

Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery Ambassador Programme



Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery (HTMS) is one of the world's most profitable crimes and is steadily growing. It impacts every country and targets victims of all ages and backgrounds. HTMS is often regarded as a 'hidden crime' as it is difficult to collect data on victims and criminal gangs, but we can all do our part to ensure our communities are safeguarded.

The first thing we must do in helping the fight against HTMS is to educate ourselves – what is HTMS, how does it impact individuals and what can we do to help safeguard potential victims and support survivors? This in turn allows us to raise awareness within our communities to ensure everyone understands the many facets of HTMS and what they can do to combat it, including how to spot the signs.

If each individual takes just one action, together we can safeguard our communities and help fight HTMS in England & Wales. To assist communities to take action, we would like to suggest that each diocese consider introducing a HTMS Awareness Ambassador programme. The programme will only work with diocesan support.



Who are HTMS Ambassadors?

Caritas Arundel & Brighton has a Modern Slavery Awareness Ambassador programme that it runs together with other faith groups across the diocese, and we are looking to replicate this model across England & Wales.

Ambassadors are volunteers who undergo training so that they are equipped to present on HTMS topics in parishes, community centres, schools and at any other institutions or events where the opportunity may arise.

Ambassadors will ideally be supported by a diocesan team in their work, to ensure they receive the necessary education and training on topics related to HTMS, including how to spot the signs, so that they are fully equipped and confident to speak to others. Ambassadors may work in partnership with other organisations also raising awareness of HTMS, and are charged with disseminating information to church and community in whatever manner they deem appropriate, including via anti-HTMS events and campaigns.

Ambassadors are vital for community engagement in the fight against HTMS, but the role is voluntary. There is flexibility as to how an Ambassador works and carries out their role, depending on the approach of the diocese.

How to set up an Ambassador programme in your diocese

Dioceses interested in the programme may reach out to CSAN for support, however, there are first steps which can be taken within the diocese to gauge interest and gather an initial group of interested individuals. The following are actions which may be taken, and may act as guidance for diocese:

- Promote the programme across your parishes – engage with priests and deacons to explain the importance of the programme and involve them in promotions.
- Direct interested individuals to a focal point at the diocese to develop a contact database and arrange a meeting to discuss their interest, motivation and next steps.
- Conduct a skills audit of the interested individuals, identify availability and locality, and confirm training required.
- Assign a lead volunteer to act as coordinator / liaison between volunteers and the steering group / diocese (see below section).
- Identify key dates/celebrations/events (HTMS related), throughout the year to be marked, including community events, for example Feast of St Josephine Bakhita on 08 February.
- Identify opportunities to speak at events, community centres, libraries etc and connect with the relevant people.
- Arrange for regular catch-ups for volunteers as a form of peer-support/ knowledge-sharing/listening circle.

We encourage ambassador groups to be all-inclusive, inviting interested people of other faiths or secular groups to join, but recognise that this may depend upon the region.

Steering Group & Lead Coordinator

A lead coordinator is vital to the project – they will act as liaison between the volunteers and the diocese. The lead coordinator is also a voluntary role but will take on the responsibility of managing volunteers and ensuring they have the necessary support and resources required for their role. The lead coordinator should also be part of the steering group.

A steering group is beneficial to the programme as it will allow individuals from local anti-slavery groups/partnerships, the local authority, the police, and other interested parties to come together and share intelligence to help guide the ambassadors in their outreach and shape their work so it is specific to the local area, thus allowing for maximum interest and involvement.

It is advised to include members from the local authority and the police as part of the steering group, as this will allow for partnership working and the sharing of resources. Their involvement will also provide updated local information on HTMS strategies and targets, which the ambassador project may be able to support.

Safeguarding

Diocesan safeguarding officers have been informed about the ambassador programme and it is recommended that anyone interested in developing a programme speak to their safeguarding officer and involve them in its development. It is important that ambassadors know the safeguarding staff and are able to speak to them should they have any concerns.

As part of safeguarding training, all ambassadors are required to undertake the HTMS online module: <https://training.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/course/human-trafficking-modern-slavery>

Resources & Training

Training is available for ambassadors and we ask that interested dioceses contact Aliya and Fr Mark at the emails below once they have identified a group of individuals ready to take on the ambassador role. Following training, individuals will be commissioned to take on the role of a HTMS ambassador in their community.

Additionally, there are many training and education opportunities available online in the field of HTMS which volunteers may use. CSAN is working with the Bishops' Conference and the Catholic Safeguarding Agency to develop resources for ambassadors, which will be made available on the **CSAN website**. CSAN will also aim to bring together the lead coordinators for support and further training.

To manage the information flow to ambassadors, it is advised that all materials be shared firstly with the lead coordinator who can then effectively coordinate the dissemination of information as is appropriate to their individual programme – for example, information on care workers may be more appropriate for dissemination in their locality as opposed to information on county lines.

As the programme evolves, training needs may change, including the provision of resources, so this will need to be reviewed in collaboration with diocesan programmes. If there are particular HTMS issues of concern in your diocese, please let us know and we can develop resources accordingly.

CONTACT

For any queries or follow-up, please contact **Aliya Zahin**, Senior Migration Officer at CSAN:

aliya.zahin@csan.org.uk and **Fr Mark Odion**, Policy & Research Officer at the CBCEW: mark.odion@cbcew.org.uk

“We recognise that trafficking and slavery are exacerbated by a lack of accessible alternatives for migration or seeking sanctuary - efforts to tackle trafficking and slavery must therefore go beyond more active law enforcement; we also need to support people to flourish in their homelands, establish more safe routes for migrants and refugees, and work to eliminate the demand for those services that slave labour continues to meet.”

Principle 18, Love The Stranger