



annual assessment 2023

WORKING TOWARDS A
WORLD WITHOUT SLAVERY

 modern slavery
& exploitation
helpline

 **unseen**

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foreword

Every year, the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline deals with thousands of complex calls and contacts relating to situations of labour abuse, worker exploitation, and all types of modern slavery. 2023 was no exception. With an increasingly complex landscape, the Helpline is often the first point of contact for many who find themselves in compromising, and often difficult and dangerous, exploitative situations.

Throughout 2023, there were several significant changes to the modern slavery landscape. With new domestic legislation introduced through the Illegal Migration Act, passed in July 2023, and the Nationality and Borders Act which came into effect in January 2023, the ability of individuals caught up in modern slavery-related situations to seek government help has certainly declined. The emergence of newer visa routes, such as the seasonal agricultural workers scheme visa and the health and social care visa scheme, has introduced and embedded additional vulnerabilities and risks into the UK labour market. This, coupled with an increasingly hostile environment towards migration and foreign workers, means that fewer people feel able to raise their concerns and seek the help and support they desperately need.

Despite the year-on-year increase in the number of contacts received by the Helpline, the volume of modern slavery-related cases raised in 2023 has declined. This could be due to a range of factors such as individuals feeling unable to seek help, more situations being assessed as not meeting the high threshold of modern slavery, or more people simply wanting advice and guidance about their current personal circumstances or immigration status.

Although referrals to other agencies and third-party organisations have also reduced, our strong partnership model remains. More than ever, we're using our experience, influence, and collaboration to bring together strategic actors in the sector and beyond to tackle this heinous crime. Our unique data continues to inform decision-makers and are recognised as a significant benefit to strategic discussions where data and evidence are often lacking or anecdotal. With the changing economic and political landscape, the independent role of the Helpline is therefore more crucial than ever. That is why we continue to thank our supporters, business clients and statutory partners who stand strong with us every day to ensure we can build a world free from slavery.



Andrew Wallis OBE
CEO, Unseen



Justine Carter
Director, Unseen



Natasha Mitra
Head of Helpline Services,
Unseen

summary numbers

8,367

Helpline
calls

3,333

webforms
and app submissions

5,876

potential
victims

106

different
nationalities

9,067

referrals and
signposts

2,185

modern slavery
cases



chapter 1: introduction

Managing a dedicated and specialist 24/7 Helpline operation remains tough but extremely rewarding. Being available to deal with concerns whenever a person is ready or able to speak can make the difference between them being able to leave an exploitative situation or remaining in it. For the fourth year running, the number of calls and contacts to the Helpline has risen significantly, from 9,779 in 2022 to 11,700 in 2023, an increase of 20%.

who we are

2023 was a significant year for Unseen as we recognised 15 years of dedication to supporting and raising awareness of the plight of those who are most vulnerable in our societies. Since establishing the Helpline in 2016 it has become integral to the organisation and this, coupled with our ongoing and wide range of activities, is crucial to moving us towards our vision of a world without slavery. We continue to:

- Provide much needed specialist support through our survivor accommodation and outreach services, as a sub-contractor under the UK Government's Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract,
- Offer expert and quality CPD-accredited training as well as awareness-raising to a diverse range of individuals, organisations and agencies, including businesses and statutory agencies, and
- Work with strategic partners, third-sector organisations, the UK government and governments overseas to continue influencing through our knowledge, understanding and data.

In addition, we continue to build a network of diverse businesses who work with us to improve and strengthen their resilience and response to the risks of modern slavery in their own organisations and supply chains. Helpline data is a key aspect of this work as it helps us to provide unique insight and guidance to businesses about what's happening in the UK and overseas.

Our growing policy and research function also benefits from unique Helpline data. Our mission is to elevate the role of the Helpline and its data to underpin crucial research projects that seek to change the status quo.

Our credibility and trustworthiness as a leading UK charity remains critical to our work. Ensuring that the sensitive data we hold is secure, confidential, and used appropriately is vital. Our approach to placing potential victims and those with lived experience at the heart of our operations remains key. We truly believe that data is the key to unlocking the potential to reduce the risks of exploitation for those who are vulnerable, and to going after those who perpetrate.

Tackling prevention requires a systemic solution. It's not simply about trying to turn off the tap or displace the criminal activities of a few. Community and society-based approaches that can genuinely tackle the pervasive causes of vulnerability that lead to people being targeted and exploited must be pursued.

chapter 2: summary of 2023

In total, the Helpline received 8,367 calls and contacts indicating 5,876 potential modern slavery victims of 106 different nationalities.



“The Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline is an essential service, which exists to provide much needed help for survivors. It might be the first chance a person has to talk about their experience and access support. As designated first responders, Medaille Trust works closely with the Helpline, and as a result often meets with survivors who have found the strength to reach out, referring them to the NRM where appropriate.”

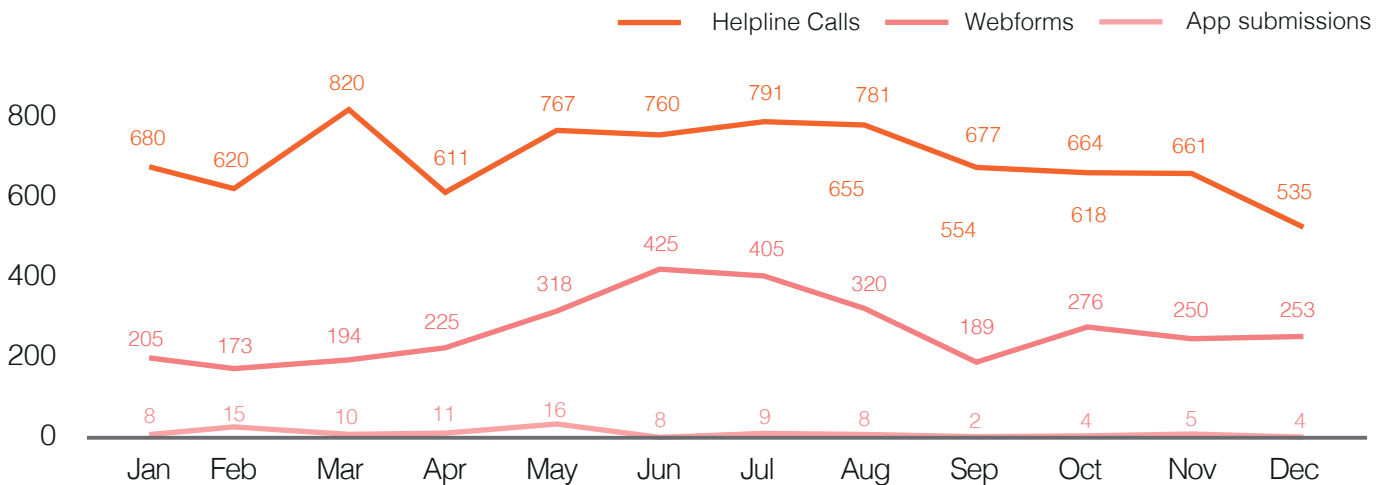
Marcus Dawson
Director, The Medaille Trust

2023 Helpline totals

During 2023, the Helpline received a total of **8,367** calls, a rise of **14%** on 2022's call totals. The highest monthly call volume in 2022 (**708**) was surpassed in each of five months during spring and summer 2023, peaking in March where **820** calls were received. **Chart 1** provides a breakdown of the number of calls received by the Helpline by month. This does not account for the significant number of outgoing calls made by the Helpline.

40% increase in webforms received

Chart 1 – Helpline calls, webforms and app submissions by month



The number of webforms received by the Helpline has increased significantly to **3,233**, a rise of **40%** on 2022. Similarly to Helpline calls, there was an upward curve during the summer months, likely due to the seasonal nature of work in several sectors. The peak was in June when **425** webforms were received. The Helpline continues to expand the breadth of partner websites that host the Helpline webform, which may account for the sustained increase. App submissions throughout the year have been steady, without any significant peaks. This includes submissions from The Clewer Initiative's Safe Car Wash app as well as Unseen's own app aimed at frontline professionals, which was redeveloped at the end of the year. Higher numbers were received during the spring and summer months, possibly due to lower usage of car washing facilities during wetter months. Overall, there was a **38%** decrease in app submissions since 2022. Numbers were much higher in 2022, resulting from a month-long campaign which accounted for almost half of the annual total. We expect app submissions to increase in 2024 as usage of Unseen's newly redeveloped app goes up.

38% decrease in app submissions

Comparison with previous years

An overview of a range of 2023 Helpline activities and data compared with the previous two year can be found in **Table 1 and Table 2**. As app submissions only make up a small proportion of incoming Helpline contacts, and given the year-on-year increase in both calls and webforms, overall contacts have continued their upward trajectory, with a sizeable **20%** increase in total calls, webforms and app submissions since 2022.

Regardless of this increase, we have seen a slight dip in modern slavery cases raised (**-16%**) and potential victims indicated (**-10%**). This drop in modern slavery cases and potential victims has had a knock-on effect in terms of the number of referrals sent, which has also reduced by **16%**. Another contributing factor may be the challenge of partner agencies' capacity to action referrals, particularly in relation to cases that have not been classified as modern slavery. Despite this, the number of modern slavery cases, potential victims, and subsequent referrals in 2023 remain considerably higher than 2021's figures.

The number of potential victim nationalities indicated has continued to increase, reaching **106** different nationalities in 2023, compared to **99** in 2022. The Helpline continues to grow the number of languages that materials are available in and utilise live interpreter services through ClearVoice, spreading awareness of the Helpline and making it accessible to people of all nationalities and tongues. The continued uptake of visa routes into the UK, such as the

Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme and the Health and Social Care Worker Visa, that are known to have resulted in worker exploitation, may also be a contributing factor to the rise in nationalities indicated.

Table 1 – High-level Helpline activity: Calls, webforms and app submissions 2021-2023

Activity type	2021	2022	2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Helpline calls	6,302	7,315	8,367	14%
Webforms	2,136	2,302	3,233	40%
App submissions	50	162	100	-38%
Total	8,488	9,779	11,700	20%

the first quarter. This peaked with **220** modern slavery cases indicated in March, which was also the month with the highest incoming call volume. For the remainder of the year, the number of modern slavery cases indicated remained below those of the corresponding months in 2022. December (**151**) followed by April (**163**) were the months when the smallest numbers of modern slavery cases were indicated. Again, this corresponds to periods with the lowest call volumes.

As with modern slavery cases, **Chart 3** shows that March was also the month when the Helpline indicated the most potential victims of modern slavery. Whereas the number of potential victims indicated remained quite consistent throughout the year in 2021, and 2022 saw a gradual rise and fall followed by a spike at the year-end, 2023 showed three clear peaks in potential victims indicated in March, July and October.

Table 2 – High-level activity: Cases, potential victims and referrals 2021-2023

Activity type	2021	2022	2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Modern slavery cases	1,526	2,588	2,185	-16%
Modern slavery potential victims	3,019	6,516	5,876	-10%
Modern slavery potential victim nationalities	76	99	106	8%
Referrals	1,248	2,207	1,845	-16%

105

situations reported involving various exploitation types

Chart 2 illustrates the number of modern slavery cases reported to the Helpline by month over the last three years. 2023 began with higher numbers of modern slavery cases indicated than the previous year recorded throughout

Chart 2 – Modern slavery cases 2021 - 2023

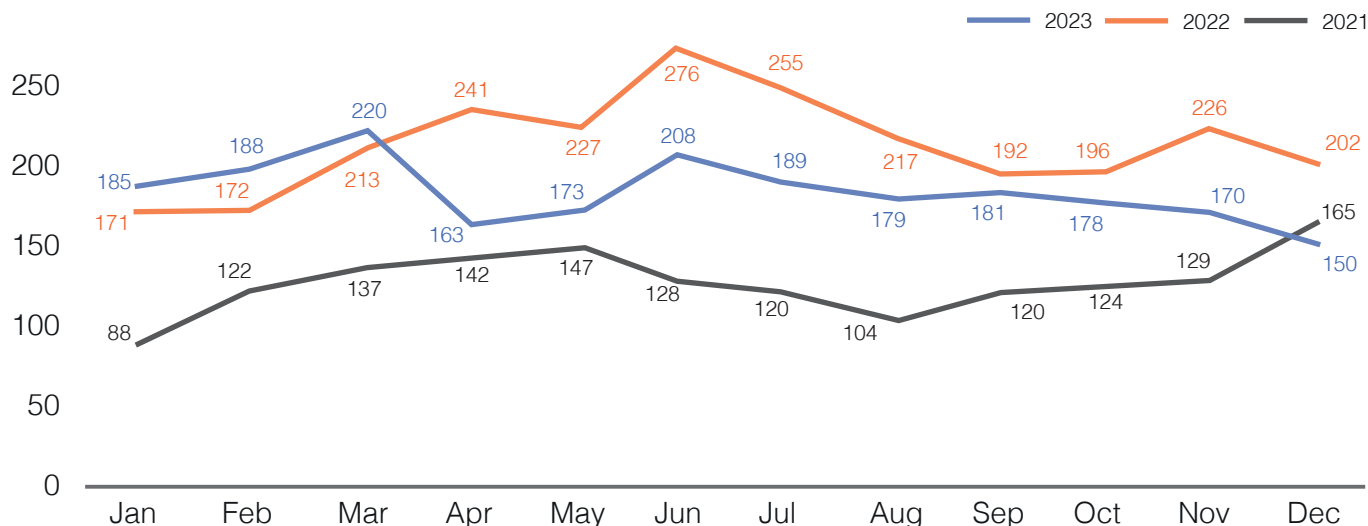


Chart 3 – Modern slavery potential victims 2021 - 2023

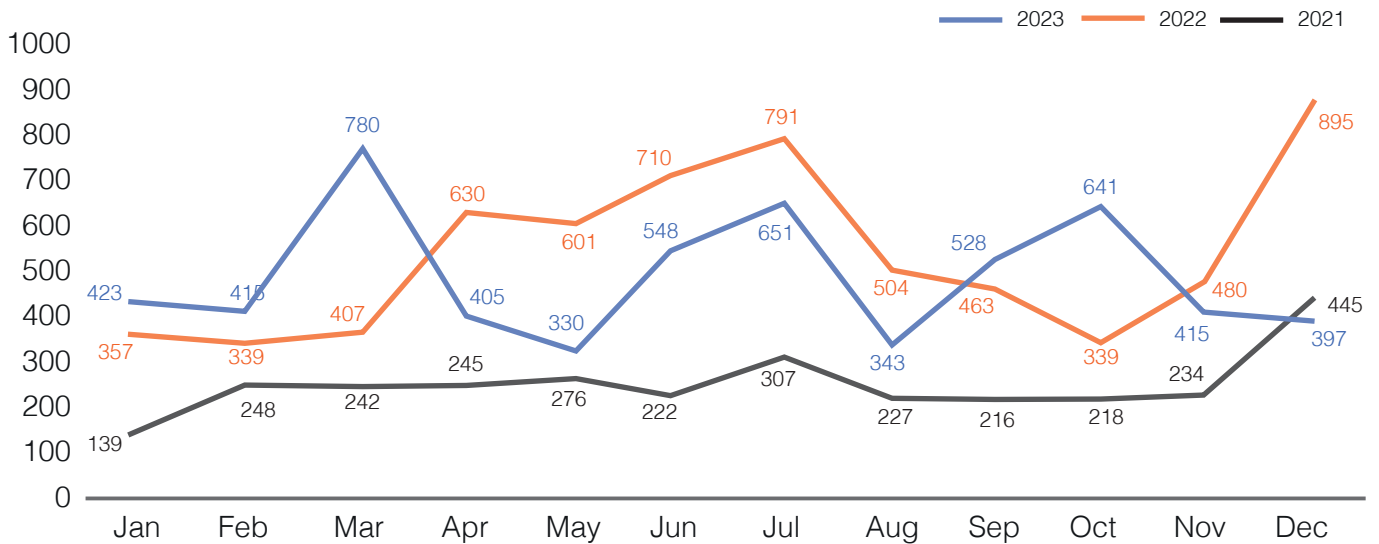
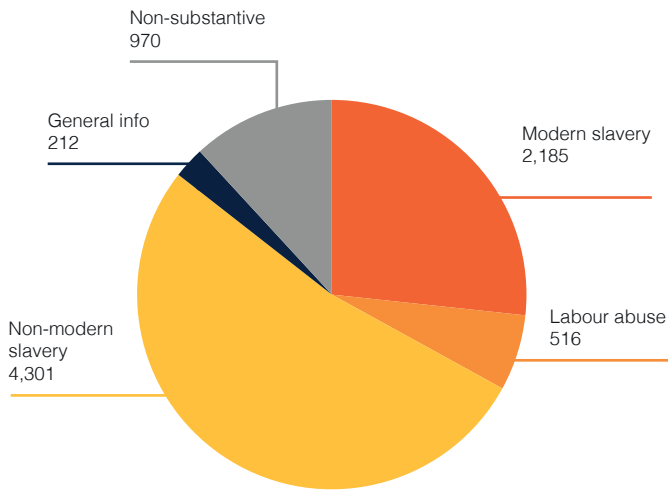


Chart 4 – Cases by case type

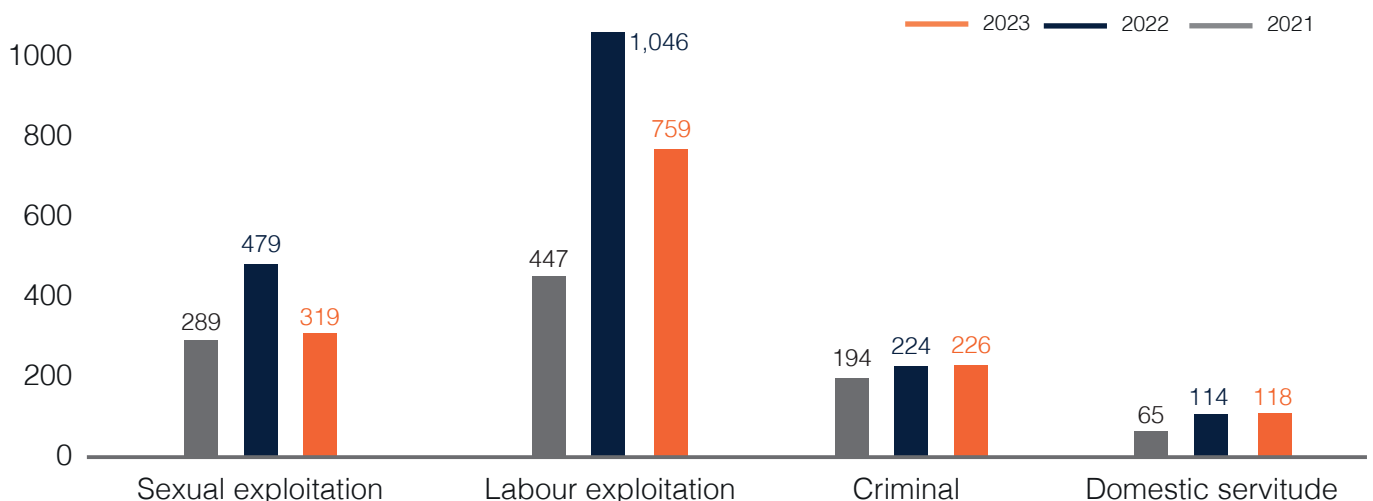


As well as the **2,185** cases assessed by the Helpline as modern slavery, the Helpline handled many other cases in 2023. Although a reduction in modern slavery cases was seen, there were increases across all other case types. **516** cases of labour abuse were indicated, **11%** more than **464**

the previous year. These cases involve worker rights abuses without the level of force or coercion of modern slavery situations. Non-modern slavery cases are situations that relate to other high risk or related crimes and have been assessed by the Helpline as not reaching the threshold for modern slavery. Non-modern slavery cases increased by **61%** from 2,671 in 2022 to 4,301 in 2023. General information cases are when a caller is requesting information about modern slavery but not in relation to a specific situation. These cases increased by **15%** from **185** to **212**. Non-substantive cases rose **9%** from **894** to **970**. These relate to calls or contacts that were not intended for the Helpline and include prank calls or dropped calls.

In 2023, the Helpline indicated reduced numbers of cases in both sexual and labour exploitation in contrast to the large increases seen between 2021 and 2022. Sexual exploitation cases have reduced from **479** in 2022 to **319** in 2023 (**-33%**), and labour exploitation cases from **1,046** to **759** (**-27%**). Cases of criminal exploitation have remained consistent over the past three years, with **226** indicated in both 2022 and 2023. Domestic servitude cases continue to be indicated in

Chart 5 – Modern slavery cases by exploitation type



smaller numbers than other types of exploitation; however, this is the only one of the four common exploitation types where we have seen an increase since 2022, up from **114** to **118** cases (**4%**) cases in 2023. However, labour exploitation remains the most prevalent exploitation type, followed by sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and domestic servitude. This has remained consistent the entire time the Helpline has been operational, since 2016. **Chart 5** shows a comparison of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation and domestic servitude cases indicated by the Helpline between 2021 and 2023.

In addition to these four most common forms of modern slavery, the Helpline indicated **27** cases of financial exploitation, which was a **33%** reduction from the **40** cases recorded in 2022. These cases involve situations where an exploiter is profiting by taking control of a victim's financial accounts and forcing them to work; however, the work is arbitrary in that the exploiter has no connection to the workplace. In 2022, the first organ harvesting case reported to the Helpline was recorded. Since then, **four** cases of organ harvesting were reported in 2023; however, in all these cases there were various other forms of exploitation indicated as well. Forced surrogacy was reported to the Helpline for the first time in 2023, a total of **four** times, with one case indicating various types of exploitation. Forced surrogacy cases involve a potential victim forced or coerced into carrying a pregnancy for another individual. In total, **104** cases were recorded where it was indicated that potential victims experienced various types of exploitation. This is an increase of **6%** from **591** the previous year.

Table 3 – Caller proximity in modern slavery cases

Proximity	% change			
	2022	2023	% 2023	2022 - 2023
Victim self-report	641	730	33%	14%
Direct contact with potential victim	1,048	877	40%	-16%
Indirect contact with potential victim	179	124	6%	-31%
Observation of suspicious activity	720	454	21%	-37%
Total	2,588	2,185	100%	-16%

Proximity of caller

Analysing the proximity of the caller (or person contacting the Helpline) to the potential victim or victims helps us understand if the information has been corroborated in any way and therefore how accurate it is likely to be. For example, the perception of someone observing a situation may be quite different from that of someone who has had direct contact with a potential victim and therefore has more in-depth understanding of their situation. We see high numbers of self-reports by potential victims as a measure of success

in terms of awareness raising, as they demonstrate that individuals in exploitative situations know of the Helpline and how to access support. The number of victim self-reports has continued to rise over the past few years including between 2022 and 2023, rising from **641** to **730**, an increase of **14%**. In 2023, the Helpline was contacted directly by a potential victim self-reporting in **33%** of the modern slavery cases indicated, which is a notable increase from **25%** the previous year. **Table 3** shows modern slavery cases indicated by the Helpline broken down by the caller or contact's proximity to the case.

As the number of potential victim nationalities increases, the importance of interpreters is as crucial as ever in allowing potential victims, and those concerned for them, to speak about their experience in their own language. The ability to have a three-way conversation with an interpreter in one of over 200 languages at any time of the day or night, means the Helpline can continue to provide a person-centred and trauma informed service. In total, **597** hours were spent on interpreter calls in 2023, which is the equivalent of almost **25** whole days. This is only marginally higher than the **593** hours in 2022.

63 different languages were used during interpreter calls in 2023, up **54%** from the **41** languages used in 2022. **Table 4** shows the top 20 languages used in Helpline calls in 2023.

The top **six** languages (Arabic, Albanian, Tigrinya, Farsi, Chinese Mandarin and Romanian) used in Helpline calls in 2022 have remained the same in 2023, although in a slightly different order. Despite these slight changes, Arabic not only continues to be the most used language on interpreter calls, but the number of calls has increased by **40%** since 2022. Calls in Arabic made up **20%** of all interpreter calls in 2023. Calls in Albanian increased by **28%**, pushing it up to the second most used interpreter language in 2023 from third the previous year. There was a slightly smaller increase of **19%** in Mandarin interpreter calls, and **13%** in Tigrinya interpreter calls. Use of Farsi dropped by **32%** from being the second most used language in 2022 to fourth in 2023. During this period, Romanian calls also reduced by **34%**. The majority of the top 20 languages used in 2023 were the same as in the previous year, apart from five languages where use rose considerably bringing them into the top 20 most common. Most notable was Mongolian, which went from no calls in 2022 to **25** calls in 2023. Tagalog was used during only **one** call in 2022 and **25** times in 2023, an increase of **2,400%**. Bulgarian calls increased by **380%**, Spanish by **100%** and Bengali by **83%**.

Of the **63** languages used in 2023, **24** of these were not used at all on interpreter calls the previous year. These were Mongolian (**24**), Tamil (**17**), Twi (**16**), Malayalam (**7**), Nepali (**6**), Fula (**4**), Kinyarwanda (**4**), Thai (**4**), Kurdish Kurm (**3**), Swahili (**3**), Dari (**2**), Edo (**2**), Latvian (**2**), Uzbek (**2**), Yoruba (**2**), Algerian Arabic (**1**), Mauritian Creole (**1**), Efik (**1**), Herero (**1**), Indonesian (**1**), Kazakh (**1**), Krio (**1**), Otjherero (**1**) and Shona (**1**).

Table 4 – Top 20 interpreter languages

Language	Calls
Arabic	322
Albanian	186
Tigrinya	110
Farsi	104
Chinese Mandarin	95
Romanian	71
Amharic	58
Bulgarian	48
Urdu	48
Russian	39
Portuguese	39
Vietnamese	38
Punjabi	37
Hindi	37
Polish	31
Somali	27
Tagalog	25
Spanish	24
Mongolian	23
Bengali	22

International calls and cases

Although the Helpline is a UK-wide service, it continued to receive calls from abroad as well as calls relating to situations overseas. Between 2022 and 2023 there was an increase in the number of modern slavery cases indicated to the Helpline from outside of the UK, the number of countries where these situations of exploitation took place, as well as an increase in the number of calls and contacts from overseas. **Table 5** provides a breakdown of international cases by type, including a comparison between 2022 and 2023. In 2023 the Helpline was contacted about **760** situations that took place outside of the UK (or in the UK and another country), **343** of which were assessed as modern slavery cases. This corresponds to a **33%** increase in international situations reported, and a **6%** increase in situations of modern slavery cases reported. Some of these cases relate to live situations taking place internationally, for which the Helpline may signpost to relevant partner organisations and support agencies abroad or refer information to the National Crime Agency (NCA) to share with police forces in other countries as appropriate to investigate. Other cases may relate to the exploitation of a potential victim abroad before they arrived in the UK. Regardless of where the exploitation took place, if a potential victim now resides in the UK, they may be eligible for support through the National Referral Mechanism.

International cases by exploitation type

Table 6 provides a breakdown of international modern

Table 5 – International cases by case type

Case Type	2022 cases	2023 cases
Modern slavery	323	343
Labour abuse	10	18
Non-modern slavery	229	391
General information	5	0
Non-substantive	6	8
Total	573	760

slavery cases by exploitation type. Similarly to cases reported within the UK, the largest proportion of international cases indicated in 2023 were labour exploitation (**39%**). Whilst more labour exploitation cases were indicated than other types of modern slavery, there was a drop of **19%** from **166** to **134** since 2022. Contrastingly, there were increases in both sexual exploitation (**58** to **72**, **24%**) and domestic servitude (**28** to **34**, **21%**). The most significant differences between 2022 and 2023 were the **136%** rise in criminal exploitation, from **11** to **26**, and the **1,700%** jump in financial exploitation, from **2** to **36**, indicated abroad.

Table 6 – International modern slavery cases by exploitation type

Exploitation type	2022	2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Sexual	58	72	24%
Labour	166	134	-19%
Criminal	11	26	136%
Domestic servitude	28	34	21%
Various	27	4	-85%
Other	2	36	1,700%
Unknown	31	37	19%
Total	323	343	6%

Location of exploitation in international cases

Modern slavery was indicated to the Helpline in a total of **87** countries outside of the UK in 2023, up from **74** in 2022, an increase of **18%**. **Table 7** shows a comparison between 2022 and 2023 of the top 10 countries where modern slavery was indicated outside the UK. Libya has been the most common location of exploitation indicated to the Helpline outside of the UK since 2020, with **84** cases, comprising almost a quarter of international cases reported in 2023 (**24%**). These cases often involve potential victims being kidnapped by militia and forced to work in labour camps. Albania (**24**) and France (**18**) remained static as the second

and third most indicated international locations. Similarly, four other countries continued to be counted in the top 10 locations, namely Greece (14), USA (16), Turkey (13) and Italy (13). Countries that were included in 2023's top 10 due to increases on the year before were Germany (3 to 12, 300%) and Romania (3 to 12, 300%).

Table 7 – Top 10 countries indicating modern slavery cases 2022 - 2023*

Country	2022 cases	Country	2023 cases
Libya	95	Libya	84
Albania	21	Albania	24
France	20	France	18
Greece	20	USA	16
Turkey	17	Greece	14
USA	12	Turkey	13
Italy	11	Italy	13
Saudi Arabia	10	Germany	12
Sudan	10	India	12
Iran	9	Romania	12

*Excludes "unknown"

Modern slavery cases were also indicated in Saudi Arabia (11), Sudan (10), Belgium (9), Pakistan (8), Qatar (8), Morocco (7), Colombia (6), Egypt (6), Nigeria (5), Ukraine (5), United Arab Emirates (5), Bahrain (4), Brazil (4), China (4), Kenya (4), Russia (4), Serbia (4), Thailand (4), Vietnam (4), Algeria (3), Bangladesh (3), Bulgaria (3), Canada (3), Cyprus (3), Ethiopia (3), Ghana (3), Iraq (3), Ireland (3), South Africa (3), South Korea (3), Cambodia (2), Democratic Republic of Congo (2), Hungary (2), Iran (2), Lithuania (2), Malaysia (2), Oman (2), Sierra Leone (2), Spain (2), Switzerland (2), Venezuela (2), Azerbaijan (1), Barbados (1), Belarus (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Cameroon (1), Chad (1), Chile (1), Cote d'Ivoire (1), Czech Republic (1), Estonia (1), Gambia (1), Grenada (1), Guinea (1), Israel (1), Kosovo (1), Macedonia (1), Malawi (1), Mali (1), Malta (1), Mongolia (1), Myanmar (1), Nepal (1), Netherlands (1), Paraguay (1), Philippines (1), Portugal (1), Somalia (1), Sri Lanka (1), Syria (1), Taiwan (1), Togo (1), Tunisia (1), Uganda (1), Uzbekistan (1), British Virgin Islands (1), Yemen (1).

The Helpline saw an increase of 49% in the number of callers or points of contact reaching out from overseas, from 138 to 205. The number of different countries that international callers contacted the Helpline from increased by one from the previous year from 52 to 53. In terms of the countries where the highest number of international callers were based, the United States of America continued to be the most common (31), although slightly less than the previous year (41). Table 8 compares the most prevalent locations of international callers and points of contact in 2022 and 2023. Callers from India almost quadrupled from 5 to 19 (280%). Points of contact from Ireland more than doubled from 6 to 13 (117%), as did those from Canada from 3 to 6 (100%). Uganda (14), Kenya (8), Philippines

(7), Ukraine (6), France (5) and Iran (4) were not common locations of contact in 2022 but increased to be so in 2023. Smaller numbers of callers contacted the Helpline from Poland (4), Saudi Arabia (4), Bangladesh (3), Czech Republic (3), Nigeria (3), Tunisia (3), Australia (2), Bahrain (2), Belgium (2), Bulgaria (2), Egypt (2), Italy (2), Kazakhstan (2), Mexico (2), Morocco (2), Netherlands (2), New Zealand (2), Norway (2), Pakistan (2), Portugal (2), South Korea (2), Switzerland (2), Albania (1), Austria (1), Brazil (1), China (1), Costa Rica (1), Georgia (1), Germany (1), Ghana (1), Israel (1), Libya (1), Malta (1), Oman (1), Syria (1), Tajikistan (1), Thailand (1), Turkey (1), Venezuela (1) and Zambia (1).

Table 8 – Most prevalent countries of international helpline callers*

Country	2022 callers	Country	2023 callers
USA	41	USA	31
Colombia	9	India	19
Ireland	6	Uganda	14
Nigeria	6	Ireland	13
India	5	UAE	10
Canada	3	Kenya	8
Oman	3	Philippines	7
Pakistan	3	Canada	6
Poland	3	Colombia	6
Russia	3	South Africa	6
South Africa	3	Ukraine	6
Spain	3	France	5
UAE	3	Iran	4

*Excludes "unknown"

Referrals and signposts

The Helpline does not work in isolation and makes referrals to a range of partner agencies and organisations to aid investigation by law enforcement or enable potential victims to access the ongoing support they need through advocating to a first responder agency to enter an individual into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Signposting is also essential to ensure that potential victims can access support outside of the NRM while they are waiting for a decision. Many potential victims do not want to enter the NRM due to an unwillingness to engage with statutory agencies and are often signposted to local and national NGOs to receive tailored support. In addition to the potential victims of exploitation that we support, we also receive reports of non-modern slavery situations or adjacent issues (eg domestic abuse, mental health issues, homelessness etc) that fall outside the remit of the Helpline. Often safeguarding referrals are completed, or individuals may be signposted to more appropriate specialist services. Table 9 provides a breakdown of all referrals submitted in 2023 by case type and recipient type.

In 2023, the Helpline submitted 1,845 referrals and 7,222 signposts. This totals 9,067, an 8% increase on the 8,387

Table 9 – Referrals by case type

Referrals to	Modern slavery	Labour abuse	Non-MS	Total
Law enforcement	1,006	25	247	1,278
Government (incl. UKVI, HMRC & EAS)	241	143	23	407
GLAA	21	70	5	96
Local authority	35	0	5	40
NGOs/ IGOs	24	0	0	24
Total	1,327	238	280	1,845

referrals and signposts in 2022. The breakdown differs from the previous year, as 2023 saw a **16%** reduction in the number of referrals submitted from **2,207** to **1,845**, and a **17%** increase in signposts from **6,180** to **7,222**. The biggest beneficiary of Helpline referrals has always been law enforcement. 2023 was no different, with **70%** of all referrals submitted to law enforcement. Notably, referrals to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) declined considerably, from **275** in 2022 to **96** in 2023. This is due to the GLAA declining to accept referrals related to labour abuse due to lack of capacity to investigate. Instead, the GLAA is focusing on higher risk labour exploitation situations within their regulated sectors. **Table 10** provides a more detailed breakdown of Helpline referrals to the most prevalent recipient organisations and agencies.

The organisation in receipt of the highest number of referrals continues to be the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for the second year in a row, with **223** referrals submitted in 2023. The number of referrals to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has risen slightly from **169** to **181** to become the second most referred to agency in 2023. Referrals to UKVI are to request they act as first responders for potential victims residing in Home Office accommodation or who have an open asylum claim. **169** HMRC referrals were submitted for labour abuse cases involving non-payment of national minimum wage, making it the third largest recipient of Helpline referrals. There has been a slight drop in referrals to many of the most prevalent recipients, however, in addition to UKVI, the Helpline sent **25%** more referrals to the NCA (**95**), and **3%** more to Sussex Police. The increase in NCA referrals likely correlates to the increase in international cases received in 2023 as well as online sexual exploitation cases.

In 2023, the Helpline agreed a new referral pathway with the Employment Agencies Standards (EAS) Inspectorate, part of the Department for Business and Trade. This was in response to care sector cases involving recruitment agencies. Despite only beginning this partnership in May, **56** referrals were sent within eight months.

The Helpline continues to grow and develop its signpost directory of local, national and international organisations and support services specialising in a myriad of fields, so

Table 10 – Top 15 referral agencies and organisations

Organisation/agency	Modern slavery	Labour abuse	Non-MS	Total
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	170	4	49	223
UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)	179	0	2	181
HMRC	40	126	3	169
GLAA (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority)	21	70	5	96
National Crime Agency (NCA)	67	1	27	95
West Midlands Police	53	1	15	69
Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate	21	17	18	56
West Yorkshire Police	43	1	12	56
Thames Valley Police	49	1	5	55
Greater Manchester Police (GMP)	37	0	9	46
Police Scotland	33	4	7	44
Kent Police	42	0	1	43
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	30	0	3	33
Sussex Police	27	1	4	32
Essex Police	29	0	1	30

that individuals can be directed to the most relevant onward support. **Table 11** shows a breakdown of signposts by case type. Whilst signposts have increased by **17%** overall, the number of signposts relating to modern slavery cases has reduced slightly from **2,995** in 2022 to **2,797** in 2023 (**-7%**), which likely corresponds to the lower number of modern slavery cases indicated than the previous year. Contrastingly, signposts for labour abuse cases have increased from **451** to **550** (**22%**), potentially because of limited referral options. The most noteworthy difference is the **45%** increase in signposts around non-modern slavery cases, from **2,458** in 2022 to **3,554** in 2023.

Table 11 – Signposts by case type

Case Type	Signposts
Modern Slavery	2,797
Labour Abuse	550
Non-MS	3,554
General Info	75
Non-Substantive	246
Total	7,222



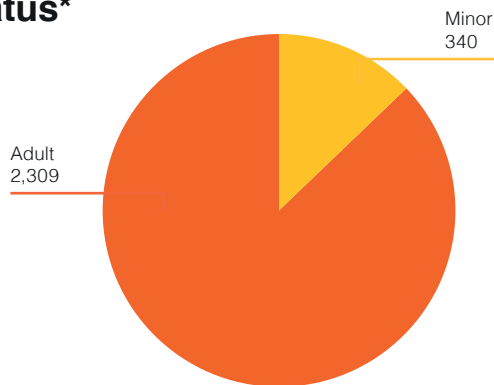
chapter 3: potential victim and exploiter demographics

Within each call and contact made to the Helpline, the demographics of potential victims and exploiters are captured to create a deeper understanding of those involved in modern slavery. In 2023, the Helpline raised a total of 2,185 cases which was a 16% reduction on the number of modern slavery cases raised in the previous year. In addition, the total number of potential victims indicated in these situations was 10% less than the total indicated in 2022, with 5,876 individuals in total.

Potential victims

Although the number of potential victims indicated by the Helpline in 2023 is significant, with **5,876** individuals, this is a decrease of **10%** on the number indicated in 2022 (**6,516**) and aligns with the decrease in the total number of modern slavery cases in 2023. This contrasts with the total number of overall cases raised by the Helpline, increasing from **6,802** in 2022 to **8,184** in 2023, a **20%** rise.

Chart 6 – Potential victims by age status*

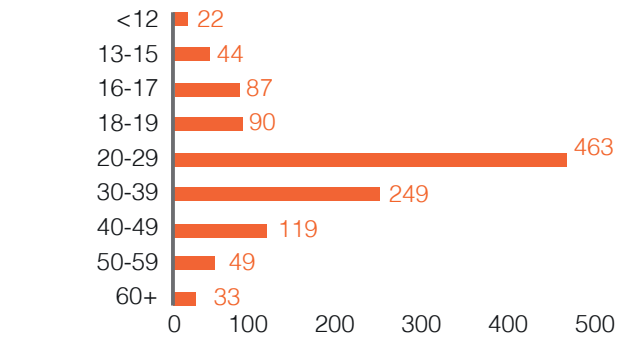


*Excludes "unknown"

As is consistent with previous years, the majority of those indicated in situations of modern slavery reported to the Helpline are adults (**2,309**) compared to minors (**340**) (Chart 6). However, for 2023 the percentage of adults, where the status is known, is slightly lower at just over **87%** than the **90%** indicated in 2022. In **55%** of cases the adult/minor status of the potential victim was recorded as unknown. This high percentage may account for the number of reports from third parties, such as members of the public, who do not know the potential victim(s) personally. Alternatively, it could be a situation where several potential victims are indicated but their adult/minor status is not clear and therefore "unknown" is recorded by the Helpline.

As with age status, assessing which age bracket potential victims fall into can often be quite difficult and is dependent on the information received by the caller or contact. This again is often due to information being received by the

Chart 7 – Potential victims by age*



*Excludes "unknown"

Helpline from those who do not know the exact age of a potential victim or victims. Again, where age was known, the most prevalent age bracket indicated in modern slavery situations is **20-29**, with **463 (40%)** potential victims falling into this group, consistent with the **39%** indicated in this age bracket in the previous year. The **30-39** age bracket, for the second year, is also prevalent with **249 (22%)** of potential victims and again aligns with the **22%** of potential victims indicated in this age bracket in 2022.

The percentage of potential victims indicated in the lowest age bracket (**under 12**) has remained consistent with **22 (1.9%)** potential victims in 2023 compared to **32 (2.1%)** in 2022. The overwhelming majority of those in the under **12** age category have been indicated in labour exploitation (**14**) (Chart 7). Labour exploitation is the most prevalent exploitation type for all age brackets but is particularly prevalent in the **20-29 (243)** and **30-39 (133)** categories. This is to be expected given these two brackets cover a large proportion of the working age population, and is consistent with the age distribution seen by the Helpline in previous years.

As with much Helpline data, the number of potential victims where the age bracket is "unknown" is significant, with the age bracket of **4,720** potential victims recorded as "unknown".

Of the **5,876** potential victims indicated in situations of modern slavery, **3,416** were indicated in labour exploitation. This is **67%** of the total number of potential victims indicated in 2023. Sexual exploitation again was the second most prevalent exploitation type with **827** potential victims

Table 12 – Potential victims by age and exploitation type

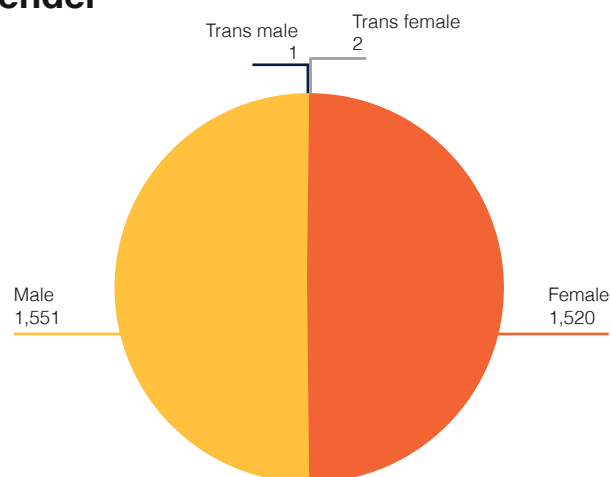
Exploitation type	<12	13-15	16-17	18-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Unknown	Total
Sexual	1	3	6	11	82	33	13	4	0	674	827
Labour	14	20	38	28	243	133	47	22	16	2,855	3,416
Criminal	2	7	17	18	55	27	11	7	8	233	385
Domestic servitude	2	1	3	3	21	20	17	8	5	68	148
Various	1	4	6	8	25	22	13	4	3	189	275
Other	0	0	0	6	4	3	5	0	1	32	51
Unknown	2	9	17	16	33	11	13	4	0	669	774
Total	22	44	87	90	463	249	119	49	33	4,720	5,876

comprising **16%** of all potential victims indicated in situations of modern slavery. This is slightly up from just under **14% (834)** in 2022.

Consistently the Helpline sees an even distribution of gender indicated for potential victims in modern slavery situations with just over **50%** of potential victims indicated as male and just over **49%** female (**Chart 8**). This is identical to the percentages for 2022. During 2023, **3** potential victims were indicated as transgender, again identical to the numbers indicated in 2022.

However, as would be expected the number of females indicated in situations of sexual exploitation is significantly higher than males (**Table 13**) with **532** females compared to **19** males. This is more than **97%** of potential victims indicated in sexual exploitation where the gender is recorded and is consistent with the percentage of female victims 2022. This is in comparison to labour exploitation where females make up around **31%** of potential victims where the gender is known. Again, this is consistent with the percentage of

Chart 8 – Potential victims by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

Table 13 – Potential victim by gender and exploitation type*

Exploitation type	Female	Male	Trans female	Trans male	Unknown	Total
Sexual	532	19	1	0	275	827
Labour	453	991	0	1	1,971	3,416
Criminal	90	169	0	0	126	385
Domestic servitude	107	20	0	0	21	148
Other	19	24	0	0	8	51
Various	99	66	0	0	110	275
Unknown	220	262	1	0	291	774
Total	1,520	1,551	2	1	2,802	5,876

*Excludes "unknown"

females indicated in labour exploitation in 2022. On the other hand, the number of males indicated in labour exploitation significantly outweighs any other exploitation type with **991 (77%)** male potential victims compared to criminal exploitation which is the second most prevalent exploitation type for males (**169, 13%**).

Potential victim nationality

Each year the Helpline records situations of modern slavery indicating a wide range of nationalities of potential victims. 2023 is no exception. In total, the number of different nationalities indicated through the helpline related to potential victims for 2023 is **106**. This is **7** more than the **99** nationalities indicated in 2022. **Table 14** provides a breakdown of nationalities indicated between 2021-2023.

Interestingly, for the first time in several years Romanian is no longer the most prevalent nationality indicated having reduced from **288** potential victims in 2022 to **157** in 2023, a drop of more than **45%**. For 2023, Indian was the most prevalent nationality with **242** potential victims, a small decrease on the

261 indicated in 2022 but a significant proportion of the total potential victims indicated where nationality was known. This increase can be seen in the number of labour exploitation cases raised where Indian nationals were indicated and is likely linked to the exponential rise in cases the Helpline has recorded concerning the care sector.

Several nationalities have increased between 2022 and 2023 despite the overall numbers of potential victims reducing. Albanian increased from **110** in 2022 to **115** in 2023, a rise of **5%**. This is the third consecutive increase the Helpline has seen related to Albanian nationals. Other increases include Nigerian (**56 to 83**), Pakistani (**54 to 82**), Zimbabwean (**51 to 77**), Filipino (**40 to 64**), Brazilian (**40 to 47**), Indonesian (**1 to 41**) and Bangladeshi (**26 to 39**).

Type of exploitation by potential victim

Given the fact that labour exploitation is the most prevalent exploitation type indicated, it follows that most potential victims indicated in modern slavery are associated with this exploitation type. In 2023, labour exploitation accounted

Table 14 – Top 20 potential victim nationalities 2021-2023*

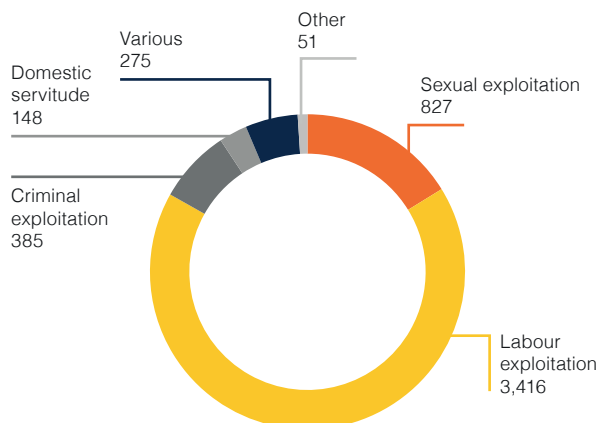
Nationality	2021	Nationality	2022	Nationality	2023
Romania	241	Romania	288	India	242
Vietnam	150	India	261	Romania	157
China	82	Vietnam	144	Albania	115
Albania	62	Sri Lanka	126	Vietnam	95
Sudan	50	Albania	110	China	84
India	41	China	106	Nigeria	83
Poland	34	UK**	63	Pakistan	82
England	29	Thailand	57	Zimbabwe	77
Brazil	25	Nigeria	56	Philippines	64
Pakistan	22	Pakistan	54	Brazil	47
Bulgaria	20	Ukraine	54	Indonesia	41
Philippines	19	Zimbabwe	51	Bangladesh	39
Argentina	16	Sudan	49	UK**	36
Nigeria	15	Nepal	45	South Africa	30
Lithuania	13	Poland	43	Kenya	29
Hungary	12	Brazil	40	England	27
Thailand	9	Philippines	40	Sudan	27
Slovakia	9	Bulgaria	37	Syria	25
Bangladesh	9	England	36	Thailand	25
Iran	8	Iran	32	Ghana	22

*Excludes "unknown"

**UK (United Kingdom) was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

for just under **67%** of all modern slavery potential victims indicated through the Helpline where the exploitation type was known. Just over **16% (827)** of potential victims were indicated in sexual exploitation and over **8% (385)** were indicated in criminal exploitation. **Chart 9** provides a breakdown of the number of potential victims by exploitation

Chart 9 – Potential victim by exploitation type*



*Excludes "unknown"

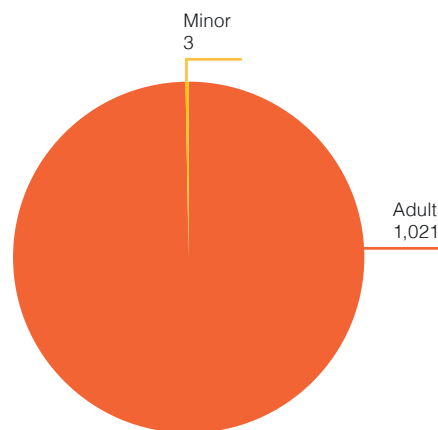
Potential exploiters

As is often the case, the Helpline receives limited information relating to the demographics of potential exploiters involved in modern slavery situations. This is quite often because the caller or contact may not be able to provide information that

is specific enough for the Helpline to record. Where a contact is unsure, the Helpline will always record information, such as adult/minor status, their gender, or age, as unknown to avoid unnecessary inflation of figures. In 2023, the Helpline indicated a total of **339 (22%)** female potential exploiters, **1,187 (79%)** male and **1** transgender female (**<1%**). This is similar to the gender distribution in 2022 where **79%** of potential exploiters were indicated as male.

As would be expected, most potential exploiters where the adult/minor status is known are adults (**1,021, >99%**) with less than **1%** indicated as minors (**Chart 10**). In **2,539** instances, the adult/minor status was recorded as unknown. This is **71%** of all indicated potential exploiters. Often, when a professional calls the Helpline to seek advice or assistance they may not divulge information about either the potential victim or the potential exploiter. Additionally, where there are several potential exploiters the caller or contact may not know the status of each of them and therefore unknown will be recorded to avoid making assumptions.

Chart 10 - Potential exploiters by age status*

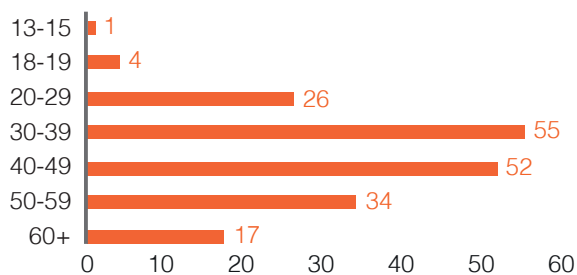


*Excludes "unknown"

The age of potential exploiters indicated through the Helpline is unsurprising in the main and consistent with what the Helpline has seen in previous years. This includes the wide age range of potential exploiters from teens through to those in their 60s. The most prevalent age category for potential exploiters in 2023 is the **30-39** age category (**55**), followed by the **40-49** age category (**52**). This is a slight change from the previous year when the **40-49** age category was slightly more prevalent, although the numbers are not dissimilar. However, the overall numbers recorded in 2022 were almost twice as many as those recorded 2023 with **93 (30-39)** and **98 (40-49)** respectively.

Interestingly, where nationality was known, the most prevalent nationality for potential exploiters indicated through the Helpline is Albanian (**63**). In 2022 Libyan nationals were the most prevalent (**86**), however in 2023 dropped by more than half to fourth position (**39**). Having been the most prevalent potential exploiter nationality in 2021 (**79**), Chinese nationals dropped to fourth in 2022 (**42**), only to rise again in 2023 to the second most prevalent (**54**). Indications of potential exploiters

Chart 11 - Potential exploiters by age*



*Excludes "unknown"

from the UK have also increased from **35** in 2022 to **42** in 2023. The Helpline records nationality independently across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as recording nationality as "UK" where the potential victim is a UK national, but it is not clear from which country of the UK. This helps to provide a granular picture of nationality rather than providing one overall UK figure.

Interestingly there are also nationalities included in the top 10 for 2023 which were not featured in the previous year. These include Saudi Arabia and Nigeria (**Table 15**). Poland was the eighth most prevalent nationality in 2022 but does not feature in the top 10 for 2023.

Table 15 – Top 10 potential exploiter nationalities*

Nationality	Potential exploiters	% Potential exploiters*
Albania	63	13%
China	54	11%
United Kingdom**	42	9%
Libya	39	8%
Romania	33	7%
India	27	6%
Pakistan	22	5%
Vietnam	21	4%
Saudi Arabia	18	4%
Nigeria	15	3%

*Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Recruitment tactics

Understanding recruitment tactics used by potential exploiters is key. This helps us to establish how an individual may have ended up in a situation of exploitation and can provide insight into future prevention activities. Recruitment tactics are not unique, in that one or more tactics may be used to target and recruit an individual. Therefore routinely the number of tactics recorded can often be more than the total number of potential victims indicated. In 2023 the most prevalent recruitment tactic was through a job offer or advertisement. This is not surprising given that labour exploitation is the most indicated type of exploitation. However, the number of instances when this has been raised as a recruitment tactic has increased

by **47%** from **457** in 2022 to **672** in 2023, despite an overall reduction in modern slavery cases, potential victims and importantly labour exploitation cases. This may indicate that potential exploiters are using this method of recruitment because it is easier or has a higher success rate and job advertisements can be placed online and therefore reach all corners of the globe in an instant.

Other notable rises include false promises or statements which have seen an increase from **243** in 2022 to **483** in 2023. This is a rise of more than **99%**. Additionally, abduction as a recruitment tactic has grown significantly from **176** in 2022 to **319** in 2023, a rise of over **81%**.

Gaining a better understanding of the methods of control used by potential exploiters can be extremely beneficial in understanding the experiences of those involved in modern slavery situations. Again, methods of control are not exclusive or particular to one individual or situation and therefore the number of methods of control indicated will be significantly higher than the total number of potential victims indicated. Excluding unknowns, in 2022 the Helpline indicated a total of **10,441** individual methods of control (**Table 16**) which has risen significantly by **55%** to **16,143**.

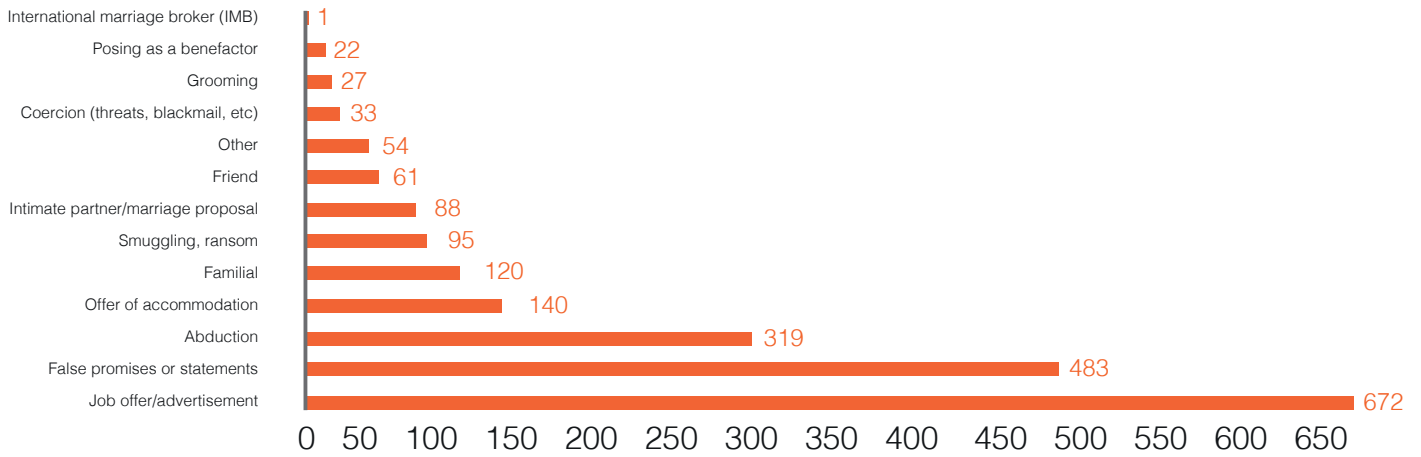
Table 16 – Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Confinement, restricted movement	2,626	53%
Tied accommodation	2,475	50%
Financial control	2,343	47%
Emotional abuse - verbal/manipulation	1,487	30%
Monitoring	1,370	28%
Physical abuse	1,315	26%
Sexual abuse	1,210	24%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	702	14%
Threat - Other	697	14%
Isolation	692	14%
Threat to report to police or immigration	378	8%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	355	7%
Induced substance abuse	111	2%
Threat to abandon subject/make homeless	87	2%
Cultural /familial/religious pressure or coercion	81	2%
Threat to expose or shame subject	12	0%
Other	202	4%
Unknown	912	-
Total	17,055	325%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Chart 12 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Most control methods indicated through the Helpline have seen a significant increase in 2023 from those recorded in 2022. The most notable of these is confinement or restricted movement (from **1,670** to **2,626 (57%)**), tied accommodation (from **1,355** to **2,475 (83%)**), financial control (from **1,610** to **2,343 (46%)**), and emotional abuse (from **814** to **1,487 (83%)**). Only three control methods decreased: cultural familial or religious pressures dropping slightly from **85** to **81 (-5%)**, induced substance abuse from **179** to **111 (-38%)**, and threat to expose or shame the subject which dropped more significantly from **43** to **12 (72%)**.



chapter 4: sexual exploitation

Following three consecutive years of rising sexual exploitation cases, the Helpline has seen a 33% reduction, from a high of 479 in 2022 to 319 in 2023. This decrease corresponds with an overall drop in modern slavery cases. However, interestingly, the number of potential victims indicated in sexual exploitation does not mirror this decrease and remains consistent at 827, only seven fewer than in 2022 (-1%). In 2023, sexual exploitation cases comprised 15% of all modern slavery cases reported to the Helpline.

Lili's* story

Lili's village wasn't safe, and she craved a new life. Some people from her community connected her with a man who promised to help her move abroad. He arranged her travel, and Lili boarded a plane out of Vietnam.

On arrival, another man met Lili and took her to a house. He confiscated her passport and locked her in a room with several other women. The women were guarded by a group of men, speaking a language Lili couldn't understand. They would sometimes separate her from the others, confining her in a room alone.

Lili's captors subjected her to horrific sexual assaults, coercing her to do terrible things against her will. They forced her into prostitution, arranging five clients a day. Lili never received money for these encounters, and any sign of resistance was met with brutal beatings, trapping her in a degrading cycle of exploitation.

Three months later, Lili's exploiters moved her again, this time to the UK. Here, a critical intervention occurred; Lili was intercepted by Border Force as she wasn't in possession of her passport. This marked a turning point. After learning about the Helpline, Lili reached out for support.

A specially trained Helpline advisor assessed for indicators of modern slavery, and provided emotional support, as Lili bravely shared her story. After exploring her options with the advisor, Lili opted to pursue support through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The Helpline Advisor was then able to refer Lili to the police, advocating for her and requesting that they act as a First Responder.

A few days later, Lili contacted the Helpline again to share the gratitude she felt towards the Helpline Advisor for helping her feel heard and access the support she desperately needed. She had been visited and interviewed by police and a social worker, starting the NRM referral process.

**Some details changed to protect identity.*

Introduction

The Helpline has seen a drop in reports of sexual exploitation for the first time in three years. An all-time high of **479** cases were recorded in 2022, a **66%** increase on the previous year. In 2023, **319** cases were indicated, **33%** less than the previous year. On average, the Helpline raised **27** new sexual exploitation cases each month in 2023, down from **40** the year before. This reduction corresponds with the overall decrease in modern slavery cases (**-16%**) indicated in 2023.

Table 17 – High-level overview 2022 - 2023

High-level	2022	2023	% 2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Cases	479	319	15%	-33%
Potential victims	834	827	14%	-1%
Helpline calls, webforms, app submissions	714	539	5%	-25%

Despite the drop in sexual exploitation cases, potential victim numbers have remained steady. In 2023, **827** potential victims of sexual exploitation were recorded, only seven fewer than the **834** indicated the previous year (**-1%**). This demonstrates that the number of potential victims indicated in each case has increased. On average, there were **1.7** potential victims indicated per sexual exploitation case in 2022. This number rose to **2.6** in 2023.

While the overall number of incoming Helpline calls increased by **14%** between 2022 and 2023, the number of calls relating to sexual exploitation reduced from **450** to **310**, a drop of **31%**. Webforms relating to sexual exploitation also reduced by **12%** from **259** to **229**, as did app submissions, dropping from five to zero between 2022 and 2023. In 2023, Helpline calls, webforms and app submissions about situations of sexual exploitation totalled **539**, a quarter less than the **714** received in 2022.

Caller Proximity

The largest proportion of sexual exploitation cases were recorded as an observation of suspicious activity, **125** cases (**39%**). This could be a member of the public who has not had directly interacted with the potential victim but has noticed indications of exploitation either online or in person, such as a neighbour or user of an adult services website. It also includes individuals who have anonymously provided information which does not make their level of connection deducible. **Table 18** details the breakdown of sexual exploitation cases by the proximity of the caller or point of contact to the situation.

35% (112) of sexual exploitation cases were reported by someone in direct contact with a potential victim. Often, this

is a sex buyer but could also be a friend, family member or professional. The Helpline works alongside adult services websites that host the webform or signpost users to call us should they have concerns for someone listed as providing services on their platforms. **76** cases resulted from potential victims disclosing their own situation to the Helpline, comprising almost a quarter (**24%**). The remaining six cases (**2%**) of sexual exploitation resulted from reports from someone who had indirect contact with a potential victim.

Table 18 – Caller proximity to victim

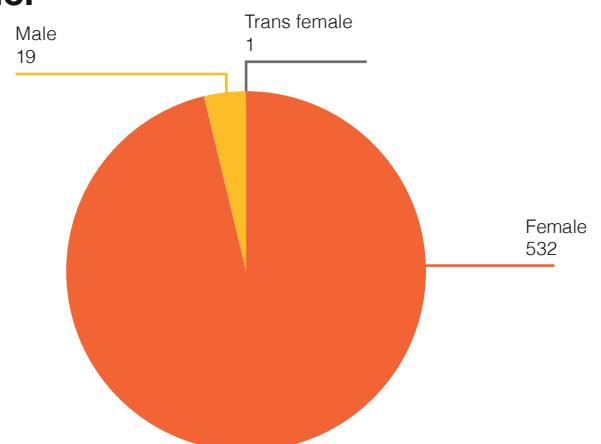
Caller proximity	Cases	% Cases
Potential victim self-report	76	24%
Direct contact with potential victim	112	35%
Indirect contact with potential victim	6	2%
Observation of suspicious activity	125	39%
Total	319	100%

Over half (**59%**) of 2023's sexual exploitation cases involved the Helpline being contacted directly by the potential victim or someone in direct contact with them. This positioned the Helpline well to gain a strong understanding of the exploitation and the potential victims' desired interventions.

Potential victim demographics

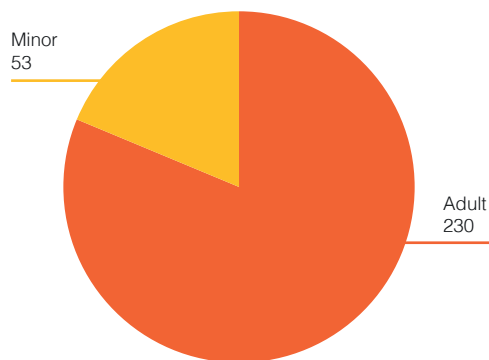
Of the **827** potential victims of sexual exploitation indicated in 2023, the gender of **275** was unknown. Excluding the unknowns, the majority were reportedly female (**532**). The gender breakdown of sexual exploitation potential victims can be seen in **Chart 13**. Between 2021 and 2022, the number of male potential victims indicated in sexual exploitation more than tripled to **20**, and this has remained consistent at **3%** in 2023 where **19** males were indicated. A transgender male was indicated in sexual exploitation for the first time in 2022, but none were indicated in 2023. Similarly, **2** transgender females were indicated in 2022, but only **1** in 2023.

Chart 13 – Potential victims by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 14 – Potential victims by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 14 provides a breakdown of adult and minor potential victims indicated in situations of sexual exploitation. In relation to **544** of sexual exploitation potential victims indicated in 2023, age status was unknown. **230** potential victims, down from **345** in 2022 (**-33%**), were recorded as adults. Similarly, the Helpline saw a **35%** reduction in potential victims recorded as minors between 2022 and 2023, from **82** to **53**.

Potential victims of **40** different nationalities were indicated to the Helpline as being sexually exploited in 2023. **Table 19** lists the top most commonly indicated nationalities in relation to potential victims of sexual exploitation. For the majority of potential victims, nationality was unknown (**618**). In 2022, the most indicated potential victim nationality in sexual exploitation was Thai (**49**) with a dramatic increase of **880%** since the previous year. In 2023, however only **18** potential victims from Thailand were indicated, a reduction of **63%**, bringing it down to the fifth most indicated nationality. The most prevalent nationality in 2023 was Brazilian (**35**), increasing by **169%** from **13** the year before, when it was the fifth most indicated. Similar numbers continued to be indicated in terms of Romanian (**29**), Chinese (**32**) and Albanian nationals (**21**), and potential victims from the UK (**7**). In addition to the large increase in Brazilian nationals indicated in sexual exploitation, the Helpline saw a **550%** rise in Kenyan potential victims indicated (**13**), after only **2** were indicated the previous year.

Potential victims of sexual exploitation were also indicated from England (**3**), Hungary (**3**), Japan (**3**), Nigeria (**3**), Spain (**3**), United States (**3**), Latvia (**2**), Morocco (**2**), Pakistan (**2**), Poland (**2**), Belarus (**1**), Benin (**1**), Cambodia (**1**), Cameroon (**1**), Cote d'Ivoire (**1**), Eritrea (**1**), Germany (**1**), Grenada (**1**), Iran (**1**), Italy (**1**), Lesotho (**1**), Liberia (**1**), Malawi (**1**), Nepal (**1**), Netherlands (**1**), Portugal (**1**), Singapore (**1**), South Africa (**1**), Taiwan (**1**), Trinidad and Tobago (**1**), Ukraine (**1**).

Potential exploiter demographics

Across the **319** cases of sexual exploitation reported to the Helpline, **563** potential exploiters were indicated, demonstrating that only one exploiter was reported in the

Table 19 – Top 10 potential victim nationalities*

Nationality	Potential Victims	% Potential Victims*
Brazil	35	17%
China	32	15%
Romania	29	14%
Albania	21	10%
Thailand	18	9%
Kenya	13	6%
United Kingdom**	7	3%
India	4	2%
United States	4	1%
Colombia	3	1%

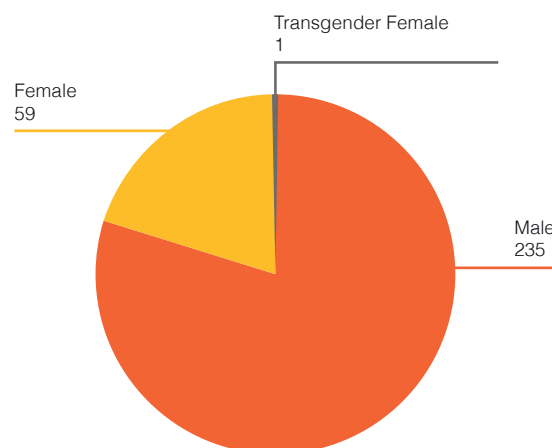
*Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

majority of cases. With **827** potential victims indicated, this means that on average there were **1.5** potential victims indicated for every potential exploiter. The total number of potential exploiters indicated in sexual exploitation cases was **27%** less than the **776** indicated in 2022.

Chart 15 provides a gender breakdown of potential exploiters indicated in sexual exploitation cases in 2023. The gender was unknown in relation to almost half of potential exploiters (**268**). Where gender was known, the proportions indicated as male (**235, 80%**) and female (**59, 20%**) remain somewhat consistent with the breakdown in 2022. **One** potential exploiter was recorded as a transgender female in 2023.

Chart 15 – Potential exploiters by gender*



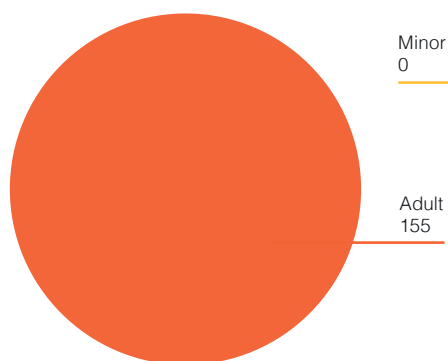
*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 16 illustrates the breakdown of potential exploiters indicated in cases of sexual exploitation by their age status. The age was unknown in relation to **408** of the potential exploiters. Where age status was recorded, **100%** were reportedly adults (**155**) and none were indicated as minors.

As with other potential exploiter demographics, information captured in relation to exploiter nationality is also limited.

Nationality was unknown for **497** potential exploiters; however, it was indicated for **68** potential exploiters. Where nationality was known, a quarter (**17, 25%**) were recorded as Albanian. **12** potential exploiters were reportedly Romanian (**18%**), **10** were Chinese (**15%**), and **5** were from the United Kingdom (**7%**). Smaller numbers of potential exploiters were indicated as nationals from Thailand (**3**), Turkey (**3**), Egypt (**2**), India (**2**), Nigeria (**2**), Poland (**2**), Algeria (**1**), Brazil (**1**), France (**1**), Grenada (**1**), Morocco (**1**), Nepal (**1**), Russia (**1**) and Ukraine (**1**). The top five potential exploiter nationalities are also listed in the top 10 potential victim nationalities. Brazilian, however, is the most indicated potential victim nationality but only one potential exploiter was indicated as a Brazilian national in situations of sexual exploitation.

Chart 16 – Potential exploiters by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Table 20 – Top 10 potential exploiter nationalities*

Nationality	Potential exploiters	% Potential exploiters*
Albania	17	25%
Romania	12	18%
China	10	15%
United Kingdom**	5	7%
Thailand	3	4%
Turkey	3	4%
Egypt	2	3%
India	2	3%
Nigeria	2	3%
Poland	2	3%

*Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

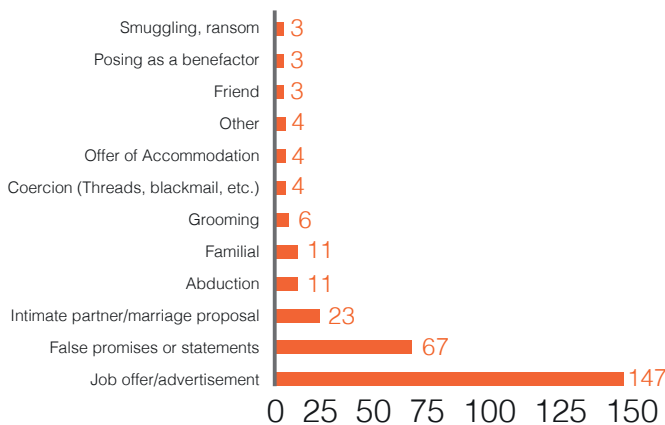
Recruitment tactics and exploiter to victim relationships

Table 21 illustrates the relationship between potential victims and those who exploited them in cases of sexual exploitation. The relationship between the potential exploiter and victim was unknown in relation to just over half of the **827** potential victims (**423**). Where the relationship was

recorded, **322** potential victims (**80%**) were exploited by individuals they had no clear relationship to. This includes situations where the only relationship was that of the potential exploiter being a pimp. **32** potential victims (**8%**) were exploited by a recruiter. In these situations, potential victims may have been lured with the false promise of a job, before being forced into sexual exploitation. **23** potential victims (**6%**) were exploited by an employer. **11** (**3%**) were exploited by a relative or someone they had a familial relationship with.

Recruitment tactics were unknown in the case of **599** sexual exploitation potential victims. **Chart 17** provides a breakdown of potential victims by the tactics used to recruit them into sexual exploitation. Where recruitment tactics were known, the most commonly indicated was the use of a job offer or advertisement, recorded in relation to **147** potential victims (**64%**). This correlates with the potential victims exploited by a recruiter or employer. This is significantly more than the **21** times this recruitment tactic was indicated in 2022, an increase of **600%**. False promises or statements were indicated in relation to **67** potential victims (**29%**). **23** individuals (**10%**) were recruited through a marriage or intimate partner proposition. **11** (**5%**) were recruited through a familial relationship. **11** were abducted and exploited, **6** were groomed, **4** were lured with the offer of accommodation, **4** were coerced or threatened into the situation, **3** were recruited by someone posing as a benefactor, and **3** by someone they thought was a friend.

Chart 17 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Control methods

In 2023, the Helpline updated the data standard around sexual abuse to ensure this was recorded as a control method in all sexual exploitation cases. Confinement or restricted movement were very common in these situations, indicated in relation to **492** potential victims (**59%**), up from **347** in 2022. Financial control was indicated in relation to **173** potential victims (**21%**). Tied accommodation was indicated in relation to **140** potential victims (**17%**). **129** potential victims (**16%**) were reported to have experienced physical

Table 21 – Exploiter relationship to potential victims*

Relationship	Potential victims	% Potential victims **
No clear relationship (including pimp)	322	80%
Recruiter	32	8%
Intimate partner of victim	30	7%
Employer	23	6%
Familial relationship to victim	11	3%
Other	3	1%
Unknown	423	-
Total	844	104%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown"

Table 22 – Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Sexual abuse	827	100%
Confinement, restricted movement	492	59%
Financial control	173	21%
Tied accommodation	140	17%
Physical abuse	129	16%
Monitoring	128	15%
Emotional abuse - verbal/ manipulation	80	10%
Isolation	78	9%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	69	8%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	40	5%
Induced substance abuse	39	5%
Threat - other	39	5%
Cultural / familial/ religious pressure or coercion	4	1%
Threat to expose or shame subject	4	1%
Threat to abandon subject/ make homeless	16	0%
Threat to report to police or immigration	4	0%
Other	7	2%
Unknown	9	-
Total	2,274	275%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown"

abuse. Monitoring was indicated **128** times (**15%**). Other control methods indicated frequently in sexual exploitation situations were emotional abuse including verbal abuse or manipulation (**80**), isolation (**78**), threats to harm the potential victim or someone close to them (**69**), withheld or destroyed documents such as passports (**40**), induced substance abuse (**39**). **Table 22** provides a breakdown of the control methods experienced by potential victims to keep them in sexual exploitation.

Location types

Looking at the types of location or venues where sexual exploitation has been reportedly taking place, they broadly follow the same order of prevalence as in the previous year. **217** potential victims were exploited in unknown location types in 2023, as well as **256** who were exploited in multiple unknown location types. Where the location type was known, **58%** of potential victims (**206**) were reportedly sexually exploited in private houses. A similar number were reported to have been exploited online (**200, 56%**). **90 (25%)** were exploited in a brothel. **Table 23** provides a full breakdown of the types of location where potential victims were sexually exploited. **13** potential victims (**4%**) were indicated as being sexually exploited in the street, and **12 (3%)** in a hotel or motel.

Table 23 – Potential victims by location type

Location type	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Private house	206	58%
Website / internet location	200	56%
Brothel	90	25%
Street	13	4%
Hotel / motel	12	3%
Other	34	10%
Multiple location types***	256	-
Unknown	217	-
Total	1,028	157%

*Totals exceed the overall number of potential victims indicated as multiple location types may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown" and "multiple location types"

***Where multiple unknown location types have been indicated

chapter 5: labour exploitation

Labour exploitation remains the most prevalent form of exploitation indicated to the Helpline. 3,416 potential victims were indicated across 759 cases of labour exploitation raised by the Helpline in 2023. This comprises 35% of all modern slavery Helpline cases and 58% of potential victims during the year.



“We are often the first people to listen to the caller talk about their experiences – the first people who believe them. It’s a challenging job as the demand for the Helpline is high. But at the end of my working day, I’m fulfilled knowing that I have supported someone through their distress. When someone has had so much taken from them, it’s amazing to be able to empower them to make their own choices.”

Lucy
Helpline advisor,
Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline

Introduction

Table 24 – High-level overview 2022 - 2023

High-level	2022	2023	% 2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Cases	1,046	759	35%	-27%
Potential victims	3,882	3,416	58%	-12%
Helpline calls, webforms, app submissions	1,977	1,520	13%	-23%

The Helpline classifies labour exploitation cases in accordance with the specific offences outlined in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which are: human trafficking non-sex (labour); slavery/servitude (labour slavery); forced labour.

Following an all-time high of labour exploitation cases reported to the Helpline in 2022, 2023 saw a **27%** decrease to **759**, aligning with the overall drop in modern slavery cases recorded by the Helpline in 2023. The proportion of these modern slavery cases classified as labour exploitation also dropped, from **40%** in 2022 to **35%** in 2023.

The number of potential victims indicated in situations of labour exploitation has correspondingly dropped, but not to the same extent as cases. **3,416** potential victims were recorded in 2023, **12%** less than the **3,822** the year before. This demonstrates that the number of potential victims indicated in each case has increased. On average in 2022 there were **3.7** potential victims per case of labour exploitation, whereas in 2023 this has risen to **4.5**. This may result from the large number of cases within the care sector, where many staff are often reported to be exploited within each care home or agency.

Whilst the overall number of incoming Helpline calls increased by **14%** since 2022, the number of calls relating to labour exploitation reduced from **1,436** to **1,097**, a **24%** reduction. Webforms and app submissions also dropped by **20%** and **30%** respectively, with **367** webforms received and **56** app submissions. In total, **1,520** incoming calls, webforms and app submissions were received in 2023 in relation to situations of labour exploitation, an overall drop of **23%** since the previous year.

Caller proximity

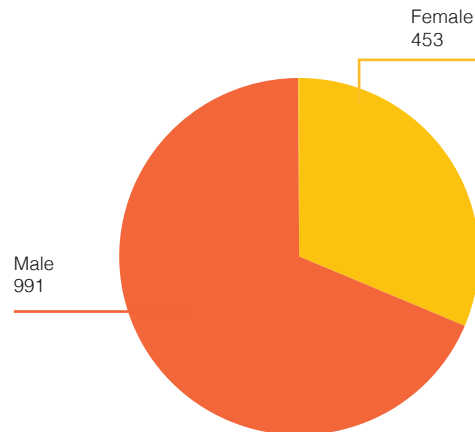
Table 25 provides a breakdown of labour exploitation cases indicated in 2023 by the proximity of the caller or point of contact to a potential victim involved. In 2023, **247** labour exploitation cases raised by the Helpline resulted from a potential victim reporting their own situation, comprising **33%**. This may be due to the work that Unseen’s Business Services team do supporting businesses to address issues within their supply chains and raising awareness of the Helpline as a resource for workers concerned about their situations. A slightly smaller number of cases came from

someone who had been in direct contact with a potential victim (**232, 31%**), meaning that in **63% (479)** of cases the Helpline received communication either directly from a potential victim or someone who had spoken to them. These cases tend to have the most detailed information and, importantly, the wishes of the potential victims involved are likely to be known. Another **31%** of cases (**239**) resulted from observations of suspicious activity. The remaining **41 cases (5%)** were reported by someone who had indirect contact with a potential victim.

Table 25 – Caller proximity to victim

Caller proximity	Cases	% Cases
Potential victim self-report	247	33%
Direct contact with potential victim	232	31%
Indirect contact with potential victim	41	5%
Observation of suspicious activity	239	31%
Total	759	100%

Chart 18 – Potential victims by gender*



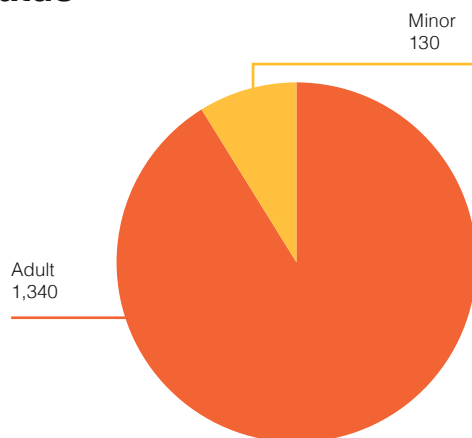
*Excludes “unknown”

Potential victim demographics

Of the **3,416** potential victims of labour exploitation indicated in 2023, the gender of **1,971** was unknown. In 2021, the number of male potential victims indicated in situations of labour exploitation was almost five times higher than female potential victims. This gap narrowed in 2022. In 2023, this gap has narrowed further from **1** female indicated for every **2.3** males to **1** female to every **2.1** males. A significant contributing factor is the growth of exploitation of care workers since the beginning of 2022, and the corresponding demographic profile of workers within the care sector. **Chart 18** provides a full gender breakdown of potential victims of labour exploitation indicated to the Helpline in 2023.

991 potential victims were reportedly male, comprising **69%** of those in labour exploitation where gender was known. **453 (31%)** potential victims were indicated as female. **One** transgender male was also recorded as experiencing labour exploitation in 2023.

Chart 19 – Potential victims by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 19 provides a breakdown of adult and minor potential victims indicated in situations of labour exploitation. Age status was unknown in relation to **1,946** of potential victims. Where age status was known, **91%** of potential victims of labour exploitation were adults, equating to **1,340**. **130** were indicated as minors, comprising **9%**. This was an increase in the number of minors recorded, up from **108** the year before, despite the overall reduction in potential victims of labour exploitation.

Table 26 – Top 10 potential victim nationalities*

Nationality	Potential victims	% Potential victims*
India	218	21%
Romania	101	10%
Zimbabwe	75	7%
Nigeria	62	6%
Vietnam	59	6%
Pakistan	55	5%
Indonesia	41	4%
China	38	4%
South Africa	28	3%
Philippines	27	3%

*Excludes "unknown"

Potential victims of **92** different nationalities were indicated to the Helpline as experiencing labour exploitation in 2023. **Table 26** lists the top 10 most indicated nationalities of potential victims of labour exploitation. In **2,390** instances the nationality was unknown. Indian nationals became the most indicated in situations of labour exploitation in 2022 (**219**) because of exploitation reported in the care sector. This continued into 2023, where India remains most prevalent (**218**), despite the overall decrease in the number of potential victims indicated. Where nationality was known, Indian nationals comprised **21%** of all labour exploitation potential victims indicated to the Helpline. The second most indicated nationality was Romanian (**101, 10%**). **75 (7%)**

Zimbabwean nationals were indicated as well as **62 (6%)** potential victims from Nigeria, **59 (6%)** Vietnamese nationals and **55 (5%)** from Pakistan. **41 (4%)** potential victims from Indonesia were indicated in labour exploitation in 2023, with none recorded the previous year. Chinese nationals (**38, 4%**), South African nationals (**28, 3%**) and potential victims from the Philippines (**27, 3%**) complete the top 10. Only one potential victim from South Africa was indicated in 2022, with an increase of **2700%** in 2023.

Smaller numbers of potential victims were indicated in labour exploitation from Sudan (**18**), Albania (**18**), Somalia (**18**), Ghana (**14**), Turkey (**13**), Syria (**12**), Zambia (**12**), Bangladesh (**11**), Eritrea (**11**), Kenya (**11**), Brazil (**10**), Iran (**10**), Egypt (**9**), Sri Lanka (**8**), England (**8**), United Kingdom (**7**), Poland (**7**), Georgia (**7**), Jamaica (**7**), Ukraine (**6**), Iraq (**6**), Thailand (**6**), Morocco (**6**), Czech Republic (**4**), Ethiopia (**4**), Uganda (**4**), Afghanistan (**4**), Hungary (**4**), Bulgaria (**3**), Tanzania (**3**), Lithuania (**3**), Libya (**3**), Cameroon (**3**), Kuwait (**3**), Portugal (**3**), Sierra Leone (**3**), Bosnia and Herzegovina (**3**), Chad (**3**), Colombia (**3**), Italy (**2**), Russia (**2**), Slovakia (**2**), Senegal (**2**), Cambodia (**2**), France (**2**), Mauritius (**2**), Uzbekistan (**2**), Greece (**1**), Latvia (**1**), Malaysia (**1**), Spain (**1**), Algeria (**1**), Yemen (**1**), Mexico (**1**), United States of America (**1**), Botswana (**1**), Mauritania (**1**), Tunisia (**1**), Bolivia (**1**), Central African Republic (**1**), Democratic Republic of Congo (**1**), Guinea (**1**), Malawi (**1**), Niger (**1**), Rwanda (**1**), Taiwan (**1**), Venezuela (**1**) and Wales (**1**).

Potential exploiter demographics

Across the **759** cases of labour exploitation reported to the Helpline in 2023, **1,334** potential exploiters were indicated in relation to the **3,416** potential victims. On average, there were **1.8** potential exploiters involved in each case of labour exploitation, which is the highest indicated across all exploitation types. For every potential exploiter, there were **2.6** potential victims indicated.

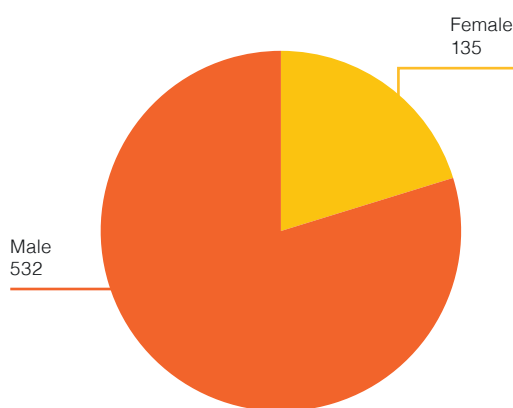
The gender of **667** potential exploiters was unknown, however, where gender was known **80%** were indicated as male (**532**) and **20%** as female (**135**). **Chart 20** provides a breakdown of potential exploiters in situations of labour exploitation by gender. Although the total number of exploiters indicated is lower than in 2022, the percentage breakdown of male and female exploiters remains consistent. In **867** instances, the age status of potential exploiters was unknown. Where information was recorded, all were indicated as adults (**467, 100%**). No minors were indicated as potential exploiters, unlike the previous year when there were **4**.

In 2023, potential exploiters of **39** different nationalities were indicated within situations of labour exploitation. Nationality was recorded as unknown in relation to **1,113** potential exploiters. Where nationality was known, the most indicated continues to be Libyan (**35, 16%**), usually in cases referring to militia forces. Indian potential exploiters have moved up from the fourth most indicated potential exploiter nationality to the second within labour exploitation (**17, 8%**) and may

account for the rise in Indian potential victims. Potential exploiters from Romania (**17, 8%**), the United Kingdom (**17, 8%**), Albania (**15, 7%**), Pakistan (**12, 5%**), China (**11, 5%**) and Vietnam (**11, 5%**) all remain in the top 10 since the previous year. Sri Lanka (**11, 5%**) and Hungary (**9, 4%**) are new to the top 10, increasing since 2022 from **4** and **0** respectively.

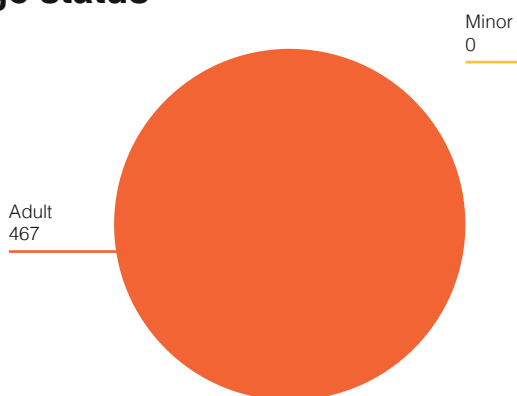
Potential exploiters were also indicated from Zimbabwe (**9**), Ireland (**7**), Vietnam (**7**), England (**6**), Greece (**6**), Iraq (**5**), Russia (**3**), Iran (**3**), Saudi Arabia (**3**), Turkey (**2**), Bangladesh (**2**), Colombia (**2**), Italy (**2**), Uzbekistan (**2**), Egypt (**1**), Poland (**1**), Cote d'Ivoire (**1**), Czech Republic (**1**), Georgia (**1**), Ghana (**1**), USA (**1**), Jamaica (**1**), Kenya (**1**), Malaysia (**1**), Philippine (**1**), Qatar (**1**), South Africa (**1**), Sudan (**1**) and Taiwan (**1**).

Chart 20 – Potential exploiters by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 21 – Potential exploiters by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Recruitment tactics and exploiter to victim relationships

As labour exploitation tends to take place within the workforce, unsurprisingly the majority of potential victims are exploited by their employer. This was the case in relation to **1,860** potential victims in 2023. Excluding the **971** times the relationship was unknown, this equates to **76%** of potential victims exploited by an employer within situations of labour exploitation. **Table 28** provides a full breakdown of the relationships between potential exploiters and potential

victims indicated in this type of exploitation.

Following this, **447** potential victims were exploited by someone to whom they had no clear relationship (**18%**). Recruiters were also commonly indicated as exploiting people for labour, indicated **164** times (**7%**). Lesser indicated were; potential exploiters with a familial relationship to a potential victim (**56**), a foster parent of a potential victim (**16**), and an intimate partner of a potential victim (**15**).

Table 27 – Top 10 potential exploiter nationalities*

Nationality	Potential exploiters	% Potential exploiters*
Libya	35	16%
India	17	8%
Romania	17	8%
United Kingdom**	17	8%
Albania	15	7%
Pakistan	12	5%
China	11	5%
Sri Lanka	11	5%
Vietnam	11	5%
Hungary	9	4%

*Excludes "unknown"

** United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Table 28 – Exploiter relationship to potential victims

Relationship	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Employer	1,860	76%
Familial relationship to victim	56	2%
Foster parent of victim	16	0%
Intimate partner of victim	15	0%
No clear relationship (including pimp)	447	18%
Other	7	0%
Recruiter	164	7%
Unknown	971	-
Total	3,536	105%

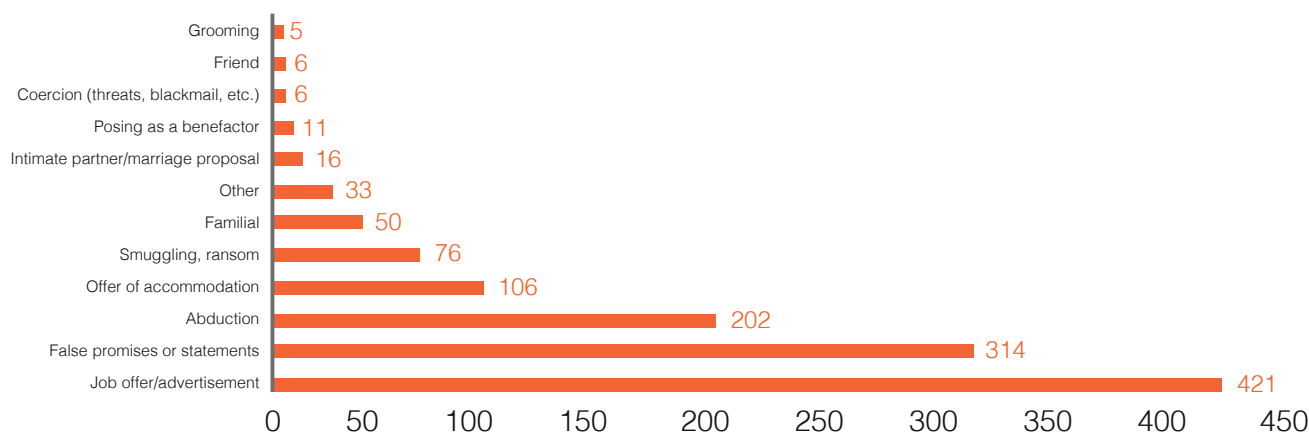
*Total exceeds number of potential victims as multiple relationships may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown"

Control methods

Control methods were unknown in relation to **229** potential victims of labour exploitation. Where these were known, tied accommodation was indicated in relation to more than half of potential victims (**1,869, 59%**), as was financial control (**1,804, 57%**). Confinement or restricted movement was prevalent (**1,455, 46%**) as was emotional abuse (**1,156, 36%**). Monitoring (**918, 29%**) and physical abuse (**824,**

Chart 22 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Table 29 - Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Tied accommodation	1,869	59%
Financial control	1,804	57%
Confinement, restricted movement	1,455	46%
Emotional abuse - verbal / manipulation	1,156	36%
Monitoring	918	29%
Physical abuse	824	26%
Threat - other	610	19%
Isolation	411	13%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	395	12%
Threat to report to police or immigration	325	10%
Sexual abuse	196	6%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	146	5%
Threat to abandon subject/make homeless	60	2%
Cultural/familial/religious pressure or coercion	27	1%
Induced substance abuse	6	0%
Threat to expose or shame subject	2	0%
Other	94	3%
Unknown	229	-
Total	10,527	323%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

26%) were indicated in relation to more than a quarter of potential victims in labour exploitation. Table 29 includes a full breakdown of control methods experienced by potential victims of labour exploitation.

Location types

The type of location was unknown in relation to the situations of 416 potential victims. 583 potential victims were reported to have been exploited in multiple location types, however, the exact location types were not known. Excluding these unknowns, the most frequently indicated location type was a private house (557, 23%), which includes many domiciliary care workers exploited within the homes of clients. Similar numbers of potential victims were exploited on business premises (553, 23%). 14% of labour exploitation potential victims (343) were reported to have been exploited on construction sites. Restaurants, takeaways, and pubs were also common (317, 13%), as were farms (277, 11%) and residential facilities (241, 10%). Residential facilities were commonly indicated in the case of those working in care homes. Table 30 provides a full overview of the types of locations or venues where labour exploitation was reported as taking place in 2023.

Industries

Exploitation in the care sector was a trend that emerged in 2022, resulting in a 606% rise in cases and a 1,024% hike in potential victims. This continued into 2023, when 918 potential victims were indicated in 140 cases, increases of 30% and 32% respectively. This is significant when considering the fact that labour exploitation and overall modern slavery numbers recorded by the Helpline have reduced. Excluding the 75 cases and 168 potential victims of labour exploitation where the industry was unknown, 20% of 2023's labour exploitation cases and 28% of potential victims were related to exploitation within the care sector. Contrastingly, there has been a drop in reports of exploitation within the service industry. It is now the second most prevalent industry in 2023, after being the most indicated since the Helpline was founded in 2016. The service industry includes two historically high-risk sub-industries, namely car washes and beauty or spa related businesses, as well as

Table 30 – Potential victims by location type*

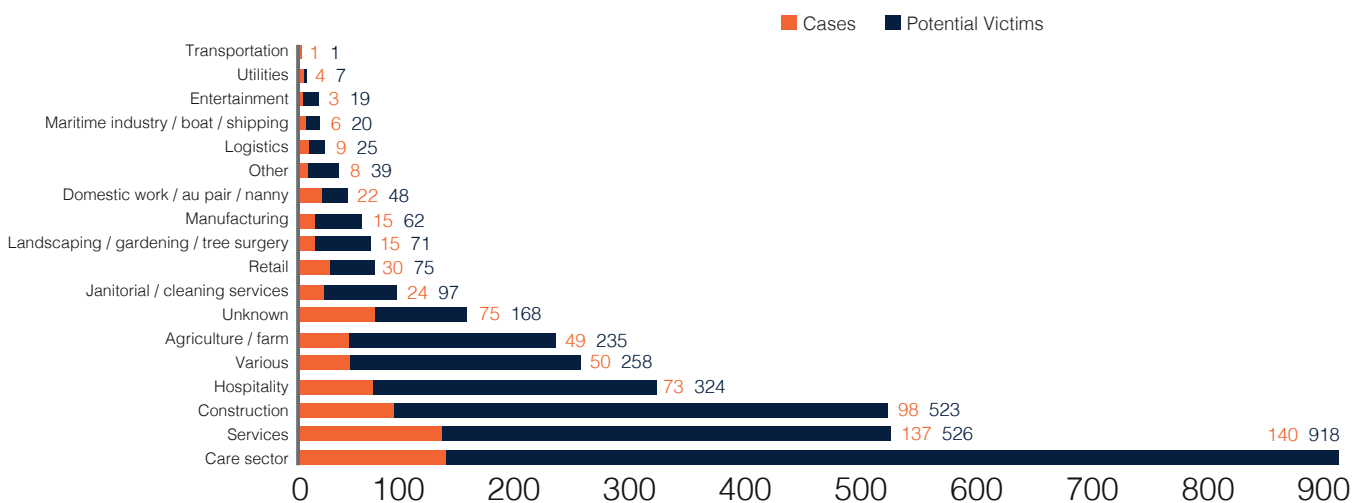
Location type	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Private house	557	23%
Business	553	23%
Construction site	343	14%
Restaurant/take away/pub	317	13%
Farm	277	11%
Residential facility	241	10%
Nail bar	125	5%
Factory	92	4%
Hotel/motel	60	2%
Shop	53	2%
Marina/port/seacoast	20	1%
Website/internet location	18	1%
Lorries/vans	16	1%
Religious site/church	14	1%
Hair salon	13	1%
Warehouse/distribution centre	10	0%
Street	9	0%
Educational facility	5	0%
Travellers/caravan site	3	0%
Ship/boat	1	0%
Other	252	10%
Multiple location types***	583	-
Unknown	416	-
Total	3,978	123%

*Totals exceed the overall number of potential victims indicated as multiple location types may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown" and "multiple location types"

***Where multiple unknown location types have been indicated

Chart 23 – Cases and potential victims by industry*



*Excludes "unknown"

repair and maintenance work. In 2023, **137** cases of labour exploitation were indicated in the service industry, involving **526** potential victims, a reduction of **44%** from **247** cases, and **36%** from **825** potential victims the previous year. The number of cases dropped by almost half in both car washes (**160 to 88**) and the beauty industry (**70 to 41**).

Construction continues to be the industry where the third highest number of cases (**98**) and potential victims (**523**) were indicated to the Helpline. Whilst cases have dropped by **30%**, potential victim numbers were only **4%** lower than the previous year, illustrating that the average number of potential victims per case has risen. **73** cases involving **324** potential victims were reported within hospitality in 2023. Again, there has been a reduction in cases (**-26%**), however the Helpline has seen a **22%** uplift in potential victims within hospitality. Agriculture has dropped from the sector with the fourth highest number of cases and potential victims in 2022 to fifth in 2023, following a **31%** decrease in cases and **38%** decrease in potential victims. **Chart 23** provides a full breakdown of labour exploitation cases and potential victims indicated in 2023 by industry.



chapter 6: criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation comprised 10% of all modern slavery and 7% of all potential victims indicated to the Helpline in 2023. 226 criminal exploitation cases were reported involving 385 potential victims, a 21% increase in potential victims since the previous year.

“[The Helpline is] a lifeline for vulnerable people. You empower victims, and your support in providing updates and helping us has been so valuable.”

Anonymous solicitor

Introduction

Table 31 – High-level overview 2022-2023

High-level	2022	2023	% 2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Cases	226	226	10%	0%
Potential victims	317	385	7%	21%
Helpline calls, webforms and app submissions	422	464	4%	3%

Criminal exploitation involves individuals forced or coerced into criminal activity. Often these are situations involving drug production and trade, begging or theft but could include any crime a victim is forced to commit. This also includes more recently emerging forms of exploitation such as victims forced to scam people online.

Despite the overall decrease in modern slavery cases and potential victims indicated to the Helpline, the number of cases of criminal exploitation remained consistent with the previous year, **226**. In 2023 this comprised **10%** of all modern slavery cases indicated, up from **9%** in 2022.

Whilst the number of cases has not changed, there has been a **21%** increase in potential victims indicated in situations of criminal exploitation since 2022, from **317** to **385**. The average number of potential victims per case has therefore increased from **1.4** to **1.7**.

In line with the other increases in relation to criminal exploitation, the number of incoming calls, webforms and app submissions received pertaining to this exploitation type also increased. There was a **3%** increase from **422** calls, webforms and app submissions in 2022 to **464** in 2023.

Caller proximity

Table 32 provides a breakdown of the **226** cases of criminal exploitation indicated in 2023 by the proximity of the caller or point of contact to a potential victim. There was a significant increase in cases self-reported by a potential victim, from **28** to **72 (157%)**. **119** cases were reported by someone in direct contact with a potential victim, meaning **85%** of all criminal exploitation cases were indicated by a potential victim or someone who had communicated with them. People who had indirect contact with a potential victim contacted the Helpline in relation to six cases. The remaining **29** cases resulted from observations of suspicious activity.

Potential victim demographics

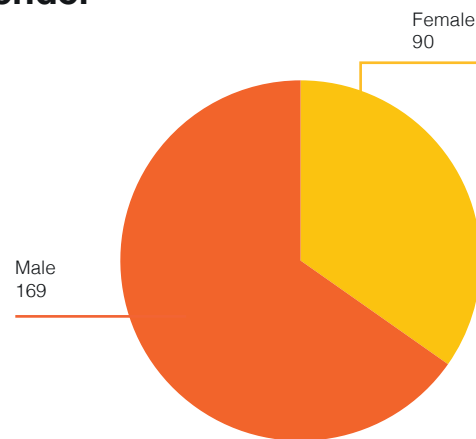
Of the **385** potential victims indicated in criminal exploitation in 2023, the gender was unknown in relation to **126**.

Excluding these unknowns, **169** were indicated as male, comprising **65%**. The remaining **35%** were indicated as females (**90**). This breakdown was much the same as in the previous year. **Chart 24** illustrates the gender breakdown of potential victims of criminal exploitation.

Table 32 – Caller proximity to victim

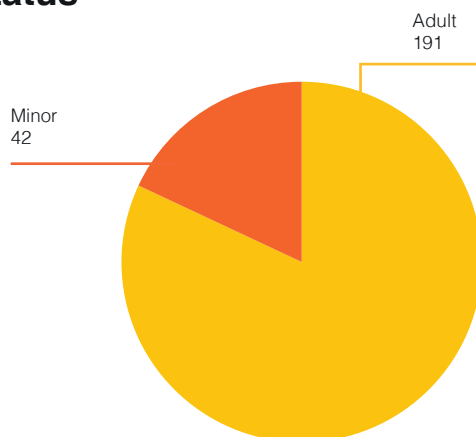
Caller proximity	Cases	% Cases
Potential victim self-report	72	32%
Direct contact with potential victim	119	53%
Indirect contact with potential victim	6	3%
Observation of suspicious activity	29	13%
Total	226	100%

Chart 24 – Potential victims by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 25 – Potential victims by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Nationality of potential victims

Potential victims of **21** nationalities were indicated in criminal exploitation, the top 10 of which can be seen in **Table 33**. Nationality was unknown in relation to **251** potential victims. Where nationality was known, **30%** were indicated as

Albanian (**40**), making it the most prevalent in both 2022 and 2023. Notably, Filipino potential victims were the second most indicated in 2023, with **25** recorded in 2023, following **zero** in 2022. Vietnamese nationals were the third most common in criminal exploitation, indicated **16** times. Syrian nationals were not indicated at all in criminal exploitation in 2022, however were the fourth most recorded in 2023 (**11**). The increases in relation to the top four nationalities, combined with the drop in Romanian potential victims indicated (**-41%**), resulted in Romanian moving from the second most common in 2022 (**17**) to fifth in 2023 (**10**). England (**7**), United Kingdom (**7**), Bulgaria (**2**), Jamaica (**2**) and China (**2**) complete the top 10. Chinese nationals were indicated in the top 10 after not being indicated at all the previous year.

One potential victim was indicated in criminal exploitation from each of the following nations: Moldova, Iran, Egypt, India, Iraq, Algeria, Croatia, Netherlands, Paraguay, Singapore, Uganda and the USA.

Table 33 – Top 10 potential victim nationalities*

Nationality	Potential victims	% Potential victims*
Albania	40	30%
Philippines	25	19%
Vietnam	16	12%
Syria	11	8%
Romania	10	7%
England	7	5%
United Kingdom**	7	5%
Bulgaria	2	1%
China	2	1%
Jamaica	2	1%

*Excludes "unknown"

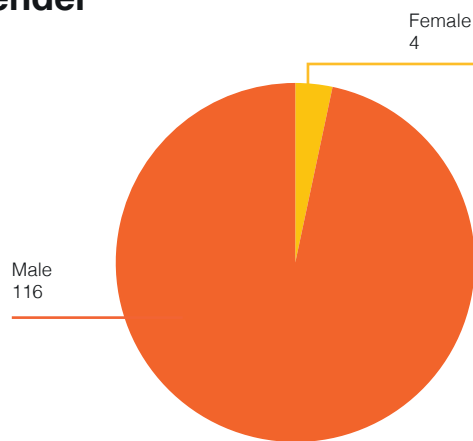
**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Potential exploiter demographics

399 potential exploiters were indicated across the **226** cases of criminal exploitation, meaning more potential exploiters were recorded than the **385** potential victims. Therefore, a number of these cases included multiple individuals involved in the exploitation of **one** potential victim. While there was an increase in potential victims within this exploitation type, there was a **2%** reduction in potential exploiter numbers. In relation to potential exploiter gender, this was unknown in **279** instances. Excluding these unknowns, **97%** of potential exploiters indicated in criminal exploitation were male (**116**). Only four were reportedly female (**3%**). **Chart 26** illustrates the breakdown of potential exploiters by gender.

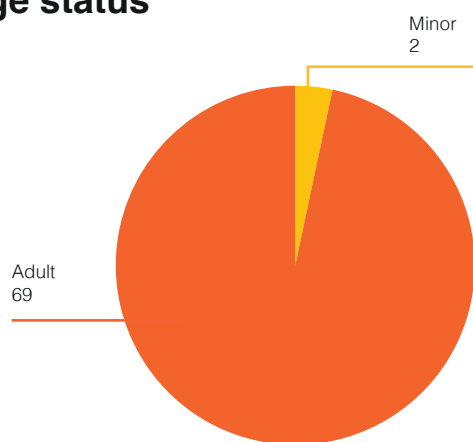
Chart 27 illustrates the breakdown of potential exploiters in criminal exploitation by age status. The age status of **328** potential exploiters was unknown, however where it was

Chart 26 – Potential exploiters by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

Chart 27 – Potential exploiters by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

known, **97%** were indicated as adults (**69**). Two potential exploiters were indicated as minors (**3%**) in 2023.

Table 34 provides the top 10 potential exploiter nationalities indicated within criminal exploitation cases. Ten potential exploiter nationalities were indicated in both 2022 and 2023. In 2023, nationality was unknown in relation to **351** potential exploiters. Where nationality was known, the most common potential exploiter nationality was Albanian, indicated **21** times, equating to **44%** of potential exploiters. Albanian was also the most indicated potential victim nationality in cases of criminal exploitation. Vietnamese nationals were the second most indicated, following a **1000%** increase from one potential exploiter indicated in 2022 to **11** in 2023. Chinese potential exploiters were the third most indicated (**6**), after not being indicated at all during the previous year. Similarly to potential victims in criminal exploitation, there was also a reduction in Romanian potential exploiters, bringing them from the second most indicated nationality in 2022 (**6**) to the fourth in 2023 (**2**). Potential exploiters from the United Kingdom (**2**), Ghana (**2**), England (**1**), Iran (**1**), Egypt (**1**) and Jamaica (**1**) complete the remainder of the list.

Table 34 – Top 10 potential exploiter nationalities*

Nationality	Potential exploiters	% Potential exploiters*
Albania	21	44%
Vietnam	11	23%
China	6	13%
Romania	2	4%
United Kingdom**	2	4%
Ghana	2	4%
England	1	2%
Iran	1	2%
Egypt	1	2%
Jamaica	1	2%

* Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Recruitment tactics and exploiter to victim relationships

In terms of the relationships between potential victims and those who exploited them, **Table 35** provides a breakdown. Excluding the **177** where the relationship was unknown, **54%** of criminal exploitation potential victims were exploited by someone they had no clear relationship with (**113**). Second most common was exploitation by a recruiter, however there was a **110%** increase from **39** potential victims indicated in 2022 to **82** in 2023. Ten potential victims were indicated as being exploited by someone they had a familial relationship with an increase of **43%** from seven the previous year. **Five** potential victims were reportedly exploited by their employer, and **3** by an intimate partner.

Table 35 – Exploiter relationship to potential victims

Relationship	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
No clear relationship (including pimp)	113	54%
Recruiter	82	39%
Familial relationship to victim	10	5%
Employer	5	2%
Intimate partner of victim	3	1%
Foster parent of victim	0	0%
Other	2	1%
Unknown	177	-
Total	392	103%

*Total exceeds number of potential victims as multiple relationships may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

The tactics used to recruit potential victims into criminal exploitation varied from the previous year, when the most commonly indicated was through friendship (**20**). In 2023, the most indicated recruitment tactic was through a job offer or advertisement, indicated **43** times, **153%** more than in 2022 (**17**). Recruitment tactics were unknown in relation to **250** potential victims. **Chart 28** provides a full breakdown of criminal exploitation potential victims by recruitment tactics used on them.

False promises or statements were used to recruit **42** potential victims, an increase of **133%** since 2022 (**18**). Coercion, including threats and blackmail, was indicated in relation to **25** potential victims. **19** potential victims were reportedly abducted, which is a significant increase of **375%** from only four in 2022. Instances of grooming also increased by **89%** from **9** to **17**. **9** potential victims were reportedly recruited by exploitation of a familial relationship. In 2023, other recruitment tactics indicated were friendship (**7**), smuggling and ransom (**7**), the offer of accommodation (**6**), an exploiter posing as a benefactor (**4**), and an intimate partner or marriage proposition (**3**).

Chart 28 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown"

Control methods

Control methods are the means through which victims become trapped in exploitative situations. In 2023, no control methods were indicated in relation to **62** potential victims of criminal exploitation. Confinement or restricted movement continued to be the most common control method, indicated in relation to **254** potential victims. Excluding unknowns, confinement or restricted movement was indicated in relation to **79%** of all criminal exploitation potential victims reported to the Helpline in 2023. This was considerably more than the second most common control method, physical abuse, which was indicated **125** times (**39%**). Similar numbers of potential victims experienced tied accommodation (**115**, **36%**) and monitoring (**111**, **34%**).

Financial control was indicated in relation to **95** potential victims (**29%**), and threats to harm the individual or someone close to them in relation to **92 (28%)**.

The most notable differences between control methods indicated in 2022 and 2023 were the **467%** increase in instances of withheld or destroyed important documents (**12 to 68**), and the **280%** in reports of isolation (**15 to 57**). **Table 36** provides a full breakdown of all control methods indicated in relation to potential victims of criminal exploitation.

Table 36 – Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	Potential victims** %
Confinement, restricted movement	254	79%
Physical abuse	125	39%
Tied accommodation	115	36%
Monitoring	111	34%
Financial control	95	29%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	92	28%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	68	21%
Isolation	57	18%
Emotional abuse - verbal/manipulation	46	14%
Sexual abuse	29	9%
Threat - other	16	5%
Induced substance abuse	15	5%
Threat to report to police or immigration	3	1%
Cultural/familial/religious pressure or coercion	3	1%
Threat to expose or shame subject	2	1%
Other	43	13%
Unknown	62	-
Total	1136	333%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

**% Excludes "unknown"

Location types

The types of location or sites where criminal exploitation had reportedly taken place follow the same order as the previous year, although there were increases in relation to each location type. The location type was unknown in relation to **132** potential victims, and another **59** were reportedly exploited in multiple unknown location types. The highest number recorded was **70** potential victims indicated as being exploited in private houses, a **75%** increase on the previous year (**40**). Cannabis farms were the second most indicated location type (**64**) an increase of **44%** from **44**. There was a **37%** increase in potential victims criminally exploited in the street (**30 to 41**).

One of the biggest increases was in relation to criminal exploitation taking place online (**1,350%**), indicated **29** times

Table 37 – Potential victims by location type

Location type	Potential victims*	Potential victims** %
Private house	70	36%
Cannabis farm	64	33%
Street	61	31%
Website/internet location	29	15%
Business	24	12%
Travellers/caravan site	3	2%
Park/recreational facility	2	1%
Public transport	2	1%
Other	15	8%
Multiple location types***	59	-
Unknown	132	-
Total	461	139%

*Totals exceed the overall number of potential victims indicated as multiple location types may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown" and "multiple location types"

***Where multiple unknown location types have been indicated

up from only **2** instances the previous year. The largest increase, however, was indications of criminal exploitation taking place at a business premises a **2,300%** increase from **1 to 24**. **Table 37** provides a full breakdown of criminal exploitation potential victims by location type. Other less commonly indicated location types were traveller or caravan sites (**3**), parks and recreational facilities (**2**) and on public transport (**2**).

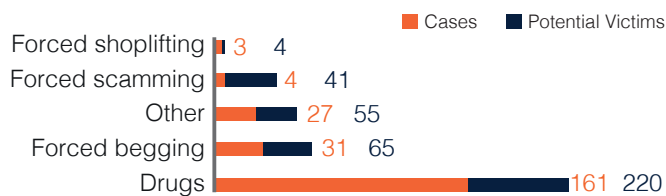
41 potential victims indicated in situations of forced scamming

Breakdown of criminal exploitation cases

Of the **385** potential victims indicated to the Helpline in criminal exploitation in 2023, over half were indicated in situations relating to drugs (**220, 57%**). These cases commonly include situations of forced cannabis cultivation or county lines. Whilst the number of potential victims exploited in situations involving drugs increased by **27%**, the number of cases (**161**) was only **5%** higher than the year before (**153**), which demonstrates an increase in the average number of potential victims per case. In contrast, whilst the number of forced begging cases reduced a little (**38 to 31, -18%**), the number of potential victims indicated in these situations decreased by around a third (**93 to 65, -30%**), showing that the number of potential victims indicated on average per case has decreased in forced begging

situations. **Four** potential victims were also across four forced shoplifting cases, similarly to the previous year. **Chart 29** illustrates the breakdown of potential victims and cases of criminal exploitation by sub-type.

Chart 29 – Cases and potential victims by criminal exploitation type



In addition, there were some additional cases of criminal exploitation which did not align with these 3 sub-types. **27** cases involving **55** potential victims were indicated in situations of criminal exploitation were recorded as 'other' forms of criminal exploitation, including cuckooing which did not involve drugs activity, situations where potential victims had been forced to commit robbery, making or selling tobacco products, involvement with offensive weapons, fraud and cybercrime. A category of criminal exploitation recorded for the first time in 2023 is forced scamming, following 2 cases involving **11** potential victims indicated in 2022. In 2023, the numbers have more than doubled, increasing to **41** potential victims across 4 cases. These cases involve individuals being forced into instigating online scams to fraudulently gain funds for an exploiter.



chapter 7: domestic servitude

Domestic servitude cases comprised 5% of all modern slavery cases raised by the Helpline in 2023. 148 potential victims were indicated across 118 cases, a 4% increase in both potential victims and cases since the previous year, despite the overall decrease in modern slavery cases.

“Unseen have been the hope of my life. I was completely hopeless before speaking to [the Helpline]”

Anonymous survivor

Introduction

Table 38 – High-level overview 2022-2023

High-level	2022	2023	% 2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Cases	114	118	5%	4%
Potential victims	142	148	3%	4%
Helpline calls, webforms and app submissions	246	280	2%	14%

The Helpline saw an overall drop in modern slavery cases between 2022 and 2023, with static or reducing case numbers across all other exploitation types, except domestic servitude. **118** cases of domestic servitude were reported, a **4%** increase since 2022, making 2023 the year with the highest number of cases since 2018. There was also a corresponding **4%** increase in potential victims indicated, rising from **142** to **148**. Domestic servitude situations comprised **5%** of all modern slavery cases raised by the Helpline and **3%** of all potential victims indicated. Of the **8,367** calls, webforms and app submissions received by the Helpline during the year, only **280 (2%)** were related to domestic servitude cases.

Table 39 – Caller proximity to victim

Caller proximity	Cases	% Cases
Potential victim self-report	47	40%
Direct contact with potential victim	62	53%
Indirect contact with potential victim	3	3%
Observation of suspicious activity	6	5%
Total	118	100%

Table 39 provides a breakdown of domestic servitude cases by the proximity of the caller to a potential victim. **40%** of these cases were self-reported by a potential victim (**47**). **62** cases, comprising **53%**, involved communication from someone who had been in direct contact with a potential victim – a **38%** increase from the previous year. This makes a total of **109 (93%)** domestic servitude cases where information had come from a potential victim or someone they had been in communication with, allowing the Helpline to get an accurate depiction of the situation and what the potential victim wants in terms of intervention. The remaining **9** cases were reported by someone in indirect contact with a potential victim (**3, 3%**) and observations of suspicious activity (**6, 5%**).

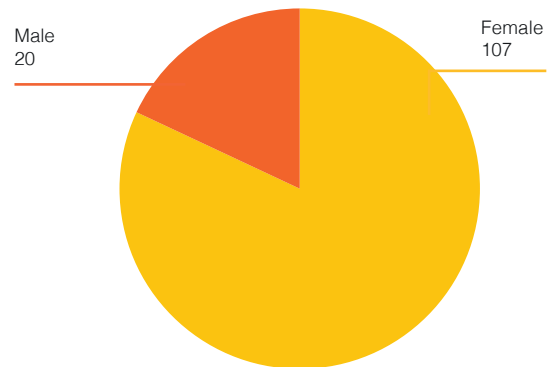
Potential victim demographics

In terms of who experienced domestic servitude, **Chart 30**

illustrates the gender breakdown of potential victims indicated in 2023. Gender was unknown in relation to **21** potential victims; however, excluding unknowns **84%** were indicated as female (**107**). The remaining **16%** of potential victims were indicated as male (**20**).

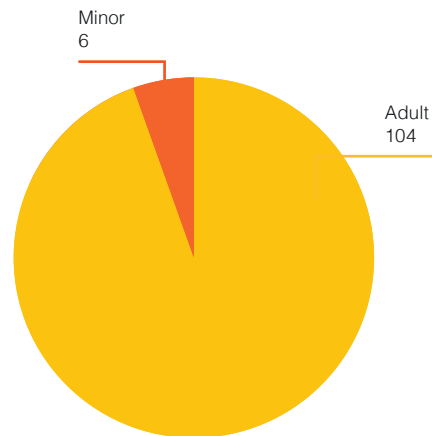
Chart 31 illustrates the breakdown of adults and minors indicated in domestic servitude. The age status of **38** potential victims of domestic servitude was unknown. Where age status was known, **95%**, the vast majority, were indicated as adults (**104**). The remaining **6 (5%)** potential victims were reportedly minors.

Chart 30 – Potential victims by gender*



* Excludes "unknown"

Chart 31 – Potential victims by age status*



* Excludes "unknown"

Potential victims in situations of domestic servitude were indicated from **38** different countries, up from **31** the previous year. **Table 40** provides the top 10 nationalities of potential victims indicated to the Helpline in situations of domestic servitude. The nationality of **51** potential victims was unknown. Nigerian nationals continue to be the most indicated in situations of domestic servitude (**9**). The same number of potential victims was also indicated from the Philippines (**9**), up from second place the previous year. Indian nationals (**6**) continue to be the third most indicated within this type of exploitation. Equal numbers of potential victims were also indicated from Pakistan (**6**) and Ukraine (**6**). Four potential victims were indicated from Bangladesh,

Eritrea, Ghana, and Sudan. Of these four, only Eritrean nationals were indicated the previous year.

Potential victims of domestic servitude were also indicated from Poland (3), England (2), Hungary (2), Iraq (2), Kenya (2), Romania (2), United Kingdom* (2), Algeria (1), Brazil (1), China (1), Grenada (1), Guinea (1), Hong Kong (1), Mauritius (1), Moldova (1), Morocco (1), Namibia (1), Portugal (1), Qatar (1), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1), Somalia (1), Sri Lanka (1), Eswatini (1), Thailand (1), Tunisia (1), Vietnam (1), Zimbabwe (1), Albania (1), Greece (1), Guatemala (1), Iran (1), Jamaica (1), Lebanon (1), Myanmar (1), and South Africa (1).

Table 40 – Top 10 potential victim nationalities*

Nationality	Potential victims	% Potential victims*
Nigeria	9	9%
Philippines	9	9%
India	6	6%
Pakistan	6	6%
Ukraine	6	6%
Saudi Arabia	5	5%
Uganda	5	5%
Bangladesh	4	4%
Eritrea	4	4%
Ghana	4	4%

* Excludes "unknown"

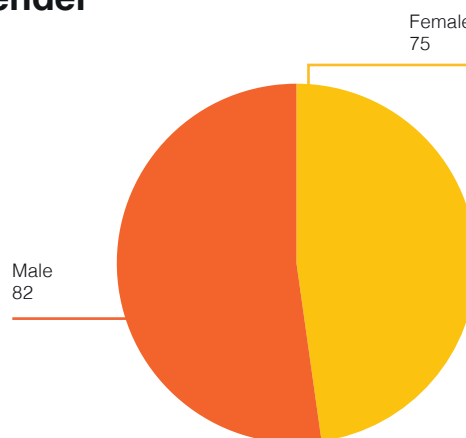
Potential exploiter demographics

In relation to the 118 cases of domestic servitude indicated to the Helpline in 2023, 230 potential exploiters were indicated. This means 55% more potential exploiters were indicated than the 148 potential victims. On average, this equates to 1.9 potential exploiters per case of domestic servitude and 1.6 potential exploiters for every potential victim indicated.

Of the 230 potential exploiters indicated in relation to 2023's domestic servitude cases, the gender of 73 was unknown. Of the remaining 157 potential exploiters, very similar numbers of males and females were indicated. Chart 32 illustrates this breakdown. 75 female potential exploiters were recorded, equating to 48%, and 82 were reportedly male, equating to 52%. This closeness in numbers is unique to this exploitation type, whereas, with other exploitation types, there has been a more significant weighting towards male potential exploiters. In domestic servitude cases, there was even a 3% increase in female potential exploiters indicated since 2022, bringing male and female numbers closer together.

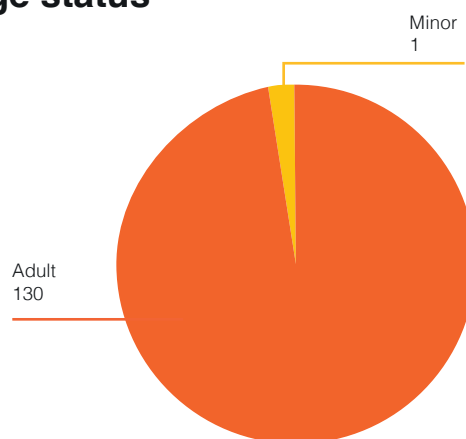
Chart 33 provides a breakdown of potential exploiters by whether they were reportedly adults or minors. This was unknown in 99 instances. Where age status was recorded,

Chart 32 – Potential exploiters by gender*



* Excludes "unknown"

Chart 33 – Potential exploiters by age status*



* Excludes "unknown"

130 potential exploiters were indicated as adults, and one was said to be a minor. No minors were indicated the previous year.

Data around the nationality of potential exploiters in domestic servitude situations is limited, with 230 being unknown. Where nationality was known, 34% were reportedly from Saudi Arabia. This equates to 15 potential exploiters in 2023, a 200% increase from 5 the previous year when it was the third most indicated nationality. This nationality was also indicated in the top 10 potential victim nationalities in domestic servitude situations in 2023. Ghana and India were the second and third most common potential exploiter nationalities in 2023, with four indicated of each nationality, increasing from 1 Indian and no Ghanaian nationals the year before. Both were also in the top 10 potential victim nationalities.

Libyan, Kenyan and Nigerian nationals were indicated 3 times each. No Kenyan or Libyan potential exploiters were indicated in 2022. However, Nigerian nationals were the most indicated in 2022 (8), with 63% fewer in 2023 despite Nigerian being the most common potential victim nationality within domestic servitude cases the second year running. Nigerian and Filipino nationals were the most indicated as potential victims, both indicated 9 times. While Nigerian

potential exploiters were reported, no Filipino nationals were. No Libyan and Kenyan potential victims were indicated in 2023. **2** potential exploiters were indicated from China, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe. China (**1**) and the United Kingdom (**6**) were both indicated in the top 10 the previous year, with the UK being the second most commonly reported. Potential victims were indicated from each of these nationalities, with Pakistani nationals one of the top five most indicated. **Table 41** highlights the top 10 potential exploiter nationalities in domestic servitude cases in 2023. Potential exploiters were also indicated from Italy (**1**), Poland (**1**), Germany (**1**) and Uganda (**1**).

Table 41 – Top 10 potential exploiter nationalities*

Nationality	Potential exploiters	% Potential exploiters*
Saudi Arabia	15	34%
Ghana	4	9%
India	4	9%
Libya	3	7%
Nigeria	3	7%
Kenya	3	7%
China	2	5%
United Kingdom**	2	5%
Pakistan	2	5%
Zimbabwe	2	5%

*Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Recruitment tactics and exploiter to victim relationships

Table 42 provides a breakdown of potential victims of domestic servitude by their relationship with their exploiter. The exploiters relationship was unknown in relation to **25** potential victims of domestic servitude. Excluding these unknowns, **39%** of potential victims were reportedly exploited by their employer (**52**). **21** were indicated as being exploited by someone they had a familial relationship with (**16%**). Similar numbers were reportedly exploited by a recruiter (**20, 15%**). **18** potential victims were exploited by an intimate partner (**13%**). In relation to **14** potential victims, there was no clear relationship. **2** potential victims were reportedly exploited by their foster parent.

Chart 34 shows a breakdown of the tactics used to recruit potential victims into situations of domestic servitude. The recruitment tactics were unknown in relation to **45** potential victims in 2023. Excluding these unknowns, over a quarter (**38, 37%**) of potential victims were recruited using job offers or advertisements, a **41%** increase from **27** the previous year. False promises and statements were also common, indicated in relation to **31%** of potential victims (**32**) **78%** more than in 2022. A familial relationship was used to

recruit **21 (20%)** potential victims, and an intimate partner or marriage proposition in relation to **18 (17%)**. The offer of accommodation was used on **14 potential victims (14%)**, more than twice the number indicated the previous year (**6**), with a **133%** increase. Other recruitment tactics reported were abduction (**8**), friendship (**4**), posing as a benefactor (**2**), smuggling or ransom (**2**), and grooming (**1**).

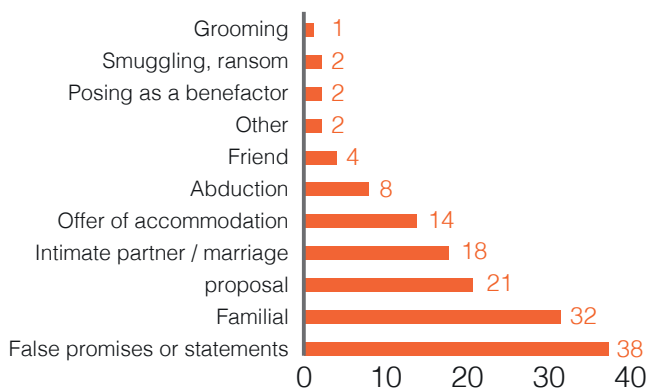
Table 42 – Exploiter relationship to potential victims*

Relationship	Potential Victims*	% Potential Victims**
Employer	52	39%
Familial relationship	21	16%
Recruiter	20	15%
Intimate partner	18	13%
No clear relationship (including pimp)	14	10%
Foster parent	2	1%
Other	7	5%
Unknown	25	-
Total	159	100%

*Total exceeds number of potential victims as multiple relationships may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Chart 34 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

Control methods

The most commonly indicated control method within domestic servitude cases continues to be tied accommodation, reported in relation to almost three-quarters (**109, 78%**) of potential victims. **72%** of potential victims (**100**) were controlled financially, and **86 (62%)** were reportedly confined or had the movement restricted. A **35%** increase in instances of financial control was recorded, moving it from the third to the second most prevalent control method. Emotional abuse (**67, 48%**) and isolation (**62, 45%**) were the fourth and fifth

most common control methods indicated in situations of domestic servitude.

Reported slightly less frequently were monitoring (55) and physical abuse (51). Withheld or destroyed documents were reported in relation to 37 potential victims. Threats to harm the potential victim, a family member or someone else close to them were indicated 28 times. Completing the top 10 most prevalent control methods was sexual abuse, reported 25 times. Table 43 shows the full breakdown of control methods reportedly used to keep potential victims in domestic servitude.

Table 43 – Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Tied accommodation	109	78%
Financial control	100	72%
Confinement, restricted movement	86	62%
Emotional abuse - verbal/ manipulation	67	48%
Isolation	62	45%
Monitoring	55	40%
Physical abuse	51	37%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	37	27%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	28	20%
Sexual abuse	25	18%
Cultural/familial/religious pressure or coercion	22	16%
Threat - other	15	11%
Threat to report to police or immigration	14	10%
Threat to abandon subject/make homeless	12	9%
Induced substance abuse	1	1%
Threat to expose or shame subject	1	1%
Other	11	8%
Unknown	9	-
Total	705	501%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim

** Excludes "unknown"

Location type

Table 44 provides a breakdown of potential victims of domestic servitude by the type of location or site of exploitation. Due to the nature of domestic servitude, the locations where this takes place are usually limited to types of residential properties. Unsurprisingly, the majority of potential victims were reportedly exploited in private houses. 145 were indicated within private houses, comprising 98% of all

potential victims recorded in this exploitation type in 2023. Other location types reported are also properties designed for people to live in, including residential facilities (3) and traveller or caravan sites (6). One other location type was reported that does not have a residential function, namely religious sites or churches, indicated in relation to four potential victims.

Table 44 – Potential victims by location type

Location type	Potential victims*	% Potential victims
Private house	145	98%
Residential facility	3	2%
Religious site/church	4	3%
Travellers/caravan site	6	4%
Total	158	107%

*Total exceeds the overall number of potential victims indicated as multiple location types may be indicated per potential victim

chapter 8: labour abuse

Although labour abuse is perceived to be at the lower end of the spectrum when thinking about labour exploitation, it can still have dire consequences for workers who experience it. In 2023, the number of labour abuse cases dealt with by the Helpline increased by 11% from 464 cases in 2022 to 516 in 2023. The number of potential victims also rose slightly, with a 2% increase rising from 1,767 potential victims to 1,799.



Introduction

Despite an overall decline in the number of modern slavery cases raised throughout 2023, the number of labour abuse cases has continued to rise, with an **11%** rise in the number of cases and a **2%** rise in the number of potential victims in 2023. **Table 45** below provides a breakdown.

Table 45 – High-level overview 2022-2023

High-level	2022	2023	% change 2022 - 2023
Cases	464	516	11%
Potential victims	1,767	1,799	2%

Table 46 provides a breakdown of the Helpline calls, web forms and app submissions made on cases of labour abuse indicated through the Helpline throughout the year. In nearly three-quarters of instances (**72%**), the contact was made through a Helpline call, which roughly equates with the corresponding percentage of all calls to the Helpline compared to webforms and app submissions. The total number of contacts on labour abuse situations is

Table 46 – Helpline calls, webforms and app submissions

Type	2023	% 2023
Helpline calls	545	72%
Webforms	197	26%
App Submissions	15	2%
Total	757	100%

not consistent with the number of cases raised, as multiple contacts may be made on one case.

As can be seen in **Chart 35**, the prevalence and frequency of labour abuse cases is not consistent across the year. This may be due to increased activity during peak seasons at different points in the year. For example, during the summer and Christmas periods, activity in sectors like agriculture, retail and logistics is high. In 2023, March and August were the two months with the highest volume of labour abuse cases, with **55** cases raised each month, followed by July (**54**) and October (**52**). Although the peaks within each of the last two years across the summer months appear to

Chart 35 – Cases by month

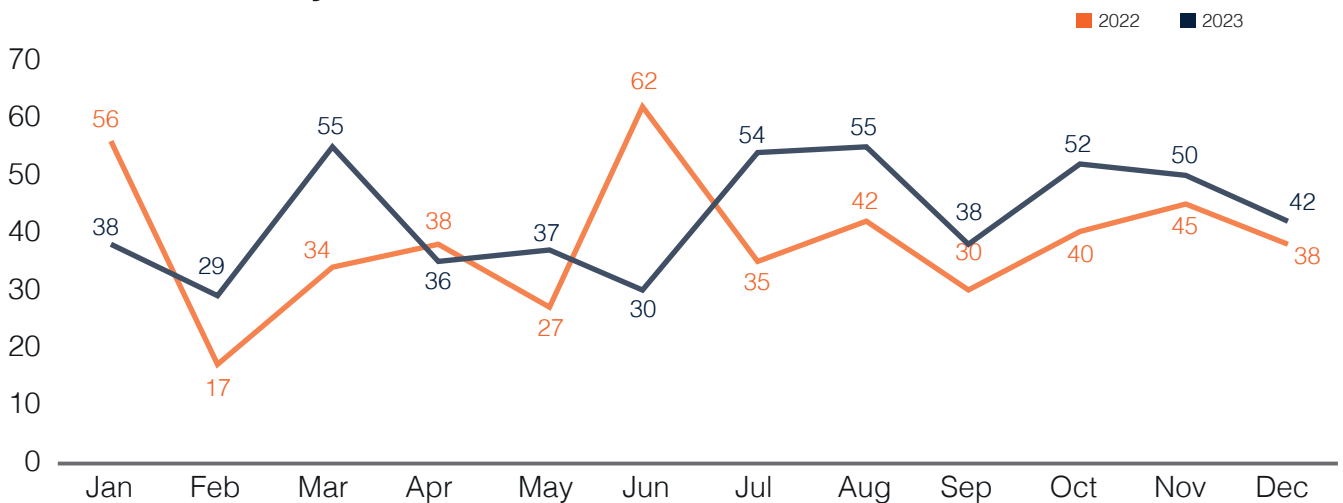
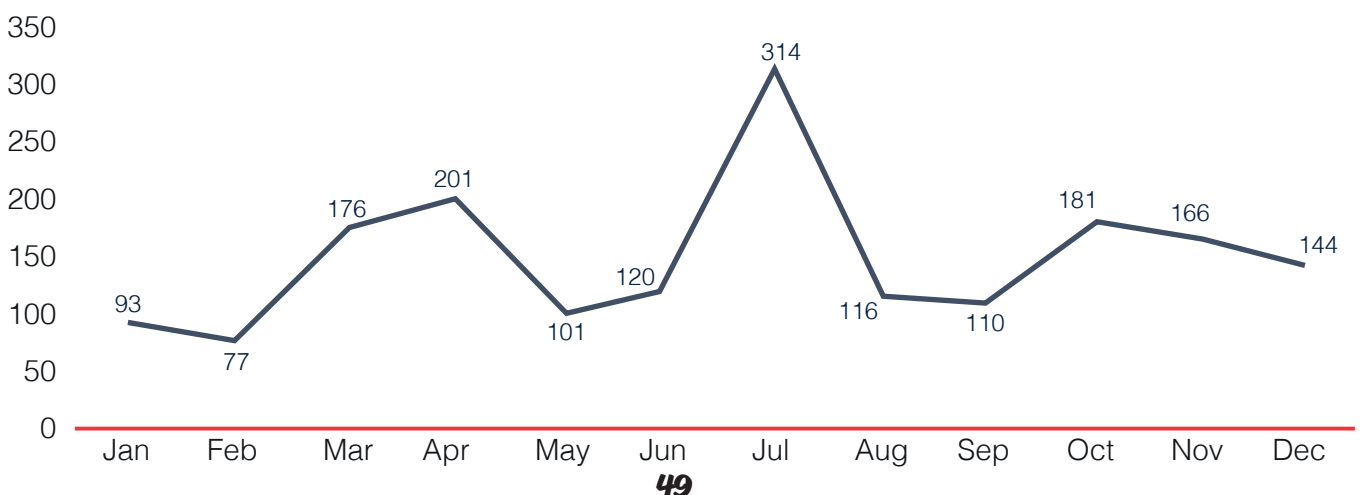


Chart 36 – Potential victims by month



show a slightly different trend, an identical number of cases were raised between June and August, with **139** cases raised in both 2022 and 2023. However, slightly contrasting peaks are evident in the last two years, with January 2022 showing a peak of **56** cases and March 2023 showing a peak of **55** cases.

As may be expected, the number of potential victims indicated each month often resembles the case, it might not always be so; one complex case involving many potential victims can impact the trajectory of the overall figures. The highest number of potential victims indicated in 2023 occurred in July with **314**. This corresponds with July being one of the months with the highest number of cases raised.

Caller proximity

Caller proximity is always important in a Helpline case as it helps to establish the facts and whether the situation or information has been corroborated. With labour abuse situations in 2023, **76%** of calls or contacts came from somebody in a situation of labour abuse or someone in direct contact with an individual. This is in comparison to 2022, where a total of **68%** of calls and contacts came from individuals themselves or someone in direct contact. This is a significant proportion suggesting that in the case of labour abuse cases, much of the information received by the Helpline is likely to be accurate, albeit information is always given from an individual's personal perspective. That is why the Helpline seeks to always remain objective when receiving and recording information.

Table 47 – Caller proximity to victim

Caller proximity	2023	% 2023
Potential victim self-report	225	44%
Direct contact with potential victim	164	32%
Indirect contact with potential victim	21	4%
Observation of suspicious activity	106	21%
Total	516	100%

Labour abuse indicators

Understanding the indicators in situations reported to the Helpline can help advisors assess a situation effectively and determine the next steps. Indicators can point to whether a situation is potentially labour abuse or modern slavery. Establishing these facts will support the Helpline advisor in providing the right advice and guidance to the caller and consider whether further action is needed, such as making a referral to another agency or organisation like the police or local authority.

Non-payment of the national minimum wage (NMW) continues to be the most prevalent indicator reported to the helpline. However, the number of instances raised where

this was an issue has increased from **42%** in 2022 to **66%** in 2023. As a key indicator of labour abuse, inadequate personal protective equipment has reduced somewhat from **29%** in 2022 down to **15%** in 2023.

In many situations a contact will report multiple indicators, hence the greater volume of indicators than potential victims. Equally, a contact may report only one indicator, but the information provided to the Helpline about the situation warrants further action or investigation. In each case, the information is considered on its own merits to ensure no inflation or conflation of issues by the Helpline.

Table 48 – Potential victims by labour abuse indicator

Indicator	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
National minimum wage not paid	1,179	66%
Long/excessive hours	754	42%
Harassment/intimidation/bullying	663	37%
Deductions from pay/wages	385	22%
Breaks insufficient	350	21%
PPE inadequate	267	19%
HSE concerns	176	15%
Holiday/leave insufficient	149	10%
Other	390	8%
Total	4,313	240%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple indicators may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown"

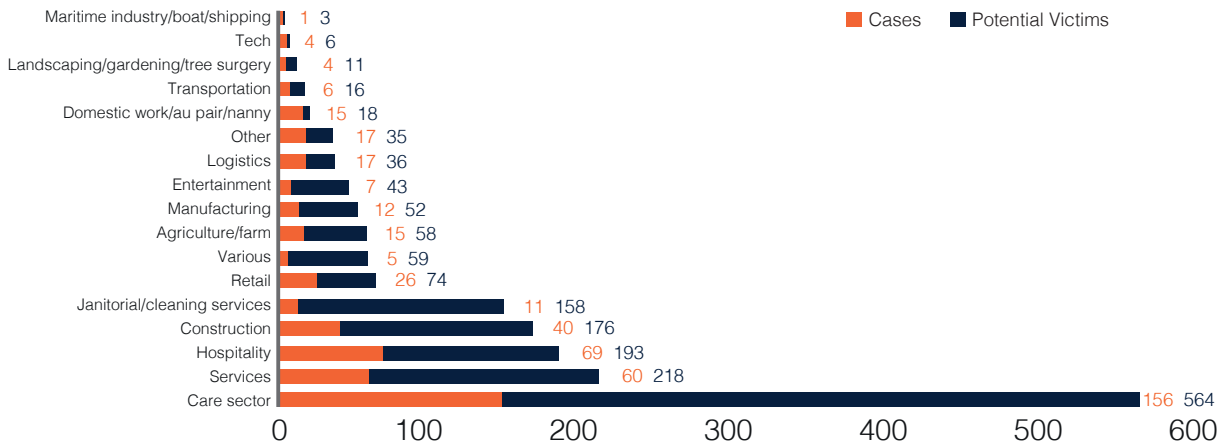
Labour abuse industries

As reported in previous years, several diverse industries and sectors are indicated in situations of labour abuse reported to the Helpline. Like modern slavery cases, the number of labour abuse cases indicated in the care sector in 2023 is significant, with **156** cases indicating **564** potential victims, an average of **3.6** potential victims per case. This is startling, given that in 2022 there were only **46** labour abuse cases indicated in the care sector. This is a rise of more than **239%**. In contrast, the most prevalent industry indicated in 2022 was the service industry with **120** cases, which has dropped significantly to **60** cases in 2023, a decrease of **50%**. The service industry is diverse, including car washes, the beauty and spa industry, and repairs and maintenance.

What is striking is the average number of potential victims per case in the janitorial/cleaning services industry. With only **11** cases but **158** potential victims indicated, the average number of potential victims is overwhelmingly the greatest per case at **14.4** potential victims.

The volume of hospitality cases remains consistent, with a slight drop from **73** in 2022 to **69** in 2023. Equally, construction has a difference of only one case, rising from

Chart 37 – Cases and potential victims by industry*



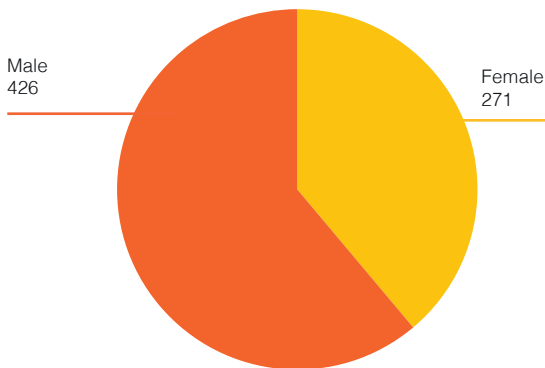
*Excludes "unknown"

39 in 2022 to **40** in 2023. **Chart 37** provides a breakdown of labour abuse cases and potential victims by industry.

Potential victims demographics

Consistently, labour abuse cases indicate a greater proportion of male potential victims than female potential victims. However, excluding the instances where gender was unknown, the percentage of male potential victims declined from **70% (513)** in 2022 to **61% (426)** in 2023. The percentage of female potential victims rose from **30% (216)** in 2022 to **39% (271)** in 2023. A contributing factor may be the prevalence of potential victims in the care sector, an industry where the majority of staff are female. In situations where the contact may indicate multiple potential victims but may not be certain of how many may be male or female, the Helpline will record unknown to prevent any assumptions being made and inaccurate information being recorded. This could be significant for any referral made to a law enforcement or safeguarding agency.

Chart 38 – Potential victims by gender*



*Excludes "unknown"

As is the case in the majority of labour abuse situations indicated to the Helpline, where age status is known, most potential victims are indicated as adults (**97%**) with only **3%** of potential victims indicated as minors. This is consistent with the breakdown in 2022.

In the case of **1,124** situations, the age status of the potential victim was recorded as unknown.

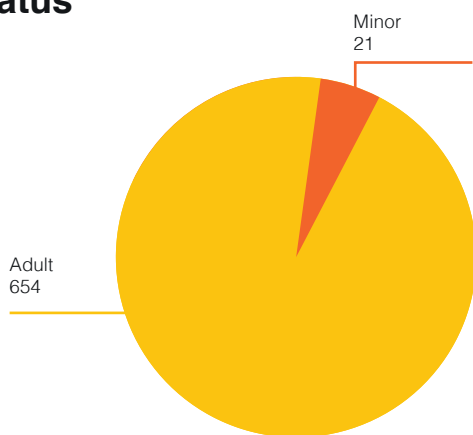
The diversity of potential victim nationalities indicated in labour abuse situations remains. In 2023, a total of **56** different nationalities were indicated compared to at least **46** different nationalities in 2022.

Where nationality was known, the most prevalent nationality indicated was Zimbabwean, with **83 (18%)** potential victims. Also prevalent were Indian nationals, with **78 (17%)** potential victims. However, the number of Indian nationals, although prevalent in 2023, has dropped significantly from the **229 (41%)** potential victims indicated in 2022. Zimbabwean nationals did not even feature in the top 10 nationalities in 2022, with only **9** potential victims indicated.

Similarly, Romanian nationals decreased from **54 (10%)** potential victims in 2022 down to **26 (6%)** in 2023, and dropped one place from the third most prevalent to the fourth most prevalent nationality. UK nationals were third most prevalent with **32** potential victims indicated in 2023 a rise from the **20** indicated in 2022.

What is striking is the different nationalities that were not indicated in the top 10 nationalities in 2022 but now feature in 2023. For example, Nigerian nationals were indicated in only **7** instances in 2022, but were indicated in **24** instances in 2023. Pakistan, as the seventh most prevalent nationality in 2023 with **17** potential victims, was only indicated in **6** instances in 2022. In the case of Fijians, no labour abuse potential victims were indicated from Fiji in 2022. However, in 2023, **21** potential victims were indicated comprising **5%** of all potential victims. The difference in nationalities and their prevalence could be, in part, to the changing demographics related to UK visa schemes within certain sectors, such as agriculture and the care sector.

Chart 39 – Potential victims by age status*



*Excludes "unknown"

Table 49 – Top 10 potential victim nationalities

Nationality	Potential victims	% Potential victims*
Zimbabwe	83	18%
India	78	17%
United Kingdom**	32	7%
Romania	26	6%
Nigeria	24	5%
Fiji	21	5%
Pakistan	17	4%
Ghana	11	2%
Philippines	10	2%
Poland	10	2%

*Excludes "unknown"

**United Kingdom was recorded where a UK national was indicated but the country was not specified

Location types

Where known, the Helpline will record the location type related to the situation being reported. As may be expected, excluding unknowns, the most prevalent location type reported for situations of labour abuse was a business. This was indicated in relation to **342 (35%)** potential victims. This is significantly lower than the **731** instances recorded in 2022. A private house being reported as the location of exploitation by potential victims remains prevalent in labour abuse situations, with **150** instances in 2023 up from **107** in 2022. A sizeable **219%** increase was seen in relation to reports relating to residential facilities, from **47** in 2022 to **150** in 2023, likely due to the high number of cases taking place within care homes. Restaurants, takeaways and pubs remain consistent, with **145** instances in 2023 compared to **148** in 2022. In relation to construction sites, the Helpline saw a significant increase in the number of potential victims reporting this location, up from **32** in 2022 to **118** in 2023 – a huge increase of **269%**.

Surprisingly, a farm was mentioned in only **55** instances, down from the **179** in 2022. This may be partly due to the

focus on the agricultural sector arising from the concerns around the Seasonal Agricultural Sector Visa Scheme and several organisations and agencies providing alternative support mechanisms. Equally, the Helpline saw a significant reduction in the number of nail bars indicated as the location of exploitation, dropping from **37** instances in 2022 to only **8** in 2023.

In contrast, the number of potential victims indicating hotels or motels as a location of exploitation increased from **49** in 2022 to **77** in 2023. **Table 50** provides a breakdown of location types indicated by potential victims.

Table 50 – Cases by location type

Location type	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Business	342	35%
Private house	150	15%
Residential facility	150	15%
Restaurant, takeaway, pub	145	15%
Construction site	118	12%
Hotel/motel	77	8%
Shop	63	6%
Farm	55	6%
Factory	45	5%
Warehouse, distribution centre	19	2%
Lorries/vans	19	2%
Website/internet location	8	1%
Nail bar	8	1%
Hair salon	3	0%
Marina/port/seacoast	3	0%
Ship/boat	2	0%
Park/recreational facility	1	0%
Religious site or church	1	0%
Other	142	14%
Multiple location types***	341	-
Unknown	471	-
Total	2163	137%

*Totals exceed the overall number of potential victims indicated as multiple location types may be indicated per potential victim

**Excludes "unknown" and "multiple location types"

***Where multiple unknown location types have been indicated

chapter 9: child victims

340 minors were indicated to the Helpline across 223 cases of modern slavery. The number of cases and potential victims below the age of 18 both increased, despite the overall reductions seen in 2023. 10% of all modern slavery cases indicated to the Helpline in 2023 involved minors.



Hammad's* story

Hammad, a teenager at the time, lacked a strong support system. He found a connection with Dev, an older boy offering friendship and a sense of belonging. They started meeting up in the park to smoke cannabis, and Hammad began to trust Dev. Knowing Hammad's family had financial struggles, Dev offered quick money in exchange for delivering drugs for him. Hoping to improve his circumstances, Hammad agreed.

With the initial promise of payment, Hammad delivered drugs across Birmingham for Dev, but instead of cash he was given cannabis. Dev then exploited this, demanding that Hammad continue working for him to pay back the supposed drug debt. When Hammad refused, Dev threatened his family. Feeling trapped, Hammad endured this exploitation for over a year until he was arrested. When he was released from custody, Hammad was hospitalised following a violent attack by Dev.

Hammad was facing drugs charges but had crucial evidence of the threats that had kept him compliant. With his solicitor's help, Hammad reached out to the Helpline.

A Helpline advisor, recognising the signs of criminal exploitation, explained the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the potential legal protection of statutory defence. The Helpline referred Hammad to the local police, urging them, as first responders, to enter him into the NRM. Soon after, the Helpline received confirmation that action was being taken by the police's child exploitation team.

*Some details changed to protect identity

Introduction

Whilst there are services dedicated to exclusively supporting children and young people, the Helpline still receives a meaningful number of contacts about situations involving minors. **3%** of all incoming calls, webforms and app submissions related to minors in 2023. Despite the overall drop in Helpline modern slavery cases and potential victims between 2022 and 2023, reports of minors in exploitative situations increased. 223 cases involving minors were raised by the Helpline, comprising **10%** of all modern slavery cases. This is a **5%** increase from **213** cases the previous year. As well as cases, potential victims below the age of 18 were also indicated in higher numbers; **340** up from **331** in 2022, a **3%** increase.

Table 51 – High-level overview 2022-2023

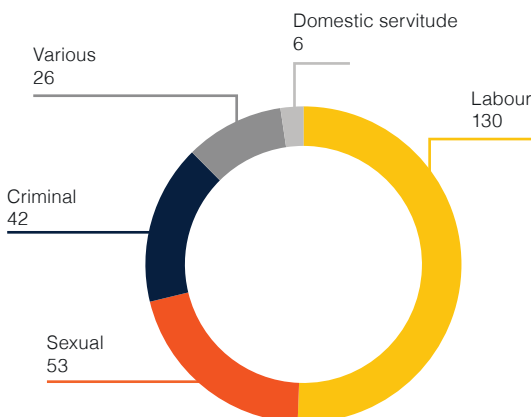
High-level	2022	2023	% 2023	% Change 2022 - 2023
Potential victims	331	340	10%	5%
Cases	213	223	6%	3%

Exploitation type

Minor potential victims were indicated across all four of the four main exploitation types. **Chart 40** illustrates the breakdown. **83** minors were reported as being in modern slavery situations, but the specific exploitation type was unknown. The breakdown by exploitation type mirrors the trends of adult victims, with the most common exploitation type being labour exploitation, with **130** minors reported. Excluding the **83** unknowns, this equates to over half of the minors (**51%**), exploited for labour. Although labour exploitation was also the most prevalent exploitation type for minors in 2022, there were **20%** more indicated in 2023.

In terms of the industries in which minors have reportedly been exploited, the picture differs considerably from

Chart 40 - Potential victims by exploitation type*



*Excludes "unknown"

situations involving adults. **Table 52** provides an overview of industries where minor potential victims have been indicated. Whilst the care sector was the most prevalent for adult potential victims, only **2** minors were indicated. Of the **130** minors in labour exploitation, the largest proportion of minors were reported in services, with **49** indicated. These situations tend to relate to car washes, the beauty industry or roles involving repairs and maintenance. The entertainment industry and the hospitality sector each had **16** minors indicated. Whilst the number of minors reported in the hospitality industry remained consistent with the previous year, instances of exploitation within entertainment grew significantly from **2** to **16 (700%)**.

The second most prevalent was sexual exploitation, with **53** minors indicated. This is a sizeable reduction since 2022's figures, with a **35%** dip from the **82** recorded. Criminal exploitation was the third most common, increasing by **31%** since the previous year from **32** to **42. 6** minors were indicated within situations of domestic servitude. **26** minors were reported within situations involving various exploitation types.

Table 52 – Potential victims by labour exploitation industry

Industry	Potential victims	% Potential victims*
Services	49	39%
Entertainment	16	13%
Hospitality	16	13%
Agriculture/farm	10	8%
Construction	10	8%
Logistics	6	5%
Manufacturing	5	4%
Maritime industry/boat/shipping	4	3%
Domestic work/au pair/nanny	3	2%
Care sector	2	2%
Janitorial/cleaning services	2	2%
Landscaping/gardening/tree surgery	1	1%
Retail	1	1%
Various	2	2%
Unknown	3	-

Total 130 100%

*Excludes "unknown"

Potential victim demographics

Of the **340** minors indicated in modern slavery in 2023, the gender of **133** was unknown. Where gender was known, **107** minor potential victims were reportedly female, comprising **52%**. The remaining **100** minors, comprising **48%**, were indicated as male. In 2022 the number of male minors exactly mirrored the number of female minors, however, in

2023 female minors have slightly overtaken males. **Table 53** provides a breakdown of minor potential victims, including differences within each exploitation. There are notable differences in gender prevalence between exploitation types for minors, mirroring the patterns seen when looking at all potential victims regardless of age, with sexual exploitation predominantly involving female minors and labour exploitation having a higher proportion of male minors.

Table 53 – Potential victims by gender and exploitation type

Type	% Female		% Male		Unknown	Total
	Female*	Male*	Female*	Male*		
Sexual	42	91%	4	9%	7	53
Labour	20	29%	49	71%	61	130
Criminal	9	29%	22	71%	11	42
Various	4	67%	2	33%	0	6
Domestic servitude	7	54%	6	46%	13	26
Unknown	25	60%	17	40%	41	83
Total	107	52%	100	48%	133	340

*Excludes "unknown"

Table 54 provides a detailed breakdown of minors in each exploitation type by specific age brackets. Looking at all exploitation types, the most common age bracket of minors is 16–17-year-olds, with **87** potential victims of these ages indicated. The 13–15 age bracket is slightly less prevalent, with **44** minors indicated and, finally, the 12 and under age bracket, with **22** minor potential victims indicated. Labour exploitation is the most prevalent exploitation type amongst all three of these age brackets. The 16–17 age bracket is the most common in sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation, and domestic servitude. This differs from 2022, when 13–15 was the most common in situations of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and domestic servitude.

Table 54 – Potential victims by age status and exploitation type

Type	<12	% <12	13–15	% 13–15*	16–17	% 16–17*	Unknown	Total
Sexual	1	10%	3	30%	6	60%	43	53
Labour	14	19%	20	28%	38	53%	58	130
Criminal	2	8%	7	27%	17	65%	16	42
Domestic servitude	2	33%	1	17%	3	50%	0	6
Various	1	9%	4	36%	6	55%	15	26
Unknown	2	7%	9	32%	17	61%	55	83
Total	22	14%	44	29%	87	57%	187	340

The top 10 nationalities of minors indicated in exploitation vary from the nationalities indicated in relation to all potential victims. **Table 55** provides a comparison between the top 10 overall potential victim nationalities and those of minors. Overall, Indian nationals were the most prevalent potential victims, however only **4** Indian minors were indicated in 2023. Turkey did not feature in the overall top 10 but was the most prevalent nationality of minors, with ten indicated. Equally prevalent were Vietnamese minors (**10**), who were also the fourth most prevalent nationality of overall potential victims. Romanian (**6**), Pakistani (**5**), Chinese (**4**), Indian (**4**), Albanian (**2**), Nigerian (**2**), Senegalese (**2**) and Sudanese (**2**)

Table 55 – Top 10 minor nationalities compared with overall potential victim nationalities

Nationality	Potential victims*	Nationality	Minor potential victims*
India	242	Turkey	10
Romania	157	Vietnam	10
Albania	115	Romania	6
Vietnam	95	Pakistan	5
China	84	China	4
Nigeria	83	India	4
Pakistan	82	Albania	2
Zimbabwe	77	Nigeria	2
Philippines	64	Senegal	2
Brazil	47	Sudan	2

*Excludes "unknown"

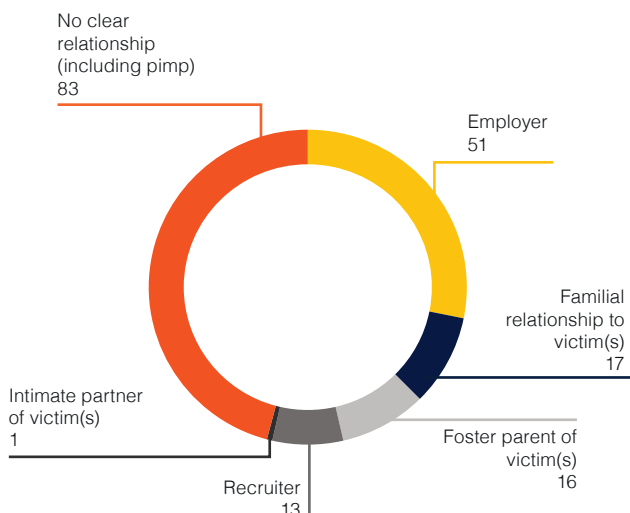
Recruitment tactics and exploiter to victim relationships

Whilst there are some similarities, the pre-existing relationships between potential exploiters and minor potential victims differ from those indicated in relation to overall modern slavery potential victims. **Chart 41** illustrates a breakdown.

The relationship was unknown in relation to **166** minors, however, excluding these unknowns, almost half (**46%, 83**) of

minors were indicated as being exploited by someone they had no clear relationship with, which also includes pimps in situations of sexual exploitation. This is a **41%** increase from **59** minors indicated with this exploiter relationship in 2022. More than a quarter (**28%, 51**) were reportedly exploited by their employers. The most significant change in 2023 was the **1500%** increase in the number of minors indicated as exploited by a foster parent, increasing from one potential victim in 2022 to **16**.

Chart 41 - Exploiter relationship to potential victims*

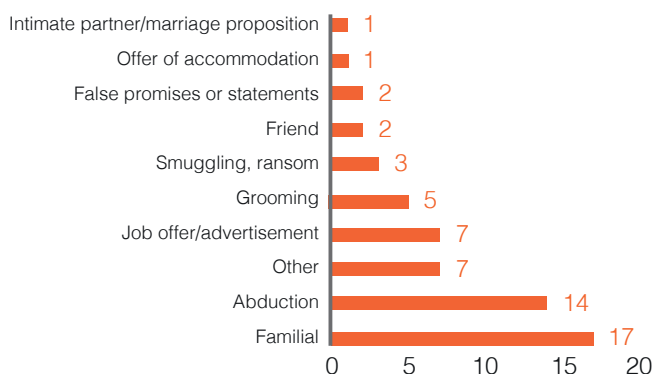


*Excludes "unknown"

Recruitment Tactics

The tactics used to recruit minors into exploitative situations also differ from those indicated in relation to overall modern slavery potential victims. **Chart 42** illustrates the prevalence of these recruitment tactics used on minors. The most common recruitment tactics indicated in relation to overall potential victims was through a job offer or advertisement, however when it comes to minors the most common recruitment method was the utilisation of a familial relationship, indicated **17** times. Following this was abduction, indicated **14** times.

Chart 42 – Potential victims by recruitment tactic*



*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple recruitment tactics may be indicated per potential victim
 **Excludes "unknown"

Control methods

Table 56 provides a breakdown of the most frequently reported control methods used to keep minors in exploitation, which correspond to those indicated in relation to adult potential victims. Excluding the **83** instances where control methods were unknown, almost half of the minor potential victims (**47%**) reportedly experience confinement or restricted movement, indicated **120** times. This is a considerable increase of **216%** from the **38** reports the previous year. Over a quarter of minors were said to have experienced financial control (**73, 28%**) and tied accommodation (**67, 26%**). Sexual abuse (**65, 25%**) and emotional abuse (**59, 23%**) complete the top five.

Table 56 – Potential victims by control method

Control method	Potential victims*	% Potential victims**
Confinement, restricted movement	120	47%
Financial control	73	28%
Tied accommodation	67	26%
Sexual abuse	65	25%
Emotional abuse – verbal/manipulation	59	23%
Monitoring	51	20%
Physical abuse	49	19%
Threat to harm subject, family or other	24	9%
Isolation	19	7%
Withheld/destroyed important documents	8	3%
Threat – other	5	2%
Induced substance abuse	5	2%
Cultural/familial/religious pressure or coercion	4	2%
Threat to abandon subject/make homeless	2	1%
Threat to report to police or immigration	2	1%
Other	64	25%
Unknown	83	-
Total	700	240%

*Total exceeds overall number of potential victims as multiple control methods may be indicated per potential victim
 ** Excludes "unknown"

chapter 10: emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities



“Unseen has been a vital member of our Modern Slavery Network during its relaunch period. The knowledge and insight they have brought has been invaluable in helping drive forward the work to end modern slavery in Merseyside. I’m proud to partner with them to raise awareness of this abhorrent crime across our region and encourage people to report to the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, knowing their trained, specialist advisors will be on hand to give people the right support and guidance.”

Emily Spurrell
Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

Since its inception, the Helpline has reported a year-on-year increase in the number of overall contacts it receives. 2023 is no exception. With the highest volume of incoming calls since the Helpline began in 2016, the continued need for an independent and confidential support and reporting mechanism for those in situations of exploitation is clear.

However, during 2023, the number of modern slavery cases dropped slightly. This could be an indication that more vulnerable people are contacting the Helpline with issues akin to modern slavery, rather than those assessed to meet the threshold. This could relate to several issues. Firstly, the changing policy landscape surrounding the UK Government's focus on reducing immigration may mean that more vulnerable people, who have no regularised status, contact the Helpline for support. Secondly, as a 24/7 Helpline, many vulnerable individuals will contact the Helpline when other support services are closed. Many of these callers also experience mental health challenges. For this reason, a directory of local, regional, and national services is vital to the operation of the Helpline. The ability to provide signposts and referrals to other more relevant services is crucial, both for the Helpline and for the vulnerable person concerned. The Helpline hopes to establish referral routes with local frontline services across the UK to ensure that all victims of modern slavery can access support, even those who become ineligible for the NRM due to the Illegal Migration Act.

Whilst 2023 saw a drop in overall modern slavery cases and potential victims reported to the Helpline, situations involving minors increased. The Helpline is contacted by a range of callers including parents, teachers, social workers and sometimes child victims directly. This rise in child victims specifically relates to increases within labour exploitation and criminal exploitation. Unseen continues to tackle this rising issue through awareness-raising campaigns, and the provision of tailored training to schools and local authorities.

Although the Helpline has seen a decrease in the number of modern slavery cases in 2023, there was still an increase in the number of labour abuse cases. Given that labour abuse is on a spectrum of exploitation, this is no surprise. Often, when cases are reported to the Helpline and an assessment is made based on the facts provided, new information may prompt a revised assessment by the Helpline to re-classify a case from labour abuse to modern slavery or vice versa. By re-classifying, the Helpline can ensure that the information held and the assessment provided is accurate and up-to-date.

And, despite an overall decrease in the number of modern slavery cases raised through the Helpline, care sector cases and the number of potential victims related to those situations are still on the rise. This has been a significant sector of concern throughout 2023, and continues to be so. The Helpline will be monitoring cases related to the care sector closely to establish whether there are any new or emerging trends arising from those reported. To increase

support for the sector and to ensure all parties involved in international recruitment through the health and social care visa are working collaboratively, Unseen is establishing a Care Hub. The Hub will provide an opportunity for partners to work together and seek practical solutions, particularly for those who are caught up in difficult and compromising situations through no fault of their own. The Hub will also provide an opportunity to monitor aggregate data from the cases indicated through the Helpline to help identify any new or emerging trends as early as possible.

The diversity of potential victims the Helpline indicates continues to proliferate with 106 different potential victim nationalities recorded in 2023. This is **7** more nationalities than indicated in 2022, and highlighting again that although the Helpline has indicated fewer potential victims throughout the year, the complexity and diversity of those needing support continues. The most prevalent victim nationality, indicated consistently since the Helpline was founded in 2016, has been Romanian. Variation has been seen for the first time in 2023, as exploitation of Indian nationals in the care sector has become pervasive.

We are also seeing a difference in the nationalities indicated in different types of exploitation. For example, in 2022, Thai nationals were the most exploited nationality in sexual exploitation; however, in 2023, this was Brazilian nationals. Additionally, the Helpline has seen an increase in the number of potential victims in sexual exploitation recruited through job offers or advertisements. Many of these will be online, highlighting the fact that easy access to vulnerable people through the internet can drive significant opportunity for exploiters.

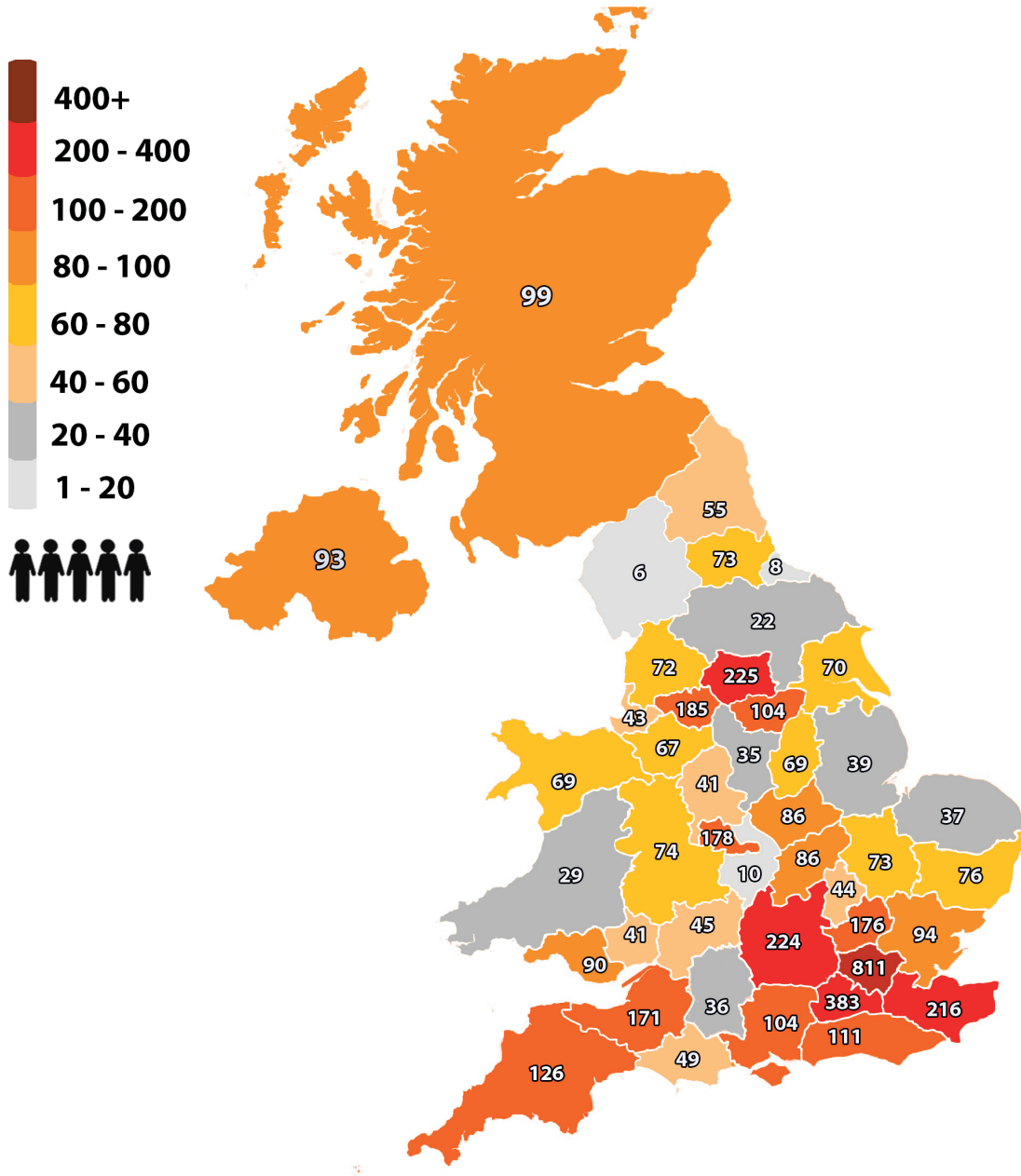
One of the lesser-known types of exploitation, and one that was not reported to the Helpline until 2022, is organ harvesting. Organ harvesting is an issue that has predominantly affected those in African and Asian communities. Vulnerable people are forced, coerced, or deceived into giving up one of their organs in the promise of receiving a cash payment. Sadly, for many, they may never receive the payment they were promised and can end up with lifelong complications from an operation they should never have had. In some situations, individuals may not even know why they are initially approached or befriended, and might be told a cover story to avoid them, and others, knowing the reality of what's in store. In 2023, the Helpline saw an increase in the number of these types of cases, which may be a very worrying trend and one that requires close monitoring.

As well as organ harvesting, forced scamming was also indicated to the Helpline for the first time in 2022. These cases often involve groups of individuals forced into participating in online scams to fraudulently gain funds from unsuspecting members of the public. These vary from scams involving cryptocurrencies to romance scams. Since this form of exploitation was first indicated to the Helpline in 2022, the number of cases and potential victims reported in

such situations, whilst still small, have more than doubled. Another worrying emerging trend is related to forced surrogacy. For the first time, cases of forced surrogacy have been indicated through the Helpline. Forced surrogacy often involves young women being coerced or forced to enter into an agreement to carry a child for another individual or couple, with the incentive of receiving cash in return.

Partnership working is essential to effectively tackle the insidious issue of modern slavery. As well as adding to the list of support organisations the Helpline can refer to, work is ongoing to expand the pool from which information is received into the Helpline. In 2023, the Helpline supported the development of modern slavery training for NHS England's safeguarding leads, promoting the Helpline as a reporting mechanism and resource to be utilised by professionals needing advice. Unseen also redeveloped its app towards the end of 2023, and aims to roll this out across police forces, local authorities, and other organisations to further embed partnership working.

Modern slavery victims by UK police force region



Modern slavery cases (MS) and potential victims (PVs) * by exploitation type and UK police force region*

Police Force Region	2023		Exploitation Types						
	MS Cases	MS PVs	Labour	Sexual	Criminal	Domestic	Other	Various	Unknown
ENGLAND (total) **	1073	3508	506	188	139	75	17	57	91
Avon & Somerset Constabulary	53	171	23	5	9	3	2	3	8
Bedfordshire Police	19	44	9	2	2	2	0	2	2
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	19	73	12	2	2	0	1	1	1
Cheshire Constabulary	16	67	12	2	0	0	0	0	2
Cleveland Police	5	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
Cumbria Constabulary	4	6	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Derbyshire Constabulary	16	35	7	3	3	2	0	1	0
Devon & Cornwall Police	28	126	13	8	1	1	1	0	4
Dorset Police	10	49	5	3	2	0	0	0	0
Durham Police	7	73	6	0	0	0	0	1	0
Essex Police	41	94	25	3	3	4	1	2	3
Gloucestershire Constabulary	15	45	7	4	1	0	0	2	1
Greater Manchester Police	52	185	26	8	6	2	0	3	7
Hampshire Constabulary	31	104	14	6	6	0	0	1	4
Hertfordshire Constabulary	15	176	8	0	0	2	1	2	2
Humberside Police	17	70	8	5	0	0	0	1	3
Kent Police	50	216	29	5	8	1	1	0	6
Lancashire Constabulary	27	72	17	4	1	1	2	1	1
Leicestershire Police	18	86	15	2	0	0	0	0	1
Lincolnshire Police	11	39	7	1	1	1	0	1	0
Merseyside Police	27	43	8	8	9	1	0	0	1
Metropolitan Police Service	259	811	84	58	40	33	2	21	21
Norfolk Constabulary	11	37	9	0	1	0	0	0	1
North Yorkshire Police	11	22	4	3	1	0	0	1	2
Northamptonshire Police	9	86	5	2	0	0	1	0	1
Northumbria Police	24	55	7	7	6	0	0	2	2
Nottinghamshire Police	22	69	9	5	2	2	0	2	2
South Yorkshire Police	28	104	14	9	2	1	0	2	0
Staffordshire Police	21	41	10	3	3	2	0	1	2
Suffolk Constabulary	16	76	11	1	2	0	1	1	0
Surrey Police	30	383	22	4	0	0	0	1	3
Sussex Police	45	111	18	6	10	3	1	3	4
Thames Valley Police	55	224	34	6	8	4	0	1	2
Warwickshire Police	6	10	3	1	0	0	0	1	1
West Mercia Police	12	74	9	1	1	0	0	1	0
West Midlands Police	67	178	22	12	10	5	2	7	9
West Yorkshire Police	62	225	33	9	5	5	1	7	2
Wiltshire Police	12	36	10	1	0	0	0	0	1
SCOTLAND (total)	52	99	23	11	6	1	1	5	5
Scotland Police	52	99	23	11	6	1	1	5	5
WALES (total)	41	151	21	6	6	0	0	6	2
Dyfed Powys Police	6	29	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gwent Police	6	41	4	0	1	0	1	1	0
North Wales Police	13	69	5	1	3	0	0	2	0
South Wales Police	19	90	8	5	3	0	1	1	1
NORTHERN IRELAND (total)	11	93	7	1	0	1	0	2	0
Police Service of Northern Ireland	11	93	7	1	0	1	0	2	0

*Sum of table may differ from the total number of modern slavery cases/potential victims as some cases spanned multiple police force regions.

**37 cases, involving 51 potential victims, were reported to occur within England, but the police force region was unknown.

Modern slavery (MS) potential victim demographics by UK police force region*

Police Force Region	Total PVs	Adult				Minor			Unknown			
		Male	Female	Transgender	Female	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown	Male	Female	Transgender
ENGLAND (total)**	3508	628	496	1	344	52	73	50	285	365	1	1213
Avon & Somerset Constabulary	171	13	49	0	35	8	1	0	17	15	0	33
Bedfordshire Police	44	8	5	0	0	2	1	0	6	0	0	22
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	73	10	20	0	13	0	0	2	4	4	0	20
Cheshire Constabulary	67	8	7	0	2	2	0	2	3	13	0	30
Cleveland Police	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	2
Cumbria Constabulary	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derbyshire Constabulary	35	9	7	0	7	0	1	0	0	2	0	9
Devon & Cornwall Police	126	7	17	0	37	1	1	0	25	7	0	31
Dorset Police	49	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	34
Durham Police	73	2	1	0	60	0	0	0	6	0	0	4
Essex Police	94	11	11	0	8	2	2	2	8	8	0	42
Gloucestershire Constabulary	45	9	8	0	14	1	0	0	4	3	0	6
Greater Manchester Police	185	47	13	0	15	5	7	6	12	11	0	69
Hampshire Constabulary	104	11	8	0	13	0	1	9	14	20	0	28
Hertfordshire Constabulary	176	5	12	0	63	0	1	1	4	4	0	86
Humberside Police	70	6	6	0	1	0	4	1	10	6	0	36
Kent Police	216	17	23	0	27	0	2	4	21	11	0	111
Lancashire Constabulary	72	13	5	0	10	2	2	3	5	19	0	13
Leicestershire Police	86	19	5	1	22	0	1	0	15	10	0	13
Lincolnshire Police	39	13	2	0	0	0	0	2	9	5	0	8
Merseyside Police	43	7	6	0	0	1	1	1	2	4	0	21
Metropolitan Police Service	811	120	143	0	8	7	25	7	35	85	0	381
Norfolk Constabulary	37	7	2	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	23
North Yorkshire Police	22	4	4	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	10
Northamptonshire Police	86	6	4	0	67	0	1	0	0	3	0	5
Northumbria Police	55	10	3	0	1	0	4	0	3	22	1	11
Nottinghamshire Police	69	8	5	0	6	0	1	0	0	9	0	40
South Yorkshire Police	104	22	19	0	6	0	3	2	8	15	0	29
Staffordshire Police	41	12	7	0	1	0	1	1	1	6	0	12
Suffolk Constabulary	76	18	18	0	15	2	3	0	3	14	0	3
Surrey Police	383	84	24	0	1	3	2	5	7	4	0	253
Sussex Police	111	50	10	0	3	5	1	1	8	14	0	19
Thames Valley Police	224	30	21	0	24	4	11	1	16	18	0	99
Warwickshire Police	10	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
West Mercia Constabulary	74	11	3	0	2	0	1	0	2	5	0	50
West Midlands Police	178	32	29	0	5	3	0	0	33	23	0	53
West Yorkshire Police	225	45	34	0	14	8	3	2	24	24	0	71
Wiltshire Constabulary	36	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
WALES (total)	151	28	32	0	6	2	1	5	15	27	0	33
Dyfed Powys Police	29	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	21	0	2
Gwent Police	41	2	8	0	1	0	0	0	8	20	0	2
North Wales Police	69	16	10	0	7	0	0	3	3	21	0	9
South Wales Police	90	18	20	0	0	2	1	2	5	22	0	20
SCOTLAND (total)	99	25	10	0	0	2	6	2	8	7	0	39
Scotland Police	99	25	10	0	0	2	6	2	8	7	0	39
NORTHERN IRELAND (total)	93	3	8	0	57	6	2	3	1	3	0	10
Police Service of Northern Ireland	93	3	8	0	57	6	2	3	1	3	0	10

*Sum of table may differ from the total number of modern slavery potential victims as some victims may have been exploited across multiple police force regions.


**51 potential victims were reported to have been exploited in England in cases where the police force region was unknown.

Referrals on cases* by UK police force region*

Police Force Region	Law Enforcement	Local Authority	Government	NGO	GLAA
ENGLAND (total) **	1047	25	240	11	85
Avon & Somerset Constabulary	41	1	14	3	7
Bedfordshire Police	13	1	3	0	1
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	17	1	4	0	0
Cheshire Constabulary	22	0	4	0	0
Cleveland Police	3	2	0	0	0
Cumbria Constabulary	2	0	0	0	2
Derbyshire Constabulary	22	1	3	0	2
Devon & Cornwall Constabulary	31	2	6	0	3
Dorset Police	22	0	4	0	0
Durham Constabulary	13	0	2	0	0
Essex Police	34	1	8	2	2
Gloucestershire Constabulary	16	0	2	0	0
Greater Manchester Police	54	1	12	0	3
Hampshire Constabulary	38	0	7	0	1
Hertfordshire Constabulary	27	0	5	1	4
Humberside Police	24	0	0	0	0
Kent Police	56	1	9	0	3
Lancashire Constabulary	25	1	5	0	2
Leicestershire Constabulary	17	0	9	0	2
Lincolnshire Police	15	0	3	0	3
Merseyside Police	25	0	1	1	0
Metropolitan Police Service	251	5	52	6	12
Norfolk Constabulary	11	1	4	0	2
North Yorkshire Police	11	0	5	0	0
Northamptonshire Police	13	1	2	0	1
Northumbria Police	23	0	7	0	1
Nottinghamshire Police	21	2	6	0	3
South Yorkshire Police	33	0	5	0	3
Staffordshire Police	27	0	5	0	3
Suffolk Constabulary	13	0	3	0	3
Surrey Police	27	0	4	0	4
Sussex Police	35	0	3	0	1
Thames Valley Police	60	2	15	0	7
Warwickshire Police	6	0	1	0	0
West Mercia Constabulary	22	0	7	0	3
West Midlands Police	84	1	16	0	4
West Yorkshire Police	64	2	10	0	6
Wiltshire Constabulary	23	1	4	0	2
SCOTLAND (total)	51	0	5	1	3
Scotland Police	51	0	5	1	3
WALES (total)	52	0	4	0	6
Dyfed Powys Police	12	0	0	0	0
Gwent Police	14	0	1	0	2
North Wales Police	17	0	1	0	1
South Wales Police	27	0	2	0	3
NORTHERN IRELAND (total)	17	0	2	0	1
Police Service of Northern Ireland	17	0	3	0	1

*Includes case types: modern slavery, labour abuse, non-modern slavery

**The sum of table may differ from the total number of referrals as some cases spanned multiple police force regions.



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