

# Using research to end modern slavery

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Credit: University of Nottingham

A new report published today looks in detail at what research is being undertaken about modern slavery in the UK and what research we still need.

Modern [slavery](#) is a brutal abuse, denying people their dignity, safety and freedom. It affects millions worldwide and thousands here in the UK.

In order to see more victims rescued and more perpetrators behind bars, experts need to know about the scales, causes and consequences of modern slavery and about the strategies to combat it. This can only be done by using the best possible research and evidence.

Now, a new report looks at what current research is already taking place in the UK, and about UK slavery, and what else can be done.

'Researching Modern Slavery in the UK' has been put together by

Professor Kevin Bales CMG, Professor Sir Bernard Silverman and Dr. Bodean Hedwards from the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham, in partnership with the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC), Kevin Hyland OBE.

Professor Silverman said: "If we are to fight and end slavery effectively, an evidence-based approach is crucial. Academic, NGO and government research all have an essential role to play in informing the policies and practices that underpin this vital effort."

With this in mind, in 2017, the team at the Rights Lab and IASC put out a call to find out what recent and current research about slavery was taking place. The request focussed on slavery in the UK and research being carried out by UK researchers.

The team wanted to find out about research in a number of areas:

- Defining, measuring and categorising exploitation;
- Processes to identify, release and support victims;
- Geographical issues – such as the country of origin of victims;
- Best practice in responding to and eradicating slavery in supply chains;
- Best practice in law enforcement;
- International interventions that have been developed to combat the flow of trafficking victim into the UK;
- Practices in recruitment of victims and related criminal activities linked to trafficking and slavery; and
- The impact of trafficking and slavery on different groups, based on—age, gender, ethnicity, national origins, religion, sexual orientation or practice.

The team received 59 submissions from researchers and they used the data to map the UK's current research activity about modern slavery.

This includes research on the anti-slavery responses being implemented by government, law enforcement and civil society.

Kevin Hyland OBE said: "If we want to rescue more victims of modern slavery and convict perpetrators of the crime, we need to develop our understanding and utilise all information available. Collating research will help us understand the tactics of criminals, the techniques of [law enforcement](#), and the trends of the crime itself. I am sure this report will inform those on the frontline and empower others to build upon the excellent research that is going on in many parts of the UK."

As well as the report, the team created a companion website. Both will help experts to better understand the research taking place across the UK, and what more needs to be done.

Professor Bales adds: "With our report and accompanying website we hope to strengthen the research taking place across the UK. By better understanding the evidence already out there we can look at what gaps there might be in our understanding of slavery, which will, in turn help us to eradicate it."

**More information:** Researching Modern Slavery in the UK:  
[iascresearch.nottingham.ac.uk/about/](https://iascresearch.nottingham.ac.uk/about/)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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