



HOMELESS PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF FALSE AND DANGEROUS JOB OFFERS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

**REPORT ON THE GREATER MANCHESTER HOMELESSNESS
AND EXPLOITATION SURVEY
AUTUMN 2019**

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STOP THE TRAFFIK.
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



Challenger

Tackling serious and
organised crime **together**

GMCA GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

WELCOME

A project like this would have been impossible without the partnerships we have made across Greater Manchester. We are grateful for all the organisations who provided advice and support in our planning and who facilitated the dissemination of the survey amongst the communities they support. Above all, we would like to thank all those individuals that shared their time and experience to complete the survey.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between January and March 2019, a survey consisting of eight questions on the subject of exploitation was carried out with 180 people who are rough sleeping, homeless, or accessing homeless services across Greater Manchester. The survey was designed by STOP THE TRAFFIK in consultation with Street Support and The Passage and was conducted by multi agency partners including charities, local authority, health and Greater Manchester Police.

The survey sought to establish what homeless people in Greater Manchester experience or witness regarding being targeted for exploitation: being offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work instead of proper wages, or having wages withheld that had been promised to them.

The survey also gave an opportunity for homeless people to share additional information or describe experiences relating to exploitation and abuse; the key quotes and information from each area are included in the report. No personal or identifying data about the respondents was collected and, for the purpose of this report, any sensitive information shared regarding businesses, names of potential exploiters or locations have been redacted.

OF THE 180 HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER:



29%

had experienced being offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work



32%

had witnessed or heard of it happening to someone else



21%

had concerns over how safe or genuine these offers were



22%

had warned someone, or been warned, not to take a job offer from particular people or groups



17%

had known someone to go missing after taking up an offer of work



24%

had not been paid wages that were promised to them after doing work

2. BACKGROUND

Human Trafficking in adults is defined as the movement or recruitment of people for the purpose of exploitation by means of deception, force or coercion. For under 18s it is defined simply as the movement or recruitment of people for the purpose of exploitation; no means of deception, coercion or force need be present as a child cannot give their consent.

Trafficking can happen just within the locality where someone lives, or they may be moved around their own country or they may be moved across international borders. Someone becomes a victim of modern slavery when they are forced, deceived or coerced into a position of exploitation, without the initial act of recruitment or movement taking place.

Victims can be of any nationality and background, although traffickers will often target people who have pre-existing vulnerabilities. There are a wide range of exploitative situations victims can find themselves in; from forced labour, to sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation, organ harvesting and forced sham marriages, adoptions or surrogacies. Many victims will find they are exploited in multiple ways once they are controlled by their trafficker and seeking help will be difficult for a wide range of complex reasons.

STOP THE TRAFFIK (STT) is a global organisation, working strategically and systemically to prevent human trafficking. The intelligence-led prevention model works to build partnerships with businesses, financial services organisations, law enforcement agencies and civil society to raise awareness and ultimately stop human trafficking.

STOP THE TRAFFIK is commissioned to provide a Modern Slavery Network coordinator based in Programme Challenger's Modern Slavery Coordination unit, as part of Greater Manchester's partnership response to tackling serious and organised crime. Across the UK, and in Greater Manchester, professionals working in the area of modern slavery often hear stories of how victims were first approached by their traffickers whilst they were begging on the street or accessing services such as soup kitchens. Promising to help with offers of paid work, somewhere to stay, drugs or alcohol, the traffickers would then abuse and exploit their victims, sometimes for many years and often involving movement all around the country or even abroad.

This report seeks to directly collect stories and information from homeless people themselves and to provide a springboard for further research and action into the issue in Greater Manchester.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 SURVEY OBJECTIVES



TO BUILD A BASELINE PICTURE

To build a baseline picture of what homeless people themselves experience and witness regarding being targeted for exploitation.



TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

To support and give evidence to what professionals working in the area of modern slavery response are already saying.



TO SHARE INTELLIGENCE

To share the findings with relevant agencies for intelligence purposes, safeguarding and disruption opportunities.



TO INFORM FUTURE CAMPAIGNS

To share the findings with key partners and stakeholders in order to create a co-designed campaign in the future with, and for, homeless people to:

- **Raise awareness**
- **Increase reporting**
- **Increase safeguarding and disruption opportunities.**

3.2 SURVEY PARTNERS

The coordinator sought advice from [Street Support](#) in Greater Manchester to advise on the wording of the questions, along with London based homeless charity [The Passage](#). The survey plan was discussed at the Modern Slavery NGO forum, Programme Challenger theme group meetings, and with representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority working on Homelessness.

The following organisations were involved in delivering the survey, collecting responses either on paper forms or via an online Survey Monkey link:

CHARITIES

- Booth Centre (Manchester)
- De Paul (Manchester and Rochdale)
- Lifeshare (Manchester)
- MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health)
- Barnabus (Manchester)

- The Brick (Wigan)
- Urban Outreach (Bolton)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Rough Sleepers Team (Tameside)

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- Greater Manchester Police (Trafford, Bury, Manchester, Wigan)

HEALTH

- Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust (Wigan)

The survey was open for a total of three months (January – March 2019) but most of the surveys were completed by multi-agency partners during a National Crime Agency intensification week in February 2019. Sincere thanks are given to all those who took the time to deliver the survey with their clients and service users.

3.3 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1: Whilst homeless or rough sleeping have you ever been offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work?

Q2: Have you ever seen or heard of someone else who is homeless or rough sleeping being offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work?

Q3: If yes to either Q1 or Q2, did you have any concerns over how safe the offer was?

Q4: Whilst homeless or rough sleeping, have you ever been warned, or warned someone yourself, not to take a job offer from a particular person or group of people?

Q5: Have you ever known a homeless person to go missing after taking up a job offer?

Q6: Have you, or anyone you know, not been paid wages that were promised to you after doing work?

Q7: Who would you tell if you knew a particular person or group were targeting people who were homeless with suspicious job offers?

Q8: Which area of Greater Manchester are you currently in?

4. SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 GREATER MANCHESTER

180 rough sleepers or people accessing homeless support services completed the survey across Greater Manchester.

A comparison between the results from the City of Manchester and the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities is given below:

All responses	City of Manchester (28 responses)	Other 9 local authorities (149 responses)	
29%	46%	26%	had experienced being offered food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol in return for work
32%	50%	43%	had witnessed or heard of it happening to someone else
21%	46%	16%	had concerns over how safe or genuine these offers were
22%	43%	17%	had warned someone, or been warned, not to take job offers from particular people or groups
17%	18%	26%	had known someone go missing after taking up an offer of work
24%	43%	21%	had not been paid wages that were promised to them after doing work

4.2 CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNING FROM SURVEY RESULTS

1. BEING OFFERED SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR WORK

Almost a third of the survey respondents have experienced and witnessed being offered something other than proper wages in return for work. In some of the situations described, the homeless person was happy with the arrangement;

"[I've been offered work] I got a room, food, and a bit of money so I was happy with it."

"[I was] offered money for lifting boxes and emptying the back of a truck for £60, I got paid, felt safe."

In other examples however, there are clear indications of exploitation taking place, despite the homeless person accepting the situation;

"Cars drive round in early summer offering land jobs down south, people know they won't get money for it, but they will get somewhere to sleep and a bottle of wine at the end of each day. People are pissed so they are happy with it, they don't mind."

"[Client] did some work at ----- -- Nightclub picking needles up and cleaning the floors and moving the wet duvets. Got paid £10 and a can of Dark Fruits. He said he's going to go again."

10.

"In 2018, I sold drugs (cocaine, weed) in order to be accommodated for a couple of months. When I met my girlfriend, I left the accommodation."

In these three examples, respondents were targeted and recruited precisely due to their vulnerability caused by their homelessness or issues with addiction.

2. WAGES WITHHELD

Almost one quarter of the respondents were promised actual wages, but never received them even after completing the work, with one person commenting,

"This happens all the time to me and people I know, we're easy to just not pay."

3. MOST VULNERABLE

Eastern European homeless people were described in two accounts as particularly vulnerable due to language barriers;

"[I've] seen Eastern Europeans not being paid... I was staying with [traffickers] - they couldn't understand the language so were getting exploited."

"[Being offered food or accommodation instead of wages] happens mostly to European homeless."

Whereas young people were highlighted as being more at risk by another respondent, due to their lack of experience;

"It might happen to younger people but us older ones would be too wise to it."

Gender was also a significant factor, with two separate female rough sleepers reporting that,

"[I've been asked] to work in a brothel - regularly - from many people whilst on the streets."

"[People offer food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol to me] all the time - everyone who is rough sleeping gets asked to sex work or prostitute themselves."

4. GOING MISSING

The survey asked if respondents knew of a homeless person going missing after taking up an offer of work. There is an obvious challenge with this question; as one respondent put it;

"There's lots of moving around anyway so it would be hard to know."

However, 17% of the respondents answered yes, they did know someone who had gone missing. This shows an awareness that something suspicious or potentially dangerous had happened, rather than that someone had just "moved on".

"Lots [go missing] especially around Piccadilly."

5. REPORTING

21% of respondents said they would tell the police if they knew about groups or individuals targeting homeless people with false or dangerous job offers, 14% said they would tell staff at a charity or outreach service. It is important therefore that frontline staff are trained in how to respond and pass on any information and concerns shared by homeless people.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the results show that the homeless population are experiencing high levels of attempts at recruitment via irregular means, which are often posed as offers of help. Although not every situation turns out to be exploitative, the potential is there due to the innate vulnerabilities linked to the need for accommodation and food, compounded by language barriers, youth, inexperience, or addictions.

The fact that 21% of the respondents had concerns over how safe or genuine these offers of help were and that 22% had warned someone else or (been warned themselves) not to take a particular job offer shows that there is already a certain level of awareness on the risks of exploitation within the homeless community.

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5. KEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Despite the challenges and limitations of the survey, there is enough evidence gathered to suggest that many homeless people do experience being targeted for exploitation or are aware of this happening to others.

The survey at present has not been conducted on a scale large enough to be truly representative of the homeless population for Greater Manchester. Instead it provides a snapshot from which to build future campaigns and interventions. In order to build a more accurate picture the survey could be:

- Carried out with more non-English speakers via translators or services with multi-lingual staff, particularly in Eastern European languages, as they featured as potential victims in several accounts.
- Targeted in areas with low/no responses recorded.
- Interviews and surveys with staff and volunteers who work in homelessness or Modern Slavery response would also collate a more informed picture of what is already known across Greater Manchester.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Some agencies are delivering crisis services for homeless people who would not be in the position to respond to a survey, or it would not be appropriate to ask them questions unrelated to their pressing need. An example would be when STOP THE TRAFFIK visited a city centre drop in where people who had just arrived in Manchester were urgently seeking help and others had lost Methadone prescriptions and were in a state of panic. The survey worked better

where people had a very basic level of stability or were regularly accessing support and had time to reflect and share their experiences.

- The quality of the relationship between the person asking the questions and the homeless person very likely played a part in the honesty of the answers. For example, some comments included, “none of your business”, “it’s nothing to do with you” or “refused to answer”. It is most likely that the most comprehensive and honest answers were in situations where there was already a level of trust and relationship between the homeless person and the person conducting the survey. However, these are often also the places where staff and volunteer time is already very stretched, staff are responding to other urgent needs and the survey understandably could not take priority. It was very useful therefore to have a focused ‘week of action’ in order to drive multi-agency engagement with the survey.
- In consultation with our partners, the survey was designed to be unintrusive in order to maximise engagement and reassure participants to disclose. No personal information was collected and no rigorous sampling methodology was carried out beyond the convenience sample of those identifying as having a personal experience of homelessness and accessing one of GM’s homeless services. The findings presented are therefore not statistically representative of any larger homeless population in Greater Manchester.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SURVEY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Conduct a survey with staff and volunteers working in the homeless sector in Greater Manchester to collate a picture of what they see and know regarding homeless people being targeted for exploitation.

2. IMPROVE INFORMATION SHARING

In partnership with homeless services, devise ways for agencies to regularly and systematically collect and share information on the current, potential and historic exploitation of homeless people for trafficking and modern slavery.

3. MORE TRAINING

Provide or coordinate further and ongoing training for staff and volunteers working in the Homeless sector- particularly around signs

and indicators, safeguarding referral pathways, reporting mechanisms including the Greater Manchester Modern Slavery Coordination Unit, the Modern Slavery helpline, Duty to Notify forms and the STOP APP, and support mechanisms for victims (NRM provision via the Salvation Army plus local options such as the City Hearts drop ins).

4. CO-DESIGN A CAMPAIGN TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE FROM EXPLOITATION

Bring key stakeholders together to co-design a campaign to increase the level of awareness around exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking within the homeless community- particularly around what to look out for, where to get help and how to share information.

APPENDIX A: FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

- Understanding and Responding to Modern Slavery in the Homeless sector
<http://passage.org.uk/540927-2/the-passage-anti-slavery-document-for-web-24-01-17/>
- Modern Slavery and Homelessness
<https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk>
- Homelessness code of guidance for Local Authorities: Chapter 25 Modern Slavery and Trafficking
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-25-modern-slavery-and-trafficking>