



## Local Elections 2024

# Developing a local response to modern slavery

Modern slavery takes place in communities across the UK. Therefore, in addition to a coordinated response at the national level, it is vital that there is a strategy for preventing exploitation, safeguarding survivors and holding traffickers to account at the local and regional level. The elections on 2nd May 2024 are an opportunity to significantly advance efforts to rid our communities of exploitation.

Hope for Justice has considerable experience of working with multi-agency partners to prevent exploitation, safeguard survivors and hold traffickers to account. We therefore recommend that candidates commit to taking the following steps:

### Governance and strategy

- Make tackling modern slavery a priority for your region:
  - When developing strategic plans for police, housing authorities, social care and other frontlines services, ensure that addressing modern slavery is identified as a priority and that appropriate resources are allocated to allow for effective delivery of that plan. Draw from guidance developed by the Local Government Association.
- Resource multi-agency partnerships:
  - An effective response to slavery requires collaboration between local authorities, health services, law enforcement, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. For such collaboration to be sustainable, it must be adequately resourced and cross-sector.

### Safeguarding and human rights approach

- Place safeguarding and independent advocacy at the heart of the response:
  - The rights and wellbeing of survivors must be prioritised in the response to modern slavery. This is essential for their individual recovery and also to establish a relationship of trust with law enforcement as they seek to hold traffickers to account.
- Create pathways to support services:
  - Identifying an individual as having suffered exploitation is only a first step. As is the case with other victims of violent crimes, pathways must be established to enable survivors to access local safeguarding protection.

### Listen to lived experience

- Listen to people with lived experience:
  - It is only by listening to people who have experienced modern slavery, and communities at risk, that we can truly understand the factors which lead to such exploitation, and what steps must be taken in response. It is essential that policymakers and those delivering services prioritise learning from survivors of modern slavery.

For more details about these recommendations or information about Hope for Justice's work, please contact [ewan.fraser@hopeforjustice.org](mailto:ewan.fraser@hopeforjustice.org)

# Hope for Justice UK Programmes

## 1. Hubs: Community Engagement

Community engagement is a critical component of a comprehensive response to modern slavery. By working in partnership with local stakeholders, Hope for Justice's Hubs have been able to improve prevention and identification of survivors in the areas in which we work through:

- **Proactive outreach:** Sustaining proactive outreach is essential to ensure that we continue to identify survivors and protect people most at risk to exploitation. Our proactive approach has enabled us to overcome many of the barriers to identifying survivors of modern slavery.
- **Survivor pathways:** Our UK Hubs teams have built effective relationships with key partners locally. The success of these relationships has enabled the creation of pathways into support services for survivors with whom we have worked.
- **Expert technical knowledge:** Hope for Justice's work is highly regarded throughout the modern slavery sector, reflecting the high level of expertise and professionalism of our frontline programme teams. This expertise means Hope for Justice is well-positioned to initiate and lead on strategic developments within the sector, such as modern slavery partnerships and their response to survivors.

## 2. Independent Modern Slavery Advocacy

Survivors of modern slavery must navigate complex systems, services and legislation at a time when they are most isolated and vulnerable. An Independent Modern Slavery Advocate (IMSA) works with the survivor to understand and navigate this landscape, while helping them to overcome barriers and empowering them to make informed decisions about their recovery. An IMSA is a trained expert who considers the survivor's social needs and legal rights together.



Survivors of serious crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse and stalking have access to accredited, dedicated professionals to advocate for them, working with them to navigate systems and services essential to their recovery. However, there is no standardised independent advocacy provision for adult survivors of modern slavery in the UK.



The IMSA Model Development Project is a collaborative effort to address this gap. Led by Hope for Justice, British Red Cross, The Snowdrop Project and the Bakhita Centre for Research Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse, together with consultants with lived experience of modern slavery, this initiative offers a national, accredited model of independent advocacy.

### Impact

- 100% of survivors working with an IMSA who have been called to be witnesses have been able to attend trial
- In West Yorkshire, 90% of modern slavery and human trafficking prosecutions related to survivors who had received early support through the local Hope for Justice Hub
- 97% of NRM referrals supported by our community Hub teams received positive Reasonable Grounds decision
- 42% of survivors working with an IMSA were referred from Hope for Justice's community outreach work
- 71% of our clients working with an IMSA in the 2nd quarter of 2022 were engaged in community-based support

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