

STOP THE TRAFFIK
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



Labour Exploitation in the Fenlands

*An overview of the exploitation of migrant
workers in Peterborough and Surrounding Areas.*



2018

STOP THE TRAFFIK

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Labour Exploitation in Cambridgeshire

Every country, regardless of its level of economic development, is affected by human trafficking and modern slavery. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2016 estimated that there are around 40.3 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, with almost 62% subjected to labour exploitation.

Perpetrators trick people with false promises of a better life, well-paid jobs, education, and comfortable accommodation. In reality, victims are forced to work long hours for little or no pay and usually live in squalid, overcrowded conditions.

Intelligence reports have identified the Fenlands as a hotspot for labour exploitation. The current report focuses on the situation in Peterborough and surrounding areas.

What Happens to Victims

Victims are often foreign nationals, usually (but not always) exploited by people of the same nationality. British people can be victims too. These individuals can work as much as 12 hours a day, 7 days per week. They are not allowed to take days off or refuse shifts, as this will jeopardise their chances of getting future work. Traffickers do not pay the national minimum wage and often pay under the counter, sometimes £1 per hour or even less. In some cases, people hold a legitimate job but are forced to pay some of their salary to their traffickers.

Traffickers control victims in multiple ways. They frequently charge high amounts for transport, give extortionate loans for food, place victims in overcrowded accommodation and threaten them with homelessness. Victims are stuck in a loop of dependency with their traffickers. Rent, deposits, and bills are collected in advance, leaving individuals in debt bondage. Moreover, documents, credit cards, and cash are taken from victims. These forms of control are often linked to physical abuse and force victims to rely on traffickers for everything.

How It Happens

Victims tend to be deceived in their home country, usually through nonviolent actions and the promise of a 'better life'. People have the false belief that they need to pay to enter the UK and they are convinced to pay recruitment agencies and other individuals to find them work and a place to live.

Once they reach the UK, victims are placed in crowded housing while they wait for work. They often do not speak English so the traffickers fill in important forms, such as health and safety questionnaires, on their behalf. Victims' identities and documents are stolen and national insurance numbers are often duplicated.

Where It Happens



Victims can be exploited in:

- Factories (e.g. food factories)
- Recycling Plants
- Skip Hire
- Fields (e.g. flower and vegetable picking)
- Car washes
- Building sites (sub-contracted construction sites)
- Shops

Designated locations, such as petrol stations, are often used as pick up points.

Spot the Signs

It is worth reporting anything that looks suspicious and it is not necessary to be certain that something is actually modern slavery before doing so. However, you can use the following signs of labour exploitation as a guideline.

Spot the Signs of Labour Exploitation

- Do workers show signs of psychological or physical abuse? Do they appear frightened, withdrawn or confused?
- Do workers have restricted movement on leaving or entering the premises?
- Are workers forced to stay in accommodation provided by the employer? Is the accommodation overcrowded?
- Do you see a lot of workers leaving the same house in the morning, and then returning together in the evening?
- Are workers forced to give incorrect information or claim to not know personal details?
- Is the employer or somebody other than the worker holding the employee's passport and legal documents?
- Do workers lack the necessary protective equipment or suitable clothing? Have they received basic training?
- Is there a group of workers of a similar nationality/age/gender who have a representative by whom they appear 'coached'?
- When they withdraw money, do they immediately give it to someone else?

References

¹International Labour Organization (ILO) (2017). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. Geneva, September 2017.

ACCESS supporting migrants in East Anglia - <http://www.accessmigrantsupport.org.uk/>

Fenland District Council - <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/>

Rosmini Centre Wisbech - <https://www.rosminicentrewisbech.org/>

Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the United Kingdom - <https://uk.mfa.lt/uk/en/>

This report is a result of information sharing between STOP THE TRAFFIK and local agencies in the Fenlands, including financial institutions, law enforcement, local government and NGOs. For more information about the CfILP visit www.stopthetraffik.org



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