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WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING?

Modern slavery is a term used for situations where an individual is exploited and cannot refuse or leave due to threats, coercion, or deception.

Trafficking involves the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people for the purpose of exploitation, often crossing borders but also occurring within countries.

Victims and survivors are often coerced through control, deception, manipulation, entrapment, and isolation, all aimed at preventing their escape or disclosure.

Modern slavery can include:

- **Forced labour** – working under coercion, often for little or no pay
- **Domestic servitude** – being controlled and exploited in a domestic setting e.g. family home
- **Debt bondage** – being required to work (or take part in other activities) to pay off a debt after borrowing money
- **Sexual exploitation** – forced involvement in sexual activities for profit
- **Criminal exploitation** – coerced involvement in criminal activities, such as theft or drug trafficking
- **Child Slavery** – when a child is exploited for others gain including child labour, child marriage etc
- **Descent-based slavery** – people can be born into slavery if they inherit a 'slave status' from their maternal line. This can mean a lifetime of exploitation, harm and being treated as property.

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Who is at risk?

There are no 'typical' victims or survivors, and anyone can be at risk of or experiencing modern slavery and trafficking. This includes men, women and children regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality.

However, socio-economic factors such as debt, poverty, lack of education or opportunities, and social isolation can put someone at greater risk of modern slavery/trafficking.

Connections with 'Honour'-Based Abuse (HBA) and Harmful Practices

Modern slavery and trafficking can intersect with HBA and harmful practices in multiple ways:

- Exploitation can include forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and criminal exploitation
- Families may use threats, shame, or violence to enforce 'honour', restricting freedom and creating dependency
- Individuals may be trafficked or exploited domestically under the guise of protecting family 'honour', including being trafficked abroad for the purposes of FGM or forced marriage
- Those who experience HBA & harmful practices often face additional isolation, family or community pressure, and barriers to seeking help, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation
- Individuals may have multiple vulnerabilities: immigration status, poverty, language barriers, and social isolation

Signs & Indicators

- Restricted movement and loss of freedom
- Enforced adherence to strict rules or values
- Control and monitoring
- Unpaid or underpaid work
- Excessive working hours
- Threats of deportation
- Fear of authorities
- Untreated injuries
- Malnutrition and unkempt appearance
- Mental health indicators including anxiety and depression
- Behaviour change including withdrawal from education or work

Modern Slavery and the law

- Modern Slavery Act 2015 – criminalises slavery, servitude, and human trafficking
- National Referral Mechanism (NRM) - framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive appropriate support
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 – allows Forced Marriage Protection Orders
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) - made it a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry. (It is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland under separate legislation).
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 - Protects children from child marriage by raising the age of marriage and civil partnership to 18 in England and Wales and came into effect on 27th February 2023. This means that 16 to 17-year-olds are no longer able to marry or enter a civil partnership under any circumstances, including with parental or judicial consent
- FGM Act 2003 (as amended) – criminalises FGM; mandatory reporting for under-18s

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Responding to Risk of Modern Slavery/Trafficking

Professionals should be aware that HBA and harmful practices often co-exist with other forms of exploitation, including Modern Slavery and Trafficking, and should recognise intersectional risks including, but not limited to: gender, age, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic factors.

Where someone discloses fear, risk or threat of Modern Slavery/Trafficking connected to HBA and harmful practices, professionals in all agencies should:

- Take the disclosure seriously and act on it
- Prioritise safety and avoid speaking to perpetrators
- Assess the risk
- Refer to Adult or Children's Social Care and the Police promptly, as well as specialist agencies (e.g. Savera UK for 'Honour'-based abuse and NSPCC / Barnardos for FGM & child exploitation)
- Always follow your organisational policy and other relevant local/national policies and procedures
- Follow the ONE CHANCE RULE at all times. We believe that there might be only one chance to speak to someone who may be at risk or under threat a potential victim, and, therefore, just one chance to prevent a forced marriage
- Hold an emergency strategy/professional meeting with relevant agencies, (this should be immediately or within no less than 24 hours)
- Contact the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice on **08000 121 700**

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

- Let the family, community or social network know about the disclosure
- Speak to the person at risk in front of family members or within the family home
- Approach the family or community leaders or attempt mediation
- Use members of the community to interpret
- Accidentally give out information which might jeopardise the person's safety

Caution is required about how information is shared, recorded, and safeguarded within the organisation. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

We will end 'honour'-based abuse and harmful practices

Helpline: **0800 107 0726**
10am - 4pm, Monday to Friday

SaveraUK

To make a professional referral to Savera UK, complete our online form:
saverauk.co.uk/get-help/referrals-for-professionals/

If you are an individual who needs help or advice, complete this form:
saverauk.co.uk/savera-uk-individual-referral-form/

In an emergency, please call 999.

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Responding to Risk of Forced Marriage

Where someone discloses fear of forced marriage, professionals in all agencies should:

- Take the disclosure seriously and act on it
- Refer to Adult or Children's Social Care and the Police promptly
- Always follow your organisational policy and other relevant local/national policies and procedures
- Follow the ONE CHANCE RULE at all times. We believe that there might be only one chance to speak to someone who may be at risk or under threat a potential victim, and, therefore, just one chance to prevent a forced marriage
- Hold an emergency strategy/professional meeting with relevant agencies, (this should be immediately or within no less than 24 hours)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

- Let the family, community or social network know about the disclosure
- Speak to the person at risk in front of family members or within the family home
- Approach the family or community leaders or attempt mediation
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