

Modern Slavery

Introduction and outline

It is difficult to understand how, in 2022, that the two words 'Modern' and 'Slavery' can actually occur in the same sentence. But, sadly, some two hundred years after the Slave Trade Act of 1807, Slavery is still an issue. In fact, currently it is estimated that 40.3 million people are in some form of Modern Slavery today, with some 136,000 in the UK.

This series of three articles will look at the following topics

a. Understanding Modern Slavery

b. Detection

c. Prevention

Understanding Modern Slavery

Before we can detect Modern Slavery and look for the tell-tale signs, we must first understand what Modern Slavery is. As previously mentioned, an estimated 40.3 million people are in some form of Modern Slavery, but how can this happen in 2022? Well at the core of this is **DECEPTION**; the offer of a better life or opportunity, which turns out to be a lie. The perpetrators of Modern Slavery prey on and exploit the vulnerable who often end up working in difficult degrading conditions with little or no pay. So why do they stay in these conditions? The threat of **VIOLENCE** to themselves or their families is used to keep them compliant and trap them in their situation.

If we were to outline a 'Business Model' for how this might work, it could look something like this:

1. people are treated as commodities...not as humans
2. lured into slavery through deceit, the job offered turns out to be a lie and they are forced to work in difficult, degrading conditions, for little pay
3. chilling levels of violence and threats used to keep them compliant, so difficult to escape
4. high earnings for the perpetrators
5. plentiful supply of potential slaves

The last point is extremely concerning, given the perfect storm that we see in the UK, namely:

- Soaring energy prices
- Changes to Universal Credit
- Ending of 'Furlough'

As people's finances become more challenged, so they may potentially become an easy target for a perpetrator's offer of 'help'.

The perpetrators are clever and make sure their crimes are difficult to discover and this is helped by our modern busy lives where the perpetrators preying on the vulnerable can often go unnoticed, especially in areas where there is no sense of community and where there are fragmented lives, fragmented families, fragmented relationships.

The Clewer Initiative, who seek to raise awareness of all aspects of modern slavery and help support victims and vulnerable groups by mobilising local churches and communities, use

some interesting language. Some of their language and training material points to the fact that Modern Slavery may happen in our communities, but we do not notice it. Modern Slavery happening, but not seen! Some of this language includes:

- *Hidden Voices*
- *Women in the Shadows*
- *Hidden in Plain Sight*
- *We see You*

For further information visit the Clewer Initiative website at **theclewerinitiative.org**

The next article will explore Detection and the tell-tale signs of Modern Slavery.

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