Supporting survivors of modern slavery
Alicja was 19 years old, in love and excited about the life she was planning in the UK with her boyfriend. He told her he had lived and worked in England, that there were good opportunities for them there. Alicja had a low paid job in a factory in her rural home town in Poland. She couldn’t wait to build a new life with the man she loved.

But when they arrived in the UK, Alicja’s ‘boyfriend’ took her passport and ID documents, handed her over to a group of men she didn’t know, and then he disappeared.

Alicja’s life became a living hell. For eight years she was moved constantly from city to city, kept locked in hotels and flats. She was forced to take drugs to keep her vulnerable and submissive. She was raped daily by many different men and regularly subjected to violent beatings from her traffickers.

One morning, after a vicious assault, Alicja got lucky. She noticed a door had been left unlocked and she escaped. Her injuries were severe and she took refuge in a nearby park. A passerby noticed her and helped her to the police station. Alicja was terrified. But the police recognised her as a victim of human trafficking and modern slavery and they brought her to Unseen’s Women’s Safehouse.

Unseen helped Alicja to begin counselling and to access vital health care. Alicja loves cooking and began to cook for other women at the Safehouse. She wants to work and has begun a college course. And all the while, Unseen has supported her to navigate complex legal processes so she can make good decisions about her future.

Alicja is a survivor. She has experienced unimaginable horror but with support from Unseen she is finding the courage to build a future based on safety, hope and choice.
In 2018 in the UK 6,993 people were identified as potential victims and their most common nationality was British.*

The Home Office reports that this number is the tip of the iceberg, estimating that there are tens of thousands of victims trapped in modern slavery in the UK. **

Across the globe, 71% of all victims are women and girls, most commonly forced into sexual exploitation.*** But men suffer too. Here in the UK over 50% of victims are men in brutal situations of forced labour.*

Whatever type of exploitation, the control tactics are similar: violence and abuse, withholding of food, lack of privacy, threats against family members, coercive control.

Modern slavery is present in every town and city in the UK. It is hidden in plain sight on all of our doorsteps.
Modern slavery is far from the transatlantic slave trade. The shackles and the chains are gone but the bonds are still powerful and now they are invisible. Traffickers prey on vulnerability: poverty; limited access to education; limited choices; unstable political and social climates; economic imbalances; war...all contribute to the commodification of human beings for the purpose of exploitation and profit.

Globally today, slavery is worth $150 billion in illegal profit every year - more than the profits of Apple, Microsoft, Google and Starbucks combined. Modern slavery is the second fastest growing crime on the planet and has overtaken drugs: humans can be used and sold over and over again.

And it is right here in our everyday lives. Since we established Unseen in 2009 we have helped 355 victims from countries all over the world, and increasingly people from the UK. People who have been brutally exploited to provide daily services we rely on. People forced to pick the daffodils for supermarket shelves, who help to pave your driveway or clean your home, people who make your favorite takeaway curry, who paint your nails, who wash your car... It is not everyone, but where the indicators are in evidence, Unseen is there.

Your commitment to the The Unseen Circle is a vital link in the fight against trafficking and slavery and will transform hundreds more lives from horror to hope. Thank you.
In 2011, Unseen's Women's Safehouse opens offering emergency accommodation and acute support for eight women at a time.
In 2013, our Community Programme opens to support survivors and their families to move on with their lives.
In 2015, UK Government passes the Modern Slavery Act Unseen's contribution is referenced as instrumental to its inception.
In 2016, Unseen's Men's Safehouse opens offering emergency accommodation and acute support for five men at a time.
In 2016, Unseen opens the Modern Slavery Helpline over 15,000 victims of slavery now indicated.
By 2019, Unseen has directly supported 355 survivors in our Safehouses and in the community.
Common nationalities in our care: Albanian, Chinese, Nigerian, British.
In 2020, Unseen launches a new strategy to guide the next five years.
The Unseen Circle is a group of extraordinary individuals committed to supporting survivors of modern slavery to rebuild their lives.

As a member of the Unseen Circle you commit to a minimum annual donation of £10,000.*

You can choose to fund the acute emergency care provided at our Safehouses for women and men. Or you can support our programme for survivors moving on with their lives in the community.

You have the opportunity to collaborate with fellow members and make a difference in the fight against modern slavery.

You will ensure compassionate, ongoing support so survivors can create their own independent futures.

Collaborative, Committed, Compassionate, Creative

*Tax efficient giving is welcome and we suggest committing to three years in The Unseen Circle.
Your donation of £10,000

What Your Donation Enables

- Safe emergency shelter for up to 40 women and men each year in our Safehouses
- 'Move on' support for up to 50 survivors each year in the community
- Counselling and physical health support
- Specialised legal advice
- Help to access education, volunteering and employment opportunities
- Support to access housing and benefits
- Training in how to build safe relationships and set boundaries
- Support to make connections and develop friendships in the community
- Independence, freedom and choice

Circle Benefits

- Annual strategy meeting to connect with other Unseen Circle members and make decisions about funding
- Insight briefings on modern slavery in the UK with option to join virtual 'teach in' briefings
- Annual networking opportunities with Unseen’s supporter community
- Access to senior leadership and service delivery staff

The annual cost of our survivor support services is £1,006,887 - equivalent to £120 per survivor per day.

In 2020 the total outstanding funding need is £112,400.
"The people in the safehouse, they always support you. They take you out of this dark fog. They tell you that you are also important person. These people, all my life they will live in my heart. They give us chance to feel human again."

Tanya, recovering in Unseen's Women's Safehouse after 20 years trapped in forced labour.

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Registered charity no. 1127620. Company no. 06754171.