

London Modern Slavery Leads Network

Annual Report 2019

Chair's Foreword



The London Modern Slavery Leads (LMSL) network is a powerful example of best practice working and partnership and demonstrates our collective belief across London that we can best tackle the scourge of Modern Slavery when councils come together to share trends and working. Back in 2018, when the London Borough of Enfield set about creating a Modern Slavery strategy we wanted to learn about other councils' activities and were disappointed there was no opportunity across London councils to share best practice. When the Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) notified us that several other local authorities wanted the same opportunity, together we decided to set up the London Modern Slavery Leads group in January 2019 to initiate a pan London approach, to ensure we better identified and safeguarded victims of modern slavery identified in London.

We did not however predict the rising success of the group, the dedication of members and the high level of uptake, with all 32 boroughs now sitting on the group, and attending meetings at London Councils, alongside the City of London, and NHS partners, with key partners joining including the Local Government Association, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, and the Home Office.

With the MSA statutory guidance recently published, which our group fed into - the only collaboration of councils to do so - where the role of local authority in identification and support is now clearly stated in Government regulation, local authority responses and cooperation are more critical than ever before. The high level of attendance at meetings, the outcomes already achieved, alongside positive feedback from our member survey underscores the need of the LMSL group and it has been a pleasure to Chair this group into 2020. Lastly I would like to thank all of attendees of the LMSL group, as well as Tamara Barnett and Rachel Smith from the Human Trafficking Foundation for making the group possible.

Sharon Burgess

**Chair of the London Modern Slavery Leads Network
(Head of Safeguarding Adults and Quality for the London Borough of Enfield)**

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Overview



“In my Strategic Plan 2019-2021, I underline the importance of working in partnership across the modern slavery sector to foster a coordinated approach in tackling this scourge. Nowhere is such partnership working more important than with local authorities.

Local authorities are well-placed to identify, disrupt and investigate modern slavery. There are many areas where local authority personnel may come across suspected victims of slavery, for example in housing, social care, licensing, trading standards and environmental health. Joint working within and across local authorities, including through Community Safety Partnerships, is essential to standardise and cascade modern slavery awareness and training to identify and refer victims.

Local authorities can also play a role to reduce the risks of trafficking taking place in their supply chains, by sharing best practice, engaging with suppliers and embedding human rights due diligence processes.

I have recently called for decision making on child trafficking cases to be devolved locally to organisations better placed to provide subsequent support and there are ongoing conversations about how best to support adults with complex needs. It is clear that local authorities are playing an increasing role in supporting victims and survivors of modern slavery, therefore it is essential that they understand their responsibilities, have in place effective processes for how to respond and are appropriately funded to do so.

I am encouraged to see the work that is going on through the LMSL and the efforts being made to ensure that communication is taking place between local authorities across London, enabling them to share good practice and develop joined up solutions.”

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner



Context

Human trafficking and modern day slavery is the fastest growing international crime and is the second largest source of illegal income for organised criminality in the world. It is also increasingly seen as one of the greatest human rights abuses of our times, and is now being recognised as the number one national human rights priority by the UK Government.

There are estimates ranging from 10,000 to 136,000 people being exploited in modern day slavery in the UK, but in 2018 only 6993 potential victims were identified. In London, in 2019, 3318 potential victims were identified in the London region - including 310 identified by the Metropolitan Police and 705 by local authorities.

The nation's commitment to the eradication of human trafficking is illustrated by the passing of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA). The Modern Slavery Act 2015 has placed a statutory duty on the police and local authorities to identify potential victims and refer them into the NRM. The MSA statutory guidance was published in March 2020.

The 2015 Act consolidated existing modern slavery and trafficking offences, created Trafficking Prevention and Risk Orders, assured the provision of child trafficking advocates of all child victims of trafficking, and gave local authorities a statutory duty, as a First Responder¹, to notify the Home Office of any individual encountered who they believe is a possible victim of slavery or human trafficking.

Modern Slavery and human trafficking, including support provisions and safeguarding of victims, is also referred to within the Care Act and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. The UK is also a signatory to the Palermo Protocol as well as having committed to the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005, and the UK's international obligations are further established in Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and Council.

Tackling modern slavery and joining up multi-agency work in this area is also identified in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021. Strategic guidance is now also provided to local authorities via the publication of the Local Government Association's guide on Modern Slavery² while operational guidance to local authorities has been created by the Anti-Slavery London Working Group³.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-to-notify-the-home-office-of-potential-victims-of-modern-slavery>

² https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.12_Modern_slavery_WEB%20202.pdf

³ <https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/modern-slavery-protocol>

Objectives

With numbers steadily rising in the last few years, the increased recognition of modern slavery in the capital including criminal exploitation, it became clear that councils and health partners needed to work together to recognise modern slavery is not bound by borough borders. To tackle modern slavery, the capital needs a pan-London approach, working together to ensure good practice is shared and trends and lessons can be learnt and communicated in an effective way that leads to better outcomes for survivors. To meet this purpose, the Human Trafficking Foundation worked with councils to establish the London Modern Slavery Leads (LMSL) network.

Local authorities, NHS and Police are still struggling to identify potential victims, and in some cases even criminalising them instead. When statutory organisations do identify victims of human trafficking (VOTs), in many cases there is a lack of appropriate support for them, with many VOTs ending up destitute or even being re-trafficked.

The LMSL aims to examine systems, services and responses to modern slavery and human trafficking for councils at both a strategic as well as operational level and provide a multi-agency London forum to share best practice and identify and solve challenges.

The group is committed to partnership working, prevention of exploitation and slavery and improving the safety of adults and children at risk of modern slavery across London. The group aims to promote a culture that recognises the underpinning principles from Making Safeguarding Personal, as guidance to the Care Act 2014 defines modern slavery as a type of abuse under safeguarding.

The LMSL Group agreed in its Terms of Reference in 2019 to:

- Establish a network of contacts to improve best practice and understanding and raise awareness about modern slavery.
- Promote the work that is occurring nationally and locally, and provide feedback on issues that are apparent within members' boroughs.
- Improve best practice and take forward specific pieces of work, which are of interest to the group, and will improve the safety and response to potential and identified victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.
- Act as an advisory body to members,
- Address challenges faced by local authorities,
- Raise awareness of issues across London,
- Identify trends and collate data
- Provide a collective voice so that short-comings can be identified and addressed,
- Identify opportunities for different types of intervention within the rapidly evolving landscape of modern slavery.
- Be the hub for LMSL in local authorities across London, with the aim of raising awareness about the crime, and setting up structures, tools and pathways that assist

councils on how to prevent it, how to recognise it and how to report it and how to support survivors.

- Promote participation of service users and service providers into the development and delivery of modern slavery' initiatives and activities; attention will be given to the need to safeguard those who lack capacity as well as those at risk of trafficking and re-trafficking.

Architecture

The LMSL network was chaired in 2019 by Sharon Burgess, Head of Adults safeguarding for Enfield Council, and co-chaired by Marino Latour and Peter Davis, while meetings were hosted by London Councils and organised by the Human Trafficking Foundation.

At the end of 2019 the Chair agreed to continue in her role and an Executive Group was also formed to cover the range of areas the LMSL wants to focus on going forward. Alongside previous Vice Chair, Marino Latour, Safeguarding Adults Lead (NHS SWL) agreeing to continue for 2020, the new additional Vice Chairs who make up the new LMSL Executive Group were agreed as: Antony Madden, Head of Service (Children) for the LB of Hillingdon, Keith Stanger, Head of Community Safety and Crime for the LB of Islington and Vikki Gray, Associate Director of Safeguarding Adults (NWL CCGS)

The LMSL invited a number of organisations to sit on the group. These now include MOPAC, the LGA, the Met Police's Vulnerabilities Unit, the Home Office, the MHCLG (who plan to attend in 2020), and the office of the IASC. The London Fire Brigade has also been invited following a request in our end of year survey. The LMSL also met with London ADASS and spoke at the Housing Directors meeting.

Year 2019 achievements

Meetings, updates and shared working

The LMSL met four times over the course of 2019 and was attended by between 35 to 45 stakeholders at each meeting.

The network also received regular updates in between meetings relevant to councils such as information on changes to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral process. A number of stakeholders used the network to share information and surveys, such as London Councils work on child criminal exploitation.

Conference

Following examining legislation around housing and safeguarding, it was agreed that in 2020 the LSML would plan a conference and target it at officers in councils - possibly those based in legal teams and housing - where there are potentially gaps in knowledge around slavery.

Sharing work and concerns

In the first meeting, Members gave overviews of current local responses which indicated that there is a wide range of activity on Modern Slavery and that boroughs are at different stages in the process of developing this. Some local areas were advanced in developing their responses to Modern Slavery; others reported they were at the earlier stages of this process but taking this forward.

Key challenges highlighted included: challenges in engaging housing teams; a problem with the Modern Slavery Act being unclear where slavery sits in local authorities creating a challenge to create a cohesive response; having to create new pathways as many of the pathways that exist don't fit with trafficking or the NRM; slavery not being a priority for the London adult safeguarding board; challenges around how to record data; there being too many specialisms and the need to just look at the vulnerability behind it; and specialist tertiary mental health barriers existing if survivors were in insecure accommodation or homeless.

Data collection

The group responded to the above challenges by first agreeing to collate data from members. This proved a challenge and later in the year the central west London (LBHF, RBKC and WCC) partnership gave a presentation on their work to tackle slavery and discussed their work around data collection.

Case Example

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster partner with the charity STOP THE TRAFFIK to employ a Modern Slavery Partnership Coordinator to lead on tackling modern slavery across the three boroughs. They coordinate the Modern Slavery & Exploitation (MSE) Group, a multi-agency partnership, made up of local authority, police, NHS and specialist NGOs with the aim of increasing victim identification, providing appropriate support, preventing exploitation and bringing exploiters to justice. The main focus for 2019 was developing a modern slavery adult referral pathway to ensure designated teams within the local authority were aware of their duty as First Responders, received robust training and have a clear guide to follow when they come across a case. 97% of Housing and Adult Social Care professionals that received the pathway training agreed with the statement "I am confident I could respond appropriately if I suspected a case of modern slavery."

The pathway also includes a step to send a completed NRM or Duty to Notify referral to an internal mailbox so the councils can begin to collate their referrals centrally and analyse

the exploitation in the three boroughs. As a wider piece around data collection, multi-agency partners in the MSE Group are sharing anonymous information about cases they're coming across to create an intelligence picture of exploitation in the three boroughs, which is then analysed by STOP THE TRAFFIK and will provide an evidence base for shaping future response.

One of the partners in the MSE Group is The Passage, which has worked with Westminster City Council (WCC) to deliver multi-agency case conferences (MACC) for victims of modern slavery who are homeless. The council is providing emergency bed spaces to fill the gap before the NRM support begins and The Passage is bringing together relevant partners to ensure victim/survivors are given the best possible support. In 2019, 11 MACCs were held for 8 victims. Seven led to NRM referrals and all received positive reasonable grounds decisions. Following the success of the pilot, WCC has received funding from MHCLG for two roles, one within the council and one within The Passage, in order to continue delivering the MACCs and roll them out further to prevent victims of modern slavery being homeless.

Safeguarding papers and workshop

A clear gap repeatedly outlined in the first meeting related to the struggle for adult survivors to access support. This led to the group agreeing to put a paper together on safeguarding. This paper was drafted and workshopped in the final meeting of 2019 and is now in review stage.

Another challenge highlighted revolved around competing demands. This led to a paper by Vikki Gray on the different Safeguarding specialisms with the overarching theme of exploitation and the benefits of combining efforts to upskill the workforce thematically, which will be explored alongside the above paper in terms of sharing with ADASS and others.

Presentations and awareness raising

Key information was shared to the group such as concerns regarding risks around interpreters and how to reduce risks to survivors stakeholders worked with.

There were a range of informative presentations throughout the year that helped notify members about the rights of survivors and how to create best practice models to tackle slavery. These include presentations from Croydon Council and the central west London partnership council representatives; presentations on adult safeguarding, slavery and the law from the Legal Director at Hope for Justice; presentations on housing and the law from Connor Johnson at Garden Court Chambers; a presentation from Shu Shin Luh at Garden Court Chambers on children and the law around safeguarding; and a presentation from Philip Ishola, from Love146 on children and the councils' roles. London Councils also addressed the group on work they were carrying out on county lines and NRPF. The

Independent Anti slavery Commissioner (IASC) and the head of the Met's Slavery Unit also spoke to the group as did the Home Office who provided an update on their work.

Informing the MSA Statutory Guidance

The Home Office presentation led to the LSML agreeing to set up a short-term working group to feed in recommendations on the Modern Slavery Act's draft guidance. There was no public consultation on the guidance and so besides via officers at the LGA, this was the primary way councils fed into the guidance across England and therefore this group was a critical voice in ensuring council staffs' viewpoints fed into this key piece of statutory guidance. This working group was reconvened with additional members again over the course of 2019 when the second draft version of the guidance was released to the LSML.

Survey

The LSML carried out a survey at the end of the year to assess views on how the group was progressing and what members wanted to achieve for 2020. Members said some of the most useful elements of the LSML they found include: sharing best practice, hearing from experts, understanding what others were doing on slavery and understanding their statutory duties.

Comments included:

"Keeping updated with where MDS sits in other local authorities and what the police are doing around this centrally"

"[i] used some of the presentations (Care Act & Housing law) in training I delivered across the councils"

"Knowing there is a network available that I could access via email if an issue arose between meetings. Validating our approach."

And when asked, "How do you share the information from the group with your organisation? "

- 66% forward information received from the network
- 42% provide presentations to their organisation
- 33% share the minutes from the group
- Others use the information in training

Respondents said they would like more contribution from attendees (45%)- one option mooted was perhaps via more workshops in 2020, with 36% saying they would have more workshops in smaller groups:

"There is a range of knowledge and experience in the room with service delivery around Modern Slavery clearly at a different stage / priority across boroughs. Perhaps smaller workshops from 'lead' boroughs could be held with

boroughs/groups that need additional steer / ideas could take place looking at what 'best practice' looks like and how to achieve it."

"I think the meeting is quite large in terms of attendance and doesn't necessarily lend itself to having everyone contributing. Maybe some smaller task & finish groups about particular themes would help."

Many felt there should be more survivor voice. Over 70% of respondents would have greater input of a survivor voice.

"I would also appreciate greater input from survivors and their experiences prior to and following from the NRM."

This is something that may be able to be addressed via a new survivor network that is being set up in London by Survivors Alliance with the HTF and Hestia.

Some members also wanted more focus on children's issues. It was also discussed that more presentations each meeting on what good practice councils are doing (i.e Enfield, Sandwell) would be useful.

In terms of what areas respondents wanted the LMSL network to focus on for 2020, the most popular options were:

- Adult and child safeguarding
- Prevention
- Multi-agency working
- Informative presentations
- Community safety responses

"It would be useful to look at preventative/community safety responses in terms of disruption techniques to special treatment licensed premises."

"How to make the most impact when training staff with a small time allocation."