

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Community, Safety and Environment Policy & Accountability Committee

Date: 28/01/2020

Subject: Review of Council Response to Modern Slavery

Report of: Director of the Environment Department

Summary

This report highlights the actions Hammersmith & Fulham Council is taking to respond to Modern Slavery & Exploitation (in line with the requirements as stated in the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and outlines the preparations the Community Safety Unit are making to further support staff and the community in this response.

Recommendations

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.
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Wards Affected: All

H&F Priorities

Our Priorities	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building shared prosperity	The Modern Slavery & Exploitation (MSE) Partnership seeks to tackle exploitation in H&F.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a compassionate council	The MSE Partnership seeks to prevent modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation and ensure that victims are supported.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doing things with local residents, not to them	The MSE Partnership supports a coordinated community response to modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking pride in H&F	The MSE Partnership seeks to ensure that H&F is a safe place for all.

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Modern slavery is an umbrella term used when somebody is forced to do something they don't want to do, and another person gains from this.
- 1.1. Modern slavery is one of the most widespread crimes in the world and comes in many forms. These include but are not limited to:
 - Sexual exploitation;
 - Domestic servitude;
 - Forced labour;
 - Forced criminality;
 - Organ harvesting; and
 - Forced/sham marriage.
- 1.2. Victims can be any age, gender or race, but are often taken advantage of due to their vulnerability. This is a serious crime in direct violation of an individual's human rights.
- 1.3. As the council is involved in such a wide range of aspects of the local community, our officers are well placed to identify and respond to cases of modern slavery. Officers in areas such as housing and homelessness, trading standards, licensing, procurement and contract management, social services, community safety and customer services may come across incidents.
- 1.4. The council therefore recognises that a collaborative, multi-agency approach is required in order to best tackle these offences. The council supports a coordinated community response to modern slavery led by the Modern Slavery and Exploitation (MSE) Partnership Group.

2. Scale of the Problem

- 2.1. Globally, 40 million people are estimated to be in slavery; 1 in 4 of these are children.
- 2.2. In the UK, the number of people estimated to be in slavery varies from 13,000¹ to 136,000² people with potentially more. Estimates vary because slavery is often hidden, making it harder to recognise victims.

¹ UK Government estimation 2014

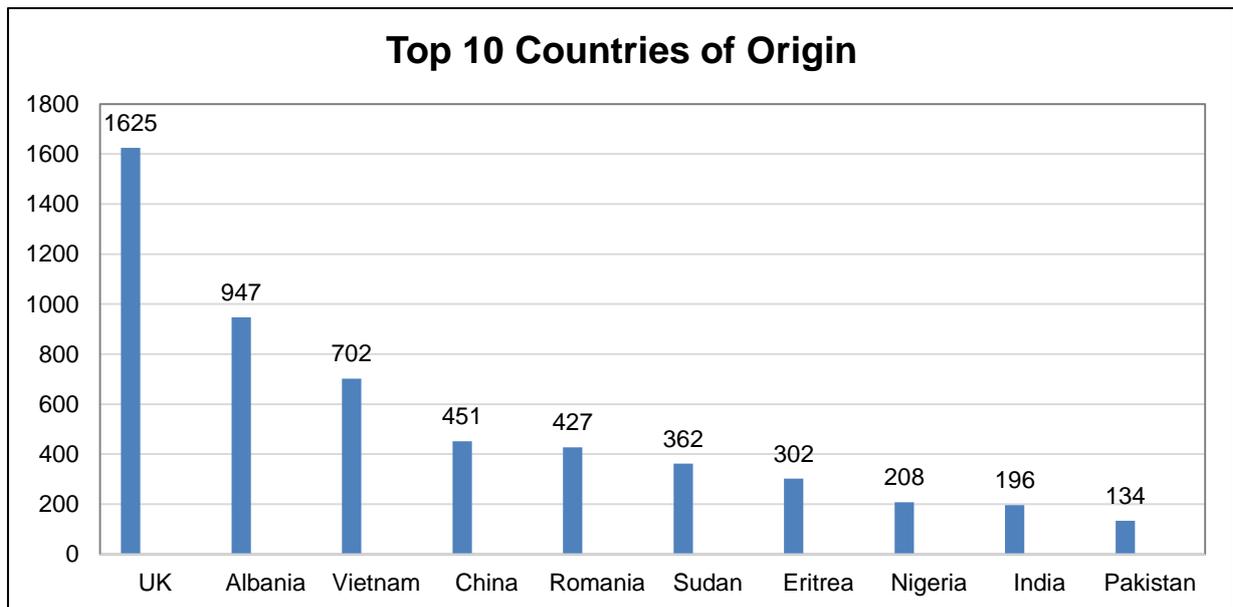
² Global Slavery index estimation 2018

2.3. In 2018, 6,993 people were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism in the UK. The National Referral Mechanism is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate protection and support.

2.4. Of these 6,993:

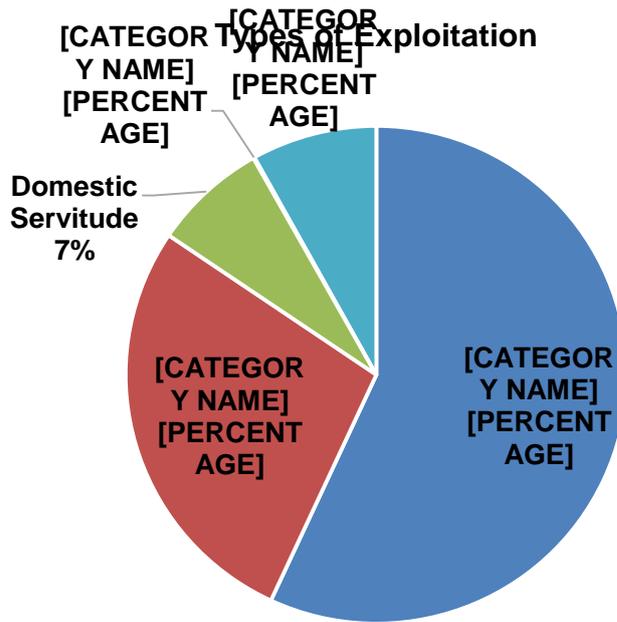
- 55% were children and 45% were adults.
- 39% identified as female, 60% as male and 1% as transgender.

2.5. The top 10 countries of origin of these individuals were:



2.6. The types of exploitation experienced by these individuals were:

Type of Exploitation	Number of individuals
Forced Labour	3980
Sexual Exploitation	1927
Domestic Servitude	515
Organ Harvesting	6
Unknown	565



- 2.7. Due to the nature of the crime it is extremely difficult to estimate the scale of modern slavery within Hammersmith & Fulham because victims are often hidden. There is also limited public data available regarding Modern Slavery & Exploitation.
- 2.8. We know from the National Referral Mechanism statistics that during 2018 Hammersmith & Fulham Council referred 0 adults and 16 children. Between January and March 2019, the council referred 2 adults and 10 children.
- 2.9. However, this will only be a partial picture of the issue as this figure does not account for victims of modern slavery who have been referred by the police and other First Responders within the borough; the adult victims who have been identified but did not give consent to be referred to the National Referral Mechanism (all child victims of modern slavery must be referred to the National Referral Mechanism regardless of consent); and those victims who remain hidden and have not yet been identified.
- 2.10. We are aware that modern slavery is taking place within Hammersmith & Fulham as the council has received referrals from homeless hostels, reports of sexual exploitation in massage parlours and forced labour in the hospitality industry. The council receives intelligence from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within the borough who are supporting victims of modern slavery.

3. What we're Doing and Why

Funding

- 3.1. The budget for Modern Slavery & Exploitation in 2019/20 is £3,250, which funds the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnerships and Community

Coordinator (detailed in Section 3.2). Funding opportunities beyond 2019/20 are currently being explored.

Appointing a Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnerships and Community Coordinator

- 3.2. In July 2018, the council appointed a Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnerships and Community Coordinator, through a partnership with the charity STOP THE TRAFFIK, to support the development of Modern Slavery & Exploitation services in three West London boroughs.

Multi-Agency Modern Slavery & Exploitation Training

- 3.3. The Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnerships and Community Coordinator delivers multi-agency Modern Slavery & Exploitation training sessions to professionals from across the three boroughs. These are designed to raise awareness of modern slavery and the support available to victims. 516 professionals attended this training between September 2018 and August 2019.

Establishing a Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnership Group

- 3.4. The Modern Slavery & Exploitation Partnerships and Community Coordinator coordinates the boroughs' Modern Slavery & Exploitation (MSE) Partnership Group, which is a multi-agency partnership to support the delivery of better outcomes for victims of modern slavery.
- 3.5. The MSE Group is an active part of the coordinated community response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is one of six operational groups that form the VAWG Strategic Partnership response. Although positioned within the VAWG partnership, the MSE Group has an equal commitment to supporting men and boys affected by modern slavery, as it does to supporting women and girls.
- 3.6. The strategic objective of the MSE Group are:
- To raise awareness of Modern Slavery & Exploitation resulting in an increase of victim identification;
 - To provide necessary support to enable survivors of trafficking to recover;
 - To build communities which are resilient to human trafficking; and
 - To ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.
- 3.7. The group has developed an action plan outlining the priorities and projects for the coming year. These include:
- Establishing a referral pathway for reporting and supporting potential victims of trafficking;
 - Developing a child trafficking protocol;

- Sharing anonymised data in order to increase the understanding of Modern Slavery in the borough; and
- Increasing awareness of Modern Slavery amongst multi-agency professionals and members of the community.

Embedding a Referral Pathway for Adult Victims of Modern Slavery

- 3.8. Following consultation with other council departments and using the Human Trafficking Foundation's protocol for local authorities, a referral pathway for adult victims of modern slavery has been developed for Hammersmith & Fulham in response to section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- 3.9. Ahead of publicising the referral pathway, bespoke training was delivered to priority teams to ensure council employees respond appropriately and in line with our legal obligations.
- 3.10. The referral pathway was officially introduced in June 2019. Guidance was shared alongside the pathway, explaining the indicators of modern slavery, the duty of the local authority and how the National Referral Mechanism works. The pathway was promoted across the council through a variety of communication channels to raise awareness amongst council officers.
- 3.11. The referral pathway and processes are being monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and requirements for additional resources are being explored.

Signing the Charter Against Modern Slavery

- 3.12. Hammersmith & Fulham Council has also demonstrated its commitment to tackling Modern Slavery & Exploitation by signing the 'Charter Against Modern Slavery'. The Charter aims to ensure exploitation has no place in council supply chains.

Introducing a Modern Slavery Page on the Council Website

- 3.13. The council has created a page on its website providing information and advice about modern slavery. It provides information about indicators of modern slavery, where and how to report concerns and organisations who can provide support to victims.
- 3.14. The page also references H&F's commitment to tackle modern slavery by signing the Charter Against Modern Slavery.

Anti-Slavery Day – 18 October 2019

- 3.15. Each year Hammersmith & Fulham Council acknowledge Anti-Slavery Day on 18 October.
- 3.16. In 2019 the MSE Partnership published and promoted a schedule of events taking place across the three boroughs, organised a local community

engagement stall in Hammersmith Town Centre and delivered an internal and external communications campaign.

4. Emerging Initiatives

Publishing a Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement

- 4.1. Over 100 councils across England have voluntarily chosen to develop Modern Slavery Statements. Whilst Hammersmith & Fulham Council is not required to publish a Modern Slavery Statement (in line with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) as it is not a commercial organisation, an annual Modern Slavery Statement will demonstrate the positive work the council is doing to tackle the crime.
- 4.2. The statement will outline the work that the council is doing to tackle the crime and will include an action plan for delivering against each of the ten actions and commitments within the Charter Against Modern Slavery.
- 4.3. A small Working Group will be established to support the development of the Modern Slavery Statement and the delivery of the commitments outlined in the Statement and Charter Against Modern Slavery.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. This report and recommendations have been developed in partnership with the charity STOP THE TRAFFIK.