

Modern Slavery Bill

Factsheet: Duty to Notify (Clause 50)

Minister for Modern Slavery and Organised Crime, Karen Bradley:

“Modern slavery is a largely hidden crime. To tackle it effectively, we need to understand the scale and nature of the problem better. We know that many potential victims of modern slavery are not reported to the National Referral Mechanism, even where they come into contact with public bodies. Where victims are not referred to the National Referral Mechanism, we lose vital information, which could be used to improve our enforcement response. This new duty will enable information on all potential victims to be captured.”

Background

Modern slavery is a largely hidden crime and it is critical that we get a better understanding of the scale and nature of the issue to better protect victims and bring slave drivers to justice.

Currently, there is a discrepancy in the number of potential victims being identified, and the number of potential victims estimated to be in the UK. In 2012, 1,186 potential victims of human trafficking were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). However, the UK Human Trafficking Centre in the National Crime Agency carried out a ‘strategic assessment’ to combine intelligence held by central agencies, including the National Referral Mechanism, police intelligence and information from Non-Government Organisations. Their Strategic Assessment for 2013 estimated that there were up to 2,744 possible victims of human trafficking in the UK.

In 2013, 1,746 potential victims of human trafficking were referred to the NRM (a 47% increase on the number of referrals in 2012). While it is promising that the number of potential victims identified has increased, suggesting improved awareness of this crime, there is still more to do.

What we are going to do:

Clause 50 of the Modern Slavery Bill will create a statutory duty for specified public bodies (which we expect to include the police, local authorities and the Home Office – i.e. to cover Border Force and Immigration Enforcement) to notify the National Crime Agency about potential victims of modern slavery.

This will ensure that the specified public bodies notify the National Crime Agency about all potential victims of modern slavery. It will also allow adult victims' notifications to be made anonymously where the victim does not wish to be identified

Benefits:

We expect the benefits of this clause to include an increase in the numbers of victims of modern slavery identified and recorded, improving the data picture that we currently have.

The improved data picture will help to enhance our strategic and operational response to tackling modern slavery.

Q&A

Will the duty to notify the NCA endanger the trust of victims in NGOs?

No, the duty will not apply to Non-Governmental Organisations. The duty to notify the NCA applies only to specified public bodies. In addition to this, there will be substantial safeguards in place, to ensure we always focus on the needs of the victim. Adult victims who do not wish to be identified will be able to choose to be subject to an anonymous notification.

However, we will encourage NGOs to notify the NCA about potential victims of modern slavery to ensure that we get the best picture possible of the nature of this crime in the UK, to help inform our operational response.

**Home Office
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