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# Executive Summary Independent Evaluation of the IMSA Framework Stage One Consultation

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# Executive Summary

In 2021, Hope for Justice, British Red Cross and The Snowdrop Project began a partnership to explore the potential for a national accredited Independent Modern Slavery Advocate role. The decision was made to develop a framework to cover the key elements of the operation of the role, based on the expertise within the partner organisations and extensive consultation of the modern slavery support sector.

This report contains an evaluation of the findings from the consultation exercise, and an assessment of the consultation process and its effectiveness. The evaluation also includes a review of the inclusion of consultants with lived experience of modern slavery within the consultation process and development of the framework. It was agreed by the project board that the framework would include four sections:

1. Ethos, values, and governance
2. IMSA role and remit
3. Training and accreditation
4. Organisations employing an IMSA

It was also agreed that the role and remit of the IMSA would focus on eight key areas:

1. Health and social care
2. Housing and subsistence
3. Survivor support and NRM
4. Reducing risk/increasing resilience
5. Criminal justice
6. Civil justice
7. Multi agency and partnership working
8. Independent advocacy and the IMSA model

The consultation process included 13 workshops, survey data collected within workshops and a call for written feedback. Five 'partnership' workshops included policy level representatives from each partner organisation, consultants with lived experience and

other invited experts. Two 'frontline' workshops included individuals operating in an IMSA or equivalent role within the partner organisations. Five 'sectoral' workshops were attended by a variety of stakeholders from across the sector and other relevant areas. Finally, an event was held to launch the draft framework and take feedback on the process to date.

## Methodology

Data from the workshops, surveys and written feedback were synthesised by the project lead, and having been reviewed by the evaluator underwent a content analysis process that identified different emergent topics as they related to each of the four sections and eight key areas. From this the key points of discussion and agreement were assessed. Most of the data came from the workshops as only a small number of written responses were received. Survey data was also included in the analysis.

To evaluate the consultation process and its effectiveness, the form and function of the workshops and written submissions were assessed against the agreed objectives of the overall consultation:

1. What needs to underpin the framework?
2. What needs to be adapted to ensure the model can be upscaled and replicated?
3. How can the model sit in different organisations employing an IMSA across four host nations?

UN guidance for stakeholder consultation was also used as a framework to assess the process and the methods of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

An evaluation of engagement with consultants with lived experience was also undertaken, as this was identified as a particularly important part of the consultation process, and an important areas of learning. The three IMSA model project development lived experience consultants were asked to participate in the independent evaluation of the consultation process. They were each asked to fill in a detailed report of each of the workshops they attended. These were given to the independent evaluator to form part of the evaluation. Interviews were offered to each of the three consultants, two interviews were carried out.

## Key findings from consultation Data

### Support for formalised IMSA role

Agreement that an accredited IMSA would be of benefit to survivors of modern slavery.

Agreement that there are significant barriers to having needs met appropriately that survivors face, and that having a specifically trained advocate is likely to bring significant benefit to the client.

### IMSA role and remit

There is a need for clarity on the role of an IMSA, and how it can be distinguished from other connected roles, such as caseworker, general independent advocate or victim navigator.

Agreement that expertise within the eight key areas is necessary for the IMSA to successfully support the client.

### Training and accreditation

High level training would be necessary for the IMSA to operate with the necessary level of expertise. Agreement that there are a number of benefits to accreditation.

### Organisations employing an IMSA

There are benefits and drawbacks to both a local and national model, with the implication from those attending workshops that they would be prepared to support either, even if practically one may be more difficult than the other.

Protecting the independence of the IMSA and avoiding conflicts of interest emerged as a key theme. There was support for excluding law enforcement organisations as organisations that can employ an IMSA, but an open-minded approach to other organisations, as long as they could meet strict criteria.

## Engagement with consultants with lived experience

- By engaging with consultants at different levels of the process, inviting LEAP consultants to attend sectoral workshops and including directly engaged consultants who had previously worked with the partner organisations to contribute more extensively to the development of the framework, different perspectives could be gained from both more involved, and more removed and objective consultees.
- The consultation of the three directly engaged consultants went significantly beyond what was referred to as 'tokenistic' involvement and created space for meaningful input and co-creation of the developing framework.

## Evaluation of consultation process

The form and function of the workshops and written submissions were assessed against the agreed objectives of the overall consultation:

- The first objective, to establish what needs to underpin the framework was met by capturing a wide range of views and stakeholder insight on the values and ethos that should be foundational to the IMSA framework. This was also achieved by facilitating a series of in-depth discussions with relevant stakeholders across the sector and beyond, to establish the utility of the eight key areas of the IMSA role.
- The second objective, to establish what needs to be adapted within the existing IMSA models of the partner organisations to ensure the model can be scaled up and replicated, was met through the discussions facilitated across the workshops, with a well considered cohort of stakeholders in attendance.
- The third objective was met, although there is potentially an opportunity to develop this further. Representatives from the four nations were included throughout the consultation process.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The data from the consultation demonstrated support within the sector for a formalised and accredited IMSA role. There was agreement that the eight key areas were vital parts of an advocacy model specifically focused on survivors of modern slavery, and support for the four sections underpinning the framework.

The process was well designed and executed, including meaningful engagement with individuals with lived experience of modern slavery. There was significant consultation across the sector, which was able to demonstrate support developing the IMSA framework. Stakeholders were meaningfully engaged with throughout the consultation process, at an appropriate level based on their expertise and interest in the project.

Based on the evaluation undertaken, eleven specific recommendations were made. These were based on findings from the consultation data, including a need to focus on a communication strategy to ensure the framework successfully embeds within the sector, and on ways to build on the consultation process carried out at this stage of the development of the framework.

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