



CONCLUSION – BY CAROLINE VIRGO, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CLEWER INITIATIVE

Thank you for taking the time, during Lent, to consider the plight of children caught up in slavery in the UK and across the world. We know that many of these reflections will have been deeply troubling. It is because of these dreadful statistics and growing trends that we, at The Clewer Initiative, press on in our work.

Because the Church of England is present in all neighbourhoods and at the heart of many, we believe we have a unique opportunity to help strengthen communities, support families and protect vulnerable children from getting drawn into exploitation in the first place. This is the preventative work that we are so passionate about.

Unfortunately, for many children, it is too late and they have already fallen prey to criminal gangs. That is why spotting the signs of exploitation is so critical.

Anecdotally we know that some victims of modern slavery access services such as food banks, refugee and homeless services, many of which are on church premises.

This means that there is a high chance that church members and project volunteers will meet victims or potential victims of exploitation and be well-placed to take action, if only they know what to do.

For this reason, The Clewer Initiative has just launched Project SEE (Supporting and Engaging the Exploited) to help churches recognise potential victims of modern slavery, provide clear and effective ways to safeguard potential victims and know what to do with their suspicions of modern slavery.

Through Project SEE, The Clewer Initiative provides training and resources to equip churches and individuals to understand the 'nuanced behaviours' around modern slavery and know how to engage, offer support, advice, signposting and advocacy to potential victims.

We have worked closely with The Church of England's Diocesan Safeguarding Officers and Diocesan Leads to develop the project and provide preliminary training so that everyone is on board with the vision to support and walk alongside victims of modern slavery in our parishes.

If you have been stirred by the material in Children in the Shadows and are keen to think further about how you can support victims of modern slavery in your existing social action projects or in future initiatives, please get in touch with us by emailing clewerinitiative@churchofengland.org

We can connect you with your diocesan lead for modern slavery who will let you know about other projects in your area and support you as you explore the best way forward. If several parishes in your area are interested in getting involved in Project SEE, we can provide additional volunteer training and specialist support.

It may be that you are only just beginning to find out about modern slavery and are unsure how to respond or what capacity you have to help. If this is the case, please don't despair or feel powerless! The best thing any of us can do, is to pray and this is something we can all do, no matter how old or young or busy or isolated.

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When I don't know how to pray, I often turn to the Psalms. Psalm 10 is a particularly fitting Psalm for our ministry and one we use regularly on our County Lines course:



*Arise, Lord! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.*

*Why does the wicked man revile God?
Why does he say to himself,
“He won't call me to account”?*

*But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;
you consider their grief and take it in hand.
The victims commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.*

*Break the arm of the wicked man;
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness
that would not otherwise be found out.*

*The Lord is King for ever and ever;
the nations will perish from his land.*

*You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,
defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that mere earthly mortals will never again
strike terror.*

 Psalm 10



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SPOT THE SIGNS OR ARE WORRIED THAT SOMEONE MIGHT BE TRAPPED IN MODERN SLAVERY

As with other crimes, it is important you report any suspicions of modern slavery to the police. Do not attempt to intervene yourself, as you may put yourself and those around you – including the potential victim – in danger.



WHO TO CONTACT

If there is an emergency and someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

If you would like to report any non-emergency suspicious activity in your local area then call your local police on **101** or go to your local police station.

If you need advice or support on modern slavery, please call the Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700**.

It operates 24 hour a day,
365 days a year.