

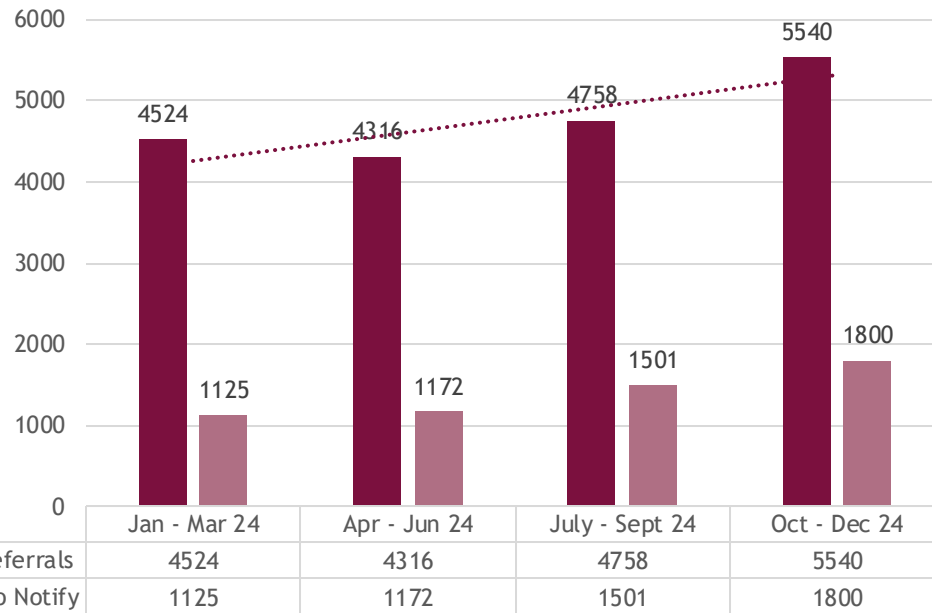
West Midlands Anti Slavery Network

Working together to
end modern day
slavery, trafficking and
exploitation

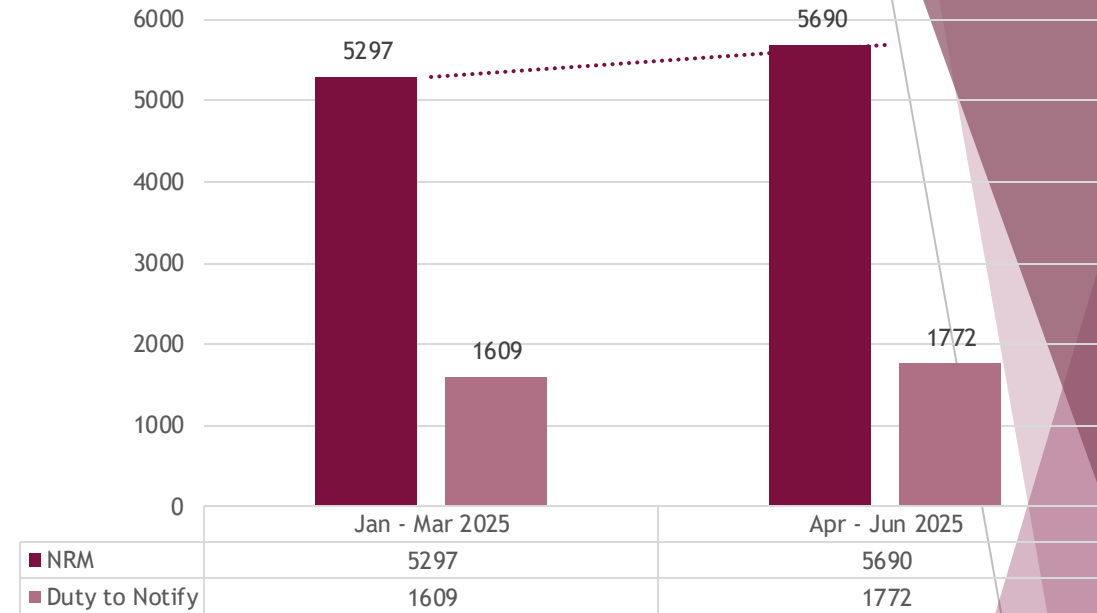


The National and Regional landscape

National picture in 2024 - UK



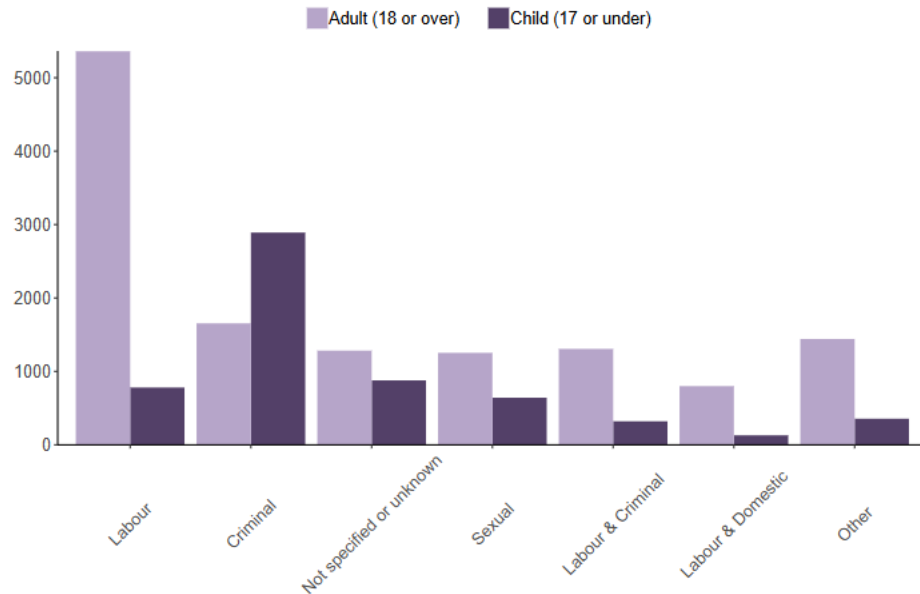
National picture in 2025 - UK



- Current trajectory indicates an increase in both NRM and Duty to Notify referrals on a national scale
- Referrals for both NRM and Duty to Notify in 2024 were the highest since records began in 2009 as were the number of conclusive grounds
- In England there were a total of 16,970 NRM referrals comprising 11,568 for adults and 5,376 for children with 26 for an unspecified age
- There were 842 West Midlands NRM referrals for those reporting exploitation in UK counties
- The most common exploitation type was Labour for adults and Criminal for children
- Of NRM referrals 23% were UK nationals, 13% Albanian and 11% Vietnamese with males accounting for 74% of victims

NRM National and Regional landscape - 2024

Figure 7: Number of NRM referrals, by exploitation type and age at referral



Fastest growing global crime!



Worth £185 billion worldwide

- In 2024 there were 842 NRM referrals for the West Midlands Region in relation to modern slavery within UK counties - the highest outside Greater London and 1125 sent to WMP for further enquiries/investigation. Of these 31 referrals were for Labour exploitation only with 17 referrals concerning both Labour and Criminal Exploitation (adults only)
- Between January and June 2025 there have been 447 referrals for the West Midlands Region, again the highest outside Greater London - should the remaining half of 2025 see a similar number, this will be an increase on 2024!
- There is only 6 months data available for 2025 and as such a direct comparison cannot be made, however some similarity can be inferred - West Midlands Region has submitted 447 NRM's which is second highest outside of London with Labour exploitation (adults) being the most common theme!

Labour exploitation

- ▶ Exploitation is on the rise in the care sector!
- ▶ The most common exploitation typology occurs within the Construction, Agriculture, Car Wash, Nail bar, Hospitality and Factory industries.
- ▶ However, a shortage in the supply of care work has increased the risk of labour exploitation within this industry! There is a growing reliance on migrant workers to fill essential roles providing increased opportunities for perpetrators to exploit!
- ▶ Migrant workers in the care sector are being exploited by unscrupulous employers who are demanding repayments often amounting to thousands of pounds, leaving victims feeling trapped and isolated and often existing in appalling conditions
- ▶ NRM statistics reveal labour exploitation is on course to be the highest exploitation typology for 2025
- ▶ The total economic and social costs in relation to labour exploitation in the UK are estimated to be between 3.3 billion and 4.3 billion pounds annually!



About us - our values and service provision

- ▶ **We unite** - working together to meet the needs of stakeholders and service users, acknowledging the achievements of others, supporting partners to achieve their aims and objectives and facilitating partners working to identify and resource gaps in provision
 - ▶ **We are accountable** - we value courage and honesty! We are personally and collectively accountable and responsible for delivering in our commitments, striving to provide a standard of excellence in our service
 - ▶ **We are kind** - we treat everyone with compassion and kindness and have respect for all people. We promote equality and diversity
 - ▶ **The survivor is at the centre of what we do** - we ensure that the survivor's voice is embedded in all we do
 - ▶ **We encourage innovation** - we create an environment in which innovation can flourish and effect change
 - ▶ **We do no further harm** - we actively encourage stakeholders to examine their own anti-slavery practises
- **IMSA's** - we have 3 Independent Modern Slavery Advocates covering the West Midlands and Warwickshire areas who play a crucial role in forging effective and sustainable relationships with Police, Local Authorities and third sector organisations. We offer various services including direct victim support, delivering training programmes and providing technical advice to professionals
 - **V.O.I.C.E** - Voice of Insight, Change and Empowerment. Survivor led initiative within the Network bringing together individuals with lived experience, providing a platform to directly inform, shape and strengthen anti-slavery strategies across multiple sectors
 - **Training and awareness** - sessions focus on recognising potential victims and outlining steps to secure support services

Why Pathway provision is critical!

- ▶ Survivor focussed approach - pathways ensure that the entire process of support, from initial disclosure to long term recovery, is centred around the needs of the survivor
- ▶ Coordinated support - pathways ensure service provision is linked together, creating a better experience for survivors and reducing the burden of having to relive their trauma
- ▶ Trauma informed - pathways integrate principles of trauma informed care, providing support that is sensitive to past experiences and limits the occurrence of re-traumatisation
- ▶ Improved Access to Services - pathways provide a robust framework for survivors to access a range of services such as healthcare, housing, legal aid and mental health support
- ▶ Better Outcomes - clear and effective pathway provision helps to improve the quality and consistency of services leading to better coping strategies, increased resilience and the improved likelihood of effective recovery for the survivor
- ▶ Reduced deterrents - effective pathway provision can reduce the emotional impact that can often deter survivors from seeking help and support



- Long lasting injuries (physically and emotional such as fear, anxiety and depression which can lead to social isolation and damaged relationships
- Homelessness and destitution - without safe accommodation, survivors face the risk of homelessness and poverty
- Prolonged trauma - a lack of clear, consistent support can prolong recovery with survivors often reliving trauma
- Stalled justice - poor communication from law enforcement agencies can make survivors feel abandoned and hinder their desire to further engage
- Increased risk - the absence of support services can leave survivors at risk of further exploitation

Case Study: Maria - Modern Slavery in the Care Sector

Background:

Maria, 34, from the Philippines, recruited to the UK as a live-in carer

Promised good pay and accommodation

Exploitation:

Passport taken “for safekeeping”

Worked 90+ hours a week, no rest days

Paid only £150/month - deductions for “fees”

Not allowed to leave the house, threatened with deportation

Identification:

District nurse noticed signs of exhaustion and fear

Maria disclosed her situation privately

Nurse raised a safeguarding alert and referred through the NRM

Outcome:

Moved to safety and received medical, legal, and emotional support

Key Learning Points:

Care sector workers can be isolated and hidden from view

Warning signs: long hours, withheld documents, restricted freedom

Trauma-informed and early intervention are essential



Case studies

Chris was 32, was homeless and sleeping in his car, he was bounced around foster homes when he was a child and abused by his parents. A friend of a friend told Chris he could get a job at a traveller site, where he would get paid and have accommodation. Chris moved to the site and worked around the site as a handy man.

Chris had no employment contract, and all the agreement was made verbally, Chris was told he would be paid in cash. When Chris's first pay was due, he was informed that his wages were being used to cover the cost of his accommodation. Chris said nothing because during this time, the site managers had physically attacked other people on the site and Chris did not want to be next. Chris continued to work on the site. Chris kept politely asking for some payment as he was working increasingly long hours and was tasked with dangerous and risky jobs, without any equipment or safety kit for himself. On one occasion, Chris chopped down a tree and got seriously injured. The site manager refused to allow Chris to go to the hospital, saying he would beat him, if he kept asking. Chris suffered pain throughout his body and felt he couldn't continue to work so he eventually fled the site when a chance to escape presented itself.

Case studies

"From Despair to Hope: My Journey at SafePlace"

Before arriving at SafePlace, I had given up hope of finding help. I scoffed at the "hope" sign on my new bedroom door, but it's exactly what I'm leaving with. After nearly five years of homelessness, harassed out of my home and even on the streets, I was desperate for shelter. I spent several winters outside before seeking refuge at a traveller site, where I was injured and in dire need of assistance. I never thought I'd get help, and I'm still amazed by the perseverance of everyone involved. The friendship and kindness I've experienced here are beyond words.

When I arrived, I was depressed, stressed, and too scared to function or trust anyone. But I was welcomed by three amazing people who've since become dear to me. They assisted me in every aspect of my mental and physical health, even accompanying me to doctors and the hospital when I fell ill. I would have been terrified to face those challenges alone. The team here is irreplaceable; they've been more like family to me. Despite my anxiety and the difficulties that come with my mental health, I've always been treated with respect, kindness, and care far beyond what I expected. They kept me from returning to the streets and allowed me to stay while my housing issues were resolved. I'm both sorry to leave and relieved, grateful that my life has been put back together. For the first time in a long while, I feel cared for and valued. All my needs were met, and I can't think of any improvements that could be made. This service is not just essential—it's invaluable. I can't imagine what others in worse situations must feel when they arrive, but being greeted and treated as I was is vital, especially in a country with dwindling services. I'm leaving here a calmer, more confident person, finally looking forward to a future I couldn't imagine for myself. I'm so grateful and will greatly miss this house and the incredible team who helped me.



Resources

OUR Team

Operational Manager - Contact: nick.walton@westmidlandsantislavery.org

Lead Independent Modern Slavery Advocate Jo@westmidlandsantislavery.org

Independent Modern Slavery Advocates (IMSAs)

Warwickshire IMSA: nigel.oseman@westmidlandsantislavery.org

West Midlands IMSA's:

ranjeet@westmidlandsantislavery.org

michael@westmidlandsantislavery.org

If there is no immediate danger and **you suspect modern slavery**, report it to the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 or the police on 101.

If you need immediate direct victim support, you can contact the 24/7 The Salvation Army helpline on 0800 808 3733.

If you **support Children** - Support is available to children who are **victims of modern slavery** – the **Local Authorities are the Primary service provider** for safeguarding and responding to the needs of a child victim, regardless of their nationality and immigration status. (i.e **Barnardos 0800 11 11**)

Modern Slavery Awareness guide and resource page - www.gov.uk

GLAA

Unseen

Salvation Army

Black Country Women's Aid

Migrant Help - www.migranthelpuk.org