



Successful first six months for Modern Slavery Helpline

The new and enhanced Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre, run by award winning charity Unseen, has now been in operation for over six months providing vital support service to those who need it most 24/7, 365 days a year.

During this time, our dedicated specialist team have been answering calls and responding to online contacts and have taken over 1,000 calls, many directly from victims themselves, as well as offering advice and assistance to Police and Social Service personnel across the UK.

Overseen by Executive Director, Justine Currell, former senior policy lead on modern slavery at the Home Office, the helpline is a lifeline to those who are being exploited and abused by others, offering information, guidance and support at their time of greatest need. As well as supporting victims, the Helpline provides information and assistance to statutory agencies and businesses who may encounter an individual or situation involving modern slavery including those in domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation or sexual exploitation.

As well as providing direct frontline support, the helpline also takes calls from members of the public who may spot suspicious activity or concerning situations. Callers can report situations confidentially ensuring their anonymity and safety. Over 280 police and local authority referrals have already been made to prevent crime and safeguard individuals, including those related to vulnerable children.

In its first six months, the helpline has directly supported several individuals out of situations of domestic servitude, forced labour and sexual exploitation from across the UK. Working closely with the police and local authority safeguarding teams, and in consultation with potential victims themselves, the helpline can facilitate the removal of individuals from situations of exploitation and provide access to the support they need to help them recover from their ordeal.

Not only does Unseen's Helpline facilitate frontline support but it is also contributing to the data-war on exploitation. Through the Resource Centre we analyse and assess the information received into the helpline and share with partners and stakeholders to increase and strengthen prevention activities. As more and more people call the helpline we are

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building a better understanding of the nature and scale of modern slavery in the UK and beyond, linking our information with national and international partners.

Justine says 'providing such a vital service to those most in need is absolutely critical to helping and supporting vulnerable people. I am extremely pleased that we are working with so many partners across the UK who recognise the vital role of the helpline. Through our many experiences - as a direct survivor support service, as a training provider and through understanding the legal landscape - Unseen offers a unique perspective on a very complex and hidden crime.'

The first full quarterly Helpline statistics are now available and can be found at:

<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/information/stats>

ENDS

Notes for editors:

About Unseen and the MSH:

Unseen is a charity that operates across three main areas: supporting survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery; equipping frontline staff and businesses with the tools to correctly identify victims and take appropriate action; and influencing governments at a strategic level to create long-lasting solutions to modern slavery. In 2015, Unseen was awarded, Charity of the Year: with an income of less than £1 million, by Charity Times Awards.

The new UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre established in October 2016 provides victims, the public, statutory agencies and businesses with access to information and support on a 24/7 basis. Potential victims who call the helpline can talk to fully trained call handlers who will guide and assist them to access relevant services, including Government-funded support through the National Referral Mechanism. Statutory agencies calling the helpline will be supported in dealing with potential victims and signposted to the range of information, guidance and tools available through the associated resource centre. To raise awareness of the helpline and ensure that it provides the services that potential callers want, we are working closely with a range of diverse stakeholders

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including law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organisations, businesses, media and faith organisations. US-based NGO Polaris is providing technical support to set up the helpline.

Justine Currell - Biography

Justine joined [Unseen](#) on 1 May 2016 following a 28.5 year career in the civil service. During that time she held a variety of operational and policy posts working across a number of UK Government departments. For the last five years of her civil service career, Justine was the modern slavery senior policy adviser in the Home Office and led on development of the Modern Slavery Act, including the transparency in supply chains provision and business guidance, working closely with Ministers, businesses and international colleagues. Since joining Unseen Justine has been called upon to provide her insight and experience on the issue of modern slavery to media, law enforcement agencies, safeguarding professionals and business. She has specifically provided support to a number of key businesses on developing their response to supply chain transparency and is highly regarded in this field. She has joined Unseen to lead the development of the enhanced [Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre](#) and Unseen's work with businesses on supply chain transparency, including the central registry for business transparency statements, [TiscReport](#). Justine seeks to use her experience and knowledge of working with UK Ministers to influence other governments internationally to take action to address modern slavery and, in particular, business supply chain issues.

Modern Slavery Helpline contact information for publication:

Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700.

Press contact details:

For further information or to arrange interviews with Unseen's frontline team please contact the press office.

Tel: 0303 040 2888

Email: info@unseenuk.org

Unseen

www.unseenuk.org

Twitter: @unseenorg

Facebook: @unseenuk

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www.modernslaveryhelpline.org

Twitter: @MSHelpline

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