

MODERN SLAVERY TOOLBOX TALK

Slavery was abolished but never eradicated. The number of people identified as victims of modern slavery has been rising year on year with over 10,000 people referred to authorities in 2019. The real number of people trapped in slavery is estimated to be much higher.

Modern slavery is the illegal exploitation of people (of any nationality, gender or age) for personal or commercial gain. It can include:

- **Labour exploitation:** victims are forced to work with little or no pay and may suffer poor working conditions, excessive working hours or wage deductions, or be housed in squalid accommodation.
- **Domestic servitude:** victims are forced to work (normally in private homes) subject to ill treatment, humiliation and excessive working hours with little or no pay.
- **Sexual & criminal exploitation:** victims are forced into prostitution or forced to commit crimes.

It is estimated that there is a large number of people within modern slavery in the UK construction industry. Victims may be subject to violence and under the control of gang-masters.

Modern Slavery Victims in Construction

The risks from modern slavery can occur anywhere in our operations. The risk varies from failure to pay minimum wage in the UK to the use of bonded or child labour in our extended supply chains.

While it may be unlikely large companies are directly employing trafficked people, contractors and sub-contractors (or the agencies supplying labour) could find themselves targeted by unscrupulous gang-masters who may be offering a ready supply of labour at knocked down rates.

Anyone can become a victim of modern slavery. However, victims of this crime are often Eastern European men who are promised a job in the UK and then forced by traffickers to work as labourers or in factories for little or no money. Through threat, violence or coercion they may be forced to live in squalid accommodation and have their identity documents taken from them.

The Warning Signs

Indications of modern slavery can be difficult to spot. Some of the things to look out for include:

- Workers who don't have written employment contracts
- Workers who have had to pay fees to obtain work
- Workers who can't prove that they are legally entitled to work in the UK
- A large number of people listed as living at the same address
- Agencies charging suspiciously low rates against standard industry pricing
- Workers who seem to have few personal possessions or often wear the same clothes

- Workers who appear frightened or reluctant to talk to others
- Workers who are dropped off or collected for work by the same person regularly, either very early or very late at night
- Worker showing signs of physical abuse and may appear malnourished or unkempt

How To Report A Concern

If you're concerned that someone who is working on a site or at a place of work could be a victim of modern slavery, you must report it to our HR Department via HR@nwhgroup.co.uk or call 03333 20 4000. Alternatively, call the national helpline numbers below (any language):

- Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700 (24 hours)
- GLAA: 0800 432 0804 (9am-5pm)

If you are worried that the individual is in immediate danger, phone 999.