



University of
Nottingham
Rights Lab

The Clewer Initiative

An appreciative inquiry

May 2020

Preface

The Clewer Initiative represents a long tradition of Christian engagement with the most challenging issues of justice and oppression. The continuities between the establishment of the original Religious Order in the mid nineteenth century, and the challenges of contemporary modern slavery, highlight a continuing need to confront tendencies to abuse and marginalise the most vulnerable. The methodologies of seeing, responding, caring and challenging systems and values to change, have a similar consistency.

The new factor for the current endeavours of the Clewer Initiative is the sheer diversity and brutality of the criminal business, and the extensive range of potential partners in trying to craft an effective response.

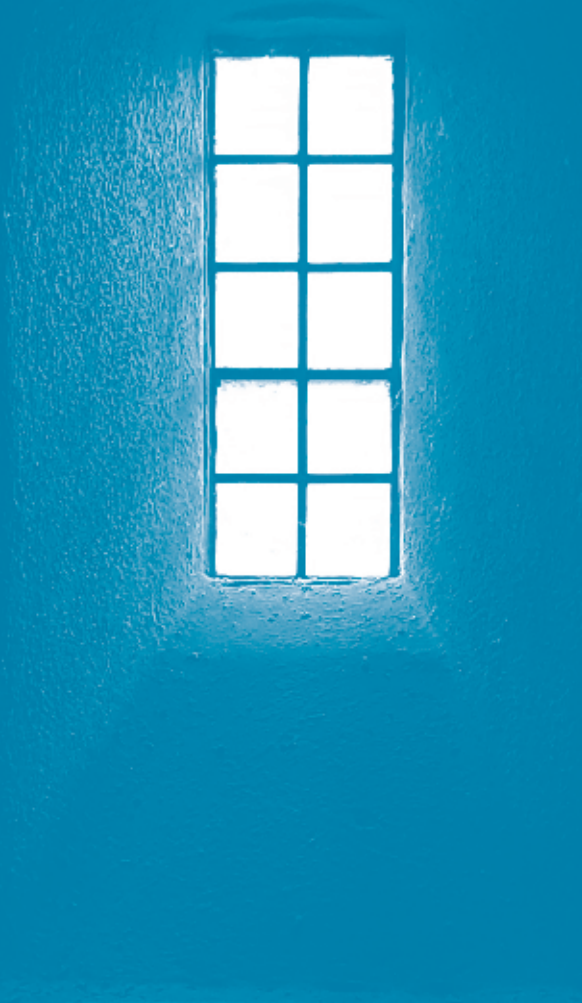
This report begins to unfold some of the issues and challenges in ways which will enable our work to grow in reach and in appropriate response.



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Foreword: Bishop Alastair Redfern



2020 marks a significant juncture for The Clewer Initiative as we celebrate all that has been achieved over the first three years of our activity and look ahead to the future. We are delighted that we have secured further funding from The Clewer Sisters and this means we will be able to make significant headway in our campaign to work with others to eradicate modern slavery.

We are grateful to Dr Alison Gardner and Dr Ben Brewster at the University of Nottingham for evaluating our progress to date. They have looked at the context in which The Clewer Initiative operates and how this impacts outcomes. We welcome their analysis and will use it to inform our strategy and priorities for the next five years.

The national and local landscape is complex with numerous agencies, providers and organisations overlapping in their remit. Collaboration is essential and we are excited that in the first three years of our campaign, we have established key partnerships with organisations up and down the country. We need to keep working towards creating greater unity in the system and sharing our learning more widely.

We believe we have a key role to play in terms of resource coordination – being a catalyst for action, coordinating disparate initiatives; providing services and buildings and performing the role of ‘critical friend’ to partner agencies. The report explores some of the challenges this sort of work brings and it is clear, that at a grassroots level, a “one-size-fits-all” approach will not be effective. While this may mean more workload in the short-term, in the long-run it should lead to innovation and more effective mobilisation. The five case studies included in the report showcase the many different approaches Clewer activists have taken and the complexities of working in urban and rural settings, alongside multiple agencies, struggling with limited time and resources and maintaining momentum.

One of the themes that emerges is the tenacity of our dedicated team. When faced with obstacles they have not given up but have developed new approaches and tactics. We are particularly pleased that this has led to the development of a widening range of specialised resources such as the rural toolkit and modern slavery safeguarding module. We are encouraged that our training materials are valued by stakeholders and are proving effective at deepening people’s understanding of modern slavery.

Despite the growing momentum in the anti-slavery movement, we believe there are considerable gaps The Clewer Initiative can bridge. We are blessed to be in a unique position to campaign at both a macro and micro level and we intend to seize this opportunity and use our voice alongside that of others to influence national policy and politics, as well as local good practice. We will continue to take advantage of the Church of England’s extensive local networks and widespread geographical presence to bring about change at grassroots level.

The Clewer Sisters’ generous provision means we can be committed to fighting modern slavery for the long-haul. We intend to focus on supporting and encouraging long-term, sustainable projects that have an enduring impact.

We have a sense of ‘kairos’ that drives us on – now is the time for action and we are thankful for the hundreds of individuals across the UK who share our calling and desire to care for and protect the poor and oppressed.

Introduction

The Clewer Initiative was created to enable Church of England dioceses to respond to modern slavery, by stimulating faith and community-led action to address exploitation. The project was funded for an initial three-year term to raise awareness of all forms of modern slavery, to increase detection and reporting, and improve victim support and care in the UK. Funding was provided by the Clewer Sisters, an Anglican order of Augustinian nuns, originally founded in 1852 to help young women who found themselves drawn into the sex trade.

The project was founded on the belief that *‘the tools to end modern slavery already exist within the local community and that the Church, which is present in all communities and at the heart of many, has a primary responsibility in leading these efforts.’*¹

This report presents a summary of the impact of the first three years of the Clewer Initiative, set against the dynamic and rapidly-developing context of anti-slavery work in the UK. As funding has recently been extended to enable work for up to ten further years, this report also identifies a number of challenges and opportunities for the project to consider as it moves forward.

Understanding the Clewer Initiative’s contribution

The current expansion of anti-slavery activity across multiple agencies, together with increased media attention and substantial additional arrests, means that there are numerous potential influences on public awareness of modern slavery. Higher prioritisation of the issue by key agencies, including Police and local authorities, has led to a greater understanding of the scale of the problem, and growing interest in local partnership responses. Amongst these diverse influences, the contribution of the Clewer Initiative manifests in many different ways but is also sometimes difficult to delineate.

This report uses multiple sources of qualitative data to explore three key areas:

- The influence of the Clewer Initiative on individual participants’ perceptions and practice
- The emerging role and offer of the Church into anti-slavery partnership work
- Five case studies of Diocesan grassroots mobilisation over a two-year period

The resulting composite narrative gives a qualitative account of the Clewer Initiative so far, and enables us to better understand how the Church can ‘give life’ to the system of UK anti-slavery interventions.

¹ Clewer Initiative Website <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/about-us/>

Methodology

This evaluation has been undertaken with support from the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab, a multi-disciplinary research platform which aims to provide evidence-based solutions towards achieving the United Nations' global sustainable development goal of ending slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour by 2030.² The principal researcher was Dr Alison Gardner, with additional survey analysis provided by Dr Ben Brewster.

The project methodology adopted by the Clewer Initiative uses an 'asset-based' focus, which seeks to mobilise the strengths and opportunities present within communities to achieve sustainable change. To complement this approach, this research report draws upon an 'appreciative inquiry' ethos to build an understanding of the way in which the Initiative has stimulated anti-slavery activism during the period of implementation.

Appreciative inquiry originated within the action research movement, and is based on an understanding that 'people invent and create their organisations and communities through conversation about who they are (identity) and what they desire (ideals)'.³ It seeks to understand 'what gives life to systems' as the basis of achieving organisational change, but does not focus exclusively on 'positive' factors. Rather, appreciative inquiry provides scope to engage with elements of 'light and shadow', recognising that both positive and negative experiences can be sources of energy.⁴ It is therefore particularly appropriate in contexts of rapid change where organisations are seeking transformation.

A qualitative approach was also felt to be more appropriate at this stage than monitoring focussed on quantifying the extent to which the objectives around awareness raising, victim identification and support have been met. Although it will be important to evaluate these factors over the longer term, foundational work to establish the Initiative also depended on building supporter knowledge, developing partnerships and engaging in joint learning around the nature of the issue and potential contribution of the Church. This is the focus of discussion for this document.

This report represents the second phase of research into the development of the Clewer Initiative. In compiling this report the authors drew upon a range of source materials including:

- a 2018 baseline report on development of the Clewer Initiative produced for key internal stakeholders
- Clewer stakeholder responses to the key themes in the baseline report, documented during a workshop at Lambeth palace in May 2018
- 12 appreciative interviews with four case-study areas over a two year period (in a fifth area, a further initial interview took place, but the original lead left and the lead role was not continued)
- a spring 2019 qualitative online survey of key internal stakeholders for the Clewer Initiative, which targeted Bishops, Clewer Leads and Diocesan Communications Officers (full details at Appendix 1)
- an analysis report on early results from the Safe Car Wash App
- practical experience of working in partnership to convene a number of Clewer-related activities in Nottingham
- engagement with a wide range of additional Clewer Initiative workshops and events (a full list is given at Appendix 2)
- secondary analysis of internal documents including the Clewer website and performance monitoring and marketing data

Although the survey and case studies mainly draw upon the perceptions and experiences of those who are working in or with the Anglican Church, not all respondents referenced in this report were part of the Church of England. The workshops and partnerships also engaged multiple individuals who were from other traditions and faiths, as well as those who did not explicitly identify as faith actors, while discussions frequently explored the intersection of faith and secular responses to the issue of modern slavery. In addition, the Anglican Church itself reflects a broad swathe of opinions and experience, by no means monolithic.

In presenting this report it is also important to acknowledge that as an author Alison Gardner has a dual interest, both as an academic engaged in development of a programme of work on 'slavery-free communities' and as a member of the Church of England in Southwell and Nottingham. As a researcher she holds a 'boundary' position as both action-researcher and faith-inspired activist committed to understanding, developing and improving community responses to modern slavery. However this study remains independent in the sense that no funding has been received from the Clewer Initiative towards this evaluation, and the report aims to offer reflexive and theoretically-informed reflection.

² <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/world/beacons/rights-lab/>

³ Ludema & Fry 2008 The Pactice of Appreciative Inquiry, in *The Sage Handbook of Action Research, Participative Inquiry and Practice*, eds. P. Reason and H. Bradbury, Sage: London p.291

⁴ Pamela C. Johnson, "Transcending the Polarity of Light and Shadow in Appreciative Inquiry: An Appreciative Exploration of Practice" In *Organizational Generativity: The Appreciative Inquiry Summit and a Scholarship of Transformation*. Published online: 20 Aug 2014; 189-207.

Emerging themes

This report demonstrates that the Clewer Initiative has achieved much to date and is still gathering momentum. The 2018 baseline report noted a range of core strengths which were ‘giving life’ to the initiative, including:

- a sense of ‘Kairos’: that this was the right time for the Church to engage
- leadership and a sense of vocation motivating key individuals
- significant partnerships which were adding value, both nationally and locally
- emerging grassroots commitment, raising awareness and spurring individuals to further action

There were also a range of opportunities and challenges emerging from the baseline report, which drew attention to potential areas of development or that required reflection and attention:

- a call from some activists for a campaigning role – or ‘prophetic voice’ – to address the societal dilemmas and social justice issues inherent within modern slavery
- continued visible leadership of the initiative, particularly from Bishops
- further exploration of ecumenical and inter-faith shared action, both in the UK and internationally
- attention to the co-ordination of anti-slavery work, particularly at a local level
- making greater use of existing Church structures, such as safeguarding structures, deaneries etc.
- greater intentionality around targeting specific audiences and outcomes
- development work on the role of the Church in supporting victims and survivors of slavery

This report demonstrates that there has been progress across many of these areas, but also that, as the Clewer has engaged more fully in anti-slavery work, new complexities and areas for consideration have emerged. In particular this report shows strengths of the Clewer Initiative, including:

- **growing roots at diocesan level**, bringing a sensitivity to context and place that enhances and complements existing anti-slavery activity both within and beyond the Church
- **resources and training materials that are valued by stakeholders**, and which cultivate a broad understanding of the nature and manifestation of exploitation in the UK. Out of this knowledge new and innovative products have been created
- **a wide range of assets, skills and abilities which can contribute to all aspects of partnership work**. The data collected for this report indicates that the majority of Clewer projects across England are engaging with partnership work at a Diocesan level
- **the way in which the initiative provides momentum for anti-slavery action**, particularly through providing **leadership, activism and other resource inputs that extend over the long-term**

There are also a number of areas suggested within this report where the Clewer could deepen and extend its impact. These include:

- a need to ensure that the Church continues to extend internal as well as external scrutiny, to understand how it can embed cultural and institutional change to support the anti-slavery movement more widely throughout the body, culture and practices of the Church
- a reminder to adequately resource the work of co-ordination at the local level, to ensure that new initiatives add value instead of increasing fragmentation
- a challenge to work towards creating greater unity in the system, particularly between faith-inspired partners, at both national and local level
- a call to work at the macro-level to challenge injustice as well as the micro-level: recognising that exploitation has many drivers and the ‘prophetic voice’ of the Church is essential in challenging important intersectional issues like poverty, homelessness or the ‘hostile environment’ towards migrants

In addition, now that widespread participation in the initiative is underway, the Clewer Initiative should consider proactively monitoring and evaluating progress against its core objectives. This report reflects upon these strengths and opportunities as the initiative moves to a longer-term focus and strategy. Further discussion of these points can be found on pages 33-36.

The national context: the ‘system’ of anti-slavery responses in the UK

Modern Slavery is now acknowledged to be a national and local challenge for the UK, with 6993 potential victims admitted to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2018.⁵ However, despite being a UK government priority, the response to modern slavery is not funded or provided by any single agency. Rather, different providers and agencies have expanded organically to create a complex system that contains both overlapping areas of provision and gaps. A simplified representation of this institutional mix can be seen at figure 1.

Government policy and investment initially mainly concentrated on supporting national-level responses, with increased resources going to agencies including the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit (MSPTU), Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and National Crime Agency (NCA). Victim and survivor support (provided through the NRM) is also commissioned by the UK government via a national contract with the Salvation Army, albeit working with regional-level non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) providers.

Other national agencies such as the National Asylum Support service, and the Department for Work and Pensions play important roles in victim identification and support. There are also some large international, national and regional NGOs who play a significant role in identification and support, but do not receive government funding.

Figure 1: Institutions contributing to responses to modern slavery in the UK



In contrast to this relatively centralised system of provision, at the local level a partnership approach to anti-slavery work is becoming the norm, with an increasing range of statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, and businesses joining government and law enforcement in responding to the issue. In 2017, 42 examples of individual anti-slavery partnerships and multi-layer networks were identified across the UK, albeit with significant variation in the maturity and intensity of partnership work.⁶ The latest research shows that nearly every police force in the UK is undertaking multi-agency anti-slavery activity, including joint training and awareness-raising, multi-agency enforcement operations, intelligence sharing and co-ordinating aspects of victim support.

Nonetheless, despite the growing momentum for co-operation there are still considerable gaps in anti-slavery work at the local level. A workshop with survivor support NGOs in the South West of England during 2018 noted systemic gaps in statutory provision, including decent housing, long-term mental-health and trauma-recovery, legal advice and access to justice and compensation, education, training, practical skills and employment support. Under-served groups included men, LGBTQ and those with multiple and complex needs.

Looking beyond institutions to the level of individuals, awareness levels amongst the general public are also reported to be variable⁷ with research from Scotland consistently noting that although two-thirds of people recognise modern slavery and human trafficking as a global problem, only 5% see it as an issue in their locality.⁸ Training for frontline workers and public services staff in England continues to depend largely on ad-hoc local initiatives, funded and organised locally. Furthermore, business culture is also proving resistant to change: 25% of FTSE 100 companies failed to comply with the three most basic legal requirements to publish Modern Slavery annual transparency statements under the 2015 Modern Slavery Act,⁹ and businesses with a turnover of less than £36 million continue to remain exempt from reporting.

⁵ The National Referral Mechanism or NRM is a support framework for victims of slavery, funded by the UK Government. National Crime Agency (2019) National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018. National Crime Agency, available online at <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/282-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2018/file>.

⁶ http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1186/collaborating-for-freedom_anti-slavery-partnerships-in-the-uk.pdf

⁷ <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1203/evening-standard-modern-slavery-report.pdf>

⁸ Scottish Government (2019) Human trafficking research: summary of findings available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/human-trafficking-research-summary-of-findings/>

⁹ <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/news-insights/calling-on-ftse-100-companies-to-combat-modern-slavery/>

The role and offer of the Church

In a context where state-funded services have contracted considerably over the past decade, churches and other faith organisations potentially offer a key cohering force in local communities, as well as acting as significant providers of education, social and welfare services. The Church of England, in particular, retains a voice in national policy and politics, with extensive local networks, and a widespread geographical presence, embedded through the ‘parish’ system. This makes it an important partner in addressing modern slavery at a community level in the UK. More generally, faith-based organisations engage with the UK anti-slavery community in a variety of ways:¹⁰

- Faith leaders highlight the issues associated with Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and encourage wider engagement with the issues from congregations. This type of direction has been apparent, for instance, in the work of Pope Francis, as well as the leadership of the Clewer Initiative by Bishop Alastair Redfern, both formerly in his role as Bishop of Derby, and now as the Initiative’s Chair.
- Faith-based anti-slavery organisations include NGOs and service providers that originated within the context of the Church, but now hold a separate organisational identity, working to deliver services such as safe-houses or survivor support services. Examples would be the Medaille Trust, which originated within the Catholic tradition, or Hope for Justice and City Hearts which grew from an evangelical base. Other service providers that have faith-based roots, such as schools or care homes, may also be included in anti-slavery awareness-raising and action. Faith based organisations vary in the degree to which their faith roots shape policy and practice.
- Faith communities include churches and other places of worship where people of faith may engage in anti-slavery work, as part of a commitment to social justice. The Salvation Army is well-known for its social justice orientation, and in addition to providing professional contracted services, volunteers are engaged in anti-slavery work such as driving clients to safe-houses, or providing long term mentoring, as well as intersectional work such as food-bank provision or homelessness outreach. Faith communities can also provide a forum for raising awareness, and conducting training, particularly for staff that volunteer in a social justice capacity.
- Faith networks are also utilised to draw together individuals or organisations in pursuit of a common goal. For example the Mothers Union have formally partnered with the Clewer Initiative to train their members, whilst in Norfolk and

Lichfield the ‘Together Network’, funded by the Church Urban Fund, has been instrumental in drawing together and supporting anti-slavery partnerships.

- Faith representation is sometimes built in to emerging forms of anti-slavery governance, for instance a faith advisor is included on the advisory board of the UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and faith representatives are frequently present on local multi-agency partnerships.
- Faith assets, such as places of worship, houses and resources, are also used as part of the system, with some churches acting as reception centres for large anti-slavery enforcement operations, or simply providing meeting spaces for partners to gather.

This means that faith-related engagement with anti-slavery work in any given locality is multi-layered and nuanced: in some areas all forms of engagement will be apparent, in other localities action may be dependent on one or two enthusiastic people of faith. This complexity is also layered over the variable local picture of secular anti-slavery responses and services.¹¹

There is also a less-positive potential aspect to the role of faith communities in the anti-slavery system. In their wider work on faith and urban governance, Lowndes and Dinham recognise that whilst faith communities can be a source and repository of social goods, they can also sometimes be places of ‘disconnection, insularity and radicalism’.¹² For example, faith engagement within the anti-slavery movement in the US has been critiqued for a disproportionate focus on the issue of sexual exploitation, with this issue detracting from other widespread forms of exploitation such as forced labour.¹³ Church investments are also widely spread, and both historically and in recent times, the Church has been criticised for unethical investment.¹⁴ Recent intelligence from the UK’s Modern Slavery Helpline has also indicated that churches are sometimes used as a network to normalise or facilitate exploitation. Religion has also been cited as a potential method of control by those contacting the Helpline, which identifies cults and religious beliefs as a way of increasing the psychological controls over potential victims.¹⁵ All types of faith organisation, including the Church of England can be affected by exploitation in their midst (indeed one of the Clewer Initiative’s own videos includes testimony from a survivor who was taken to Church by her controllers). There is also evidence of suspected traffickers using faith-supported outreach work, such as soup runs, night shelters and food banks, to either access free food for labourers, or recruit individuals in need.¹⁶

When it launched in 2017, the Clewer Initiative therefore joined an already-complex landscape of statutory organisations, NGOs and faith initiatives seeking to impact the anti-slavery agenda. However, the Initiative’s focus on grassroots community mobilisation as a vehicle for awareness-raising, victim identification and support, coupled with the Church of England’s influence and geographical presence in English communities, meant that it also developed a distinctive niche and profile alongside a suite of practical tools and resources. These are set out in more detail below.

¹¹ http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1186/collaborating-for-freedom_anti-slavery-partnerships-in-the-uk.pdf.

¹² Adam Dinham and Vivien Lowndes (2008) Religion, Resources, Representation: Faith Engagement in Governance, Urban Affairs Review, pp.832.

¹³ Jeffrey Barrows, ‘The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in the US Anti-Trafficking Movement (2017) in Makini Chisholm Straker and Hanni Stoklosa (eds) Human Trafficking is a Public Health Issue, Springer International pp.277-291.

¹⁴ See Hochschild, Adam (2005) Bury the Chains, Pan Macmillan: Basingstoke and BBC news (2013) Wonga Row: Archbishop of Canterbury ‘embarrassed over Church funds, available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23459932>.

¹⁵ Unseen (2019) Modern Slavery Helpline Annual assessment 2018, p.76 available at <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/uploads/20190424042048980.pdf>.

¹⁶ Author’s conversations with local foodbanks. Also Unseen (2019) Modern Slavery and Homelessness p.12, available at <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/uploads/20190627135914693.pdf>.

The Clewer Initiative: resources and assets

The Clewer Initiative has developed its work through leadership and advocacy led by Bishop Alastair Redfern, supported by a small central team. Their key actions include local engagement with dioceses and churches; identifying and creating targeted resources, shared through a dedicated website <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/>; developing partnerships with statutory and non-statutory bodies; and creating a network of local activists. A diverse range of tools, events and initiatives has been developed over the past three years. These include:

- a series of high-profile events at Lambeth Palace to launch the initiative and convene the network for ongoing learning
- A website with information on modern slavery, details of the Clewer Initiative and participating dioceses, and a range of downloadable training resources, posters, films, artwork and information www.theclewerinitiative.org
- slides and materials for a 'train the trainer' course on trafficking awareness and 'spotting the signs', delivered in partnership with the GLAA
- theological resources including materials for prayer, bible study, teaching and reflection and a 'Give Up Slavery' Lent course, publicised through social media
- the 'Safe Car Wash App' for checking features of hand car washes and logging any possible signs of exploitation
- the 'Hidden Voices' community mobilisation course, which provides a structured community development approach to anti-slavery work for small groups
- themed resources on the links between modern slavery and homelessness, targeted at those running night shelters, drop ins and foodbanks
- free downloadable lesson-plans and collective worship materials for schools
- slides and a short film on 'County Lines' exploitation
- a toolkit specifically highlighting the features of rural slavery
- an online safeguarding course focussing on modern slavery, together with safeguarding recommendations for churches aiming to deliver victim and survivor support
- a regional network for individuals leading Clewer work in participating dioceses, with meetings three times per year
- one-to-one support and mentoring for individual dioceses as they move their Clewer work forward

In general, feedback indicates that these resources have been well-received by key stakeholders within the Church of England, although internal marketing and download statistics suggest that most of the products could be more widely distributed. A survey of stakeholders conducted in Spring 2019 looked at the utility of seven of the longest-established resources described above, and found that all were highly valued, with training materials, the car wash app and educational resources ranked most highly. The Safe Car Wash App has had a particularly broad reach with more than 14,000 downloads achieved by July 2019 and more than 5000 reports of car wash locations. High risk reports have been shared with local Police forces, and the data used to identify examples of previously unknown car wash locations showing risk factors for modern slavery (see the case study below for further information).

Case study: the Safe Car Wash App

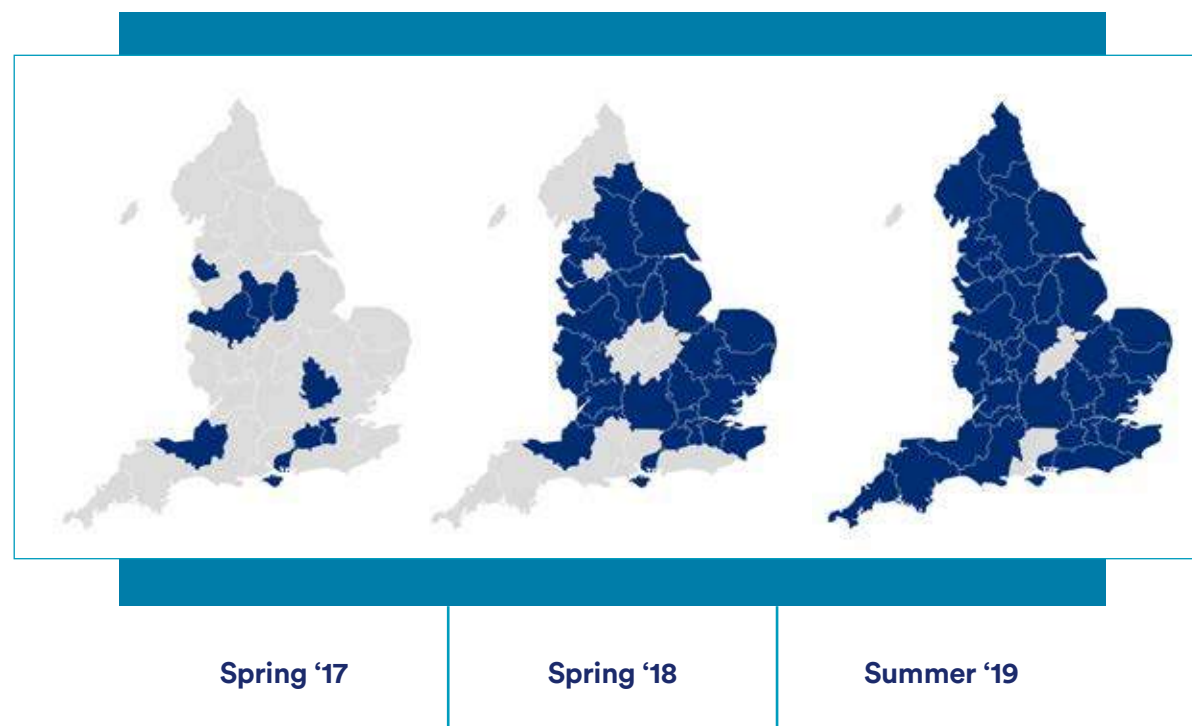
The Safe Car Wash App is a free downloadable phone application designed to help identify and report potential cases of labour abuse in hand car washes. The app was developed by the Clewer Initiative in partnership with the Santa Marta group, among other stakeholders. Users are asked a series of simple questions relating to the appearance of workers, visibility of safety equipment, pricing and payment. The resulting information is reported automatically to the GLAA and other statutory authorities, alongside a geolocation reference point for the site. If a sufficient number of red flag markers are triggered by a report, members of the public will be requested to call the Modern Slavery Helpline. The initial 2271 reports resulted in 126 calls to the helpline (although this only represented 18% of the total number who were recommended to report their experience.) An indirect impact from the Car Wash App was the high level of media interest, which contributed both to increasing public awareness of labour exploitation and potential reporting methods, and provided additional momentum for a public and political conversation about increasing regulation for the hand car wash sector.

A wide array of events, training and initiatives have also been delivered at a local level as a result of the initiative. In early 2017, when this research was initiated, it was envisaged that four dioceses might be involved as 'pilots' in 2017 with a wider roll-out developing in 2018. In practice, dioceses have joined the scheme in 'waves', with almost all dioceses engaged with the scheme in some way, albeit on a spectrum, ranging from sending representatives to networking events to intentionally seeking to mobilise congregations for specific actions. Whilst gaining engagement with the project was initially a slow process, requiring intensive engagement from the project lead, the 'second wave' onwards has developed more rapidly, with approaches increasingly coming from dioceses themselves, or from external partners such as the Police. A map showing how dioceses have engaged since the start of the initiative is included at **figure 2**. The Initiative has also recently begun to engage with the Church of Wales.

¹⁷ Jardine A and Gardner A (2019) Safe Car wash App Report, University of Nottingham available at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/mseu/mseu-resources/2019/march/safe-car-wash-app-apr-19.pdf> p.7.

Dioceses in the North East and West, Midlands and South West were initially slower to engage. It is not clear why this occurred, but suggestions include rurality (for the South West and North) and staff capacity. Several interviewees consulted for this research suggested that more prosperous areas are sometimes better-able to fund staff, thus enabling clergy and lay-leaders sufficient additional capacity to engage with initiatives such as Clewer. This is an important point, as in most cases local leadership for Clewer has been added to individuals' existing job roles, an issue highlighted by the 'pen portraits' of five dioceses in this report.

Figure 2: Diocesan Engagement with the Clewer Initiative over time



Different dioceses have also found that they had varied starting points for their partnership activity, with some having to work out how they would relate to well-developed local or regional anti-slavery networks, and others finding minimal anti-slavery activity in place. Diocesan-level work has therefore developed in a varied way across the country, and in some cases even within the diocese, at the local level. The majority have run awareness raising events or shared communications on national campaigns such as the Safe Car Wash App, sometimes drawing on the Clewer-branded training and promotional materials. More than half have been engaged in some way with a local anti-slavery partnership, according to our stakeholder survey. A quarter have undertaken 'Hidden Voices' community mobilisation courses (some have run multiple courses) or worked with other advocacy organisations such as citizens UK. At least three are actively building responses to victim care and support. There have also been examples of cooperation with organisations such as the Church Urban Fund and the Lottery, as well as innovation, for instance developing new resources on rurality, homelessness, safeguarding and education.

Section eight

Findings

8.1 The impact of the Clewer Initiative on individual participants' perceptions and practice.

Over time, the Clewer Initiative's engagement with modern slavery has deepened in nuance and complexity. This has been evidenced through the widening range of specialised resources and products developed for practitioners, as well as our workshop and case study evidence (see below). It is also expressed through the Initiative's key stakeholders own perceptions of their expanding knowledge base, and understanding of the topic.

Respondents to our 2019 stakeholder survey (which targeted Diocesan leads, Diocesan communications officers and Bishops) overwhelmingly felt confident in their knowledge of modern slavery, with 95% of our respondents rating their own knowledge between six and nine on a scale of one to ten. (Although not directly comparable, the same question to a very similar group of stakeholders in 2017 found only 65% rating their knowledge 6 or above.) When asked to rank the extent to which different factors and resources informed their knowledge, there was no dominant trend towards any one specific resource or contributor, but results showed that a number of factors had made significant contributions to respondents' awareness and understanding, including engagement with partnership work, personal reading, media coverage, and training and conferences being run by the Church. However, Clewer project leads overwhelmingly cited church-based training as a major contributor to their knowledge.

In describing what modern slavery meant to them, respondents showed a well-developed understanding, reflecting a broad and varied range of definitions and the often complex nature of the situations and means through which people are controlled (see Figure 3 on page 20). The terms that they used encompassed all three aspects used in the definition recognised by the Council of Europe's 'Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings', including the act (harbouring, receipt or movement of a person), the means (of control such as force, coercion, or deception) and the purpose (the form of exploitation).¹⁸ Again, though comparison cannot be made directly, such detailed explanations have not been typical of responses found to similar open questions in wider surveys, where research findings suggest that the term 'human trafficking' is usually associated by members of the public with the illegal movement of people and sexual exploitation.¹⁹

¹⁸ Council of Europe, "Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings" 7, no. 7 (2012): 1–30.

¹⁹ See for example Coral J.Dando, David Walsh and Robin Brierley (2016) Perceptions of Psychological Coercion and Human Trafficking in the West Midlands of England: Beginning to Know the UnKnown, PLOS One available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0153263&type=printable>

Figure 3: Responses to 'Please describe what the term 'Modern Slavery' means, from your perspective'



Almost one in three Clewer respondent answers made reference to forced or exploitative labour. Often, this was tied with terminology indicating that work was unpaid or unfairly remunerated.

“[Modern slavery involves] using coercion, deception or debt to force vulnerable people into working either against their will or without proper recompense.”

Other common terminology included references to the way people are controlled or coerced in situations of slavery. Some centred on the condition of ‘unfreedom’, whereby victims were deprived of their rights and the choice to remove themselves from the situations they found themselves in. Quotes which illustrate how some of these key terms were presented included:

“Modern slavery is a term applied to a range of situations where an individual is being denied basic rights of their money or other decisions affecting their life, where they go, live and who they speak to [sic].”

“People trapped in work / setting that they have not voluntarily chosen and from which they are not free to simply walk away. Coercive control with no proper wages or rights [sic].”

Notably, sexual exploitation was not amongst the most frequently-used terms in responses to our survey. Faith-based responses to modern slavery and human trafficking in the US have been critiqued by commentators for an excessive focus on sexual exploitation,²⁰ but although some of our respondents did mention sexual exploitation – or words to that effect, the topic was markedly less prevalent than labour exploitation in their definitions. This could reflect the frame driven by UK court cases and media coverage,²¹ but may also be an indicator that the Clewer Initiative’s holistic presentation of modern slavery is helping to shape a broad understanding of the topic.

Another interesting aspect of Clewer stakeholder responses was the degree to which they perceived modern slavery to be an issue relevant to their diocese. Randomly sampled surveys of public awareness (such as the Scottish Government’s annual survey) regularly report that although around 70% of the public generally accept that modern slavery and human trafficking are significant global problems, far fewer (in the Scottish case only about 5%) also felt that it was an issue relevant to their local area. It was therefore interesting that 93% of Clewer stakeholders saw modern slavery as a problem in their diocese. In some cases this was partly because participants understood modern slavery to be widespread or all-pervasive, and therefore relevant locally as well as globally. Responses also cited specific types of local exploitation with car washes, the agricultural sector, and domestic servitude all referenced by multiple respondents.

However, despite perceiving the wide-scale challenge of modern slavery and exploitation, a small number of respondents qualified this observation by noting that their institutions and day-to-day practices still remained unchanged:

“...A few people know about, are concerned about... would like to... sometimes do stuff about it. But the vast majority of people who go to church and the structures of the Diocese are ‘unaffected’”

“...Unwittingly people in our pews / parishes will be receiving goods and services that have modern slavery in their supply chain and people in their communities who are being exploited. People will be affected without even knowing it”

“It does not affect our work, rather we have modern slavery occurring within our diocese [sic].”

These respondents seemed to be indicating that although they agreed that exploitation was affecting their local area, they did not yet see widespread institutional and cultural changes fully embedded in response.

²⁰ See Cynthia L. Purekal, 2012 Christianity and Sex Trafficking: the Role of Faith based service Providers in the United States, p.8. Available online at https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/123580/Purekal_Christianity%20and%20Sex%20Trafficking%20The%20Role%20of%20Faith%20Based%20Service%20Providers%20in%20the%20United%20States.pdf;sequence=1; In 2018, roughly double the amount of potential labour and criminal exploitation victims were identified and referred to the UK NRM: compared to sexual exploitation; 3980 vs. 1927.

²¹ Birks, Jen and Gardner, Alison (2019) ‘Introducing the Slave Next Door’, Anti-Trafficking Review (13) pp 66-81, available at <https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/407/341>.

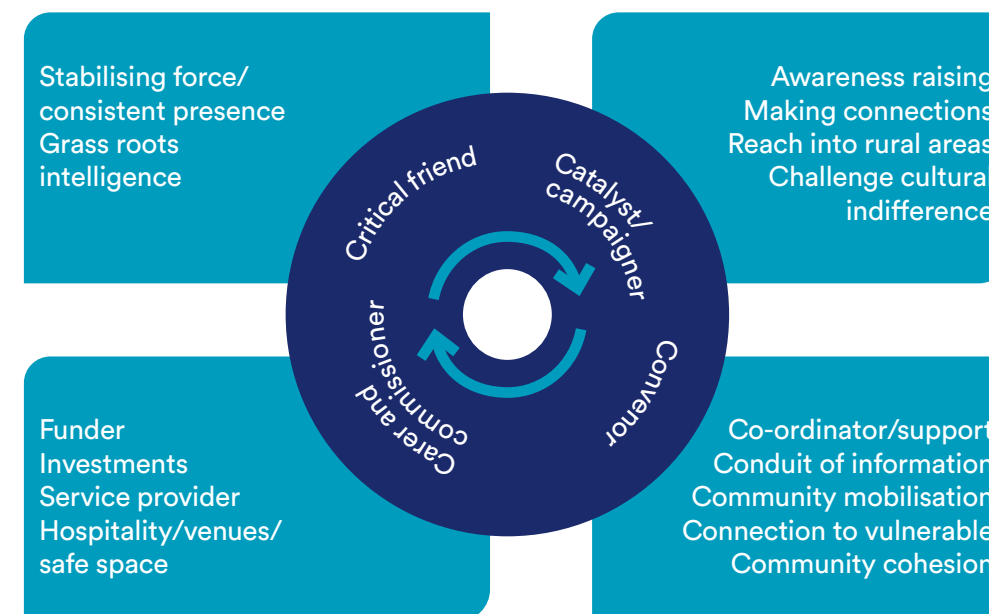
8.2 The emerging role and offer of the Church for anti-slavery partnership work

In a workshop with Clewer Diocesan leads in January 2018 we used Lowndes and Skelcher's (1998) concept of a 'partnership lifecycle' to think about the development stage of local partnership activity in participating dioceses.²² Lowndes and Skelcher contend that partnerships have four key stages: pre-partnership networking, a formalising period of formation and establishment, a delivery stage and review and restructure. This dynamic perspective was useful to help underline the different starting contexts of dioceses that were 'early adopters' for the Clewer Initiative, and the varying demands and requirements for contributing to local partnership activity.

Building on this recognition, we also discussed the different roles the Church of England could play at each stage of the partnership cycle. A diagram highlighting the different roles that were suggested by network participants is at **Figure 4**. The roles described go much wider than the Clewer Initiative's original aims of raising awareness, increasing identification and reporting, and supporting victims.

- At the **networking stage**, participants saw the Church as a catalyst for action, making connections, utilising its networks and reaching into key untapped constituencies, such as rural congregations. A number of our participants also felt that the Church had a role in challenging the existing status quo, questioning cultural indifference and highlighting exploitation where it is not widely recognised. This was termed 'prophetic voice'.
- At the **formalisation stage**, the Church plays a role as a convenor, drawing key partners together and providing much-needed co-ordination for disparate initiatives. This role may also draw on the Church's connection to vulnerable and diverse communities who may be at risk of exploitation, as a means to enable co-production of anti-slavery work.
- The **delivery stage** recognises the significant role played by the Church as carer, commissioner, and service provider, building institutional structures and protocols to prevent slavery within its own investments, assets and existing elements of service provision, such as homelessness outreach or education. It can also support wider partnership work, by allowing partners to use assets and resources such as Church buildings. Some churches may also initiate projects which complement or fill gaps in existing provision (see rural case study, below).
- At the point of **review and restructure** the Church can assist by acting as a critical friend, using its representative and network roles to sustain momentum for action and draw upon sources of grass-roots intelligence across its network to help drive future change.

Figure 4: Partnership contributions from faith communities to the anti-slavery agenda



These themes were subsequently echoed in other Clewer workshops attended by the author. For instance, at a South West workshop on victim support in March 2018, the theme of 'prophetic voice' emerged again, with participants highlighting the need to "petition the change" on systemic issues which create barriers to services, such as immigration legislation. A Midlands workshop also picked up the importance of leadership, particularly work that increased awareness of local instances of modern slavery, and targeted at-risk communities. They were keen to see faith leaders actively engaged, with one respondent commenting that the "role leaders can play in promoting the modern slavery agenda is under-utilised". The need for improved communications and coordination within partnership work was also underlined, with one workshop suggesting a directory or knowledge-web which could help local service providers to connect with peers in other organisations, to provide effective care.

However, while recognising that the Church had a range of unique levers to contribute to the anti-slavery agenda, a further workshop of Clewer leads and stakeholders held at Lambeth palace in May 2018 also recognised a range of barriers and challenges.

Firstly, it was recognised that in order to **overcome 'cultural denial'** the Church needed to help challenge attitudes within as well as beyond its congregations, on topics such as the existence of exploitation, hostility to migrants, and expectations of the true price of goods and services. As one workshop participant commented: "you can't produce peas for £1". This was sensitive in the context of societal tension caused by Brexit, and against the realities of poverty experienced in some parishes. Participants recognised that it was sometimes also important to **point to practical changes** that ordinary Church members could implement, to avoid the danger that Church members could be left feeling concerned but powerless if they were not encouraged to connect to a local action.

Second, the workshop highlighted difficulties in acting as a convenor and co-ordinator, particularly where **competing agendas** existed between NGOs (or even faith actors) at local level. **Time and resources** to join up disparate actors were also a challenge - also reflected in all of our case studies, below.

²² Lowndes, Vivien and Skelcher, Chris (1998) The Dynamics of Multi-Organisational Partnerships, Public Administration 76 pp.313-33 available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-9299.00103>.

In relation to the roles of carer and commissioner, there was growing recognition of the complexity of justice issues connected to modern slavery. For example, participants recognised that slavery was part of a spectrum of exploitation, and that some apparent ‘victims’ would express contentment with exploitative situations. Reflecting the reality of the ‘hostile environment’ policy for immigrants, workshop participants expressed **concern about potentially making victims’ circumstances worse by reporting their situation**, if for instance, they become homeless or lost their income as a result. There was additionally concern to **ensure care and proper training in areas of victim safeguarding and support**, especially around finding the right balance between voluntary and professional assistance, and setting clear boundaries on sharing personal aspects of faith.

Finally, in respect of the critical friend role, the workshop highlighted that the Church needed to be **involved for the long-haul**, with an extended commitment to sharing basic messages, targeting vulnerable groups, and paying attention to raising awareness throughout linked structures, networks and institutions, both within the Anglican Church and more widely.

8.3 Case studies of mobilisation

The five case study areas followed for this study were by definition early-adopters of the initiative, with all cases joining in the first two waves. This means they had longer to develop their responses than some of the other dioceses engaged in the initiative, and cannot be regarded as ‘typical’, although lessons from their experience provide interesting points of learning for other areas moving forward. The Diocesan Clewer leads also volunteered to be followed over the period of the research, bringing a degree of self-selection, although the cases also represent a good cross-section of economic and social contexts across the UK. However, as will be apparent from the case studies below, the starting point for each study was distinctive, and each area met with a range of barriers and enablers for their work, experiencing both successes and frustrations in the course of their journey. A reflection on common themes can be found at the end of this section on page 32.

1) Building networks in a rural diocese

One puzzle for Clewer activists related to how action could best be stimulated across wide areas that are intensely rural, with limited communications and transport infrastructure links. The journey of this case-study diocese provides an example of the capacity of churches and faith-based NGOs from different denominations to mobilise a network for convening and co-ordinating anti-slavery partnership activity, with support from the Clewer Initiative.

The diocese in this case study covers a County dominated by agriculture and tourism, with a large migrant labour workforce. It includes one city and several market towns, but for the most part congregations are dispersed, with some parish priests covering up to 13 different parishes. The diocesan co-ordinator for social and community concerns connected with the Clewer Initiative after the first network meeting in Lambeth, in May 2017. She spoke about having her eyes opened by the event; “I was totally naive about things that were happening around me and it was quite a shock”.

One of her initial challenges was in tailoring communications to the demographics of local Church congregations. For instance in sharing the Clewer’s ‘Give Up Slavery’ campaign for Lent, she had to print off materials for her (largely elderly) congregation as “I suddenly realised that some of them didn’t have the internet”. Congregations could sometimes also be less receptive to messages about

exploitation due to prejudice against migrant workers. As another activist in the area commented, “for example when I was talking about the fact that language can be a barrier to people getting help, people were getting very upset, saying “why aren’t people learning the language when they come?” ...So it’s more complex or there’s more of that kind of thinking or lack of understanding”.

At that point the County had no multi-agency anti-slavery partnership, but as awareness-raising events began to take place, it became apparent that a number of different organisations within the County were supportive of collaboration, particularly around victim and survivor support. Energy to progress anti-slavery work came from existing network connections between organisations who were already dealing with vulnerable individuals, including food banks and support services for homeless people. One support worker described how these existing connections meant she was “able to, I think, almost have those personal conversations with people about what the impact of this might be, because I already go to a lot of meetings of things like the food bank, and have been involved in supporting this in various ways. I can take the opportunities when meeting with them anyway just to introduce the issue gradually, and talk about how it might be impacting on some of the people they work with.” Through such conversations, it was recognised that there were significant gaps in local and regional service provision for survivors including an absence of emergency and long-term safe-house accommodation, as well as legal provision.

With support from the Clewer Initiative, the CEO of a local charity convened a meeting to explore a formalised anti-slavery collaboration. Twelve agencies turned up to the first meeting with membership including the regional Baptist Association, a local faith-based charity which dealt with homelessness, and an anti-poverty charity which helped to build networks between faith organisations. Good relationships were rapidly established with the Police and Council, who have been “very willing to help with urgent cases”. The Chair commented that she had found the process “very affirming, how individual-focussed everyone is”, and the collaboration has now been formalised into a regular meeting, with joint actions including a planned ‘freedom week’ across the County in October 2019, involving multiple events led by many different partners.

Although local relationships are strong, the Chair saw challenges in persuading national actors such as the National Asylum Support Service to interact effectively, and felt that contract-based service-provision was driving competition rather than collaboration of organisations working at the local level. She cited the story of a locally-based survivor who had been moved to the area without appropriate accommodation, sleeping on a camp bed in a shared room. Local agencies could provide a more personal response – “I actually lay on her bed, you wouldn’t put your dog to sleep on it” - but national agencies with large contracts were less responsive or flexible. In her view national policymakers needed to “stop devolving to massive contracts that are not working at the grassroots level”.

Another recurring theme centred on the need for partnership support and co-ordination. The diocesan link highlighted the challenge in 2018, emphasising that “no specific person will be appointed by the diocese so I am running with it on a very general remit and hoping that I can push it along a little”. By 2019, although other agencies were engaging, the Chair of the collaborative was clear that she could not commit long-term to providing her time and energy to driving the partnership, as opposed to her own charity: “none of us have got any money or any time to engage with this”. However, the collaborative were benefitting from learning from other partnerships across the country, as well as the advice, resources and encouragement they had received from the Clewer Initiative: “I don’t think we would have done it if it wasn’t for Clewer, I don’t think we would have started”.

2) Central diocese: layering antislavery action into a complex local context

In this case study, the Clewer Initiative added a further jigsaw-piece to a local landscape of anti-slavery work that already included a multi-agency partnership, voluntary sector forum and a number of active institutional partners. The cosmopolitan character of a major city within the diocese meant that it was important that work was developed on an ecumenical and inter-faith basis. The local Diocesan lead emphasised the importance of a tailored approach, commenting “it’s all about context. Every diocese is different”.

Awareness events organised by the Catholic diocese and a local University were already underway when local Clewer activity started. To promote co-ordination, planned Clewer events were discussed at the multi-agency partnership, and the partnership’s quarterly meetings were regularly attended by the Clewer Initiative lead. Local links and awareness were also facilitated by a pre-existing network for social justice projects, as well as a faith leaders forum, and information about Clewer activities was shared via diocesan communications.

An early response was the development of a ‘We See You’ workshop, aimed at people of all faiths and none, who were engaged in social justice projects and outreach with groups vulnerable to slavery. These workshops were delivered in partnership with the Salvation Army, local police and university, and targeted the army of volunteers engaging in food banks, soup runs, night shelters, youth work, and welfare visits. The workshops introduced the concept of modern slavery, highlighted the local picture, provided information on common signs and reporting, and gave participants a chance to discuss how they might have encountered exploitation. They added value to other work by targeting projects and churches that existing training had not yet reached. Each session recognised examples of potential exploitation, raised by attendees at each session, and provided space to discuss common concerns, such as what would happen to victims after reporting. Participants were also given bespoke versions of Clewer handouts with key national and local contact numbers.

The workshops led to a number of follow-on activities, such as awareness-sessions with a local Nigerian community group, and a talk to the Mothers Union. However, as in other projects across the country, building longer-term engagement from awareness raising proved challenging. Initial mobilisation activity occurred in partnership with a local branch of Citizens UK, which included both faith and secular organisations. The group was effective in bringing the issue to a wider audience, via a local website and awareness raising at an assembly meeting for more than 800 people, but had less success engaging with local businesses. Activity also dissipated after a year, as the branch moved onto fresh topics that were perceived to have salience for a wider group of local people.

More recently, an ecumenical group has been initiated which brings together actors with an interest in modern slavery from a variety of faith partners, including significant local civic and free churches, and a connection to the social justice hub. This group has planned a number of ongoing activities, and modern slavery has also been highlighted at key ecumenical gatherings in the city including a well-attended prayer event. A recent ‘Hidden Voices’ workshop also identified a wider potential pool of volunteers to add to this group from across the diocese.

However, practical forms of ongoing action were more difficult to initiate. The Clewer lead was conscious that statutory actors were looking to faith partners to go beyond awareness-raising to a deeper level of sustained action, particularly around connecting-up survivor support outside the National Referral Mechanism. However, he questioned whether the local knowledge base and partnerships were developed enough to engage with such a complex area, or whether partners expected them to “deliver a lot more than they actually can”. The diocese has a strong relationship with the local Salvation Army, and the Clewer lead recognised that they were currently best placed to engage in this issue, drawing in other denominations with volunteering opportunities.

This also highlighted the need for further dedicated co-ordination resources, which had been a challenge from the start of the initiative. When he took the role on, the Clewer lead had responsibilities to at least 8 other projects. Whilst this proved advantageous in terms of connecting with existing, ongoing social justice work, it also emphasised a tension in the Church between espoused commitment to social justice and practical commitment of resources:

“The Church of England is at an interesting juncture because at General Synod social justice issues like homelessness are very much on the agenda, whereas at a local level it seems dioceses attention is very much focused on growing disciples, growing churches. The challenge for those engaging in tackling social injustices like modern day slavery is to demonstrate how important social action/justice is to discipleship and church growth. Many volunteers in projects would say they work alongside the most vulnerable because that’s what Jesus taught us to do – they’re living out those well-known words of Jesus to: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ When others see that we are making a difference to the quality of people’s lives around us, when Local Authorities and others see the transformative work we’re involved in, they want to partner with us”.

Despite the challenges in moving practical action forward, the impetus of the Clewer Initiative had arguably played an important role in helping keep the topic of modern slavery on the agenda and encouraging the Church to convene key local actors, particularly when local activity lacked direction or went through periods of dormancy. This in itself was an important contribution from the local Church, at a time when few other actors were able to bring disparate networks together.

3) Scrutinising supply chains in a merchant city

Despite a successful launch event, one of our case study dioceses did not succeed in maintaining momentum across the lifetime of the project. The initiative started well with a workshop attracting more than 60 people, including a local museum and historic projects focussed on slavery. The local lead commented at the time, “the most overwhelming thing for me, is how encouraging and how open everyone is to working with the Church. This is the really right time for the Church to be getting involved, because there is such enthusiasm there on both sides”. A key advantage that the Diocese claimed was the ability to pull different partners together, perhaps linked to the decision to hold the first event in the Cathedral.

A further successful awareness event followed on St. Bakhita’s day, but unfortunately the individual leading the work left her post before she had the chance to establish either a team-based approach or the city-based network that she desired. Her ideal solution at that point would have been to secure funding streams to employ a full time worker, perhaps also connecting with displaced people. “Doing it one day a week has been a bit of a testing period. We could do with someone who has more time to give.” Unfortunately her role was not replaced, meaning that the work lapsed.

However, although the partnership-focussed work did not progress, the diocese was not inactive on modern slavery. It had a longstanding commitment to facilitating exchange visits between young people in the diocese with their peers in West Africa and the East coast of the United States, with the aim of creating a ‘covenantal community’, dedicated to transforming the history, effects, and continuing presence of slavery through repentance, reconciliation and mission.

The merchant city was also the first Anglican diocese to develop a transparency statement examining the risk of modern slavery and forced labour in Church supply chains. There has been additional learning from the process of agreeing the statement with trustees, creating a replicable project which could assist other parts of the Church.

4) Contrasting Communities in Urban and Rural settings

This diocese spans a wide geographical area, including three principal local authorities, featuring both urban and rural landscapes. Co-ordination for local Clewer Initiative work is provided by a diocesan social justice lead, who has a long experience of working with refugees and asylum seekers. He also sits on the sub-regional anti-slavery partnership, which is coordinated by an NGO and local police. Like several of the other Clewer Initiative leads, he recognised early-on that work on Modern Slavery could develop in multiple different directions, representing a considerable additional workload: “just catching all the projects, they are so diverse”.

Clewer’s work in the area was initiated through large-scale awareness-raising events, based at the Cathedral. Although these were successful, the local co-ordinator initially found it difficult to follow-up on the energy created by these conference-style meetings. In particular, he noticed that challenges, dynamics and populations were very different between different urban and rural areas. This caused practical issues, for instance, deciding the right location for meetings and gaining speakers; “can you invite the same statutory people out three times?” It also brought challenges in the way they developed and applied anti-slavery actions, as much of the prevailing wisdom on anti-slavery partnership work focussed on urban examples: “so many of the other actors seem to be very urban, not even small-town”.

In response, the Clewer link established and chaired a task group on rural slavery for the local anti-slavery partnership. Research from the Police recognised that the majority of reporting was coming from urban areas, whilst many high-risk industries and employers were based in the countryside, where there was a comparative absence of data. This research informed the development of a national Clewer Initiative toolkit focussed responding to modern slavery and exploitation in rural UK settings, but the co-ordinator felt the issue could still gain greater prominence: “we’re not getting to any senior levels around this issue around...rurality because it’s got to somehow to jump high as an issue, and it isn’t jumping high enough yet.” He felt that the Clewer Initiative could usefully plan further follow-up work on rural issues, to build on the resources produced and enhance learning.

A further local problem concerned how to prevent the growth of exploitation – particularly labour and sexual exploitation – at a significant local construction project, which was set to employ thousands of people. Here the Clewer Initiative’s advocates raised an important challenge given that there was a prominent discourse accentuating positive benefits: “there still is an attempt to not talk about it...there’s this real sense of not wanting to talk anything down”. In addition to establishing Chaplaincy cover for the site to support construction labourers, the initiative started working with a local NGO to help plan a drop-in centre in a local town, offering pro-active support services to sex workers, as well as a ‘Street Pastors’ team.

More recently three successful ‘Hidden Voices’ programmes have been held within the diocese, all of which have been ecumenical, with a recent programme additionally including members of the wider community. The co-ordinator was enthusiastic about the contribution of the ‘Hidden Voices’ tool as a means of mobilising a team of volunteers towards practical action. “You’ve got to take people on a journey... Having eight different speakers all talking from their own perspective on modern slavery doesn’t actually really empower people”. However he also recognised that the requirement for longer-term commitment from participants of Hidden Voices was potentially difficult to market. “We’re really wanting you to do something here. Not just to come and listen”. Another feature of Hidden Voices was that the emerging outcomes were very specific to particular communities. The inevitable variation resulted in an extra call on the capacity of the local co-ordinator, who reflected that it would be useful for the different strands emerging to be networked across communities during the longer-term.

The co-ordinator also raised a question about whether the issue has peaked in terms of public attention, and highlighted the importance of providing bridges to other mainstream elements of work, such as adult safeguarding or identifying vulnerabilities. This was particularly significant given the myriad priorities of local clergy; “you know, this is number 29 on the list of 50 jobs or whatever. Yeah, and therefore what we want to do what is useful for them to communicate to their local... congregations and things. It’s got to be simple”. Building modern slavery into other regular activities also represented a means to embed recognition of the topic, “In some cases, I don’t think you’re going to get a special slot to do training or stuff around modern slavery only, but if you did about vulnerability... It’s trying to find bridges of communication to get the rest of the world to be interested in it.”

Reflecting later, he added that para-church organisations like Street Pastors or homelessness projects tended to offer 20-30 minute slots to include training on modern slavery in an existing training event. He saw a need to be realistic about the reach and depth of such awareness training, both in terms of how it would be disseminated and the material covered: “this kind of activity is then really about building a relationship of trust rather than imparting huge detail - we have to be very careful to ensure that these 20-30 min slots do not [just] tick the modern slavery box”.

The combination of community engagement, local capacity constraints and (sometimes) imperfect training also raised particular safeguarding concerns:

“ this is the first time in 25+ years that I have dealt in social action so directly with organised crime and its (potential) victims in such a sustained way ... so we need extra safeguards at the local implementation level... It is easy to get carried away with the fact that things are working in the locations where we have worked - contact with victims at church projects who may not have been recognised as such without the training and also the trust built with representatives of marginal groups which means that they have shared their stories. But when we have made certain steps forward, we recognise for ourselves, or one of our clergy ‘critical friends’ rightly points out, that there are safety and safeguarding issues....

....The quality issue also concerns me and is linked to the safety issue – if we are rightly handing over agency to communities to do this for themselves, we need to hand over the best tools and advice that we can, but also have some clear method of ‘call-back’ or ‘quality control’. There is a critical exercise in Hidden Voices where we move from knowledge giving to action and agency for that action should pass from the ‘team at the front’ to the local community members – yet because of the quality/safety issues it feels as though we have to continue to steer. Some clergy have raised concerns that people have passion and some (enough?) knowledge, but are not fully prepared in engaging with others.”

5) A port city: joining up existing knowledge and action

This case study concerns a historic port city. As with other maritime cities in the UK, vestiges of the transatlantic slave trade are etched throughout this city’s streetscape and architecture, and into the biographies of its most famous civic leaders and philanthropists. Debates on how the legacies of historic slavery should be remembered and acknowledged remain live, and continue to inform community action, local politics and decision-making.

Action to address modern slavery was well-advanced between statutory partners when the Clewer Initiative started local work in 2018, with an established strategic multi-agency partnership active at both city and regional level. However, at the time, community-level engagement in anti-slavery work was less developed. One of the challenges for the Clewer lead in this area was to understand and demonstrate how and where faith partners could add value, both at a local and regional level.

Different approaches to raising awareness and convening action were explored, including ‘faith and freedom’ events within churches, an academic conference drawing on historical, theological and sociological perspectives, and a practice workshop looking at strengths and gaps in local survivor support. These events highlighted the diversity of local actors with an interest in the agenda, with as well as some divergence in interpretations of the issue both between potential partners and within the Church itself. Whilst many valuable projects were in place, the co-ordinator initially struggled to identify a sense of shared purpose between local actors, alongside a perceived reluctance on the part of some key influencers to collaborate. She reported a desire to see a genuine community-based anti-modern slavery movement emerging, commenting:

“ I think the anti-slavery movement in this country, could do with sitting back and actually taking stock of what’s happened... if it were possible for us... just to put our heads together for a start, it would make a really enormous difference.”

She also admitted that she had found it difficult to keep work moving forward alongside her wider job-role.

Despite these challenges, progress was achieved in a number of areas. For instance, one of the sensitivities recognised in the survivor support workshop was the need to more clearly delineate appropriate safeguarding boundaries, to empower volunteers to understand when professional – as opposed to voluntary – responses were appropriate. In response, the diocese worked with Clewer at a national level to pioneer development of a new national modern slavery safeguarding module for Church volunteers, which can now be accessed online. Whilst the long-term goal of joining faith and voluntary responses together to achieve comprehensive local wrap-around support for victims and survivors remains an aspiration, safeguarding guidelines form an essential part of the infrastructure to facilitate future work.

There were also some successes in developing wider participation in anti-slavery action as a result of a ‘Hidden Voices’ course, the Clewer Initiative’s community mobilization tool. This included an initial three-week ‘Hidden Voices’ course which generated a new action group, with a forward plan including practical activities, such mapping sites where there were known to be vulnerable workers. This direct-action work acted as a catalyst for connection between different Christian organisations, including prayer support from a non-conformist Church, cooperation with the Catholic community, a workshop with a social action group and fresh links with community development organisations. Reflecting on some of the challenges of local anti-slavery work, the co-ordinator emphasised the long-term investment of time and energy that was needed to build momentum and connect different initiatives. “So you can see there are a lot of things joining up. I think it just takes a long time...”

Reflections on themes emerging from the case studies

Whilst there are commonalities emerging from these studies, it is also particularly striking how each case has a distinctive starting context – from our rural diocese, where there was no partnership work in place, through to the coastal city, where partnership structures had been in place for many years, but a role remained to build grass-roots action. One strength of the Clewer Initiative’s local and grass-roots work lies, therefore, in its ability to connect with the strengths, assets and unique back-story that make anti-slavery activity in each locality distinctive. This also led to innovation, for instance in the safeguarding work, or the creation of the rural toolkit, where general assets grew from specific needs.

All elements of the Church’s potential role and partnership contributions, identified in section 8.2 of this report, are present within these case studies. Catalyst roles are apparent both in the rural case study and the case of the merchant city. The Merchant city lacked resources to fulfil a co-ordination role, but was able to progress action based on its own interests and services as a purchaser and commissioner. The caring roles and responsibilities of the Church are particularly apparent in the rural, contrasting and coastal case studies, where victim and survivor support was a central concern. The central case and the contrasting case also provide strong examples of both ‘convening’ action and acting as a critical friend to wider partners. Yet no single case was simultaneously active in all potential types of contribution, which also speaks to the idea of anti-slavery work as locally-specific and cyclical. It also meant that some areas were not ready or able to take on specific aspects of work, such as providing co-ordinated arrangements for survivor support.

The pattern of development also varied from place to place, and it was clear that a single type of approach or mobilisation technique did not automatically transfer to a different context, underlining the need to continue promoting a range of tools and resources. One element of learning which was common to a number of cases however, was the realisation that large-scale awareness-raising events did not necessarily stimulate community mobilisation: they had to be followed with diligent, longer-term grassroots network-building and motivation.

This finding reinforced the need for someone to play a ‘convening’ role in the fragmented landscape of anti-slavery activity; and indeed where this role was not present the Initiative’s work could lapse, as in the case of the Merchant City. However, Clewer Initiative work that was led by a single co-ordinator was often fragile, and Clewer leads consistently emphasised the value of building a small team or group to take the work forward.

Joint work seemed to be particularly powerful when it was ecumenical in nature, drawing on diverse networks, as exemplified in the rural and coastal case studies. Yet even with a functioning network, the role of the co-ordinator remained important as a means to connect together disparate strands of work and to keep momentum moving when group enthusiasm dissipated, as in the case of the central diocese. This co-ordinator role was also demanding, and did not sit comfortably with an already-busy workload, suggesting a need for dedicated resourcing. Finally it was also important to invest for the longer term, as momentum for action took time to build and sustain.

Section nine

Analysis

When this research began, a number of respondents spoke of a sense of ‘Kairos’; translated by one individual as “a moment when God speaks and makes the opportunity for something to happen”. There was a sense of momentum for many of those working on the initiative: “it does feel as if we are in with a chance of making a difference and I find that very exciting”. As another individual put it “this is the really the right time for the Church to be getting involved”.

This study has followed the learning of the Clewer Initiative across its first two years of active operation, recognising that it has been establishing its profile and contribution in an-already complex system of anti-slavery action. The initiative has been established to raise awareness, increase detection and reporting, and improve victim and survivor support across the UK; but much groundwork has also been necessary to stimulate and sustainably embed this work at community and parish level. Therefore this report has not taken a traditional evaluation approach of quantifying the extent to which objectives have been met, recognising that - although important to measure and monitor over the longer term - these founding objectives are dependent on the fore-going groundwork of increasing supporter knowledge, developing partnerships and engaging in joint learning. Together, the individual reflections, workshop outcomes and stories recounted in this report create a richer narrative of how the project is unfolding and impacting at a national and local level. This final section reiterates some of the emerging themes which tell us ‘what is giving life to the system’, and looks at some of the ongoing challenges and opportunities associated with those themes.

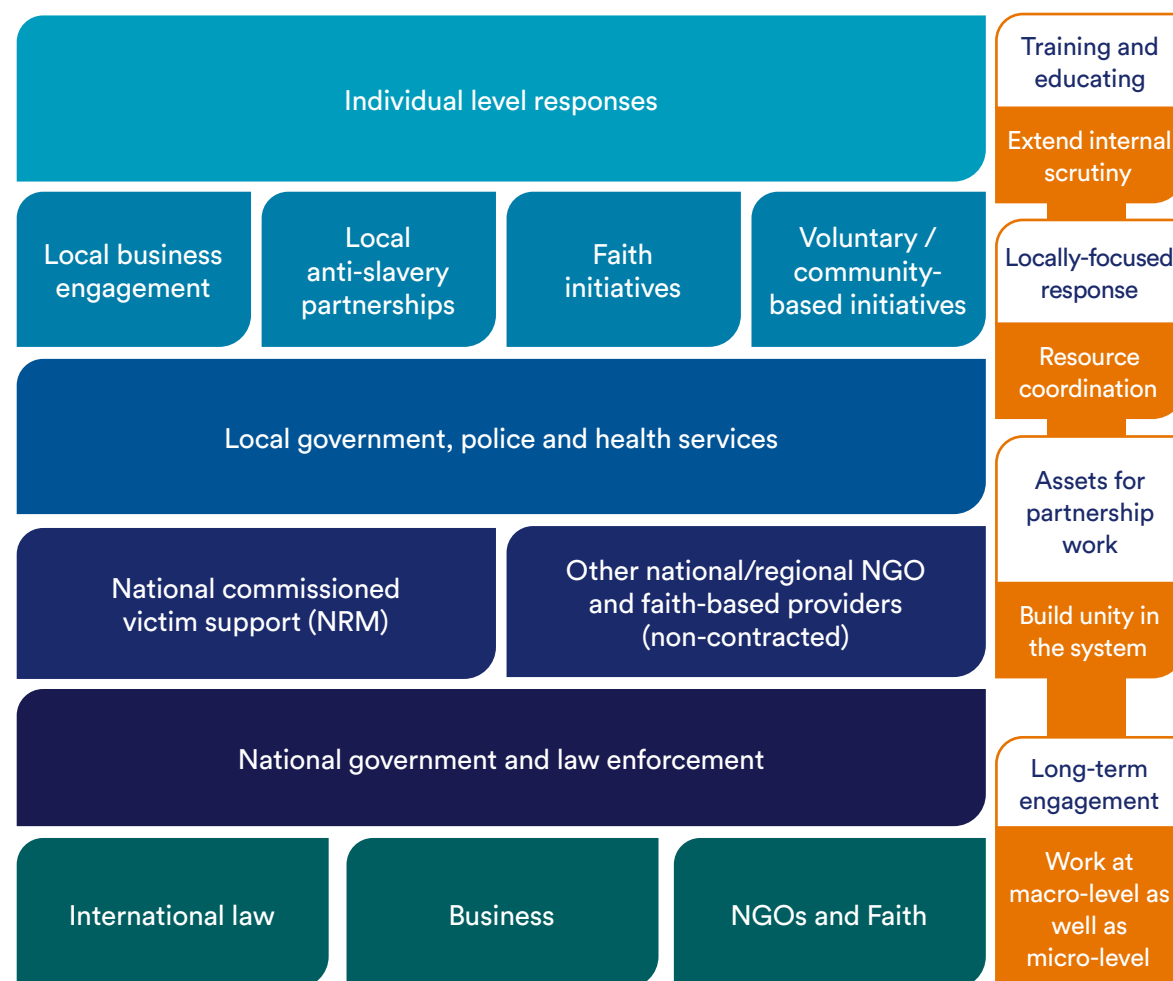
How does the Clewer Initiative contribute 'life' to the UK anti-slavery system?

The 2018 baseline report identified several strengths including the sense of 'Kairos'; the obvious vocation motivating key individuals; significant partnerships which were adding value; and emerging grass-roots commitment. These strengths have been consolidated as the Clewer Initiative matures its contribution in relation to the system of UK anti-slavery action. Key strengths are summarised in the orange boxes in Figure 5.

Firstly, the Clewer Initiative is nurturing strong roots at diocesan level, which brings a sensitivity to context and place that enhances and compliments existing anti-slavery activity within and beyond the Church. In the already-complex system of anti-slavery work, this locality-focussed approach is essential to ensure that the Church fills gaps and coheres fragmentation, rather than adding further confusion to an already crowded system.

Second, it is creating training materials that are valued by stakeholders, and which cultivate a strong confidence in personal knowledge and understanding, as well as a broad understanding of the nature and manifestation of exploitation in the UK. Out of this knowledge, and coupled with the locality-focus, new and innovative responses have been created, such as the rural toolkit and targeted resources to engage with the issue of modern slavery in homelessness.

Figure 5: Clewer Initiative contributions to the UK Anti-Slavery System



Third, it offers a wide range of assets, skills and abilities which contribute to all aspects of partnership work: from acting as a challenge or catalyst, to convening and co-ordinating work, contributing through Church-provided or commissioned actions, or performing the role of 'critical friend' to partner agencies. The data collected for this report indicates that the majority of Clewer projects across England are engaging with partnership work at a diocesan level.

Fourth, it is providing an essential support in sustaining momentum for anti-slavery action, particularly through providing leadership and other resource inputs that extend over the long-term, enabling mobilisation of a grassroots response.

Of the areas suggested in the baseline report as requiring reflection and attention, several have been developed more fully. For example, ecumenical and inter-faith action is starting to be apparent, both locally (in the case studies) and nationally, with joint initiatives like the Safe Car Wash App. We can also see a greater use of structures, for instance in the developing partnership with the Mothers Union, and development of safeguarding tools. Finally the range of specialist communications material which has emerged in the past 12 to 18 months on topics such as education or homelessness has created resources for intentional and targeted awareness raising with specific groups. Victim support has been an area where development has been more gradual, but as reflected in the case studies, this specialist area of provision takes time to develop and may not be appropriate for Clewer groups to address alone. Indeed, development of more effective provision in our case studies was generally associated with partnerships.

There are also a number of areas suggested within this report where the Clewer could deepen and extend its impact as it moves forward. These are shown in the yellow boxes in Figure 5 and include:

- a need to ensure that the Church continues to extend internal as well as external scrutiny, to understand how it can challenge and address detrimental attitudes and behaviours within congregations, and mitigate negative impacts through its own institutions and practices. Tools like the safe-car wash app, safeguarding training and measures to examine transparency in supply chains are important steps on this journey. These now need to be embedded throughout the body and culture of the Church
- a reminder to adequately resource the work of co-ordination at the local level, recognising that this essential role is often not being performed by other agencies, and is key to ensuring that new initiatives add value instead of increasing fragmentation
- a challenge to work towards creating greater unity in the system, particularly between faith-inspired partners, at both national and local level. Our learning so far has shown that networks of faith partners can increase the resilience of anti-slavery initiatives at local level, but equally, that organisations competing for territory or labouring under mutual suspicion delay progress. In addition there is much work to do to share learning from the Clewer Initiative more widely. This is happening to some extent through equivalent initiatives in Catholic and Baptist denominations, but could go much further within emergent and growing Church movements such as Pentecostalism, or the Eastern-European Orthodox traditions, as well as other faiths

- a call to work at the macro-level to challenge injustice as well as the micro-level: recognising that exploitation has many drivers and the 'prophetic voice' of the Church is essential in challenging important intersectional issues like poverty, homelessness or the 'hostile environment' towards migrants. Research shows that sympathetic people can be dissuaded from reporting exploitation if they are concerned they will make victims circumstances worse;²³ the Initiative's core objectives are therefore ultimately undermined by national policies that normalise and sustain injustice. To achieve change, it is necessary for the Church to work at national, as well as local level

To conclude, much promising work has begun, and learning is being generated on addressing slavery in multiple community contexts. As expertise and confidence in tackling this issue grows, it will also be important for the Clewer Initiative to continue to reflect on practice and refine action. More formal quantitative monitoring and evaluation of its different objectives will be important to understand the impact the initiative is making over the long-term, work which should be fully enabled by the Initiative's intention to develop a five-year strategy.

The Initiative is also almost unique in stating a sustained commitment to this issue for the next decade. Statutory agency agendas are continually being pulled in different directions, whilst high-profile political support for action on modern slavery may not be guaranteed over the longer term. In a world where attention-spans are short and there are many competing calls on our time and resources, the Clewer Initiative, with its long-term focus and national and local influence, has the potential to inspire numerous changes in our communities and throughout wider society that could make an enduring impact.

²³ Birks, Jen and Gardner, Alison (2019) 'Introducing the Slave Next Door', Anti-Trafficking Review (13) pp 66-81, available at <https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/407/341>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey methodology

In 2019 the University of Nottingham conducted a survey to explore awareness of modern slavery amongst key stakeholders in the Church of England's staff and volunteers, and to gain an understanding of the extent to which churches are involved in action on the issue, what has been effective in prompting action to date and what action might continue to help efforts in the future.

The survey was constructed using the online JISC survey tool, and distributed by the Clewer Initiative team via email. Responses were anonymous to encourage honest feedback, although participants were requested to state job role and region. The sample was selected on a purposive basis to represent key stakeholders and influencers in relation to the implementation of the Clewer Initiative in dioceses throughout England. The intention was not to produce generalizable inference across members of the Church of England as a population, but to use the responses to the survey to elicit qualitative perceptions from key champions and stakeholders that could throw light on responses to the initiative. The survey therefore targeted bishops, diocesan communications leads, and Clewer Initiative 'champions', as well as including an open category for individuals that did not identify with these roles. The target sample was 130 and we received 70 completed surveys representing a 54% response rate. Seven surveys were withheld from the final sample as those completing the survey had not granted full consent for the use of their data, leaving a total of 63 responses for the analysis.

Respondents were evenly distributed between the Bishop, Clewer Project Lead, Diocesan Communications Officer and 'other' categories. Of the 15 participants that selected the 'other' category, five were involved in social responsibility-based roles, and three in partnership roles. The remainder were spread around various positions, including a volunteer and a retired priest. Due to the high proportion of 'other' participants in social responsibility roles this category was added during the data analysis.

Looking geographically, 41% of respondents came from the South of England (South West, South East and the East of England), 31% from the Midlands (East and West) and 24% from the North (Yorkshire and the Humber, North East and North West). The location of one respondent was unspecified.

All textual responses were qualitatively coded using a thematic analysis to inductively identify trends and key concepts from the data. Quantitative data was visualised as both raw and mean values where appropriate. Data was also organised and analysed by job role and by geographic region to discern any patterns in levels of knowledge and engagement with modern slavery based on those variables.

All regions except the North East returned at least six respondents (approx. 10% of the overall sample). Only the East Midlands, South East and West Midlands returned a significantly larger number than this; ten, thirteen and ten respectively.

Appendix 2: Summary of additional national and local Clewer Initiative meetings and activities attended by the author

Date	National work	Local work
May 17	Clewer national gathering at Lambeth Palace	Local Faith leaders meeting
June 17		Meeting with local lead and Caroline Virgo re: local event
October 17	Clewer public launch Lambeth Palace	
November 17	Launch event: Merchant city	Clewer local launch event
January 18	Clewer leads meeting Birmingham	
February 18		Local Clewer planning event
March 18	Coastal City Victim Support workshop	Clewer awareness event
May 18	Derby, ‘bread in the wilderness’ event	
	Clewer network event Lambeth Palace	Mothers Union event
July 18	Regional Clewer Leads event, Birmingham	
October 18	Clewer North event, Bishopsthorpe, York.	Local victim support discussion
March 19		Local churches joint action meeting
May 19	Clewer national network meeting	Hidden Voices Clewer Training day



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