



**modern
slavery
helpline**

MODERN SLAVERY AND HOMELESSNESS

The following report is based on calls and online reports to Unseen's UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline, concerning modern slavery and homelessness between October 2016 and April 2019

08000 121 700 | www.modernslaveryhelpline.org | @MSHelpline

Unseen • Registered charity number 1127620 • Registered company number 06754171

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Recruitment	5
Type of Exploitation	6
Potential Victim Demographics	7
Regional Breakdown	9
Types of Callers	10
Importance of Collaboration	11
Conclusion	12
Indicators	12



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 2016 – April 2019



276 cases linking modern slavery and homelessness
(7% of the Helpline's total modern slavery cases)



690 calls and **32 webforms** for modern slavery cases



353 potential victims (PVs) of modern slavery indicated who also experienced homelessness (2.5% of total PVs indicated). Periods of homelessness were reported before, during or after exploitation or at multiple points.



**modern
slavery
helpline**

08000 121 700

Before



48 PVs experienced homelessness **before exploitation**

21 PVs recruited through **job offers/advertisements**



Poverty, substance abuse and immigration status were most common additional vulnerabilities



English victims were most common nationality (**10**) before exploitation occurred

During



86 PVs were reported as homeless **during exploitation**

Including **37 PVs** of **criminal exploitation** – most commonly **begging**



Romanian victims were most common nationality (**34**) during exploitation

After



234 PVs fell homeless **after exploitation**

Including **99 PVs** of **labour exploitation** (43%)



35 PVs of **sexual exploitation** (15%)



29 PVs of **domestic servitude** (13%)



Polish victims were most common nationality (**32**) following exploitation



6 PVs were recruited at **homeless shelters**

13 PVs were recruited at **train stations, parks or on the street**



The **most common callers** when concerned that someone currently homeless was suffering or had suffered exploitation were:

1	NGO/Charity	39
2	Police	33
3	Member of the Public	32



The **highest three regions** in which PVs were exploited were: Greater London (84 PVs); Avon and Somerset (26 PVs); Sussex (23 PVs)



268 Signposts and Referrals made for shelter and accommodation

186 of which were made for modern slavery cases

INTRODUCTION

Modern Slavery Helpline and Unseen

The Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre is a 24/7 helpline, open every day of the year. The Helpline is free to call, independent and confidential; callers need not provide their name or details if they prefer not to do so. On calls, Helpline Advisors ask strategic questions to gather information to make a risk assessment and form a case response, which may include emotional support, signposting, safety planning, or sending a referral to police, local authorities, or other NGOs.

The Helpline is operated by Unseen, an award-winning UK-wide national charity working towards a world without slavery. Unseen also runs safe houses for survivors of modern slavery, and collaborates across sectors to help prevent and protect against exploitation.

The purpose of this report is to show recorded links between modern slavery and homelessness/rough sleeping as reported to the Modern Slavery Helpline between October 2016 and April 2019. While homelessness and rough sleeping are two separate situations, the two distinctions are not always made clear through reports received by the Modern Slavery Helpline and so the statistics compiled in this report are a combination of both situations. Unless otherwise specified, the potential victims referred to in this report experienced homelessness before, during or after reported exploitation.

The number of potential modern slavery cases and potential victims indicated are based on information provided to the Helpline at the time of contact. The Helpline does not corroborate or seek to investigate the information provided.

As this report indicates, connections between modern slavery and homelessness/rough sleeping are seen across the UK. Only by ensuring everyone is aware of the indicators and understands their responsibility in safeguarding individuals, can we stop exploitation of the most vulnerable.

Over 350 Potential Victims of Modern Slavery Have Experienced Homelessness

Since launching in October 2016, there has been 353 individuals reported to have experienced both homelessness and exploitation (2.5% of total PVs for this period). Periods of homelessness were reported before, during or after exploitation or at multiple points.

- *14% (48 PVs) were homeless before exploitation
- *24% (86 PVs) were homeless during exploitation
- *66% (234 PVs) were homeless after exploitation

***These percentages do not add up to 100% as some individuals report being homeless during more than one stage of their exploitative experience.**

The Need for Collaboration

Frontline professionals working with homeless populations (including law enforcement officers, local authority personnel, and support workers within homeless charities and outreach services) need to be aware of the indicators of modern slavery; the advice and information available through the Modern Slavery Helpline; and support through the NRM, in order to better support this population with increased vulnerability to modern slavery.

RECRUITMENT

Potential exploiters target homelessness and other vulnerabilities at various locations and using different methods of recruitment.

Recruitment Locations

Two common locations of recruitment for people who experienced both homelessness and exploitation were:

1. **Public Areas (such as train stations, parks and on the street): 13**
2. **Homeless Shelters: 6**

Recruitment was also reported to occur in workplaces and on the internet, including through social media, while a foster home and a place of worship were also recorded as locations of recruitment.

Recruitment of Individuals Homeless Before Exploitation

For the 14% of PVs (48) being homeless prior to exploitation, job advertisements, or the offers of jobs were used to recruit 21 PVs. The second highest method through which homeless people were recruited was deception (including false promises or posing as a benefactor), which saw 14 PVs recruited. This was followed by coercion, which affected 6 PVs.

Where homelessness was a factor prior to exploitation, the highest additional vulnerabilities recorded were **poverty** (13 PVs); **substance abuse**, including drugs and/or alcohol (9 PVs); **immigration status** (5 PVs); **language barriers** (4 PVs).



TYPE OF EXPLOITATION

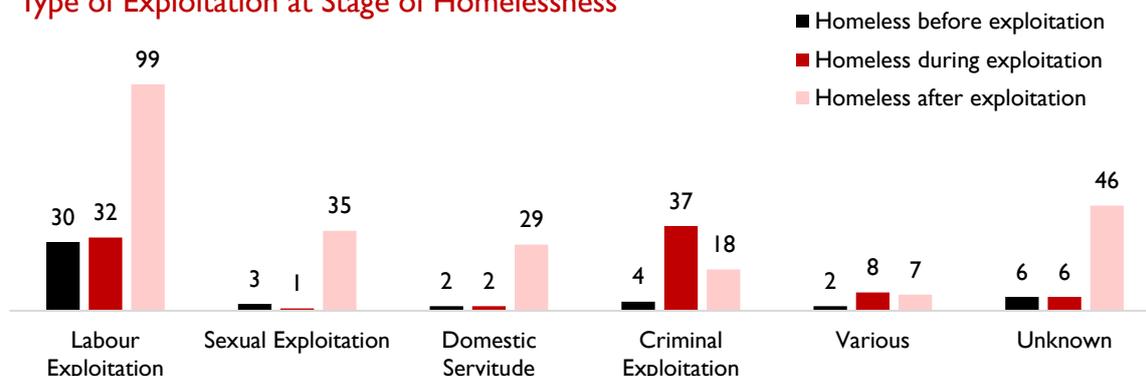
The most common type of exploitation where homelessness was a factor was labour, with 161 victims recorded. The majority (61%) of these were reported as homeless following exploitation (see table below) with 83% of female PVs (15). Men accounted for the highest number of PVs of labour exploitation (91%, 140 PVs), of which 83 were left homeless following exploitation. This was higher than the overall percentage of male victims of labour exploitation reported in the [2018 Helpline Annual Assessment](#), which indicated 53% male PVs of labour exploitation.

The highest three industries of labour exploitation when homelessness was a factor, were:

1. Construction: 35 PVs
2. Car Washes: 20 PVs
3. Hospitality: 10 PVs

PVs of domestic servitude were far more likely to be homeless *following* exploitation, 88% of PVs of domestic servitude (29) were homeless following exploitation (see table below). Over three-quarters of victims of domestic servitude were women: 76% (25 PVs).

Type of Exploitation at Stage of Homelessness



Similar to domestic servitude, 89% of PVs (35) of sexual exploitation were homeless after exploitation, while only 8% of PVs (three) were homeless before exploitation. Women accounted for the vast majority of victims of sexual exploitation (97%), which was a similarly high number to the percentage of female victims of sexual exploitation recorded in the [2018 Helpline Executive Summary](#) (89%), when homelessness was not necessarily a factor.

Criminal exploitation was the only form of modern slavery in which PVs were more likely to be homeless during exploitation (64%, 37 PVs). All 37 PVs were recorded to be victims of forced begging. The majority of female PVs who were homeless during exploitation were victims of criminal exploitation (69%). Interestingly, no women were recorded as being homeless prior to becoming victims of criminal exploitation, while nine female PVs were homeless during exploitation. Victims of criminal exploitation, such as forced begging, were predominantly men (55%, 32 PVs).

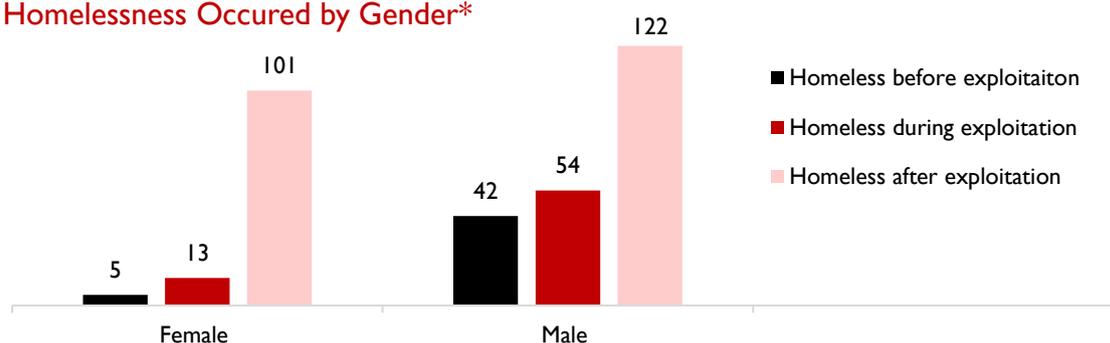
Exploitation Type by Gender and When Homelessness Occurred (PVs)*

	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
Sexual Exploitation				
Homeless before exploitation	2	1	0	3
Homeless during exploitation	1			1
Homeless after exploitation	35	0	0	35
Criminal Exploitation				
Homeless before exploitation	0	4	0	4
Homeless during exploitation	9	13	15	37
Homeless after exploitation	1	16	1	18
Domestic Servitude				
Homeless before exploitation	1	1	0	2
Homeless during exploitation	0	2	0	2
Homeless after exploitation	24	5	0	29
Labour Exploitation				
Homeless before exploitation	1	29	0	30
Homeless during exploitation	2	28	2	32
Homeless after exploitation	15	83	1	99

* In addition, there was a total of 17 PVs in various exploitation and 55 PVS of unknown exploitation.

POTENTIAL VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Homelessness Occured by Gender*



* There were additionally 28 PVs in total whose gender was unknown. No individuals identifying as transgender, non- binary or other gender were reported.

A far higher number of men than women were homeless prior to exploitation – 42 men compared to 5 women.

Overall, men accounted for 58% of PVs (205), while women comprised 34% (120 PVs) and there were 8% (28 PVs) of an unknown gender. These stats were similar, but not equivalent to the overall victim gender demographics recorded in the 2018 Helpline Annual Assessment, which saw 46% of total PVs being men, and 21% of PVs being women.

Similar to the victim demographics recorded in the 2018 Helpline Annual Assessment, there were more adults PVs recorded than minors, with 93% (327 PVs) being adults and only 3% (10 PVs) being minors, while the remaining number were of an unknown age. Contrastingly, the 2018 Assessment showed those aged between 18-24 years old as the most common age of PV. In terms of homelessness, 54 PVs were aged between 25-34 years old, representing the highest age bracket.

While Romania was the highest recorded nationality of PVs, no Romanian victims were reported to be homeless prior to exploitation. However, 34 were recorded as homeless during, and 26 homeless after exploitation, indicating that it was more common for Romanian nationals to be trafficked to the UK or move to the UK for the offer of work, only to subsequently find themselves homeless. England was the highest nationality recorded for PVs who were homeless before exploitation (10).

Case Study I

While in his home country of Romania, Pavel found out about a job online to work in the UK. The people who were offering employment – who would turn out to be exploiters – were part of an Albanian gang and had given Pavel false promises of cash-in-hand payments for his work which they would organise for him.

The exploiters paid for Pavel's travel and they also arranged his accommodation. When he arrived, Pavel saw the accommodation provided was of poor condition and he would have to sleep on the floor. Furthermore, it was on the work site, which was a car wash.

Although promised payment, Pavel was not compensated for his work and he was even threatened with violence by the exploiters. His ID documents and passport were confiscated as a means of stopping him leaving.

After a week, the threats of physical violence became a reality and Pavel was assaulted with a piece of metal by one of the gang members. Pavel felt he had no choice but to escape from the situation. However, because he did not have any documents and little money, he ended up sleeping rough. At this point, a support worker from a local outreach service met Pavel on the street and called the Helpline for assistance. Through a translator, a Helpline Advisor spoke to Pavel and after confirming there were indicators of modern slavery, drafted a referral which was sent to the police for them to investigate where Pavel was working and to support Pavel with entry into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – the government's system for identifying and supporting potential victims of slavery.

Pavel was successfully entered into the NRM and was deemed eligible for support and services.

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

The Modern Slavery Helpline received reports of PVs who had also been homeless from every UK country. The highest number was in London, within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police Service (24%, 84 PVs).

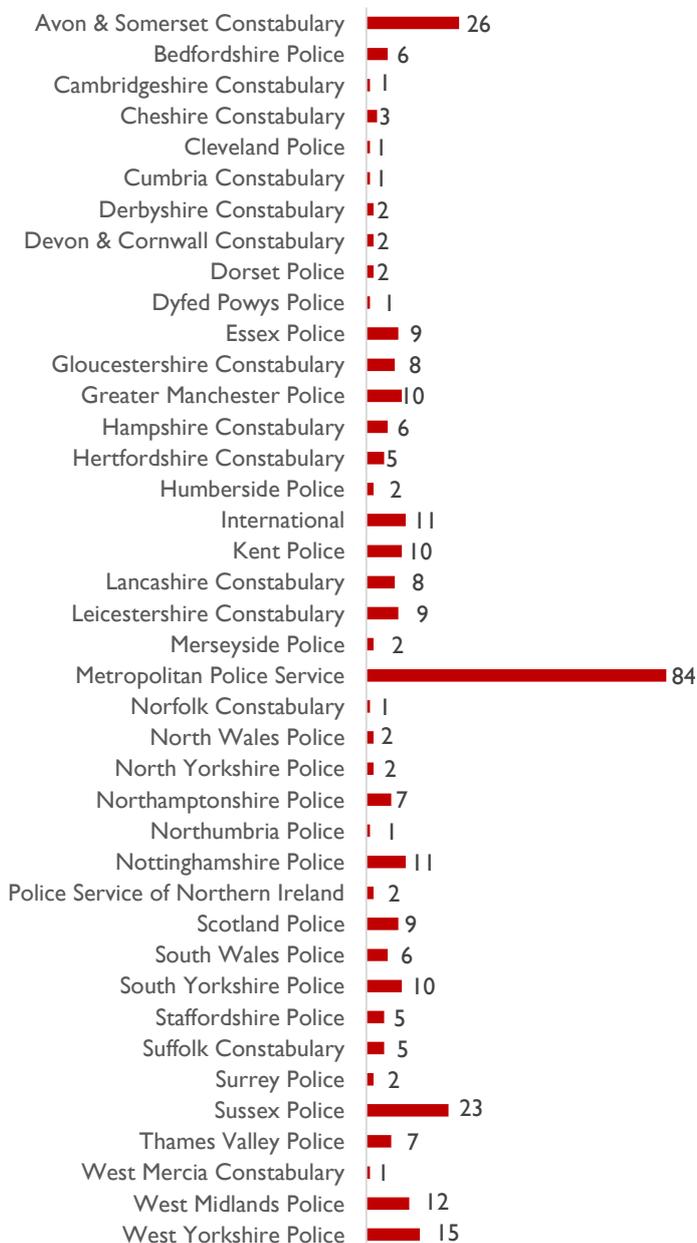
One PV may be counted in two regions, as they may have been exploited across more than one police force area.

There is a strong correlation between where PVs were recorded to be homeless and the location where exploitation was taking place. However, the numbers do not always match, which could be due to exploiters recruiting a homeless individual and trafficking them to another region, or a PV escaping from a situation and moving to a different region for safety or other reasons.

This may be due to the fact that more people may be homeless in a particular region, and therefore more likely to be recruited/have been recruited by an exploiter. The data recorded by the Helpline has correlations to 2017 data released by [Homeless Link](#) which shows the highest ten local authority regions for estimated numbers of rough sleepers, including within London (Metropolitan Police Service, Brighton (Sussex Police), Manchester (Greater Manchester Police) and Bristol (Avon & Somerset Constabulary).

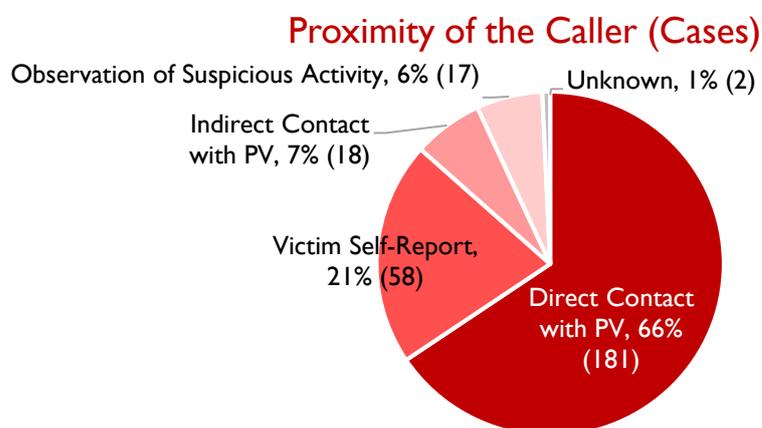
Reports to the Helpline also indicated 11 PVs who were exploited overseas. For cases outside the UK, the Helpline may be able to signpost a PV to the relevant services in that country.

Potential Victims Indicated by Location of Exploitation (by Police Force Region)



TYPES OF CALLERS

One of the potential difficulties of victims self-reporting is that due to their situation, whether being homeless, a victim of modern slavery, or possibly both, they may not be able to contact the Helpline. Surprisingly, victims themselves contacted the Helpline in 21% of cases, compared to 11% of total modern slavery cases raised in 2018.



The three most common type of caller reporting a concern or seeking help, support and advice when the PV was homeless at the time of the call, were:

1	NGO/Charity	39
2	Police	33
3	Member of the Public	32

Between October 2016 – April 2019, the Helpline made 268 referrals and signposts for housing and accommodation on all types of cases. For modern slavery cases, 186 referrals and signposts were made for housing and accommodation.

Case Study 2

Michal and Jan were homeless when through a friend they were offered work and accommodation by another man, who was of the same Eastern European nationality, and was willing to pay them £70 a day. Eager to take the opportunity of shelter and payment, they accepted.

However, they were told that they would need to pay the man £20 a day for the accommodation and were only paid £10 each every few days for a series of jobs, such as construction and maintenance, across the UK which left them in a situation of debt bondage, meaning that they owed the man who was exploiting them, more than they were being paid. In addition, the man took their IDs and out of desperation, Michal and Jan went back to living on the street.

It was at this point that a support worker from a homeless charity encountered Michal and Jan and called the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice. The Helpline Advisor informed the support worker about the National Referral Mechanism and also the Helpline’s translation services.

When Michal and Jan called the Helpline and spoke to an Advisor through use of a translator, the Helpline confirmed that there were indications of modern slavery and in turn, Michal and Jan decided that they did want to receive support through the NRM and also wanted police to investigate the actions of the man who had exploited them. The Helpline Advisor sent a written referral to the relevant police force for assistance in entering the victims into the NRM, and requested them to conduct an investigation into the potential crimes committed.

IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

The Modern Slavery Helpline works with frontline staff including law enforcement officers, local authority personnel and support workers within homeless charities across the UK to ensure staff understand the signs of modern slavery, where it takes place and how to recognise a victim. The Helpline also send referrals to police to support PVs with entry into the NRM and to conduct investigations into potential crimes reported. The Helpline made 186 referrals and signposts for modern slavery cases involving homelessness/rough sleeping. Across all types of cases, Helpline Advisors signposted callers to appropriate services such as accommodation and shelter in 268 cases where homelessness was a factor.

Frontline support workers are in a key position to note if someone who is homeless disappears, or if someone is acting suspiciously around homeless people. It is important that they are aware of the dangers of modern slavery and where to report concerns and get advice (see Indicators on page 12).

Multi-language materials including the Helpline number are available to distribute or post in shelters, soup kitchens or areas where homeless PVs may attend. Visibility of the Helpline number offers a greater opportunity for people to get free and confidential support and advice through speaking to trained advisors.

One example of the innovative multi-agency collaboration was evident through a [campaign](#) in Lancashire in February 2019. Lancashire Police, working alongside outreach teams and health representatives, supported the homeless community across the county by highlighting how they could be vulnerable to exploitation, how to spot the signs of modern slavery and where to get help. One strategic means of signposting was to provide handwarmers (pictured) to homeless people which had the Modern Slavery Helpline number printed on them – ensuring homeless people, rough sleepers and service providers knew who to call for concerns regarding modern slavery.



CONCLUSION

The 353 PVs reported to the Helpline where homelessness was a factor supports the assertion that links do exist between modern slavery and homelessness. The data published in this report is intended to be used to raise awareness of these links, promote collaboration and support effective identification of those in, or at risk of, exploitation.

An increased effort to raise awareness of the dangers of modern slavery is necessary to prevent further vulnerable people from being exploited in this way and/or to help individuals previously exploited and now without accommodation to find services. It is vital that frontline workers, such as police officers and outreach workers are aware of the potential for exploiters to recruit homeless people on the street, in shelters and at services such as soup kitchens. By having knowledge of the Modern Slavery Helpline as a central point of contact for support and advice, staff can call to get victims help and assistance into support services such as the NRM.

Indicators

<p>Recruitment Methods</p>	<p>Homeless people and rough sleepers might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted at night shelters, day centres, soup kitchens, hostels or on the street • Befriended with alcohol, drugs, tobacco or money • Promised work, food or shelter
<p>Where Work is Offered</p>	<p>Agriculture, Construction, Car Washes, Paving, Cleaning, Hospitality and more</p>
<p>Work Conditions Which May Indicate Exploitation</p>	<p>Work conditions, which indicate that exploitation is taking place, may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no payment • No days off and long working hours • No contract • Frequent travelling between locations • Being controlled and prevented from leaving through threats, violence and intimidation
<p>Other Indications of Modern Slavery</p>	<p>Victims may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be expected to pay their employer for food and shelter • Be living in squalid conditions in a house or caravan • Appear to be poorly dressed, malnourished or fearful • Have had their ID/passport/bank cards taken to control their benefits/money • Be monitored and not allowed to freely communicate with friends, family or loved ones.

Disclaimer: This report represents a summary of the contacts received into the UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre regarding the links between modern slavery and homelessness/rough sleeping between 10 October 2016 and 30 April 2019. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of the correlation between modern slavery and homelessness/rough sleeping. The number of potential modern slavery cases and potential victims indicated are based on the information provided to the Helpline at the time of contact. The Helpline does not corroborate or seek to prove the information provided.