

STOP THE TRAFFIK.

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

HOMELESSNESS & EXPLOITATION:

Understanding the drivers of
exploitation for people
experiencing homelessness,
and approaches for prevention.

GMCA

GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY


Challenger
Tackling serious and
organised crime **together**



CONTENTS

- 03** Executive Summary
- 04** Background
- 06** Methodology
- 10** Findings
- 22** Applications
- 33** Recommendations
- 39** Thanks & Recognition



A RESEARCH REPORT BY
STOP THE TRAFFIK,
FUNDED BY GMCA AND
CLOTHWORKERS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research has contributed to the growing body of evidence indicating links between homelessness and exploitation.

The methodology used engagement with those working closest to the issue, such as front-line workers, utilising interviews and focus groups to gather evidence. The findings indicated a clear causal link between homelessness, in addition to other support needs and exploitation. The results from this initial research provided the foundation for the initiation of three distinct projects: a geo-targeted social media campaign, community awareness raising activity and the championing of a financial inclusion scheme. The report also makes recommendations that potentially have national reach in terms of their applications and implications.

Key findings

- The most common vulnerability within the homeless community was drug dependency with no bank account second.
- The most common type of recruitment was befriending which often started with the giving of gifts to build trust.
- All types of exploitation were seen with criminal exploitation the most common, closely followed by sexual exploitation.
- The traffickers and victims had similar demographics, anecdotally traffickers tended to be older (although there was insufficient volume of data to see this robustly).
- Victims tended to use a different language to support organisations, using terms like “bullying” or “abuse” rather than “modern slavery” or “victim of trafficking.”



THE RESEARCH GAP

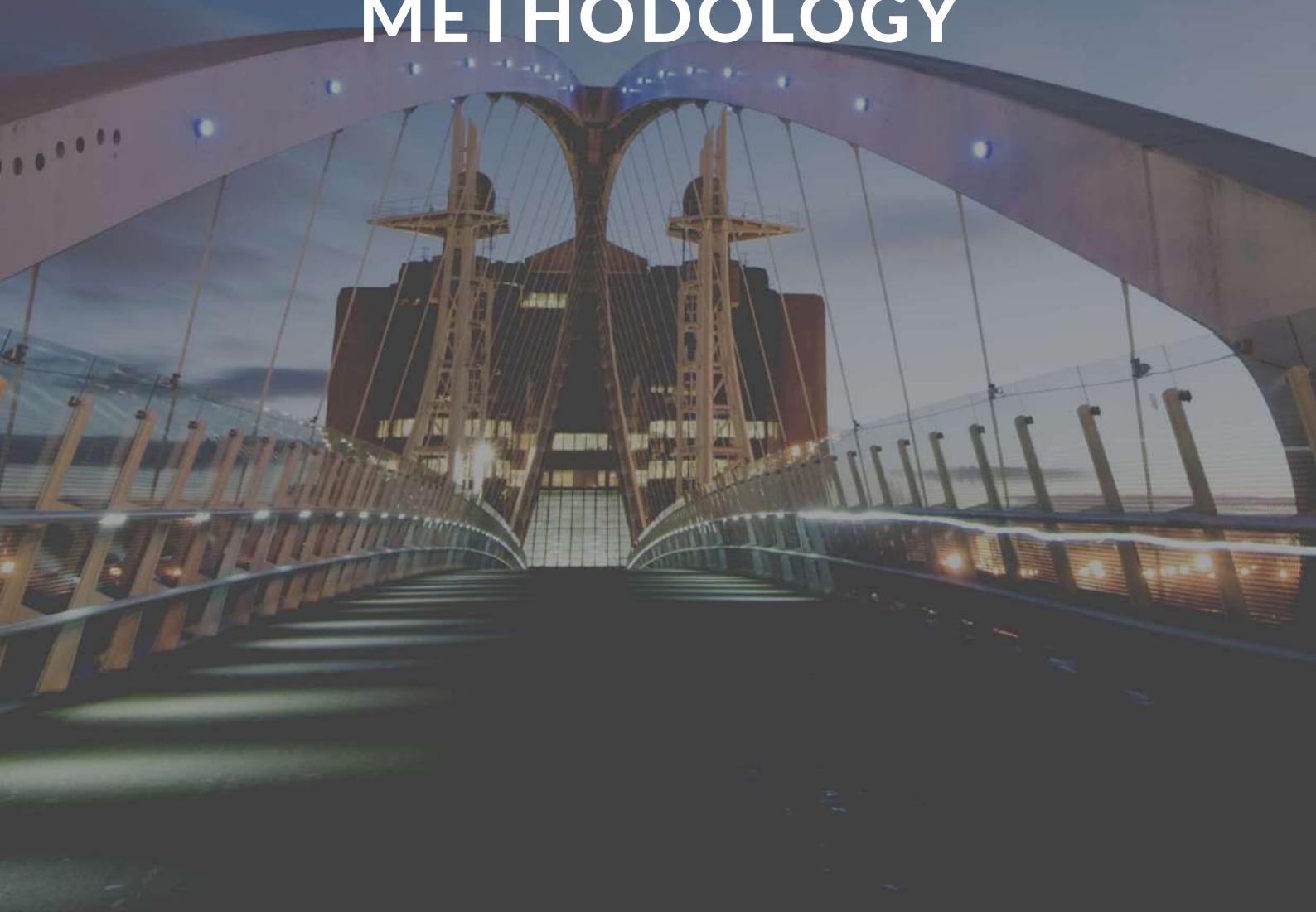
There was a lack of research which investigated the interrelated dynamics of vulnerability experienced by people without a fixed address. Specifically, about how these vulnerabilities impacted an individual's risk of, and vulnerability to forms of exploitation related to human trafficking and modern slavery. This paper seeks to shed light on this research gap and offer tangible actions for the prevention of exploitation among homeless populations.

BACKGROUND

Previous research on this issue in the UK has identified clear links between homelessness, rough sleeping, and an increased risk of becoming a victim of trafficking and exploitation. The Passage, a homeless charity in Westminster, London (2017)¹ found that 64% of the homelessness organisations they contacted had encountered clients who had experienced modern slavery. The Modern Slavery helpline, through reports submitted to them, identified homelessness as a vulnerability factor before, during and after exploitation². In support of the findings from these studies, the Manchester Safeguarding Board identified exploitation cases within the city, as did the NGOs supporting potential victims.³ Other enablers to exploitation identified include alcohol and drug dependency, former asylum seeker status, no recourse to public funds, a history of mental health problems and those with a history with the criminal justice system.⁴⁵⁶ Evidence has also indicated venues such as homeless shelters and soup kitchens are used by exploiters as recruitment venues.

-
1. The Passage (2017) *Understanding and Responding to Modern Slavery within the Homelessness Sector*
 2. Unseen (2019) *Modern Slavery & Homelessness*
 3. Manchester Safeguarding Boards (2018) *Staying Safe Manchester's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy 2018 to 2020*
 4. Centrepoint (2019) *Escaping the Trap: Supporting homeless young people affected by youth violence and Criminal exploitation*
 5. Hestia (2019) *UNDERGROUND LIVES Homelessness and Modern Slavery in London*
 6. Homeless Link (2018) *Modern slavery and human trafficking: guidance for frontline services*

METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY

Our research followed a 'grounded approach'⁷ to data collection, seeking to generate new theory on the drivers of exploitation for people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping. This was realised through employing a constant comparative method of coding and analysis. Grounded theory is a methodology of research which aims to continually incorporate research findings into the data collection processes, allowing researchers to broaden the scope of their investigations as their knowledge of the subject areas broadens through increased exposure to the issue.

For example, the heightened risks of exploitation for people with no fixed address and without access to banking services were not included in the initial list of interview questions. However, following the first couple of interviews, the issue was frequently highlighted as an important causal factor in the development of exploitative relationships between employers and people with no fixed address. In subsequent interviews, specific probing questions were added to the interview guide to include a deeper examination into the banking needs of people involved in the cases reviewed. The inclusion of these new questions allowed researchers to deepen their understanding of the exploitation enablers created by the lack of access to financial support and independent money management. This flexibility in the data collection methodology allowed the project to address each new case of exploitation in its own terms and allowed for a more person-centered approach to data collection.

Grounded Theory contrasts to alternative methodologies which prioritise consistency in data collection processes to preserve the statistical significance of their results, which was not the primary aim of this research.

7. Robert Glaser (1998). *Doing Grounded Theory*, City: Mill Valley, CA, Sociology Press



METHODOLOGY (cont.)

The purpose of this methodology was to create a holistic understanding of the relationship between the support needs of people experiencing homelessness and the methods of control used by exploiters to force them into exploitation. It aimed to do this primarily by collating the voices of people working and living closest with the homeless and combining them with the views and experiences of individuals engaged in support.

The research utilised the following methods:

Steering Groups

Three steering groups were held which brought together multi-agency professionals from across Greater Manchester. Homelessness services were consulted at the start of the project to set the aims and objectives of the project. Partner engagement was a crucial element of this project, allowing us to work with organisations and groups firmly embedded within the communities in which we were working.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 18 front-line staff working to support individuals with no fixed address across Greater Manchester. Interviews focused mainly on specific incidents of exploitation which had affected their service users, the circumstances which led to their exploitation and the ways their vulnerability to exploitation could have been minimised.



METHODOLOGY (cont.)

Lived Experience Focus Groups

Six focus groups were held with individuals who had experienced homelessness in Greater Manchester. This work was done in partnership with Inspiring Change Manchester who facilitated group discussions around the work with their Core Group of lived experience volunteers. The sessions were initially planned to focus on issues relating to trafficking and homelessness as well as the aims of the project, theory of change and planning. As well as discussions on these topics, these sessions were intended to build the confidence of the volunteers in discussing trafficking and to provide the opportunity for participants to join the project's steering group as key stakeholders with decision making power to affect the progress and outcomes of the project. Unfortunately, due to several difficulties including the outbreak of COVID-19, we were unable to continue this aspect of the project. The initial sessions explored the concept of prevention work and generated ideas that were eventually used in the campaign, including the on-street advertising campaign.

In addition to the researchers in Programme Challenger & STOP THE TRAFFIK, the project was directed by a multi-agency steering group combining the perspectives of NGO and local government staff. The steering groups met at the beginning of the project to set the aims and objectives of the research. Unfortunately, due to competing priorities of stakeholders following the COVID-19 pandemic, the steering group was unable to continue, and collaboration was done individually with signposting partners. Participants included staff from NGOs, Police, the NHS, NRM providers & the GMCA.

FULL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS: City Hearts, STOP THE TRAFFIK, Inspiring Change Manchester, Street Support Network, MASH, GMP, the GMCA, Urban Village Medical Practice, Lifeshare, The Sanctuary Trust and Urban Outreach.



The background image is a high-angle aerial photograph of a city, likely London, showing a mix of modern skyscrapers and traditional architecture. Notable landmarks include a large green dome-shaped building, a white curved roofed structure, and a tall, uniquely patterned skyscraper. The city is densely packed with buildings of various heights and colors, with roads and green spaces visible.

FINDINGS

GENERAL FINDINGS

Young people that had recently become homeless and people leaving care were at heightened risk of exploitation. Traffickers manipulated their loneliness, social isolation, and drug use as levers to facilitate sexual and criminal exploitation.

There were several reports of women being exploited by abusive partners, leading to them becoming homeless. Interviews highlighted links between these cases, and significantly higher levels of violence or sexual assault faced by female interviewees. These risks were identified as a factor that prevented women from accessing existing services like day centres or night shelters.

It was frequently reported that people being exploited did not have a bank account and relied on getting universal credit or other financial support paid into the accounts of others. In some cases, it was the exploiter themselves who kept the money and used it as a means of coercion. In others it was an acquaintance who would charge them a fee each week for using their account, depriving them of a proportion of this much needed financial support.

Several interviews highlighted the coercive nature of street begging and drug trafficking. Several individuals reported being forced by groups of other homeless people to work for them. These individuals were also criminally exploited. They were made to shoplift, commit violent crimes, and engage in sex work. Power dynamics between individuals and groups were closely connected to the supply of drugs.

Interviews frequently highlighted the blurred distinctions between victim and perpetrator. People who were being exploited at one time may have played a role in exploiting others at another. Exploitation can sometimes be a means of survival within the homeless community. Drugs have such force over many people's lives. Sometimes the only option to avoid being exploited is to exploit someone else.

The research also highlighted the vulnerability of people within bed and breakfast accommodation (BnBs). This can create a potential power imbalance between landlords and vulnerable people housed in their BnBs, resulting in guests being exploited financially and for their labour.

FINDINGS: EXPLOITATION TYPES

Research found that the exploitation experienced by Manchester's homeless population fell into three main types:

Criminal Exploitation: this covers activity such as forced begging, drug supply/trafficking, benefit fraud, cuckooing, forced violence against others and forced shoplifting.

Sexual Exploitation: the sexual exploitation of groups of vulnerable people or individuals was often found to combine with criminal exploitation. It also took place in controlling relationships with individuals forced into sex work by their partner.

Labour Exploitation: key forms of labour reported through interviews included, manual labour, paving drives, domestic work. The survey phase also reported cleaning and agricultural work.



Figure 1: Exploitation Types by Sector

FINDINGS: VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationality: The majority of cases identified in research interviews were from UK nationals.

Gender: most incidents reported were male. This potentially reflected the under-representation of women accessing multi-gendered homeless services due to the levels of intimidation women can experience within these facilities and the dangers present for women accessing these services.

Age: 12-17 and 18-25 were the most common groups identified, being young people at risk of homelessness and people who had recently become homeless. This reflects the reported vulnerability of younger individuals targeted by older, long-term homeless individuals or groups for the purposes of exploitation. Children and young people were most frequently involved in sexual exploitation. Criminal exploitation involved a mixed age range. Labour exploitation generally affected those above 30.

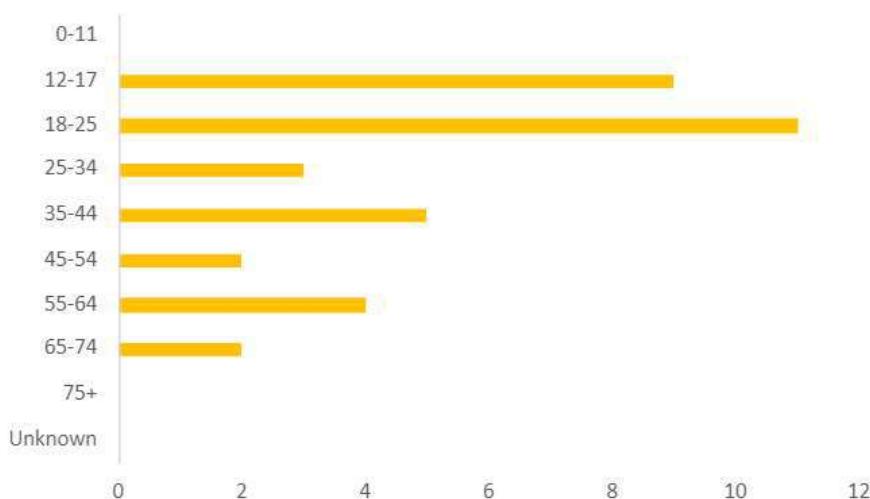


Figure 2: Victim Age

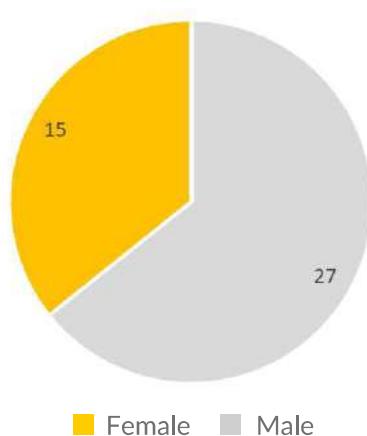


Figure 3: Victim Gender

FINDINGS: TRAFFICKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationality: The majority of cases identified in research interviews involved UK nationals.

Gender: most incidents reported involved male offenders. Our research findings suggested that around two-thirds of traffickers were male, which was a similar gender distribution in direct comparison to the homeless population researched.

Age: it was generally reported that traffickers tended to be older than the people they exploited, however not enough of the data collected in interviews were able to provide specific age brackets for this to be broadly visualised.

It was highlighted frequently that older long-term homeless individuals would often target younger people for the purposes of exploitation.



Figure 4: Trafficker Nationality

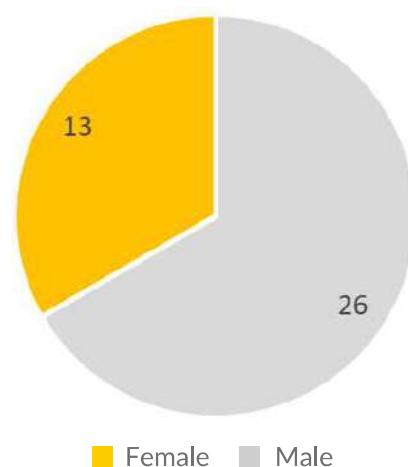


Figure 5: Trafficker Gender

FINDINGS: VULNERABILITIES

Trafficking vulnerabilities aligned with many previously identified factors that can make people without a fixed address vulnerable. The barriers to engaging with support services similarly reflected barriers that also prevented people from achieving independent exploitation-free lives.

Vulnerabilities identified included:

- Drug & alcohol dependencies, commonly used for control.
- Young people recently becoming homeless.
- Young people previously in care.
- No access to a bank account.
- Socially isolated with no family ties.
- Histories of abuse, meaning some people find it difficult to recognise abusive and exploitative dynamics in their friendships and relationships.
- Histories of traumatic experiences, particularly shared experiences of trauma with their exploiters, and the emotional bonds created by these intense experiences. This was frequently reported as means of control and coercion.
- Histories of mental health issues.

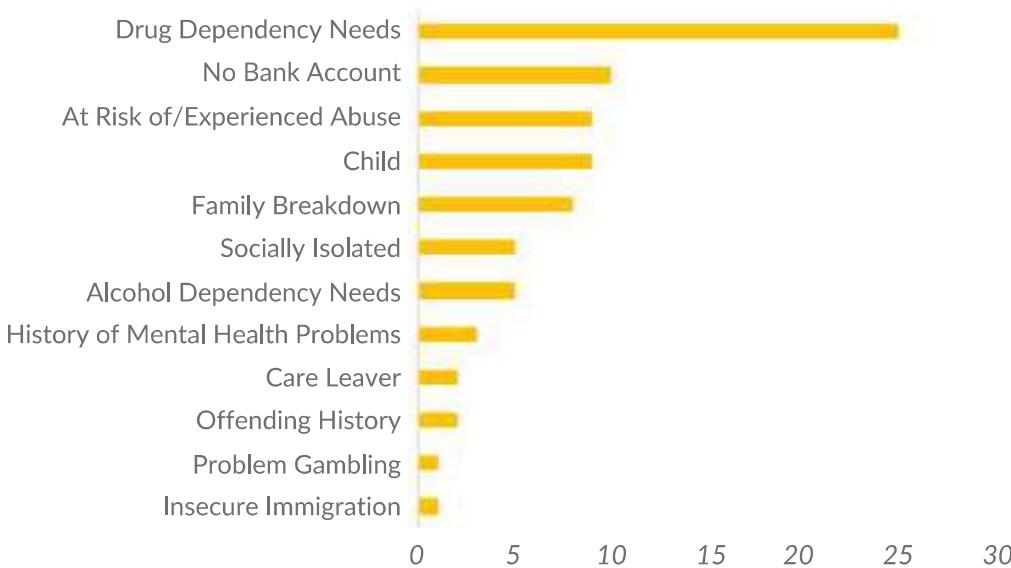


Figure 6: Vulnerabilities

FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE OF RISKS

Findings from the lived experience consultation group indicated most people who are homeless and rough sleeping do not recognise terminologies like 'modern slavery' or 'victim of trafficking'. Exploitation would instead be commonly called 'bullying' or 'abuse'. This highlighted a disconnect between the language used in the support and reporting processes and the language of the people they hope to engage with.

The lived experience consultation group also found most people know about or have experienced some sort of exploitation but are reluctant to talk about it. Some respondents appeared to be more comfortable discussing experiences as if they had happened to a friend. This is especially true where they may have played a role as an exploiter as well as a victim, since the lines are often blurred, and it is common for people to take on both roles as part of the process of surviving on the street.

Several respondents to the survey and several cases discussed in interviews identified people who did not self-recognise that they were in an exploitative situation. This included several cases of labour exploitation in return for payment in alcohol and cases of sexual exploitation within controlling relationships.



FINDINGS: RECRUITMENT METHODS

Befriending: Interviews frequently reported incidents in which homeless individuals were approached by a potential exploiter who pretended to be their friend. Gifts were used to build up trust and offering drugs, seemingly for free, only to reveal they will have to pay back later and trapping them in debt bondage. People were often targeted for this type of exploitation while staying in emergency accommodation and while begging. One caseworker described the process as "giving a little to take a lot". This method is mainly used in sexual and criminal exploitation.

Relationship model: It was frequently highlighted in interviews that women in controlling relationships would be forced into sex work by their partners after having built up their trust. There were also incidents of cuckooing and benefit fraud which started in this way. Sometimes this happened for financial gain where the partner was a drug dealer and other times for the purpose of sustaining their substance needs.

Violence, threats and abuse were found to have often been used in combination with these methods. Intimidation was also being used in isolation for criminal exploitation.

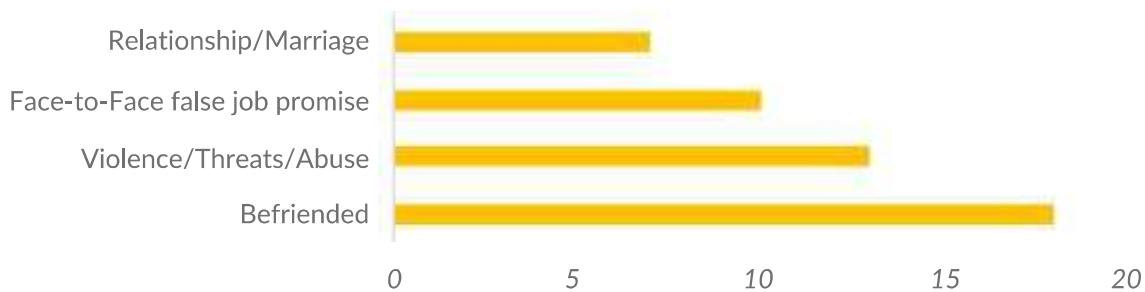


Figure 7: Recruitment Methods

FINDINGS: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Research found that in 10 of the incidents discussed, the person being exploited did not have access to a bank account.

In 6 cases, the victim had their benefits paid directly into the account of their exploiters. This increased the individual's vulnerability by cutting them off from accessing financial support independent of their exploiter.

It was commonly reported that people were charged for using another bank account in this way. There were also frequent reports that benefit support went directly into the account of the exploiter.

Multiple survey respondents reported being paid £10-£20 a day for their labour. In the interviews, some cases were reported of people receiving £30 a week for labour while working in BnBs.

FINDINGS: CONTROL METHODS

While methods of control and coercion used by exploiters vary, our research found that these methods fell into three main categories:

- Use of psychoactive substances, with exploiters taking control of the victim's drug supply to manipulate their addiction to force them to do things.
- The use of violence, threats and emotional abuse.
- The creation of debt bondage, which was often used in combination with drugs and alcohol.

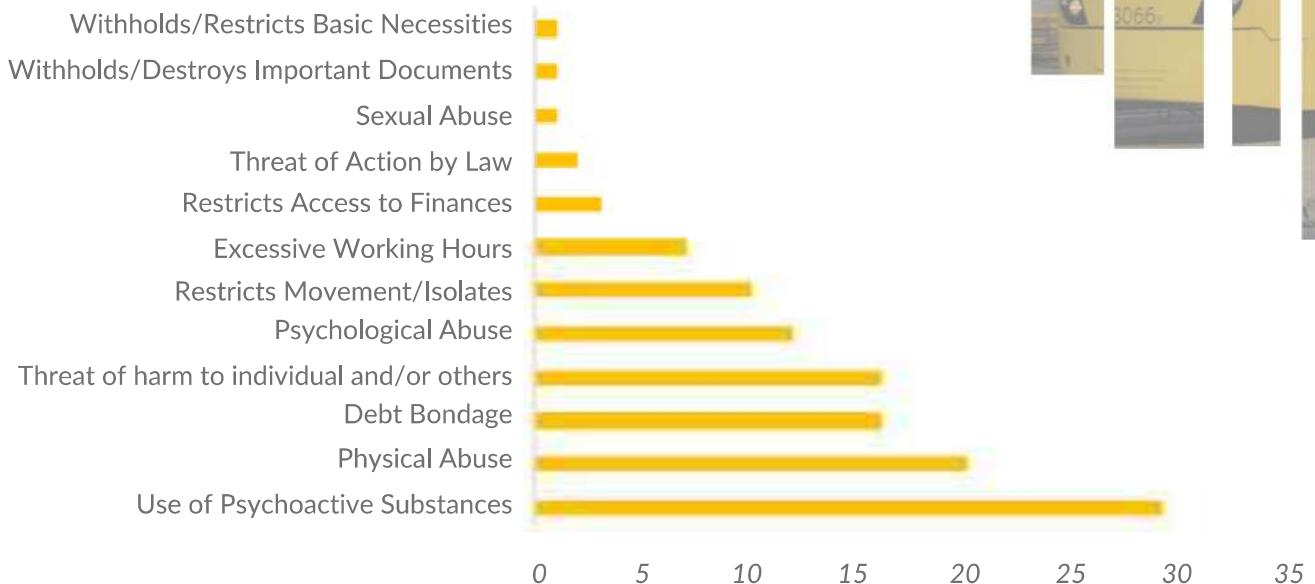


Figure 8: Control Methods

FINDINGS: ROUTES & TRANSPORT

Multiple interview respondents reported that vans had been used to collect victims from day centres. There were also reports of private cars being used to transport people around different sites within Greater Manchester as part of criminal and sexual exploitation.

In 22 out of 42 cases, no travel was facilitated, and the victim was exploited in the same area they were recruited.

In 3 of the remaining 20 cases where travel was facilitated, the victim was moved from a town or city outside of Manchester into the city. Source venues varied and activity did not seem to be carried out by an organised group.

Of these 20 cases where travel was facilitated, 16 were recruited in Manchester and moved to other areas. 9 people were recruited in Manchester and moved to another area within Manchester, 7 were recruited in Manchester and moved outside of Manchester.

A nighttime photograph of a canal scene. In the foreground, the dark water reflects the warm lights from the surrounding area. On the left, a large metal bridge with multiple diagonal cables is illuminated from below, casting a glow on the structure and the water. To the right, there's a brick building with arched windows and doors, some of which appear to be open. Several boats are moored along the canal, their lights reflecting on the water. Bare trees stand in the background against a dark sky.

APPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

TARGETED AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: STT APPROACH

STOP THE TRAFFIK has significant experience delivering social media campaigns with local partners in diverse settings which have been successful in raising awareness of the risks of human trafficking.

These campaigns have been geographically and demographically targeted and have been collaborative with STOP THE TRAFFIK reaching out to various partners in various locations around the world. For example, geographic targeting has previously been used in Nigeria-Libya-Italy; Kenya and Uganda; Croydon; the Fenlands and Lincolnshire-Lithuania

As a result, we have developed and deepened understandings of the dynamics of human trafficking and modern slavery within specific geographic areas, demographic groups, and social contexts, all of which have been fed into broader national and international data sets.

Local partners have also benefited from increased interactions with hard-to-reach communities and groups, resulting in increased calls to helplines and increased attendance at drop-in centres.



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

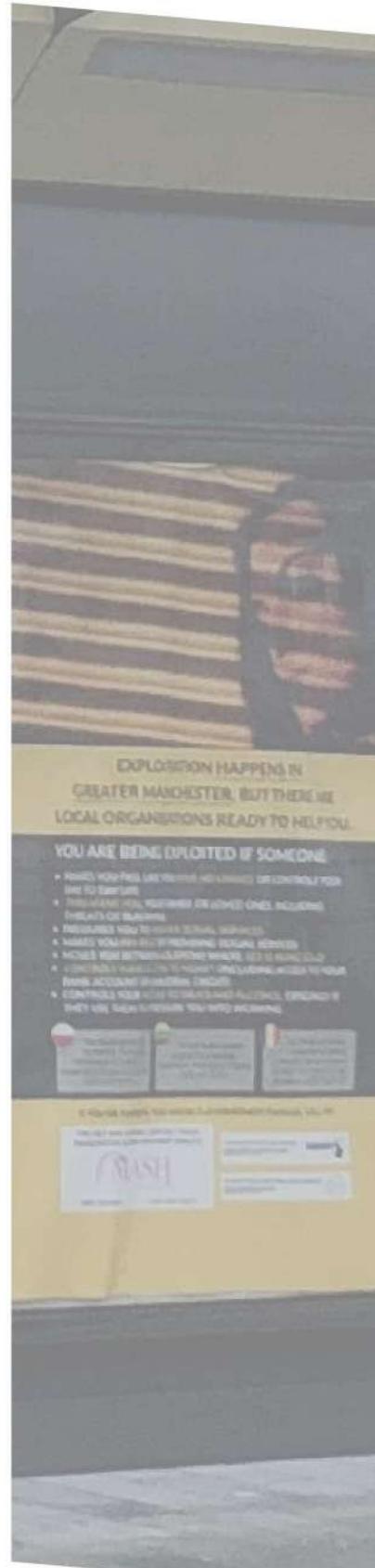
STOP THE TRAFFIK delivered awareness campaigns in Greater Manchester targeting demographics identified through the research as having an increased risk of trafficking compared to the general population.

The campaign used mixed methods, including bus and tram stop advertising and a targeted social media awareness campaign. The campaign targeted 3 core groups: young people at risk of homelessness, Polish, Romanian and Lithuanian nationals and women with no fixed address.

Due to the limitations of the targeting methods used, in some instances the campaign reached a wider audience than just these target groups.

The campaign ran in 6 Local Authority areas across Greater Manchester including Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan, Salford and Bolton. The bus and tram stop advertisements went up for 4 weeks from 5th October to 1st November. The targeted social media campaigns ran in 2 phases of 1 week from 11/11/2020-16/11/2020 and 13.01.2021-17.01.2021.

The first phase was a pilot for the approach and targeted only the young people and women groups within certain wards within the Manchester local authority area. The second phase targeted all three groups across the 6 local authorities we targeted.



DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING

Campaign recipients were selected due to their geographical location but used filters on Facebook Ads Manager that omitted homeowners, frequent international travellers, early technology adopters, small business owners and management. Targeting different geographical areas allowed us to signpost to local partners within each local authority area and made sure that people who saw the campaign were able to access local relevant support. These criteria applied across all social media targeting. In addition to these criteria, we also targeted narrower sub-groups with specific messaging and signposting partners.

These criteria applied to all of the campaign's social media targeting. In addition to these criteria, we also targeted narrower subgroups with specific messaging and signposting partners such as:

Young People: we targeted young people aged 18-25 as these groups were identified by the research as being at an exacerbated risk of exploitation compared to older peers experiencing homelessness. These risks were rooted mostly in grooming relationships between older individuals experiencing homelessness and systematic recruitment focusing on and around homeless support services. They were also chosen so that the preventative impact of the social media campaign could be maximised, with the idea of targeting individuals potentially vulnerable to exploitation in the near future over those already in exploitative situations and crisis.

Women: women experiencing homelessness face additional risks of exploitation to men, especially when accessing gender-specific support services. Risks faced by women include abusive relationships, physical and sexual assault and harassment.

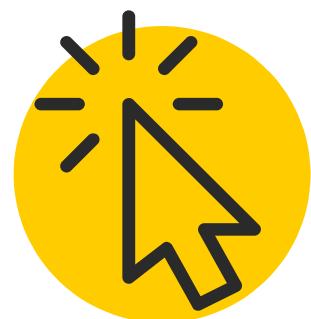
CEE nationals: Romanian, Lithuanian & Polish nationals were targeted using ads in their own languages. Our specialist partner Europa was the most appropriate to target based on their experiences with their service users identified these nationalities. CEE immigrants face additional challenges in accessing support in the UK e.g. language barriers and immigration enforcement, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation relative to UK individuals also experiencing homelessness.

CAMPAIGN OUTCOMES

Over the period in which our targeted social media campaign was running, we were able to reach over 186, 346 people across Greater Manchester who fell within the criteria stated above. The following statistics give a glimpse into the performance of the campaign. These insights allow us to measure the impact of the campaign in terms of the volume of potentially at-risk users we were able to reach with our messaging, and how many of those engaged with the campaign's content.



1,086,324
IMPRESSIONS



6094 UNIQUE
LINK CLICKS



107,879+
VIDEO PLAYS



3.2% CLICK
THROUGH RATE



186, 346
REACH

CAMPAIGN IMPACTS

Following the activity around our campaigns, we undertook a surveying period where we measured the impact of our work with a focus on changes to perceptions and behaviours.

	Before	After	% change
Percentage of participants who correctly identified, what the most common nationality for victims of Modern Slavery in the UK was. (Correct answer UK, percentage = number correct).	48%	94%	46%
Percentage of participants who agreed with the following statement: "I am confident I could respond appropriately if I suspected a case of modern slavery".	46%	94%	48%
Percentage of participants who agreed they found the training engaging.	-/-	88%	-/-
Percentage of participants who agreed the training was relevant and applicable to their role.	-/-	94%	-/-
Percentage of participants who were satisfied with the training overall.	-/-	88%	-/-

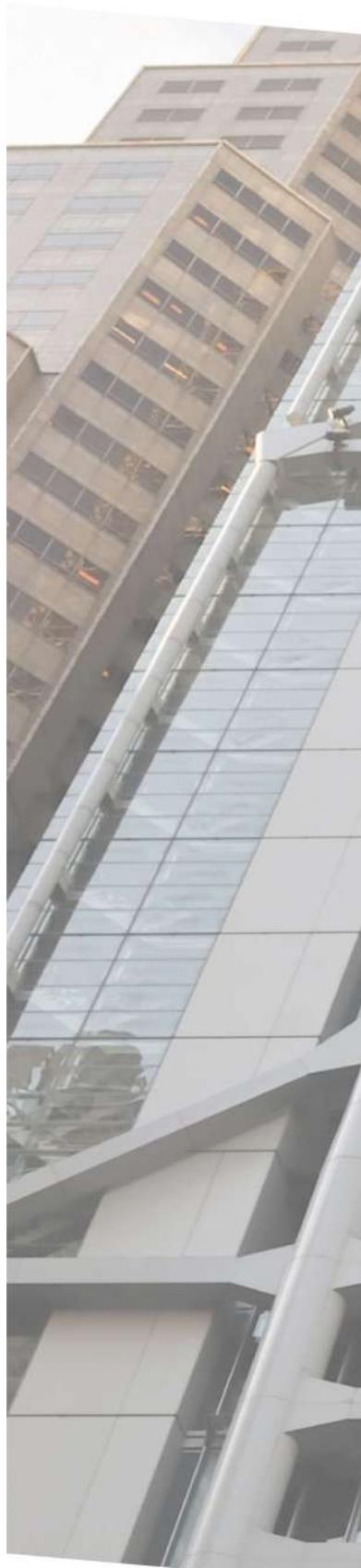
HSBC CASE STUDY

Financial exploitation was one of the most common exploitation types we identified, with debt bondage present in almost all the cases that the research analysed. This, combined with the testimonies of support service staff, concluded that being "unbanked" created increased trafficking risks for people experiencing homelessness.

Unbanked people find it more difficult to access and receive any kind of financial support, and many people experiencing homelessness lack access to personal bank accounts. Having limited access to financial support means that these individuals need to rely on others to receive funds. This situation creates a dynamic where people experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to exploitation by those who are gatekeepers to the access of their finances.

Our research found that this created financial leverage which was used to either charge a fee to make withdrawals, alongside control methods like the control of substance needs or violent behaviour to coerce vulnerable people into more severe forms of exploitation. We wanted to see how the financial sector could respond to this situation and work to lower barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness.

More information on our broader work on survivor bank accounts and consultancy with financial institutions can be found [here](#).



HSBC CASE STUDY

We discussed our findings and our previous work on survivor bank accounts with HSBC's financial inclusion team and learned about the work that they are doing to help lower barriers to financial resources. Put simply, HSBC's financial inclusion team has developed the provision to be able to open bank accounts for people even if they don't have any ID or if they have previously had accounts closed for fraud.

Being the victim of criminal exploitation such as fraud, or having forms of ID stolen can be common among people experiencing homelessness. This can include the theft of documents, and forced fraud such as being made to take out a maximum benefit when ineligible or getting refunds when they shouldn't to finance substance needs.

HSBC provides training to all staff on these schemes so they are able to make more allowances than they might for a standard customer, and have more flexibility in terms of making appointments, to lower barriers that people experiencing homelessness face when opening an account.

We raised awareness of these services to different networks, including at the Greater Manchester Anti-slavery NGO network to make sure all of the project's partners knew about the availability of the scheme.

We worked with Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) to gather some feedback regarding the work on survivor bank accounts.



HSBC CASE STUDY FEEDBACK

The experience of taking service users to open survivor bank accounts was praised in our reporting for being a simple and straightforward process. The staff who deliver this service at the bank are very professional and make the service users feel relaxed from the outset. The whole process takes around 40 minutes and service users leave with a bank account and sort code details. A debit card is issued within 7 days.

The impact that opening a bank account had on women was reported to be very positive. Most women have said that they now feel in control and that it has brought back some of their confidence. The main theme of responses centered around the notion of independence, and how the survivor bank account has allowed the users to not have to rely on other people for their financial security. Below are some of the comments we received from women who have accessed survivor bank account:

"I have never had my own bank account I am so grateful to have this I now feel I have some independence".

"Before I got the bank account I was having my money paid into a friend's account I always felt like I was putting on him. Now I have my own card I feel so much better it means so much to me".

"I have not had a bank account for ten years I am not running round anymore now going to different people asking if I can pay money into their account. I feel in control of my own finances now and the money is all mine I get to keep it all."

"Having my own Bank Account makes me feel like a normal person"



TRAINING

STOP THE TRAFFIK developed "train the trainer" sessions which were delivered to organisations in Greater Manchester that work to support people with no fixed address. These sessions were offered to all GM Housing first housing providers as well as members of the GM anti-slavery network & research partners. Greater Places were the only organisation to attend the train the trainer session, with most of the other organisations contacted choosing to attend smaller training sessions or alternative STOP THE TRAFFIK session the Power of 10.

The goal of the train the trainer sessions was to lengthen the impacts of the awareness training work we had done and to strengthen collaborative networks within the city. We had initially planned to deliver training across 10 sessions with different Manchester-based organisations, giving them the tools to run their own training sessions and provide feedback to us by the time of the project's end. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we took the decision to reduce the scope of this training program's cross-collaborative aims. Greater Places has since set up a training group within the organisation to facilitate further training.

The training we ran was broken into 2 sessions:

Session 1: We started the session with an introduction to modern slavery including a look at terminology and definitions, and a focus on the scope of human trafficking and modern slavery cases in the UK. We looked at the types of exploitation that are more likely to affect people experiencing homelessness, the casual factors of exploitation and who high-risk groups are. We then looked at the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), reporting pathways, and what to do if you come across an incident.

Session 2: Our second session focused on training participants to deliver the sessions to other people. This involved group activities where we helped participants to practice delivering different bits of the session, a section on answering human trafficking and modern slavery specific FAQs, and a detailed and thorough Q&A session with participants.



TRAINING: FEEDBACK

Following our training sessions, we reached out to participants and gathered feedback. You can find a selection of comments fed back to us below:

What would you do differently after receiving this training?

"Possibly refer to NRM for cuckooing cases."

"I work in elderly services and following this training I will present an overview of the training to my team tailored to things we are more likely to spot with our particular customer base. It was really interesting to have a case study with an older person as I think there is an assumption this is a younger person's issue."

"Now I understand more about the subject and the referral process and how to spot some of the signs."

"I am now more aware of the indicators to look for and how to confidently refer a case."

"Read more information on this subject"

"Share the information with my team and now I have a clearer understanding I will be able to recognise the signs."

What could be done differently next time?

"Less time spent on the figures and more focus on the latter part of the training to discuss examples and ways we can work in specific situations."

"Felt a bit rushed towards the end of the session as running out of time."

"I enjoyed the training & found it to be very relevant."



RECOMMENDATIONS



From the research, we identified fifteen recommendations divided into short, medium and long-term categories.

SHORT TERM (0-6 MONTHS)

Homelessness organisations to adopt financial inclusion and vulnerability schemes and proactively encourage their service users to take part. It can be difficult for people without a permanent residence to access banking services. This potentially raises the risk of exploitation because often the only option is to rely on others to help access their money. These 'friends' are often the same people who are intent on exploiting them. This prevention project **offers a real opportunity to remove a significant enabler to exploitation.**

Replicate financial inclusion schemes and promote them across communities. Not every banking business in the financial sector offers financial inclusion schemes. However, this is slowly changing. By publicising the successes and promoting the positive outcomes seen in Manchester, this could act as a real lever for wider take-up across the UK.

Some best practice for financial institutions would be:

- Providing additional time and private appointments for people with specific vulnerabilities.
- Having systems that allow people who have not the formal types of ID, or have previous fraud claims to still open accounts.
- Collaborate with specialist financial sector organisations such as Fair4All Finance.
- work alongside local and national NGOs to reach those individuals who will benefit most from access to financial services.
- Replicate financial inclusion and vulnerability schemes.
- Promote financial inclusion schemes across communities.

Provide staff working in the Street Engagement Hubs with training to help recognise exploitation within the homeless community. Many UK cities have set up support hubs (in Manchester Street Engagement Hubs) that offer critical services to vulnerable individuals visiting or living in city centres. These typically offer drug and alcohol services, domestic abuse support, homeless support, DWP, probation and other services. Staff often have no training or experience in recognising and supporting potential victims of modern slavery. This can result in potential victims missing out on bespoke support including accommodation and care. Upskilling staff to recognise the signs as well as knowing how to refer a potential victim into the national referral mechanism will complement those services already offered.

MEDIUM TERM (6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR)

Same day methadone scripting as standard. Clear escalation process when short term methadone scripting is unavailable or inaccessible. In the research, services flagged that some people experience longer than average periods of time to get access to methadone scripts. This can stall attempts to engage individuals who are in exploitative situations and contribute to the prolonging of their exploitation. Where this is an issue, the establishment of effective and appropriate escalation and resolution processes should be developed between support agencies and commissioned drug and alcohol providers.

Our research identified a delay in methadone scripting meant that a person would be unlikely to engage in the service or leave their exploitative situation. This caused a barrier to access to support. It is therefore recommended that when there is a delay in access to methadone scripting there should be effective pathways between support agencies and commissioned drug and alcohol providers to remediate as quickly as possible.

Training/awareness raising with rough sleeper workforce (e.g. via Rough Sleeper Initiative, Housing First and A Bed Every Night GM programmes) – Provide training on the signs, appropriate support & information sharing in cases where there has been exploitation. Create a consistent training programme that can be rolled out across the many support services working within Greater Manchester

Training/awareness raising with care leavers programmes – From the research findings, young people who have recently become homeless and those exiting local authority care were identified as the most likely to be targeted for the purposes of exploitation. Involved NGOS (e.g. Programme Challenger in Manchester) can work collaboratively with children's services and relevant providers/organisations to run awareness raising events and modern slavery training to augment existing services.



MEDIUM TERM (6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR)

Outreach services training on exploitation signs and processes -

Exploited individuals are less likely to seek out and take advantage of local authority provided support services. Outreach workers are key to helping overcome this issue. It is important for outreach workers to have a good understanding of exploitation signs and processes and significant outreach operations should be considered an essential part of a homeless support service's modern slavery prevention activities.

Look at options to develop language capacity for support services

services – Case workers and support workers with language skills significantly broaden the demographics of service users.

Manchester Action on Street Health has a Romanian case worker who has built up relationships with many Romanian sex workers in a way that has not been possible with sex workers of other nationalities. Support & Action for Women's Network in Oldham as well as Europia covering CoM has formed similar links to previously isolated people through a diversity of in-house language capabilities. Investment in these areas will broaden the demographics reached

Training/awareness raising with probation services – Individuals who have previously been involved with the criminal justice system are more likely to be exploited and exploit others. Respondents reported that much of this behaviour is developed in prison and can start as soon as custody ends with a placement in follow-on accommodation. Providing probation and accommodation staff with a better understanding of exploitation could provide an early intervention opportunity for targeted prevention work as well as identify potential victims.



LONG TERM (1+ YEAR)

THRIVE Framework for system change of emotional well-being support – Some mental health provision can be siloed and complex to navigate. This can result in those in need of support falling between the gaps. The THRIVE approach, which is currently being implemented in children and young people's services across Greater Manchester, offers a user-centred approach. They can access a range of support at the right time and place to suit their needs. Consideration should be given to ensuring that VCSE homelessness service providers are included and involved in implementing the THRIVE approach particularly to those users under 18. Involving these services within the system change process will upskill staff to better consider supporting individuals utilising the THRIVE principles and approach.

Recognising exploitation & trafficking risks within policy & strategy linked to temporary accommodation provision – Homeless accommodation provision, where unsupported, can be extremely dangerous places for vulnerable individuals resulting in exploitation. The risk can increase the longer an individual remains in that situation. The additional trauma, addiction issues and abuse further undermine their efforts to rebuild their capacity to live independently and increase their vulnerability to exploitation. In addition to exploitation, slow move-on times increase the number of individuals that end up in revolving door situations and add to the overall cost of support. Evidence of exploitation should be used as a factor in assessing the risk linked to a rapid rehousing model. The minimal use of temporary accommodation in un-supported settings such as BnBs, should be considered where possible.



LONG TERM (1+ YEAR)

Highlight benefits of family counselling to young people "At Risk" – To help prevent family breakdown, a key issue that results in many young people's initial homelessness, increased family counselling for young people can reduce the exploitation risk. Prioritisation of family counselling and mediation for young people at risk of homelessness was highlighted as a measure that could reduce risks of exploitation. The Young Persons's Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder programme could be used as a pilot in order to test the benefits of this approach.

Recognising exploitation & trafficking risks in policy & strategy around the accessibility of Women only services – Respondents highlighted the vulnerability many women experience accessing mixed-gender services. Women regularly meet exploitative individuals while attending appointments who they later begin a relationship with. The availability of women only services should be considered for the prevention of sexual exploitation of vulnerable women experiencing homelessness. Findings so far support developing the accessibility of women only spaces.

Transparency & Data-sharing between organisations that support people experiencing homelessness – Data sharing pathways need to be established (consent gathering, data protection etc...) that allow organisations to share information. This will increase the knowledge of up to date issues and methods to resolve and support individuals. Regular interaction between safeguarding agencies, police, health and NGOs to share and analyse information will create a much more rounded understanding of the issues and how best to address them.



A nighttime photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, a bridge spans a body of water, its reflection visible in the dark water. The background features several multi-story buildings with illuminated windows, creating a warm glow against the dark sky. The overall atmosphere is urban and serene.

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS ON THIS PROJECT

Bolton
at Home



cityhearts

GMCA
GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Cornerstone
Caritas Diocese of Salford



URBAN VILLAGE
MEDICAL PRACTICE

great
places
HOUSING GROUP

JI Justlife



GREATER MANCHESTER
WOMEN'S SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Inspiring Change Manchester



Mustard Tree



Salford
LOAVES & FISHES



URBAN
OUTREACH

Manchester Action on Street Health, Greater Manchester Women's Support Alliance, Bolton At Home, Great Places, Greater Manchester Police, Inspiring Change Manchester, The Sanctuary Trust, Support & Actions Women's Network, Lifeshare, Mustard Tree, Justlife, Europia, Cornerstone, Urban Village, Medical Practice, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, CRISIS: Project TILI, City Hearts, Urban Outreach, Loaves & Fishes, Street Support.