

From: [The Clewer Initiative](#)
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 **THE CLEWER**
● INITIATIVE

Mobilising the Church to help end modern slavery.

Modern slavery in food banks

This month, our newsletter explores how food banks can protect their users from modern slavery. We also introduce our new food bank resources and speak to Sion Hall from PLASP about how they have been raising awareness amongst food banks in Lancashire.

Please forward this newsletter to your friends and colleagues and encourage them to sign up to receive it regularly.



Detecting modern slavery in food banks and warm banks

The number of vulnerable people seeking support from food banks is predicted to get even worse this winter as the cost of living cripples many on the margins of society.

As well as food banks and pantries, local councils and community organisations are responding to the looming social emergency by establishing “warm spaces.” These community hubs are a brilliant way for people to gather and stay warm.

Unfortunately these initiatives, which churches are often at the forefront of, could prove rich picking grounds for criminal gangs looking for vulnerable people to exploit.

It is therefore vital that everyone involved – managers, volunteers and users – are aware of the tactics used by criminal gangs and the signs to look out for.

The Clewer Initiative has specially designed resources for use in food banks to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst volunteers and victims. It also has bespoke safeguarding training to inform and equip frontline volunteers and safeguarding officers.

If you are involved in a food bank or warm bank, please sign up today for our training; download our resources and tell your colleagues. We must ensure modern slavery is at the forefront of our minds as we run these vital social action projects this winter.

[DOWNLOAD OUR FOOD BANK TRAINING RESOURCE](#)

When we meet food bank volunteers, we find very few have had modern slavery training. This must change so we ensure vulnerable people in food banks are not targeted by criminal gangs.



Posters for Food Banks

Many food bank users are vulnerable and therefore at risk of exploitation. Increasingly, traffickers are using food banks as a way to feed their workers at no cost to themselves and to recruit victims. Display these posters around your food bank to educate staff, volunteers and food bank users on how to spot the signs of modern slavery.

[DOWNLOAD POSTERS TODAY](#)

Between April 2021 and March 2022, **food banks in the Trussell Trust's UK wide network** distributed **more than 2.1 million emergency food parcels** to people in crisis. This is an **increase of 14 per cent** compared to the same period the year before.

When surveyed in May 2022, **93 per cent of independent food banks reported** an increase or significant increase in the need for their services since the start of 2022. Ninety five per cent of respondents said it was due to the cost-of-living crisis.



It can be hard to know what to do if you come across someone in your food bank or social action project who you fear may be being exploited or targeted. We have created a step by step flow chart to help you know what actions to take in terms of safeguarding a vulnerable person.

[DOWNLOAD SAFEGUARDING FLOW CHART](#)



On the Diocese of Gloucester's blog, Becca Faal, one of The Clewer Initiative's safeguarding consultants who delivers our food bank training, shares where her calling to protect people from exploitation came from.

Read her story and find out how her faith informs her safeguarding role.

[READ MORE](#)



PLASP tackles modern slavery in Lancashire's food banks

Over the last few years, the Pan-Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership (PLASP) has been thinking about how it can help the county's food banks grow in understanding of modern slavery and slavery-proof their projects.

Pre-covid, PLASP held an event in Blackburn for anyone working in food banks, soup kitchens or homeless shelters to raise awareness. At the event, the team explored the link between poverty, vulnerability and modern slavery and how food bank users can actually be targeted by criminal gangs when on site. Afterwards, members of PLASP offered to visit food banks around the county to chat further about modern slavery; the signs to look out for and how to protect vulnerable people from potential exploitation.

Sion Hall, chair of the PLASP, explains: "It was really valuable to meet with food bank staff, volunteers and service users to talk about modern slavery.

Worryingly many food bank users recognised our descriptions. They would tell me stories of white vans loitering outside food banks or homeless shelters and offering people a day's work for a small amount of cash. It is understandable why destitute people would accept this sort of casual work but sadly, the offers of work can often be misleading. People can find themselves being threatened or paid very little or working without the correct protection or equipment and getting hurt."

[READ MORE](#)



A Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order has been imposed on the owners of a Lincolnshire hand car wash thanks to information obtained by the GLAA and partners. Some of the workers at the hand car wash were being paid significantly less than the National Minimum Wage.

[READ MORE](#)

Upcoming training

We have a selection of free online courses on various topics to help you learn more

about modern slavery and what you can do to respond to this heinous crime.

1) County Lines for Foster Parents

18 November 10:00-12:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/county-lines-training-for-foster-parents-tickets-384755091837>

2) The Clewer Initiative Project Leads Modern Slavery and Safeguarding Training

12 December 19:00-21:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/388671375547>

3) Modern slavery and safeguarding training for Diocesan Safeguarding Teams

18 November 13:00-15:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/388674565087>

[VIEW ALL UPCOMING TRAINING](#)

Tell us your story!

We love hearing about what you are doing to combat modern slavery in your community. We want to share case studies of anti-slavery action every month in our newsletter and through our social media channels. Please tell us what you are doing so more people can be inspired and learn from you! Email clewerinitiative@churchofengland.org with your story!

Follow us on social for more news from The Clewer Initiative!



The Clewer Initiative enables Church of England dioceses and wider church networks to develop strategies for detecting modern slavery in their communities and help provide victim support and care. [Learn More](#)

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