

Understanding the Potential of Licensing Frameworks and Teams to **Tackle Modern Slavery in the UK**

**Introduction
and Overview**



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Foreword

Local councils have a broad ranging responsibility to identify and support people affected by modern slavery and to prevent this problem that traps and exploits people in many areas of life and economy.

Through effective collaboration with external agencies, training programs for staff and other actions, they play a key role in the prevention and eradication of this pernicious issue.

To identify and refer people trapped in exploitative situations, local councils are expected to liaise with the police, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and other relevant agencies. To support people affected by modern slavery, councils are expected to provide a range of services including safe and secure housing, financial assistance and access to counselling and healthcare.

They are also encouraged to provide training to staff on how to recognise and respond to signs of modern slavery. For example, social workers might observe signs of exploitation and abuse while carrying out their duties, while procurement officers need to identify and mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains.

We are proposing that we use the existing frameworks and the multiple licensing and enforcement teams across the country, to incorporate preventative modern slavery practices into existing policies and activities. We have already seen excellent and effective work with licensing teams to reduce anti-social behaviour and alcohol-fuelled crime in the nighttime economy; and this good practice has started to expand work to prevent modern slavery by initiatives led by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Local Government Association and similar bodies.

We recognise that licensing authorities and the public sector face various funding and resource constraints, which was heavily considered when creating the recommendations in this report. While implementing these recommendations will require some additional capacity, they will enable licensing teams to use their leverage to effectively prevent modern slavery.

It is imperative that local councils take advantage of the recommendations outlined in this report and fully utilise their licensing teams in preventing and addressing modern slavery. The implementation of this approach will not only aid in disrupting this heinous issue that affects many people, but ensure local communities are safer and more prosperous. Let us come together to tackle modern slavery.



Cllr Meenal Sachdev



About Shiva Foundation

Shiva Foundation is dedicated to tackling human exploitation in all forms.

We work to ensure that local and national government policies meaningfully address modern slavery and labour rights violations and support survivors fully. This includes but goes beyond the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

We work with policy-makers, local councils, government, businesses and regulatory bodies to make this happen and to achieve systemic change.

We work on projects that:

- Bridge the gap between policy and practice
- Embed better survivor support mechanisms into local practices
- Inform and recommend specific and practically useful guidance for businesses and the public sector
- Advocate for changes in legislation where it might impact people who were exploited or those vulnerable to exploitation

About the Report

This report builds on Shiva Foundation's experience coordinating the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership and the 2022 report 'Assessing your modern slavery risk – a self-assessment scorecard and supporting guidance for local authorities', which provides practical steps for public bodies to assess key risk areas of modern slavery in their operations, supply chains and other areas of work.

The report makes recommendations for strengthening statutory guidance and explores the opportunities for licensing authorities and practitioners to utilise tools at their disposal to enhance local anti-modern slavery responses. Modern slavery can be identified across a number of council areas including, but not limited to licensing, environmental health and trading standards, housing, procurement, community safety and social services. The report seeks to identify key principles for leveraging existing frameworks, which are already used by licensing and enforcement teams across the 333 local authorities in England, to embed anti-modern slavery responses and to provide practical solutions and recommendations for enhancing anti-modern slavery provisions across licensed sectors.

The report was compiled following extensive evidence gathering from April to August 2022. We conducted roundtables with 30 stakeholders, composed of 15 local authorities, regulatory agencies including the Environment Agency and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and three other non-statutory partners. Analysis was conducted on case studies utilising local licensing frameworks that addressed anti-social behaviour and crime in the night-time economy.

West Sussex Council Community Safety and Wellbeing Team held 1-to-1 meetings with two local authorities to provide further advice on how to implement a few of the recommendations and suggested activities highlighted throughout the report.

Outline

The report is organised as follows:

Section 1 explores how **national licensing guidance can be strengthened to prevent modern slavery** across the UK. This section contains a list of recommendations for national government.

Section 2 looks at how **local councils can update local licensing policies to directly address modern slavery**. This section contains a list of recommendations for local council leadership.

Section 3 focuses on the importance of awareness raising amongst licensed businesses and **how to build the internal capacity of local licensing teams to practically address modern slavery** in their daily operations. This section contains a list of suggested activities for local licensing enforcement teams.

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