[Nationality and Borders Bill – suggested introduction and MP letter template]

**Ask your MP for urgent changes to the Nationality and Borders Bill**

More than 100 leaders in the human rights and anti-slavery sector have written to MPs asking for urgent changes to the new Nationality and Borders Bill currently making its way through Parliament.

The Bill could mean more victims of modern slavery going unidentified, including British victims and children, and make it harder to prosecute traffickers.

To make this message even louder, we need your help.

**Take urgent action today**

Please email your MP asking for urgent amendments to the Bill in its current form.

You can find your MP at: <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

Choose from either the template letter, below or use the template to compose your own letter.

**Remember to include your name and contact details: if your MP receives a personal letter from a genuine constituent, they are more likely to take notice.**

**Letter template to send to your MP:**

Dear [Insert MP name]

I am writing as a concerned constituent [insert address with postcode]. You will soon be asked to vote again on the Nationality and Borders Bill, and I ask that you consider the inadvertent but serious harm this Bill is likely to cause to the fight against slavery.

Unless we significantly increase prosecution rates, slavery will remain a low risk/high reward crime for traffickers and the costs to this country of modern slavery will continue to rise.

Key to securing more convictions is victims’ testimony and engagement with the police. Yet the Nationality and Borders Bill is likely to make it more difficult to identify victims and will hinder their access to support so their vital evidence will be lost. It misses the opportunity to enable more victims to engage with prosecutions.

The changes to the modern slavery system will affect all victims, adults and children. While some victims of modern slavery might be from overseas and be part of the asylum system, a significant number are from the UK: in 2020, 34% of all victims of modern slavery identified in the UK were British.

If Part 5 is not removed from the Bill, I would ask you to support the anti-slavery sector’s proposed amendments to Part 5 in order to mitigate against these very real risks and ensure this Bill is fairer to victims and firmer on criminals.

My specific concerns are as follows:

●       **A time limit on reporting could mean thousands of victims not being identified (clause 58)**

Experts in policing, the courts and the anti-slavery sector agree that this Bill will make it harder for victims of slavery to be identified and supported.

One of the main reasons is that it puts pressure on victims to identify themselves within a limited timeframe, without consideration for the impact that trauma may have on the victim’s ability to disclose their experiences.

This has echoes of the mistakes we made around historic rape cases: victims could feel if they have missed the timeframe that there is no point in coming forward. It means fewer victims will be identified and helped, and more criminals free to exploit the most vulnerable in our area.

●       **Victims who are forced to commit crimes, including child victims of County Lines, could receive no help and remain trapped in exploitation (clause 62)**

The Bill will also disqualify from support any victim of modern slavery who is considered to be a “threat to public order”, using a broad definition which fails to take account of the fact that many victims will be forced to commit crime as part of their exploitation (including victims of County Lines drugs gangs), or that victims can be targeted for exploitation because they have criminal convictions.

I fear this will send a message to traffickers that they are free to exploit people with criminal records (including for crimes committed under duress) as they will no longer qualify for help.

Experts agree that it is likely that the fewer people we identify as victims of modern slavery, the fewer traffickers will be caught and ultimately convicted. Despite the Bill’s stated intentions to be “firm but fair”, it is unfair to victims of slavery, while making it easier for the perpetrators to get away with their crimes.

That is why I am asking you to support amendments to Part 5 of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

I, like you, want to eradicate modern slavery from our area. But to do so requires us to provide support, not barriers, to victims so that we see more traffickers behind bars.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name and address]