



THE PASSAGE MODERN SLAVERY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

From April 2020 to March 2021



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Headlines

34 people were supported by The Passage Modern Slavery Service between April 2020 and March 2021, down from 38 in the previous year.

- **28 people were identified** as potential victims of modern slavery.
- **1 confirmed victim** also requested our support.
- **5 people identified in previous years** were still receiving our advocacy services.

- **22 males and 12 females**
- **1 British national** was supported, down from 7 in the previous year.
- **20 EEA nationals** were supported, up from 18 in the previous year.
- **13 Rest of the World nationals** were supported, the same as in the previous year.
- **28** had no recourse to public funds, up from 24 in the previous year.
- The predominant form of exploitation was forced labour/labour exploitation.

- **18 Multi-Agency Case Conferences (MACC)** were held with Westminster City Council to provide immediate support.
- **11 people** received positive reasonable grounds decision and entered the National Referral Mechanism (NRM - government system to identify and support victims of modern slavery).
- **1** received negative reasonable grounds decision.
- **1** received positive conclusive grounds decision and is receiving government move-on support.
- **13** refused to enter the NRM.
- **1** gained permanent social housing.
- **1** gained legal employment and housing linked (but not bonded) to the work.
- **1** person gained temporary social housing.

Executive Summary

From the 1st of April 2020 to the 31st of March 2021, The Passage Modern Slavery Service supported in total 34 people. The support is provided before people enter the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), while they are in the NRM (mainly advocacy and welfare checks) and after they have been in the NRM (housing, employment, education, immigration status). When a potential victim sleeping rough is identified, they are taken off of the streets that same day and are given some time to decide if they want to enter the NRM and receive government support or if they do not want to enter the NRM and receive general homelessness services (which includes reconnection or assisted voluntary return).

The strategic partnerships in place with Westminster City Council (WCC) were essential to the sustainability of the service. Working in close collaboration with the Council has proved to be fruitful regarding prevention of modern slavery and protection of victims.

Internal referrals are being redefined so that better harmonised support is provided in different areas. For instance, the Modern Slavery Service aims at supporting applications to pre-EU settled status to all EEA nationals as soon as possible, preferably before the person enters the NRM and is placed in a safe house.

At strategic level, the Modern Slavery Service intends to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders through its Advisory Group to reach agencies at national and international levels.

The role of the Modern Slavery Navigator is crucial for sustained trauma-informed support. Therefore, having secured further funding for the Navigator project, we will work with MHCLG and WCC to look at how this model can be shared with other local authorities and providers to better address the issue of homelessness and modern slavery.

We will also work with the Home Office Modern Slavery Unit to make changes to the NRM referral form to ensure that homelessness (and the type of homelessness) is recorded and captured, to enable further data gathering in respect of the link between homelessness and modern slavery. This information can then be used to better understand the impact of homelessness on survivors' physical and mental health, addictions, vulnerability to exploitation and re-exploitation, and their difficulty to navigate support systems.

Emerging evidence suggests that Covid-19 indirectly created an opportunity for criminals to aggressively target those supported in the Everyone In London hotels, for exploitative work. National research should be undertaken to further explore the increasingly clear links between modern slavery and homelessness; building on the evidence of the increasing number of victims who are coming forward for support and highlighting their experiences to support proactive identification and equally, learning from those experiences to address gaps in the current systems.

We will also continue to raise concerns and work with government with regard to the new immigration rules and the danger of these being exploited by criminals to keep those vulnerable and at risk engaged in modern slavery.

We will explore the need for a Homelessness and Modern Slavery National Advice Hub to be established and also explore the links between modern slavery and homelessness at an international level and share our learning in this area.

Finally, we will publish (via The Passage website) a tool kit for other organisations who wish to create their own modern slavery service and work with St Mary’s University Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse, to make training more available.

The Passage would like to thank London Housing Foundation, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and Westminster City Council for their support with this project.

Data

The agencies that referred people to The Passage Modern Slavery Service can be seen in the table below:

| | |
|---|----|
| The Passage Day Centre | 14 |
| The Passage Community Intervention Team | 4 |
| Eastern European Resource Centre | 4 |
| The Passage Housing Solutions | 3 |
| The Passage Immigration Solicitor | 2 |
| Westminster Council | 2 |
| St Mungo’s | 2 |
| Passage House | 1 |
| Migrants Organise | 1 |
| St Thomas Hospital | 1 |

Table 1: Referrals to the Modern Slavery Service by agency (2020/2021)

In 2020/2021, out of 34 service users, 15 (44%) accepted to be referred into the NRM while 13 (38%) refused to be referred into the NRM. 2 (6%) had previously been in the NRM and are now confirmed victims of modern slavery, and 4 (12%) were supported while they were in the NRM.

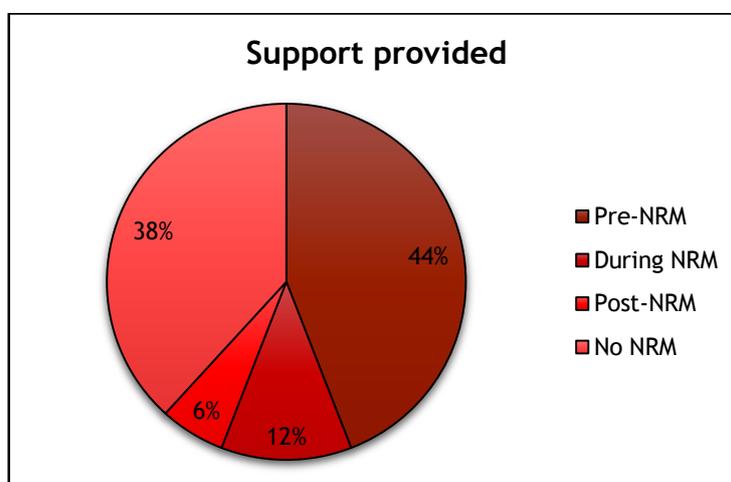


Figure 1: Support provided (2020/2021)

Pre-NRM support

Out of 15 people who accepted to enter the NRM:

- 11 received positive reasonable grounds decision, out of which 7 are receiving government support in a safe house and 4 are receiving outreach government support.
- 1 person who received positive reasonable grounds decision was also supported by The Passage to gain employment.
- 1 received negative grounds decision but is still supported by The Passage.
- 1 was placed in a non-governmental safe house before entering the NRM.
- 1 disengaged.
- 1 was already supported by another charity.

The First Responders who worked with The Passage were Westminster Council Rough Sleepers Team (6 referrals) and Adult Social Care (4 referrals), with whom The Passage has a joint working protocol to provide immediate relief to victims of modern slavery. The Met Police and the Salvation Army also worked as First Responders in two cases. The following table shows how many referrals were made by each agency.

| | |
|---|---|
| Westminster Council Rough Sleepers Team | 6 |
| Westminster Council Adult Social Care | 4 |
| Met Police | 1 |
| The Salvation Army | 1 |

Table 2: Referrals to the NRM by First Responders (2020/2021)

During NRM support

- 1 received positive conclusive grounds decision and is receiving government move-on support
- 1 disengaged from the NRM and the Modern Slavery Service helped the service user gaining temporary social housing.
- 1 is still in a government-funded safe house. The Modern Slavery Service is supporting the service user's solicitors.
- 1 disengaged from the NRM and then disengaged from The Passage support.

Post-NRM support

- 1 disengaged from our services
- 1 gained permanent social housing

No NRM

Out of the 13 people who refused to enter NRM:

- 4 disengaged from The Passage services.
- 5 were assisted with voluntary return.
- 1 financed their return to the country of origin.
- 1 was referred to an external agency.
- 2 received other homelessness services within The Passage.

Case study

Valerie is from West Africa. She came to the UK with her uncle, his wife and their two children with a promise of a good job and the chance to go to school; Valerie dreamed of being a nurse. But at the house, she was forced to clean the home and look after the children 24/7. She cooked all meals, shared a bedroom with the 2 children so she could be always available to take care of them. She would eat the family leftovers in the kitchen once all her duties were done. When she asked about studying, she was told that they couldn't afford to send her to school. She was never paid. She felt trapped and had no independence.

She eventually left the house and got a casual job in a hairdressers while staying with friends, but when her visa expired. She lost her job. She became destitute and homeless, sofa surfing where she could.

Valerie had never heard of modern slavery, nor did she realise that this is what had happened to her until she was directed to The Passage by a man that had used our services before. When she was assessed at The Passage Day Centre, it was clear that she was a survivor of domestic servitude and was referred to The Passage Modern Slavery Service. She was placed in a hotel for respite and given food, toiletries and clothing provisions. She was supported to see the homeless health team at The Passage and was referred to a sexual health clinic as she had been sexually abused. The Modern Slavery Navigator held a MACC, an NRM referral was submitted and Valerie received positive reasonable grounds decision. Valerie was anxious about moving out of London to a government-funded safe house. The Modern Slavery Navigator successfully advocated with The Salvation Army and a safe place was found in the city. Valerie now has an immigration solicitor. She has been going for walks and doing some knitting; she has made a baby's blanket. She has started college and is doing an English GCSE so she can start a nursing course.

Demographics

Like last year, the majority of people supported by the Modern Slavery Service were male: 22 males (65%) and 12 females (35%). In the previous year we supported 24 males (63%) 13 females (34%) and 1 transgender (3%).

The age for males varied between 19 and 57 years' old; and for females between 18 and 55 years' old.

26 people (76%) had no recourse to public funds. Of those entitled to benefits, only 1 person had European Settled Status and 1 person had indefinite leave to remain. 2 people had discretionary leave to remain. The other 4 were British and Irish nationals or had a British passport.

Region breakdown

During the last financial year, 1 British national, 20 EEA nationals and 13 Rest of the World nationals were supported by the service. When compared to last year, this represents a decrease of 86% of British nationals, an increase of 11% of EEA nationals and roughly the same percentage of the Rest of the World nationals. This may be due to the fact that British rough sleepers were given priority for temporary accommodation during Covid 19 lockdowns and thus are less likely to be identified by front-line support organisations.

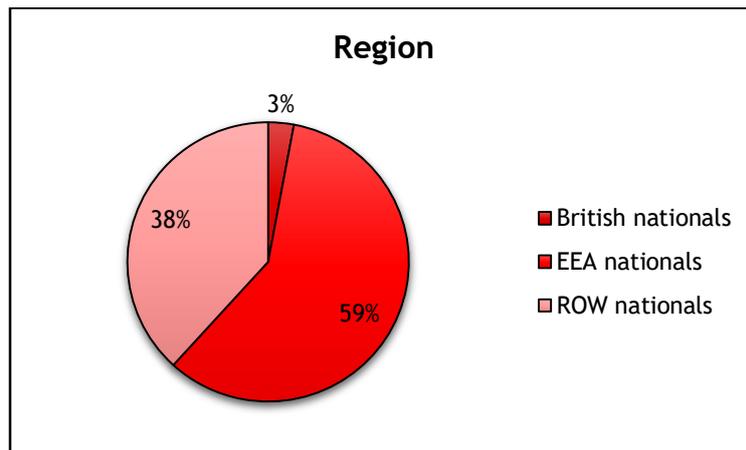


Figure 2: Region breakdown (2020/2021)

Nationalities

The two predominant countries of origin were Poland (9) and Romania (6), followed by Ireland (2) and Nigeria (2). The other nationalities include Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Eritrea, Jamaica, Philippines, Moldova, Norway, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

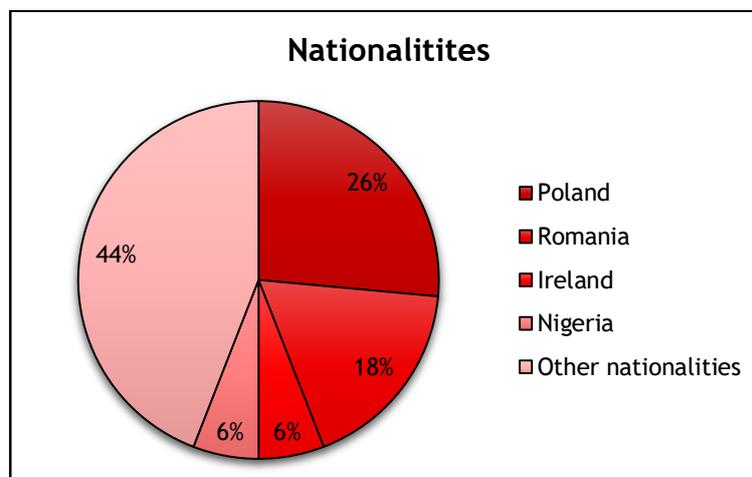


Figure 3: Nationalities (2020/2021)

Forms of exploitation

Reported forms of exploitation included labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced marriage, forced criminality and historic child slavery for domestic servitude. Some cases reported more than one form of exploitation. Like last year, the predominant form of exploitation is labour.

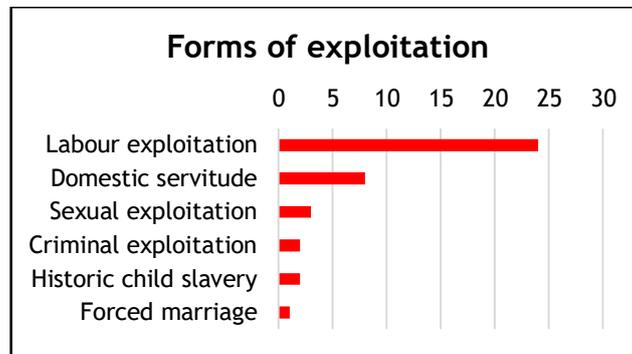


Figure 4: Reported forms of exploitation (2020/2021)

Location of recruitment and exploitation

23 people (68%) were recruited (generally by deception) in foreign countries while 11 people (32 %) were deceived or coerced into exploitation in the UK. The locations of exploitation were mainly England (73%) though 5 people (15%) were exploited only in foreign countries. Some people were exploited in various countries including in the UK.

Housing

At the time of referral to the Modern Slavery Service, all people were homeless. 20 (59%) were rough sleepers, 7 (21%) were in Westminster Covid temporary accommodation, 3 (9%) were sofa surfing. The others were staying at a SWEP hotel (1), at Passage House (1), in a hospital (1) and with friends (1).

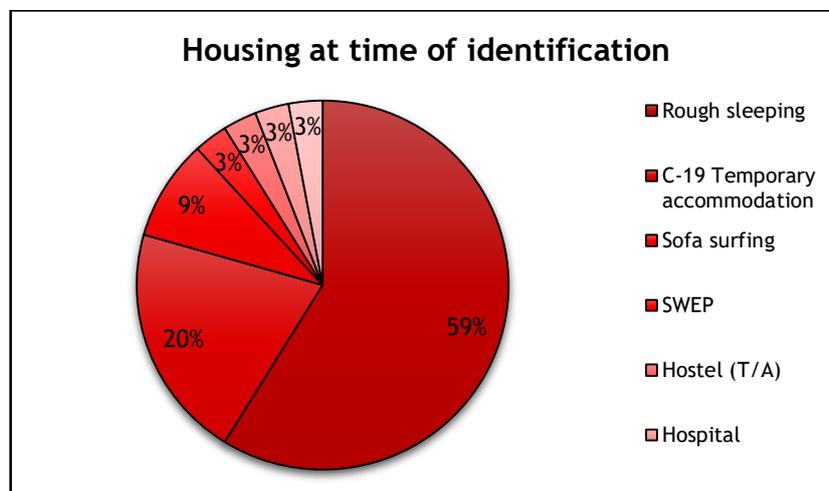


Figure 5: Housing status at time of referral to the Modern Slavery Service (2020/2021)

The Passage, in partnership with Westminster City Council Rough Sleeping Team, provided emergency accommodation to all but 5 people who preferred to stay with friends. 22 people who accepted emergency accommodation were placed in hotels and 7 were placed in hostels following the Mental Health pathway. In the previous year, the majority of people were placed in hostels and night shelters but this was impossible during the Covid outbreaks.

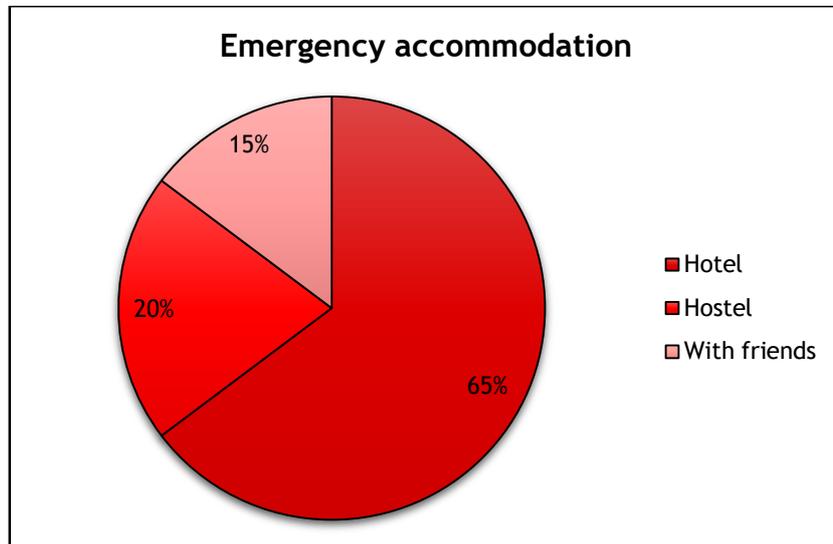


Figure 6: Emergency accommodation (2020/2021)

After receiving our support, 11 people (32%) were placed in safe houses; 4 (12%) were placed in hostels; 2 (6%) are still in hotels; 6 (18%) were supported to go back to their countries of origin safely; 1 person gained legal employment and is living with their employers; 1 person gained temporary social accommodation closer to their family and 1 person gained permanent social housing. 8 people (23%) have unknown housing status because they disengaged from The Passage services.

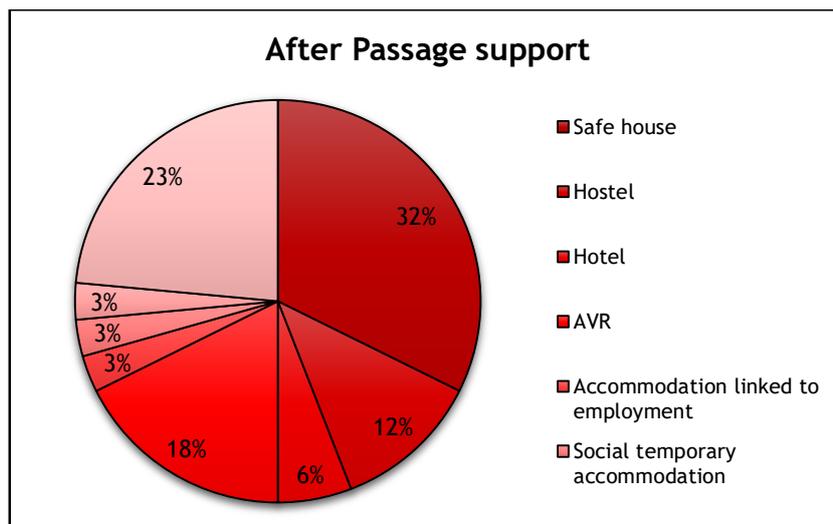


Figure 7: Housing after The Passage support (2020/2021)

One can therefore conclude that overall, The Passage Modern Slavery Service has achieved 77% of positive outcomes and therefore has a clear positive impact on our service users.

Traffickers, exploiters and methods of recruitment

Alleged traffickers and exploiters are originals from different countries, including Romania, Poland, Columbia, Nigeria, Kosovo, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt and Qatar. Note that many people refuse to talk about their exploiters. Therefore this information is incomplete.

This last year, we observed an increase in recruitment through fake job agencies and deception via Facebook and Tinder. We have also been informed of rough sleepers working for traffickers who recruit other rough sleepers at Covid hotels. Other methods of recruitment include by “a friend of a friend”, by relatives, offered a job in the streets while sleeping rough and coercion.

17 people (50%) presented with mental health problems and complex trauma. In many cases it is difficult to understand if the person was deceived due to previous mental health vulnerabilities or if it is a consequence of exploitation.

Emerging trends

Last year we saw an increase of EEA nationals identified as potential victims of modern slavery and a decrease of UK nationals. EEA nationals who are homeless are still coming over to the UK with hopes of a better life. There is a general concern that they will soon find themselves trapped without immigration status, which will enable traffickers and exploiters to better control them. Victims might also be more reluctant to come forward due to current immigration policies.

Perpetrators appear to quickly adapt to their new environments (i.e. Covid 19 and Brexit). There is anecdotal evidence showing that recruiters are aware of new places where their victims might stay (for instance, Covid hotels).

We have also seen an increase of cases of domestic servitude. This might be linked to successful prevention campaign at tri-borough level.

Recommendations

- The role of the Modern Slavery Navigator is crucial for sustained trauma-informed support. Therefore, having secured further funding for the Navigator project, work with MHCLG and WCC to look at how this model can be shared with other local authorities and providers to better address the issue of homelessness and modern slavery.
- Work with the Home Office Modern Slavery Unit to make changes to the NRM referral form to ensure that homelessness (and the type of homelessness) is recorded and captured, to enable further data gathering in respect of the link between homelessness and modern slavery. This information can then be used to better understand the impact of homelessness on survivors' physical and mental health, addictions, vulnerability to exploitation and re-exploitation, and their difficulty to navigate support systems.
- Emerging evidence suggests that Covid-19 indirectly created an opportunity for criminals to aggressively target those supported in the Everyone In London hotels, for exploitative work. National research should be undertaken to further explore the increasingly clear links between modern slavery and homelessness; building on the evidence of the increasing number of victims who are coming forward for support and highlighting their experiences to support proactive identification and equally, learning from those experiences to address gaps in the current systems.
- Continue to raise concerns and work with government with regard to the new immigration rules and the danger of these being exploited by criminals to keep those vulnerable and at risk engaged in modern slavery.
- Explore the need for a Homelessness and Modern Slavery National Advice Hub to be established.
- Explore the links between modern slavery and homelessness at an international level and share our learning in this area.
- Publish (via The Passage website) a tool kit for other organisations who wish to create their own modern slavery service and work with St Mary's University Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse, to make training more available.

Quote from a survivor

[The Passage staff] offered me all necessary initial support, making sure I received the best for my wellbeing. They offered me clothes and food, even help with all necessary documents to organise my situation here in England. They booked a bedroom where I could stay until all referrals and documents were produced. Thanks to The Passage team, that is done now and I can be placed in a safe house where I will receive government support. [...] They were so good to me, and still are. They changed the course of my life, of my story and that is very important for me as no one has ever done what they did, and still do for me. [...] The Passage gave me an opportunity for a better life, a life worth living. Thank you all so much: God bless you.