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Mobilising the Church to help end modern slavery.

Exploitation within the refugee community

This month, our newsletter is devoted to understanding why and how refugees are often drawn into modern slavery. We learn about Canterbury Cathedral's plans to mark Refugee Week and our new Ukrainian refugee toolkit.

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

Don't forget to mark Refugee Week!

Refugee Week (19–25 June) is a UK-wide festival which aims to celebrate the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. This year's theme is "compassion" and what compassion looks like in action.

Refugee Week is an umbrella festival, and anyone can get involved by holding an event or activity. Refugee Week events happen in all kinds of different spaces and range from arts festivals, exhibitions, film screenings and museum tours to football tournaments, public talks and activities in schools.

With three weeks to go, what could you do in your community to mark this important festival?



The risk to refugees

The situation facing refugees, asylum seekers and migrants is a matter of huge global concern and the issues are many and complex. Because refugees are usually extremely vulnerable, they are at risk of being targeted by criminal gangs and drawn into modern slavery and exploitation.

Last summer, the British Red Cross and UNHCR published a joint report [At risk: exploitation and the UK](#) highlighting the many reasons why refugees and asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. They cited the lack of community support networks, the way refugees often end up socially and culturally isolated and a lack of basic resources and opportunities to work and support themselves and their families. These and other factors leave refugees and people seeking asylum at serious risk of being drawn into exploitation.

[READ MORE](#)

What is the role of the church in supporting refugees?

Sadly the challenge of effectively caring for and protecting refugees is as old as time itself. It is a big theme in the Bible – God’s people were effectively refugees in the wilderness for 40 years; Ruth and Naomi were refugees in Bethlehem and many exiles were displaced following the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions.

When the Old Testament law was written, God made provision for “strangers” or “sojourners” or “foreigners,” insisting that God’s people leave grain around the edge of their fields so that the poor and “foreigners” could pick it. Time and again, God commanded his people not to “mistreat any foreigners who live in your land. Instead, treat them as well as you treat citizens and love them as much as you love yourself.” (Leviticus 19.33-34). Even at the very beginning of the Bible, God was calling his people to act radically and sacrificially to provide for the needs of refugees.

As we reflect on this, we have a huge responsibility and opportunity. Because the church is present in every community and at the heart of many, it can lead the way in exemplifying what a compassionate community looks like. It also has a key role in raising awareness of the risk of exploitation and how criminal gangs operate.

In these two articles, we outline how churches and individuals can help safeguard refugees.

SAFEGUARDING REFUGEES

LONG TERM WORK OF SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Activists gather for National Network Meeting

On May 23rd, 45 people gathered in London for The Clewer Initiative's annual National Network Meeting. It was wonderful to meet so many hard-working campaigners and project leads from across the country and hear about the different projects they are running to combat modern slavery.

We spent time brainstorming and discussing what we want to achieve in the

future and what support we can offer each other. It was an animated and productive day and we want to thank everyone for attending and for their insightful contributions.

THE CLEWER
INITIATIVE

**NATIONAL
NETWORK
DAY
2023**

A snapshot of the day!

COMPASSION

19-25 June 2023



#RefugeeWeek2023

Celebrating Refugee Week in Canterbury

To coincide with Refugee Week, the Diocese of Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral, Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) and The Clewer Initiative have teamed up to organise a three day programme of activity, entitled 'A community of compassion'.

The programme (20-22 June) will include the hard-hitting exhibition, *Hear my Voice* (which was previously displayed in Ely Cathedral); art workshops for secondary school pupils, a panel discussion and Q&A and a market place of stalls, showcasing various modern slavery tools and resources.

[READ MORE](#)

Did you know...

- There are approximately 103 million forcibly displaced people worldwide
 - 53.2 million are internally displaced people
 - 32.5 million are refugees
- More than 7 in 10 of all refugees come from just five countries - Syrian Arab Republic; Venezuela; Ukraine; Afghanistan and South Sudan
- As of November 2022, there were 231,597 refugees, 127,421 pending asylum cases and 5,483 stateless persons in the UK. The war in Ukraine drove a large increase from the previous year.

Statistics from [UNHCR](#)



New resource for Ukrainian refugees

We have created a new resource to help Ukrainian refugees learn more about modern slavery and the risk of being drawn into exploitation by unscrupulous criminal gangs that are operating in the UK.

The material is in English and Ukrainian and includes practical case studies and information on knowing your rights and staying safe. The PowerPoint contains everything you need to run a short, interactive seminar. Please forward this [toolkit](#) to anyone working alongside or hosting Ukrainians.

Definitions

A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'

An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognised as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim.

A vital part of being recognised as a refugee is Refugee Status Determination (RSD), a legal process that governments or UNHCR use to determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, national or regional law.

SIGN UP FOR MODERN SLAVERY TRAINING

1. County Lines Training for Foster Parents

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/558608191137>

Friday 16th June 10:00-12:00

2. Understanding county lines for parents, grandparents and guardians

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/601268358847>

Thursday 22nd June 10:00-11:00

To find out more, visit <https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-and-events>

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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