

! GETTING STARTED

- When you think about modern slavery, do you picture the victims to be male or female? British or international? Young or old?
- How would you define modern slavery? Do you think it is something you find mainly in big cities, towns or the countryside?
- Why do you think women and girls are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of modern slavery and exploitation?
- Do you think there are any misconceptions or prejudices that may make us less aware of women and girls as potential victims of modern slavery?

▶ WATCH BEGINNINGS
https://youtu.be/g3TM0_-OIEA

? QUESTIONS FROM THE FILM

- What struck you from the film?
- Did anything you heard surprise you?
- What inspired you?
- What questions does it leave you with?

UNDERSTANDING THE SCALE OF MODERN SLAVERY IN THE UK

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By its very nature, modern slavery is a hidden crime. The number of people in the UK who are victims of modern slavery has been subject to much debate and discussion, with estimates ranging from 10,000-13,000¹ to 136,000². What we do know is that referrals into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the UK Government's framework for identifying and supporting potential victims of

modern slavery, are increasing year on year and this number is likely to be only the tip of the iceberg. Despite significant progress in the UK's response to modern slavery, these crimes continue to be seen by perpetrators as high reward and low risk.

There are still many myths and misconceptions about modern slavery, most commonly, that this isn't something that happens here. Sadly, it is, and it affects men, women and children across the UK. In 2020, there were 10,613 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – 26 per cent of which were women or girls (2,752 referrals)³. Reflecting on women specifically, both sexual exploitation and domestic servitude disproportionately affect women and girls. There is also an increasing number of women who are survivors of child sexual exploitation being referred for support as victims of modern slavery as well as women and girls being criminally exploited by county lines drug dealers. Often, victims of modern slavery will be subject to multiple forms of exploitation.

Over recent years in the UK, there has been significant growth in the more informal, gig economy. We also know there can often be competition for businesses to offer and consumers to find the 'best price', whether that be for a car wash, a manicure or a takeaway meal. Yet is the human cost of this approach always fully recognised? In some cases, individuals working in the UK are not aware of their rights and may not realise they are being exploited. Raising awareness among workers can therefore be extremely important and empowering. In tackling modern slavery, there is undoubtedly a pivotal role for enforcement, for legislation and for businesses to prevent exploitation from taking place in their supply chains. However, as consumers, we also need to be more aware of where our goods and services are coming from. In addition, the role of communities as the 'eyes and ears' cannot be underestimated as whilst some potential victims will come into contact with services, many will not.

Over the past year, there have also been a number of significant changes in the external environment. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of victims and survivors and in many ways has created new vulnerabilities. Individuals who are desperate for work may find themselves accepting exploitative working conditions thinking that it is their best or only option. In addition, on 1 January 2021, the UK left the European Union and although the Government has set out its commitment to protect individuals from exploitation and unscrupulous employers, the new Immigration System has the potential to increase vulnerability to modern slavery. It is absolutely essential that the risks are monitored and mitigated so that the most vulnerable can be protected from exploitation and abuse.



DIGGING DEEPER

Why are women disproportionately affected by modern slavery?

There is no typical victim of slavery. Victims are men, women and children of all ages, ethnicities and nationalities. However, it is normally more prevalent among the most vulnerable or within minority or socially excluded groups.

Worldwide, women and girls account for **71 per cent** of the **40.3 million** people living in modern slavery. In fact, **one in every 130 females** globally is living in modern slavery.



There are many factors that contribute towards this gender imbalance. It can begin even before birth as many cultures place less value on girls. This can lead to sex selection and female infanticide. In many countries, fewer girls attend school and often have less access to medical care than boys. On top of this, laws can exacerbate, rather than protect women from modern slavery. Some laws prevent women from inheriting land and assets, conferring citizenship on their children, traveling freely, and working without their husbands' permission.

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT⁴



Globally, there are **122 WOMEN** (aged 25-34) in **EXTREME POVERTY** for every 100 men of the same age

15 MILLION GIRLS each year will never go to school. This increases the risk of child marriage and forced labour.

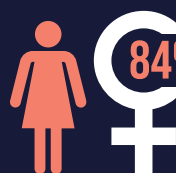
Only **2 IN 5 GIRLS** worldwide complete secondary school



13 MILLION GIRLS have experienced forced sex in their lifetime



Women and girls make up **84% OF ALL FORCED MARRIAGE VICTIMS**



1 Home Office [2014], 'Modern Slavery: an application of multiple systems estimation'
 2 Global Slavery Index [2018], 'More than 136,000 people are living in modern slavery in the United Kingdom'
 3 Home Office [2020] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2020/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2020>
 4 Global statistics taken from Stacked Odds, a recent report by Walk Free exploring how lifelong inequality shapes women and girls' experience of modern slavery https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/09024229/Stacked-Odds_201008_FNL1_LR.pdf