

## Background: What is Modern Slavery?

Modern Slavery is an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, human trafficking, and exploitation. It is the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of individuals for exploitation. It includes holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them. Forced labour is a type of modern slavery where victims are forced to work long hours for little or no pay in poor conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. It can happen in various industries, including construction, hospitality, food packaging, manufacturing, agriculture and beauty (nail bars). More recently, there has been evidence of forced labour within some agencies supplying services to the regulated care sector.

### Questions to Consider

- Are there any indicators that the person may be a victim?
- Is a new agency being used?
- Are they charging inflated fees?
- Have safety checks been undertaken before accepting the person for a shift?
- Is the person being accompanied to appointments?
- Does the person arriving on shift match the profile shared by the agency?
- Have you undertaken welfare conversations?

### What to Do

Trafficking gangs are dangerous criminals, therefore it is vital you do not attempt to act on suspicions which may put you or the possible victim(s) at risk.

Should you come across anyone you believe could be a victim of Modern Slavery, an agency that raises your suspicions, or might be using forced labour, you can call the Modern Slavery helpline on 08000 121 700.

If there is an immediate risk of harm to an adult or child, contact the police via 999. Or, for non-urgent cases contact the police via 101 or the [GMP 'Report a Crime' webpage](#).

For more information take a look at the [Oldham Modern Slavery Toolkit](#).

Do not allow staff shortages and system pressures to influence your recruiting responsibilities. It is vital that permanent care home workers/registered managers engage with temporary workers on a regular basis to check on their welfare and circumstances etc.

## Why it Matters: Responsibilities Under the Law

To ensure the safety of residents and service users, service providers must assure themselves that anyone working in their service is competent and safe to do so.

It is the law that persons employed for the purposes of a regulated activity are 'fit and proper'.

The 'Right to Work' student visa permits students to work 20 hours per week. There have been examples of cases where some students have been working over 80 hours per week. The care home or provider has paid the supplying agency for the hours worked but the agency has only paid workers for the 20 permitted hours, withholding the rest, stating that this was needed to pay for other costs such as National Insurance contributions.

### Indicators

Signs of exploitation are often hidden. Victims can be any ethnicity, gender, nationality or age. Some common signs can include victims' legal documents (passport, ID, DBS) being held by someone else. They may be forced to use false documents. They may look tired, unkempt, malnourished, appear withdrawn, unable to answer questions about themselves or give inconsistent answers or they may be dressed inappropriately for the work.

### Responsibilities of the Care Provider

Care providers have responsibilities including:

- Having appropriate policies and procedures in place for managing adult abuse, or the risk of abuse including whistleblowing procedures
- Satisfying themselves that agency staff have been recruited appropriately (including relevant reference checks and Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks)
- Satisfying themselves that agency staff are inducted, trained and provided with ongoing supervision
- Checking online professional registrations sites e.g. The Nursing and Midwifery Council website to ensure professionals are registered.

## Modern Slavery in Regulated Care

### Further Responsibilities of the Care Provider

- Managing allegations against persons working with adults at risk, including reporting to professional bodies in relation to misconduct
- If there are concerns that a staff member (agency or not) has caused harm, or poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups, care providers have a legal obligation to raise a safeguarding alert and refer relevant information to the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#)
- Raising awareness of forced labour and modern slavery by [displaying information posters](#) and by making sure the topic is discussed often at team meetings.

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