Modern Slavery Service

Five year report

Explore our five-year report of milestones in work against modern slavery, featuring our Modern Slavery Service outcomes, advocacy, educational initiatives, community engagement efforts and international collaborations.

The Passage

Everyone deserves a place to call home

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the users of the Modern Slavery Service. We are deeply honoured by the trust you have placed in us, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to uphold that trust as we work together towards a brighter future. Your resilience and strength continue to inspire us all.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Bruno Batista for generously sharing his inspirational speech from March 2024, which is featured in this report.

Our appreciation extends to Robyn Phillips, Director of Operations at Human Trafficking Foundation, and Charlotte Jamieson, Modern Slavery and Exploitation Coordinator for Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, for their valuable time and peer review.

We are extremely thankful to our funders, namely, London Housing Foundation and Westminster City Council.

We are deeply thankful to the Modern Slavery Service Advisory Group: Westminster City Council, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Office, Human Trafficking Foundation, Metropolitan Police Service, Local Government Association, Homeless Link, Greater London Authority and British Transport Police.

Thanks to Julie Etchingham, for kindly hosting and facilitating the launch of our Online Toolkit.

We extend our gratitude to Saloni Sethi, Melissa Paquette, David Carroll and Dermot Murphy for their support with our international research. We are also thankful to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office.

Lastly, we acknowledge with much appreciation all other organisations and individuals who have supported The Passage Modern Slavery Service over the years.

Foreword

This report details the work The Passage has undertaken over the past few years, both operationally and strategically. We have collaborated with numerous organisations, working domestically and internationally on the intersection between homelessness, modern slavery and human trafficking.

In 2017, The Passage was the first organisation to identify the links between homelessness and modern slavery. Since then, our efforts have expanded to include pioneering services on the ground, strategic collaborations with other organisations and government bodies to drive systemic change, and the production of extensive resources for professionals in the homelessness and modern slavery sectors.

We have also provided training and guidance. Most recently, our work has involved investigating and confirming the link between homelessness and human trafficking in other international cities.

The Passage is immensely proud of what has been achieved over the last five years and is highly motivated to build on this work to achieve long-term systemic change. As with all our work, it is not enough to simply address the emergency in front of us; we must also explore preventative strategies in policy and practice to prevent these issues from occurring in the first place.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said:

> “We keep pulling people out of the river; at some stage we need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.” For The Passage, this means continuing our vital work to help survivors while also working at an international level to find global solutions to this global issue.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the incredible efforts of The Passage staff. I would like to thank Dr Júlia Tomás, Jenny Travassos, Lynsey Lovelock, and Elena Ionita for all their hard work, and Kevin Hyland for his advice, guidance and support. I also add my thanks to all the partners we have worked with over the last five years, all of whom are listed in this report.

Most importantly, I pay tribute to the survivors we have worked with, especially Bruno Batista, who is now assisting with our efforts on this issue.

Hope is such a precious thing. As Dr Martin Luther King Jr. once said:

> “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

It is hard to imagine greater trauma than those who have suffered both homelessness and modern slavery. Their bravery and resilience inspire The Passage to work tirelessly to address this issue. It is an honour to accompany them on their journey from trauma to a place of hope and a home they can truly call their own.

Mick Clarke
Chief Executive, The Passage

Summary

The Modern Slavery Service (the service) was born out of necessity and is the result of visionary minds and successful partnerships. The service evolved through historic social landmarks: over the past 5 years, modern slavery identifications have steadily increased at national level; the hostile environment for migrants has led to detrimental immigration legislation; we are seeing an unprecedent number of people experiencing homelessness due to the current housing crisis; and we lived through a global pandemic that changed the world. The service grew to face new challenges, demonstrating its resilience, sustainability and adaptability.

This report covers the key findings and milestones of The Passage Modern Slavery Service from July 2018 to March 2024. Initially planned for five years, it now includes an extra nine months, making it five years and nine months in total. This extension allows for a deeper look at our progress. However, more than just numbers, this report aims at telling the story of our service from its beginning to now.

Here is a summary of key findings:

- 204 referrals to the Modern Slavery Service.
- 192 (94%) individuals were experiencing homelessness (including 136 rough sleepers) at the time of referral.
- 140 (64%) did not have recourse to public funds.
- 127 (62%) service users were male, 68 (33%) were female and 9 (5%) were transgender.
- The predominant form of exploitation was labour.
- The predominant country of origin for service users was Romania.
- The service prevented 134 (70%) individuals from street homelessness.

From the 142 individuals who successfully engaged with the service:

- 134 (94%) were placed in emergency accommodation within 24 hours, providing immediate rough sleeping relief and safety.
- 120 (84%) were successfully housed, preventing re-trafficking.
- 87 received pre-NRM support and 61 referrals were made to the NRM [1].
- 59 received positive Reasonable Grounds decision.
- 34 received support from the service while they were in the NRM.
- 13 were supported by the service after they had left the NRM.

[1] The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK government system to identify and support people with lived experience of modern slavery.

From its origins to the present day: Our journey

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” - Laozi

In 2017, The Passage was tasked by the UK’s first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to investigate the correlation between homelessness and modern slavery. Anecdotal evidence suggested that traffickers prey on people experiencing homelessness and unstable housing, exploiting their vulnerability. The Passage published its findings in a report, which also found that individuals living on the streets were susceptible to manipulation, coercion, and deceit from traffickers and many who manage to escape the clutches of modern slavery ultimately end up homeless on the streets, thereby entering a vicious cycle of vulnerability to re-trafficking.

The following year, in 2018, The Passage started a modern slavery programme funded by London Housing Foundation. The three initial objectives were to deliver training to the homelessness sector, to establish partnerships aimed at enhancing survivor support services, and to gather and collate data evidencing the intersection between homelessness and modern slavery.

The Passage started by upskilling its own organisation and once staff received specialised training, the identification of and support to survivors of modern slavery began. The foundations of a service that had yet to be defined and established was accompanied by a series of immediate challenges.

Initially, the challenge was to identify a First Responder [2] who was not associated with the police. Many survivors hesitate to collaborate directly with law enforcement due to threats from traffickers. Another concern was preventing survivors from experiencing additional trauma. They often had to recount their experiences to multiple staff members and the First Responder. The third issue was the risk of re-trafficking while support services were being arranged.

[2] First Responders are organisations authorised by the Home Office to refer potential victims of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism.

In 2019, The Passage, in partnership with Westminster City Council, initiated a Multi-Agency Case Conference (MACC) strategy to address these challenges. This approach was designed to offer immediate assistance to survivors of modern slavery who experience homelessness, including those without access to public funds. MACCs are collaborative meetings involving Westminster City Council (our designated First Responder), The Passage, and other relevant agencies. In these meetings, details about a modern slavery survivor are shared to create a cohesive action plan that enhances safety and safeguarding, eliminating the need for the service user to relive their traumatic experiences. Additionally, MACCs offer swift access to emergency accommodation, immigration advice, and physical and mental health services while the individual is being referred to the NRM, thereby reducing the risk of re-trafficking.

Since 2019, The Passage has held MACCs for 74 individuals. 61 survivors (83% of the cases) were placed in emergency accommodation (i.e. B&B and hotels and hostels). 73% (54 cases) led to an NRM referral from which 93% (50 cases) received positive Reasonable Grounds decision. This demonstrates that the MACC approach results in high quality NRM referrals. In addition, it ensures a person-centred, holistic and tighter support offer to survivors, reducing the risk of re-trafficking and providing immediate homelessness relief. The MACC model received a London Housing Foundation Award in that same year and was highly recommended by Homeless Link in 2022.

THE LONDON HOMELESSNESS AWARDS 2019

In April 2020, The Passage Modern Slavery Service was formally established and Westminster City Council commissioned the role of a Modern Slavery Navigator. Modern Slavery Navigators for people experiencing homelessness are support workers, with extensive knowledge of modern slavery and homelessness. They help survivors navigate through complex support processes, ensuring their journey leads them to a secure environment, such as safe accommodation within the UK or through a safe assisted voluntary return. The Modern Slavery Navigator assumes the role of an advocate, ensuring that survivors' voices are heard and their desired outcomes are achieved. This expert frontline worker interacts with multiple specialist support agencies, addresses multiple factors (such as exploitation, trauma, substance misuse, domestic violence, etc.), and navigates multiple processes (like the NRM, asylum claim, assisted voluntary return, housing, employment).

Over time, our data collection process has evolved as we gained a better understanding of the necessary information and identified gaps. Consequently, we've incorporated essential data points to our database. By incorporating additional data points related to housing, mental health, substance misuse, and legal aid outcomes, our overall understanding of the situation has become more comprehensive. We now have a clearer picture of the housing journey experienced by victims before and after exploitation, as well as the impact of mental health and legal support. This enriched data allows us to make more informed decisions and tailor our interventions more effectively.

The Passage Modern Slavery Service, the MACC model, the role of the Modern Slavery Navigator specifically designed for the homelessness sector, and the data collection methods linking modern slavery to homelessness are significant achievements. Since June 2018, The Passage identified and supported over two hundred people with lived experience of modern slavery and exploitation.

But this was just the beginning. The Service is continuously evolving to address new challenges. Since 2023, the modern slavery assessment process has become more time-consuming due to the expanded NRM form and the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 evidence requirements. This has extended the need for emergency accommodation until the NRM referral is complete, which now takes about two weeks for straightforward cases.

The time to receive a positive Reasonable Grounds decision has also increased, often exceeding the stipulated five working days. This forces survivors to live in uncertainty for weeks, negatively impacting their housing situation and mental health.
This delay has led to discussions about temporary rather than emergency accommodation at the MACCs, resulting in many service users receiving temporary housing. [3] By the time survivors receive a positive Reasonable Grounds decision, they have settled into their new homes and are actively engaging with services provided by The Passage, such as training, health support, art activities, welfare support, and legal aid. Consequently, The Passage is now providing services typically offered by the government.

[3] Emergency accommodation is short-term housing provided in urgent situations, such as fleeing domestic abuse or modern slavery, typically lasting a few days or weeks. Temporary accommodation, on the other hand, is for longer-term needs while waiting for permanent housing, and can last several months. Both aim to offer safety and shelter but differ in duration and stability.

Prevention and education

“Awareness is a precondition of action.” - Rob Thomson

Education empowers people to act. Our training program equips professionals to engage with various systems effectively and continually improve their practice. Training not only educates individuals but also creates a network of informed advocates who actively work toward eradicating modern slavery. We are committed to reaching as many people as possible across various sectors. We have successfully engaged with Central Government, local authorities, homelessness non-profit organisations, anti-slavery organisations, regional anti-slavery partnerships, and the business sector.

In addition, we provide expert training to health organisations at local, national and international levels, co-producing and enhancing anti-trafficking programs and partnerships for effective collaboration. For instance, we worked with the Imperial College Healthcare [4], the NHS Homeless Team and the Adult Safeguarding Team in Central London in 2018 and 2019. We are currently expanding our educational reach into the United States by adapting our training programme to the New York State Office for Mental Health, demonstrating a commitment to international anti-slavery education. This effort ensures that mental healthcare professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and support survivors who are experiencing street homelessness.

We have also delivered training and presentations to religious communities, including the Church of England, London Diocese, Jewish Social Action Forum, the Anglican Church, Renée Cassin and the Voice of Islam Radio. The grassroot organisation Compassionate Communities recorded and shared a lunch and learn session. [5]

Since June 2018, we’ve conducted 63 training sessions, reaching over 870 attendees across 40 agencies, with presentations delivered to over 3000 people.

> “I just thought I would let you know that following [The Passage Modern Slavery Training] session, it made me more confident in recognising indicators. Subsequently, A Roma beggar who has been present in Birmingham City for a few years has now been safeguarded and we are awaiting a result from the NRM.”
> **- Training delegate, March 2020**

[4] https://vimeo.com/506153831/3f359f840e
[5] Cost-of-Living Lunch & Learns 4: Spotting Modern Slavery in Foodbanks & Warm Spaces

In November 2022, The Passage hosted its third national Modern Slavery Conference, which served as the launch event for our online toolkit. The Passage Modern Slavery Toolkit [6] equips homelessness organisations, local authorities, and frontline workers with templates and documentation to create modern slavery services and foster multi-agency partnerships. This comprehensive resource addresses the intersection of modern slavery and homelessness, providing practical tools for victim support.

Launch of The Passage's Modern Slavery Toolkit
London, 21st November 2022

In 2023, we produced a report focusing on the link between homelessness and human trafficking in Dublin [7] in partnership with Depaul Ireland, and we are currently working in partnership with the New York City Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence to publish a report on this same intersection in New York.

Launch of The Passage's report: 'An Overview of homelessness and human trafficking in Dublin'
Dublin, 22nd April 2024

[6] The Passage Modern Slavery Toolkit
[7] An overview of homelessness and human trafficking in Dublin

Research and advocacy

“Knowledge is power.” - Francis Bacon

Modern slavery policy and research became a function of The Passage’s anti-slavery project. The intersection between homelessness and modern slavery is where The Passage positions its efforts, emphasising the unique role the homelessness sector plays in identifying and supporting survivors. Thus, equipping the homelessness sector with the skills to recognise and respond to trafficking can lead to early identification and intervention. At the heart of The Passage’s work is a robust advocacy program, designed to enact systemic change and maintain modern slavery as a priority on national and global agendas. Through strategic engagement with policymakers, collaboration with industry leaders, and the elevation of public awareness, The Passage seeks to advocate for policies and practices that provide robust support for survivors and prevent trafficking.

Data gathering has been consistent and currently The Passage is the only organisation collecting data on the housing status of survivors before and after exploitation, thereby collecting evidence that links homelessness to modern slavery. Beyond data collection, we emphasise transparency by sharing our findings through annual reports. Additionally, we provide crucial insights and data to anyone seeking information.

The Passage anti-slavery project has contributed to several key publications, including:

- Good practice in protecting people from modern slavery during the Covid-19 pandemic (Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern Slavery and Human Rights and University of Keele, 2021)
- Re-trafficking: the current state of play (Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and University of Nottingham, 2021)
- A path to freedom and justice: a new vision for supporting victims of modern slavery (Centre for Social Justice and Justice and Care, 2022)
- Supporting modern slavery victims through homelessness services at Westminster City Council (Local Government Association, 2022)
- London Modern Slavery Leads Annual Report 2021/22 (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022)

- Modern Slavery Service (London Housing Foundation, 2022)
- Bi-Borough Safeguarding Adults Executive Board Annual Report (Westminster City Council and the Royal Boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea, 2021/22)
- Council Guide to Tackling Modern Slavery (Local Government Association, 2022)
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Guidance for homelessness service (Homeless Link, 2022)
- The Key Issue: Housing for Survivors of Modern Slavery (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2023)

Leadership and innovation

“A true leader is not the one with the most followers, but the one who creates the best leaders.” - John C. Maxwell

The Passage is now leading the way on understanding the intersection between modern slavery and homelessness. Our approach to leadership is to both transform and empower. Rather than seeking to establish an empire, The Passage aims to empower others by fostering learning, teaching, advocacy, survivor support, and data-driven policy influence. We prioritise the creation of strong, collaborative networks, bringing together professionals from social services, healthcare providers, law enforcement, legal aid and researchers to create initiatives to tackle modern slavery.

Mick Clarke, CEO of The Passage, has been a member of each Advisory Panel convened by the three appointed Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioners, advocating for the inclusion of homelessness issues within the anti-slavery sector.
The Modern Slavery Service was supported by an Advisory Group from 2018 to 2023. The Advisory Group – comprised of stakeholders including Human Trafficking Foundation, Westminster City Council, Greater London Authority, Local Government Association, Homeless Link, the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police – provided invaluable information and advice to create a robust and sustainable service.

The Passage worked collaboratively with the Home Office Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office Modern Slavery Unit, as well as the Centre for Social Justice and Crisis. Notable accomplishments include the creation of the Modern Slavery Toolkit for the Homelessness Sector.

The Passage Modern Slavery Service is a member of the Modern Slavery Community of Practice (MS-COP), bringing our experience in emergency, transitional and permanent accommodation for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. MS-COP is a community of survivors, professionals and other experts who work in practice with survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery across all related fields, sectors and services. Securing long-term suitable and safe housing is their priority.

Providing long-term, suitable accommodation for survivors of modern slavery is a growing challenge. Housing options are scattered and temporary, failing to provide the stability and support widely recognised as conducive to recovery. The lack of housing options also increases survivors' vulnerability to homelessness or re-trafficking. The Passage evidence and experience shows that the answer lies in multi-agency mechanisms, partnerships and consensus between local authorities and housing/homelessness organisations as well as creating and adapting practical tools to support housing officers. Because of the successful MACC model pre-NRM, we are now working on establishing a post-NRM MACC model for confirmed survivors in partnership with Westminster City Council.

Finally, collaborating with individuals who have lived experience of modern slavery is crucial. Since 2022, The Passage has maintained a Group of Experts by Experience, comprising individuals who have experienced homelessness. This group advises and supports the organisation's decision-making, service delivery, and advocacy efforts to combat homelessness. The membership of this group, which changes annually, includes a survivor of modern slavery.

"I am delighted to let you know that we won the SCVO Partnership of the Year Award. The Award was for the anti-trafficking/homelessness partnership we have developed with Simon Community Scotland. The combining of this expertise is the first of its kind in Scotland and could not have been achieved without the inspiration, learning and generosity of The Passage."
- Joy Gillespie, CEO, SOHTIS, July 2024.

Survival and creativity

Speech from Bruno Batista, MS-CoP and The Passage Forum: Securing Long-Term Suitable Housing for Survivors of Modern Slavery, March 20, 2024.

I call this sculpture "The Silence Epidemic".

"It represents illusion, coercion, manipulation, violence, gaslight, addiction, mental health, sexual abuse, human trafficking, homelessness, smite on belief and dogmas. And this represents the life story of thousands and thousands of people, including myself.

My name is Bruno Batista, thirty years old. I am a Brazilian independent artist. I am also a survivor of human trafficking. I am a survivor of addiction. I am a survivor of homelessness.

At seventeen years old, I was trafficked from Brazil into sexual slavery. This experience at such a young age got me trapped into drugs. The addiction shaped my reality for a long time. I came to a point that I lost my dreams, my expectations in life. I became a sad and empty person. I tried to escape twice and I failed. I knew that I had one option: escape from human trafficking and addiction to homelessness and more vulnerabilities. I didn't have any strength to run and be in the streets.

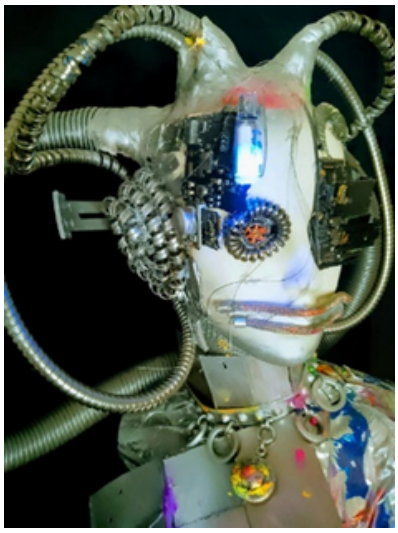
My experience with human trafficking and addiction took more than fifteen years of my life. And during these years, I changed, and I mean physically changed. I had no teeth anymore. I was looking dirty. Not sellable anymore to the sex industry. Then my traffickers and pimp stopped arranging clients for me, and I could not afford to pay the rent to my abusive landlords. The streets became my only option.

At this point, I started my journey into homelessness. I had to face many different challenges like hunger, cold, sleeping rough, abstinence. I also had to deal with my physical, emotional and mental breakdown. I spent six months on the streets without hope or direction.

The Passage immediately placed me in emergency accommodation and it took around two weeks to go into long-term accommodation.

I was sent to a safehouse in Northern England, where I spent almost three years. Then started the process to prove to the Home Office that I was a victim of human trafficking.

I called this sculpture "The Child".



This represents Reborn, Restart. Because the safehouse gave me the understanding of resetting everything and starting from zero.

In the safehouse, I realised how I was disconnected from society, disconnected from my intellect, disconnected from my reality, disconnected from my imagination, disconnected from my essence. I started engaging with doctors' appointments, counselling, police interviews, etc. Very quickly, I started engaging with social activities.

I started to paint, to make sculptures, draw and collect materials and objects from people's gardens and bins. Life seemed to be more enjoyable. I was shaping new expectations about my future. I loved to develop my art skills, knowledge and intellect. I thought that from that moment everything was going to be finally okay.

Eventually, my time in the safehouse ended and I was moved to NASS accommodation. At this point every support that I was used to, like a key worker, counselling, etc. was gone as well. After a while, the decision from the Home Office about my case came positive. And this was great news, right? But with great news comes great challenges. I didn't know what to do next. I didn't know how to apply for housing or benefits. I didn't know what to do at all.

Then the lockdowns began, and everything became worse. As a result, I went back to the sex industry and took drugs again. I automatically relapsed. I was back on the streets again for the second time. But this time, I spent two years in a totally vulnerable situation. I could not fit myself into the system. I didn't know how to open a bank account, I didn't know how to write an email, how to apply for universal credit. I was hospitalised many times for dehydration and several overdoses.

All horror movie scenarios were playing in my head again.

Recently, just about one year ago, I could finally sort out my life when I returned to The Passage for help. I was empowered to get temporary accommodation. I am on benefits. I stopped taking drugs. I can now dedicate myself to my self-development and education. Now I am addicted to achievements.

I became an Arts facilitator; I deliver art workshops to two different organisations, including The Passage. Both places help vulnerable people. I became a member of The Passage Group of Experts by Experience and helped them to change and shape their strategies. I am also collaborating with anti-slavery organisations by delivering speeches about my life experience.

I want to look at my past and see that every dot is connected, and with that, understand that I need to believe in something: in life, God, karma, destiny or whatever. Because believing that the dots will be connected down the road will give me the confidence to follow my heart.

And that will make all the difference."

Looking forward: Next steps

“The only way to do great work is to love what you do.” - Steve Jobs

The journey has evolved in fascinating ways. Initially, it began with curiosity and uncertainty, much like a seed planted in fertile soil. Over time, it sprouted, branching into various paths: a direct support service, training, research, knowledge and experience sharing. Some led to unexpected successes, most faced challenges. Yet, resilience prevailed and the journey continues.

Recognising the link between modern slavery and homelessness is crucial for effective intervention and support. By collecting and sharing our data, we enhance our ability to identify and record incidents of modern slavery among people experiencing homelessness. This effort ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the issue, leading to improved responses and increased protection.

This approach should be implemented at national level. Currently, there is no reliable national data on the housing status of survivors at various stages: when they are recruited, when they escape exploitation, when they receive only outreach support under the MSVCC, and after receiving NRM Conclusive decisions.

The Human Trafficking Foundation reports that only 13% of survivors are housed in safehouses under the MSVCC [8]. Enhanced research and data collection are essential for local authorities and homelessness organisations to understand the prevalence of homelessness among survivors in their areas, enabling better resource allocation.

Regarding pre-NRM respite accommodation, the MSVCC holder may accommodate survivors before they enter formally the NRM if they are destitute and/or are in unsuitable accommodation. However, according to one of the last reforms of the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance [9], section 15.8:

> *“In general, asylum accommodation, local authority housing and living with friends or family, temporary accommodation provided by the police, charities or hostels, and room sharing across all of these accommodation types are suitable for individuals prior to a Reasonable Grounds decision.”*

[8] The Key Issue: Housing for Survivors of Modern Slavery (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2023)
[9] Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As a result, the MSVCC holder does not offer emergency accommodation to our Modern Slavery Service users who are destitute, as most have already been placed in hotels or temporary accommodation by our service at the time of referral to the NRM. For homelessness organisations lacking dedicated funding for respite accommodation for survivors, it becomes increasingly challenging to ensure their safety until they enter the NRM. Consequently, the risk of re-trafficking and re-exploitation is heightened.

Although the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities includes a comprehensive section on modern slavery (chapter 25) [10] to help local authorities understand the NRM and its interaction with statutory homelessness duties, it remains unclear who is responsible for housing survivors. Similarly, the Care Act [11] struggles to support survivors of modern slavery effectively due to gaps in providing long-term, trauma-informed care and inconsistent access to specialised services.

Homelessness, like modern slavery, violates the principle of human dignity enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The fact that survivors experience homelessness during and after Government support suggests that the NRM permits this violation. Policymakers should use this information to address the issue more effectively by implementing targeted interventions and policies. By integrating data on modern slavery into homelessness strategies, policymakers can develop comprehensive solutions that address both immediate needs and long-term prevention.

As we move forward, we remain committed to enhancing our existing efforts and expanding our partnerships. Our goal is to further integrate anti-slavery protocols into the homelessness and housing sectors on a global scale. To achieve this, we will prioritise clear communication, consistent performance, and continuing monitoring and evaluation. By fostering strategic relationships with our partners and aligning our values agenda, we aim to make meaningful progress in combating modern slavery and promoting ethical practices.

The Passage also aims to further amplify our educational outreach, co-producing new resources and training programmes to meet the evolving needs of the homelessness sector.

We will continue our research programme to understand the intersection between homelessness and modern slavery at local, national and international levels.

[10] Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Chapter 25: Modern slavery and trafficking - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[11] Care Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

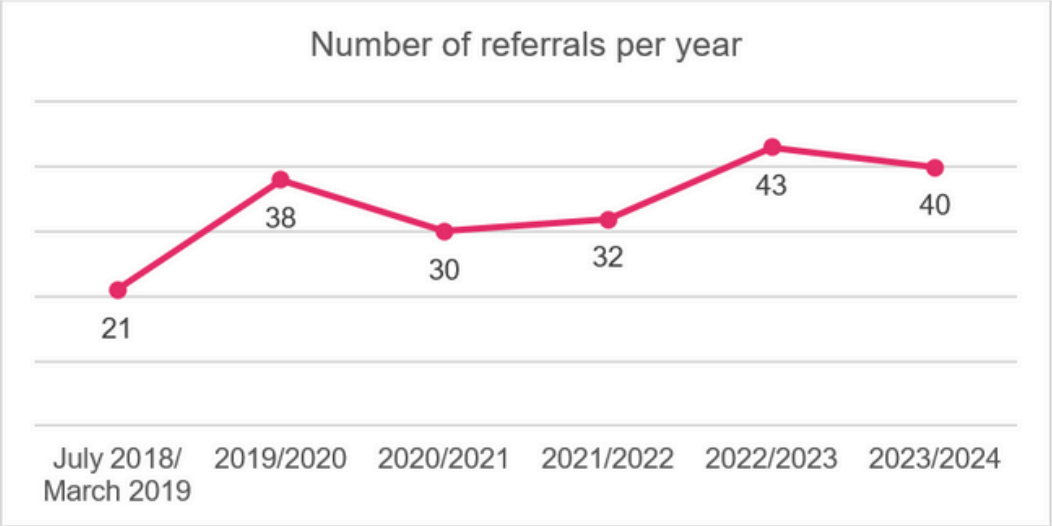
We aim at enhanced international collaboration to customise and update our Modern Slavery Toolkit, broadening its global reach and effectiveness. By fostering international relationships and resource-sharing, The Passage ensures a survivor-centred approach that promotes positive outcomes for those seeking support as well as strong protocols that assist those who directly support survivors.

Last but not least, our Modern Slavery Service will continue to identify and support those with lived experience of modern slavery and homelessness. We will run consultations with survivors to enhance the quality of the MACC model. We will maintain a survivor's presence in The Passage Expert by Experience Group. We are also fortunate to have the UK's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, as a Passage Trustee. The inclusion of modern slavery as one of our strategic goals underscores our unwavering commitment to this cause in the years ahead.

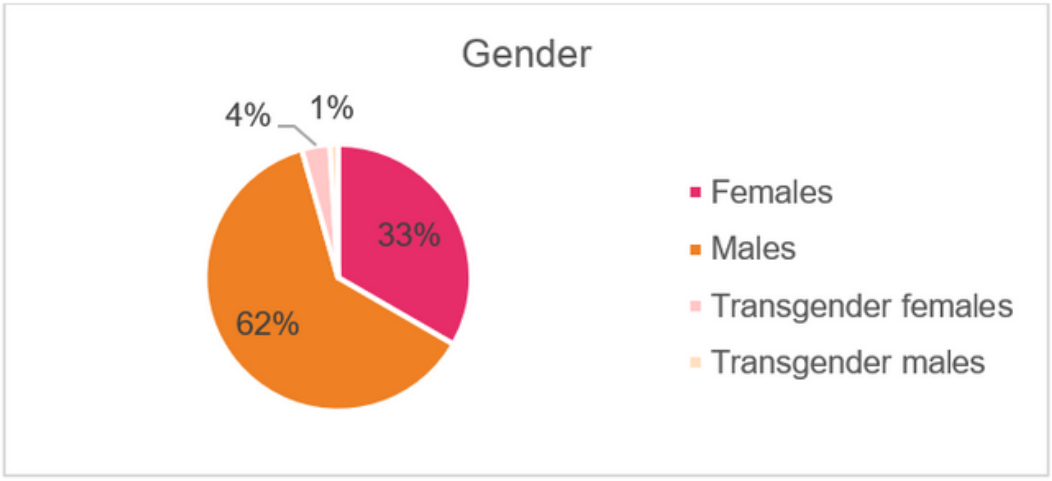
For further information and queries, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Júlia Tomás, Human Trafficking Policy and Research Manager at The Passage, via email on julia.tomas@passage.org.uk or modernslavery@passage.org.uk.

Appendix: Five years of Modern Slavery Service -Key findings

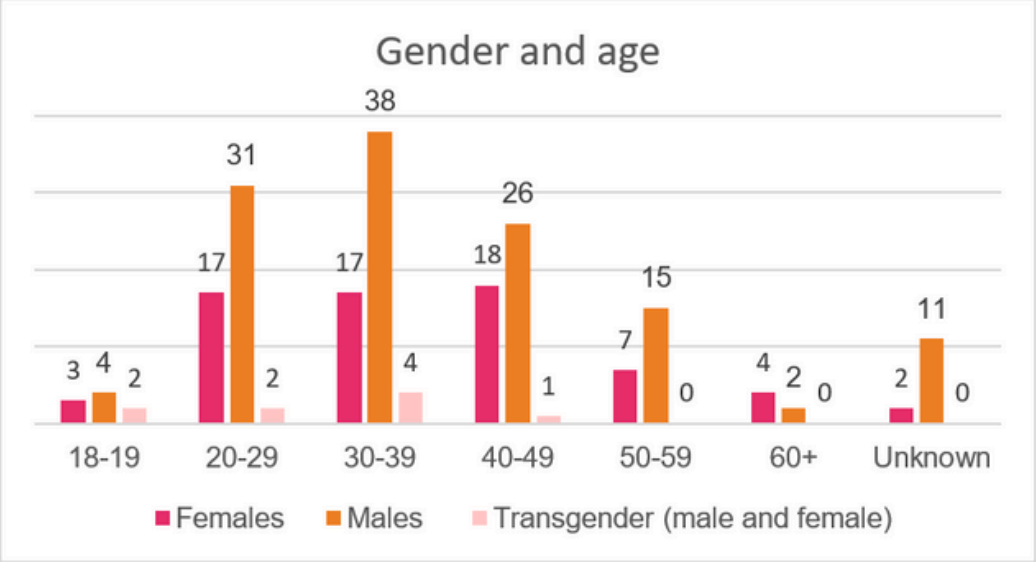
The Passage Modern Slavery Service received 204 referrals from July 2018 to March 2024 (5 years and 9 months). Despite a decline in referrals during the Covid-19 lockdowns from March to December 2020, the service remained operational.



Most potential victims were male (127, 62%) while 68 (33%) were female. The Passage also supported 7 (4%) transgender females and 2 (1%) transgender males. Interestingly, in the financial year of 2022/23, the number of females exceeded that of males. This was accompanied by an increase of cases of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.



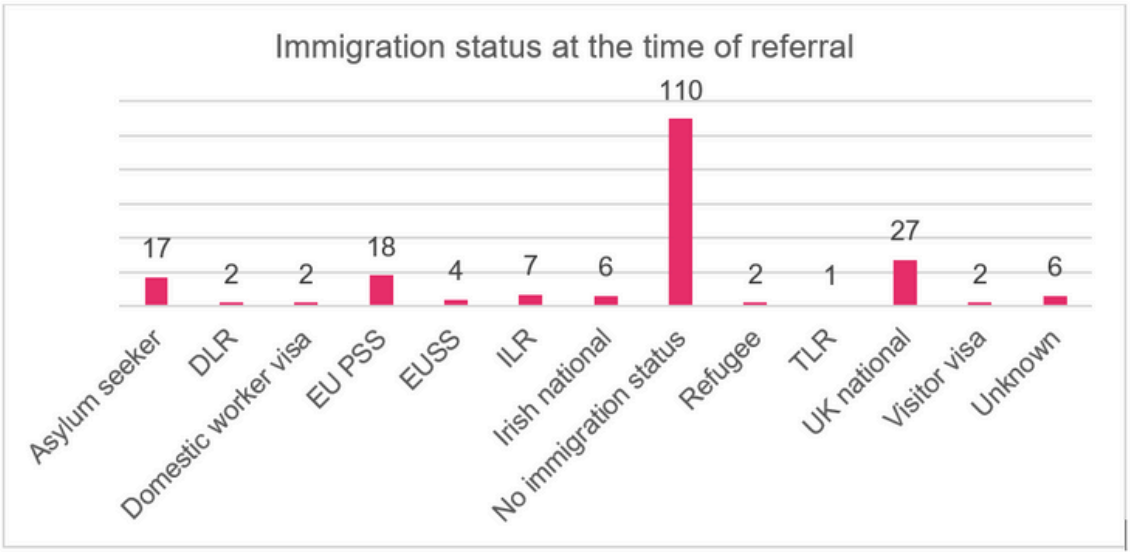
The prevalent age bracket for men was 30-39, for women was 40-49 and for transgender females and males was 30-39. The age of 13 individuals is unknow. This is due to situations where the individual disengages or disappears after being referred to The Passage by an external agency and before their initial assessment by The Passage Modern Slavery Navigator.



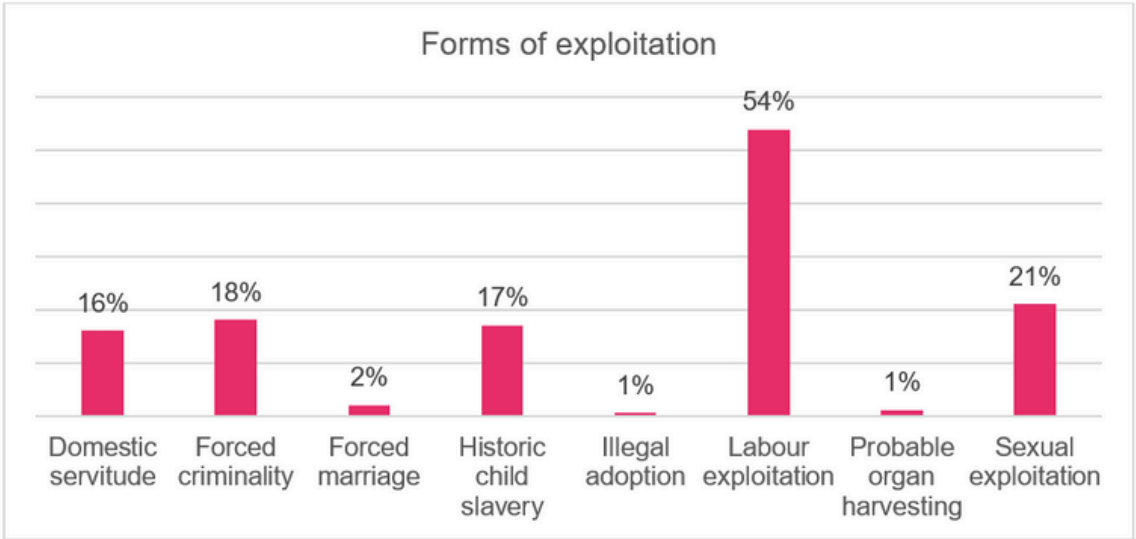
The Passage Modern Slavery Service supported individuals from 62 different countries. The five prevalent countries of origin were Romania (35), the UK (27), Poland (20), Brazil (8) and Bulgaria (8).

35 | Romania
27 | UK
20 | Poland
8 | Brazil
8 | Bulgaria
6 | Ireland
5 |Eritrea
5 | Nigeria
4 | Albania
4 | Morocco
4 | Ukraine
3 | China
3 | Latvia
3 | Lithuania
3 | Philippines
3 | Portugal
2 | Algeria
2 | Bangladesh
2 | Botswana
2 | Colombia
2 | Czech Republic
2 | Ethiopia
2 | India
2 | Iran
2 | Japan
2 | Netherlands
2 | Pakistan
2 | Slovakia
2 | Sri-Lanka
2 | Sweden
2 | Thailand
2 | Uganda
2 | USA
1 | Afghanistan
1 | Angola
1 | Australia
1 | Barbados
1 | Gambia
1 | Grenada
1 | Guatemala
1 | Guinea
1 | Italy
1 | Jamaica
1 | Kenya
1 | Kyrgyzstan
1 | Libya
1 | Mali
1 | Moldova
1 | Somalia
1 | South Africa
1 | Sudan
1 | Syria
1 | Trinidad and Tobago
1 | Turkey
1 | United Arab Emirates
1 | Vietnam
1 | Norway
1 | Peru
1 | Russia
1 | Santa Lucia
1 | Saudi Arabia
1 | Singapore

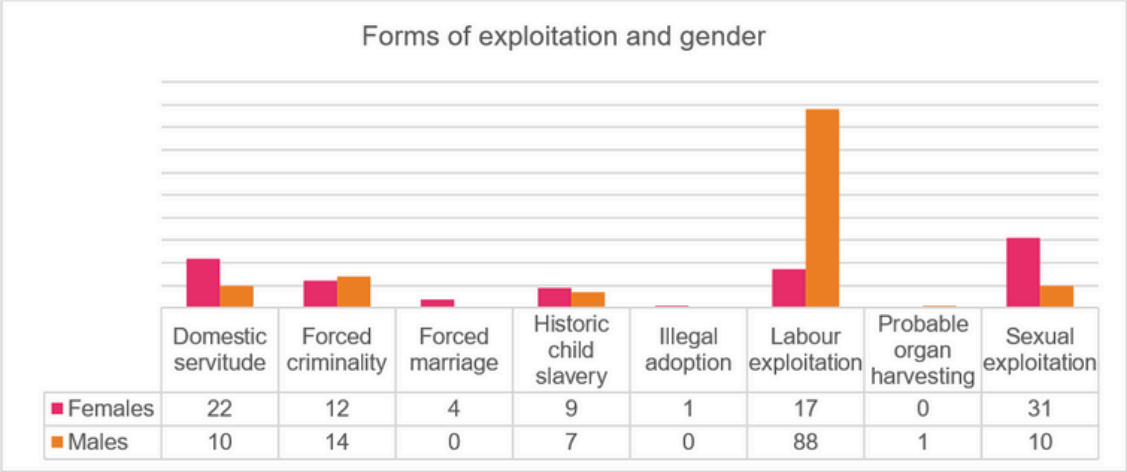
At the time of referral to The Passage Modern Slavery Service, 110 individuals (54%) did not have immigration status and 140 (69%) did not have recourse to public funds.



The prevalent form of exploitation has consistently been labour. However, we have been observing a steady increase of cases related to criminal exploitation and domestic servitude.

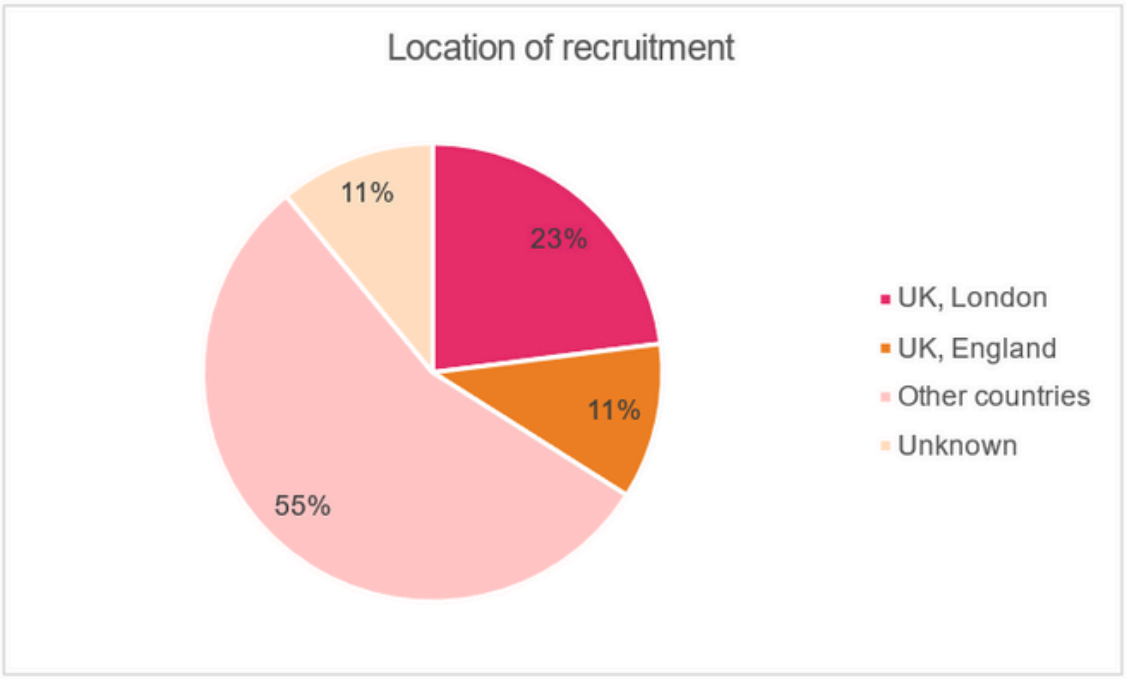


When correlating forms of exploitation and gender, not surprisingly, most males are deceived or coerced into labour exploitation while females tend to be predominately victims of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

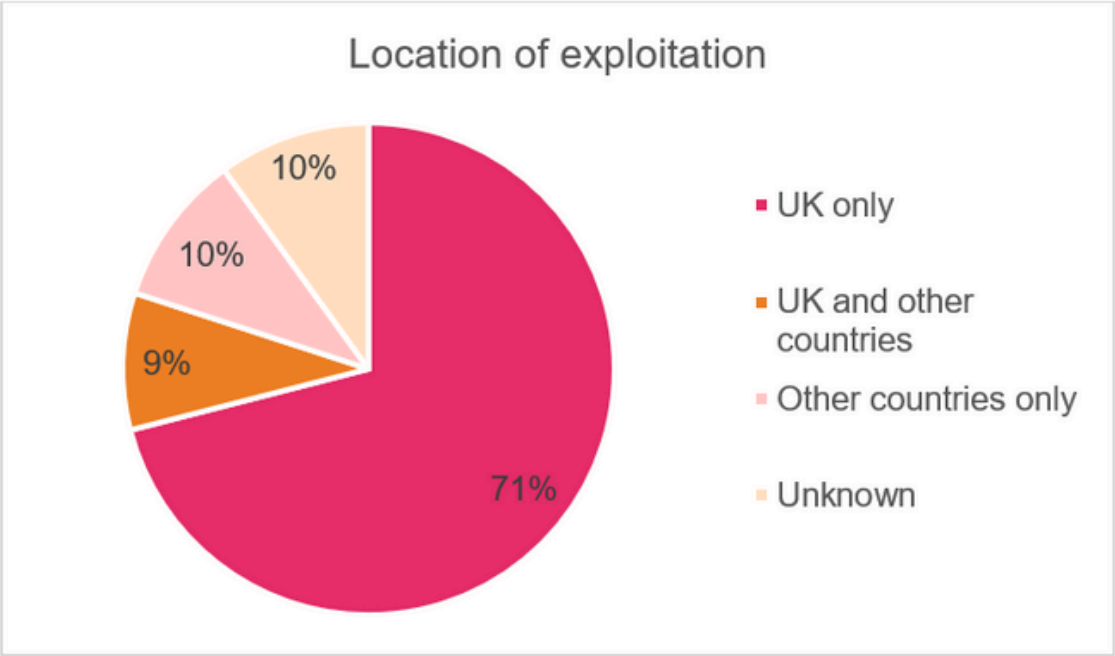


	Domestic servitude	Forced criminality	Forced marriage	Historic child slavery	Illegal adoption	Labour exploitation	Probable organ harvesting	Sexual exploitation
Females	22	12	4	9	1	17	0	31
Males	10	14	0	7	0	88	1	10

In terms of recruitment location, 113 potential victims/survivors (55%) were recruited outside of the UK, while 46 (23%) were recruited in London and 23 (11%) in England (excluding London).



As regards to the location of exploitation, 144 potential victims/survivors (71%) were exploited exclusively in the UK, while 21 (10%) experienced exploitation solely in other countries. Additionally, 18 individuals (9%) faced exploitation in both the UK and other countries.



Support provided

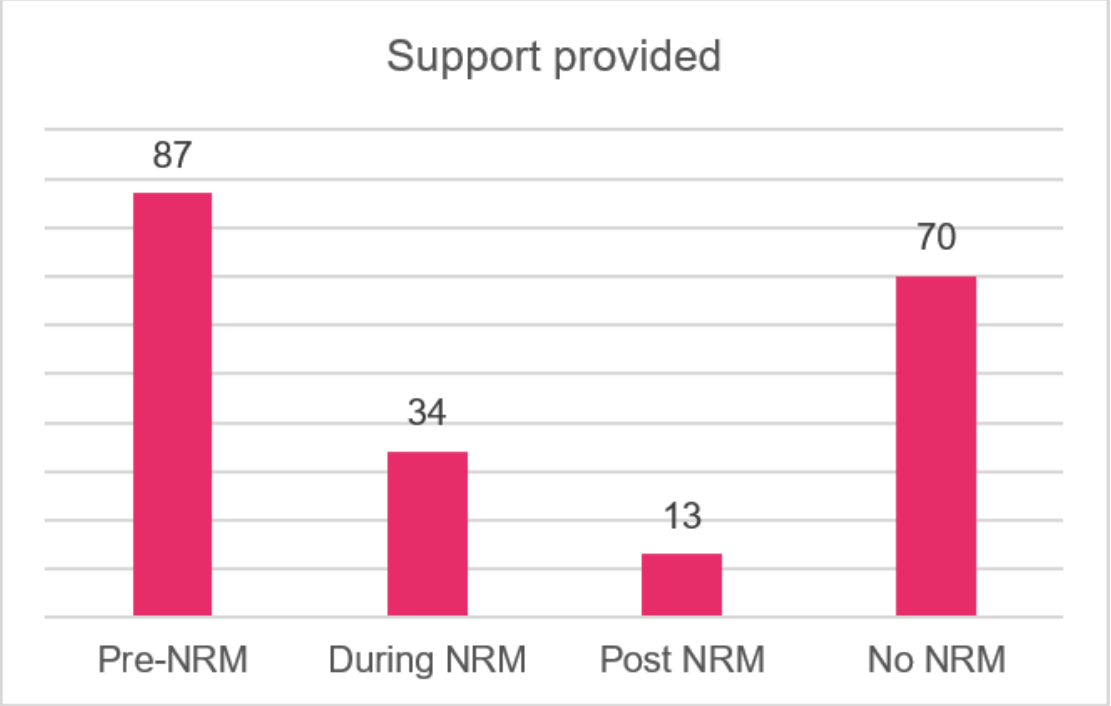
Of the 204 individuals who accessed The Passage Modern Slavery Service:

- 87 (43%) received a dedicated pre-NRM service in which the main outcome is for the individual to receive positive Reasonable Grounds decision and access government support under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC).

- 34 survivors were in the NRM and therefore entitled to support under the MSVCC. In these cases, the main outcome is to re-engage with their key workers under the MSVCC.

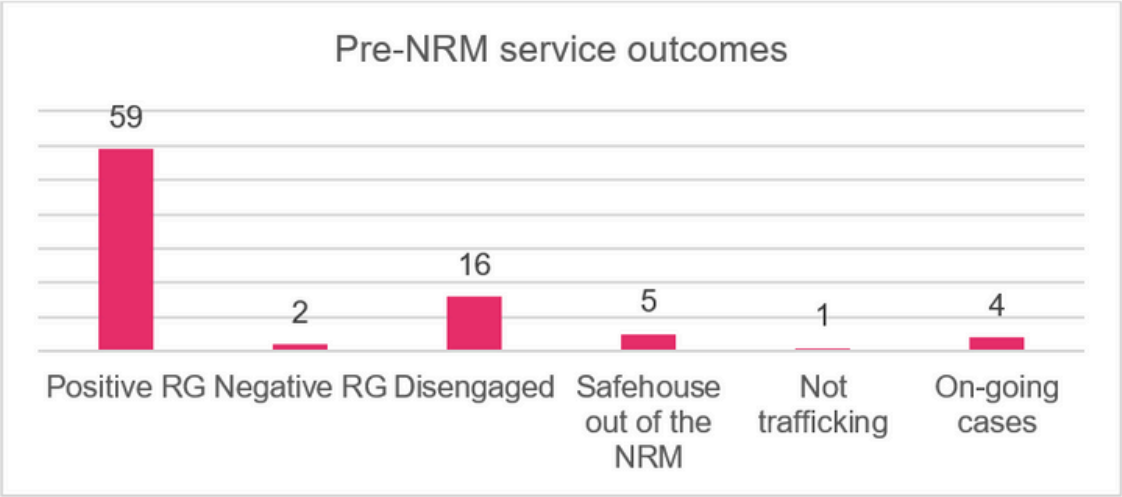
- 13 service users had already left the NRM with a conclusive decision but found themselves homeless in Westminster. These cases require work with our housing services and the main outcome is to find long-term suitable accommodation.

- 70 (34%) cases did not require referral to the NRM. It is important to highlight that regardless of the specific service needed, once an individual is referred to the Modern Slavery Service, they are provided with emergency accommodation. This allows the service user time to understand and consent to entering the NRM. Additionally, the Navigator can conduct a modern slavery assessment in a trauma informed way, inform the service user about the NRM, and address the individual's requested services.



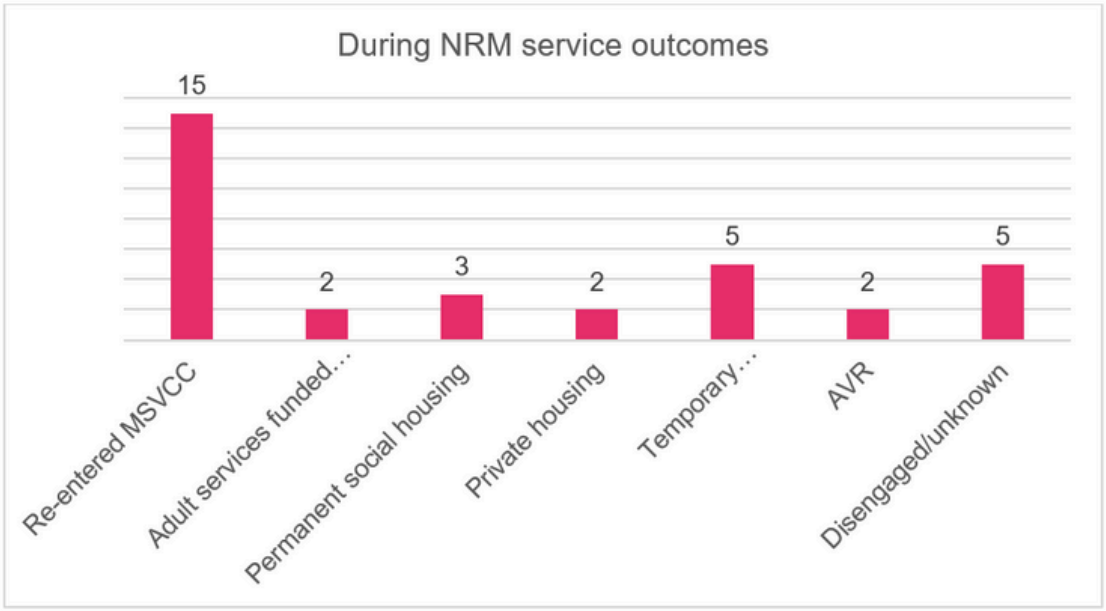
Of the 87 potential victims who consented to enter the NRM:

- 59 (68%) received positive Reasonable Grounds (RG) decision and entered the NRM.
- 2 (2%) received negative Reasonable Grounds decision and accessed The Passage homelessness services.
- 5 (6%) were placed in safehouses outside of the NRM.
- 16 (18%) disengaged from the referral to the NRM process and chose to access only homelessness services.
- 1 case related to smuggling and not trafficking.



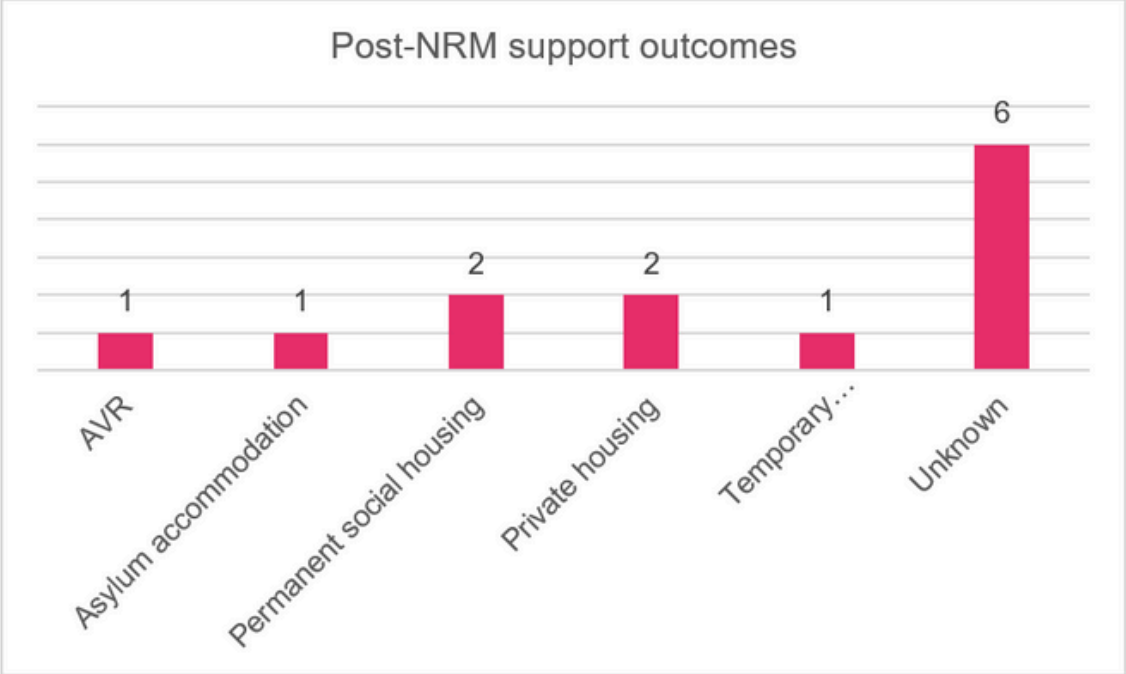
Of the 34 survivors who were already in the NRM:

- 15 re-entered the MSVCC and relocated to a safehouse.
- 2 were placed in hotels funded by Adult Social Care.
- 3 gained social housing.
- 2 gained private housing.
- 5 gained temporary accommodation.
- 2 were supported with assisted voluntary support (AVR).



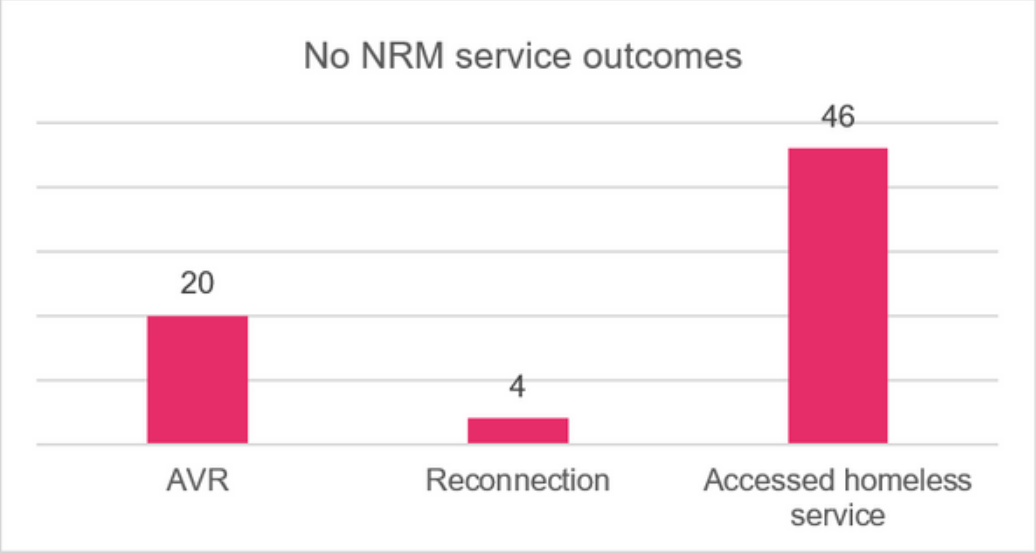
Of the 13 survivors who were referred to our service after Conclusive decision:

- 10 individuals were confirmed survivors (with positive Conclusive Grounds decision) and 3 had negative Conclusive Grounds decision.
- All individuals with negative Conclusive Grounds decision disengaged.
- In one case, traffickers were arrested.
- In terms of housing outcomes: 2 individuals gained permanent social housing, 2 gained private accommodation, 1 person was placed in asylum accommodation and 1 person is currently in temporary accommodation on the wating list for permanent social housing.



Of the 70 individuals who did not consent to enter the NRM:

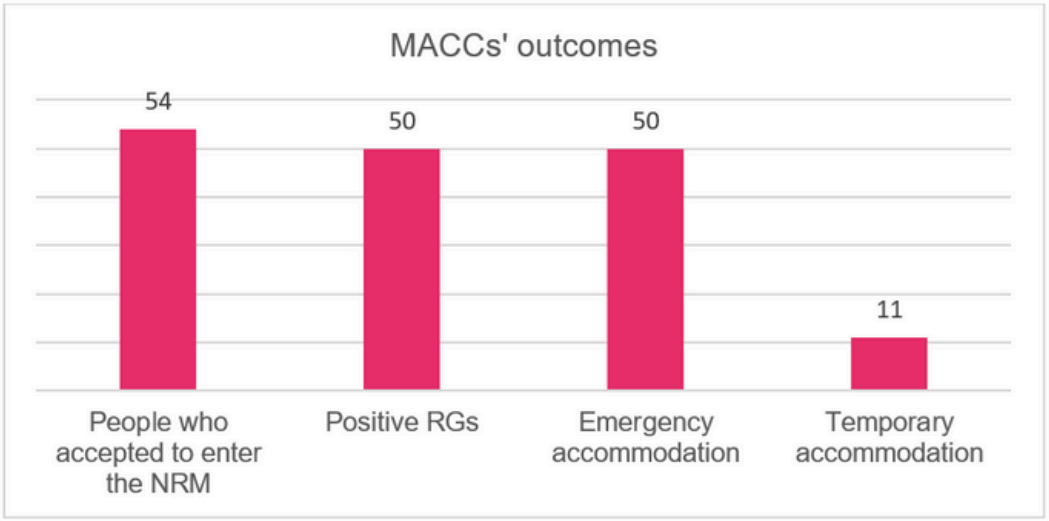
- 20 (29%) were assisted with voluntary return (AVR) to their country of origin.
- 4 (6%) were supported with reconnection to their local area in the UK.
- 46 (65%) accessed our homelessness services.



In total, 142 victims/survivors successfully engaged with The Passage's Modern Slavery Service.

Since March 2019, when The Passage and Westminster City Council implemented the Multi-Agency Case Conferences (MACC) approach, they conducted MACCs for 74 potential victims. Out of these, 54 individuals agreed to enter the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and 50 received a positive Reasonable Grounds decision.

This translates to a remarkable 93% success rate in addressing modern slavery cases. Regarding housing, 50 people were provided emergency accommodation, while 11 were placed in the Council's temporary housing. This represents an 83% success rate in achieving positive housing outcomes. Overall, these results demonstrate the effectiveness of the MACC model.



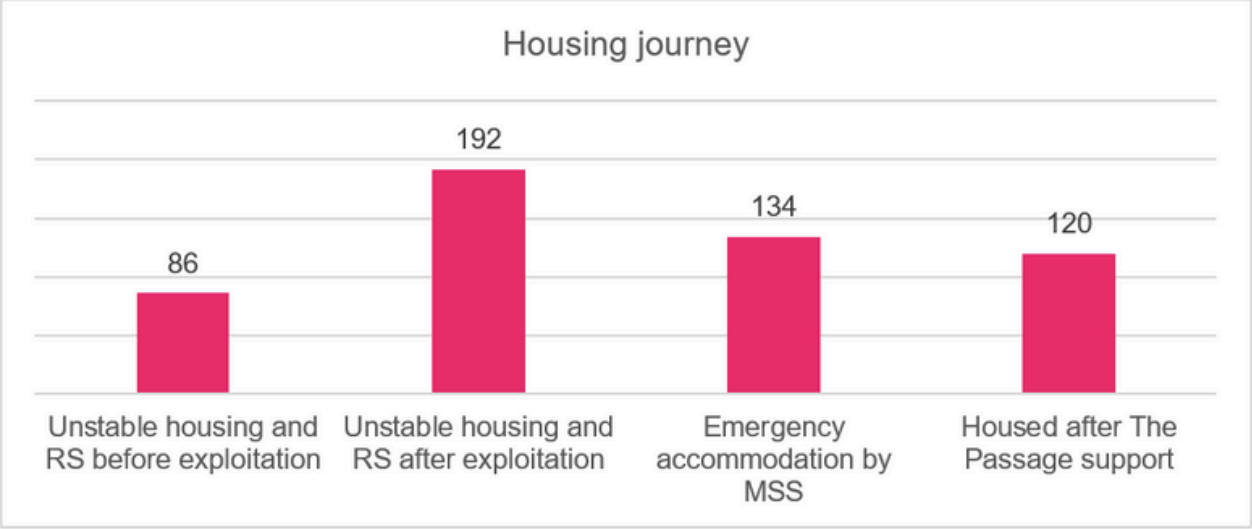
The intersection between modern slavery and homelessness

Based on the experiences of our service users, we can delineate a housing journey that spans from before their exploitative experiences to achieving relative safety.

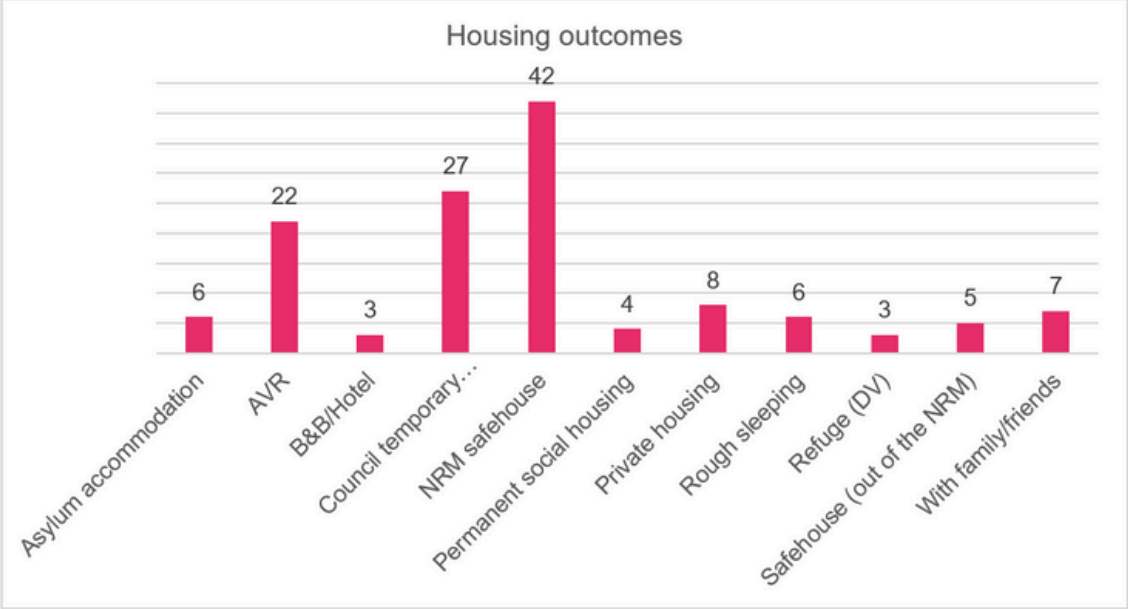
While before exploitation 86 (42%) individuals were experiencing homelessness (including 29 rough sleepers), after exploitation, 192 (94%) were experiencing homelessness (including 136 rough sleepers) at the time of referral to the Modern Slavery Service.

This data underscores that homelessness and unstable housing are potential drivers and consequences of modern slavery.

Therefore, the homelessness sector plays a crucial role in preventing modern slavery by providing long-term stable housing and by identifying potential victims for immediate support, thereby preventing re-trafficking.

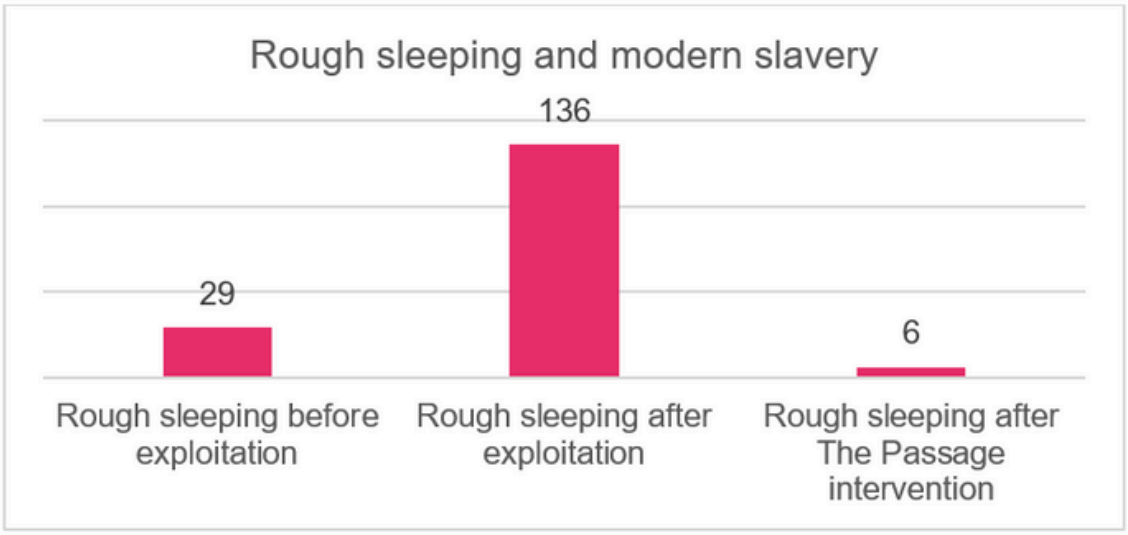


The Passage Modern Slavery Service provided emergency accommodation (in hostels or hotels) to 134 individuals (94% of those 142 who remained with the Modern Slavery Service), effectively providing immediate rough sleeping relief. At the end of the service provision, 120 individuals (84%) were successfully housed, preventing re-trafficking.



* This excludes “Unknown” housing status relative to those who disengaged from the Modern Slavery Service.

If we analyse solely rough sleeping, we can observe the impact of exploitative experiences in people’s lives. While 29 individuals were street homeless when they were recruited, 136 slept rough after escaping their abusers. After intervention from the Modern Slavery Service, only 6 remained rough sleepers.



The Passage Modern Slavery Service has demonstrated significant impact through its dedicated efforts to support individuals with lived experience of modern slavery and homelessness.

By providing crucial services such as emergency accommodation, welfare support, legal aid, mental health support and advocacy, the service has successfully assisted numerous individuals in navigating the complexities of their situations.

The statistics highlight the tangible benefits, including the placement of many in safe housing and the provision of essential services.

As The Passage continues its mission, it remains committed to identifying and supporting those affected by modern slavery and homelessness, ensuring they receive the comprehensive care and assistance needed to rebuild their lives.

To learn more, please visit our website:
https://passage.org.uk/modern-slavery-and-homelessness/

The Passage

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