

# Responding to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Sandwell

Annual Report  
2019/20





Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau



# In this Report

Welcome to Sandwell's first annual report on the work we have carried out around modern slavery.

This report is the combined work of Sandwell Anti-slavery Strategic Partnership and SHOP (Slavery and human trafficking operational partnership)

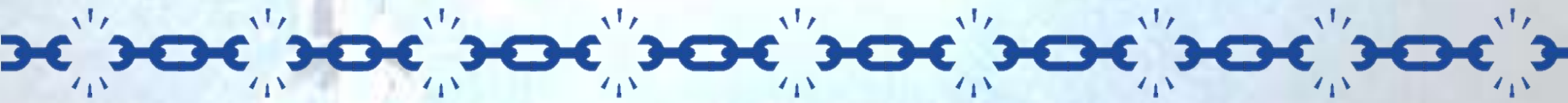
The report details our journey over the last 12 months where we have reviewed and re-launched our new operational approach, we have learned many valuable lessons and are improving our response all the time.

The report also details our efforts towards working to a slavery free Sandwell, and provides an outline of our response to equip those who live and work in Sandwell with the knowledge to recognise and respond to modern slavery.

We are stronger together, this was a theme we started this year and we carrying this on into 2020.

## You can read about:

- Sandwell's Approach to modern slavery
- **Progress of the Sandwell strategic Anti-slavery Partnership**
- SHOP (slavery and human trafficking operational partnership) overview and annual performance
- **Moving upstream in our efforts to address modern slavery**
- Coordinating the whole system
- **Improving victim care and support**
- Working to address modern Slavery
- **Case studies**
- Equipping the workforce
- **Tackling modern slavery in the homeless sector**
- Tackling sexual exploitation
- **Co-producing a slavery free Sandwell**
- Slavery free charter
- **Key community engagement**
- Working towards slavery free businesses





# Forward

As our understanding of slavery and human trafficking evolves, the complexity and challenges increase. This remains one of the most damaging of crime types, where people are exploited for both gratification and/or financial reward. It is therefore imperative that partners work collaboratively to prevent, whilst increasing their ability to identify and safeguard potential victims, and maximising their collective powers to disrupt those that exploit.

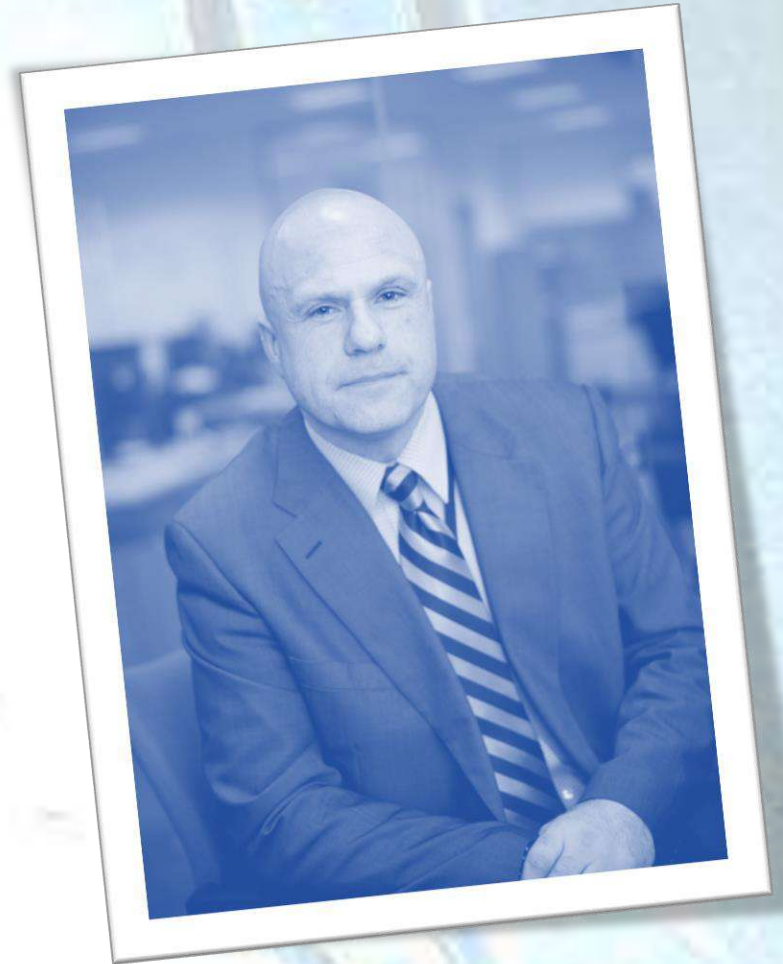
Since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, the West Midlands has seen increasing numbers of NRM referrals, and a number of high profile multi-agency and police led investigations. However, there is more to do in this space and intelligence is key to understanding the problem.

2019 saw the successful outcome of Operation Fort, an investigation with a significant Sandwell footprint. Fort has attracted national interest and is the largest UK slavery/trafficking investigation to date.

Essentially, the approach to partnership continues to mature, with Sandwell very much seen as a “trailblazer”, with their own co-ordinator and strong governance and accountability arrangements.

As the lead for West Midlands Police and the chair of the West Midlands Partnership Board, I’d like to express my gratitude and admiration for the manner in which Sandwell continues to respond to the issue, with other areas seeking to replicate the approach.

Detective Superintendent Nick Walton  
West Midlands Police



# Sandwell approach to Modern slavery

Modern Slavery is one of the most complex crimes to understand, it is one of those crimes that does not have a one size fits all approach. Sandwell's approach is to be broad and also specific, proactive and reactive and it is focused on protecting victims, prosecuting offenders and disrupting locations. The approach is to be tailored to a wide range of audiences, have strong governance and accountability and have resources to build a sustainable model.

Over the last year we have defined and redefined our approach several times. The more we understand and know about modern slavery in our community the more effective our response will be.

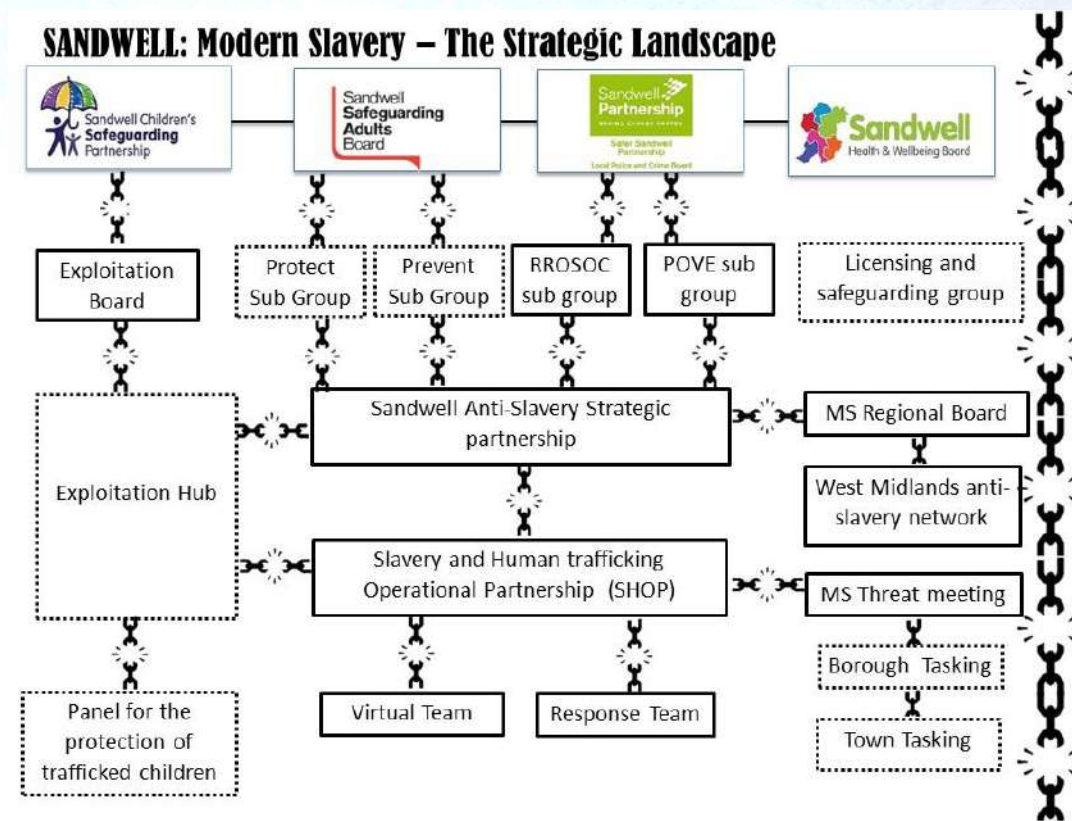
## Sandwell Approach is:

**Strategic Approach:** Ensuring an effective governance and accountability structure. Ensuring we are joining the dots and working effectively to address all forms of modern slavery. The Sandwell Strategic Anti-Slavery Partnership is the main vehicle to address the strategic work around modern slavery as well as linking in with the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network and Modern Slavery Regional Board

**Operational Approach:** All operational activity is co-ordinated through SHOP (Slavery and Human trafficking Operational Partnership) activity is both proactive and reactive and has effective models in place to deal with all forms of modern slavery

**Community Approach:** Modern slavery exists within our communities, ensuring education and awareness is in place to educate our community on how to identify and respond to modern slavery

**Trauma informed approach:** We have ensured we take a trauma informed approach to our disruptions, understanding the impact of trauma on victims of modern slavery









Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau




# Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership

The Sandwell Anti-Slavery Partnership provides a strategic and integrated operational approach in partnership with SHOP (Slavery and Human trafficking Operational Partnership) in delivering successful outcomes for anti-slavery work in Sandwell.

The partnership is committed to ensuring that our response to Modern Slavery is robust and informed.

The partnership is in a unique position to add value by co-ordinating collaboration across partners to plan and support delivery in Sandwell, thereby maximising the opportunities for multi-agency solutions to tackle slavery.



“Tackling modern slavery requires a collective, co-ordinated and sustained effort from a range of actors. No one individual or organisation can bring an end to this crime alone. Effective partnership working between organisations, both statutory and non-statutory, is therefore imperative”

Kevin Hyland OBE

## What the partnership does

The main purpose of the partnership is to adopt and keep under review an effective, over-arching plan for the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act, Statutory Duties and delivery of the Government’s Modern Slavery Strategy, we will:

- Advise, guide and oversee the work of the delivery of the adopted plan and work to achieve their stated vision and goals
- Promote awareness of slavery and of the contribution that can be made by agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and by the public, to reduce its incidence and impact and to support victims of slavery.
- Enable interaction with other agencies and anti-slavery partnerships as necessary within the wider region in circumstances where dealing effectively with an issue requires a regional response.
- Establish and appoint sub-groups and/or task and finish groups to advise, guide and oversee aspects of the work of the Partnership.
- Provide reports on progress to relevant boards and publish an annual report of the work of the Partnership
- Ensure a performance approach is adopted to compare and benchmark performance and, ensure governance and accountability
- Identify strengths and areas of good practice which can be shared



# Strategic Objectives

We are committed to ensuring that our response to Modern Slavery is robust and informed, and that our central aim is to use all the means at our joint disposal to disrupt the activity of perpetrators and to make Sandwell a hostile place from which to perpetrate Modern Slavery. We acknowledge that we cannot do this alone and building on our successes to date we have to continue to work closely as a collective body that reaches out to all statutory bodies, partners and communities.

**PROTECT:** Increasing protection against serious and organised crime

**PREVENT:** Preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime

**PREPARE:** Reducing the impact of serious and organised crime

**PURSUE:** Prosecuting and disrupting serious and organised crime

Objective 1: Protect Victim Pathway	Objective 2: Prevent Intelligence gathering	Objective 3: Prepare - Raising Awareness	Objective 4: Pursue – Disrupting MS activity
We recognise the need to strengthen our approach to supporting victims of modern slavery, to do this we will:	Developing an understanding of the threat, risk and harm modern slavery and human trafficking poses and target resources to the best effect.	It is recognised that there is a need to raise awareness across partner agencies, businesses and communities, to address modern slavery.	In order to disrupt incidents MS in Sandwell, we work collaboratively to target perps and victims.
<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and enhance multi-agency victim's pathway</li> <li>Develop specific guidance for operational services</li> <li>Ensure a system of quality assurance is in place to test all pathways</li> </ul>	<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to improve information sharing and intelligence, ensuring compliance with GDPR</li> <li>To gather information from a range of partners and stakeholders at both strategic and operational level to enable targeted interventions.</li> <li>To increase confidence in the sharing of information.</li> </ul>	<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise the town locality working model to increase awareness through town partnerships and town plans.</li> <li>Ensure all stakeholders are aware of pathways of support</li> <li>Proactively working with the business community to increase their awareness.</li> </ul>	<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the terms of reference for the SHOP group to ensure relevant agencies are engaged at an operational level.</li> <li>Raising awareness of successful disruptions and prosecutions in Sandwell</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victim pathways will be reviewed and updated</li> <li>Individual areas have their own guidance to reflect their operational work</li> <li>Victim pathways are quality assured and have been tested</li> </ul>	<b>Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The production of a Sandwell modern slavery and human trafficking intelligence profile.</li> <li>Greater intelligence and increased referrals to NRM</li> </ul>	<b>Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased referrals and reporting</li> <li>Increased operational activities tackling modern slavery in Sandwell</li> </ul>	<b>Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase reporting from communities</li> <li>Increase reporting from business's</li> <li>Reduce incidents of MS in Sandwell</li> </ul>

# Our Objectives

The partnership started the year with 4 main objectives,

## **Objective 1: to establish and embed effective victim pathways**

We had the victim pathways agreed and these have been imbedded, they are being trained out as part of first responder training and the number of referrals received through SHOP has demonstrated pathways are working well.

## **Objective 2: to look at ways to effectively gather intelligence to build up a local picture of modern slavery**

We have worked hard across the year to understand what modern slavery looks like in our communities. We now have profiles of each town and are starting to see trends and hot spot areas develop.

## **Objective 3: raise awareness of modern slavery across our workforce and within the community**

The training plan is in place and over 1000 staff have been trained so far. We also launched a Slavery Free Sandwell and for the first time starting to adopt a community led approach to modern slavery.

## **Objective 4: to ensure we embed a disruption approach to modern slavery**

We have imbedded an effective disruption response to modern slavery cases, 66 multi-agency disruption visits have been completed over the last 12 months.

The partnership has representation from a number of agencies and organisations who are at the forefront of modern slavery. We have really benefited from the specialist knowledge experts who have taken their time out to up-skill the partnership. We want to say a big thank you to everyone who presented at our partnership this year.

## Key Achievements of the partnership

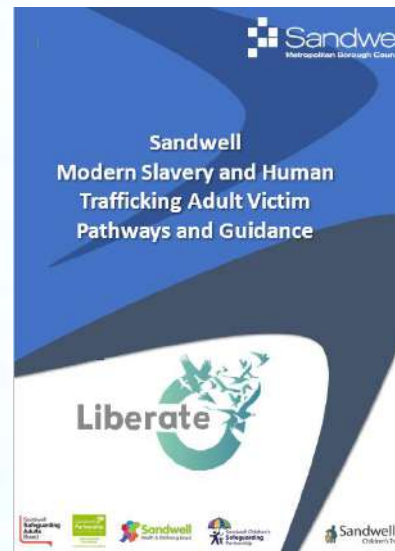
There have been several success over the last 12 months

Working with Dr Alison Gardner from the Rights Lab which is home to the world's leading modern slavery experts and have built a large-scale research platform for ending slavery.



**University of  
Nottingham**  
Rights Lab

The rights lab supported the Sandwell Partnership with the launch of a Slavery free Sandwell.



Sandwell Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Adult Victim Pathways and Guidance was established and this is currently imbedded into first responder training across the Local Authority.

This guidance has been developed to increase awareness of modern slavery and provide clarity for Sandwell council staff to carry out their role effectively when dealing with potential victims of modern slavery human trafficking.



“As the West Midlands Modern Slavery Co-ordinator, it is my job to promote this agenda and raise awareness in both police and partner agencies. It is recognised that to truly tackle serious organised crime, for which slavery and trafficking are significant types, then it needs a complete partnership approach.

From what I see first hand operating in Sandwell is a great example of multi agency working in a true partner based approach. The operating process is one that works on trust, relations and a ‘dare to share’ new culture. Without the luxury of an expensive co-located agency hub, the Sandwell SHOP model shows how a virtual team can just as effectively deliver against this threat area.

The role of a central Modern Slavery Co-ordinator is key to ensure identified cases are real time disseminated and intelligence collected to understand the full picture. Wendy undertakes this role fantastically and takes much of the pressure and resourcing away from the police who would normally be the default to generate an effective response while maintaining their daily business.

SHOP is now a recognised model for dealing with Modern Slavery both from a pursue but also a prevent / protect perspective. As a result both the national Modern Slavery Programme and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner have looked to promote the model as good practice to other regions and similarly within the West Midlands Force, the other six Local Authority areas are now looking to replicate.

Keep up the excellent work!!”

**Jason Grove**

West Midlands Regional Modern Slavery Co-ordinator  
Modern Slavery Police Transformation Programme

# Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership SHOP





# Slavery and Human trafficking Operational Partnership

The Slavery and Human trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) is a multi-agency partnership who is committed to ensuring that Sandwell's operational response to Modern Slavery is robust and informed.

SHOP's central aim is to use all the means at our joint disposal to disrupt the activity of perpetrators and to make Sandwell a hostile place from which to perpetrate Modern Slavery.

The Sandwell Housing Operational Partnership (SHOP) is committed to taking a partnership approach in identifying vulnerable members of society with a particular emphasis on identifying victims of Modern Day Slavery, Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation.

"It's a pleasure to see how the Slavery Partnership has grown and evolved over the last 12 months. From recognising concerns, to our preparation and implementation of operations, we have gone from strength to strength. We work as one complete team, assisting and complimenting each other in our practices. All this means a greater service to our victims in terms of identification, safeguarding and support. Additionally our ability to disrupt locations and persons of concern is outstanding. I'm proud to be part of the team"

**Inspector Colin Gallier**  
**West Midlands Police**

SHOP have adopted their recommendation that deliverables are developed around the '4 x P' model:

## **Prepare: Reducing the impact of serious and organised crime**

- To increase intelligence sharing between partners.
- Ensuring that information and intelligence about organised criminal activity is shared quickly and effectively between all relevant organisations
- Ensure a comprehensive understanding of organised crime including who is involved in this criminal activity and where it is taking place
- Prepare Town Leads with key information about performance data in their area, this will be done through Town and Borough Tasking
- Assist the 4 Sandwell Boards to understand the approach to disruption activity in Sandwell

## **Prevent: Preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime**

- Feeding progress through to the Strategic Anti-Slavery partnership and ensure effective communication with the public and professionals through a high-quality publicity campaign
- Raise the profile of the partnership and referral pathways

## **Pursue: Prosecuting and disrupting serious and organized crime**

- Understanding and using the full complement of tools and powers available to all organisations with regulatory power.
- Undertaking disruption activity with known organised crime groups.
- To develop proactive strategy and opportunities to prevent exploitation

## **Protect: Increasing protection against serious and organised crime**

- Providing support to victims of trafficking and organised crime
- Ensuring that the National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify are being used appropriately and comprehensively.
- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from criminal exploitation.
- Working towards an improved safeguarding response to complex cases.

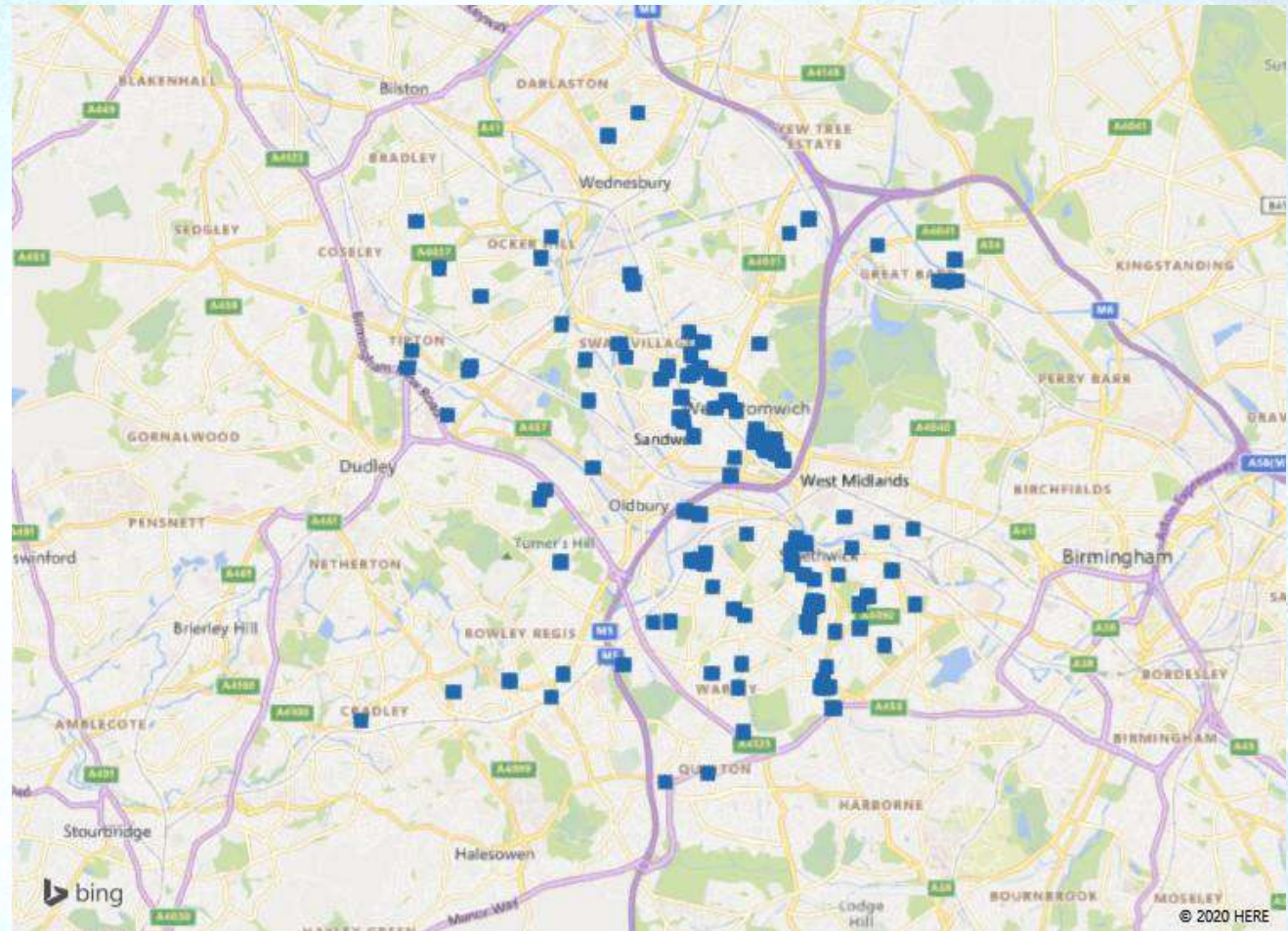


# SHOP Data

Over the year we have worked to get an effective set of data that we can monitor and identify any key trends. We have created an effective system that self-populates a DASH board

## Headlines

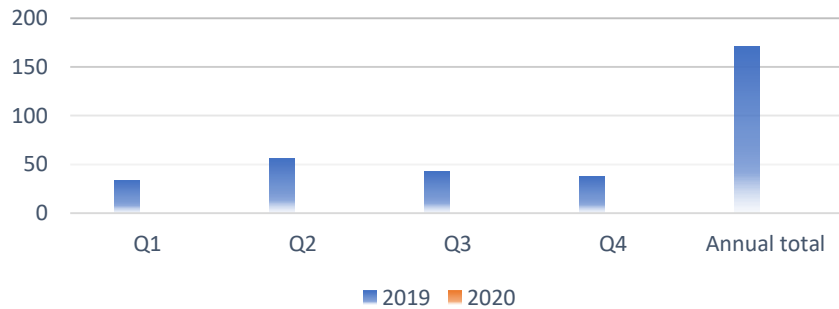
- 171 Concerns have been raised over the last 12 months
- 406 Potential victims of modern slavery screened
- 98 Multi-agency disruption visits
- 468 multi-agency interventions undertaken



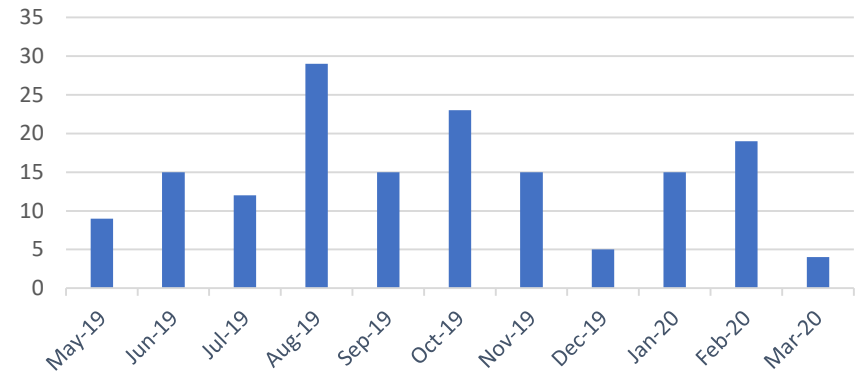
# SHOP Referrals

Over the Past 12 months, there have been 171 concerns raised for incidents of Modern Slavery

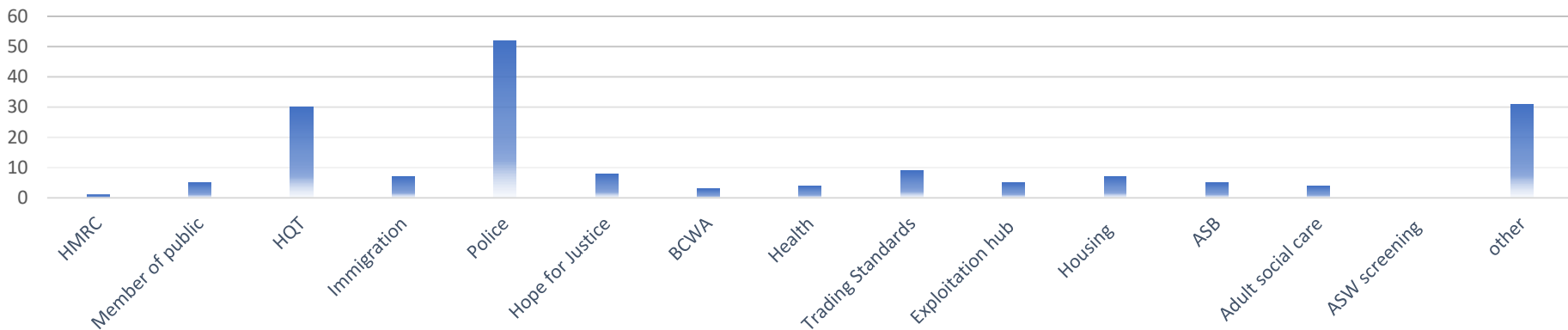
## QUARTERLY MODERN SLAVERY CONCERNS



## MONTHLY CONCERNS



## SOURCE OF REFERRAL

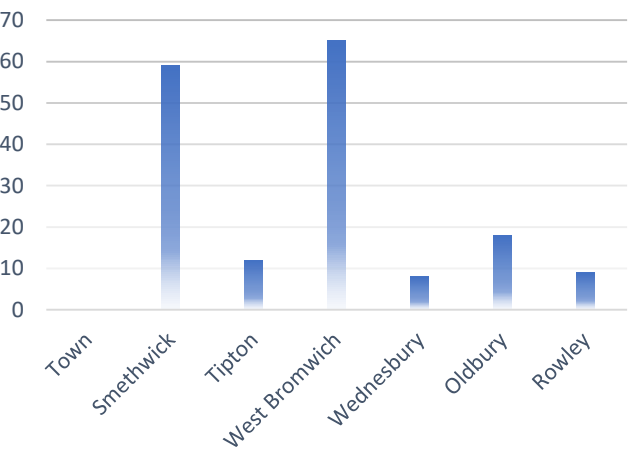




# PREVENT

West Bromwich and Smethwick have been the two main locations

TOWN



35% of concerns have been in Smethwick

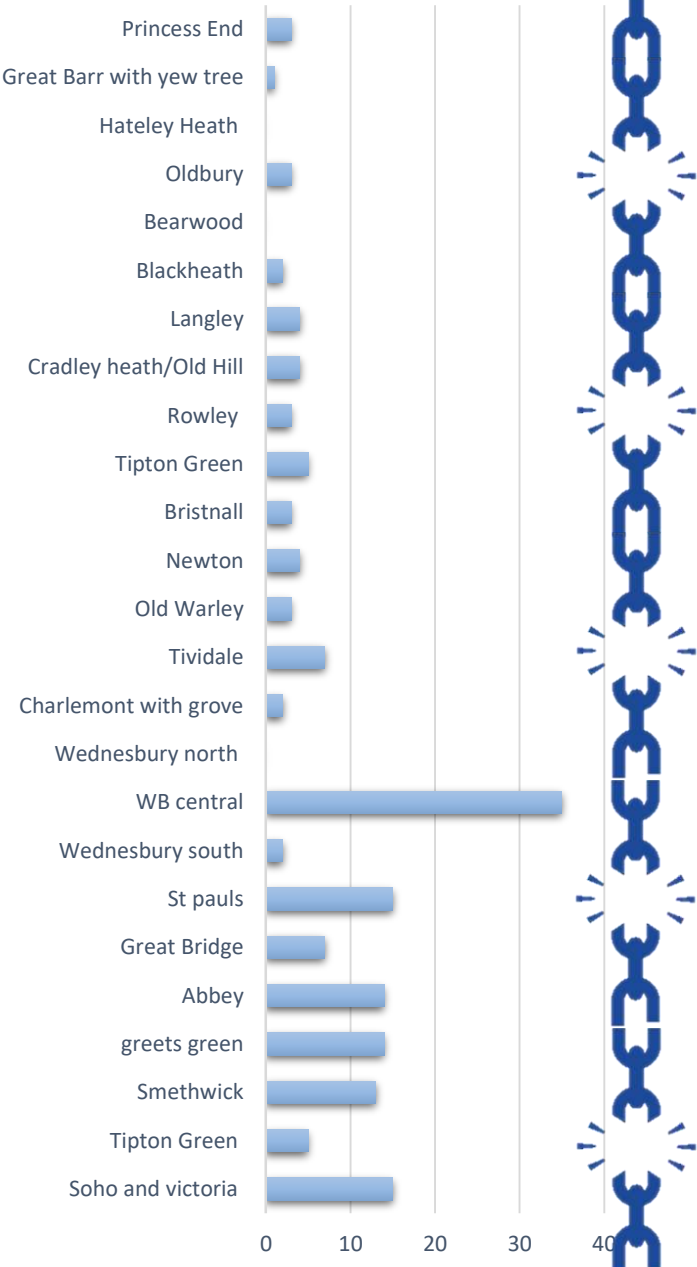
38% of concerns have been in west Bromwich

59% of concerns have been for Private dwellings, although many of the individuals in private dwellings have been going out to work in other locations, often outside of Sandwell

TYPE OF LOCATION

Factory	13
Private Dwelling	101
Waste Recycling	2
Restaurant	3
Car Wash	21
Takeaway	8
Public Place	4
business	1
shop	6
letting agents	1
Hospital	1
Night club	1
hospital	1
hotel	1
supported housing	1
GP surgery	1
social club	1
church	1
other	3

CONCERN BY WARD



# PROTEST

Sexual Exploitation

45



Labour exploitation

129



Criminal exploitation

14

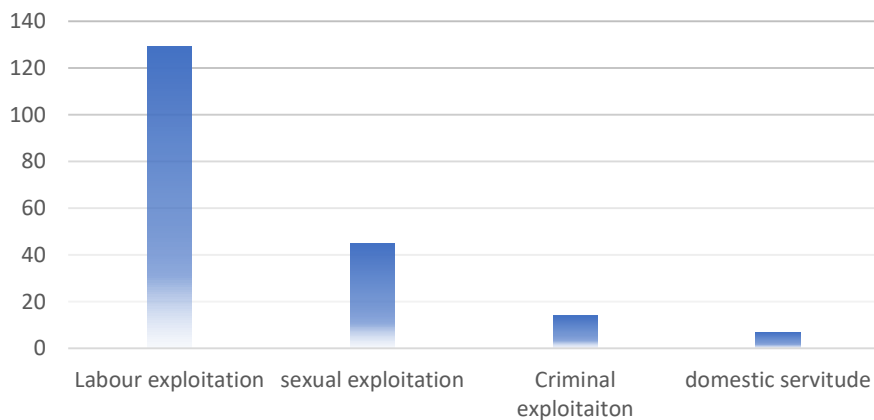


Domestic servitude

7



## TYPE OF MODERN SLAVERY



Number of potential victims screened

406

Male

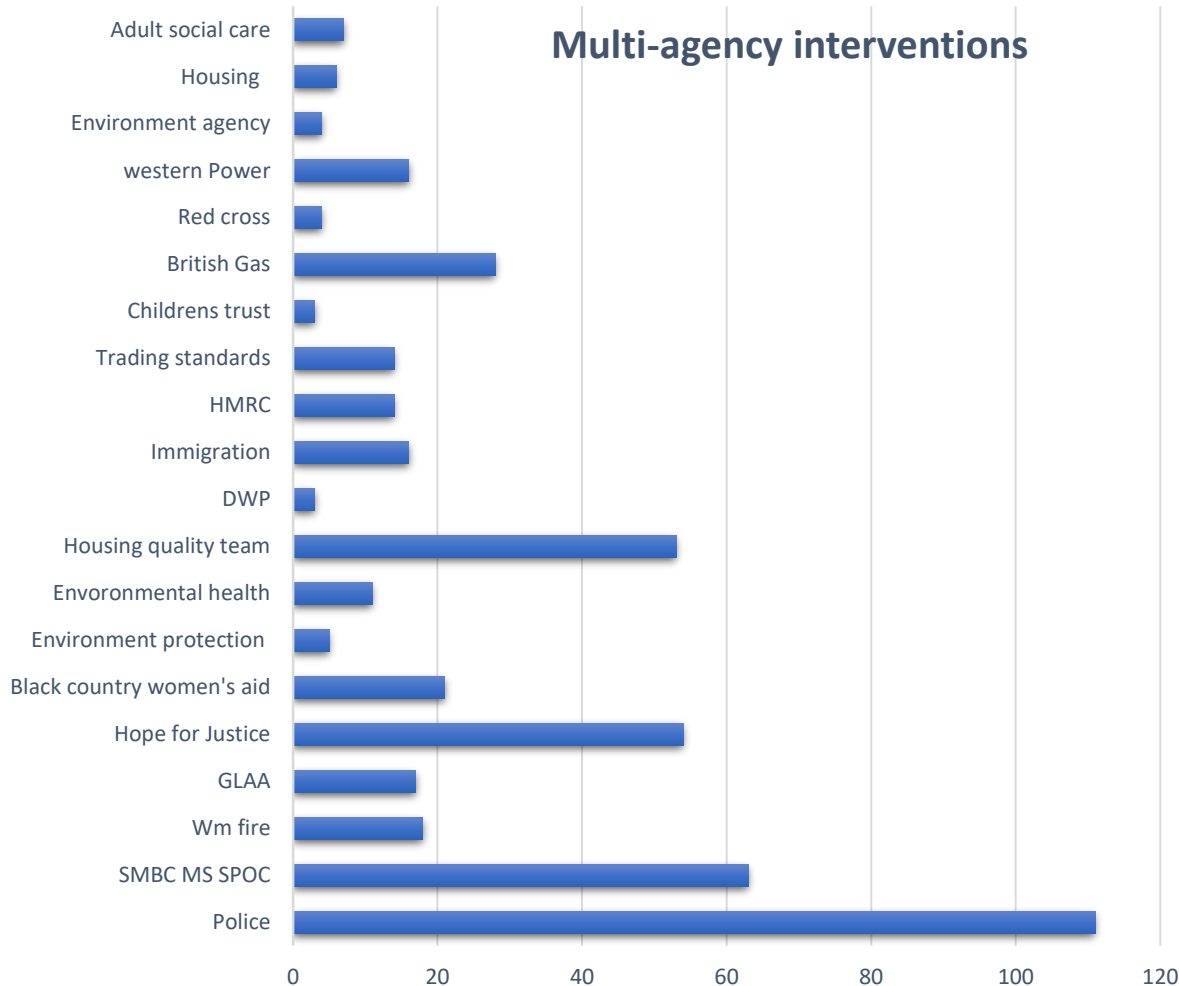
261

Female

145

## Nationality of potential victims

Indian	28
Polish	15
Albanian	12
British	9
Pakistani	4
Lithuanian	1
Chinese	6
Vietnamese	1
Romanian	31
Kurdish	1
Irish	2
Vietnamese	4
Bulgarian	2
Israeli	1
Latvian	2
unknown	52

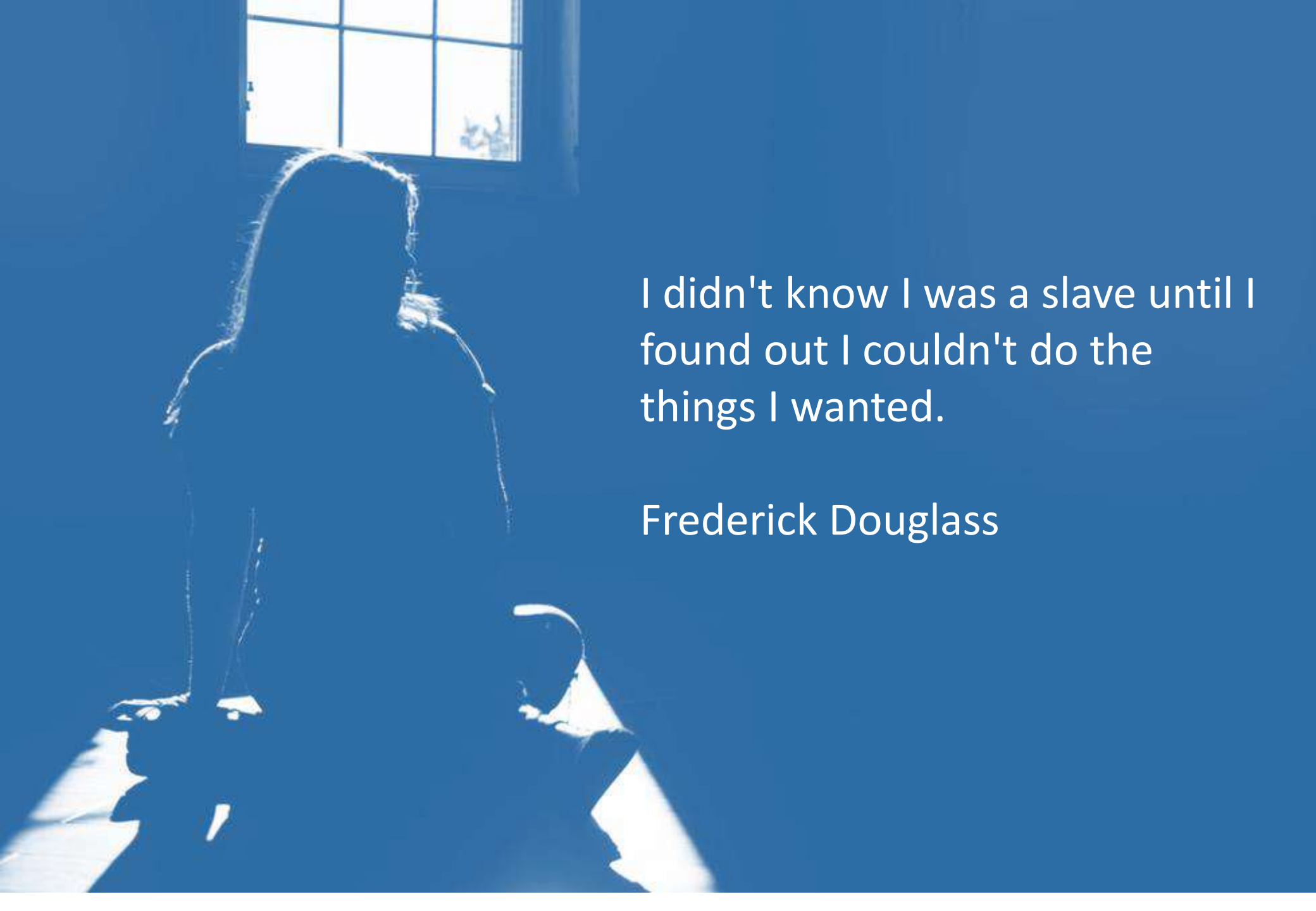


There have been 468 multi-agency interventions that have been completed

“We work as one complete team, assisting and complimenting each other in our practices. All this means a greater service to our victims in terms of identification, safeguarding and support. Additionally our ability to disrupt locations and persons of concern is outstanding. I’m proud to be part of the team”

**Inspector Colin Gallier**  
**West Midlands Police**





I didn't know I was a slave until I  
found out I couldn't do the  
things I wanted.

Frederick Douglass

When I took up the role of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Programme Manager in December 2018 it became clear that Sandwell already had some great work in the fight against modern slavery.

Within the first few months it became evident that we have spent years in responding to modern slavery, we had become trapped in a cycle of response. Everything was built around a system of rescuing victims, safeguarding them and as the months went by, we celebrated the response, the rescue, the recovery of victims only to find more and more victims were being exploited.

We were living in downstream operations, if we needed systematic improvements then we needed move upstream. Over the last 12 months we have set out to do just that and have made many significant changes to our approach, our awareness, our operation protocols and we want to share some of that with you.

We pulled together the right people, a core group of people who had a passion to see our approach to modern slavery be holistic, effective and built on strong partnerships that last.

We had the right people in place, now it was time to surround the problem, modern slavery was not going away, perpetrators become more complex and sophisticated we needed to move beyond an initial response and get a head of the game.

In his book upstream, Dan Heath says “Systems change starts with a spark of courage. A group of people unite around a common cause and they demand change. But a spark can’t last forever”

I saw a group of individuals with courage to step out, to try new things, to be bold, a group who owned a problem that they did not create. And 12 months later, I still see that spark, I see that same passion, I saw the uniting of individual and collective power, I saw the hope for the change we wanted to see

We developed an effective system that coordinated the response to modern slavery, a system that saw us move from 47 referrals to 171 within 12 months. A system that was shared, collectively having the most effective response to support victims, pursue offenders and disrupt locations.

To me... this was common sense! We just applied common sense, but it was so much bigger than that!

# Moving Upstream



# Key Learning

**Relationships are key** – For partnership working to be effective, it is crucial it is built on effective relationships with individuals as well as organisations. Taking time out of busy schedules to meet with key people and build up a network of contacts has been crucial.

**People see behaviours before they see Modern Slavery** – Very few referrals come with a definitive “This is modern slavery”, you get given a seed of information and then take time to watch it grow, this could be an issue of overcrowding, people seeing minibuses pick people up, cars visiting potential brothels.

**A whole systems approach** – If we are going to be effective in addressing modern slavery, it has to be a whole system approach. Rarely do you encounter one individual victim of modern slavery, usually there are multiple victims, multiple offenders and multiple locations. A well designed system is the best upstream intervention.

**Education is key** – We have to educate our workforce and the community on how to identify modern slavery and how to respond and report concerns. Modern slavery training should be targeted at every individual not just first responders.

**A Slave Next Door** – Kevin Bales book A Slave Next Door really brought it home that every victim of modern slavery lives next door to someone and we have to educate that someone to know how to identify and respond to potential modern slavery.

**Get close to the problem** – you don’t understand a problem until you’ve seen it up close. As the co-ordinator, I would be those boots on the when you are close to the problem.

**Joining the dots** – We have made a lot of process in Sandwell joining up the dots, making sure we have a good governance, clear accountable information, robust information sharing and everyone understands their role and function.

**Trauma informed** – We have worked to embed a trauma informed approach to our work, it is important that we understand the victim journey, the trauma, experiences, circumstances and we seek to build trusting relationships. We learnt that People are vulnerable during transitions and that every victim needs something different.

**Strategically operational** – You cannot co-ordinate modern slavery from a desk, it is important to keep an operational hands on approach. We have worked to get a good balance between operations and strategic work, having separate operational and strategic forms has been essential.

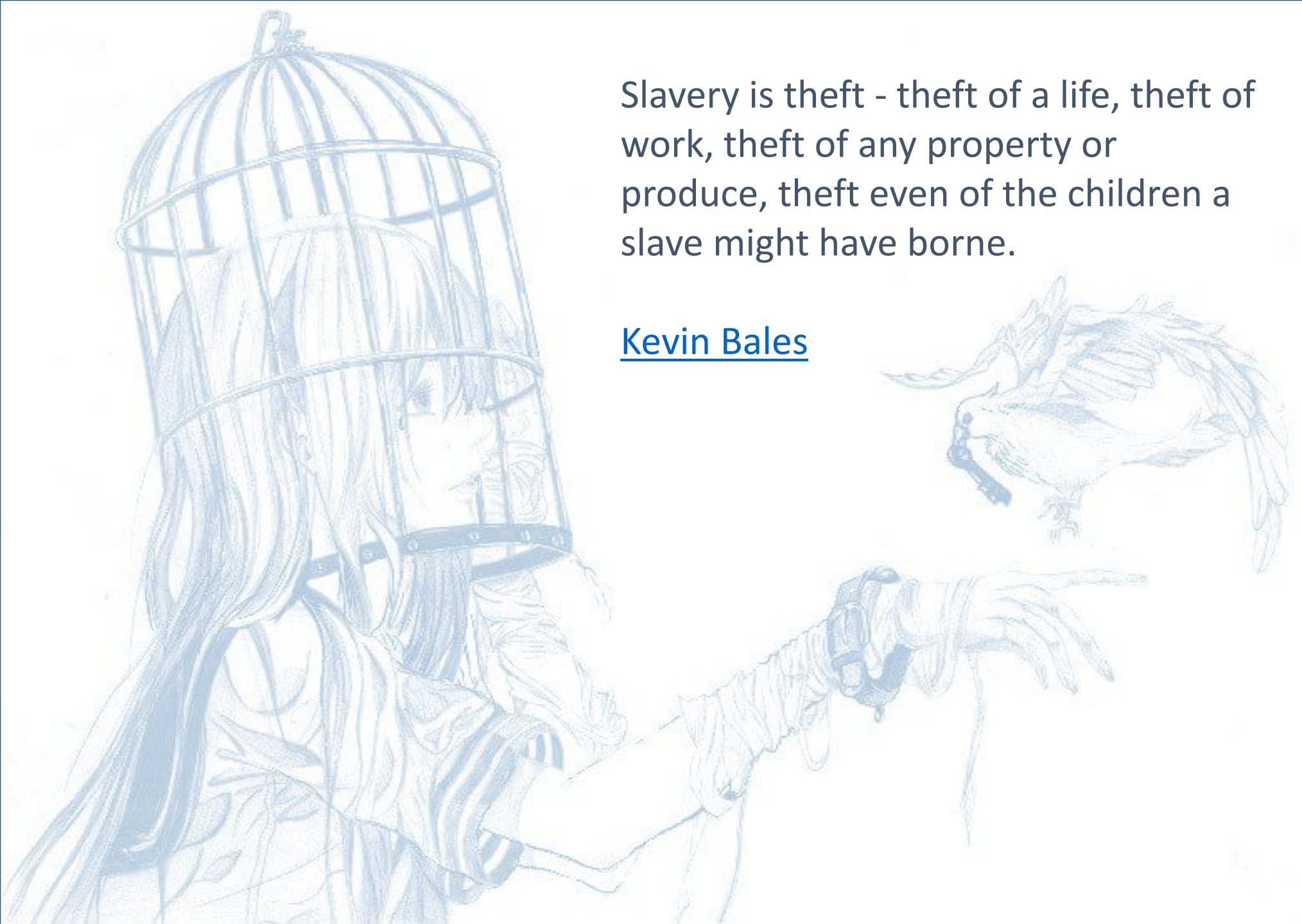
**Understanding power** – Part of our learning has been getting the right lead agency, understanding powers, duties, compliance, enforcement are all key to helping to disrupt locations.

**Consistent communication** – the virtual team created a fast paced response system to easily support an effective approach to addressing modern slavery



Slavery is theft - theft of a life, theft of work, theft of any property or produce, theft even of the children a slave might have borne.

[Kevin Bales](#)



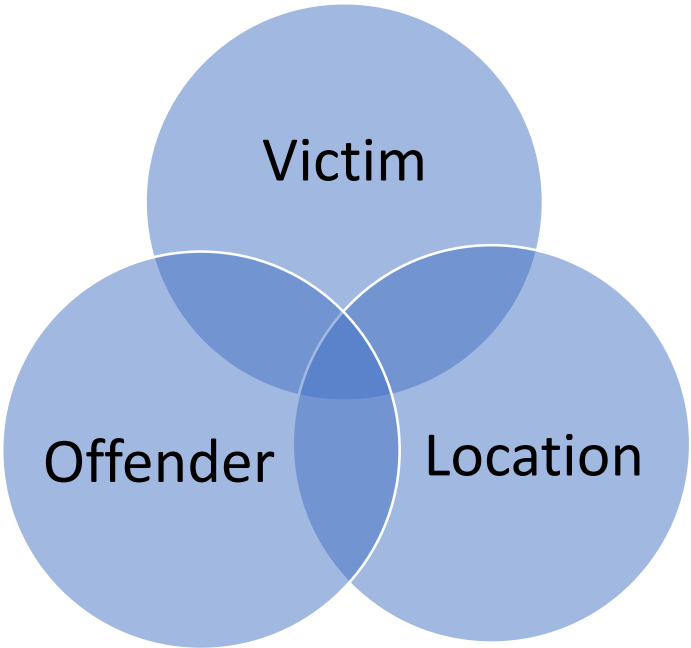
# Coordinating the whole system

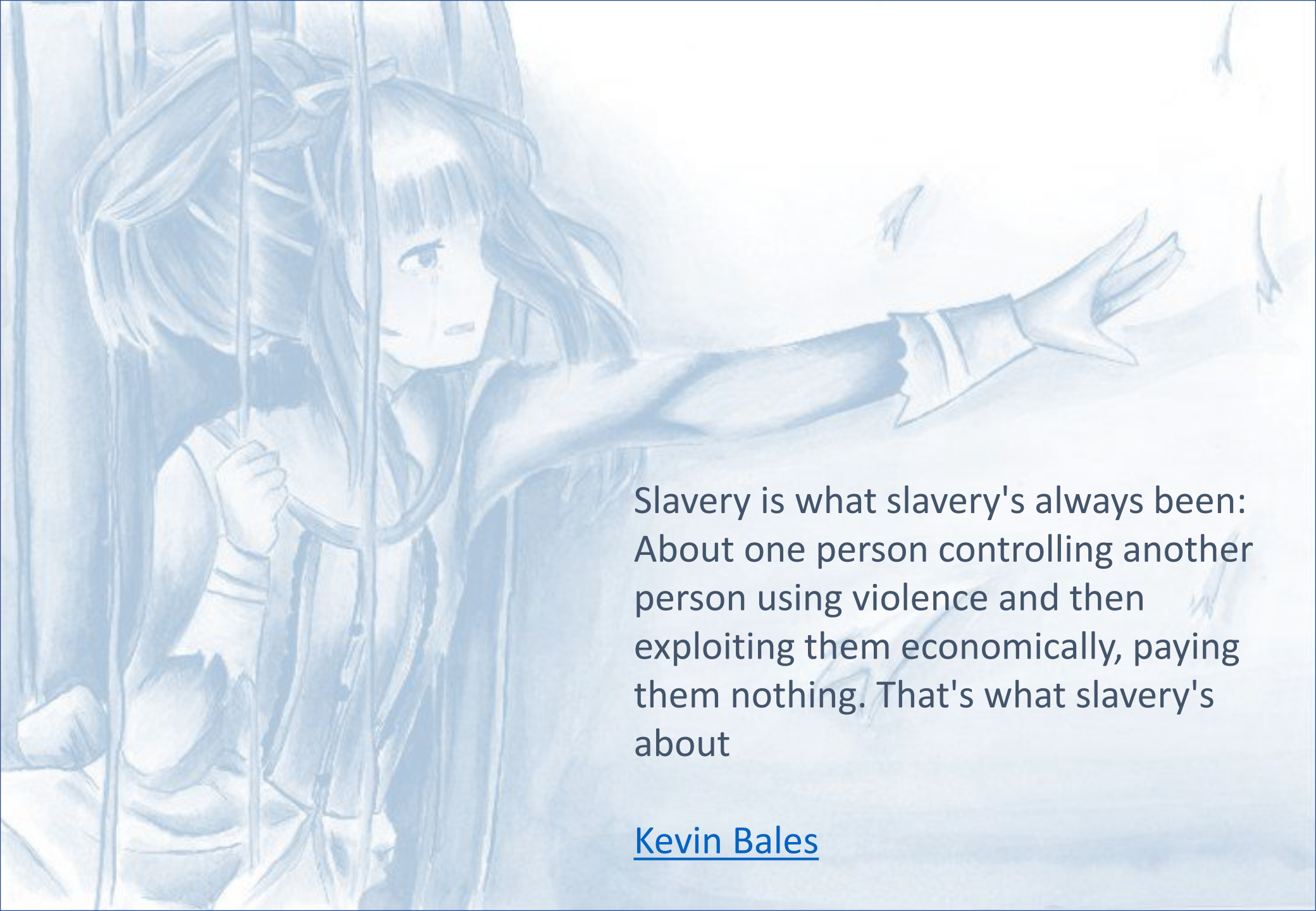
Sandwell Council had employed a Modern Slavery Programme Manager who is the Council’s single point of contact (SPoC) for modern slavery and human trafficking. The main remit of the role follows the 4P model and includes:

Protect	Prevent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure SMBC have effective mechanisms to support and guide victims of MSHT</li><li>• Develop policies, procedures and guidance for frontline staff</li><li>• Review referral pathways and map support services for Sandwell</li><li>• Establish a multi-agency task force that drives continuous improvement, reviews progress, and provides accountability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-ordinate partnership working</li><li>• Chair the Anti-slavery strategic partnership and promote its work</li><li>• Report to the council, safeguarding boards and Safer Sandwell Partnership and H&amp;W Board</li><li>• Lead on the development of Strategy and the Modern Slavery delivery plan</li><li>• Support SMBC to comply with the Modern Slavery Act and ensure we have effective supply chains</li></ul>
Prepare	Pursue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate the operational work relating to modern slavery into locality work and borough and town tasking</li><li>• Ensure quality training, development and awareness raising takes place</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with partners to gather intelligence and use data and intelligence action to prevent slavery and human trafficking, protect victims, and pursue perpetrators.</li><li>• Monitor arrangements for measuring progress and performance, reducing, mitigating and managing risk, and for effectiveness of partnership working.</li></ul>

Sandwell takes a multi-agency approach to modern slavery and human trafficking which is focused on partner agencies working together under common aims by promoting constant multi-disciplinary interactions that enhance informal communication flows and continuous communication.

We ensure our approach provides support to victims, pursues perpetrators and disrupts locations





Slavery is what slavery's always been:  
About one person controlling another  
person using violence and then  
exploiting them economically, paying  
them nothing. That's what slavery's  
about

[Kevin Bales](#)



# Improving Victim Care and Support

Improving the care for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking is central to Sandwell's strategic plan.

Modern Slavery is one of the most complex crimes to disrupt and investigate, it is recognised that no one agency can tackle modern slavery alone and a comprehensive, joined up, effective multi-agency approach is required.

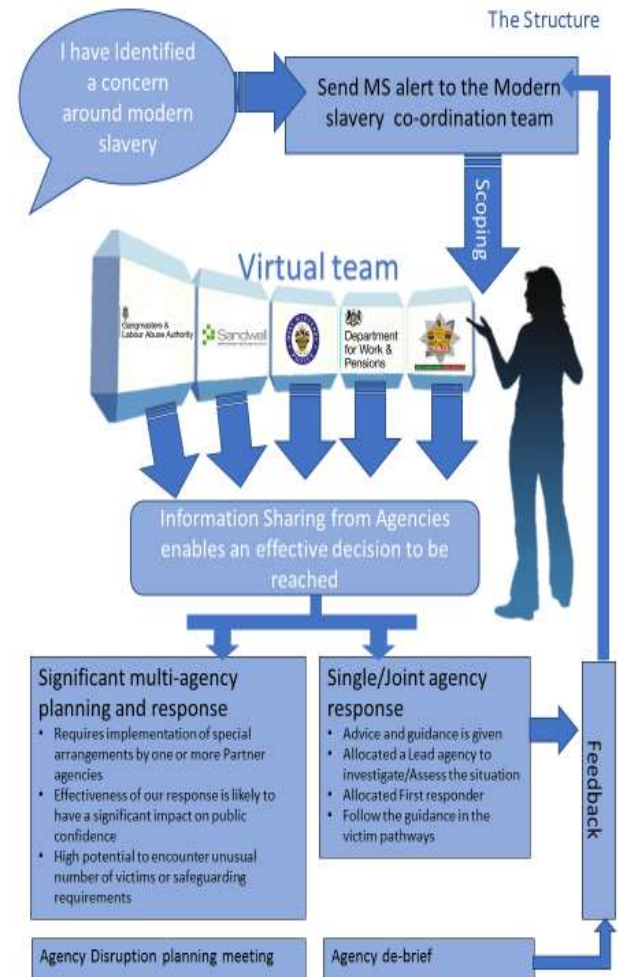
Sandwell takes a multi-agency approach to modern slavery and human trafficking which is focused on partner agencies working together under common aims by promoting constant multi-disciplinary interactions that enhance informal communication flows and continuous communication.

To ensure this work is effective Sandwell Partnership have implemented an effective 4Ps strategy in our approach to tackling modern slavery. Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare

Sandwell has created a robust structure to Modern Slavery, and this needs to be much more than a single victim approach. It is important that we can look at each case to see if further disruptions are possible.

To ensure a robust response, all referrals of modern slavery and human trafficking are discussed with the Modern Slavery Programme Manager to ensure a robust response.

Information will be screened and where required will be scoped for additional information through the Modern Slavery Virtual team and this will determine the response.





***Inspector Colin Gallier leads on Modern slavery in Sandwell for West Midlands Police. He shares some his thoughts and experience of our partnership working to address modern slavery and human trafficking.***

### ***What has been the greatest achievement of the partnership?***

I believe that first and foremost it's the strength and depth of the working relationships. This has been essential because the partnership needed a strong buy-in from a variety of partners to function effectively. We have been operationally delivering on a high volume of work throughout the last year and none of that could be achieved without partnership working. I must commend the commitment and motivation from the individual partnership members who may be doing beyond their daily remit in contributing to the partnership. The reality is that despite coming from a range of organisations, the partnership genuinely views itself as one big team

### ***What has been the focus of Sandwell's strategy to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking?***

We've always made the victim the focus of any of our efforts to tackle modern slavery in Sandwell. This means that safeguarding always comes first. Beyond this we are always seeking to understand the causational factors for modern slavery. This involves a deeper dive into certain locations and demographics and why some people may be more vulnerable than others. More often than not, foreign nationals are more susceptible to trafficking because they are isolated from a community. To counter this, we have deployed a range of disruption activities that are really varied thanks to the diversity of the partners. Equally, there has been a focus on making sure that the great strides made by the partnership are not lost if individuals move positions. In order to confirm this legacy, I have started to train modern slavery SPOC's in the WMP based in Sandwell to ensure that our strong working practices are maintained.

### ***What advice would you give other local authorities and police forces in terms of a Modern Slavery strategy?***

I definitely think the important element to get right is also the most difficult; it's the people. The working relationships need to flow and flourish to achieve the desired end product. Mandating a top-down structure is likely to stifle individual partners; those who actually commit to the partnership need to be given the freedom and flexibility to tailor their own strategy rather than just using a carbon copy. I think that within this it's crucial to establish your drivers who will push the whole partnership forward. For these drivers, it's a case of being dedicated and passionate. They should want to do it and not have to do it. Finally, the partnership needs to always be recognising the efforts of its members and contributing agencies. When reviewing an operation, we like to pinpoint exactly how everyone contributed. You want your partner members to feel pride in their service and know that they are

# Hidden in plain sight

2019 saw one of the largest modern slavery cases ever brought to trial in Europe (Operation Fort) concluded. Following a complex and lengthy investigation led by West Midlands Police, the criminal gang responsible were brought to justice and the victims safeguarded. The criminal gang responsible trafficked over 400 potential victims from Poland to the UK for forced labour.

Meet Miro... He represents one of a possible 400 victim of modern slavery. Transported to the UK by bus, promised £400 per week, he was housed in squalid, rat infested home, forced to sleep on filthy mattresses. They washed in a canal and worked long days at rubbish recycling centres, farms and turkey-gutting factories. Victims were paid as little as £20 a week as they had their wages farmed from bank accounts the gang had complete control over. If they complained, gang enforcers would humiliate, threaten or beat them



## Meet Ignacy Brzezinski,

A gangmaster who led Britain's biggest ever modern-day slavery network is back behind bars after being caught in Poland. The group of five men and three women lured vulnerable people from Poland – including the homeless, ex-prisoners and alcoholics – with the promise of employment, money and accommodation. The eight-strong group were collectively jailed for more than 55 years in what a judge described as 'the largest conspiracy of its type ever known'.

**Dame Sara Thornton**, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, said:

“This case sends a strong message to all traffickers that we will not tolerate their brutal criminality. I hope it also gives confidence to victims that they will be supported and that justice will be done.”

## Landmark Case

This case has helped the SHOP to focus our approach, it is important that we are able to support victims, but also pursue offenders and disrupt locations. We have learnt lessons on applying key legislation from the Modern Slavery Act (2015) in applying for slavery and risk prevention and risk orders. We also saw the application of the legislation as the gang of 8 were collectively jailed for more than 55 years.

This case demonstrates that we all have a role to play in identifying and responding to modern slavery,

## Landmark slavery and Risk trafficking order

As a follow-up to this case, partners were able to work together to obtain a slavery and risk trafficking order for the landlord who turned a blind eye to modern slavery occurring in his properties.



# Multi-Agency disruption

A concern was submitted to SHOP following reviewing historical logs where patterns emerged of potential forced labour.

## Scoping identified the following

- 50-70 workers were being exploited and working in poor conditions.
- Females were locked in rooms in the evening and the keys were kept with someone in the office.
- There were also 5 - 6 illegal minors aged between 15 - 17 working at the premises. Workers were collected and transported to the premises.
- There was believed to be a secret room where workers would be moved if required however it is not known where this is located.
- Many of the individuals attend a local gurdwara.
- The company produces top brand high street products.

## Outcomes

The following short – long term outcomes have been achieved:

- ❑ 60 workers were on site and contained upon our arrival
- ❑ All were screened for identity, slavery, trafficking, exploitation, immigration and national minimum wage
- ❑ 16 Illegal Indian nationals were identified, Immigration will be pursuing the standard fine to owners of £20,000 per illegal worker!
- ❑ 1 minor was identified with safeguarding needs and accommodation requirement.
- ❑ We had many disclosures regards to labour exploitation. All issues on this and national minimum wage have been picked up for continued investigation by HMRC which will result in huge penalties for owners.
- ❑ Western Power rep on site found that the whole factory was being run via huge scale abstract electricity, estimated to have run into the hundreds of thousands of pounds. This has resulted in the business being shut down indefinitely and electricity supply totally cut off via street supply.
- ❑ The follow up from the electricity bypass will mean a requirement on the owners to pay back the value of abstracted electricity. The evidential side will be collated from Western Power and passed to Police to pursue further prosecution
- ❑ Fire Services have issued their own notice of improvements that required rectifications
- ❑ This company was the supplier of imprinted glass bottles (perfumes etc) to many highly renowned companies.
- ❑ Concerns came to light for the owner's personal residence around gas and electricity usage and a further follow up operation will take place to disrupt this.

## Partner Agencies

21 Different partner agencies worked together to ensure maximum enforcement and protection

- West Midlands Police
- Regional Organised Crime Unit ROCU
- SMBC (Modern Slavery SPOC, Environmental Protection Officers, Housing Quality, Planning, Housing, Trading Standards, Building Control, Community Safety Team)
- GLAA
- HMRC
- Immigration
- Western Power
- British Gas
- West Midlands Fire
- Sandwell Children's Trust
- St Albans Community Centre
- Hope for Justice
- Red Cross
- BCWA

# Black Country factory shut down over suspected slave and child labour

A Black Country factory has been shut down after more than a dozen suspected modern slavery victims were found during a police raid.

The factory on Anne Road in Smethwick, which West Midlands Police has declined to name, was raided on Wednesday after officers received information the factory was involved in labour exploitation and trafficking.

A total of 15 suspected exploitation victims were found, including one child, after police spoke to around 60 workers to check their identities and salaries.

The bosses of the factory, who are also under investigation by HMRC, face fines of up to £20,000 for each worker found to have been exploited. The child worker has been safeguarded by Sandwell children's services until their age and parent or guardian can be identified.

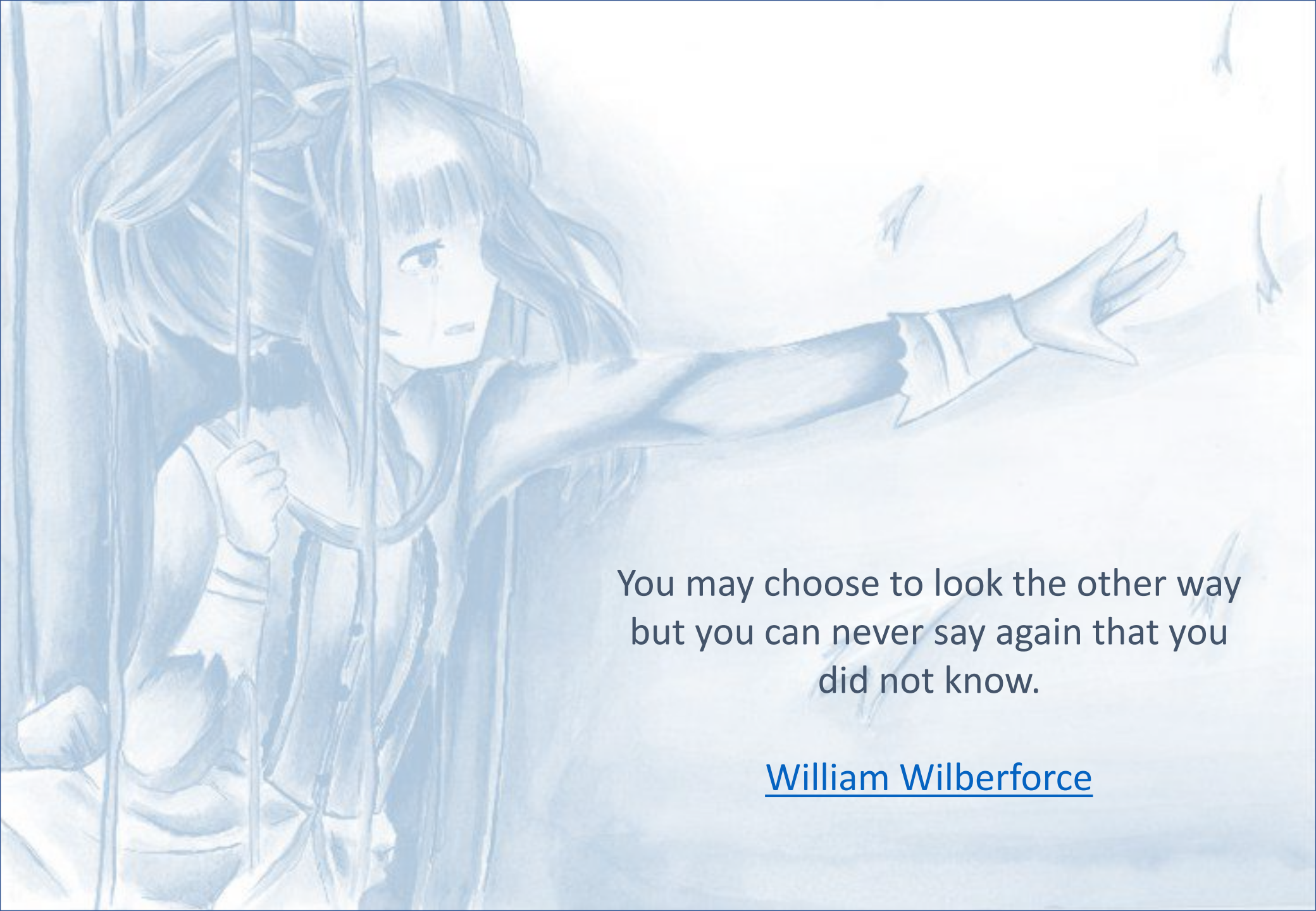
Inspector Colin Gallier, from the Sandwell neighbourhood team, said: "As a result of the hard work and ultimately the important information that has come from members of the public, we have successfully shut the business down indefinitely."

A spokesman for Sandwell Council added: "Working together with partner organisations on operations like this is essential for tackling modern slavery and human trafficking."

The factory was also found to be using electricity diverted from the grid.







You may choose to look the other way  
but you can never say again that you  
did not know.

[William Wilberforce](#)





### First Responder Training

Sandwell Council deliver first responder training in partnership with Black Country Women's Aid. The training is targeted at frontline workers who are likely to respond to potential victims of modern slavery.

There are currently 133 first responders within the Local Authority.

### Modern Slavery Briefing Sessions

These sessions are targeted at all workers across the Local Authority and partner agencies. They provide crucial awareness training on how to identify and report cases of modern slavery.

1253 Professionals have been trained to date.

### Bespoke training

The partnership has supported a range of bespoke training to a number of agencies including, DWP Freud teams, Police, sexual health clinics, unions, business leaders, faith groups and training and awareness sessions for local community. We plan to enhance this approach over the next 12 months.

## Equipping the workforce

Specific training  
'What to look for', 'How to report it',  
'How to manage and monitor it'  
The NRM

**Level 3**  
First  
Responders

133 First  
Responders have  
been trained

Modern Slavery in supply chains  
'Financial implications around supply chains'

**Level 2**  
Supply Chain

All procurement  
staff undertake CIPS  
training

Modern Slavery Briefing sessions  
'What to look for', 'How to report it'

**Level 1**  
Awareness

1253 professionals  
have been trained

# Tackling modern slavery in the Homeless Sector

Over the last 12 months, we have worked to embed an excellent response to modern slavery around housing and support. You can see in the response below we have tried and tested our housing pathways several times over the last 12 months.

We have been able to link our housing and support offer to include Housing First, support through the LASLO (Local Authority Asylum support officers) and through local neighbourhood support.

## Targeting Vulnerable homeless males

A waste recycling company, targeting and recruiting vulnerable homeless people and putting them to work in a recycling plant paying £10 per day for 10 hours work. Working conditions were very dangerous, no health and safety training and individuals were locked inside on arrival. A multi-agency visit with police, GLAA, The environment agency, HMRC, LA modern slavery lead and Hope for justice. A slavery and risk trafficking order is in place for the location and any further breaches will result in charges being made. Three individuals were assessed for Modern slavery, they declined referral to the NRM, an MS1 was completed and individuals were supported to access temporary accommodation.

## Victim of domestic servitude accommodated

A multi-agency visit to a nail bar, identified a female who was trafficking individuals into the country and using them to work in her nail bar and as domestic servitude in her house. We rescued a victim of domestic servitude, she was trafficked to the UK 7 years ago, forced to sell her house and promised she would have a life free from abuse. She has moved around 5 different families since being in the UK and is given a bed and small amounts of food in exchange for working long hours cooking, cleaning, looking after children. Referral into the NRM was made and temporary accommodation provided until reasonable grounds decision was received.

## Declined NRM

A multi-agency disruption visit was undertaken to a local bakery, concerns that they were exploiting workers, working very long hours, very little pay. One of the potential victims who made a disclosure, was working 10 hours a day for £25 per day, he was never given a contract or a wage slip which he requested several times and needed this evidence to secure accommodation. The gentleman was in his early 60's and had multiple health issues and was sleeping rough for the last 3 years. He made disclosures of the abuse however declined a referral to the NRM, this meant our Modern slavery pathway would not be appropriate. Back up plans were initiated and Hope for justice picked up on support and we were able to ensure the potential victim was housed through the local authority through a reputable landlord who had bed sit accommodation available

## Keeping you safe

A call came in from Met police regarding a female who called very distressed saying she was being trafficked. Police were able to triangulate mobile phone signals and cross reference with traffic cameras to an address in Sandwell. A visit to the address uncovered 4 girls, all potentially sexually exploited. Three girls declined any further support, and one girl made a full disclosure. A referral was made to the NRM and an ABE interview was undertaken with police. Due to the victim being destitute housing pathways were initiated to provide emergency accommodation whilst waiting for the outcome of the NRM. A positive reasonable grounds decision has now been obtained and a safe house located through the Salvation army.

# Tackling modern slavery in the Homeless Sector

Transforming Communities Together (TCT) works across Sandwell and the other three Black Country Boroughs on their Modern Slavery work. Their key areas of work are building partnerships to tackle Modern Slavery and raising awareness.

In 2019, 734 people took part in one of their awareness raising sessions. This includes work with churches, other faith groups, drop-ins and charities.

Part of this work was teaming up with the Big Issue Foundation to co-develop a training programme for vendors which allows them to be the "eyes and ears" to report and tackle the Modern Slavery. This was covered by the national Big

Eight vendors attended the first class just before Christmas to illustrate the scenarios that can lead to modern slavery, with the hour-long session also translated to help breakdown language barriers with vendors from overseas.

*Vendors are in a unique situation where they are out and about and the eyes and ears on the street and they will see a lot of things and, sadly, they are also quite vulnerable because traffickers are on the lookout for any vulnerability*

Big Issue Midlands service broker Gabi Sima added "Slavery these days has just changed its form but still exists and people can be easily trapped in it."

"The session that we delivered was valuable for our vendors not only because it was accessible and easy to understand, in a language that they speak but also because they now know their rights and what support is available if they are experiencing modern slavery.

"The session was a joint effort and I am sure the message was there not only for the Big Issue vendors but reached a whole community who are at risk of being exploited."

**TRANSFORMING  
COMMUNITIES  
TOGETHER** 



# Tackling Sexual Exploitation

## Responding to sexual exploitation

Responding to sexual exploitation can be a challenge for agencies, balancing safety and a trauma informed approach is essential. It is additionally important to make sure that we have a balanced approach between supporting individual victims, disrupting locations and pursuing offenders.

### Pop-up Brothels

Over the last 12 months we noticed patterns of pop-up brothels occurring in one of our Sandwell Towns. By the time activity had been reported and teams were pulled together, quite often occupants had moved on. We had a lack of intelligence or footprint into where workers operate, who they are, whether they are safe or if they are victims of exploitation including sexual crime, human trafficking and modern slavery, to adapt to this we moved more upstream to start reviewing and monitoring adult service websites

### Adult service Websites

Starting to understand how adult service websites operate has given us an insight into sexual exploitation in our Area. In particular online advertised services show a hugely disproportionate amount of EU females in the adverts, which are also considered a high risk group in relation to modern slavery. On-line adverts demonstrate workers are both based from residential premises and business locations including hotels and Homes of Multiple-Occupancy (HMO). Adverts show some sex workers are both based within Sandwell (including those operating from their own addresses) and transient often referred to as 'touring'. We began to see that Sandwell had a high volume of advertising on adult service sites and can now develop a more targeted approach to this work.

## Headlines

- Sexual exploitation accounts for 26% of all modern slavery cases referred to SHOP
- 24 multi-agency visits were to locations where we believe women were being sexually exploited
- 128 Adults have been screened for modern slavery and offered support
- 144 agency interventions have been carried out to date towards disrupting locations where individuals are sexually exploiting
- 10 arrests have been made in relation to labour exploitation
- Chinese (36%) Romanian (22%) are the top sexually exploited nationalities
- 56% of sexual exploitation occurred in Smethwick, 33% in west Bromwich

# Disrupting Sexual Exploitation

## CONCERN

A Takeaway in Sandwell has been giving free pizzas out to girls in the area. The manager was advised that if staff feel the need to offer free pizzas to school girls, then we're happy to offer free check-ups on the location from our Partners

## PREVENTION

As a preventative measure, a Multi-agency disruption team was built to undertake a compliance visit to the venue

Agencies involved included

- ✓ Police – NHT
- ✓ Fire
- ✓ SMBC Licencing
- ✓ SMBC Urban Renewal Team
- ✓ SMBC Trading Standards
- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Western Power
- ✓ British Gas

## OUTCOMES

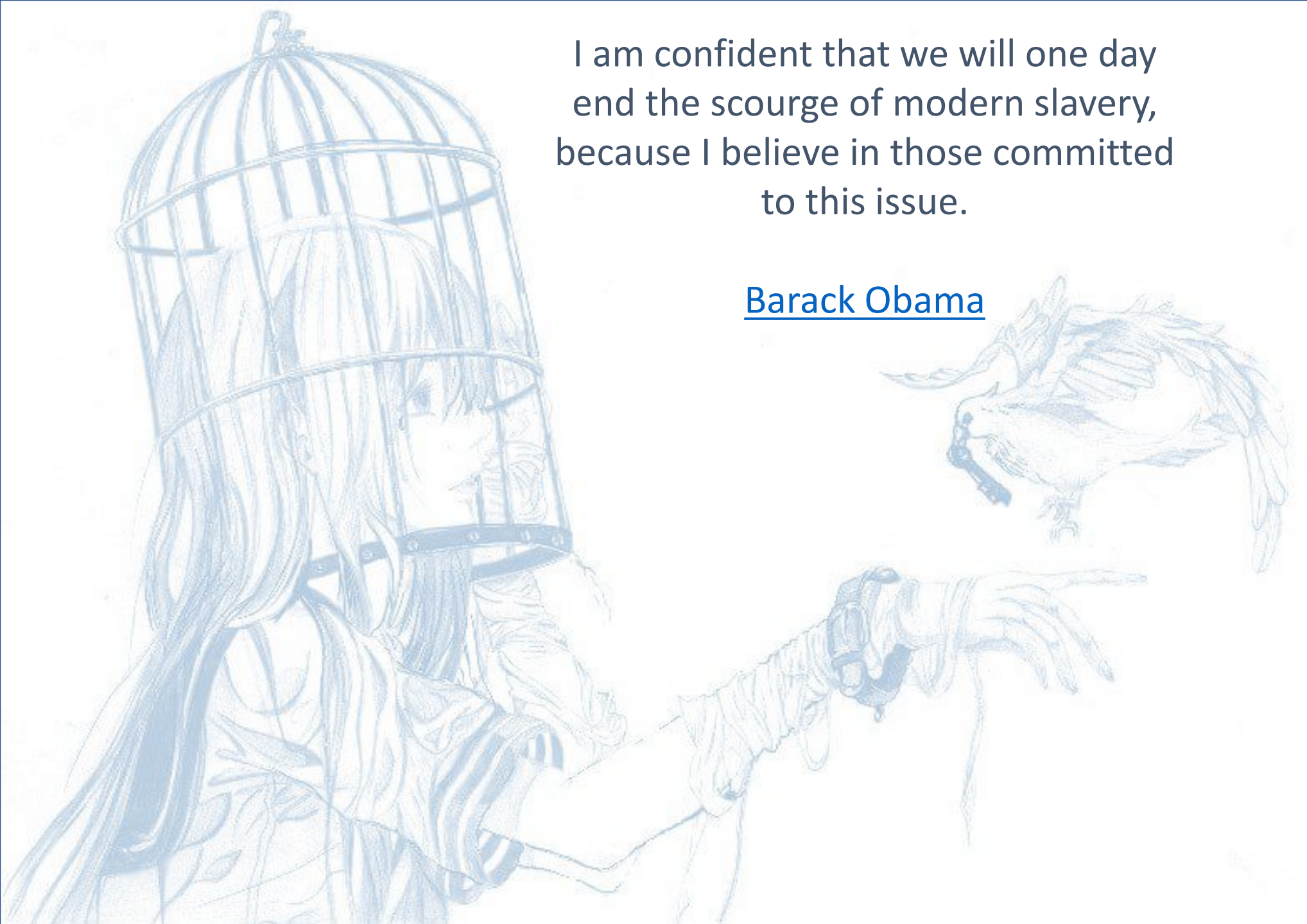
- Licencing – Minor breaches found, advisory.
- Trading Standards – Minor breaches found, advisory
- British Gas – Potential that the gas meter/supply has been tampered with and could have an illegal supply. follow up investigation
- Fire Service – Minor breaches found, being followed up by Fire
- Western power – Links had been tampered on the meter and there were seals missing. Broken plug sockets found in the premises which are dangerous. Due to these reasons electrical supply cut off and the business closed down

NO MORE FREE PIZZA



I am confident that we will one day  
end the scourge of modern slavery,  
because I believe in those committed  
to this issue.

[Barack Obama](#)







**Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategic Partnership (SHOP)** was **shortlisted** for Outstanding Contribution to the Fight Against Slavery in reducing vulnerabilities. Judges Said:

*“SHOP were not satisfied with simply demonstrating great partnership work, but were determined to achieve victim identification and comprehensive post-identification support, leading to a complete change in direction, including setting up victim pathways and the Slavery Free Sandwell Pledge”*



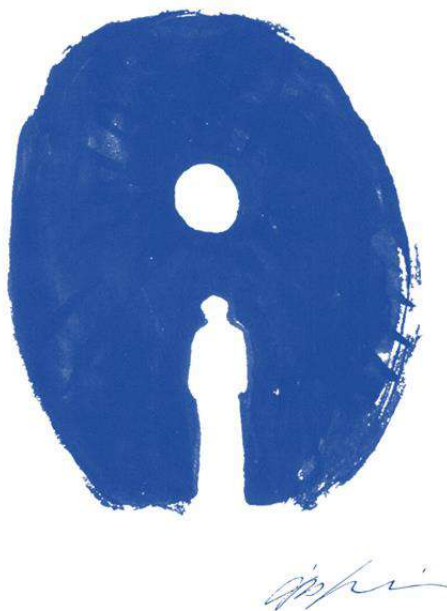
**Sandwell Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategic Partnership (SHOP)** was shortlisted the **Thompson Reuters Foundation stop slavery award**.

The Collaboration award which honours collaborative programmes that have had a tangible impact. The award is an international award Recognises the wide range of actors dedicated to ending the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking.



SHOP was one of 18 shortlisted organisations across the Globe, of which 4 were from the UK, which includes organisations such as IBM, Delta Airlines, HSBC and Hestia and was the only anti-slavery partnership shortlisted.

Although we did not win the final prize it was an honour to see the calibre of organisations across the globe and to be part of the event and seeing some of the world's most influential leaders in the global fight against slavery and human trafficking. We all left feeling energised to continue our work in eradicating human trafficking and modern slavery



**STOP SLAVERY**

A W A R D

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Sandwell Council

Shortlisted for:

The Collaboration Award

# Slavery free Communities

A global commitment to end slavery by 2030 has now been enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by consensus at the United Nation General Assembly. This goal—both ambitious and urgent enables Sandwell to take a global and national approach at a local level.

We believe that to slave proof Sandwell this begins with every single citizen in Sandwell, every business, charity and organisation. It is our main aim that every single person who lives, works in or visits Sandwell can

1. Recognise slavery in our towns
2. Understand what to do with suspicions
3. Understand how to report and support victims once they are rescued

Slavery free communities is all about responding to the problem at a local level using available resources and better serving people to respond to and then prevent modern slavery.

‘Sandwell are developing the concept of a slavery-free community in multiple imaginative ways, demonstrating how partners can join together to develop a more effective, holistic and multi-faceted response to exploitation. There is much for others to learn from their pioneering partnership work and efforts to engage the wider community’.

**Dr Alison Gardner, Nottingham Research Fellow, The Rights Lab**

## The Plan for a Slave-Free Sandwell has five parts

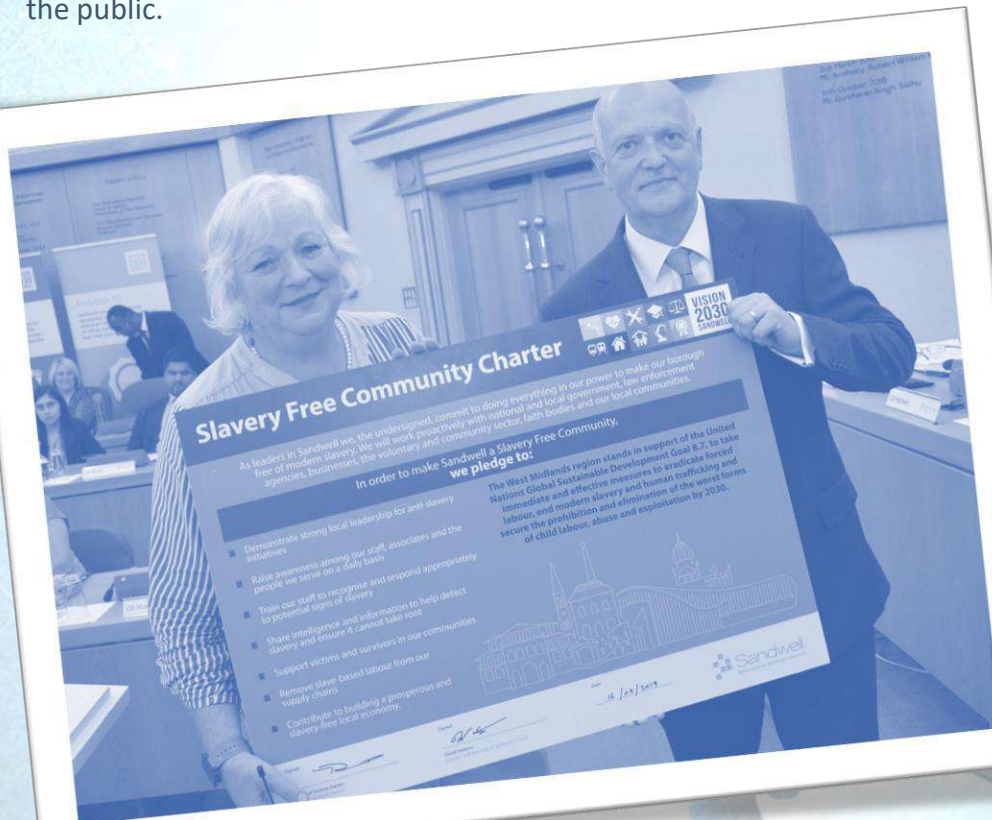




# Slavery Free Community Charter

In July 2019, Sandwell Council Leaders signed the Slavery Free Community Charter to demonstrate their commitment to addressing modern slavery within our communities.

We worked to promote the message and start to equip our communities with the understanding of what modern slavery is and how to respond. As a result of this, we have received 4 referrals so far from members of the public.



## Safer Sandwell

We're working together through the Safer Sandwell Partnership and with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to make a safer borough for all.



## Help us end modern slavery

**Modern slavery is real. It is happening in our communities in Sandwell.**

Sandwell Council has signed a pledge to show its commitment to making Sandwell a slavery-free borough. We are working closely with the police and partner organisations to tackle criminal networks and rescue people from exploitation.

### How you can help end modern slavery in Sandwell

Modern slavery can happen anywhere. The good news is you can play a part in stamping it out by understanding what modern slavery is, how to spot the signs and how to report it.

Modern slavery includes forced labour, sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation – this could include being forced to commit criminal offences such as shoplifting or selling drugs.

Victims can be men, women and children of all ages, but it is normally more prevalent among the most vulnerable, minority or socially excluded groups.

If you think you may be a victim of modern slavery, call the confidential Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 and speak to someone who can help you seek safe accommodation and support.

If you think you may have seen something suspicious, you can report this through the helpline by calling 08000 121 700 or reporting through the **Unseen app**, which is available to download.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/modernslavery](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/modernslavery) to find more information on signs of slavery and human trafficking to look out for.



## Modern slavery is hiding in plain sight

To find out how to spot the signs, search Modern Slavery Helpline. Spot it. Stop it.



**Leader of the council, Councillor Davies said:**

"Modern slavery is real and happening in our communities in Sandwell. It can happen anywhere and victims can be men, women and children of all ages, but it's often more prevalent among the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

We all have a part to play in spotting the signs and reporting slavery and human trafficking. It's vital we demonstrate strong leadership and stand together with our partner organisations and our communities to continue tackling this issue and do all we can to make Sandwell slavery free."



It is our **main Aim** that Every single person who lives, works in or visits Sandwell can

- Recognise Slavery in our Towns
- Understand what to do with suspicions
- Understand how to report and support victims once they are rescued



# Co-Producing a slavery free Sandwell

## Developing roots

In developing the co-produced slavery free Sandwell, we see this like a tree that is growing,

- The roots will take a hold and hopefully we will create a great environment for the tree to grow
- Trees need a lot of space, we will ensure we give this project space to grow and develop
- The fruit of the tree will take shape as the project develops

## Developing Values

As with every project it is important that we have defining values that are a basis for development. The Values we have defined around the co-produce slavery free Sandwell include:

- **Safety:** We want to ensure people in our communities feel safe and protected and are equipped to identify and respond to modern slavery.
- **Freedom:** That communities can have freedom and exercise and their human rights
- **Protected:** We want to ensure that potential victims of modern slavery are protected and feel safe to come forward
- **Prepared:** We want to ensure we are helping to build resilient communities and individuals to build a stronger community
- **Pursued:** We want to ensure we are pursuing Perpetrators of modern slavery and reduce modern slavery crimes in our community

## Phase 1

Co-produced education and awareness programme to raise awareness of modern slavery within our communities. This Phase will be initiated through an initial Slavery free task and finish group to plan the following aspects

1. Awareness Campaigns to raise awareness within communities on modern slavery
2. Develop and deliver training packages to a range of audiences which will include
  - Professionals
  - Business communities
  - Faith communities
  - Charities, and community groups

## Phase 2

Co-produced community champion programme, whereby community champions will be recruited from the training and sessions and will work together to help create and design a community champion programme to:

1. Provide on the ground support to potential victims of modern slavery
2. Help target specific community groups who may be more vulnerable to modern slavery
3. Continue to raise awareness and educate communities on modern slavery
4. Provide a range of interactive engagement activities such as coffee mornings, world café, drop in sessions

**Journey:** As with any journey, it is important that you know where you are going, we do not have a destination for a co-produced slavery free Sandwell, it is important that we continue to move forward and plan out the journey together.

**Road Markings:** we have ensured we have added in road markings to ensure we remain focused, ensuring we are focused on Co-delivery, co-evaluation, co-decision and co-design

**Road signs:** we do have road signs to guide us along the way, these will ensure that we are setting our focus on the right communities, this could be the general community, specific community groups, the faith communities, business communities





## Our key community messages as part of the safer six work include:

- **To inform** – To tell people what we are doing to tackle modern slavery and protect them.
- **To explain** – To put in plain words via trusted channels and ‘human voices’ the action we are taking and the support and services we offer.
- **To engage** – To gain greater understanding of the picture of modern slavery in Sandwell – by promoting **opportunities for community involvement/reporting**.
- **To ensure** people have a voice and are involved in the planning and design of a slavery free Sandwell through work around co-production
- **To reassure** – To show we care, that we are responding and that we have the interests of the community and victims at heart.



# Working together to make Sandwell safer

**SIX TOWNS // SIX WEEKS**



SAFER

Youth activities  
Safer communities

**Combat**  
anti-social  
behaviour

Prevent  
knife crime

Work with  
young people

**Better**  
health

Help  
vulnerable  
people

Promote  
road safety

**Fire safety**

Cleaner neighbourhoods

Crime prevention

Challenge  
street drinkers  
**Safety patrols**

**Tackle cyber**  
crime and bullying

Tackle drugs

Stop hate  
crime

Tackle  
dog mess

**Combat**  
rogue traders

Stop fly-tipping



#Safer6

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer6](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer6)



# Working towards Slavery free Businesses

## Sandwell Business ambassadors

We have established links this year with the Sandwell Ambassadors, we share their passion to see Sandwell, and the wider Black Country, thrive.

The Ambassadors are a collective of business people in the Sandwell area with the aim of supporting the Sandwell Business Community.

It has been a great experience to come together with them as they are promoting the concept of 'doing business better'. By encouraging responsible business practices such as local procurement, inclusivity and diversity in recruitment, bridging skills gaps, and nurturing employee wellbeing.

It was encouraging to hear their response towards tackling modern slavery in Sandwell as we started to explore some of the challenges in Sandwell and demonstrate a commitment to taking practical steps towards slavery free community

## Equipping Unions

"The training that you provided to the TUC on modern slavery, prompted a lot of interest from the different unions. Feedback was extremely positive, some of the attendees were very enlightened with the presentation and were unaware of the seriousness of the issue. Attendees of the Health and Safety forum were not only impressed with your presentation but were also inspired to tackle the issue of modern slavery in their workplaces and communities.

I on behalf of the Midlands TUC Health and Safety forum would like to express thanks to Sandwell MBC for making the commitment to modern slavery and allowing you to present this to our forum"

## Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Partnering with transforming Communities together we have worked with Black Country Chamber of Commerce to help raise awareness of signs and indicators of modern slavery across businesses. This event helped to equip their staff in how to recognise modern slavery and also raise awareness with businesses they support.





Safer Sandwell  
Partnership  
Local Police and Crime Board



To get in contact with SHOP or the Anti-slavery  
partnership email [wendy\\_sims@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:wendy_sims@sandwell.gov.uk)