

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

Anyone who might be a victim of modern slavery is offered the chance to enter the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is the system used in the UK to identify people who have experienced modern slavery and human trafficking, ensure they receive appropriate support and protection.

Referrals to the NRM can only be made by authorised agencies known as First Responders. First Responders are responsible for identifying potential victims, gathering information and referring them to the NRM.

Further details can be found [here](#)

What to do

If you suspect modern slavery, call the police. Call **999** if it's an emergency, or **101** if it's not urgent.

To report an adult safeguarding concern, contact the appropriate safeguarding hub, based on whereabouts the adult lives: Contact Cumberland Council on **0300 373 3732** or contact Westmorland and Furness Council on **0300 373 3301**.

If you have urgent concerns for a child, or suspect that a child has been abused in anyway and needs an urgent response, please call the relevant Safeguarding hub: Cumberland Safeguarding Hub on **0333 240 1727** or Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub on: **0300 373 2724**

For advice and guidance, call the Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700**.

It does not matter if you do not have evidence, you should always report because your piece of information may help to save someone.

The Victim

There is no typical victim of slavery – victims can be men, women and children of all ages, ethnicities and nationalities and cut across the population. But it is normally more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, and within minority or socially excluded groups. Approximately two-thirds of victims are women, and a third are men. Every fourth victim of Modern Slavery is a child. Child victims are victims of child abuse and should therefore be treated as such using existing child protection procedures and statutory protocols.

Further Resources

Modern Slavery Helpline: [Modern Slavery Helpline](#)

Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board [Home page](#) | [Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

Cumbria Safeguarding Childrens Partnership [Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery](#) | [Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

The Children's Society www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Salvation Army [What is Modern Slavery](#) | [The Salvation Army](#)

What is Modern Slavery & Exploitation

To be exploited is to be used for someone else's personal gain. Modern slavery is an umbrella term that encompasses the criminal offences of human trafficking, exploitation and slavery.

Modern slavery is often hidden and may take place alongside a wide range of abuses and other criminal offences.

Modern slavery happens across the world and the UK. It is happening in Cumbria.

It can happen to people who come from the UK, or who have come here from other countries.

Modern Slavery should not be confused with illegal immigration or people smuggling. It doesn't have to be cross border – it can be within the same city or town. Moving a person from one room to another for personal gain is human trafficking. The victim is most likely to be from the UK as is the perpetrator, so this is not an area solely focused on foreign nationals.

Legislation

The Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2015. The act gives law enforcement the tools to fight modern slavery, ensure perpetrators can receive suitably severe punishments for these appalling crimes and enhance support and protection for victims.

Further info: [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

Types of Modern Slavery

An individual may experience multiple forms of exploitation or abuse. Modern Slavery takes many forms including:

- **Sexual exploitation** – This includes but is not limited to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos.
- **Domestic servitude** – This involves a victim being forced to work in predominantly private households, usually performing domestic chores and childcare duties. Their freedom may be restricted, and they may work long hours often for little or no pay, often sleeping where they work.
- **Forced labour** – Victims may be forced to work long hours for little or no pay in poor conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families.
- **Criminal exploitation** – This can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shoplifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking (county lines) and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.
- **Child Exploitation** is a form of abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to encourage or compel a child or young person under 18 into an activity that benefits the perpetrator or facilitator. The perpetrator(s) might coerce, control, manipulate or deceive the young person. This activity includes, but is not limited to, sexual and criminal activity, wider forms of labour, forced begging and domestic servitude. (The Children's Society (2024))
- **Other forms of exploitation** – Organ removal; forced begging; forced benefit fraud; forced marriage and illegal adoption.

Signs & Indicators of Exploitation

There are a number of signs that are common across all types of exploitation.

- **Physical Appearance** - bruises, untreated injuries, malnourished/unkept, inappropriate clothing, agitated, anxious/withdrawn.
- **Restricted Freedom** - unable to move freely/ dependent on another for travel, food and/or money, communication controlled, no identification/travel documents, vague or unclear about their address.
- **Isolation** - fearful/distrustful with strangers/authority figures, limited access to family/friends, language barriers.
- **Work** - vague/unclear about job, concerned they are in debt to another person for accommodation/travel, work excessive hours but has very little money.
- **Economic** - victims may come from a background of poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunity and debt bondage.
- **Social vulnerabilities** – vulnerabilities may include homelessness, being uneducated disabilities or learning difficulties, in the social care system, lack of family support or having a weak social network.

7 Minute Briefing - Modern Slavery