

Modern Slavery and Housing

What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is a hidden crime, which according to the Global Slavery Index 2016 affects an estimated 136,000 people across the UK. Adults and children are exploited for financial gain through several means, including:

- **Sexual Exploitation** – Victims are deceived, coerced and/or forced to take part in sexual activity.
- **Labour Exploitation** – Victims are coerced to work for little or no pay under the threat of penalty.
- **Criminal Exploitation** – Victims are coerced/deceived into committing criminal acts under the threat of penalty.
- **Domestic Servitude** – Victims live and work in private households and are forced to work long hours undertaking a variety of domestic tasks for very little or no pay.

Victims are controlled through actions including threats, violence, deception and debt bondage. Sometimes a person may not identify as a victim or understand their rights.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be at risk of exploitation. Although there are a number of factors which may make a person more at risk, including debt, poverty, homelessness and mental health.

What role does housing play?

Housing plays an important role in facilitating exploitation; it could be where the exploitation occurs, for instance, domestic servitude takes place in the private homes. It also is where victims are housed – often in poor conditions. Often exploiters will also use housing as a way of controlling their victims through charging extortionate fees.

In some instances, landlords have been held liable for their role in facilitating exploitation – [see Operation Fort](#).



Identifying exploitation

There are several questions to ask when thinking about the link between housing and exploitation:

- Are the people occupying the property, those named on the tenancy agreement?
- Is there a frequent turnover of occupants?
- Is there evidence of poor living conditions, sub-letting or over-crowding?
- Have issues been raised in relation to the property e.g. refuse, anti-social behaviour?
- Is the person paying fees different to the person occupying the property?
- Does a person try to pay large amounts of fees cash in hand?
- Are the occupants of the property in possession of their own passports, identification or travel documents?
- Does someone appear to be controlling the occupant's communication, movement and/or behaviour?
- Do the occupants of the property appear withdrawn or frightened?

For more information on preventing modern slavery, refer to the [LGA Guide for Landlord](#).

✓ Do

- ✓ Be aware of the signs of exploitation.
- ✓ Trust your instinct. If you spot something that does not feel right, it might not be.
- ✓ Visit southyorksmsp.co.uk for more information and guidance.

✗ Don't

- ✗ Put yourself or any potential victims in danger. Instead, report your concerns.
- ✗ Think you are alone. Get advice from the Modern Slavery Helpline or the GLAA.
- ✗ Think anything is too small to report.

Report your concerns

If you are concerned call:

- The [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) on **08000 121 700**
- The [Police](#) on **101** or **999** in an emergency
- The [GLAA](#) on **0800 432 0804** for labour exploitation concerns.