



# THE CLEWER INITIATIVE - 2024 & BEYOND

 **WE SEE YOU.**  
THE CLEWER INITIATIVE

THECLEWERINITIATIVE.ORG  
CHARITY NUMBER: 1186900



## FUNDRAISING GOAL:

to secure £2 million over the next three years to continue the vital work of The Clewer Initiative and place it on a sustainable and long term footing.

## THE CLEWER INITIATIVE – OUR HISTORY

The Clewer Initiative was established in 2016 as the national work of the Church of England to combat modern slavery. We exist to raise awareness and mobilise the Church and communities to take action against modern slavery, promote victim identification and provide victim care and support.

For the last seven years, the Community of St John Baptist (CSJB) or Clewer Sisters, an Anglican religious order of Augustinian nuns, have funded The Clewer Initiative. This financial support is coming to an end so we are seeking alternative sources of funding to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

We receive amazing support from the Church of England at every level but, like most charities, we have to secure our own direct funding. Being independent means we can create an important and unique space in which church and non-church actors can meet as equal partners and collaborators.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery and exploitation is present in every single community in the UK. It can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude and exploitation in criminal activity, such as county lines drug supply, shoplifting and cannabis cultivation.

Victims are forced, coerced or deceived into exploitation, often over a period of time, becoming trapped in a situation they cannot escape. Victims come from all different backgrounds and can be any age or gender. There is usually a 'vulnerability' that criminals seek to exploit such as homelessness, immigration status, drug or alcohol dependency or mental health problems.

## THE SCALE OF THE ISSUE

The Global Slavery Index<sup>1</sup> estimates that the number of people trapped in modern slavery in the UK is around 122,000. Many of these people are never identified or find formal support.

In 2022<sup>2</sup>, 16,938 people were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)<sup>3</sup> – this was a 33% increase compared to the preceding year and the highest annual number since the NRM began in 2009. Just under half (41%) of these individuals claimed they were exploited as children and 13% were victims of county lines.

However, the national context is changing. The introduction of the Illegal Migration Act is making many victims even more reluctant to come forward. If they do come forward, the amount of support available through the NRM and the number of victims being allowed to access it, is also reducing. For example, in the first six months of 2023, only 53% of Reasonable Grounds (RG) decisions were positive, compared to 90% in the same period in 2022. There are significant variations by nationality: 86% of RG decisions for UK nationals were positive compared to 40% for foreign nationals. These factors could result in more victims remaining in their situations and others being re-trafficked. There is very little data available on re-trafficking but experts say that the risk of re-trafficking increases if effective support is not received.

Modern slavery and exploitation is growing in the UK and worldwide and this trend is expected to continue due to the increasing number of vulnerable people in our societies.

<sup>1</sup> <https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2023/05/17114737/Global-Slavery-Index-2023.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022>

<sup>3</sup> The Government's framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

## THE NEED

There is an urgent and obvious need to raise awareness of modern slavery and equip individuals and communities to know how to spot the signs of slavery and report suspicions so that criminal gangs are disrupted and victims rescued.

Time and again, law enforcement officers state that the single most useful thing we can do at The Clewer Initiative is to educate the public about the crime. The Police and statutory bodies are entirely reliant on members of the public to be their eyes and ears and report suspicions. That is the only way the criminal gangs will be thwarted and modern slavery stamped out. Church groups of many denominations are present in all communities, yet The Clewer Initiative is the only organisation working nationally to challenge and catalyse churches to improve their response.

There is also a huge need to mobilise churches to care for the most vulnerable in society and help build resilient communities where criminal gangs cannot get a foothold. This preventative, public health element to our work is vital as it recognises that vulnerability in both individuals and communities can lead (often by increments) to modern slavery and exploitation. We seek to enable and empower churches to recognise and interrupt this cycle.



## A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Because the Church of England is present in all communities and at the heart of many, it is in a unique position to take action against modern slavery. We believe the will and ability to end modern slavery exist in every church community and that communities can be mobilised with no or minimal financial cost to ourselves.

Through the Church of England's cathedrals, dioceses and parish systems it can be extremely influential - perhaps the only institution in the UK with an ability to work through government and civic structures right down to the grassroots. We have sought to harness this strategic position by working closely with Cathedrals, Dioceses and local parishes, pioneering, resourcing and supporting projects and partnerships.

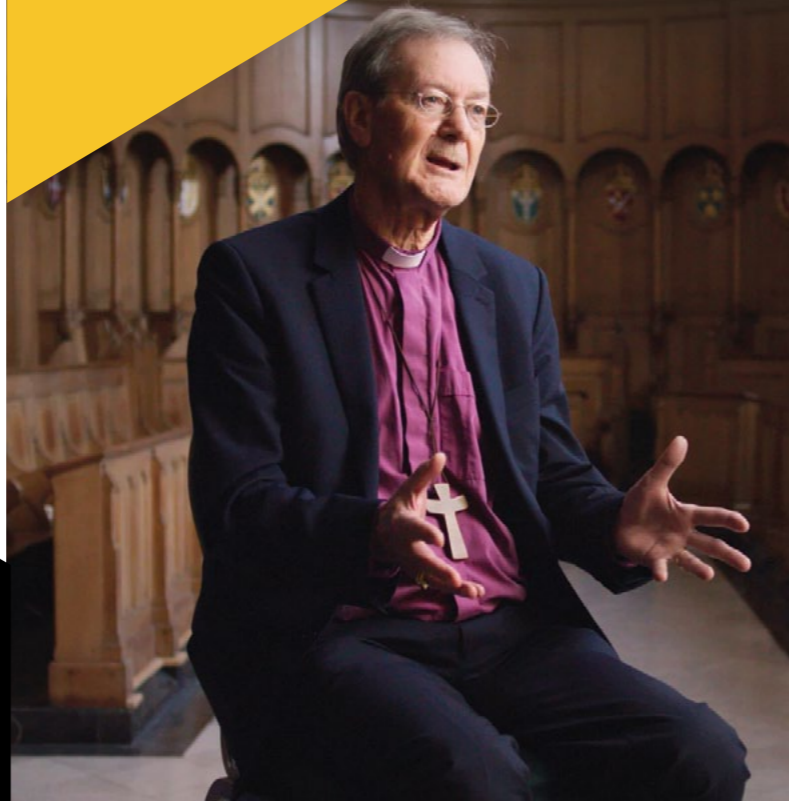
## OUR GOAL

Our ultimate goal is to create a preventative safety network for people in danger of slipping into modern slavery and exploitation. The Government, statutory bodies or Police don't have the resources to do this but this is something that the church can be mobilised to achieve.

## OUR APPROACH

We aim to build this preventative safety network for people in danger of slipping into modern slavery and exploitation by:

- Raising awareness of modern slavery through communication campaigns and new resources
- Pioneering anti-slavery partnerships and supporting grassroots action in Dioceses and Cathedrals
- Providing first-class training for frontline practitioners
- Helping to synergise and triage the care and restoration of victims.



## OUR PEOPLE

We have a board of trustees, staff team and extensive network of very able and effective volunteers.

## PROGRESS MADE SO FAR:

*"There is no other organisation in the UK doing the sort of work The Clewer Initiative is doing. Other charities implement good, regional victim care or strong campaigning work but The Clewer Initiative is unique in its reach and focus. It is able to bring together faith and secular groups as well as statutory and other community organisations to tackle modern slavery together."*



**Dame Sara Thornton,**  
former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

## NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND AWARENESS RAISING

In 3.5 years, **MORE THAN 100,000 USERS** have visited our website to access our resources and find out more about fighting modern slavery.



Users have visited the website more than **135,000 TIMES** and viewed more than 370,000 pages.



In the last 12 months alone, we have had an estimated **900 DOWNLOADS** from our website - this includes posters, toolkits, training resources and Bible studies.

**YouTube**  
We've received **25,000 VIEWS** from just five films on YouTube



In 2023, **13,426 NEWSLETTERS** were issued to our supporter mailing list which includes hundreds of modern slavery activists from across the UK

We have created four compelling, multimedia Lent courses:



## WOMEN IN THE SHADOWS, CHILDREN IN THE SHADOWS, JOURNEYS AND TRUE FREEDOM

- which have been used by churches around the world to learn more about modern slavery and begin to take action in their communities.

# PIONEERING AND SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS ACTION IN DIOCESES AND CATHEDRALS

We have worked at varying levels with most of the 42 Church of England dioceses, either on community-based projects or by sharing learning and knowledge through our network. We have a regional model with particularly strong regional hubs in the North West (Dioceses of Carlisle, Blackburn, Leeds and Liverpool), South West (Dioceses of Bath and Wells, Exeter, Gloucester), East Anglia (Ely Cathedral), South Central (Dioceses of Southwark and Chichester) and South East (Dioceses and Cathedrals of Canterbury and Rochester). (see stories section below)

# FIRST-CLASS TRAINING FOR FRONTLINE PRACTITIONERS

Over the last seven years, we have developed an enviable repertoire of training packages. We have trained more than 5,000 practitioners who have, in turn, passed their learning on to an estimated 75,000 people.

Our training has focused on the areas of greatest need and emerging trends within modern slavery in the UK. For example, we have a large amount of training on county lines as well as new resources to help Ukrainian refugees identify signs of exploitation and to equip people in the rural community to identify modern slavery. These are three examples of how we have responded to evolving threats and developed bespoke resources to speak into them.

We work with the NCA, police forces, local authorities and major charities to better equip a large range of people in the fight against modern slavery.

With more than 31,000 Social Action Projects in the Church of England, there is huge need to keep training frontline volunteers and safeguarding officers. This is becoming even more urgent as the number of vulnerable people in our society and those accessing church social action projects surges.

# OUR TRAINING PACKAGES INCLUDE:



Breaking County Lines: **TRAIN THE TRAINERS FOR FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS**



Understanding the **NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM** and the **ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACT**



Breaking County Lines: **TRAIN THE TRAINERS FOR SECULAR ORGANISATIONS**



Care sector training for **CHAPLAINS, STAFF AND VISITORS** in nursing homes/visiting housebound



County Lines **TRAINING FOR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND GUARDIANS**



Safeguarding and modern slavery for **DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING TEAMS**



County Lines **TRAINING FOR FOSTER PARENTS**



Safeguarding and modern slavery for **PROJECT LEADS**



County Lines **TRAINING FOR TEACHERS**



Safeguarding and modern slavery for **FOOD BANKS**



County lines **TRAINING FOR DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING TEAMS**



Safeguarding and modern slavery for **PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**



Hidden Voices **COMMUNITY MOBILISATION TRAINING COURSE**



Modern slavery and **HOMELESSNESS**



Refugees, safeguarding and **MODERN SLAVERY SEMINAR**

No one else has a suite of resources like us. We are the go-to resource for churches, safeguarding officers and people running church-based social action projects.



## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Clewer Initiative is a leading player within the Modern Slavery arena and widely respected by law enforcement, local government, charities, and wider faith networks. It has established significant partnerships with many international, national and regional organisations and is often asked to speak at conferences and share its experience of working in communities.

Key partners include the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit, National Crime Agency, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), the Mothers' Union and World Council of Churches.

One of our most high-profile projects, which has involved working closely with a range of statutory partners, is the Safe Car Wash App<sup>4</sup>. The app is an innovative solution helping to address the issue of modern slavery.



Since its launch in June 2018, it has been downloaded more than 40,000 times and received almost 9,000 reports, with many reports being referred to Modern Slavery Helpline and law enforcement every month. This intelligence has been crucial in building a clear picture of the hand car wash sector around the country, and has enabled law enforcement agencies to follow-up on numerous businesses that may be exploiting their workers. The Safe Car Wash App demonstrates what The Clewer Initiative can achieve - even with limited resources, we have been able to bring together key players within the sector to create a groundbreaking technological solution which engages consumers, helps identify victims and shut down illegal, exploitative businesses.

We are also developing an app for the beauty industry.



<sup>4</sup> <https://theclewerinitiative.org/campaigns/safe-car-wash>

## THE COST

To date, we have been funded by the Community of St John The Baptist. This funding is coming to an end in 2024. Our current budget is £600,000 per annum. We are seeking to find £2,000,000 over the next three years to continue the vital work of The Clewer Initiative and place it on a sustainable and long term footing.

### THESE ARE OUR CORE COSTS:

1. **Staffing** - £350,000 (a director, training officer, digital comms officer, business support officer and comms/fundraising officer)
2. **Infrastructure** - £30,000 (shared services, IT equipment, printing of resources)
3. **Travel** - £25,000
4. **Consultants for specialist work such as delivering safeguarding, schools / county lines training, resource development** - £60,000 (15 days a month, 12 months)
5. **£100,000** (expenses to help diocesan and other development - this is seed money at £3,000 per diocese.)

**TOTAL: £565,000 PER YEAR**

If we secure funding for the next three years, we will continue to focus on our goal of creating a preventative safety network for people in danger of slipping into modern slavery and exploitation. We will achieve this by raising awareness, pioneering action through Dioceses and Cathedrals and providing bespoke training.

The above costs reflect most of our current operational structures. The main change is the appointment of a training officer so we can strengthen our networking and development function. We would like to increase the impact of our training - following up with trainers and pioneering further long-term action off the back of training. The diocesan seed money is also a new feature - feedback from Dioceses has said that a cash injection to make things happen is often needed.



*"The Clewer Initiative is playing a vital role in the life and mission of the church. It is keeping modern slavery on the agenda of the church and educating all of us on the latest trends and issues. Without The Clewer Initiative, the UK church and modern slavery sector as a whole would be the poorer."*

**The Most Reverend & Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York.**



# STORIES OF SUCCESS

## 1. Diocese of Leeds

In Summer 2023, The Clewer Initiative worked with partners in the Diocese of Leeds to bring together dozens of frontline workers and leaders of the Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist and Christian faith communities, as well as representatives from the local authority, NHS and Police, to consider how to tackle modern slavery in Bradford and beyond. As a result of the day-event, they now hope to form an anti-slavery partnership.

## 2. Diocese of Blackburn

In July 2023, The Clewer Initiative attended The Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show and spoke to hundreds of people about modern slavery. The agricultural show provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the issue of modern slavery in rural communities and launch our new rural toolkit.



**Bishop of Bradford, Toby Howarth, comments:**

*"We have benefitted enormously from the support of The Clewer Initiative. The Clewer Initiative is a wonderful national initiative which has been leading the fight against modern slavery in our country. It specialises in helping Dioceses build on its national perspective and bringing people together to forge effective partnerships."*

**Anton Muller, County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Lancashire, explains:**

*"We are so grateful for the support and input provided by The Clewer Initiative. They have introduced us to lots of others working within the sector and shared resources and best practice from other counties."*

## 3. Diocese of Carlisle

In May 2023, around 80 representatives from the Police, Fire Service, NHS, Local Government, Churches, Probation Services, Third Sector as well as regional partners from the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership, The Salvation Army, Medaille and The Clewer Initiative gathered to discuss how modern slavery can be tackled more effectively in Cumbria.

The Clewer Initiative provided support to Churches Together in Cumbria and Women's Community Matters as they planned the event and has continued to work closely with them, helping to establish a new anti-slavery partnership.



**Jo Phillips of Churches Together in Cumbria explains:**

*"The Clewer Initiative was amazing at connecting us with people from up and down the country who could share their experience of building a multi-agency partnership."*

## 4. Canterbury Cathedral

In June 2023, hundreds of people gathered in Canterbury Cathedral to mark Refugee Week and learn more about how modern slavery can impact refugees. The three day programme, which was organised by Diocese of Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral, Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) and The Clewer Initiative included a hard-hitting exhibition, art workshops for 100 secondary school pupils, a panel discussion and Q&A and a marketplace of stalls, showcasing various modern slavery tools and resources. Throughout the week, there were many opportunities to draw attention to the link between modern slavery and refugees.





## 5. Worcester Cathedral

The Clewer Initiative helped Worcester Cathedral organise a county lines schools day for 80 secondary school-aged children. As part of the day, young people enjoyed a specially-commissioned film, took part in a forum theatre performance and attended three challenging and informative workshops. It was a brilliant example of how a Cathedral can use its influence and position to teach young people about county lines.



### The Vice-Dean of Worcester Cathedral, The Reverend Canon Dr Stephen Edwards, adds:

*“As a Cathedral, we are at the heart of our community and have a voice which we can use to educate, inspire and challenge. Our schools day was a powerful example of how to use this voice to fight the injustice of modern slavery and county lines.”*



## 7. Establishing a place of safety

Chris Elliott, a Project Lead and Modern Slavery Advisor for Southwark Diocese, became aware that there was no safe house for victims of modern slavery in Surrey. With the help of the Diocesan Secretary, they reviewed the Diocese’s property portfolio and identified a house that was not in regular use. The Diocese liaised with Surrey and Sussex Police and Justice and Care and agreed to provide a short-term place of safety for victims of modern slavery who are rescued and waiting to enter the National Referral Mechanism. In the last year, the Place of Safety has had nine overnight guests and six daytime guests.

This is a wonderful example of a Diocese providing victim care and support. It is also a good demonstration of the effectiveness of a local partnership approach. Working through the local Anti-Slavery Partnership and alongside Justice and Care and the Surrey and Sussex Police was critical in getting the Place of Safety established.



## 8. Providing early intervention in primary schools

A Clewer Initiative trainer and facilitator recently got asked to support four young children who were at risk of being drawn into county lines. He was asked to adapt The Clewer Initiative’s existing county lines material and use it to educate the boys about the dangers of county lines and begin the long work of showing them they have choices. He spent time with each boy, one -to-one, thinking about how you know who to trust, how county lines drug gangs operate, how the senior gang members are benefitting from their involvement and where it might lead in the long run.





## 9. County lines training for Cumbrian schools

The Clewer Initiative produced lesson plans for schools and youth leaders to raise awareness of the nature of county lines. The KS3 and KS4 lesson plans were created following feedback from teachers, youth leaders and statutory partners who attended the Breaking County Lines courses. There was huge demand for something that could be used directly with children and young people and act as a preventative tool.

The material is being piloted in Cumbria where they hope every child in Cumbria will get some sort of input on County Lines. To date, three schools and one Pupil Referral Unit have used the material in full. Other schools have adapted it and used it differently.

## 10. Training frontline youth workers

The Clewer Initiative recently delivered its County Lines Train the Trainer sessions to 25 team members of A Wilderness Way (AWW). AWW is one of the country's leading providers of residential care, health and education for children who have suffered trauma and exploitation. While the AWW staff members are hugely experienced and knowledgeable about how to care for vulnerable children, they felt there was a need to further develop their understanding of county lines, as many of their children have been impacted by this.

### The Clewer Initiative trainer comments:

*"It was a privilege to provide training to A Wilderness Way. It is such an inspiring organisation doing groundbreaking work amongst truly vulnerable children and potential victims of county lines and modern slavery. It is vital that all their teams have an in-depth understanding of county lines as it, no doubt, affects many of the children they work with. The team was so passionate about what they do and I believe they are now more equipped to identify warning signs of county lines and respond appropriately."*



## 11. Protecting Ukrainian refugees from exploitation

The Clewer Initiative ran a seminar in Canterbury for Ukrainian refugees to help them learn more about modern slavery and the risk of being drawn into exploitation by unscrupulous criminal gangs that are operating in the UK. The seminar has been turned into a toolkit which is now being used more widely amongst the Ukrainian community. The material is in English and Ukrainian and includes practical case studies and information on knowing your rights and staying safe.



## NEXT STEPS

If you would like to have a confidential conversation to find out more about The Clewer Initiative and potentially supporting the organisation financially, please email:

**Caroline Virgo**  
Director of The Clewer Initiative  
[caroline.virgo@churchofengland.org](mailto:caroline.virgo@churchofengland.org)

**Chris Elliott**  
Volunteer head of fundraising  
for The Clewer Initiative  
[rasocialjustice@gmail.com](mailto:rasocialjustice@gmail.com)

## MAKE A DONATION

If you would like to make a donation today, our bank account details are:

**Sort code: 83-91-55**

**Account Number: 11016838**

**Charity Commission number: 1186900**

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-our-vital-work-continue>





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