

Modern slavery is a hidden crime, and its victims may be especially isolated during the coronavirus outbreak. However, help and support are available for its victims.

WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY?

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and human trafficking. Traffickers prey on the vulnerable, and those who are alone or lack strong support networks.



The 'Modern Slavery Wheel' illustrates the main types of Modern Slavery. It includes the key signs to look out for if you believe someone may be a victim. You can find it here: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of%20nursing/documents/publications/2018/may/pdf-006745.pdf>

MODERN SLAVERY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the pandemic, criminal gangs may exploit people's vulnerabilities, such as sudden unemployment or loss of earnings, by drawing them in to Modern Slavery.

Victims who are living in secure accommodation may be feeling particularly anxious and lonely, as a result of social distancing. Some of them may feel so desperate that they decide that life will be better if they return to the people who were exploiting them.

SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

Adults

Adult victims can access a range of support across the UK if they give their consent to enter the National Referral Mechanism (see below).

Children

Support for child victims of Modern Slavery is provided through Local Authorities. Any potential child victim must be referred to local children's services urgently, and a referral made to the NRM, once the child is safeguarded.



The government's statutory guidance on the Modern Slavery Act (2015) gives full details of the support available and how it can be accessed: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875281/March_2020_Statutory_Guidance_under_the_Modern_Slavery_Ac_2015.pdf

THE NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

The NRM helps to identify victims of modern slavery, and refers them to the organisations that can help them. Victims receive safe and secure accommodation, financial support, and physical and psychological medical care.

Healthcare staff cannot refer a person to the NRM directly; they should contact a First Responder organisation (such as the police), or the Modern Slavery Helpline (see below).

To find out more about the NRM see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>



HOW TO GET HELP

If you, or someone you know, is in immediate danger, you should call 999 and ask for the police.

If you are being trafficked, or suspect someone you know is being trafficked, call the 24 hour **Modern Slavery Helpline** on **08000 121 700**. The Helpline's trained Advisors can support you to access services that can help you.

More information is available here: <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org>

Doctors of the World have produced clear and straightforward advice on how to stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic. It is available in 45 languages, here: <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#>



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