

For Immediate Release



UNSEEN TAKES HOPE TO THE VATICAN FOR MODERN SLAVERY SURVIVORS

(UK)(Bristol-based) anti modern slavery charity, UNSEEN, is taking a message of hope for survivors of human trafficking to the Vatican this week. UNSEEN MD, Kate Garbers is joining Church leaders and experts from around the world as they work towards Pope Francis' pledge to end human slavery by 2020.

Garbers, who has been briefed by Margaret Archer, President of Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences to present a paper on the challenges faced by survivors of modern slavery, will provoke debate and join the presentation of recommendations to the Pope and Catholic church on the role the Church can play in tackling the issues.

Garbers says: "We need to address resettlement of survivors both in UK and also returning them to their home countries. If their situation hasn't changed, if they have not recovered or been given the appropriate support to recover within the UK, we are setting them up for further exploitation.

"Our mission is to help people become resilient, empowered and independent. Enabling them to become contributing members of society takes time. It needs resourcing and a change to how we approach 'survivors' and their needs currently in the UK."

Pope Francis has constantly repeated two statements from the beginning of his Pontificate: that 'Human Trafficking is Modern Slavery' and that this practice is a 'Crime against Humanity'.

In December 2014 religions leaders from around the world joined him at the Vatican to sign a pledge to end human slavery by 2020, focusing on the tens of millions of people "in chains" due to human trafficking and forced labour.

"The physical, economic, sexual and psychological exploitation of men and women, boys and girls, is chaining tens of millions of persons to inhumanity and humiliation," the Pope said and signed the pledge to do "all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond" to end modern slavery by 2020.

For more information or to interview Kate Garbers email kate@unseenuk.org

For further information please go to www.unseenuk.org or call 07507 966 196

Note for editors

Unseen

- Unseen began in 2008.
- Figures released for 2014 by the National Crime Agency states there were 2,340 reported potential victims of human trafficking victims in the UK, including 671 children – a 34% increase on 2013's figures. However, the Home Office estimates there are between 10-13,000 victims of Modern Slavery in the UK.
- Unseen's WATER (Women's Anti-Trafficking Emergency Refuge) project is the only safe-house in the South West and is one of only three services in the country offering 24/7 support to victims of human trafficking.
- For women who have left the safety of our WATER project, we also offer a resettlement service (RIO –Resettlement, Integration and Outreach) to help them continue on their journey of recovery within their chosen community. This project is supported by the Commissioner's Community Action Fund awarded by the Police Community Trust. The Commissioner's Community Action Fund was set up by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset to tackle ASB, domestic and sexual violence, burglary and provide support for victims of crime.
- Unseen runs a Room Sponsorship Scheme for people to directly support women survivors at our WATER project.
- Unseen is currently working towards opening the UK's first specialist accommodation project for child victims of modern slavery.
- The charity was instrumental in setting up an Anti-Slavery Partnership with Avon & Somerset Police and Bristol City Council, which brings together 22 agencies in fighting human trafficking in the South West, including other NGOs and local government.

The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery.

The Fund is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK. Since its inception in 2004 we have awarded close to £6bn.

The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.

Unseen, 1 Georges Square, Bath Street, Bristol, BS1 6BA

0303 040 2888

info@unseenuk.org

www.unseenuk.org

