

Call for improved measures – The Modern Slavery Bill provides a step forward in the UKs fight against modern slavery but more clarification is key to success

Anti-trafficking organisation Unseen welcome the governments Modern Slavery Bill, but calls for it to be strengthened in key areas if it is to have any real effect in the UK.

Unseen’s CEO and chair of the working group responsible for the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) report ‘It Happens Here,’ Andrew Wallis comments:

“This is an opportunity to introduce real change in the UK and to lead in the fight against modern slavery on a global level. But, there are certain measures that must be improved on if we want to really see the reduction of modern slavery in the UK and importantly better support for the victims.

“Firstly, the Bill must improve its focus on victims. As an organisation that works directly with survivors, we see first hand the need for a more rapid response to survivors needs including proper identification, immediate care and support and improved re-integration into society. We need a commitment to ensure each individual’s circumstances will be investigated fully and a safeguard to prevent victims being prosecuted for crimes they may have committed under duress.

“Secondly we need a coordinated approach led by an independent Commissioner. If this position is to strategically lead on the UKs approach, be a voice for victims and speak impartially across all political parties - this post must stand independent of government.

“Thirdly, we know California has seen success with ‘Transparency in Supply Chains’ (TISC) legislation, where large businesses are now disclosing what they are doing to prevent slavery in their work practices and supply chains – the UK now has an opportunity to take this further with a national policy.

“We would strongly urge government to be bold and support and protect British businesses by including similar measures in the Modern Slavery Bill.

“It is an extremely encouraging start and as an organisation we continue to support the government in its challenge to create the most effective measures to fight this abhorrent crime and most importantly support its victims”.

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Note for editors

Unseen

- . Unseen began in 2008.
- . Government statistics show that the number of victims of trafficking found in the UK rose by 47% between 2012 and 2013. 64% were female. (Home Office Report 2013)

- . In 2012 25% of trafficking victims found in the UK were children, 70 of which were aged up to 9 years old. (Home Office Report August 2013)
- . Figures released for 2012 by Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) states there were 2,255 reported human trafficking victims in the UK – a 25% increase on 2011's figures. However, this is only the number of victims that chose to report the crime – and, importantly, who have been found.
- . 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 to help them continue on their journey of recovery within their chosen community.
- . Unseen runs a Room Sponsorship Scheme for people to directly support women survivors at our WATER project. For details, go visit www.unseenuk.org/donate/sponsor-a-room
- . Unseen is currently working towards opening a specialist accommodation project for child victims of trafficking. For details, go visit <http://www.unseenuk.org/projects/projects-in-development>
- . The charity was instrumental in setting up an Anti-Trafficking 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.

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