



West Midlands Anti Slavery Network

A network of agencies tackling modern slavery in the West Midlands and beyond

Newsletter - July 2020

West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network

Robin Brierley, Executive Director, West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network

We hope that this newsletter finds you, your families, and colleagues well, and that you have managed to keep safe over the past few months. Please do let us know if there is anything, we can support you with and we will try and help or link you with someone who can.

Thank you for all the support you have given us since our last newsletter, we are so pleased that we have all managed to have kept MSHT on the radar. It is a huge achievement that the work of all partners has continued despite the most challenging times that Covid has brought to us. This I think is vital as so much work was done by all in the proceeding years and to lose that now would be devastating. We must all ensure that all the good work isn't lost, or that it doesn't take us many months to reinstate it.

Thank you also for maintaining the attendance at network meetings including our care and support task group. The Challenge Board is proving to be an excellent tool to capture all the issues we face. From the Challenges submitted, we then turn these into actions and allocate appropriately. Many of those actions go into the Strategic Board to be disseminated to the MS Leads from each LA area, health and others. Some go directly from us into other agencies such as PH England, NHS National MS Network and TSA.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping and their vulnerability to exploitation remains high on our list of priorities. Ensuring that people who are homeless or sleeping rough do not fall prey to traffickers and exploitation post Covid is so important, and something we have to take responsibility for. We work closely with the WMCA and the Homelessness Task Force Steering Group and Rough Sleepers task group on this. As we know from our colleagues at Staffline and Fresca, exploitation, and the need for labour very quickly post Covid will leave those with vulnerabilities most susceptible to exploitation. Interestingly there were only one or two NRM referrals submitted during lockdown for people in these groups, which was also mirrored by the findings in the publication from Dr Julia Tomas at The Passage this week. It is important we reflect and learn from this in the event of another spike in Covid regionally or nationally in the future.

Karen Saunders PH England has always been a key contributor to all our work but during Covid she has ensured we are all kept update with sharing information on an almost daily basis. There is also a suggestion of an interesting piece of research for us all on MSHT, Health and Covid – we will keep you updated on this.

We are planning for a new task group on language and images which will look at the appropriateness of what we use and the impact it has on the people we all work with. On another note I'm keen to explore the use of the word Modern as in Modern Slavery. Anyone wishing to be part of this particular task group please do contact Donna; donna.pryor@westmidlandsantislavery.org

We have been fortunate enough to receive funding from West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to employ a Slavery and Trafficking Victim Safeguarding Pathways Coordinator for the West Midlands. The recruitment process took place last month and I'm proud to say that Nick Walton was the successful candidate. His role will be similar to that of a DA Marac coordinator and will be essential in ensuring a multi-agency approach to victim care and support at the point of identification. Combined with the work of Lisa Bird, Adam, Charlotte, Local Authorities together with our network partners this will contribute to better outcomes for victims and survivors regardless of whether they choose to enter the NRM or not. It will also ensure we have a better understanding of the outcomes for survivors longer term – addressing the age-old question of where they are now.

I will leave our other updates to our next meetings so that the remainder of this newsletter is for our partner updates and the great work they are all doing.

Thank you for all your support, take care and see you again soon.

Amber Cagney, Development Manager, West Midlands Anti Slavery Network

COVID-19 has made our organisation change how it works significantly; it has been a different few months, working from home and meeting with you all online rather than in person. Despite being in lockdown our organisation has been as busy as ever, here's a few updates of what we've been up to.

- We recruited two new staff members for our SafePlace^{WM} team, all online, and welcomed them to the team on 1st July, please give a warm welcome to Hebe Lawson and Nicole Morris, both of whom have excellent backgrounds with significant experience working with vulnerable people.
We're looking forward to re-opening SafePlace^{WM} after a period of working remotely and delivering an outreach service, as the need for pre-NRM accommodation has been proven to be needed more than ever during this time.
- We've been working on an NRM and support options document that has been funded by the West Midlands PCC via the MSPTU, we've had extremely generous support from Wates Living Group, Staffline, Hope for Justice and Survivor Alliance with design and translation of the document which is going to help us to reach more survivors and ensure that they're fully informed of their rights and options at the point of identification. We look forward to sharing this resource once it's completed and we'll be running workshops with first responders on how to use it effectively very soon.
- After a lengthy application, training, and security clearance period, I'm now a member of the Home Office's multi-agency assurance panel to scrutinise the negative conclusive grounds decisions made by the SCA. This is an area that I'm extremely passionate about as I've seen first-hand the devastating impact an incorrect decision can make to a survivor that is later overturned, and I hope we'll start to see real change happen from the feedback we can give.
- I now sit on the Home Office's Modern Slavery Strategy Implementation Group on Victim Support which brings together key stakeholders to support the implementation of the Government's modern slavery strategy, I have been involved in consulting on policy documents, attending workshops on new projects and workstreams and ensuring the West Midlands and our partners views are represented in this space. I look forward to updating you soon on the latest "NRM Transformation Unit" and the changes we could soon see to the NRM process.

- We've been involved in training and awareness raising sessions with Sifa Fireside, Homeless Link, and Dudley Council, feeding into new reports and recording podcasts and webinars as we're exploring increasing our online presence and capability as we adapt to our 'new normal'.

Thank you for all of your continued support and engagement in all that we do and I look forward to being able to see you in person soon.

Staffline

Since the closure of a number of cash businesses such as car washes, nail bars and restaurants – we have assisted over 16 victims of labour exploitation and debt bondage back into meaningful work and sustainable financial independence and have assisted them in sourcing alternative accommodation from reputable agencies.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of a number of exploitative businesses and an increase in demand for labour in supermarket supply chains (resulting in an increase in disclosures from victims who were trafficked away from their previous employment and into more legitimate employment) we are also noticing that as the lockdown measures are relaxed – many victims / survivors are being coerced and pressured into returning to their former places of work as they start to re-open.

Paul McAnulty, Compliance Investigation Manager

Paul.Mcanulty@staffline.co.uk

www.staffline.co.uk



Transforming Communities Together (TCT)

As well as running online awareness sessions on County Lines and Homelessness & Modern Slavery, we've launched our first podcast today to empower people to learn about Modern Slavery - <https://soundcloud.com/tctogether/sets/focus-on-modern-slavery>

We have also been working with a number of church groups to produce weekly 'Hidden in Plain Sight' videos that help Christians engage with modern slavery as part of their faith journey - <http://bit.ly/hidden-in-plainsight>

<https://tctogether.org.uk/>



The Salvation Army Connect Project

'The Salvation Army Survivor Support Service's 'CONNECT Project' is delivering fortnightly online group sessions for clients during lock down.

Our usual face to face Drop In has had to cease for now and we have replaced this with weekly well-being calls for all our clients. However, we felt we could offer something more to help take the edge off the clients' isolation and boredom. So, we are going to be running these informal group sessions as a way for the women to connect with our volunteers and one another, and to provide a positive distraction during this time. Ice breakers, quizzes, sharing uplifting or insightful anecdotes whilst having a cuppa will be the focus until our Drop In can return to normal. For those clients who have more imminent issues they need support with, these will continue to be addressed in our one on one calls.'

'The Salvation Army Survivor Support Service's 'CONNECT Project' helped a client access food parcels for their family overseas. The client was concerned their elderly parents would die from starvation as a result of lock down. They were too frail to grow their own vegetables and with travel restrictions in place, family members were not able to bring them reserves or money as usual. Within a week we were able to mobilise resources internationally with a regional officer visiting the family to give them noodles, rice, milk, and canned goods. The officer took a photo of the family which we were then able to share back with the client. This was a very touching experience for them after not having seen their family for many years.'

**Melpo Economou, Local Programme Co-ordinator Survivor Support Service
Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery**
melpo.economou@salvationarmy.org.uk

**West Midlands Anti Slavery Network meeting dates 2020, for further information
contact:**

donna.pryor@westmidlandsantislavery.org

10th September

19th November

USEFUL LINKS

Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700

Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB): fib@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

[National Referral Mechanism Guidance](#)

[Digital NRM Form](#)

[Modern Slavery Act Duty to Notify](#)

[Home Office: 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery](#)

[Human Trafficking Foundation Trafficking Survivor Care Standards](#)

[Recovery Needs Assessment](#)

West Midlands Anti Slavery Network

Robin Brierley

Executive Director

07412 482791

info@westmidlandsantislavery.org

Donna Pryor

Administration and Finance Officer

07907 479477

donna.pryor@westmidlandsantislavery.org

www.westmidlandsantislavery.org



Amber Cagney

Development Manager

07907 478668

amber.cagney@westmidlandsantislavery.org

