



Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales

Tim Cymorth
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All Wales Black Asian Minority Ethnic Engagement Programme

‘Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking’

Notes from Forum - 22nd September 2022, 10am – 11.30am

Chaired by Selima Bahadur (Programme Manager).

Co-hosted and supported by Twahida Akbar (Policy Officer) and Judy Li (Marketing and Communications Officer), Grainne Connolly (Co-host)

Key Speakers/Panellists:

Naeema Ahmed – Manager of UK BME Anti-Slavery Network

Noree Webb – Salvation Army Anti Trafficking & Modern Slavery

Rakhshanda Shahzad – BAWSO – Head of Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Services

Introduction to topic

TA: What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the process of trapping people using violence, deception or coercion and exploiting them for financial or personal gain.

What trafficking really means is girls groomed and forced into sexual exploitation; men tricked into accepting risky job offers and trapped in forced labour in building sites, farms or factories; and women recruited to work in private homes only to be trapped, exploited and abused behind closed doors with no way out.

People don't have to be transported across borders for trafficking to take place. In fact, transporting or moving the victim doesn't define trafficking – it can take place within a single country, or even within a single community.

People can be trafficked and exploited in many forms, including being forced into sexual exploitation, labour, begging, crime (such as growing cannabis or dealing drugs), domestic servitude, marriage or organ removal.

What is modern day slavery?

Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. Modern slavery is all around us, but often just out of sight. People can become entrapped making our clothes, serving our food, picking our crops, working in factories, or working in houses as cooks, cleaners, or nannies.

From the outside, it can look like a normal job. But people are being controlled – they can face violence or threats, be forced into inescapable debt, or have had their passport taken away and are being threatened with deportation. Many have fallen into this oppressive trap simply because they were trying to escape poverty or insecurity, improve their lives and support their families. Now, they can't leave.



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Introduction of key speakers

NW: Good morning. My name is Norree Web. I'm from the Salvation Army, first responder team. I coordinate all the referrals that come into our mail drop from a variety of organisations including police, lawyers particularly, and self-referrals as well. We have referrals that come through the helpline. So, it's a variety of referrals that we receive. I coordinate a team of volunteer first responders. I train them up. There should be a second coordinator working with me, but she left recently, so I'm just waiting for a replacement. So, at the moment it's quite busy, quite hectic. The rate of referrals is growing all of the time, and it's a very big issue, as you obviously are aware, modern day slavery and human trafficking and the amount of work that comes our way is exponential, it's unbelievable.

NA: Good morning, everyone. It's a pleasure being here, to be part of this much needed conversation. My name is Naima Ahmed and I'm the network manager for the UK BME anti-Slavery Network which is shortly referred to as bassinet, which is a project safeguarding children. It's the first network in the UK and Europe dedicated to promoting equality and inclusion speaking in anti-slavery space. Our network members are registered charities or connect with companies working in communities affected by modern slavery. And I do agree with what Norree said, the issues around modern slavery, it gets so hectic when we need to talk about the referrals that are coming in. Then there are other nuances that goes on within the sector, ie, the very services that we design and develop, the policies that we develop doesn't suit everyone. Is it accessible for everyone? Do we take into consideration the cultural nuances that comes in, and these are the right things that you're trying to amplify. And another thing is that when it comes to the decision-making table, mostly you find a very white decision-making table. But then when you go to the Community level and great people who are doing the legwork, the very people who are designing services and other projects are quite small at Charities and they have the knowledge and expertise and we need to find a way to bring them to their decision, making it able to be able to share their knowledge they have the evidence that they have said I to be able to feed him to the larger picture or the bigger picture for on benefits. So that's for me. Thank you.

RS: My name is Rakhshanda Shahzad and I'm Modern slavery services for BAWSO and I will talk about little bit about our services in BAWSO. BAWSO provides support victims of modern slavery, human trafficking and we work with the victim care contract and outside victim care contracts. It's been years that we actually started providing this support to victims. We are also a first responders, so we submit NRM. Therefore, the potential victims and sent it off and then those who don't give a consent for NRM, we do a safeguarding and support. So we have accommodation sub base support where we support victims in a safe and secure accommodations. We have four refuges and four safe houses for female and male victims, and then I must say that BAWSO supports only adult victims of modern slavery, and our large project is funded under victim care contract by Home Office via Salvation Army. We also have a safe house which is by Welsh Government. So, during last year I would say we supported 298 service users who were the victims of modern slavery. That can give you a picture of how many victims have been in Wales. I can also tell you out of those what type exploitation; we have sexual exploitation and forced labour almost hand in hand. However, forced labour is actually being on increase now, we have 13% of domestic servitude and then 50% of criminal exploitation and I could say that the criminal exploitation has also been on the increase. Within our clients we have 43% of male victims and 57% of female victims and age range varies. It's from 18 years to 67 years. So, you can say there is no set age for this. The largest groups has been between 26 and 35 Our top 5 nationalities been exactly a mirror as it has been identified by the national referral mechanism across UK and cross Wales, and interestingly from since last year, the top group nationality has changed it's now UK, British, followed by Albanian, Sudanese, Iranian,



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Chinese and Pakistani, Yemeni so on. So those have been the group or nationalities we supported. The kind of support provided is a very much on individuals support, need basis. But overall as you can imagine the group, the victims are really having serious mental health issues, physical health issues, trauma, access to counselling, the financial help and support and providing support according to what individuals needs are. There are as Norree and Naema mentioned there has been increase and the issues around inclusion and ensuring that the support is according to everyone's needs.

We consider off those who are from different nationalities may have immigration issues. As status issues move on, it has been always an issue, I think there is a lot of work needed for within our local authorities, within other agencies to understand, to support providers to understand the real needs. We also need to have a policy approach to support clients, we might be having identification but supporting clients, certainly to support clients the best way possible, there is need for us all to come together. In terms of the client's needs when we found safeguarding has been really on top depending, on what their background is, what the type of exploitation is we get, when we have a client, sometimes there at a very high risk, I'm sure you may have heard about human trafficking in marriage and have a multi-agency approach to safeguard them. Safeguarding is our top priority and language support and accessing. The language I mean under the victim care contract, and the system actually works quite well to access the language support, but for those the issues comes in, if victim or suspected victim does not consent to go for NRM, then the support gets a bit; it's not their language supports. We can do a safeguarding; it all depends, there are no funding available for those victims depending on where they are being referred to, so there is sometimes the issues around providing the language support provided and appropriate support and appropriate accommodation.

Those who are under victims care contract get weekly subsistence regardless of where, whatever the access to income now they have and some of the dependent children also get the subsistence. Access to education, training and supported some with the voluntary return to home countries and enable them to settle back into their home countries. So that's the work we do. NRM numbers in Wales last year - last year we had 479 NRM referrals and then that's for adults and children. The exploitation under NRM, last year has been the highest one was criminal exploitation, followed by labour and labour and criminal altogether.

Question & Answer Session

Question: for RS: What more can organisations do to raise awareness that will help the victims?

RS: I think what we as individuals and organisations need to do, is actually raise awareness, to make themselves and their staff aware of the modern slavery, human trafficking and what it is exactly and what the indicators are and how victims can be supported etc. You know once we are raising awareness then we must be mindful. I mean it is happening every week, it is happening on our doorsteps and we need to be aware of it. Once people are aware of it, they can identify or even if you suspect someone, there is no harm to follow the victim care pack - Victim Support pathway - in Wales which clearly identifies what we need to do, who we need to contact. I mean if it is absolute emergency, we all know it's 999 but otherwise the contract says you can refer them to human trafficking. MARAC is multi-agency where a case can be discussed and with the consent of the victim, an NRM can be submitted if victim wishes and they can receive support. If they don't wish to go in through an NRM, I'm sure then they can still be supported or access support within the other agencies. So, I think it is about us all being aware of it all being actually being open eyed seen what's going around.

An attendee asked a number of questions: Am I right in assuming we have a proper support from the government and the local authority level at every council throughout Wales as well as the UK,



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or is it being picked up and serviced by the volunteer sector right now to the victims of human trafficking and MD Slavery?

Also, what is happening on the the other end - is some police involvement in trying to prevent the trafficking taking place in the first place? How are we actually picking up the victim and in other words is anybody working helping put a stop, trying to stop it happening in the first place whether it is happening in this country or even overseas? It could be overseas because they got their government knowing about it. You know that the citizens are being trafficked into different countries, is the government aware?

Do the victim fall into believing they actually been transferred to another country for economy reasons rather than being trafficked into slavery and things like that?

I'm also keen to find out the overall stats. Who actually collects overall stats, specially starting from Wales and onto England?

Is all the work carried out by you funded by charities or the local government? Council?

SB: We will try and answer questions, if we don't have time in the session, we will ask the speakers and send the answers around.

NA: I just wanted to chip in, just add to what Rakhshanda was saying in relation to what organisations can do and I think organisations play a significant role when it comes to victims and survivors. The issue is that the solution to modern slavery is not a one pack fits all. What will help someone from Eastern Europe may not necessarily help someone coming from Asia or Africa. The bigger picture or the narrative may be similar, but in the nuances, what goes into it that believes, the culture, the tradition are quite different than when you assume that this is a narrative coming from someone from Europe, this is how someone coming from Europe is exploited and based on the solution that we're giving to such a person should be similar to someone coming from Africa and then Asia, you missed the whole point, you missed the whole nuances because we have individuals, victims being sent to shelters at the very point being accepted into the national referral mechanism. They do not have any mental cases as Rakshanda said earlier. As soon as they enter shelters, it becomes worse they're being exploited, they're being profiled in shelters, and it goes on and on and on. So again, the very services that we are designing whether it's from the third sector, whether it's from the government, we need to understand the very issues that borders on modern slavery. We need to understand why it's coming from and then be able to design services to suit each and everyone.

The other thing that I also want to share again this time, I think there is so much grey area when it comes to our policies on immigration and labour and based on these grey areas it becomes so difficult when you're dealing with individuals that do have issues with modern slavery and human trafficking because then again the very issue that we are picking up on whether passing is being exploited when it comes to labour or financial or sexual or criminal, its borders on whether the passing has breached an immigration law or whether the passing has breached labour law. So at the very instance when a law enforcer comes in or is speaking to a victim or survivor, the very first point of call is looking at it from with a criminal lens. What are the laws that you've broken before exploring? Oh, maybe you could have been exploited and based on that, this is the help that you can have. So for someone to come in at the first instance will looking we access it presented with the criminality lenses. It would take forever for us to be able to understand, Oh, hold on a minute, lets take a break a second, probably these persons has not necessarily broken the laws, safeguarding or guarding the whole UK, but probably the person is being exploited and based on that, what are the



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support that we need to give to the person so we need to be again look at the nuances when it comes to policies, shred or mixture with strength and especially when it comes to the modern slavery act or the recent strategies or the policy to that coming in so that we are able to save that the individuals that we ought to be safeguarding at the end of the day. Then lastly again so that we go onto the other conversations, again, our policies, our approach, everything at the council even as an evolved country, we're looking at what is going on here. The fire is coming from outside, their individuals being trafficked beyond our borders and we are not asking the questions why are they being trafficked here and I know in an attendees question asked what is happening at the source. We need to be able to coordinate our approach with what is going on at the source so that will be able to kind of put an end. We need to have a significant approach. Whether it is a matter of tapping into our foreign officers, the campaigns that we're having here. Are we taking it across the border, across the pond, so that the very people who are trafficked here. We are pushing such conversations out there. None the less, the higher order new trend of anti- trafficking on modern slavery that is going on is going on right at our backyards. We are having issues on modern slavery right here that issues of county lines, trafficking etc and I know my colleagues on the panel may touch on it or talk about it or we may be able to explore it later on the issues of cuckooing again I know somebody may touch on it and then pick up on it. But what I'm trying to say is modern slavery is so close to us, the perpetrators that we may be talking about maybe our very own friends, our relatives, the very people who sit in the room with us to watch Britains Got Talent! And then we're having breakfast with them! So, it's not so far from us, the very people who are exploiting our children in schools on their way home, then the very people that we know, our neighbours! So again we need to have a clearer picture, we need to open our eyes further. We need to be literally questioning everything. Who is coming in, who is doing what? Then lastly, there's a whole new trend within the care sector then again, hopefully I'll be able to touch on that. There's a whole new trend brewing within our social care homes, individuals coming under, new business schemes being exploited and using the health and care business. The traditional narrative has been someone using the, I'm using the same with Mo Farah's story; somebody using a whole different identity to bring someone here under the guise of trafficking and exploitation. No, the new trend is that individual coming in legally and the legal visa schemes, but then they are in huge debts, they are being exploited, moving on, so again, these are all the nuances that we need to pick and I hope I know the time is very limited but that we will be able to touch on as the conversation goes, thank you.

NW: A couple of points I'd like to just pick up on, so much Naeema has told as talk to us about which is so important internationally. The Salvation Army has an international arm to its work as well in which we are working in source countries to try to prevent the trafficking happening in the first place. That's a whole department of within the anti-trafficking and Modern slavery unit that we have and as I say they have, they are working very hard in a number of countries to try and prevent people being drawn into these situations in the first place, that is one aspect. The other thing that I wanted to talk about was that, when I'm training our first responders and thinking about the different cultural aspects that are involved in all of this, I trained very hard and we talk about that we take each NRM, we take the person back to their birth and we build their story taking into account the culture from which they may have come from, and how that may have affected how they've become exploited and trafficked in the first place and recruited, so we work very hard to ensure that any cultural aspects of the person that we are interviewing is highlighted within that NRM interview when we write it up, so that when it arrives with the decision makers already, we hope that they are aware of the cultural differences in the different victims that we referred to the NRM and hopefully as that moves through the system that will remain a highlighted point. So, I just want to just to make that point that our NRM's are very deep and take into account much about the individual as we can. So, I just wanted to make that point. Thank you.



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An attendee asks in the chat what an NRM stands for

NW: National referral mechanism. It's the process the government uses to decide initially with initially whether they suspect that someone is a potential victim of modern slavery and that's if that is positive, they give them what's called a reasonable grounds positive decision. So, it's the process the government goes through during the support period. They then look further into the case in order to make a conclusive grounds decision.

An attendee asks/ comments: I'm not quite sure of how, no access to public funds effects people who are in insecure status because obviously places like BASWO have funds from the government to enable them to manage this. Secondly, I have a friend who is Indian origin working and she does stuff with Nestor in Manchester, and she says they come across a lot of familial Exploitation, which is very different from what we've been talking about here, where people bring in a cousin or niece or even a new wife and exploit them and she says this is much more difficult to manage. And I just wondered if you had anything to say about that.

SB explains that we may will try and answer all attendee questions at the end of the forum, but if we run out of time, we will get the answers to the questions from our key speakers and let the attendees the answers

Question for NA: We've heard of a recent case of modern day slavery in Newport, South Wales and we found it surprising that it was happening on our doorstep. And the question we would like to ask is do you know the number of cases in Wales? Rakhshanda in her intro mentioned that 298 service users, but could you expand on this Naeema?

NA: Thank you, I'll pick it from a different angle and then hopefully come here if that's okay. And I'm just, I'm going to tap into the Newport case a little bit. So yes, on the 24th of August it was reported about the conviction of three people; two men and a woman who had been found guilty of modern offences and that's after their vulnerable victim was brought to Wales and forced into labour. According to the report, the perpetrators controlled the victims' passports and bank card, parcel sent from family members and threatened him with violence if he ever attempted to leave. So in reviewing the case, one thing stood out. Clearly the issue of debt bondage. And I know earlier on I talked about it, briefly. So that's one each from a huge base of perpetrators, debt and threat. And this is very common in understanding or spotting the signs of modern slavery that in most cases, especially those coming and beyond our borders. I'll give a snapshot picture so that we are able to put this into perspective. When you convert 1 pound to Ghana cedi, it's around 11 cedis. The plane ticket from Ghana to UK is almost around 800 pounds. If you have a visa to come to UK, whether it is in the health and care visit scheme, you're supposed to pay for your visa application, which may range between say 300 to 400 pounds. On top of that, you're supposed to buy your own ticket, and I'm giving you the rates of 1 pound to a cedi, so we're rounding it to a thousand Ghana cedis. The average healthcare passing in Ghana does not earn anywhere close to this figure. So again, this is a huge opportunity to come and find greener pastures based on the skills and professional data one person already may have. So, the person had been recruited cutting jobs to come here and then the recruiter is selling the person before you come here because they don't have the money. I'm going to earn you this money so that when you come here you pay me back over XYZ period of time and then when you get into the country to ensure that you pay the person that brought you in, they seize all your significant documents and again, I'm saying I'm only using an example from Ghana, its similar to someone coming from Nigeria or anywhere else and again the pay. The case here is also similar from someone coming from Eastern Europe or Europe, coming in here. So, your passport is seized, any significant identity documents get seized just to make sure they have hold on you because without your document you wouldn't be able to get away from them and then you pay



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them within a certain period. So, the recruiter controls you and they determine the amounts that you pay them. In most cases when they come here, they even open your bank accounts for you. So they have access to your cards, everything. They are able to determine how much is going into your account because anyway you owe them and they need to do the deductions and pay what they are owed. It will take forever for you to pay that XYZ amount of money and that is what that is, the role of debt bondage. So you are bonded to this person simply because you owe them and they will exploit you for God knows how long until they are OK or someone comes into maybe explained to the victim to say this is not right, this is not true. This doesn't have to go on. What I'm just trying to say that even though in this case, they are from Europe or and Eastern Europe, the narrative is mostly not different from someone coming from Asia or Africa. The settings mainly are similar. The traditions and core beliefs from each community may or may not compound the situation so depending on where you're coming from. We mainly work within BAME communities. The narratives that we've had over the years especially became stories from West Africa or Eastern Africa. We understand individuals who are bonded or being sworn to juju before they come. So, there is an underlying fear, even all that kind of bond, fear bond between the perpetrator and victim even before they come into the country, right. So again, the traditions and culture within the very community that they come from plays a very significant role. What I'm trying to say here is that in most of these cases, and I'm going to mention some few things here, these things are very common, number one, the seizing of passports and any other significant identity document they use of reported to police. So, your picture will be telling you if you report me, I'm going to tell the police that you either overstayed or you've done this, or you've done that. So even though it's the same law enforcement that you were seeking to run to, it's the same law enforcement that is being used to threaten you, at the same time. So even when you have the leeway to move, you can't move, you don't even know who to go to. Then there is the consequences of helping families back home. The recruiter knows you and knows your family back home, so it's not just hurting you here, they also having the ability to hurt your family back home. So, for the love of your family back home, you are still bonded to these individuals just to protect your families back home. And I think I briefly talked about the use of juju or swearing or three deities just to be able to have it hold on to you. Then the continuous threats to you as a person here, if you don't give me this, if you don't pay this, I will do this to you. When I finish, I will send the link of the GLA, a report, if anybody among the audience have a link please so that others can have a read that you see all these new ones is that are picked by the GLA in this investigation. The narrative may be the same, but the tactics and what goes in there is never different.

The perpetrators think it's a crime that keeps evolving and I think I know the police comes up to say, oh we notice is going on, but mostly what we know from our organisational perspective is that whilst we are in 2022 at the moment, perpetrators maybe in 2025. They are looking at new taxes; what else can we do, what else can we explore? So just mitigating all, being able to be a step ahead of them is where we need to reduce or make sure we are way ahead of the perpetrator. I'm just waiting for that day to come. Rakhshanda has talked about the data. In relation to cases, I'll just try and give a brief breakdown. So in 2021, the mail referrals into NRM, the adult male, the case, the referrals were around 119. And then child 230, so male adult 119 and male children and 230. For female we have 47 Adult female and 61 female children and then the type of exploited again, I know I'm just building this into a case so they will be able to share with all of you. So the types of exploitation here, we're looking at criminal exploitation. Labour and criminal, sexual and sexual exploitation. What I'm trying to pick up here is that the very cases that we are looking at, even though we may pick a singular case and now use the Newport's case, as an example, will have strength of all the other explanations coming in. Assuming the victim here was a woman, she may have gone through sexual exploitation while being exploited with labour and then there will be other

strains or clips and criminal exploitation. So again, one case may feed into all other exploitations at the end of the day. So then when there is a referral of the case and I hope Norree will jump on in here those who are first responders here, you are looking at all the tick boxes of what happens here. You make which ones plays a very significant role when you're looking at the the whole narrative which one is it affects the passing most so the data that the NRM had, even though we all do have a duty to notify and share we know from the Community level and large chunk of individuals who even though they do not want to go through the end, they have very significant reasons. Again, time will not permit us to go into it; we know the number of the ground is not reflecting the number that the NRM is having and yeah, there is huge disparity. And again, these people have very, very significant reasons why they don't be part of it and time is not permitting and I hope maybe there's a part 2 of this conversation so that we can explore all the other nuances, especially from a ground level as to what is going on in the community. There is a 2022 data, I'll try and share it but just don't want to take too much time. There's so much going on, there is so much within our communities. It may not necessarily reflect on the NRM data, but we know for sure that there are things happening. People are not coming forward; they are not opening up. They may open up to smaller community organisations and hold onto ransom please, don't tell the police because if you do my perpetrators will hurt my family back home, my perpetrators will do this and this. It doesn't just break it down there so much I want to put out there. The data that we have is only giving us nationality it's not breaking it down to ethnicity and we are missing so much opportunity here; how many Black people? How many Asians? So that will be able to have access to the communities to be able to protect them or to raise awareness and enhance proper conversation. This is a missed opportunity from the government level, and I hope something can be done about that. On that note, may I seek permission to leave because I have another meeting that I have to be at. If there are any questions, I would love to receive them and answer them and then if there is a part 2, I would love to be part of it and then share experiences and knowledge that we do hold. Thank you so much.

Question to NW: Could you tell us what are the signs that people need to look out for modern day slavery?

NW: This a very key point as we are saying that it's something that's very underground. Lots of people are unaware about modern slavery and in order to help us to help these people, people need to be aware of what they need to be looking out for. So, I think first of all is the physical aspects of someone might look very unkempt, they may have injuries that have clearly not being dealt with properly, you know, they may have what it looks like to be perhaps stitches or something like that. This bound up very poorly, but you know, whatever it is that it does not look right. They might look very malnourished, because very often victims are not fed properly, but by their exploiters. So, there's those kinds of very obvious physical things. But then there's also more, the emotional. They may look very uneasy, the person with them, maybe there may be something with his controlling them, off answering questions for them, especially where there is someone who doesn't understand English. Perhaps they might be at the bank and having bank details set up for them. The person with them is answering all the questions. You know, I want that there are some banks already onto this problem and their staff are aware to, you know, to look out for these kinds of cases where they suspect that something untoward is happening when someone comes to open the bank account and someone else is doing it for them. So those kinds of things. So, it's just really a case of it keep picking as we said, as someone said earlier, if it doesn't look right, do something about it. We have in this country it's very much we mind our own business, and this is one case or time when you don't mind your own business. If you suspect anything, it's better that you report something, and it turns out that there was nothing wrong then not to report it and someone's life is at risk. Also, it's looking for someone who's under some control, so you might see two people walking along in the street and



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one clearly that the body language and the verbal language between them there is something amiss, so please, do feel that it is your responsibility to do something about that. It's not easy. I've been watching a house, actually, the top of my road, where I've noticed a lot of men sitting on the wall outside smoking and the blinds in that house and never up, it's always down and I've just been keeping an eye, I'm just a bit concerned and if necessary, you know I'll give it a little bit of time and I will do something about it. It's quite a brave thing to do I think the people who are not really aware of this this subject in the depth that we are, to actually be brave enough to pick up a phone and say something. Crime Stoppers are great; you can ring up Crime Stoppers - It's all anonymous. We have no fear that anyone is going to find out it was you. So, I think, that's the key to this, If it doesn't look right, do something about it.

Question to RS: What are the short term and long-term effects of trafficking?

RS: To be honest I don't believe there are many short-term effects. I think the trafficking really experience affects has a severe impact on the victim and affects remains for a long period. I mean short term effects could just be someone being homeless and some of the physical health issues, which need treatment but most of them are a long-term severe impact. Having experienced this exploitation experience which goes into a long-term psychological impact, mental health issues and depression, lack of sleep, flashbacks, isolating, keeping themselves away, not trusting anybody as some of them or most of them having panic attacks, distrusting, being fearful of people, fearful of authorities - these are all long-term impacts; post-traumatic stress, disorders, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, feeling guilty, Stockholm syndrome's etc. You can just carry on and on with the list. It really is a serious impact. It takes years, and can be traumatic and you know that the interventions it takes number of counselling, health professionals involved and also it's all about rebuilding life which does take a long time, not just, I mean sometimes people think I'm in specially and the reflection and recovery period that you know once that's over maybe the victim is okay, though it takes a longer time, just slowly. They can rebuild their lives slowly with the right support and with the counselling, with mental health teams, intervention at trauma recovery. They can move on and some of them move faster. It can actually stay for a long period and this experience also moves them into having substance misuse, sometimes having that, links into mental health issues, alcohol dependencies which again is extremely difficult and people to access support in that in these days and also is a long-term plan. The victims or survivors does need help and support for a longer period, the government agents policy makers is we need to think about it is not a short term fix.

An attendee asks: How did Covid and lockdown affect the statistics?

Josh (another attendee) Head of MDS and Workers Rights, Welsh Government, happy to come in and comment, made a comment in the chat but is invited to speak: Essentially the covid pandemic seems to have negatively impacted the trend of cases being reported to the international referral mechanism. We saw it basically, there's been a case of fairly steady increase in the number of national mechanisms since, particularly since the modern Slavery Act 2015. During the pandemic for numbers in a flat lined or slightly declined and then lockdown measures were relaxed, we've seen the number of cases again increasing quite substantially. We don't think that's because covid caused exploitation to decrease, in fact the indications we've had is that exploiters just moved to different types of exploitation too, kind of, you know, to adapt to the changing situation, returning labour market during the pandemic. But unfortunately, what covid pandemic seems to have done is this made it much more difficult to detect MDS on safely, because, you know, if you're moving to a society where people are not going outside much for not having the same daily life, daily exposure in schools and workplaces and all that kind of thing, it just makes it much more difficult to detect. So,



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what we think is, well, exploitation carried on, you know, at that had been before the pandemic, we think the evidence seems to suggest had a negative impact on protection of monetary cases.

RS: I just wanted to add to Josh that just absolutely right, the identification of the victims became a bit difficult during the pandemic and also that the traffickers also change their tactics. If we know that they are always ahead and finding new ways of doing it, so they will be changing the tactics and also, they are treating victim as a commodity. So, if you saw one type of exploitation they can't get that they will move it to the next type of exploitation and use them. However, pre pandemic, when we have seen what is happening now is because of the climate, because of those economic circumstances, I think people are becoming more vulnerable to be more know more vulnerable at that they could be exploited. I am we are seeing that's happening and with changes legislation bringing workers from abroad; Students come in being exploited by employers into different sectors, you know, so that's what I think we need to be mindful of.

NW: I think during the pandemic, yes, our numbers were down on referrals. And have since risen very sharply, but also the demo graph has changed somewhat as well, we've noticed more recently a lot of people, and particularly younger people coming from Somalia, Iraq, Iran and all coming through Libya. And that's where the big problem arises. That's where we find that the actual modern slavery is happening, in Libya, whereas a lot of movement is smuggling, occasional trafficking, in fact there is modern slavery happening once they hit Libya that is whether there entrapped etc. So that's one of the demo graphs that changed and more recently a lot more self-referral and I think that maybe again a result of things that people who were not detected during the pandemic and during the lockdowns, for some reason it seems that self-referrals are on the rise.

An attendee comments: I work in community cohesion in mid and SW Wales, a lot of our work involves working with the Ukrainian to arrive there in Wales and helping with the resettlement programme and identifying Community tensions and helping with support as well You know, I'm linked in very much with kind of the safeguarding side of things, especially with regards to the homes for Ukraine scheme. And obviously, you know there's a lot of work that goes on there with safeguarding in DPS, cheques and things like that to play screening families within homes. But now obviously as we move forward, we've got more people moving on from those sorts of arrangements and there also. People arriving through different schemes as well, I know that the family visa scheme, those sorts of cheques and taken by the local authority aren't done for those schemes because it's a different sort of arrangement on arrival. So, it's kind of outside of that local authority jurisdiction. I'm aware that there was to be potential for exploitation of people displaced from Ukraine as a result of the war and I just wondered if any evidence has come to light around this issue and you know whether or not there's been an increasing in people who are arriving from Ukraine have been exploited or targeted the modern slavery.

RS: I think it is too early for me it's too early to say that it has been increased but I think we need to be really mindful that there will be, these people have very vulnerable, they I mean out. If they are going to be moving away from the families, they absolutely will be ideal for traffickers to recruit and to be exploited. So, I do believe that there will be an increase. I do believe that there will be, you know, these people I wonder about and maybe we could fall into the traffickers' hand and also let's not forget the type of exploitation. You know, sometimes it's a very difficult even a victim doesn't recognise themselves that they are a victim. So, it starts who it could just start with the with the slow low level a bit of a control and then move onto a different type of exploitation. However, that it is that someone vulnerabilities there and I am really sure that they were being increased in Ukrainian people become falling into the trafficker's hand. The international situation, the war zones that the disasters, that natural disasters, all these actually creates vulnerability in people and



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children, and they become a fall into hands of traffickers, become victims. I think Naeema mentioned earlier that, you know when people come in with the with the promise of a better life, but sometimes they come in, think it, they will have a better life, but has somehow that promised changes and those who brought them changes that becomes into exploitation, death, bondage, the contracts changed. I mean we talked about smuggling. I mean yes, with the smuggling there is a consenting of all votes for the person to be smuggled, but somehow if the terms changes And then they been exploited by the traffickers, then they are they become a victim of trafficking, not necessarily remaining smugglers. So it's really is very, complex. Political situations, war zones, natural disasters, or just for a better life for promises or internally. Having certain issues and falling into the hands of traffickers, they do become trapped. I know I moved away little bit from the Ukrainian situation but that's exactly what it is with the Ukrainian situation and there will be the vulnerabilities there. Hence it will be increasing victims sadly.

SB: You used the word trapped and I'm just wondering, can these people who are stuck or trapped in these situations get out of it by their selves ever or do they rely on us as organisations or people like yourselves to help them out?

RS: Some don't recognise they are trapped; they don't know how to get help. Naeema talked about debt bonding, and she also talked about people being afraid they may be the families being held at ransom in different countries. So, they are afraid of that. Some may not have the language so it is sometimes you just are not even sure whether you can go and get up. Yeah, and then let's not forget the Stockholm Syndrome also. So, there are number of issues that people do have when trapped. If we do identify it, then we can have interventions and they can get the support to get up and out of those situations, rebuild their lives etc. The risks are very high. Without naming the situations I can tell you because we have provided support over the years, there have been times after times we've seen some of the victims coming through, their risks are really high. The traffickers go to all extents to find them, whether they start finding different staff members, try to pretend to be someone else and call, try to pretend that they are that person's relatives, even going to the other partner agencies, pretending to be relatives and asking them! So, the risks are really, really high for some people. So that stops people accessing support and also some of don't know if there is support available. For some they may have immigration issues and thinking if I go and ask for the support I may be deported, so this might stop people asking for support too.

Angelina Rodriguez from Welsh Gov comments: I'm Angelina Rodriguez and I work alongside Josh in the Welsh Government. We work very closely with safeguarding teams, and other department within Welsh Government to make sure that modern slavery is inputted in the guidelines and when people are coming over here that they've got the right processes. We also work alongside the welcome centres as well to make sure that we embed modern day slavery and workers' rights with modern slavery into their thinking. So, a lot of work has been done and we regularly meet to make sure that we are safeguarding people and obviously we work closely with BAWSO and other organisations to make sure it's on the radar and people are well aware that people could get trapped into this situation. There's more and more as we have these different schemes and things going on; just to reassure people that it has been on the agenda, modern slavery is an issue and for people to be well aware of it.

NW: Just a couple of points linking back to the international work I was talking about where the Salvation Army is working in other countries as soon as the Ukrainian issue arose and people were coming across particularly into Poland. We immediately had teams on the border looking out for the traffickers and they were spotted. So, we're trying that from that side, we're trying to help there and the other thing you mentioned the words about people being trapped. Three keywords, I think,



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which puts the whole thing into perspective. Tricked, trapped and traded! And that's what happens to the victims. They are tricked, trapped, and then traded

An attendee asks: What do we know about the traffickers?

NW: Someone that you might think looks a little bit suspicious, very well to do high-powered people, particularly as we talked about domestic servitude where women are brought across from the Middle East, very often from some of those countries on a visa, with the family as their helper, nanny or whatever and very legally and legitimately. The problem happens then sometimes the husband or the wife are very well to do people and with very high-powered jobs but what's going on in that home, once they get the person here, is quite horrendous. So you know you can have someone who is very well to do, very rich, very well thought of possibly. I heard of a case yesterday where the perpetrator was a surgeon in a hospital and you think it's not you, and in fact that happened locally to me, where a local GP was imprisoned for modern slavery - for keeping a slave in her house! It can be anybody or it can be people who are what would appear to be ordinary people who just get into the idea that they can treat someone else to their own benefit. You know, we've had that with particularly the traveler community. We've had a lot of cases where the traveler community have been involved in a lot of modern slave labour exploitation, doing drives and roofs and things like that. So, you've got two ends of the spectrum there. It can be anybody. There isn't a typical trafficker I think the answer is.

An attendee asks: My question, If I was exploited and my passport was taken away once I reported the police, the police should be able to retrieve the passport and the personal hold. My passport taker should be prosecuted and that would start breaking the chain of this traffickers. This is another way of attacking the root causes it. We've got to get the police involved in this and take the passport away from this people who hold their documents and start to put proceedings against them. Yeah, even deport them if they are foreigners but that level has to be very strong. Imagine not just talking about it, you have to act on it.

Question to RS: How many people are prosecuted? How many people do have to take account of what they've done? This is the traffickers I am speaking about.

RS: You know, to be I will be honest here, I can find out the figures of how many prosecuted, especially in Wales, but I think it will be very, very few. I mean the number of cases, there have been a couple of cases we have been involved with. It's been mostly labour exploitation and sexual exploitation. There was a case last year in the South Wales area. Yes, the police are always there, you can get police involved. It really depends on a victim and how they feel about it. They have number of reasons why sometimes they actually give the accounts and sometimes they don't. Some don't want the police to get involved and also depending on how much information they have about the traffickers. So, I think you can see prosecution has been a bit slower than it should have been, because only on the evidence and of how the police are able to gather the evidence. I can just say that is normally when we are supporting somebody, they are given a choice whether they want to go to police and make a statement. We will not force them in any way for them to do that.

Closing remarks

SB mentioned that links and notes will be shared, and anything shared in chat will also be shared. SB thanked everyone for attending.



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