

# Help stamp out UK modern slavery



**Who would think that slavery is happening in Britain today? Unfortunately it is a very real part of modern life. Although slavery was outlawed a lifetime ago and is illegal throughout the world, it is an endemic problem in some industries and in some parts of the world.**

Indeed, cases of people being held in conditions of modern slavery are discovered within the UK. We must do more to ensure these practices cannot take place in Wales and in our public sector supply chains around the world.



Slavery can include the well-publicised incarnations of forced prostitution, child trafficking or criminal exploitation in illegal drugs gangs, but there are other versions that it's vital we're aware of.

These can include domestic servitude, where a person is forced to serve an individual, family or group.

Or even more worryingly Slaves who are kept for Organ harvesting or sexual exploitation. The youngest rescued slave from Sexual Exploitation in the UK last year was around two years old.

It's so important to remember that people at risk of Modern Slavery and people trafficking are of all ages and sizes and hidden in plain sight. There is no distinct vulnerable group.

## Modern Slavery Act

The Modern Slavery Act came into force in 2015 and it places a requirement on companies with an annual turnover over £36 million to report on slavery in their supply chain.

These organisations are required to produce a statement to ensure that slavery does not occur throughout their supply chains and businesses.

In Wales there aren't many who reach that threshold, and the Welsh Government has created a Voluntary code of practice that will also apply to local authorities, police forces, health boards, social care organisations and charities.

## A widespread issue

Modern Slavery is widespread within different industries and companies. In fact, the National Crime Agency reported a **35% rise** in the number of suspected cases of slavery in the UK.

An Astronomical 5000 people were referred for support to the Government Agencies that specialise in slavery during 2017.

## How you can spot the signs

Due to the hidden nature of slavery and their reluctance or inability to seek help, you may not realise you've come into contact with a victim. Some of the signs to look out for include:

- limited family contact



- physical abuse
- distrust of authority
- having no friends
- acting as if under another's control
- appearing malnourished
- disorientation
- avoiding eye contact
- Inability to speak any English.

We were of the opinion that exploitation of labour and slavery was abolished, a story for the history books not Modern Britain.

However, unfortunately it is evident that it is not. We need to ask why this is happening on a daily basis on our doorstep in the UK today.

The facts are that people are being badly paid and exploited in the workplace, on the streets and even in the home. We all need to play a part and identify such abuse and the signs to ensure that this is stamped out once and for all and that slavery is abolished in Britain today.

**The Wales Slavery Helpline telephone number is 0800 012 1700 or if you would like to find out more visit [www.modernslaveryhelpline.org](http://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org)**

**GMB members with concerns should contact the GMB on 029 2049 1260**

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### Press office

07958 156846

### Member requiring help?

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