

## **Contemporary slavery in the UK**

### ***Overview and key issues***

*Gary Craig, Aline Gaus, Mick Wilkinson, Klara Skrivankova and Aidan McQuade*

This report looks at the existence of slavery in the UK today. It reviews the different forms modern slavery takes, such as trafficking of women and children for sexual or domestic labour, forced labour or debt bondage.

In 2007, we commemorate the 200th anniversary of the legal abolition of the slave trade by Parliament. Slavery, however, continues and is commonplace across the world, including in the UK. Thousands of people are working as slaves within the UK at present; they are working in highly exploitative conditions, have no rights, and are threatened with the fear or the reality of violence. Although agencies such as the police and social services are increasingly aware of the problem, this is the first comprehensive review of evidence about the current extent of slavery in the UK.

The study was carried out by:

- reviewing published material, both within the UK and more widely
- looking at reports prepared by many agencies responsible for developing policy or delivering services to those affected by slavery
- searching a wide range of websites
- interviewing key personnel in a range of agencies.



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The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has supported this project as part of its programme of research and innovative development projects, which it hopes will be of value to policy makers, practitioners and service users. The facts presented and views expressed in this report are, however, those of the author and not necessarily those of the Foundation.

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**Website:** [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

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First published 2007 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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ISBN: 978 1 85935 573 2 (paperback)  
ISBN: 978 1 85935 572 5 (pdf)

A pdf version of this publication is available from the JRF website ([www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)). Further copies of this report, or any other JRF publication, can be obtained either from the JRF website ([www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/](http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/)) or from our distributor, York Publishing Services (tel: 01904 430033).

A CIP catalogue record for this report is available from the British Library.

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*Modern-day slavery victims are typically very poor, vulnerable and marginalised. Furthermore, they are unaware of the imperfect nature of contract or of transaction terms, the process of enslavement, and they lack viable secondary sources. The [modern-day slavery] perpetrators, in contrast, exploit the incompleteness of contracts or transactions in terms of the significant information gap between them and the victims (or potential victims) and the desperate state of the enslaveables that results from their ignorance, vulnerability and the absence of viable alternatives. (Adel Abadeer, 2004)*

*Slavery ... I didn't know about all these forms that existed. I think it's largely because we aren't expecting it. It is hidden. Generally people would not believe that it is possible under modern conditions. They would say 'No I think you are making it all up', because it's just too incredible. (Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 1999)*

*... [the abolition of the slave trade] is something absolutely without precedent in history ... if you pore over the histories of all peoples, I doubt that you will find anything more extraordinary. (Alexis de Tocqueville, 1810)*



## **Contents**

1 Introduction	9
2 The scope of modern slavery: definitions and numbers	12
3 Modern slavery: the international context	24
4 Modern slavery in the UK	31
5 Sexual trafficking	48
6 What is the current situation in the UK?	55
7 Conclusions and recommendations	64
References	73





## **1 Introduction**

The year 2007 is a significant year as it marks the 200th anniversary of UK legislation abolishing the slave trade. The state-sanctioned transportation of as many as ten million black slaves from African countries to Latin America, the Caribbean and the southern US remains one of the most shameful episodes of the history of the so-called 'enlightened' nations.

The 1807 UK legislation and similar laws in other countries were not enough to halt slavery and further legislation was needed in both the UK and elsewhere. Campaigning groups were established to draw attention to the continued existence of slavery. The most prominent of these was the Anti-Slavery Society, formed in 1839 and renamed in the 1990s Anti-Slavery International, one of the co-authoring bodies for this report.

The continuing legacy of slavery and its impacts on relationships between black and white people (particularly in the various forms of individual and structural racism that persist today) and on the development of poorer black countries is the subject of substantial current debate. These debates are critically important for resolving some of the long-standing and unanswered questions about historical slavery and its legacies in the modern world.

However, slavery also exists in the contemporary world. Some forms of slavery, for example, the 'descent slavery' of countries of the Sahel such as Mali and Mauritania, are simply a continuance of long-standing arrangements. Other forms – such as child labour – have existed for many years but have increasingly been constrained in many parts of the world by international conventions to protect the relatively recently recognised rights of children. The trafficking of women and children for human sexual gratification is an enduring problem, and debt bondage occurs on a massive scale, particularly in South Asia.

Slavery exists in the modern world, however, not just in poor countries. It exists in the UK in many forms, coming to light only when a crisis occurs such as the death of the 19 Chinese men drowned while cockle-picking in Morecambe Bay, or when the police raid brothels and find enslaved women forced into prostitution.

This report reviews the nature and extent of slavery in contemporary Britain as a contribution to the debate about slavery and the conditions under which it is still possible for it to happen. The report was commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) trustees and we hope that the Foundation will be able to invest further resources in work to uncover, map and respond to modern slavery. Although the report – largely because of the limitations of the JRF remit – necessarily focuses on the UK, we want to stress that slavery in the contemporary UK cannot be seen in isolation from elsewhere. Most of those working as slaves in the UK have come from elsewhere, often legally. Modern slavery is, of course, illegal, dynamic, internationalised and, because of these characteristics, difficult to map.

The most significant form of slavery in the world include descent-based slavery, bonded labour, serfdom, debt bondage, sexual slavery, child labour and enforced participation in armed conflict. In this report we will review the evidence regarding the key areas of slavery occurring in the UK: forced labour, debt bondage, sexual slavery and child trafficking and labour.

Much of the material here has been accumulated through a review of a very wide range of literature, and searches of hundreds of relevant websites (in English, German and French languages), and we have therefore referenced the sources in some detail. We have also drawn heavily on the work of a number of key campaigning groups that have been undertaking the most difficult work of freeing slaves – men, women and children – with whom they have come into contact.

We have drawn on the findings of a pilot study on trafficking for forced labour recently undertaken by Anti-Slavery International and on a range of more anecdotal evidence collected by the

Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) and others in the course of episodes of fieldwork. We are grateful to all those who provided information or were willing to be interviewed for freely making material available and responding to requests for help. We are also grateful for the support we have had from Anne Harrop, Director of Research at JRF, for her continuing support. We hope this report will at least offer some sense of the scope and shape of modern slavery in the UK and help to generate effective political and policy responses.

Professor Kevin Bales, President of Free the Slaves, argues that it is perfectly possible to end slavery throughout the world within a generation, but this will require political will, financial and human resources. Two hundred years after the successful campaign to stop a trade that many then argued could never be halted, it is clearly time to make a renewed effort to eradicate slavery in the modern world.

## **2 The scope of modern slavery: definitions and numbers**

### ***Definitions***

It might be helpful to begin this review of the definitions and scope of modern-day slavery by identifying the elements of the exploitative relationship between one human being and another that constitute slavery. These are essentially threefold:

- they involve severe economic exploitation;
- the absence of any framework of human rights;
- the maintenance of control of one person over another by the prospect or reality of violence.

The last element is important because very often relationships of enslavement do not actually involve physical violence. However, the nature of the relationship – the nature of working and housing conditions, the withdrawal of important papers such as passports or ID documents, deceit and abuse of power, the use of what are essentially thugs to maintain control – may make the threat of violence a real one and render the possibility of flight a remote one. Each of these elements can be seen in the situation of the Chinese cockle-pickers in Morecambe Bay, as reported widely in the press. They were brought illegally into the country and their documentation was removed from them, they lived in appalling conditions and were transported in closely supervised vehicles to their place of work, they worked in equally appalling conditions and for pitifully small ‘wages’, and they had no opportunity to protest their circumstances. As much evidence shows, those who have protested such conditions may be beaten, abused, raped, deported or even killed.

It is also important to be able to distinguish what are poor – or even appalling – working conditions (that occur in the UK not infrequently) from slavery. The key aspect of slavery, as the Palermo Protocol makes clear (see [www.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraffic.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraffic.htm)) (see Case study 1

below) is that of coercion. Coercion exists “in any situation in which the person has no real and acceptable alternative but to submit to the *abuse* involved” (Weissbrodt and Anti-Slavery International, 2002; authors’ emphasis). Abuse in turn refers to the treatment of one person by another specific person (covering one or more of the six indicators of forced labour devised by the International Labour Organization [ILO]), and needs to be distinguished from the situation of people being forced into dangerous or difficult work by economic circumstances or other impersonal forces.

Case study 1 shows how even those relatively competent and skilled workers who enter the country legally may find themselves working in enslaved conditions.

### ***Case study 1: Polish workers***

A group of Polish people came to work in the UK. They had no idea where they were when the gangmaster’s minivan brought them to the house in Exeter in the middle of the night. They were made to wait on the patch of grass outside while the dozen or so Afghans inside were told to throw their things into black dustbin bags. The Afghans looked frightened. They were bundled into the van and driven off. And that was the last the Poles heard of them. The driver appeared to be Chinese-looking and spoke no English; the Poles spoke no English either, so they could not ask what was going on. The Poles said they had been told when they were recruited back home that they would be working somewhere near Southampton. They said there had been no mention of packing chicken for a major supermarket in Devon. But without language, money, or even the proper name of the boss of the company to which they seemed to have been handed over on arrival in England, they felt helpless. They were not employed directly by the factory that supplied the supermarket but subcontracted in a complex chain through a series of labour agencies.

The house to which the Poles were taken was unremarkable from the outside. Inside, there was no furniture, just mountains of rubbish, piles of syringes, soiled mattresses on the floor and a terrible smell. They slept on the bare mattresses and were taken by the minivan to their 2-10 pm shift. Twenty Poles were sleeping three and four to a small room, ten of them in another small house nearby. They were threatened with eviction and loss of two weeks’ wages by their gangmasters if they dared to tell anyone about their

conditions. They were also told they must be very quiet and not to go out in groups or the police would come. They said they felt intimidated.

They had been recruited in Poland to come to England after 1 May 2004, as soon as they were legally entitled. Two men from an English labour agency came to a central Polish city and interviewed workers in batches of ten, non-stop for two days. They had promised the Minimum Wage (£4.50 per hour), good accommodation for £25 per person per week, and lots of hours' overtime. But the Poles said it had gone wrong almost as soon as it started. There had been no work and no wages in their first week in Southampton, and they were told they would have to pay rent £40 each, although they were sleeping on the floor in the kitchen and in the sitting room. Then suddenly they had all been taken to Exeter in the night and left there.

Their payslips showed that £40 was being deducted from each of their pay packets each week for rent although the legal maximum for those on the Minimum Wage is just under £25. Several of them were given the same National Insurance number. They were having tax deducted at a high emergency rate, although the Tax Office said it had not yet received payments for them. The contracts they signed were made without translation. After deductions, their payslips showed they were getting just £115 a week for 40 hours (£2.88 per hour). But this was not what the runners who brought their cash were actually giving them, they said. Another £15 was disappearing along the line without explanation. Most of them had not registered with the Home Office because the £50 required to do so seemed an impossible amount when they were trying to survive and support families at home on so little money. By failing to do so, they had put themselves on the wrong side of law. This made them vulnerable to deportation if they contacted the police.

Tadeusz had been a farrier in Poland, and had wanted to better himself, so he had given up his lifelong job, never thinking he might regret it. Now he wanted to go home but could not yet afford the return fare. "I came to this free country as a free man wanting to work hard. I feel robbed, robbed of my rights. How can this happen?" he said.

Anna and Marek were a couple in their early forties. She was one of two women in the group, sleeping on the floor of what should have been the sitting room. They left their four children with Marek's mother when Marek had been made redundant from his job in financial services in an area of Poland where there is 23% unemployment.

In the corner of the downstairs room that served as a kitchen, there was an electric cooker that had no plug, so the main cable had its wires stripped bare and pushed straight into the socket.

A couple of younger men from the group showed their payslips but they were clearly confused and did not know when they would get paid. A man they said was Afghan had been coming late at night on Saturdays with their cash, but five of them had not received any money last week. They did not know who their boss was to complain to, their payslips carried the name of a different

company, but it had no address, and no information they could pin down to provide a contact.

The workers finally managed to escape their slave-like conditions thanks to the involvement of the local trades union.

*Source:* Lawrence (2005)

Slavery, slavery-like practice, serfdom as well as debt bondage is referred to as contained in the 1926<sup>1</sup> and 1956<sup>2</sup> Conventions. Technically, slavery refers to situations of absolute control of one person over another but clearly within the world of forced labour, for example, there are many gradations ranging from slavery through to super-exploitation. This tends to complicate debates. The 1926 Slavery Convention described slavery as "... the status and/or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised". In 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 4 of which proclaims: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms". The 1956 UN Supplementary Convention offers a definition of servile status and "slavery-like practices", such as debt bondage, serfdom, unfree marriages and the exploitation of young people. In 1966, the Economic, Social and Cultural Covenant recognised "the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts".

The fundamental definitional framework for trafficking for forced labour, exploitation and conditions similar to slavery is provided by UN legal instruments on trafficking and slavery and ILO Conventions on forced labour. The concept of trafficking in persons (covering both children and adults) was defined internationally for the first time by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons supplementing the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Article 3 of the Convention defines trafficking as follows:

*Trafficking shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use*

*of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.*

This definition was adopted also by the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Council of Europe, 2004; see [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)).

Additionally the Protocol clarifies that even where the child (any person under the age of 18) may have given consent to exploitation, this should be regarded as irrelevant and that the recruitment and so on of children for the purposes of exploitation is also to be considered as trafficking in persons. Article 34 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also concerns the child's right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including for prostitution and pornography; Article 35 requires states to make every effort to "prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children for any purposes or in any form".

The definition and regime of *forced labour* are covered by the ILO Forced Labour Convention No 29 and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No 105. The term 'forced or compulsory labour', according to Convention No 29, means "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" (Article 1[1]). Clearly, the "menace of any penalty" may include the threat or reality of violence, removal from the country where the work is taking place or threats against others such as family members. The ILO has also produced perhaps the most comprehensive reports on forced labour and on child labour (ILO, 2005a, 2006).



These reports cover defining characteristics and country case examples. They place trafficking in its global economic context, for example, estimating total illicit profits in one year from trafficked forced labourers at around US\$32 billion. They advocate global action to combat these particular forms of contemporary slavery.

The most challenging questions that arise from these definitions are: how exploitative does the labour relation have to be in order for the subject to be considered either a trafficked person and/or a person in forced labour? (How do we measure the degree of control exerted by one person over another, especially when this control may exist in physical, emotional, financial or sexual forms?) How severe do the labour conditions have to be in order to be considered a trafficked person and/or person in forced labour? (The Polish workers in Case study 1 above were being paid less than half the Minimum Wage: would 60%, 70%, 80% of the Minimum Wage have been enough for some to argue that they would be lifted out of slavery?) How deceived does a worker have to be in order to be considered a trafficked person and/or person in forced labour? (Many find themselves in slavery because of their lack of fluency in English or other relevant language that then creates barriers to them accessing knowledge about their rights or where to go to find out about them.)

The element of coercion, as noted, is a useful indicator of forced labour. Weissbrodt suggests, referring to the *travaux préparatoires* of the Palermo Protocol (see also Chapter 4), that coercion exists, as we have indicated, in “any situation in which the person involved has no real and acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved” (Weissbrodt and Anti-Slavery International, 2002). This is a crucial aspect determining the very situation of the trafficked person, but it also complicates the task of identification. Very often, trafficked people do not see themselves as victims of trafficking; rather they simply see themselves as people who have no other option but to do what is demanded from them. Furthermore, service providers with responsibilities towards trafficked people, such as law enforcers or social workers, often fail to grasp that people they are encountering have been trafficked into forced labour. This was because they

*presumed* that *illegal* entry was fundamental to trafficking and that, if the workers 'agreed' at some point along the line to do the work on offer this meant that they were not in a situation of forced labour. Yet, the ILO and the European Union Experts Group on Trafficking in Human Beings propose that the main focus in identifying trafficking needs to be on the situation of exploitation, that is, the *forced labour* element (European Commission et al, 2004), rather than the *movement* element. Further, as noted above, submission to a situation under threat is a very different thing from free and informed choice.

To help overcome some of these practical confusions, the ILO has suggested six indicators of forced labour (see ILO, 2004):

- threats or actual physical harm to the worker;
- restriction of movement and confinement, to the workplace or to a limited area;
- debt bondage, where the worker works to pay off a debt or loan, and is not paid for his or her services. The employer may provide food and accommodation at such inflated prices that the worker cannot escape the debt;
- withholding of wages or excessive wage reductions that violate previously made agreements;
- retention of passports and identity documents, so that the worker cannot leave, or prove his/her identity and status;
- threat of denunciation to the authorities, where the worker is in an irregular immigration status.

In practice these are often present in a combination of two or more elements. Anti-Slavery International argues that cases where at least one of the ILO listed indicators is identified should *at the very minimum* prompt a thorough investigation, and where two or more elements of coercion are identified, then the case should be identified as forced labour.

To overcome the problem of non-identification of the majority of trafficked people, the situation of all suspected trafficked people needs to be assessed in the widest sense of vulnerability in order to see whether they are coerced or deceived. The situation of exploitation itself needs to be the core determinant, not the means by which the person arrived into such a situation.

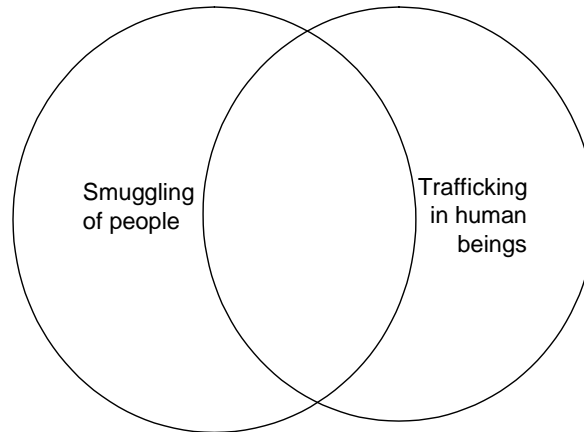
The lack of clarity in the public discourse between the concepts of smuggling and trafficking is also problematic. The UN Protocol against Smuggling in Migrants states that smuggling is “The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident”.

In other words, smuggling involves the explicit consent of a migrant to be smuggled illegally across the borders. The relationship between the smuggler and the migrant typically terminates when the point of destination has been reached. Even though smuggling often happens under dangerous and undignified conditions, it is a contract with consent. Trafficking involves ongoing exploitation and even if the person might have consented at some stage, this consent is meaningless, because of the deception and coercion involved. Regardless of the legality of the route, exploitation occurs at the end of the route with the provision of employment through force or deception. This exploitation often also incorporates substandard accommodation and extortionate interest on any initial loan. Furthermore, trafficking may also occur internally, within national borders, whereas smuggling is always across borders of states.

In practice, smuggling and trafficking are often connected, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Given the substantial overlap between trafficking and smuggling in practice, there is a clear imperative to understand the specific distinctions between the two. For example, if the key element of trafficking is understood, erroneously, to relate to the illegal crossing of borders, then institutions with responsibility for the protection of vulnerable people may completely overlook the much more critical and fundamental indicators of trafficking for forced labour.

**Figure 1: Conceptual relationship between trafficking and smuggling**



### ***Numbers***

Modern slavery exists throughout the world, but numerically particularly in parts of South East Asia, Latin America, the US, parts of Africa and Europe. Precise numbers are hard to come by for obvious reasons and as Bales observes (2004a), we could know the numbers much more accurately if governments and international agencies cooperated much better than they do. The ILO estimates that a minimum of 12.3 million people are enslaved in the world today. These include at least 360,000 in industrialised countries, of which at least 270,000 have been trafficked into forced labour.

Of those trafficked into forced labour, approximately 43% are trafficked into sexual exploitation, approximately 32% into labour exploitation and about 25% are exploited for a mix of sexual and labour reasons. The ILO estimates that the worldwide traffic in human beings is worth at least US\$32 billion annually, with just under half of that (about US\$15.5 billion) obtained from the traffic to industrialised countries.

Because of the illegal and hidden nature of slavery, figures for its extent remain contested, however. Human trafficking is notoriously difficult to measure in quantitative terms:

*... one of the most challenging problems facing researchers is the fact that most of the populations relevant to the study of human trafficking, such as victims/survivors of trafficking for sexual exploitation, traffickers, or illegal migrants are part of a 'hidden population', ie it is almost impossible to establish a sampling frame and draw a representative sample of the population. (Laczko, 2005; see also Laczko, 2003)*

Kevin Bales, Director of the US-based organisation Free the Slaves, sister organisation to Anti-Slavery International, argues that there are an estimated 27 million enslaved people worldwide (Bales, 2004a). Others put the figures still higher. The ILO's 2006 report on child labour states that in 2004 there were 218 million children trapped in child labour worldwide, of whom some 126 million children were engaged in "hazardous work" (ILO, 2005b). According to a recent report, by 2006 that figure had reached 171 million, including in factories, mines and agriculture (UNICEF, 2006a). Despite these difficulties in measurement, an increasing number of studies are being undertaken giving a better grasp of the extent of modern slavery. In 2003 there were an estimated 3-4.5 million people living in the EU without any legal papers, with an estimated 400,000 people a year being trafficked into member states (Smartt, 2003). The 2006 Department of State *Trafficking in persons* report estimates that of the 600,000-800,000 men, women and children trafficked across international borders each year, approximately 80% are women and girls, and up to 50% are minors. The data also demonstrated that the majority of transnational victims were trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. With a focus on transnational trafficking in persons, however, these numbers do not include millions of victims around the world who are trafficked within their own national borders (see [www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/)).

There are no reliable estimates for the number of trafficked people in the UK, a problem that both the police and Home Office acknowledge. The Solicitor General suggested in a recent

parliamentary speech that more than 1,000 women were trafficked into the UK for sexual purposes annually, but this is generally recognised to be a substantial under-(guess)time. (See Chapter 4 on sexual trafficking.)

Migrant workers, with their various immigration statuses and entitlements to work, are the group most at risk within the UK of becoming subjected to slavery or slavery-like working conditions. Migrant workers are “person(s) who is to be engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national”. An irregular migrant is “someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country”. (These may be illegal migrants or legal migrants working illegally.) There are at least 200 million migrants worldwide, most of them working in rich countries. This number is steadily growing, driven not least by conditions in home/sending countries (including war, famine, ethnic cleansing and poverty) but also by an increasing recognition of the opportunities to be taken advantage of for a better standard of living.

There are estimated to be about 1.4 million registered foreign workers in the UK; estimates of the number of illegal workers in the UK range from about 300,000-800,000. UK enforcement agencies estimate there may be as many as 10,000 gangmasters operating across the various industrial sectors, most of them employing migrant labour. The main sectors for the employment of migrant workers include agriculture, food processing and packing, construction, catering, leisure, hotels, cleaning, textiles and social and health care<sup>3</sup>. Many migrant workers working – apparently legally – do so under such levels of exploitation that they meet the international legal definition of ‘forced labour’.

According to the ILO’s survey of forced labour in 2005, worldwide there are, as noted, at a minimum 12.3 million people in conditions of forced labour under conditions of economic exploitation, state or military imposed conditions, sexually exploitative or ‘mixed’ conditions (ILO, 2005a). The ILO 2006 report additionally suggests there may be 126 million children worldwide in the worst forms of ‘child labour’.

An estimated 8.4 million children are in slavery, trafficked, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour. (The ILO uses the term 'unconditional' worst forms of child labour to describe such situations. These estimates are the global minimum estimates of forced labour.)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The League of Nations Slavery Convention (1926) and its 1953 Protocol define slavery as "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised" (Article 1[1] of the 1926 Convention).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations' Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956) Article 1 offers a definition of debt bondage and serfdom, otherwise known as 'slavery-like practices':

- *debt bondage*, that is to say, the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt, or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined;
- *serfdom*, that is to say, the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labour on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status.

<sup>3</sup> For example, 5,500 Filipino agency nurses were sent to the UK in 2003 under false pretences, and are now working 60-hour weeks, paying off large sums – £5,000 – as contract fees.

### 3 Modern slavery: the international context

In this chapter, we briefly summarise the international literature relating to modern slavery. Although the focus of this report is on the UK, it is important, as we have noted, to understand the UK as merely one site within which a series of dynamic processes occur, often involving chains or groups of actors that might touch on the political, social or economic interests of the UK or its geographical territory. Thus the UK is a site within which modern slavery exists, but it is also a conduit through which some slaves pass, and it is connected, particularly through economic chains and criminal gangs, to actors who have their base inside or outside the UK. It is increasingly impossible to understand modern forms of slavery without this international context, particularly as global migration becomes feasible for more people.

Much of the literature pertaining to contemporary slavery is in the grey domain. It is not in the formal academic sector, but is the output of practitioners working in the field of human rights, international law, employment law, policy studies and policy change. It is also increasingly emerging from government agencies and international development agencies. There has also, in recent years, been a formidable body of work from investigative journalists (see, for instance, Leader and various articles in *The Guardian*, 11-13 January 2005 and the extensive list of articles at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trafficking_in_human_beings)), and there are a range of websites providing information on contemporary slavery and trafficking, from those established by campaigning groups (for instance, [www.antislavery.org/](http://www.antislavery.org/) and [www.gaatw.net/](http://www.gaatw.net/)).

There is an increasing set of sources on national and international definitions and treaties, legislation and strategies to outlaw and counter slavery. These were touched on in Chapter 2. Bales and Robbins (2001) trace the development of slavery definitions in international agreements from 1815 to 2001 (see also Miers, 2003). They provide an overview of slavery definitions in international law and an analysis of the evolution of slavery



definitions and the main characteristics of slavery in international agreements.

Human trafficking, for sexual or forced labour purposes, is the most numerically common form of modern slavery. The trafficking Protocol of the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime came into effect in 2003. The definition was given in Chapter 2. Most international agencies have contributed to the growing literature. For example, UNICEF has published a range of documents on child exploitation and trafficking in the past few years (see [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk)) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime issued a comprehensive *Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons* (2006)<sup>1</sup>. The US Department of State produces an annual *Trafficking in persons* report. It provides a country-by-country analysis of trafficking (see [www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/)).

The Council of Europe has instituted legal instruments in relation to the trafficking of women and children. These put forward a pan-European strategy taking in definitions, general measures, a methodological and action framework, prevention, victim assistance and protection, criminal measures, judicial cooperation and coordination, culminating in the *Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings* (May 2005)<sup>2</sup>. The European Parliament has also issued a related set of recommendations. The European Commission has published a comprehensive European strategy for combating trafficking in women (2001) and introduced several European legal instruments. In 2005 it also drafted an EU action plan on trafficking in human beings that sets obligations for member states.

One key aspect of the debate about trafficking highlighted in the literature is whether trafficking should be an immigration issue or a human rights concern. Networks such as the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) are uncompromising in their position that “ensuring safe migration and protecting rights of migrant workers should be at the core of all anti-trafficking efforts”, and they argue it is important to “challenge anti-trafficking paradigms and programmes which ignore human rights” (GAATW, 2006; see also [www.gaatw.net](http://www.gaatw.net) and for a brief but comprehensive

analysis, and for the 'rights' approach to people trafficking, see Ould, 2004).

It is clear from numerous accounts, however, that a rights focus has not been central to the UK authorities' handling of trafficking cases and at times, responses to the victims of exploitation has been wholly inappropriate:

*Because migration is such a controversial issue in the UK, the approach to trafficking has at times overemphasized law enforcement at the expense of the protection needs of the victim. The UK has tended to address trafficking as an issue of migration control rather than as a human rights problem. This has led to the deportation of trafficking victims, especially women, without adequate consideration of their safety and well being." (Young and Quick, 2006; see also Burgoyne and Darwin, 2006; Herzfeld et al, 2006)*

In Chapter 2 we discussed the issue of the numbers of those subjected to slavery and trafficking in particular. There are a growing number of accounts from individuals, countries and regions about the growing scale of contemporary slavery. Anti-Slavery International provides a series of recent informative case country reports<sup>3</sup>. They also provide an overview of debt bondage in which they estimate that there are some 20 million bonded labourers worldwide (see [www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/publication.htm](http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/publication.htm); see also Anti-Slavery International, 1998). Dozens of journal articles evidence the global nature of the problem – from the well-known and documented cases of Thailand and the former Soviet Union/Eastern Europe to the largely ignored in the United Arab Emirates, to the only recently exposed in the US and Canada (McClelland, 2001; Orlova, 2004; Rennel, 2004; Corrin, 2005; Fang, 2005; Degorge, 2006).

Bales (2001) argues that not only has slavery seen a rapid escalation since 1945, it has also undergone 'a dramatic change' in character. Key to that change are three convergent processes: a tripling of the world's population post-1945; rapid economic change and globalisation that have driven rural people off the land into

cities and into debt; and widespread government corruption and indifference to the plight of the trade's victims. Central to that transformation is the fact that the new slavery "is marked by a dramatic shift in the basic economic equation of exploitation – slaves are cheaper today than at any other time in human history. The agricultural slave that cost \$1,000 in Alabama in 1850 (\$50,000 at today's prices) can be purchased for around \$100 today" (Bales, 2001). As a consequence, although there has been a significant drop in the price of slaves since 1950, there are still huge profits to be made, the value of global slavery is estimated at \$12.3 billion per year, but "the expensive slave of the past was a protected investment: today's slave is cheap and disposable" (Bales, 2001). Slavery is also global in the sense that although most slave-produced goods are consumed locally, other goods and services filter through the entire global economy and there is now "a significant amount of international trade in slave-produced goods" (Young and Quick, 2006; see also Burgoyne and Darwin, 2006; Herzfeld et al, 2006).

In *Disposable people*, Bales defines slavery as "work for no pay and under the threat of violence". But van den Anker argues that this depiction is too restrictive, that the element of not being paid is not essential. One can, she suggests, be paid some remuneration and still be in a state of slavery in that the key elements are "of being forced to work against one's will and under threat of violence, often with restrictions on freedom of movement". She stresses that not all forms of contemporary slavery have globalisation as their root cause: "some depend more on local practices and traditions, than on the changing international economy". Nonetheless, she argues:

*Economic globalization in the form of a sudden change of development strategy towards full incorporation into the world market, as part of structural adjustment programmes implemented by the IMF and the World Bank, does contribute to contemporary forms of slavery by increasing poverty and therefore vulnerability for specific groups of people." (van den Anker, 2004)*

She provides a series of examples to illustrate her case, from export drives enforced on poor countries to the increase in trafficking in persons, and concludes that, “Globalization influences all forms of slavery negatively, even if they existed previously in a traditional form”. She also champions a human rights approach towards the victims of slavery, with coherent strategies, including economic strategies, to assist their transformation out of bondage (see also Dowling, 2004).

Bales also makes a strong plea for action against slavery in all its forms, laying the responsibility at the feet of individuals as much as institutions:

Of course, there are many kinds of exploitation in the world, many kinds of injustice and violence to be concerned about. But slavery is important because it is exploitation, violence, and injustice all rolled together. There is no more potent combination of these three crimes. If there is one fundamental violation of our humanity we cannot allow, it is slavery. (Bales, 2004b)

Several commentators agree that current enforcement approaches are inadequate to the task. Smartt argues, for example, that “it is questionable whether international law enforcement agencies, such as Europol, Interpol or the FBI, are truly collaborating in the field of human trafficking, since their different intelligence systems do not really talk to each other”, a problem “exacerbated by Europol’s insistence on eleven language multi-lingualism” (Smartt, 2003).

Van Impe argues, further, that as the root cause of trafficking is multi-dimensional, “a structural problem caused by a diverse set of economic and social realities, commonly called ‘the gap between the rich and the poor’”, so must the remedy be multi-faceted.

*When there are powerful push factors in countries of origin, or pull factors in receiving countries, and especially when the two fully converge, restrictive measures alone cannot arrest human trafficking ... [Instead] an effective strategy must combine and*

*balance punitive measures with protection of human rights, stricter border control and the removal of the root causes of irregular movements. Measures must be agreed and coordinated between origin, transit and receiving countries. (van Impe, 2001)*

In part, that must involve:

- formulating a common EU immigration policy;
- instituting information campaigns about possibilities for legal migration and the dangers inherent to illegal migration;
- providing illegal migrants with rights in order to secure their evidence for legal action against the perpetrators;
- severe punitive financial sanctions against perpetrators;
- addressing the developmental needs of the countries of origin.

In essence, “coordinated action at a national level, but also on an international legal scale, a global, multi-disciplinary approach” (van Impe, 2001; see also Ghosh, 1998).

Doomernik (2004) advocates anything but stricter border controls. He considers migration to be a natural product of a globalised world, and asserts that just as western developed countries are only too happy to take the overt benefits of globalisation – economic growth and prosperity – so they should make allowances for concomitant factors that they might not welcome as readily. He argues that the current fixation with ever-increasing border controls is doomed to failure – people will always find a way to migrate – and is also assisting no one other than organised crime and the people smugglers. Instead he calls for greater flexibility in relation to legal migration, which he argues would take power out of the hands of the criminals (Doomernik, 2004).

One other important text outlines the fact that a key driver in contemporary sex trafficking has been the collapse of the former Soviet Union, which has left both its own economy and those of its former satellites in disorder, and in some cases, in a state of near collapse, with organised crime filling the vacuum left by the

collapse of the old order (Malarek, 2004). Most commentators agree that a fundamental factor in trafficking is the conditions in the sending countries: these are often countries characterised by poverty, a lack of basic education, by poor attention to human rights and, frequently, by a recent record of conflict leading to considerable demographic dislocation and migration. A typical example is that of Moldova<sup>4</sup> where one seventh of the population is estimated to have migrated from the country in the past few years to seek work (in three years 1,131 victims of child trafficking were identified in this country; see [www.unicef.org.uk/unicefuk/policies/policy\\_detail.asp?policy=30](http://www.unicef.org.uk/unicefuk/policies/policy_detail.asp?policy=30)).

Oxfam has argued that the fundamental requirement to combat trafficking at source is to address the impoverishment of many countries by these processes (see, for example, Masika, 2002), and to ensure “strategies are developed that prevent communities at risk from becoming vulnerable”. Anti-Slavery International would add that vulnerability arises not only out of material conditions, but that discriminatory power relationships, which aim to dehumanise those who are enslaved in both sending and receiving countries, must also be addressed.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> This was pre-dated by an equally comprehensive handbook from Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW, 2000), which focused on rights-based and advocacy strategies.

<sup>2</sup> A factsheet on the Convention is available at [www.coe.int/trafficking](http://www.coe.int/trafficking)

<sup>3</sup> These include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Benin and Gabon, The Sudan, Niger and China.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF has also prepared a preliminary report on trafficking of children in the region.

## 4 Modern slavery in the UK

### *The literature*

The literature on trafficking in the UK is also relatively sparse. There is a growing body of newspaper accounts of individual victim case histories (see, for example, Stratton, 2005; Wainwright, 2006) but as previously asserted, by its very nature, much of this trade in people is both clandestine and below the radar of academics, policy specialists and the media. The literature on trafficking for sexual exploitation is largely covered in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, therefore, we focus on trafficking for forced labour as a separate and distinctive category together with literature pertaining to migrant workers who may not have been trafficked but who are working in conditions bordering on a state of servitude. A major theme in the literature is that while the UK government has acted to prosecute traffickers and criminalise all forms of trafficking – in the 2004 Sexual Offences Act and the 2004 Immigration and Asylum Act – the current lack of protection for those who escape from trafficking in the UK compounds the abuse that many have already suffered and prevents victims from bringing their plight to the attention of the authorities. Many victims continue to be removed from the UK as illegal immigrants, with no assessment of the risks they may return to and without their traffickers being held to account.

An early account was given in *Britain's secret slaves*, which provided a picture of domestic slavery in the UK (focused primarily in London) (Anderson, 1993; for a more recent account of the plight of migrant domestic workers [MDWs] in the UK, with proposals for remedies, see Anderson, 2004). A more contemporary report by Anti-Slavery International (2006), *Trafficking for forced labour: UK country report*, furnishes much greater detail and analysis than the earlier report (Anti-Slavery International, 1998), of what is now clearly recognised as a UK-wide problem (for more detail and analysis, see Skrivankova, 2006). Pointing to the structural, systematic, global nature of trafficking, the author argues that it is a product of social change,

economic and political factors, and asserts that, “migration has become a necessity of life for many people” (Skrivankova, 2006). Skrivankova continues:

*A worrying fact is how widespread and common exploitation in the UK labour market is ... exploitative practices such as wage reductions, failure to pay, long working hours, lack of breaks, holidays, health and safety issues, removal of documents, dismissal as a result of complaining about working conditions, and demanding unlawful fees by employment agencies, are situations which are directly or indirectly experienced by what seems to be a significant proportion of migrant workers in low-pay sectors, sectors where work can be described by the ‘three Ds’ (difficult-dangerous-dirty) or where there is a high concentration of migrant workers in general. (Skrivankova, 2006)*

While unable to provide figures on the scale of forced labour in the UK, Skrivankova’s report (2006) furnishes a range of qualitative accounts on the subject, based both on first-hand and anecdotal accounts of nationals from Europe, Africa, South America and Asia trafficked into the UK. Alongside the frequent accounts of deception, debt bondage, the removal of passports, isolation, language difficulties, low wages and irregular deductions from wages, intimidation and coercion, and the concentration in industries depending on casual and temporary labour, there are other, previously little-known insights, such as the group of women from the Baltic States trafficked purposely (although they had not been told this when recruited) for illicit activities such as shoplifting.

The research offers two clear findings. First, that the majority of the trafficked people researchers encountered entered the UK *legally* through regular migration routes and work visas. What then subjected them to forced labour were debt bondage, the removal of documents and an inadequate understanding of their rights in the UK. Second, that statutory agency personnel interfacing with trafficked migrant workers were often unsure about what to do to assist them or who to refer them on to and kept few, if any, records as to their subsequent well-being. The report also notes that since the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act, there has yet to be a single prosecution brought for trafficking for labour exploitation.



Anderson and Rogaly (2005) offer another contribution to the literature. This provides a concise account of the international legal framework to forced labour and to trafficking in persons, together with overall UK policy approaches and recent UK legislation. They make a detailed investigation and analysis of four economic sectors in which significant numbers of migrant workers are found – construction, agriculture/horticulture, contract cleaning and residential care – and ask the question

*Are there particular, systematic features in the UK labour market in general, and in these sectors in particular, which create an environment that may actively encourage the exploitation of certain categories of worker? Or are we looking at isolated instances of abuse that can be explained by the profit-maximising behaviour of a small number of unscrupulous employers acting outside the law?*

The question is clearly rhetorical. They go on to point out that the UK has one of the most flexible labour markets in Europe: “flexible employment patterns, for instance with regard to working hours; easier hiring and firing of workers; widespread use of short-term contracts; greater flexibility in pay arrangements, linked to performance, for example; and high geographic mobility of the workforce” (Anderson and Rogaly, 2005).

Building on Anderson’s previous body of work emphasising the demand-led nature of trafficking (Anderson and O’Connell Davidson, 2003), Anderson and O’Connell Davidson point to the constant pressure on owners and employers to cut costs and increase productivity, and who therefore choose to employ temporary ‘disposable’ workers who are available on demand and can be laid off when they are no longer needed. They report the growth in subcontracting and the creation of long subcontracting chains as well as outsourcing. In such an environment, labour is treated as a commodity that can be purchased whenever needed and at very low costs. Anderson and O’Connell Davidson (2003) document the violence and intimidation meted out to migrant workers and of the substandard working and living conditions they endure, before highlighting the inadequacies of current UK statutory protection afforded them. They provide a series of

reasoned and measured recommendations for legislation, law enforcement, protection and assistance.

The National Association for Citizens' Advice Bureaux (NACAB) representative body has also contributed to the debate, producing two recent reports on migrant workers in rural areas of the UK. While recognising the fact that the "problems and issues facing migrant workers in rural areas have not been the subject of any comprehensive or systematic national study and analysis", the reports provide clear insights (with examples) into employer exploitation, from deception, to the failure to provide contracts of employment, to poor quality working conditions, to unfair dismissal, to substandard, overcrowded and tied housing. These problems were compounded by others relating to immigration status, "approximately 58% of bureaux identified immigration as one of the key issues on which migrant workers seek advice". They call for a "step change in the government's response", asking the government:

*... to ensure a compliance with statutory workplace rights and more effective enforcement action against rogue employers and employment agencies. More specifically, the Government should extend the more accessible and pro-active compliance regime already associated with the National Minimum Wage to a range of basic employment rights, through the establishment of a Fair Employment Commission. (NACAB, 2005a, 2005b)*

In 2006 the Migrants Rights Network (MRN) was established as a result of consultations around a document aimed at building capacity among migrant workers (MRN, 2006). The Network now services a rapidly growing MRN newsgroup in which, in recognition of the vulnerability illegal status brings, they have called for the regularisation of the estimated 500,000 undocumented migrants, a call supported by the Transport and General Workers Union, UNISON and the Institute of Employment Rights (see Ryan, 2005; IPPR, 2006)<sup>1</sup>.

In recent years trades unions in the UK have also produced valuable work on the plight of migrant workers. They played a key role in the development of the gangmasters' legislation<sup>2</sup> following

the Morecambe Bay tragedy and in fostering the understanding that pressures higher up the food chain (corporations/supermarkets) play a significant part in the process of exploitation (see [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/20040011.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/20040011.htm); see also House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 2003, 2004). They continue to provide a stream of information on local circumstances to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA). There are now several trades union-sponsored and independent websites highlighting key migrants' issues (see [www.unison.org.uk/international/migration.asp](http://www.unison.org.uk/international/migration.asp) and [www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-9316-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-9316-f0.cfm))<sup>3</sup>.

A recent UNISON discussion paper, *International labour migration* (2006), points out the benefits and losses of migration to the sending countries and the benefits to the UK economy, benefits acknowledged by both government reports and influential think-tanks<sup>4</sup>. But regardless of those benefits, the UNISON paper argues that the UK government has not offered any real employment protection to migrant workers:

*Work permits continue to remain the property of the employer, while a worker's right to remain in the UK depends on them remaining with the same employer. The employer–migrant worker relationship is consequently an uneven one, with the employer holding a distinct advantage and exercising great power over the worker.... They are often threatened with withdrawal of their work permit if they do not comply with the employer's wishes.*

Among a raft of recommendations the paper calls on the government to ratify the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families (see Home Office and DWP, 2006)<sup>5</sup>, to reform the work permits scheme to reduce the power of employers, to support an amnesty for undocumented workers and to initiate international action to regulate the activities of private recruitment agencies.

There are clearly other ways in which government agency is adding to rather than ameliorating the problem. A study carried out by Dwyer at Leeds University in 2004 revealed the government-

imposed destitution on those migrants arriving to claim asylum (Dwyer, 2004), a factor that is clearly a driving force propelling many thousands into the irregular workforce of the informal economy.

There remains an unfortunate tendency for public bodies such as local authorities, Government Offices for the Regions and the Audit Commission, to focus on the economic impacts of migrant workers to particular localities – both in terms of their value to the local economy and of additional costs to local services – while their exploitation is dealt with in a cursory and peripheral manner, almost as an afterthought (see, for example, Matthews, 2006).

However, there are a few notable exceptions. One such is a recent report of a study of migrant labour undertaken in South Lincolnshire in 2005 on behalf of the East Midlands Development Agency (Zaronaite and Tirzite, 2006). The study identifies a range of problems faced by migrant workers due to the exploitative practices of employment agencies and gangmasters and makes key recommendations in relation to exploitation at work, exploitation in accommodation and also quality of life issues, education, training and integration (Zaronaite and Tirzite, 2006)<sup>6</sup>.

There have also been contributions to the debate by the Yorkshire and Humber Churches Regional Commission and the Churches Rural Group. An unpublished report entitled *Guest workers – Exploited and ignored* (in Boston, Lincolnshire) (Chaplain de Verny, 2006) provides a valuable overview and detailed insights into the complete inadequacy of local services, health, housing and so on to meet the needs of ‘disposable’ migrant workers in rural communities: “When seasonal work in the fields and packing factories dries up, many workers not only lose their jobs but also their accommodation in houses of multiple occupation and are forced to sleep in derelict buildings, parks, old cars or in bushes along the river Witham” (Chaplain de Verny, 2006).

The following case study draws together material from one sub-region, the area within travel-to-work distance from Hull for migrant workers, but also incorporating a range of forms of modern slavery. It was chosen partly because of its proximity to one part of

the present research team but also because it offered a wide range of rural and urban contexts within which modern slavery has been identified as occurring within the UK. It also enables us to see how particular geographical areas may form part of a much wider context within which the dynamics of slavery can be observed.

***Case study 2: Contemporary slavery: a local case study – Hull and the East Riding***

**Migrant workers**

It is not possible to obtain accurate estimates of the numbers of migrants living and working in the region. Figures for Hull are cited as between 4,000 and 5,000, for Goole (in East Yorkshire) as 3,000-5,000, for North Yorkshire perhaps 10,000, with, probably, several thousands elsewhere in the sub-region. Counts are complicated by the fact that migrant workers typically live in one district and are bussed to other districts, perhaps as much as 50-60 miles away. Between April 2004 and March 2006, there were over 10,000 registered new arrivals to the area, primarily from Accession 8 countries, predominantly from Eastern Europe, with the majority from Poland, but including Latvians and Lithuanians, Russians, Iraqis, Iranians, Kurdish and nationals of various African countries. In the main they work for gangmasters or employment agencies. There are also hundreds of non-registered migrants, plus asylum seekers refused the right to remain and asylum seekers awaiting decision – given that none of these are legally entitled to work, they are the most vulnerable to exploitation.

The majority of migrants are young people, aged 18 to mid-30s, generally single or unmarried couples. Many of them, while having been academically or vocationally well qualified in their home countries (we identified a surgeon and a GP), work here in menial and very taxing occupations. In Hull and Goole, they work primarily in fruit and vegetable picking and packing, factory work, and service industries such as in takeaways and restaurants. In Selby (to where migrants from Hull are bussed), they work in pig and dairy farms, mushroom and strawberry picking, food packing and food processing.

Accounts of deception are, however, legion. Migrants into the East Riding are routinely recruited in their home countries by agents “offering the earth”. Many sign contacts then find these are worthless in the UK. A large, non-returnable administration fee is the norm. Sums as high as of £800 and £2,000 were cited. Migrants then face an unexpected employment sign-on fee on arrival in the UK. This immediately places them in debt bondage. By means of systematic irregular deductions from wages, incomplete wages, sporadic employment patterns, tied accommodation, removal of passports, and threats to themselves and their families back home, combined with their often poor language skills and a lack of awareness of their rights, they are effectively

enslaved by being unable to leave and unable to clear their 'debt'. They are routinely placed in unsafe, grossly overcrowded, multi-occupancy accommodation. Hot bedding – by which beds are mutually slept in by different work shifts – is commonplace. Migrants tell of enforced isolation, of not being allowed time off work to visit the doctor or other welfare services. Service providers in the sub-region do not have the outreach facilities to find them.

To some employers, many migrant workers are simply disposable: “We have heard of people that have been at work and their gangmaster has said to their employers if they don't do what you want them to do, just take them for a ride up the road and drop them off. I'll get you somebody else. So leave them in the middle of nowhere” (Hate Incident Service, Goole). Migrants are left with a debilitating loss of dignity and self-esteem. One graduate expressed his trauma: “I'm not being treated with any respect or dignity ... I have no belief in myself, I feel I have no worth”.

### **Individual case histories**

An *East European couple*, in their early 20s, paid a £250 introductory fee for employment in Goole. They were moved into a two-bedroom house, knocked through into a dormitory, shared with eight men with no privacy. The rent was £200 each per month. Wages were underpaid. They asserted there were 800 people working and living in the same circumstances. They had £200 stolen from their room and when they said were going to the police, there were threats of violence to the woman in particular, from the man who recruited them. They cut their losses and left the region.

A *Latvian woman*, in her early 20s, arrived in London on her own initiative, leaving her young children behind. She was recruited by an employment agency at a £100 fee. They moved her to Hull and took her passport, ostensibly to send to the Home Office for registration. After four months she had not received her passport back (they had not sent it off). This later impacted on her benefit status. Without her passport she felt unable to leave the agency. While with the agency she regularly worked 16-hour shifts in factories, under threat of losing her job and accommodation if she refused. Overtime was never paid. She was transported to work double shifts in Barnsley, sleeping in a car between shifts. Spurious deductions for 'administration charges' and 'transport costs' were the norm and she evidenced systematic theft by the deliberate miscalculation of wages. Sometimes migrants worked two shifts only to be paid for one. Her protestations were met with threats of dismissal. Her accommodation was inappropriate, she was placed in a bedroom with two men she had not met before. Her general mood was “Terrible. Having to live in a room with two men. You can't dress. You can't do anything”. She didn't know where to go to for advice, her English wasn't strong and she had no friends. She described herself as “trapped”<sup>7</sup>.

A 20-something *Iranian male* living in Hull arrived from Iran five years ago, claiming asylum. He was provided with a work permit. A qualified electrician,

he holds both Iranian and UK qualifications. But he has no passport and cannot obtain permanent work without one or work as an electrician. His is facing a different kind of slavery: "All the time I am on standby for a call from the agency ... I am waiting. It can be today come 2-10, maybe two or three days don't come, then 10 to 6.... Tomorrow may be packing, may be high risk, may be low risk. You are working in different areas". He wants "a regular job" to have "a regular life". He rarely receives a full week's work and feels the agencies do this deliberately so that he cannot save money or make permanent links at the places he works. He has worked for seven agencies over the years, always on or below the Minimum Wage: "We are here, we are nothing. Even dogs in this country have identification. We are less than dog because we have nothing. We would like ordinary life. Normal life. This is unfair. We are human. Humanity must help each other".

### ***UK corporate beneficiaries of contemporary slavery overseas***

The literature also makes it clear that by utilising what are effectively ruthless buying practices, big brand fashion retailers and food and related retailers squeeze developing world suppliers. This pressure on prices, when passed down the supply chain, translates into exploitation of workers. Employers in developing countries find ways around corporate codes of ethical trading and the UK-based corporations do not police them in any meaningful way. Justin Forsyth, Oxfam Policy Director, explains: "There is a widening gap between the rhetoric of global corporate social responsibility and the reality of corporate practice" (Oxfam, 2004). Corporate Watch has criticised a UK supermarket, for example, for its complicity in low wages and appalling workplace conditions for women in the textile industries across Asia: "... the structure of global sourcing in the garment industry means that the way it operates will always contribute to an undermining of workers' standards worldwide" (Oxfam, 2004). There are numerous such accounts by concerned journalists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and campaigning organisations (see [www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=1825](http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=1825); for a definitive article, see Corporate Watch, 2005; see also Barber et al, 2004).

The global fruit-picking industry is also a target for much criticism (see, for instance, Monbiot, 2005;

[www.wdm.org.uk/news/presrel/current/corporateirresponsibility.htm](http://www.wdm.org.uk/news/presrel/current/corporateirresponsibility.htm); [www.labourbehindthelabel.org/content/blogsection/9/52/](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org/content/blogsection/9/52/); see also Action Aid, 2005). There have been numerous newspaper reports on this subject, particularly since the ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement in 2005 dissolved the traditional protection of suppliers in countries such as India and Bangladesh and effectively created a free-for-all as western companies and corporations sought cheaper sources elsewhere (most notably in Chinese sweatshops). *The Independent* (2006) recently revealed how a major retailer, with a previously tarnished image (benefiting from sweatshop labour), had chosen to adopt corporate and social responsibility and insist that their suppliers pay their workers a living wage. This had seen their reputation (and importantly, also sales) rise accordingly<sup>8</sup>. However, Action Aid (and many others) assert that a voluntary code of practice approach is insufficient and needs to be underpinned by minimum legal standards. These would incorporate a requirement that the UK government should extend company law to place a legal duty on company directors to take account not just of the interests of their company but of the company's wider stakeholders – notably employees, suppliers, local communities, and on the environment – in their decision making.

***Modern slavery in the UK: some recent evidence from the field***

Anti-Slavery International (2006) has recently conducted exploratory research into trafficking for forced labour in the UK. The aim of the research was to see in what forms the phenomenon is manifest in the UK and to gather information on the situation of trafficking for forced labour and the exploitation of migrant workers in areas other than sexual exploitation. (The extent of trafficking for sexual exploitation to the UK is unknown but best, very rough, estimates from the government suggest at least 10,000 women and perhaps 3,000-4,000 children have been trafficked into the UK for sexual purposes in the past decade; see Chapter 5.)

During this pilot research, Anti-Slavery International identified 27 cases of migrant workers who were trafficked for forced labour in the UK. Many, but not all, come from countries where they



experienced hardship, poverty, war or other conditions of upheaval. Some will have come by legal routes, others by illegal means. The latter are of course the most difficult to locate and research.

More than one case of forced labour was recorded in the following industries: agriculture, construction, food processing and packaging, care/nursing, hospitality and the restaurant trade. Anecdotal information is available on forced labour in motorway services, casual labour in ports and other services, such as laundry and nail parlours. In several cases Anti-Slavery International identified people who had been trafficked specifically for illicit activities. Coercive recruitment, where debt bondage and deceit are involved, occurs both in the countries of origin and in the UK and is a significant factor in trafficking for forced labour.

Among the 27 trafficked people were nationals of European, African, South American and Asian countries. Critically, the majority of them entered the UK legally, but then in order to control them for the purposes of exploitation they became or were made to believe they were illegal as a result of action by the traffickers.

Equally critically, the agencies that originally recorded these 27 cases did not initially identify them as trafficking cases. Furthermore, in the majority of cases, there was no further information as to what happened to the trafficked people. This implies that the 27 cases represent only the tip of a substantial iceberg. The vast majority of people trafficked for forced labour and labour exploitation are generally not identified as there is insufficient awareness or training among the relevant agencies and individuals. Case studies 3 and 4 below are typical examples of how this happens.

#### Case study 3: Sri Lankan migrant domestic worker

C is from Sri Lanka. She came to the UK when she was 29 with a family she was working for in Jordan. Before finally coming to the UK, she went with the family to Cyprus. London was their next destination. She does not have any formal education and was not able to find work at home. She got the job with the Jordanian family through friends. She had to pay the friends for organising the job.

The experience she had is still very traumatising for her. She says that only in London was she able to get her freedom back. The lady of the house was treating her very badly. Also, the other members of the house would not respect her space or need for rest. She had to sleep on a bed-settee in the sitting room, where she was disturbed by anybody who would come in late. Friday nights were particularly horrific for her, since the teenage children would come in late at night and even bring their friends along, which would prevent her from being able to sleep.

She had to work 16-18 hours per week and was earning £200 per month (approximately £2.60 per hour). She was not allowed to eat with the family, was given only leftovers or was advised to eat onion and potatoes. She was automatically blamed for any missing food, and if, for example, there were six apples for the five-member family, she was not allowed to take one. If an apple was missing, she was immediately investigated and insulted.

She was not allowed any days off within her first two years of work. During this period, she was also kept without a visa, so that she would not run away. She kept on asking for a letter from her employer to get her visa, but was refused.

She was allowed to go shopping to a supermarket. There she was told about Kalayaan by a fellow MDW. Eventually, she managed to get in touch with the organisation and ask them to press the family to organise her visa. She remained with the family long enough to reach the period of residence in the UK necessary to obtain indefinite leave to remain. Only after that period had elapsed was she able to leave the family. At last, she now feels able to decide herself about the job she wants. Although she was badly exploited by the family, she was still concerned that if she left early or ran away, the family would have been punished or imprisoned, and she would have felt responsible. She says that the conditions of MDW are often so horrible, that the girls run away as soon as they have the first opportunity to do so.

Press coverage and websites have also identified a range of food production, horticulture and agriculture outlets that supply some major supermarkets and food outlets, which depend on migrant workers who are being paid less than £3 per hour for 72-hour weeks and living in substandard housing conditions.

Source: In-person interview by Anti-Slavery International in the Kalayaan9 premises

#### Case study 4: Vietnamese men

Two Vietnamese men in their 20s were promised a job at a hotel in the UK. They had paid £18,000 to their agent in Vietnam for the job arrangement. The men came to the UK under the government's work permit scheme with a promise to receive £4.95 per hour for their work.

After their arrival in the UK, an agent representing an agency that supplies workers to major hotel chains met them at the airport and took their passports away from them. They were put to work in a hotel. The men worked at the hotel for two months without receiving any pay, and were provided solely with food. To protest against this, they attempted to strike at the hotel. However, almost immediately after that, their families in Vietnam received threats.

They approached the local Citizens' Advice Bureau via a Vietnamese-speaking person they met on the street. They are too frightened to approach the Vietnamese Embassy, but want to warn others.

Source: Citizens' Advice Bureaux

The cases outlined here and in Chapter 2 provide some instances of the most common form of slavery, trafficking for forced labour, that occurs in the UK. Two broad themes emerge from these cases.

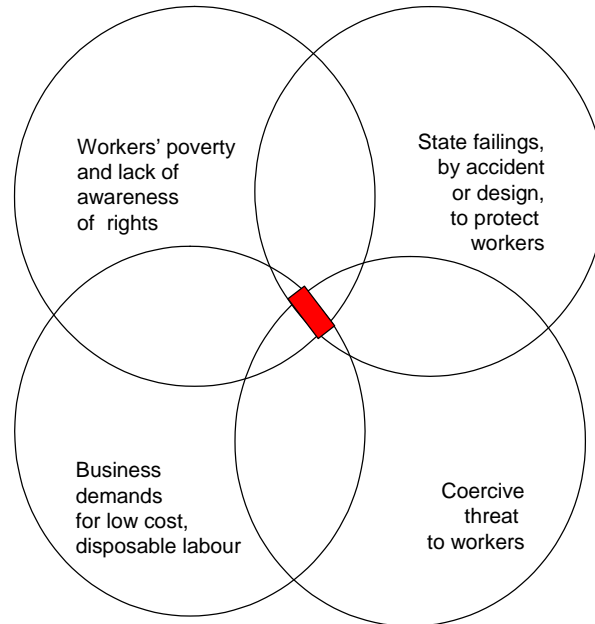
The first relates to the supply of cheap, exploitable labour to the market. Migrant workers are generally isolated from the wider community as a result of, for example, control, difference in language, prejudice or some combination of these factors. They are also, as the cases demonstrate, usually unaware of their rights. The extensive and complex web of rules and regulations relating to migrants' rights to work and a variety of immigration statuses<sup>10</sup> exacerbates this situation of a lack of information, which in combination with isolation, nurtures fear. Fear is often further heightened by violence or the threat of violence. Debt bondage and the links between forced labour users in the UK and criminal gangs in the home countries of the enslaved is one particular context for explicit coercion. The tying of visas to specific employment in the UK (for example, as domestic workers in Embassies, which can make effective use of diplomatic privilege to obstruct official investigations unless these are pursued with political backing) is a more subtle opportunity for threat. The combination of dependence and vulnerability, as a result of their status, deception, coercion and contributing systematic factors put the migrant at risk of trafficking and exploitation. Abuse of power and a position of vulnerability are frequently seen in cases of trafficking<sup>11</sup>. These factors combine to create an environment for the price of labour to be suppressed below legal minima or for other forms of exploitation to occur (see, for example, recent

investigations by the Audit Commission in East Anglia and Anderson et al, 2005).

A second theme that emerges from these, and other cases, relates to the demand for cheap and potentially disposable labour. Our review of the literature has identified the repeated assertions by the users of forced or exploitative labour, that they themselves are forced into this position by ruthless pressures from the small number of powerful supermarkets to drive the prices of suppliers down, and “put gangmasters at each other’s throats” (The Observer, February 2004). Given the very extensive reporting of the consequences of these pressures that our review reveals, it is not credible to argue that the supermarkets and other major British retail outlets could be ignorant of the consequences of their drive for reduced costs. Within the UK these factors interact to produce the situation where labour can be exploited. Clearly again, there is a range of situations from very highly exploitative situations under conditions of coercion to those where people work ‘informally’ for very low wages (as reported in, for example, Community Links, 2006).

The interaction of factors that contribute to forced labour and labour exploitation is shown in Figure 2 below. This model can apply at any point in a business’s international value chain or, put another way, any business that is international is susceptible to being contaminated by forced labour *internationally*. For example, Anti-Slavery International has identified that bonded labour is used in South Asia in the gem-polishing industry, glasswork, cotton-seed production, brick-kilns, saltpans, tanneries, carpet-making, fishing and other food-processing, silk production, rice mills, handlooms, power-looms, quarries, mining and domestic work (see Upadhyaya, 2006). This is possible, in part because, despite the illegality of bonded labour, the states of South Asia fail, for various reasons, adequately to protect their citizens from these practices. Any business that, wittingly or unwittingly, outsources to another business that uses such forced labour has thus introduced forced labour into its value chain. Forced labour has also been identified in the African cocoa industry (Anti-Slavery International, 2004) – some of whose end products may be manufactured, for example, in York, Bristol and Birmingham.

**Figure 2: Interaction of factors contributing to forced labour and labour exploitation<sup>12</sup>**



While the cocoa industry has begun significant reform efforts, it is likely that in this respect the *unreformed* cocoa industry is representative of much agri-business in Africa and elsewhere.

For sustainable reduction in forced labour and labour exploitation, each of these elements must be thoroughly addressed (Anti-Slavery International, 2004). The nature of how these are addressed will vary from industry to industry and from locality to locality. However, the UK government has yet to sign the European Convention on Action Against Trafficking – the only international law that provides trafficked people with guaranteed minimum standards of protection (a minimum 30-day leave to remain in the country to receive support, emergency medical assistance, safe housing and legal advice) – and has been criticised by Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, UNICEF, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and many others for failing to do so.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The IPPR also has considered this as a policy option.

<sup>2</sup> The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act was effective from April 2006 and from October 2006 the first punishments for violations, that is, severe labour exploitation, can be introduced.

<sup>3</sup> Another very useful site on exploitation and other migrants' issues can be found at [www.hazards.org/migrants/index.htm](http://www.hazards.org/migrants/index.htm)

<sup>4</sup> The following statement was given by the Minister, Angela Eagle, in response to a Parliamentary Question on 9 January 2002: "We have no plans at present to sign and ratify the convention. The government consider they have already struck the right balance between the need for immigration control and the protection of the interests and rights of migrant workers and their families in the UK. The rights of migrant workers and their families are protected in UK legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998, and the UK's existing commitments under international law".

<sup>5</sup> In April 2006 a report by the influential Ernst & Young Item Club, Economic Forecasting Group, using the Treasury's own models, revealed that migrant workers from Eastern Europe had helped keep inflation under control, had helped boost output, increase economic growth, raise tax revenue, to the tune of £300 million in a single year in 2006, and in so doing, have kept interest rates low and eased the pensions burden (see [www.ey.com/global/Content.nsf/UK/Economic\\_Outlook](http://www.ey.com/global/Content.nsf/UK/Economic_Outlook)).

<sup>6</sup> Similar problems are highlighted in a recent East of England Development Agency Report, from research undertaken in 2004-05: see Winkelmann-Gleed and McKay (2005).

<sup>7</sup> It is argued by some that migrant workers prefer to share rooms even at the rate of ten per room in order to maximise their earnings. This may indeed be the case for some but for most, as this case study shows, there is no question of choice and the housing conditions they endure are indeed appalling. Local authorities are increasingly having to police the private rented sector vigorously to prevent the levels of housing exploitation that are increasingly the norm for migrant workers.

<sup>8</sup> *The Independent* also urged consumer responsibility, as do many of the campaigning organisations (see *The Independent*, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Kalayaan is an NGO working with MDWs in the UK.

<sup>10</sup> Earlier work identifies at least 13 different routes for entering the UK, including statuses as economic, humanitarian, student, religious, legal and illegal migrants; see Craig et al (2004).

<sup>11</sup> "...abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability are some of the constitutive elements of trafficking as defined in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Moreover, the relevant UK legislation, Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004, which covers trafficking for all forms of labour exploitation, defines exploitation as: slavery or forced labour; use of threats, force or deception to obtain a service; or a request or inducement to get someone to undertake an activity that someone who wasn't young, disabled or a family member would be likely to refuse...."

<sup>12</sup> This diagram was first used in a draft report by Anti-Slavery International with La Strada Czech Republic, Dublin City University, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, APAV Portugal and Christien Van den Anker (November 2006). The final report will be published later in 2007.

## **5 Sexual trafficking**

Sexual trafficking is a particular aspect of human trafficking with its own dominant characteristics. Analysis of global migration trends point to the fact that almost half of all migrants are women. However, although many women and men migrate for reasons to do with poverty (the push factor) and economic betterment (the pull factor), gender relations – and in particular the disparities in power between men and women – are an important contextual factor (Piper, 2005). Within the overall phenomenon of global migration, the process of human trafficking is dominated by the trafficking of women and children by men. This chapter focuses on trafficking for sexual and related abusive purposes (see, for example, Candappa, 2003; Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005; NSPCC, 2006; TUC, 2006).

A number of pieces of academic or policy-oriented research have been undertaken although these tend mainly to be scoping exercises of one kind or another (see, for example, Somerset, 2001; Anderson and Davidson, 2004; Chase and Statham, 2004). Some of this work is concerned more broadly with issues about sexual exploitation of children within which child trafficking is but one element. All point to the difficulties of getting quantitative data about the size of the issue although there is no dispute about the qualitative dimensions of the issue. In the UK, interest has grown as a result of the introduction of legislation in the past few years and, most recently, of a Home Office consultation on proposals for a UK action plan on trafficking (NSPCC, 2006; see [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/tacklingtrafficking.pdf?view=binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/tacklingtrafficking.pdf?view=binary)).

Early research suggested that the “movement of children across international borders for abusive purposes” might incorporate at least four different kinds of phenomena: forced marriages; trafficking of children for sexual exploitation; economic exploitation of children (including the UK as a staging post between Africa and Europe); and trafficking of children for inter-country adoption (involving corruption and exploitation) (Levy, 1991).



### **Sexual trafficking in the UK: description and numbers**

It is estimated that about 100,000-500,000 people are trafficked into Europe annually (Floor, 2006). Similarly, the US Department of State has estimated that during 2003, up to 800,000 people were trafficked across borders worldwide, most of whom were women and children for sexual purposes. These figures do not include people trafficked *within* countries (UNICEF, 2005a)<sup>1</sup>. The UN, however, believes that as many as 1.2 million children may be trafficked annually, internally and externally (ILO, 2004)<sup>2</sup>.

Concern about the issue of child and young people trafficking for sexual purposes in the UK originally arose as a result of the experience of a succession of unaccompanied girls (one as young as 12) and young women, mostly from Nigeria and other West African countries, who arrived at Gatwick Airport and who, being minors, were placed in care in a West Sussex hostel. Many of these girls and others like them arriving at Heathrow Airport disappeared after a short period and were later identified as sex workers in Italy. Attempts to quantify the extent of this phenomenon have failed because of the difficulties of tracking the young people, although it was known that more than 60 passed through the West Sussex hostel in the space of less than three years<sup>3,4</sup>. Investigations by children's charities have now identified sexual trafficking both *through* the UK to other destinations, but also *to* the UK, with children and young people ending up as sex workers in refugee dispersal areas such as Glasgow (where boy prostitutes have been identified) and Newcastle upon Tyne.

UNICEF estimated that about 250 children were known to be trafficked into the UK over a five-year period but that "the real figure ... is likely to be far higher" (UNICEF, 2003). The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) suggests that there is no evidence of large-scale trafficking into the UK (SOCA, 2002), but other commentators have argued that this statement is questionable both because the notion of 'large-scale' is not defined and because reliable data is hard to come by (TUC, 2006). Trafficked children in the UK have been identified over the past few years as coming from a widening range of sources<sup>5</sup>. Children may also be trafficked into the UK for the purposes of domestic labour<sup>6</sup> – often in conditions of considerable exploitation<sup>7</sup>.

Often, children who are trafficked may have been physically abducted but many are trafficked with the compliance of family members who believe they are being offered a chance to better themselves and do not know that their children may be destined for sexual exploitation. Families are often also coerced through a range of factors including physical threats, debt bondage or pressure from threats of voodoo/juju cults<sup>8</sup>. The vast majority of those trafficked for sexual purposes are girls but trafficking of boys is not unusual<sup>9</sup>. It is estimated that there are at any one time about 5,000 child sex workers in the UK, most of them trafficked into the UK, and 75% of them girls (UNICEF, 2006c).

A study of some London boroughs in 2004 identified a total of 35 cases of child trafficking; 250 cases of child trafficking were identified in the UK between 1998 and 2003, but this is thought again to be a serious underestimate (ECPATUK, 2004; see also UNICEF, 2005b). The NSPCC has recently recorded a 'dramatic' rise in referrals of trafficked children to its sexual exploitation service. It suggests that trafficking of children, through deception, manipulation and coercion, may be easier than trafficking in women, because of children's increased levels of dependency on adults (NSPCC, 2006). One estimate suggests that 30% of all those trafficked are minors.

The trafficking of women is a much more extensive and better-recorded phenomenon although again hard data is difficult to come by and there is no attempt to determine whether global figures make allowance for those who are re-trafficked. A study commissioned by the Home Office in 1998 identified 71 women trafficked for the purposes of prostitution that year (see Kelly and Reagan, 2000), but this investigation suggested that the real figure might have been as much as twenty times higher (1,420). In 2006, the Home Office produced an unofficial estimate of 400 women trafficked into prostitution although again this is believed to be a serious under-estimate: a 2004 study of the sex industry in London found that 85% of women working off-streets had been trafficked into prostitution in the UK; ten years earlier, the figure was nearer 10% (Poppy Project, 2004). More recently a number of police investigations have led to raids and court cases<sup>10</sup>. A major campaign by the police in 2006 ([www.pentameter.police.uk](http://www.pentameter.police.uk))

suggested that less than 10% of all brothels or other sex establishments were visited and that “several thousand more victims remain to be found”. In the police Reflex campaign, for offences associated with trafficking, a total of 1,456 arrests were made in 2004/05.

Evidence suggests that many women are likely to have been trafficked as a result of responding to advertisements offering specific kinds of better-paid employment in the UK or even offers of marriage to help improve their quality of life. Often women are trapped not only by physical threats<sup>11</sup> but by debt bondage as they struggle to repay the costs of bringing them to the UK; other control techniques involve physical and emotional violence (including rape, torture and beatings), the use of drink and drugs, and economic coercion of women and their families<sup>12</sup>. Large numbers of women come from East and Central Europe and police suggest that up to 75% of prostitutes in some parts of London are now from Eastern Europe (see Somerset, 2002)<sup>13</sup>. Trafficked women arrive in this country by every conceivable mode of transport, including on foot. Some may have suffered rape during ethnic conflict and, having been ostracised from their communities, may arrive ostensibly as refugees (which they may wish to be seen as in terms of their experiences) but in reality are being trafficked (see [www.unicef.org.uk/unicefuk/policies/policy\\_detail.asp?policy=30](http://www.unicef.org.uk/unicefuk/policies/policy_detail.asp?policy=30); see also Masika, 2002).

### ***Legal frameworks***<sup>14</sup>

Policy concern in the UK has been translated into legal instruments in the past few years. Since 2002, a series of laws have been passed explicitly now covering issues of trafficking (which previously did not exist as a distinct crime<sup>15</sup>). Since 2004, all forms of trafficking have been made illegal and traffickers may receive sentences of up to 14 years imprisonment<sup>16</sup>. Initially, legislation such as the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act defined trafficking in terms only of prostitution but the term is now extended to cover forced labour and domestic servitude. The Queen’s Speech in November 2006 also included a provision that the assets and cash of arrested people traffickers would be able to be seized.

However, although most countries have adopted laws to combat trafficking, policy and practice responses vary quite widely from country to country. The UK has yet to sign up to the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. Other policy and practice responses to trafficking are criticised. For example, the TUC is particularly concerned that the victims of trafficking appear to have no enforceable employment rights, a situation that may have contributed to the deaths of the Chinese cockle-pickers in Morecambe Bay in 2003 (TUC, 2006).

### ***Policy responses***

Many commentators have been critical of the response of the UK government that appears to have been far more concerned with the tracking and capture of traffickers, with policing, immigration and law enforcement, than it has with the needs and rights of the victim. Evidence to the Home Office consultation on an action plan (NSPCC, 2006) suggest that it falls far short of an adequate response, including overlooking the position of Africa as a major sending country, and the links between the trafficking dynamic and the under-development of the Continent.

The criteria for identifying trafficked women and allowing them to remain within the UK established by the Home Office have also been criticised as being too narrowly drawn, by not recognising the need for building trust between authorities and women who have been victims of trafficking and who may be in fear of their life. Women identified during police raids are often regarded as illegal immigrants first, and trafficked victims second, often leading to their deportation back to their country of origin where they may face hostility from the host community and re-trafficking or punishment from the trafficking gangs. Because of these pressures, many women find it difficult to cooperate with the UK authorities and there is considerable pressure growing from a number of quarters for official policy to be more centred on the needs of victims (see, for example, statements from [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk); [www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk](http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk); [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)). The government's most recent response, confirming that it has yet to sign the Council of Europe

Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, indicated that the government's prime concern remains the fear that illegal economic migrants may abuse the provisions of the Convention. The UN High Commission for Refugees takes the view that people who experience sexual violence (including sexual trafficking) should be regarded as having refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. To date it is the case that "only a few trafficked persons [to the UK] have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK on the basis of their trafficking experience" (Young and Quick, 2006), usually then only on appeal (Limanowska, 2005; Dottridge, 2006).

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> This raises the question of whether there are 'sexual slaves' or 'domestic 'slaves' working or being trafficked within the UK. Clearly migrants are most vulnerable given their isolation, general lack of understanding of legal arrangements or of their rights or of the English language. We do not know the scale of slavery in the UK overall and it is probable that there are UK-born people in forms of slavery in the UK; however, the scale of this will probably be relatively small given that such people are more likely to know the country, have English as a first language and have access to forms of support.

<sup>2</sup> The ILO ([www.ilo.org.uk](http://www.ilo.org.uk)) suggests that there may be 1.4 million trafficked migrants worldwide forced into commercial sexual exploitation.

<sup>3</sup> This 'Newbridge' phenomenon is described at greater length in UNICEF (2003) and in Somerset (2002).

<sup>4</sup> A range of documentation is available from [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk) including factsheets and research reports on child trafficking in particular.

<sup>5</sup> These include China, Vietnam and South East Asia more generally; a growing number of countries in West, North and Central Africa; East and Central Europe (especially the Balkan and Baltic countries); and, most recently, possibly from the Caribbean.

<sup>6</sup> Adult domestic workers are the subject of work by Kalayaan ([www.kalayaan.org.uk](http://www.kalayaan.org.uk)).

<sup>7</sup> For example, the case of Victoria Climbié, an eight-year-old from the Cote d'Ivoire who was trafficked to the UK under the guise of

being part of an extended family and was beaten and starved to death by distant relatives who used her as domestic labour. This has also led to demands for much stronger regulation of private fostering arrangements.

<sup>8</sup> The latter is believed to have been behind both the death of the young African boy 'Adam', whose mutilated body was found floating in the Thames, and to the disappearance of a large number of young African boys in East London (see Left, 2005). Another example cited of voodoo cult was of a young Nigerian girl who was told her body would swell and she would die if she failed to repay the transport costs involved in trafficking her to the UK.

<sup>9</sup> The trafficking of boys may have cultural determinants: for example, there is considerable evidence of sexually trafficked boys in the Indian sub-continent where there is also a history of bonded labour.

<sup>10</sup> For example, in Sheffield and Hull, where several people trafficking women for sexual activity have been imprisoned (both the victim and trafficker were generally from Eastern and South Eastern Europe but there were also traffickers from China).

<sup>11</sup> Even extending to the public execution of victims *pour encourager les autres*; see Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No 105.

<sup>12</sup> The physical and mental health effects on victims of sexual trafficking are recorded at [www.lshu.ac.uk/hpu/docs/StolenSmiles.pdf](http://www.lshu.ac.uk/hpu/docs/StolenSmiles.pdf). The first prosecution under the 2003 Sexual Offences Act was of two Albanian traffickers who lured two Lithuanian women to the UK, took their passports and forced them to act as prostitutes to pay off their airfares. The traffickers were given 18 and 9 years in prison (see [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org), 7/1/05).

<sup>13</sup> See note 2 above.

<sup>14</sup> The report of the Women's Commission (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005) gives a detailed account of national and international legal frameworks.

<sup>15</sup> in this chapter, we talk about trafficking in general; this incorporates sexual trafficking.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the 2002 Proceeds of Crime Act, 2003 Sexual Offences Act and the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act.

## **6 What is the current situation in the UK?**

The most prevalent form of slavery in the UK at present is that represented by trafficking in human beings. This is a complex issue and as such demands comprehensive responses. Indeed, it has been argued that “human trafficking is an exceptionally dynamic phenomenon where traffickers adapt in response to policies designed to combat it ... [and that therefore it is necessary to] ... address inter-linkages between trafficking, asylum, human rights, poverty, organised crime and the growth of the sex business” (Kelly and Reagan, 2000). Multi-actor involvement is seen as a key prerequisite in tackling the issue effectively, including its causes and consequences. Responses in the field in the UK vary with regards to various forms of trafficking and those working in the field agree that, in particular, services for trafficked persons are far from being sufficient. This chapter contains information about the key players in the field of anti-trafficking and associated areas. While it is not an exhaustive analysis, we aim here to provide an initial insight and to outline the status quo in addressing the issue of trafficking on the ground. This will help in shaping future political, policy, practice and research responses.

### ***Actors involved***

There are several levels of involvement regarding responses to trafficking. The traditional actors are:

- NGOs (charities)
- governmental agencies
- international organisations.

The traditional actors have usually tackled trafficking as part of their wider policy and practice agendas. The majority of them would in particular focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation. There is a wide range of responsibilities and expertise that the various actors carry. In principle, each actor pursues their own interests and defines their area of activities specifically (such as law enforcement, crime prevention, assistance to trafficked persons or advocacy on behalf of trafficked persons). Nonetheless,

it can be assumed that the general agenda is similar – the elimination of trafficking in human beings.

In recent years, however, other, or rather new, actors have become involved. Their focus is either on areas connected to trafficking, but they often do not have trafficking as a specific focus in their agenda (for example, migrant or refugee organisations); or they come into contact with trafficked persons but do not focus on the trafficking problem at all (migrant organisations, refugee centres, immigration service); or they have been traditionally working in a different field, but due to increasing encounters with trafficked persons have added trafficking into their agendas (trades unions, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, migrant organisations).

### ***Areas of action***

Areas of actions are covered differently by the above-mentioned actors. While some areas are covered by more than one organisation, it is far from the case that there is significant overlapping or doubling of work. Work and activities are often diffused, lack coordination and gaps and shortcomings are evident.

### ***Traditional actors***

*Governmental organisations* are active in particular in the fields of policy making, legislation, enforcement, funding of anti-trafficking programmes and projects in the UK and abroad, and assistance to trafficked persons.

The *Home Office* has been the main actor in policy making at the central government level. It convenes regular meetings of multi-stakeholder groups to consult over the situation in the field. Recently, it has published a consultation on the UK action plan (see NSPCC, 2006) to tackle trafficking (an EU requirement). More than 180 individuals and organisations submitted contributions to the consultation process but only a small proportion of those who responded are continuously involved in dealing with trafficking. Following an evaluation of the consultation process in June 2006,



the Home Office was expected to deliver the completed action plan around the end of 2006.

Other government bodies involved in tackling trafficking, albeit not as a complex policy issue, are, for example: the *Department for International Development* (DfID: for example, by support of programmes in the countries of origin); the *Department of Trade and Industry* (DTI: for example, the division responsible for employment agency standards is preparing materials to raise awareness of migrant workers about their rights); and the *Gangmasters Licensing Authority* (GLA: which was set up to curb the exploitation of workers in the agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and associated processing and packaging industries). The GLA is in charge of registration and issuing of licences for gangmasters and other associated activities ([www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk)). The *Foreign and Commonwealth Office* (FCO) supports other activities in the countries of origin through UK High Commissions.

Various *police* bodies are in charge of law enforcement in the area of trafficking, crime prevention, pursuit of perpetrators and the protection of victims (especially connected to their status as witnesses). The Metropolitan Police (Met) has special departments dealing with trafficking, trafficking for sexual exploitation and child trafficking. The Met also coordinated the nationwide Operation Pentameter ([www.pentameter.police.uk](http://www.pentameter.police.uk)) focusing on trafficking for sexual exploitation. The operation was carried out for several months during the spring of 2006.

A specialised agency, SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency), was launched in April 2006, taking over the functions of other police bodies. One of its aims is combating organised immigration crime, which includes trafficking in human beings. The classification of trafficking as organised immigration crime, however, as we noted in the previous chapter, is rather problematic, with negative implications on the ground for victims.

The *immigration service* is involved in tackling trafficking from the perspective of violations of immigration regulations. In practice, effective cooperation between the police and immigration service is not without its problems. One of the reasons is the difference in

interest targets, where the immigration service pursues the aim of the deportation of illegal persons, while other police bodies might need witness statements from trafficked persons that might have at the same time irregular status (often as a result of coercion). Fear of deportation may hinder cooperation with the police.

Since October 2006, the *UK Human Trafficking Centre* (UKHTC: see [www.ukhtc.co.uk](http://www.ukhtc.co.uk)) has been in operation. The creation of such a centre represents a new step in tackling trafficking in the UK. The centre has a multi-agency basis and aims to be the central point for the development of expertise and operational coordination. The priorities of the UKHTC are:

- prevention of trafficking through building knowledge and understanding of the harm it causes and to use this to set priorities for the UK law enforcement response;
- improvement and coordination of the law enforcement response to trafficking through awareness raising and training development;
- provision of protection and assistance to victims in cooperation with other organisations (UKHTC leaflet).

It remains to be seen whether the conflict between the priorities of differing organisations can be resolved within this umbrella approach.

*Social services* are involved in the provision of services to trafficked persons, including migrant workers that might have been trafficked. They are also responsible for the protection of children that have been identified as being trafficked. However, the involvement of social services is not a systematic one and could be described at present as ad hoc, depending often on individual or departmental initiative and awareness. In some regions, such as Yorkshire and the Humber, social services have been more active in the area of anti-trafficking, whereas in other regions, the services do not consider this issue to be a priority. The case study below shows how one city council has actively approached this issue.

**Case study 5: Working to combat trafficking – a local authority response**

In 2003, Glasgow City Council established an inter-agency working group to explore the issue of trafficking in women for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Membership of the working group included Glasgow City Council (Development and Regeneration Services, Criminal Justice, Social Work), Strathclyde Police, NHS (Greater Glasgow), UK immigration services, Scottish Executive, Women's Voluntary Network, Scottish Refugee Council and the Glasgow Asylum Support Service. During 2004 the group placed a successful bid to the Scottish Executive's Violence Against Women Service Development Fund for £100,000 to employ a development worker to progress the work of the inter-agency group. The bid also contained a small monetary fund to provide support costs for women. The council negotiated with Strathclyde Police a method of third party reporting enabling frontline workers to confidentially pass on anonymous information to the police, to assist with their criminal investigations. This has been successfully piloted with Base 75 and two other voluntary organisations and the information gathered indicates a number of women trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.

Source: Response of Glasgow City Council to the Inquiry of the Joint Committee on Human Rights

*Non-governmental organisations/charities/faith-based organisations* carry out activities especially in the areas of advocacy on behalf of trafficked persons, lobby, undertake capacity building, action-oriented research, provide assistance to trafficked persons, provide advice on cases of trafficking, and expert advisory help, and promote awareness raising, campaigning and monitoring. The work of NGOs in the area of anti-trafficking has been increasing in the past five years. The majority of these NGOs focus on specific aspects or forms of trafficking. Anti-Slavery International is the only organisation that has been focusing on all forms of trafficking for human beings in the UK for several years.

At present there are several organisations that provide assistance and a wide range of services (including housing) to women trafficked for sexual exploitation. The *Poppy Project*<sup>1</sup>, run by the Eaves Housing for women and financially supported by the Home Office, has been providing its services since 2003. In 2006, the Poppy Project received a further commitment from the Home Office and was able to extend its services. The services, as noted earlier, operate under tight criteria set by the Home Office (women must have been brought to the UK, have been involved in

prostitution in the last 30 days [in the UK], have been forcibly exploited, have come forward to the authorities and are willing to cooperate with the authorities), which makes access to the services limited.

Two new safe houses were opened in 2006 by a faith-based organisation, *CHASTE* (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe). This organisation also provides assistance to women trafficked for sexual exploitation in the UK.

Several streetwork and health prevention organisations working with sex workers in various cities in the UK provide advisory help and assistance to women that are forced into prostitution. These do not necessarily have a focus on trafficked women but are increasingly coming across them in their work.

Other organisations are focusing especially on the areas of advocacy, research, lobby, campaigning and capacity building. These include:

- *ECPATUK* (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes<sup>2</sup>) is a leading children's rights organisation campaigning against the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the UK and on its international aspects. In particular, it focuses on the protection of trafficked children and children exploited in tourism and the prevention of such crimes. It represents a coalition of nine leading UK organisations working for the protection of children's rights. These are: [Anti-Slavery International](#), [Barnardo's](#), [Jubilee Campaign](#), [NSPCC](#), [Save the Children UK](#), [The Body Shop Foundation](#), [The Children's Society](#), [UNICEF UK](#) and [World Vision UK](#) ([www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)).
- *Amnesty International UK* has been campaigning against trafficking as part of a campaign to stop violence against women that was launched in 2004. It is also active in lobbying the UK government on the issue of signing the Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

- *Anti-Slavery International* has been the major charity working on the issue of trafficking in areas such as in advocacy, lobbying, research and capacity building. The organisation contributed to raising the profile of the issue within the political agenda through a campaign on trafficking in 2002-04. *Anti-Slavery International* has also been continuously working on the issue of the protection of the rights of the trafficked people, their access to justice and compensation. It recently finished research (reported earlier) into trafficking for forced labour in the UK and three other EU countries. Its campaigning work involves not only active lobbying for changes in the UK, such as legislation changes and issues surrounding the adoption of key international instruments guaranteeing minimum standards of protection to trafficked people, but also maintaining its involvement as an expert at the international level, especially in relation to the EU, the Council of Europe and the various UN agencies.
- *Kalayaan* is the only example of an organisation offering direct services to persons trafficked for forced labour other than sexual exploitation. The organisation assists migrant domestic workers, some of whom have been trafficked. It provides a variety of services, including legal help, advice and job facilitation.

*International organisations* are active especially in the area of advocacy, research, support the activities of national organisations, pressing for the implementation of specific programmes and monitoring. These agencies, such as the various UN agencies (UNICEF, ILO etc) act within the remit of their mandates. Thus UNICEF is active in the area of child trafficking, whereas the ILO focuses on forced labour. Both organisations have carried out and supported projects with various actors in the UK. The IOM (International Organization for Migration) is an intra-governmental agency that worldwide implements assisted voluntary returns programme ([www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)). Through this programme, trafficked persons can be assisted in the repatriation to their countries of origin.

## ***Non-traditional actors***

New actors tackling trafficking represent organisations that are in contact with the group most at risk of trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation – migrant workers and other groups of migrants (for example, ‘failed’ asylum seekers, that is, those refused leave to remain). The issue of trafficking is a new area of work for these organisations – some of them have explicitly included the issue in their policy agendas whereas others prefer to focus on the other issues that are making the life of these groups in the UK difficult.

*Trades unions*, especially through the TUC, have begun focusing on awareness raising among migrant workers, organising migrant workers and acting on behalf of migrant workers facing exploitation at the workplace, including the most severe forms – particularly forced labour as an outcome of trafficking. The TUC has produced several reports on the position of exploited workers ([www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)).

*Citizens’ Advice Bureaux* across the UK have been recoding cases of migrant workers that approached them with various complaints connected to problems at the workplace or within the community. Some of the migrant workers were trafficked. NACAB has also published a national report (NACAB, 2005a) on the situation of migrant workers, describing the current status quo as ‘nowhere to turn’, clearly implying the lack of assistance afforded to migrant workers in general, let alone those who have been trafficked. Several individual bureaux have started projects focusing on awareness raising of rights among the migrant worker community.

Examples of the involvement of private sector – employment agencies and businesses – have also been recorded, although these are relatively rare and many such agencies have been criticised for their lack of care for those they place in work. Some agencies do provide migrant workers with information about their rights. For example, an initiative among businesses in Northern Ireland aims at drafting ethical codes with regards to the employment of migrant workers. Some businesses and private

agencies have also participated in voluntary audits focusing on compliance of regulations and norms connected to the workplace.

The range of activities and involvement of various actors in anti-trafficking activities has increased significantly in the past five years as a response to growing awareness of the issues. However, particularly in comparison with the experience and coverage of the issue in other West European countries, the situation in the UK is far from satisfactory. Coordination and cooperation between agencies is not systematic and a lack of a coherent policy framework in tackling the issue is evident. In particular, services for people trafficked for forced labour other than for sexual exploitation are practically non-existent. There is clearly, in the view of most commentators and activists, a need for capacity building, training and awareness raising, especially with regards to the new actors involved in the area.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Poppy Project at [www.poppypoint.org.uk](http://www.poppypoint.org.uk) or [www.eaves4women.co.uk](http://www.eaves4women.co.uk). The project is a London-based feminist charity providing supported housing for women trafficked into prostitution and other vulnerable women.

<sup>2</sup> ECPAT is a federal alliance, End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, involving six individual organisations ([www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)) within the UK. It is also part of a worldwide alliance of similar groups.

## **7 Conclusions and recommendations**

A review of the position of most organisations active in this field suggests that formal adoption by the UK government of the various treaties and conventions in place would be an important first step. For example, the UK has yet to sign and ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, or to ratify the UN Palermo Protocol. It also has entered a reservation against Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which allows it to sidestep providing a guarantee for the rights of refugee children because, as Baroness Scotland put it, "the government are examining how the [Council of Europe's] Convention's approach could best be harmonised with effective immigration controls" (Baroness Scotland, Home Office Minister of State, 2 November 2006).

It also appears to be the case, as we note, that the needs of victims remain secondary to government policy; as one commentator put it, "[although] the police see trafficked persons as victims, immigration just sees them as illegal entrants" (see Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005, p 35) It is also the case that the penalties for trafficking are widely regarded as too lenient, although the Solicitor General has recently said she will refer cases back if she felt this was the case. At present drug trafficking can carry a maximum term of life imprisonment but human trafficking for sexual purposes can attract only a maximum of 14 years in prison. Most sentences have been averaging at about one-third of this figure and, according to the Poppy Project, as in cases of rape, many victims feel that the further ordeal of preparing to give testimony against traffickers is exacerbated by light sentences being imposed and by their inability to remain anonymous.

At present, the UK regulatory environment is too complex. Even with sufficient resources to enforce the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act, divergent policies of different institutions of state may be counter-productive in relation to the intent to improve protection for migrant workers. For example a Health and Safety Executive official may identify a situation of labour exploitation and wish to initiate an investigation of those responsible. Immigration officials,



when becoming aware of this situation, generally pursue the enforcement of immigration regulations and often treat the exploited workers as illegal immigrants rather than victims of crime and have them deported. The police may become involved if they believe a crime has been committed but the needs of the victim may rapidly become submerged.

Trafficking is a 'high profit-low risk' crime. Reversing this particular relationship is regarded by many as desirable. A precedent could then be established in British Courts to increase the accessibility of people trafficked for forced labour to legal redress and compensation from those who have exploited them that would potentially contribute to this. Increasing the human rights protection for trafficked people in line with the measures proposed in the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings would also increase the potential for successful criminal prosecutions of those involved in labour exploitation, as demonstrated in those European countries that have already put the measures in place. The availability of witnesses to investigators along with thorough research of the value chain could help increase awareness of the police, prosecutors and judges of the individuals and practices involved at each stage of the forced labour supply chain. This in turn would allow authorities to target and punish accordingly those most culpable for the practices.

One suggestion from many agencies engaged in this work is to require the government to allow victims a period of reflection (of a minimum of three months), not dependent on the willingness of the victim to cooperate with the authorities, before any action is taken; this would give them the opportunity to consider – in the light of more accessible information about their rights<sup>1</sup> – how best they want to respond to their situation, rather than being forced by a rapid succession of events to make very difficult decisions that may end up with them being deported, criminalised, ostracised and exposed to further trafficking and/or physical injury. At present the Home Office argues that, “the current ad hoc system for providing temporary protection while offences are being investigated is adequate” (Burgoyne and Darwin, 2006). The evidence suggests, however, that many victims are not even aware of their entitlement to protection and it is certainly the case that very few trafficked women are granted refugee status, and then normally only under

European law and on appeal. The Home Office has a 'white list' of countries deemed safe (that is, with a reputable record of human rights) but this list contains many countries from which sexual trafficking occurs in substantial numbers (for example, Albania, Moldova, Romania), countries that the US government, for example, does not recognise as safe.

In relation to children, despite considerable policy and political concern, there is currently no strategic UK programme designed to address the specific protection needs of trafficked children or support services other than those offered on an ad hoc basis by a few voluntary agencies. Most statutory and voluntary agencies remain ill equipped both in terms of training and resources to identify trafficked children and respond effectively to their needs<sup>2</sup>. Indeed there is currently no comprehensive guidance available to social services bodies or police authorities to help them identify and work with trafficked children, nor do the vast majority of such agencies have a clear lead person for dealing with trafficking.

ECPAT is currently undertaking training programmes for agencies working with potentially trafficked children but there is a clear need for more effective mainstreaming of training to enable staff to identify such children and work with them. Given that children and most adults cannot extricate themselves without help from trafficked situations, and indeed often do not even regard themselves as having been trafficked, this training is critical. This should include immigration officers at ports of entry of whatever kind. Such training would also underpin effective monitoring, allowing a better idea of the scope and size of the problem and would avoid a situation where trafficked children and women are often recorded as 'undocumented migrants' or 'illegal immigrants', because staff are not sensitised to the key factors they should be identifying. Training might also be used to help develop an up-to-date best practice guide<sup>3</sup>.

Many agencies suggest that a safe house programme would be appropriate if the legislative and policy framework were strengthened in the interests of the child. These houses would offer supervision, counselling, independent legal advice, resettlement programmes and an environment free from enforcement activities or adults unrelated to them. It would, as with

trafficked women, also offer a period of safe reflection, free from other pressures. These safe houses should be funded by central government, thus avoiding the possibility that they would be rather randomly distributed throughout the country on the basis of local ability or willingness to fund them rather than of need.

There is also a clear need for better coordination between different agencies, including in terms of the sharing of data. It is not clear yet if the Human Trafficking Centre will effectively fulfil this role. One response to the government's consultation on an action plan (see NSPCC, 2006) suggested that the Department for Education and Skills should act in this way on behalf of government and other agencies but this may not be the best location for functions covering a range of departmental interests. Better coordination is also needed between the UK authorities and those in sending countries; this is necessary to determine what is in the best interests of the child (which family repatriation may not always represent). A good example of this has recently taken place between the governments of Italy – which is considered by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as a model of good practice in this regard – and Nigeria, where simultaneous investigations have taken place in the two countries (Di Cortemiglia, 2004)<sup>4</sup>. Current research being undertaken under the auspices of ECPAT, which is looking at the position of trafficking in a number of West and East European countries, may help to build such inter-country links and help not only in preventing the issue at source, but also with effective repatriation where appropriate. (Repatriation is better than deportation as it ensures that not only is the victim returned to their country of origin but that 'home' authorities are alerted and may be in a better position to provide support.) The current policy of enforcing the return of failed unaccompanied asylum-seeking children may be counterproductive as it may lead to re-trafficking of such children<sup>5</sup>. Where trafficked people are able and willing to return to their country of origin, this must be accompanied by adequate programmes of social assistance in order to help them rebuild their lives.

Other recommendations made with regard to child trafficking are that children should be interviewed separate from adults, to avoid manipulation of the children; that vulnerable children should be placed immediately under care orders; and that unaccompanied

minors should be escorted by airline staff as a matter of course. Areas where further research is needed in the area of trafficking include the following:

- researching the movement of trafficked children within the UK;
- an exploration of how exploitation of children for sexual purposes varies between differing ethnic and cultural groups;
- an enquiry into the proper balance in services for trafficked children and young people (and adults) between policing and support services.

Some organisations have also argued for the need for a range of good publicity to be developed including posters, leaflets videos and films. Material such as this has been developed by other governments such as the Canadian government; good posters, short TV advertisements and so on can have a powerful effect in raising public awareness of the existence of slavery and there are already instances of people being freed from slavery as a result of the interventions of concerned neighbouring individuals. The role of public opinion should not be discounted: it was, after all, the support of public opinion that finally drove through the 1807 anti-slave trade legislation. This could be seen as part of a process to mobilise popular support for a campaign, similar in spirit to the abolition movement, for the removal of slavery from the UK. Appropriate charitable trusts might consider funding more specific campaigns such as one to remove forced labour from UK businesses and their international value chains. Such campaigns would need to learn the lessons of past successful and unsuccessful campaigns that in turn requires research as to how such campaigns can maximise their effectiveness.

In relation to the issue of forced labour, there may already appear to be a prima facie case for strengthening the powers of surveillance and regulation of the GLA. At the very least, a robust monitoring and evaluation scheme needs to be put in place that can take evidence from interested parties and report on the effectiveness of the GLA and the relevant legislation within a relatively short period of time, for example, within a year. Allied to this, there needs to be a strengthening of Fair Employment Legislation to cover the kinds of gaps outlined above. Company

law in the UK needs to be addressed to protect the rights of those working in supply chains and the UK government could take a lead in promoting minimum legal standards for all employers: this will require global collaboration but it will also require a much more subtle regime of tracing of products than currently occurs. This, of course, requires the active collaboration of employers that must be much more transparent in their company accounting in relation to the use of exploited labour both in this country and more widely. This could be required by national legislation but it would be important for the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and for local chambers of commerce or trade to engage in this debate by developing national and local codes of practice and ethics for employers and their suppliers. There is already a body of practice in relation to the supply of goods and services to local government that can be drawn on but it must be recognised that the issue of forced labour is a global one; the use of forced labour abroad (and at home) can strongly affect the prices of goods purchased in the UK.

Given that a significant proportion (albeit a minority) of those in forced labour, debt bondage, or who have been trafficked, may have entered the country illegally, there is a strong case for the government to offer regularisation to all those palpably in enslaved situations. This would undermine the strength of those enslaving them at a stroke and offer these people, most of them the victims of violence, deception and manipulation, a fresh start to their lives. It would also flag up the government's overriding concern with the needs of victims at a time when most political rhetoric continues to brand illegal immigrants as criminals. Because the debates about immigration have a strongly racialised content, it remains difficult for migrants to be viewed as entitled to the same rights of citizenship as white UK nationals. Strong political leadership here could have a powerful effect in shifting the terms of the debates about migration and offer a more protective framework to those who are most vulnerable among global migrants.

A further implication for the government is to re-examine the terms on which development aid is offered to countries, both directly and indirectly in the form of, for example, trade agreements. In recent years, development aid has been increasingly couched in terms of conditionality, for example, in relation to addressing issues of

corruption in recipient governments. There is no reason in principle why a country's track record as a sending country of exploited migrants should not also be included in this equation. Criminal gangs in sending and transit countries have a very strong role in promoting modern slavery in all its forms and the UK government should require to be satisfied that, through legislation, policy and practice frameworks, these countries are doing as much as they can to undermine the development of modern slavery at source. It is quite straightforward (and Kevin Bales has done this) to identify the characteristics of a country that will increase the likelihood of slavery existing. This will require stronger partnerships to be built between countries so that all points in the supply chain of slaves can be monitored.

It is at a local level that the incidence of modern slavery is generally first observed – often through cases coming to light at the doors of advice agencies – and local organisations, in particular churches, trades unions, local government and the voluntary and community sectors, have a particularly important role to play in both monitoring the incidence of slavery and responding to it. (Of course some organisations have been working for a number of years on a range of relevant issues and this work needs to be resourced and strengthened.) This may require new forms of partnership working to be developed and for local government to be prepared to fund initiatives. There are now a number of innovative local partnership groups throughout the country beginning to work on this issue as well as broader-based national organisations such as the MRN, which are developing intelligence in specific policy areas. Within 50 miles of Hull, for example, there are at least five partnership bodies in part addressing these kinds of issues.

However, most organisations have yet to properly regard this as a significant issue or to be funded appropriately. Resources will be required to equip them for this task, including training to be able to spot the characteristics of those working in enslaved conditions, better use of translation and interpretation services, inter-agency collaboration, and helping to build capacity among the victims themselves. Trades unions will need to develop better intelligence in terms of the potential sites of victims and develop more effective outreach work – again there are some initial signs of this

happening but this kind of work will need to be strengthened perhaps with guidance from the TUC centrally.

The issue of training is a key one at a wider level. Funding should be sought for a range of training programmes that could address the needs of particular agencies that come into contact with modern slavery; these include not only grass-roots organisations, but members of the police and judiciary, the immigration service and social services workers. Each of these has the potential to identify the enslaved and work to rescue and protect them.

Training programmes are also needed to help organisations such as MRN that are aiming to build capacity among vulnerable groups such as migrant workers so they can develop an autonomous voice. One of the contributory factors to the enslavement of many people in this country is a lack of awareness of their rights. Giving a voice to enslaved people to articulate not only their past experience but also to define a reasonable protection and rehabilitation process for victims of forced labour is critical. At present, this paradoxically depends to a certain extent on forced labourers themselves.

It is necessary to ensure that some opportunities are created for outreach from those who have been trafficked for forced labour to the communities that supply forced labour, which could help reduce supply. Further, skilled researchers could gather information on the phenomenon to increase understanding of the situation of people in forced labour, mechanisms operating in the environment, as well as to develop indicators for identification of such situations. This information could provide a resource for outreach (by housing and employment advice workers working together, for example) to groups of forced labourers within the UK, which could help them in plotting paths out of forced labour.

All of this work should be undertaken within the continually strengthening framework of international law, promoted and monitored by the UN and transnational agencies such as the EU. It is critical that strong messages are available throughout the world that slavery is no longer acceptable and that there is, in effect, no hiding place for those enslaving others. This could be linked to wider campaigns of information and education, for example, pointing out the social, political and economic benefits of freeing

slaves. Cross-country research, collaboration at the level of laws, policy and practice should also aim to be making recommendations on national and European reforms to remove the regulatory loopholes that facilitate trafficking for labour exploitation, loopholes (such as differing national practices, laws, thresholds or 'tests') that traffickers are quick to exploit.

Finally, we return to the point that modern slavery is a dynamic process. As its shape begins to be defined and official and unofficial agencies begin to respond to it, those responsible for enslaving others change tack: they may move to different sites, try different methods, go further underground. This report cannot be the last word on the subject: it is an issue that must be addressed on a continuing basis and will require ongoing, subtle and, at times, difficult and dangerous interventions from practitioners and researchers. Responding effectively in terms of policy and law, in the last resort, depends on the skill with which such people undertake their work.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The issue of rights is multidimensional: it may cover not only immigration status and employment rights but issues to do with health, for example, many trafficked women and children are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDs.

<sup>2</sup> There are thought to be 30-40 statutory and voluntary agencies working singly or in partnership groups in the UK against trafficking. Anti-Slavery International maintains a database of such organisations.

<sup>3</sup> The government published a toolkit in 2003 that is already substantially out of date.

<sup>4</sup> Approximately 20,000 women have been trafficked into Italy up until 2004, the largest numbers of them Nigerian and Albanian, but more recently joined by women and children from Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Bulgaria.

<sup>5</sup> Although by no means all unaccompanied minors arriving at UK ports are likely to have been trafficked, numbers may be substantial: the number of these unaccompanied minors is of the order of 7,000 per year.



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