

Making communities more resilient to modern slavery

November 9 2017



Credit: University of Nottingham

Agencies and community groups in the UK need more dedicated funding to help fight modern slavery, according to a new report.

There is also a need for clearer leadership and co-ordination of anti-slavery activity, as well as consistency across the country in order to ensure appropriate services are provided to victims.

These are just some of the findings from the research report—"Collaborating for Freedom: Anti-Slavery Partnerships in the U.K.," which explores how we can make our communities more resilient to modern slavery by bringing agencies together to combat crime.

The report is a collaborative project between experts at the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab and the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland OBE.

The six-month project mapped UK 'modern slavery partnerships'—groups of organisations coming together to address slavery locally and regionally. This mapping exercise was achieved through a targeted survey. The second phase of the research explored the different types of partnership work which is already taking place around the country and what has been successful.

Dr Alison Gardner, the lead researcher on the project from the University, said: "Local partnerships play a vital role in tackling modern slavery and by mapping their work we can start to share good practice and help to make our communities slavery-free."

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, who spearheads the UK's fight against modern slavery, said: "Modern slavery is a brutal abuse, denying people of their dignity, safety and freedom. It impacts millions worldwide and thousands here in the UK. If we want to see more victims rescued and more perpetrators behind bars, we need to work together. Police, charities, local authorities, health services and others must not act in silos, and this research identifies how those agencies can better work in partnership to provide a professional response to stop this evil trade in human life."

The findings of the report will provide the first comprehensive overview of anti-slavery partnership work in the UK, together with an assessment of its strengths and challenges, and the associated implications for national and local policymakers.

The findings will be presented by experts from the University's Rights Lab and the Anti-Slavery Commissioner at a national conference on Thursday 9 November in the Trent Building at the University of Nottingham.

The conference, which is being held as part of the Economic and Social

Research Council's annual Festival of Social Science, is also part of an anti-slavery awareness campaign, which has seen local organisations pledging their commitment to making Nottingham a slavery-free city.

Other key findings from the report show that:

- Varying approaches in the way local agencies are addressing modern-slavery are affecting the consistency and quality of service responses.
- Whilst many partnerships focus on training frontline staff and sharing information, the majority of partnerships were not yet influencing deeper problems of slavery, such as what is happening in their supply chains.
- There is very little dedicated funding to promote joint planning of local anti-[slavery](#) activity.
- There is high demand for increased co-ordination of [partnership work](#) at a national, sub-regional and local level.

Provided by University of Nottingham

Citation: Making communities more resilient to modern slavery (2017, November 9) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-resilient-modern-slavery.html>

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