HTMS Ambassador Programme

HTMS on our doorstep

To mark Anti-Slavery Week 2024, CSAN together with the Catholic BIshops' Conference of England & Wales (CBCEW) and St Mary's University, Twickenham, hosted a webinar entitled 'Modern Slavery On Our Doorstep'. We heard from 3 expert speakers working in this field to examine how close this evil trade is to our own doorsteps and what we can do to liberate victims and help survivors.

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Fr Mark Odion spoke about how HTMS victims are 'hidden in plain sight' in our communities, whether it be in restaurants, factories or local homes. There is a lack of awareness and understanding about HTMS and its prevalence in our communities as well as the many forms it can take.

You can view Fr Mark's presentation online at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6mhF4gJL3k&t=6s

BRITISH VICTIMS OF HTMS

Carole Murphy, a Professor of Sociology and Applied Research at St Mary's University and Director of the Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation, and Abuse, presented on British victims of HTMS and missed opportunities to prevent, identify and protect them.

There is a failure to recognise British victims of HTMS as it is often considered to be linked with migration and something that happens to 'others'. However, there is a reported increase of British victims, with the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) recording 819 in 2017 and increarsing to 3,952 in 2021. In 2023, British nationals were the most referred into the system.

Professor Murphy's research found many missed opportunities to prevent exploitation by looking at the insecure environments British victims find themselves in. Additionally, statutory agencies such as the police, social services and health professionals, as well as the local authorities, need to be trained and aware of HTMS so they can identify victims and take action to protect them to prevent further exploitation and harm, and support them to prevent further exploitaion.

You can view Professor Murphy's presentation online at:
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMpT136MNdw&t=32s

caritas
social
action
network

SUPPORTING HTMS SURVIVORS IN THE UK

Ben Ryan, the Deputy CEO at Medaille Trust, one of the leading Catholic charities fighting modern slavery, spoke about how victims are referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the support they receive thereafter by charities such as Medaille Trust.

Ben also spoke about the delays within the NRM and the lengthy time taken to receive a decision, how it impacts individuals, as well as the move-on suport required following a decision.

Ben noted the biggest challenge to be the task of rebuilding people who have often been physically, mentally and spiriually damaged by their exploiation,especially when they may have been exploited or sold into trafficking by a family member or loved one.

You can view Ben's presentation online at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t-2MyeCDcg

BE AWARE

British victims can be of any age and background but there are gangs targeting youth and it is important to be aware of this and how it may impact them:

- It is important to be aware that young people can be coerced and controlled to commit criminal acts.
- Try not to make assumptions based on young people's behaviour as they may be acting out to cover up their their fears due to ongoing exploitaion.
- Pay attention to people in general who look vulnerable and out of place .
- If you suspect someone to be at risk, call the police or the HTMS helpline (numbers below).

If you are concerned about someone, seek help:
You are never wasting anyone's time if you raise concerns about possible harm.

If it is an emergency, call **999**

If you wish to report a crime anonymously, you may call **Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111**

You can also report any concerns to the **UK modern slavery and exploitation helpline**, a free 24-hour helpline where you will be able to discuss your concerns, receive advice and support.

You may call the helpline on: **08000 121 700** or you may visit the website and report your concerns online at **https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/**