



GETTING STARTED

- When you think about labour exploitation, what sort of sectors come to mind?
- What do you think would be some of the signs that someone was working against their will?

WHAT IS LABOUR EXPLOITATION?

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit, NCA

Labour exploitation can take place in a number of ways. While some offenders directly control victims in the workplace, exploiting them in their own businesses for profit, or in their households and on their properties for personal gain or cost savings, others have limited links to victims' employment. In such cases, offenders control their finances and home lives, profiting through confiscation of wages and excessive charges for accommodation, arranging employment, subsistence and travel.

Victims of labour exploitation are usually made to work long hours, often in dangerous or difficult conditions, and frequently without relevant training or protective equipment. Offenders often provide and control victims' housing, and minimise costs through overcrowding properties, undertaking little or no maintenance and otherwise subjecting victims to poor living conditions. Victims tend to lead lives, isolated from colleagues and their wider communities, and have little or no unsupervised freedom or means with which to enjoy any leisure time that they are granted.

While the majority of victims of labour exploitation identified in the UK are men, women are also affected across a wide array of sectors in the UK. Overall, victims are most commonly identified in the construction and car wash industries, but women are more likely to be exploited in nail bars, or in hidden environments such as the food supply chain. During the COVID-19 pandemic when many public-facing businesses, including nail bars, were unable to open

due to trading restrictions, labour exploitation in such settings became unviable. As restrictions ease, these settings are almost certain to re-emerge as places for exploitation, and exploitation within supply chains will also continue.

Worker shortages that have come about as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU are also likely to increase pressures on sectors like agriculture and adult social care. Illegal working and unlicensed operators are likely to become more prevalent, and in turn, noncompliance such as national minimum wage or health and safety breaches are also likely to increase, creating an environment with an elevated risk of labour exploitation and other harms.



WATCH HANA'S STORY

<https://youtu.be/JovPvhUu1Ds>



QUESTIONS FROM THE FILM

- What struck you from the film?
- Did anything you heard surprise you?
- How did Hana's story make you feel?
- What inspired you?
- What questions does it leave you with?

DID YOU KNOW?



Worldwide women and girls make up

58% OF ALL FORCED LABOUR VICTIMS⁶



Worldwide women and girls make up

41% OF ALL STATE IMPOSED FORCED LABOUR VICTIMS⁷

Only **30%** OF PEOPLE ARE CONFIDENT OF SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF SLAVERY⁸



HOW CAN CRIMINALITY INFILTRATE COMPLIANT BUSINESSES?

Lysbeth Ford, Senior Partnership Prevention Officer, The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)

Is low skilled migrant agency labour essential for your business? If yes, then unfortunately you are at increased risk of exploitation within the workforce.

High risk sectors include agriculture, packhouses, food production, car washes, nail bars, care homes, hospitality, textiles, recycling and the cleaning industry - all areas in which women find employment. Where low skilled migrant labour is coupled with the inability to speak the language, the chance of exploitation is even higher. In many cases, women can be deliberately targeted because they are unable

to communicate. This creates the perfect feeding ground upon which organised crime groups exploit very vulnerable individuals.

The expectation to pay a work finding fee is accepted by workers as normal practice. They are told they can pay off the debt when they start work. However, in reality, the debt never diminishes. Accommodation is promised alongside work but in fact, there is no choice where to live and workers end up paying inflated costs for sub-standard accommodation, and transport to and from work.

The reality is that criminality is present in many compliant businesses. These businesses are infiltrated and used as vehicles for exploitation. Everything the workers understands is filtered through a fellow national. Likewise, businesses depend upon the foreign speaker to communicate with the worker because he or she can speak their language.

To expectation that they have to pay extra to get a shift at work or give a bribe to someone to ensure they are kept in work becomes accepted practice.

Women are threatened, in debt, often mistrustful of authority, and unable to speak the language. These are all key reasons why the crime goes undetected. Refusal to make eye contact, their demeanour, constantly looking to another before answering or letting someone else do all the talking, not bringing much food in for lunch, appearing tired all the time, are all signs that something more serious could be going on.

Direct communication with workers is vital to help detect and eradicate modern slavery. Always use independent interpreters and never be tempted to use friends or people employed alongside the worker. By communicating regularly with your workers, you provide an opportunity for workers to tell you something is wrong. This may not happen immediately but it is important to give your employees space to speak. How do you know if workers are being paid properly if no one ever asks?

Some employers say, “I don’t know what the problem is? They are here, they are being paid, they don’t give any problems, they can leave if they want to”. This needs to be challenged. Instead, we need to be asking ourselves, “is there any vulnerability here?”

Knowing how people can be exploited and the methodology is the key to unlocking this crime and eradicating criminality in your business.

Exploitation is currently low risk for criminals because workers are reluctant to speak up and it offers huge returns for the exploiters. According to the International Labour Organization, forced labour in the private economy generates \$150 billion in illegal profits every year. It is hugely nuanced and sadly an insidious presence in many supply chains. We need to be alive to the issue and start fighting back.



DIGGING DEEPER

What are the signs to look out for?

Victims of modern slavery can be of any age, race, or gender. There is no ‘typical’ victim. However, there are physical and behavioural indicators that may mean someone is being exploited.

Appearance

- Show signs of abuse and untreated injuries.
- Appear malnourished, unkempt, withdrawn and/or neglected.
- Seem under the control or influence of others.
- Wear the same clothes every day.
- Wear no safety equipment even if their work requires it.

Accommodation

- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Living and working at the same address.
- Appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.

Travel

- Rarely allowed to travel on their own.
- Regularly collected and dropped off early in the morning or late at night.
- In a crowded minibus with other workers.
- Have no control of their identification documents such as their passport.

Seeking help

- Reluctant to seek help and avoid eye contact.
- Appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers.
- Fear of the police, don’t know who to trust or where to get help.
- Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

Sometimes, it can be the “absence” of signs that may draw your attention to a situation. If a woman never relates any personal information about her life outside work, that could be a sign that she is being held against her will. If she can’t tell you anything about her weekend plans or what she does in the evening or who her friends are, that might be cause for concern.

ACT TODAY: DOWNLOAD TWO ESSENTIAL APPS

To help you stay alert to labour exploitation, why not download The Clewer Initiative's **Farm Work Welfare App (FWWA)** and **Safe Car Wash App**?



Farm Work Welfare App (FWWA)



Safe Car Wash App

Both Apps are designed to help identify victims of modern slavery – the first is relevant for the rural economy and fresh produce supply chain where both businesses and workers can fall victim to criminal labour providers, the second is used to monitor hand car washes.

You can use the apps to flag up concerns or suspicions and contact the Modern Slavery Helpline. The apps help to identify hot spots, pursue criminal investigations and most importantly, support victims. Even if you are not sure about something, it is worth reporting your concerns. No one will get in trouble if nothing criminal is going on. For more information, visit

www.theclewerinitiative.org/farmworkwelfare and www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash



⁶ https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/09024229/Stacked-Odds_201008_FNL1_LR.pdf

⁷ https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/09024229/Stacked-Odds_201008_FNL1_LR.pdf

⁸ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/It-Still-Happens-Here.pdf>