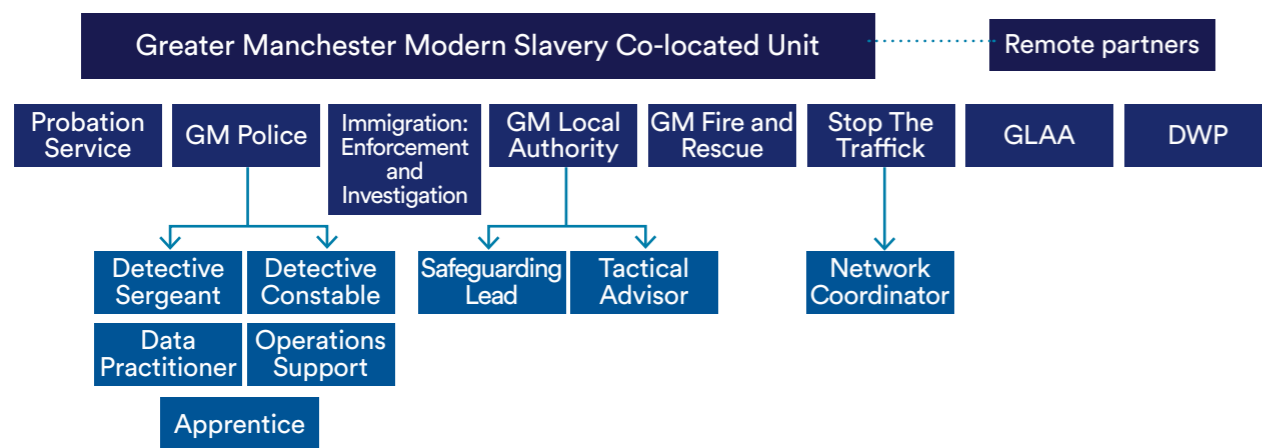


Figure 15: Greater Manchester Modern Slavery Co-located Unit structure

In addition to traditional methods of targeting criminals, these teams also use a variety of regulatory tools and enforcement powers to target people, gangs, businesses and premises where organised criminal activity is taking place. Moreover, Programme Challenger is committed to ensuring that individuals and communities affected by modern slavery receive appropriate protection and safeguarding. Programme Challenger works closely with local authority social care (both adults and children) as well as health services and voluntary organisations to ensure that victims are identified and provided with the relevant support based on their needs.

The alignment of this many partners across many facets of anti-slavery work is not without challenges, and Programme Challenger had to go through a process of learning the boundaries of what each partner can provide and is required to do. This process is facilitated by the co-location of the partners, and once these boundaries are identified the chance for partners to work jointly on activity helps to strengthen those relationships and what can be achieved. This includes improved intelligence pictures with more information now provided via NGO partners than the police, adding the 'bigger picture' to crime report data. Data sharing itself is also significantly improved, not just relating to the agreement of protocols but also in helping to overcome the common issue of incompatible data systems. Co-ordination of joint activity is more easily achieved, and does not require partners to wait for pre-planned monthly or quarterly meetings before being put into action.

The success of this approach has seen the emergence of additional co-located teams in London and Sussex, the latter part of the multi-agency Project Discovery team.

### 9.3 Faith mobilisation of community activism

In an environment where state-funded services continue to struggle with both shrinking general resource and an overall absence of dedicated funding for anti-slavery work, faith organisations can play a potentially key, and alternative, role in developing impetus for anti-slavery work. The national coverage of the Church of England, in particular, makes it an important partner in addressing modern slavery at a community level across the country.

Through the Clewer Initiative (an anti-slavery project which works alongside Anglican dioceses), faith leaders have been enabled to raise awareness of issues associated with modern slavery and human trafficking, encouraging wider engagement and action from faith congregations.

In Norfolk faith actors took a lead in convening a modern slavery collaborative. Together they have engaged statutory partners, pioneered approaches to victim support, linked with existing homelessness outreach, and developed new awareness-raising tools.

And in Southend, Together Free – a Baptist based network – mobilised the Southend Against Modern Slavery Partnership, which has delivered a number of high profile community awareness raising events that have received national attention. The success of this partnership was linked to their effort spent building trust. This understood that many of the partners have their own perspective and priorities on modern slavery, and that identifying each other's strengths has played a big part in the development of the partnership.

### 9.4 Slavery exploitation and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (SERAC/MARAC)

In Nottingham, the local authority's modern slavery team co-ordinates a Slavery Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC) alongside the police's anti-trafficking team. The SERAC was established following two cases of concern where it was believed that potential victims were being missed as their specific conditions meant they were not meeting existing adult safeguarding thresholds. Following the referral of these cases to the police and local authority modern slavery teams the decision was taken to convene a SERAC meeting to review cases – following a traditional Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) style model.

The SERAC provides a forum where suspected cases of exploitation, slavery and trafficking can be discussed, pulling together relevant practitioners so that information can be exchanged and appropriate plans of action can be developed and implemented. The SERAC aims to provide a structure where professionals can refer known or suspected victims of exploitation, so that the multi-agency group can explore, investigate, discuss, and plan actions to safeguard victims.

Between May and October 2019, SERAC has dealt with 62 cases from across Nottinghamshire. These cases have involved a broad spectrum of exploitation types – often those which are less well known. Pervasive issues the SERAC has dealt with to date involve cuckooing (a situation in which the home of a vulnerable person is taken over in order to be used as a base for drug dealing), financial exploitation, human trafficking, physical abuse and forms of labour and sexual exploitation.

Similarly, in Sandwell, the local authority has added an additional layer to their multi-agency response by operating an effective 'virtual-MARAC'. This brings together their partners via email and phone at the point of referral, meaning that an initial response can be formulated immediately and any joint activity can be planned without the need to wait for the scheduled meetings (see figure 16). Following this virtual scoping, response teams are established to support victims, pursue offenders, and disrupt locations. In the first three quarters of operation, Sandwell received 133 referrals (compared to 47 the previous year) from 23 different referrers. This led to 73 multi-agency visits and the screening of 250 potential victims of modern slavery. This approach, combined with the wider efforts of their dedicated – and local authority funded – co-ordinator, meant that Sandwell became the 3rd highest referrer to the NRM.

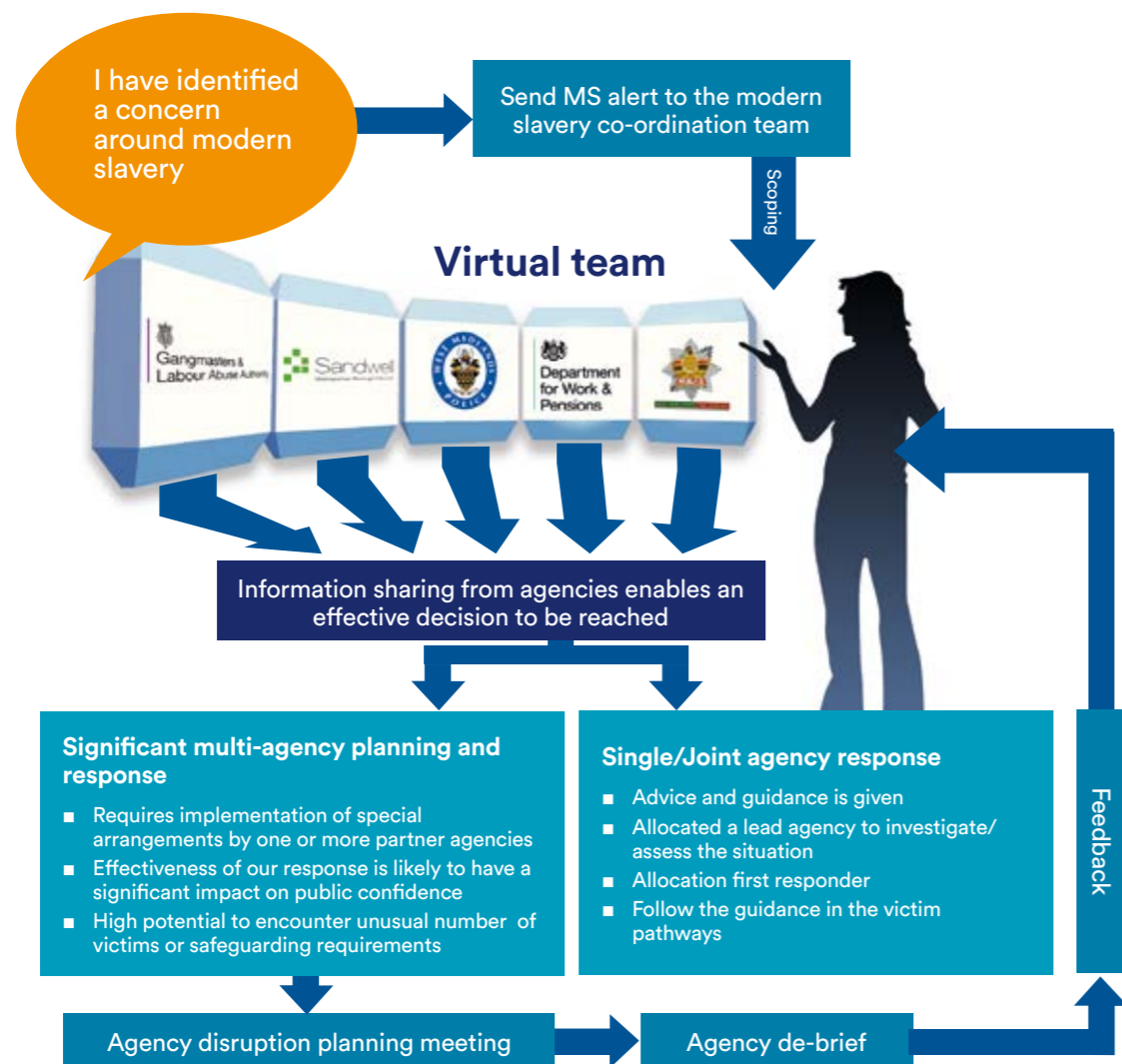


Figure 16: Sandwell virtual MARAC and multi-agency operating protocol

## 10. What does a good partnership look like?

Following both the interviews and our workshop with partnership representatives it is clear that there is no 'one-size fits all' approach to anti-slavery multi-agency partnership work. The complexity of the issue, combined with the vastly different contexts within the UK, means that what can be delivered, and how it can be delivered, must be determined locally. This complexity impacts what success looks like for each partnership, whilst the difficulties that exist in implementing effective performance measurement extend the challenge of what a good partnership might look like.

With this in mind, we outline a menu of options to consider rather than a prescribed ideal partnership, and underline that partnerships are in different stages of development, facing different challenges, with different resources, and with different levels of engagement from partners. Some partnerships need to focus on the initial steps, building trust, outlining partnership structures, identifying the problem, and agreeing appropriate actions. Other partnerships are much more developed, and are now considering how to deliver more nuanced approaches and sophisticated activities, whilst considering the options of how to normalise activity within broader structures.

### 10.1 Get the basics right and agree the scope of the partnership

Despite these differences, there are also aspects of multi-agency partnership work that are ubiquitous – particularly in the early stages – which can lead to more activity and help keep partners engaged in anti-slavery efforts. These are outlined in the 'Partnerships Checklist' on the Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit and cover key aspects related to function, membership, governance, resourcing, strategy, and action planning:

#### Function

- What would you like your partnership to do?
- Provide strategic co-ordination for anti-slavery work in your area?
- Provide operational co-ordination for anti-slavery work in your area?
- Share information and resources?
- Increase understanding of the nature and scale of modern slavery in your area?
- Involve the wider community in anti-slavery activity?

#### Membership

- Which organisations have you considered inviting to the partnership?
- How will your partnership engage with modern slavery survivors?
- How will you engage with the private sector?
- Are there existing partnerships/networks in your area or region that you should link with?



## Governance

- Do you have Terms of Reference for the partnership (including expectations for member input, meeting frequency, and a dispute resolution process)?
- Who will co-ordinate the work of the partnership? Will a sole member co-ordinate the partnership or can this role be shared?
- Are information-sharing agreements in place between members?
- Are partners putting modern slavery transparency agreements in place?
- Do partners have procurement and commissioning policies in place?

## Resourcing

- Have you thought about different funding sources that may be available to the partnership, including grant funding for specific projects, funding from statutory sources such as your Police and Crime Commissioner, pooled budgets, or philanthropic funding?
- What in-kind resources are available to the partnership? (consider offers of staff resources, student placements, loans of property assets, skills offers from NGOs and businesses.)

## Strategy and action planning

- Have you developed a strategy for the work of the partnership?
- Do you have an action plan?
- Are you planning work on awareness raising?
- Are you planning work to support victims and survivors?
- How will you monitor and evaluate the work of the partnership?

## 10.2 Develop a shared vision and joint activity

Without a statutory requirement to deliver activity, the success and impact of anti-slavery partnerships rests heavily on the motivation and energy of individuals in your partnership organisations. By developing a shared understanding of the local manifestation of the issue – potentially identifying key aspects of anti-slavery resilience (outlined at section 3) which are pertinent to your area – it should be possible to identify the contributions of diverse partners and how they might work together. This will allow specific actions to be assigned to partners, creating ownership over the activities, and helping to improve individual accountability.

Where appropriate this may involve establishing thematic for example, training, health, business, or geographic sub-groups within your partnership. This will help to align partners with similar priorities or at more practical scales, and help to keep people engaged in relevant activity. However, it is important to ensure that such targeted activity still attends to the original shared vision and that sub-groups regularly report back into their respective strategic or operational partnerships.

## 10.3 Monitor activity and consider the impact on outcomes

Whilst monitoring and reporting of activity can be an onerous task, there are ways to reduce the workload required. Effective monitoring can help empower existing partnership members and encourage others to contribute, it can lever in resources by making the case for the activities taking place, and it can enhance the local understanding of the issue and more effectively target existing resources.

'A short guide to performance management for local anti-slavery partnerships' was produced to help improve monitoring in anti-slavery partnerships, and recognises both the difficulty in achieving successful performance management, and the additional difficulty of attempting this with limited resources. To overcome these difficulties the guide breaks down the process, starting with an outline of the principles of performance management and examples of models that can be implemented. Goal setting and action planning using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) objectives helps to set manageable performance indicators that can more easily be monitored and evaluated.

It is important that such evaluation is communicated and responded to, and the results should not be seen as an end in themselves but as part of a learning process that can:

- ensure partnerships are on track to achieve their stated vision and goals
- identify strengths and areas of good practice which can be shared
- identify areas for improvement
- inform decision making, planning and resource allocation
- compare and benchmark performance, and
- ensure governance and accountability.

Successful implementation of monitoring and performance measurement, and crucially, the ability to link partnership activities to agreed targets or outcomes, will contribute to how we identify what success looks like. Providing a local response to this question and combining it with results and ideas from across the UK, will help key decision-makers to make the case for more resources to be targeted at what works. This will contribute to the final aspect to consider for a good partnership.

## 10.4 Evolving partnership working

Whilst there are variations in structure and activity across anti-slavery partnerships in the UK, many follow a similar format that brings together relevant partners to address agreed aims. This self-contained approach can help to enhance existing activity and raise awareness of modern slavery in each partnership area. Within some partnerships in the UK, broader questions are beginning to emerge, notably around how anti-slavery work can become normalised within broader structures. This might include questions over who the partnership reports into for example, a community safety partnership, or vulnerable peoples board, or somewhere else; how the partnership fits into overlapping activity and broader work on exploitation or organised crime; and what format and scale is appropriate within vastly differing administrative and geographic contexts.

The answers to these questions contribute to the evolution of individual partnership and local anti-slavery activity into a national debate and a unified response to modern slavery. In order to move through the resilience cycle (described below in section 11.1) and to strengthen anti-slavery activity, the following section outlines recommendations for leadership, engagement, accountability, and funding.

# 11. Strengthening multi-agency anti-slavery partnership work: recommendations

Our reflection on partnerships' progress since 2017 suggests a number of recommendations to assist in moving work forward. In many instances, these build upon those included in the original 'Collaborating for Freedom' report, and continue to highlight the need for a focus on leadership, engagement, accountability and funding for modern slavery partnerships.

## Leadership – national government should:

- establish a nationwide protocol to improve co-ordination between local, regional and national anti-slavery initiatives and encourage leadership and communication at all levels
- consider setting a small number of objectives for anti-slavery work at a local level, informed by evidence of frontline practice
- fund local partnership co-ordinators to develop anti-slavery work and consistently monitor performance
- encourage stronger leadership by local authorities particularly around enforcement, victim support, and procurement, for example signing up to the Co-op charter and providing modern slavery statements.

## Engagement – local partnerships should:

- encourage engagement with businesses that is non-tokenistic. More could be done to encourage local engagement with businesses at a community level so they can play an active role in prevention activities
- review training needs and provide resources to develop understanding of emergent models of exploitation, such as county lines, rent and cuckooing
- look for ways to involve survivors and survivor voices in setting objectives and reviewing the work of anti-slavery partnerships.

## Accountability – national and local anti-slavery actors should work together to:

- develop a small number of targets for anti-slavery partnerships based on evidence of effective practice
- ensure all partnerships have action plans, and have links to local accountability structures
- seek co-ordination with regional (and national) bodies to avoid repetition of activity.

## Funding – national government should consider:

- resourcing and promoting the activities of local anti-slavery partnerships through a collaborative local innovation fund
- ensuring that local authorities are funded to meet their role and responsibilities in relation to the anti-slavery agenda.

## 11.1 Aligning place-based approaches and building resilience

The intention of this report is to better understand the role multi-agency partnerships play in the delivery of anti-slavery work, and to enhance the successful aspects of that work. However, partnerships are not the only piece in the anti-slavery jigsaw, and we need to appreciate how partnerships and place-based approaches contribute to long term resilience and the creation of slavery-free communities. Broader work at the University of Nottingham is exploring how the adaptive cycle of resilience (see figure 17) can develop processes to ensure that place-based activities help to normalise and sustain slavery-free communities.<sup>12</sup> The approach described here, based on established eco-systems principles,<sup>13</sup> identifies four stages of activity, which are strengthened after each cycle:

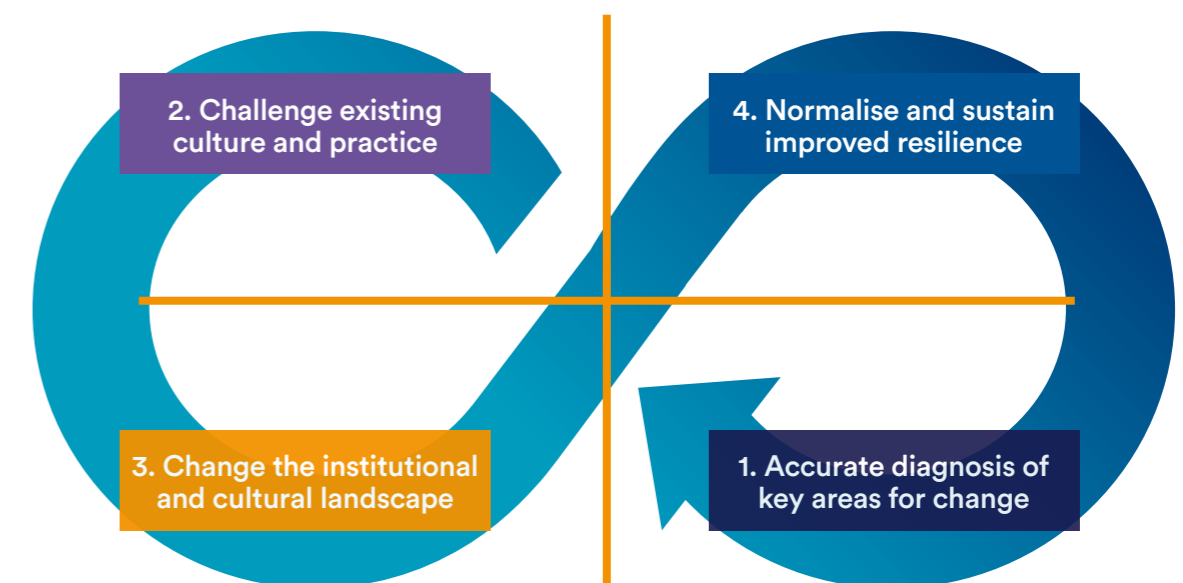


Figure 17: The infinite adaptive cycle of modern slavery resilience

<sup>12</sup> See Gardner, A., Northall, P. & Brewster, B. (2020) Building Slavery-free Communities: A Resilience Framework. *Journal of Human Trafficking*.

<sup>13</sup> The adaptive cycle comes from the work of C.S. Holling, in particular his 2001 paper on Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological, and Social Systems in *Ecosystems*, 4(5), 390-405.

**1) Diagnose problems and potential solutions:** The first stage in building resilience is acknowledgment of risk and vulnerability. Local manifestations of exploitation can be rendered more obvious by analysis of risk factors, and highlighting geographic, demographic, or sectoral weaknesses can enable particular threats to be identified. This process can also recognise assets within the community that can help to address different forms of exploitation. By using different tools and datasets, a cross-sectional picture can emerge that reveals locally specific patterns in social determinants of modern slavery, as well as potential levers for change.

**2) Challenge hierarchies and systems:** Having identified determinants and assets at the community level, a local asset-based community development (ABCD) process can be initiated, involving a wide range of actors in discussing and validating risk and vulnerability findings, prioritising and implementing action, sharing best practice, and learning from both community and global networks. Survivor voices are crucial to informing this process, and challenging existing systemic imbalances and weaknesses.

**3) Change cultural and institutional landscapes:** This phase aims to start shifting cultural and institutional practices, exploring what assets and innovation can enable change, especially in relation to some of the structural determinants that promote vulnerability to modern slavery. Alongside government and law-enforcement partners, media and business have important roles to play in creating the context to enable and embed change.

**4) Normalise and sustain practice:** This phase of the cycle considers what changes to governance, legislation and policy are needed to embed the positive changes identified and achieved. It involves monitoring and evaluation of progress to date, as well sharing learning widely, and initiating further governance change where necessary. The point of this adaptive cycle is not to see resilience as a fixed and finite endpoint, but to be continually adjusting and re-evaluating the local context to enable continuous improvement towards creating a community where modern slavery cannot easily be established or flourish.

Although not every problem can be resolved at a local level, by working together across key areas of action, anti-slavery partnerships can create a context in which it is more difficult for diverse forms of exploitation to take root and flourish.

## 12. List of identified anti-slavery partnerships

#	Region / Nation	Partnership
1	UK	UK Modern Slavery Training Delivery Group
2		National Network Co-ordinators' Forum (NNCF)
3	Northern Ireland	Joint Agency Cross Border Task Force
4		PSNI Engagement Group on Human Trafficking
5		Organised Crime Task Force Modern Slavery Sub-group
6		Regional Practice Network on Trafficked and Separated Children
7	Scotland	Scottish Government Strategy Implementation Group
8		Police Scotland Human Trafficking Champions Meeting
9	Wales	Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group
10		Wales Anti-Slavery Operational Delivery Group
11		Wales Threat Group for Modern Slavery
12		Wales Anti-Slavery Casework Review Group
13		Wales Anti-Slavery Training Sub-group
14		Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Regional Anti-Slavery Group
15		Cwm Taf Regional Anti-Slavery Group
16		Western Bay Regional Anti-Slavery Group
17		Gwent Regional Anti-Slavery Group
18		Dyfed-Powys Regional Anti-Slavery Group
19		North Wales Regional Anti-Slavery Group
20	East of England	Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership
21		Operation Pheasant
22		Bedfordshire Anti-Slavery Strategic Group (Gold)
23		Bedfordshire Anti-Slavery Tactical Group (Bronze)
24		Norfolk Modern Slavery Collaboration
25		Suffolk Partnership
26		Southend Against Modern Slavery
27		Eastern Region Anti-Slavery Partnership
28		Essex and Kent Strategic Leadership Anti-Slavery Group
29		Essex and Kent Tactical Anti-Slavery Sub-group
30		Essex Anti-Slavery Sub-group
31		Essex and Kent Charities and Volunteer Sector Anti-Slavery Sub-group

32	<b>East Midlands</b>	Derby and Derbyshire Modern Slavery Partnership
33		Lincolnshire Police Modern Slavery Partnership
34		Northamptonshire Modern Slavery Group
35		East Midlands Anti-Human Trafficking Partnership
36		Nottinghamshire Modern Slavery Partnership
37		Greater Nottingham Modern Slavery Forum
38		Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Modern Slavery Action Group
39	<b>London</b>	Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery London Working Group (LWG)
40		London Co-located Unit
41		Prevention of Modern Slavery in Croydon Sub-group
42		Modern Slavery and Exploitation Group (London Tri-borough)
43	<b>North East</b>	Cleveland Anti-Slavery Network
44	<b>North West</b>	Cheshire Anti-Slavery Partnership
45		Warrington Anti-Slavery Partnership
46		Pan-Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership
47		Cumbria
48		Modern Slavery Co-ordination Unit
49		Greater Manchester Modern Slavery Response Network
50		Merseyside Slavery Network
51		Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Meeting
52	<b>South East</b>	Kent Anti-Slavery Sub-group
53		Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Modern Slavery Partnership
54		Thames Valley Anti-Slavery Network
55		Pan-Sussex Modern Slavery Network
56		Brighton and Hove Modern Slavery Group
57		South East Modern Slavery Threat Group
58		Gatwick Modern Slavery Partnership
59		East Sussex Modern Slavery Meeting
60		Sussex Discovery Unit
61		Buckinghamshire Adult Exploitation Task and Finish Group
62		Buckinghamshire Anti-Slavery and Exploitation Network
63		Oxfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership
64		Oxford Anti-Slavery Network
65		Reading Strategic Group
66		Bracknell Modern Slavery and Exploitation Strategic Task and Finish Group
67		Slough Modern Slavery and Exploitation Group

68		Thames Valley Police Modern Slavery Operational Group
69		Berkshire Anti-Slavery Network
70	<b>South West</b>	Dorset Anti-Slavery Partnership
71		Plymouth Anti-Slavery Partnership
72		Gloucestershire Anti-Slavery Partnership Co-ordinator
73		Wiltshire Anti-Slavery Partnership
74		Devon and Cornwall Anti-Slavery Partnership
75		Devon and Torbay Anti-Slavery Partnership
76		Avon and Somerset Anti-Slavery Partnership
77		Bristol Based Operation Breakthrough
78		South West Region Anti-Slavery Partnership
79	<b>West Midlands</b>	Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Anti-Slavery Partnership Operational Group
80		West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network (WMASN)
81		Panel for the Protection of Trafficked Children
82		Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People (PVVP) Board
83		Wolverhampton and Walsall Anti-Slavery Partnership
84		Warwickshire MSHT Task and Finish Group
85		Sandwell Anti-Slavery Strategic Partnership
86		Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP)
87	<b>Yorkshire</b>	South Yorkshire Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Practitioners Group
88		Humber Modern Slavery Partnership
89		Leeds District MDS Forum
90		Bradford District MDS Forum
91		Calderdale District MDS Forum
92		Kirklees District MDS Forum – Strategic
93		Kirklees District MDS Forum – Operational
94		Wakefield District MDS Forum
95		West Yorkshire Anti-trafficking and Modern Slavery Network
96		North Yorkshire and York Modern Slavery and Illegal and Exploitative Working Group
97		South Yorkshire Modern Slavery Partnership
98		York (and Durham) Partnership



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