

Sexual Exploitation 7 Minute Briefing



1

What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term covering human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Modern slavery occurs when someone is forced or coerced to do something, and another person gains from this. The most common ways people are exploited are through forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and criminal exploitation.

2

What is Sexual Exploitation?

When someone is pressured, controlled, coerced, or manipulated into providing sexual acts for someone else's benefit. It could be perpetrated through criminal groups, familial or intimate relationships or other relationships with power imbalances. Anyone under the age of 18 cannot consent to any form of sexual exchange. This would be regarded as child sexual exploitation and requires a child safeguarding response.

3

What are the signs of sexual exploitation?

- Providing sexual services through force/without consent
- Having no control over who they have sex with, the services offered, when they work, or how much money they make/keep
- Not having their passport or documents
- Having movements/interactions controlled
- Being given substances by exploiters
- Not accessing health services

4

Is everyone in the sex industry a victim of modern slavery?

No they are not. There are different levels of choice, consent and control within the sex industry, and these factors determine whether a situation is voluntary, exploitative, or meets the threshold for being seen as modern slavery.

7

Specialist Organisations*:

SASH provide support for all sex workers
info@sashlondon.org

Tamar support women in Westminster
contact@tamarteam.org

Rahab support women in RBKC
referrals@rahabuk.com

Sexual Health Clinics for Sex Workers:

John Hunter Clinic at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Jefferiss Wing at St Mary's Hospital, 56 Dean Street.

6

How should I respond?

Someone being exploited should not feel blamed or that they are in trouble. Often long-term trauma-informed support is required to build trust (refer to agencies in box 7)*.

Ensure immediate safety, listen, believe and respect an individual's choices.

If there is risk of serious harm the police should be contacted as sexual exploitation is a crime.

5

What should I consider if I identify a victim of sexual exploitation?

People may not feel able to leave their situation, and may not recognise what is happening to them as exploitation. Use trauma-informed language and be aware of power imbalances. Be mindful that insecure immigration status can increase fear, dependency, and barriers to seeking help.