

Article

Modern slavery in the UK: March 2020

The hidden nature of modern slavery makes producing an accurate prevalence measure difficult. This article explores the issue and brings together data sources linked to modern slavery from a range of organisations.

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Release date:
26 March 2020

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Summary

Modern slavery is a serious crime being committed across the UK in which victims are exploited for someone else's gain. It can take many forms including trafficking of people, forced labour and servitude. Victims are often hidden away, may be unable to leave their situation, or may not come forward because of fear or shame.

Because of its hidden nature, producing an accurate measure of prevalence is difficult. Currently, there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK. Instead, this article brings together a range of available data sources on known victims and cases to provide a better understanding of the extent and nature of this crime.

Greater awareness, increases in reporting and improvements in police recording are likely to have contributed to the increases seen in potential victim numbers since the introduction of the modern slavery Acts across the UK in 2015. For example:

- the Modern Slavery Helpline received a 68% increase in calls and submissions in the year ending December 2018, compared with the previous year
- there were 5,144 modern slavery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019, an increase of 51% from the previous year
- the number of potential victims referred through the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased by 36% to 6,985 in the year ending December 2018

Collecting legal evidence for modern slavery offences can be difficult, and the cases are among the most challenging and complex to prosecute. For example:

- there were 205 suspects of modern slavery flagged cases referred from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019.
- over two-thirds (68%) of modern slavery related CPS prosecutions in England and Wales resulted in a conviction in the year ending March 2019

Modern slavery can affect anyone in society, with victims being exploited in a number of ways. For example:

- almost a quarter (23%) of the 6,985 potential victims referred through the NRM in the year ending December 2018 were UK nationals.
- of the 2,251 potential victims supported by The Salvation Army in England and Wales in the year ending June 2019, 48% had experienced labour exploitation and 39% had experienced sexual exploitation.

Statistician's comment

"This is the Office for National Statistics' first attempt to bring data sources together on modern slavery to help us better understand both the nature of this terrible crime and the potential demand on support services.

"While there is no one source or method available that accurately quantifies the number of victims in the UK, evidence suggests there have been improvements in identification since the introduction of the modern slavery Acts in 2015. Yet this is only part of the story, as many cases remain hidden and unreported."

Finding help

If you or someone you know is being or has been exploited or you are unsure if someone is in need of help, assistance and advice is available:

- for life-threatening emergencies, call 999, or for non-emergencies, call 101 for the police
- [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) can be called on 08000 121 700 or contacted via an [online form](#)
- [Victim Support](#) can be called on 0808 16 89 111 or contacted via an [online form](#)
- [Crimestoppers](#) can be called on 0800 555 111 or contacted via an [online form](#)
- [Migrant Help](#) can be called on 0808 8010 503
- [The Salvation Army](#) have a 24/7 confidential referral helpline, which can be called on 0800 808 3733

2 . Things you need to know about this release

Modern slavery is an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. It is a crime that affects some of the most vulnerable in society. It is often hidden from view and many victims also do not self-identify, which means that quantifying the number of victims is challenging. Measuring and monitoring the prevalence of modern slavery over time is important in assessing its scale and the effectiveness of policies to stop or prevent it. It can also highlight the resources needed to support the victims involved.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to assess the number of victims directly, and most of the data sources available can only measure the general level of awareness and response to the problem. This article brings together a range of available data on modern slavery. The data sources cannot be used to measure the underlying prevalence. However, they provide a better understanding of the nature of the crime in the UK than is possible from any data source individually.

The data sources included in this article are from different organisations and are not directly comparable. They are collected on different bases (for example, victims, crimes or suspects) and cover different time periods. Additionally, some data sources do not cover all countries of the UK, and therefore data are presented separately and cannot be combined. See [Quality and methodology](#) for more information on each data source.

This article contributes towards monitoring the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), in particular indicators [8.7.1](#) and [16.2.2](#), which measure the UK's progress towards combatting modern slavery. This is the first time we have explored data relating to modern slavery, and we welcome feedback on this article by emailing CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk.

This article has been produced working in collaboration with:

- Sir Bernard Silverman, Professor of Modern Slavery Statistics, University of Nottingham
- Clewer Initiative
- Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- Department of Justice, Northern Ireland
- Home Office
- Migrant Help
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Modern Slavery Registry
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Scottish Government
- Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA)
- The Salvation Army
- Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) report
- Unseen
- Women's Aid

3 . Defining modern slavery

Modern slavery is a complex crime that covers all forms of slavery, trafficking and exploitation. Trafficking includes transporting, recruiting or harbouring an individual with a view to them being exploited. Modern slavery crimes may involve, or take place alongside, a wide range of abuses and other criminal offences such as grievous bodily harm, assault, rape or child sexual abuse.

Victims of modern slavery can be men, women and children of any age across the world. There is an assumption that victims of modern slavery are often trafficked to the UK from other countries, but residents of the UK are also among the victims that are exploited in the UK and other countries. The crime is often hidden from the authorities and the general public. Victims may struggle to leave their situation because of threats, punishment, violence, coercion and deception, and some may believe that they are not in a situation of exploitation.

The [Palermo Protocol](#), the internationally recognised process for defining human trafficking, includes three aspects:

- the action: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons
- the means: threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person
- the purpose: the definition of exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs

All these aspects must be present for a trafficking crime to have been committed. However, for those under the age of 18 years, only the “action” and “purpose” are required, as children cannot give consent to being exploited regardless of whether they are aware and agree. Victims of modern slavery may be trafficked, but this is not always the case because the “action” may simply involve recruitment.

There are five main types of exploitation that victims of modern slavery may experience:

- labour exploitation: victims are forced to work for nothing, low wages or a wage that is kept by their owner; work is involuntary, forced and/or under the threat of a penalty, and the working conditions can be poor
- sexual exploitation: victims are exploited through non-consensual abuse or another person’s sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose
- domestic servitude: victims are domestic workers who perform a range of household tasks (for example, cooking and cleaning); some live with their employers and have low pay, if any at all
- criminal exploitation: victims are forced to work under the control of criminals in activities such as forced begging, shoplifting, pickpocketing, cannabis cultivation, drug dealing and financial exploitation
- organ harvesting: living or deceased victims are recruited, transported or transferred, by threat or force for money, for their organs

The Home Office has published [a typology of modern slavery offences](#), which breaks these exploitation types down further. Because of the nature of the crime, a victim can suffer from multiple exploitation types at the same time or throughout their lifetime. Some data sources included in this article use slightly different definitions of exploitation types.

To combat modern slavery in the UK, legislation was introduced in England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland:

- the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) for England and Wales, which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2015
- the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) for Scotland, which received Royal Assent on 4 November 2015
- the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Criminal Justice and Support for Victims\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#) for Northern Ireland, which received Royal Assent on 13 January 2015

Modern slavery crimes are not new to the UK, and they were punishable against previous offences prior to the introduction of the new Acts in 2015. The new legislation increased the maximum penalties for offences to life imprisonment and introduced further protection and support for victims.

For more information, see "The support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK" (Figure 9) and "The legal pathway for modern slavery crimes in the UK" (Figure 10) in [Quality and methodology](#).

4 . Measuring modern slavery

The hidden nature of modern slavery makes producing an accurate measure of prevalence difficult. Using a combination of data sources can help build up a picture of the scale and nature of modern slavery. Our approach quantifies and groups indicators known to be linked to modern slavery, which will help the UK measure its progress towards combatting the crime. Previous attempts have been made to measure the number of victims, and there are currently two well-known estimates available. However, neither can be relied on to accurately reflect the current extent of the crime.

Previous estimates

In 2014, the Home Office produced an [estimate of the scale of modern slavery in the UK](#) of between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims using a multiple systems estimation (MSE) approach. While the data and method used to estimate the number of victims were the best available at the time, we currently recommend that the method should not be repeated. This is because of several issues, including changes to the content of some data sources, the dependence on administrative data and issues surrounding the statistical model used. See Previous methodologies section in [Quality and methodology](#) for more information on the MSE approach.

An alternative method of estimating the prevalence of modern slavery has been used by the Walk Free Foundation. Their latest [Global Slavery Index](#), released in July 2018, estimated the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK at 136,000. The method used data from a small number of countries (not including the UK) to estimate prevalence for a wider range of countries. The method assumed that the UK was similar to the countries in which data were collected, and the estimates were subject to wide error intervals. While the Walk Free Foundation's work is important in identifying risk factors in countries with much higher likely prevalences than the UK, the specific estimated number of victims for the UK cannot be regarded as accurate or reliable. The Walk Free Foundation are currently working to improve the Global Slavery Index methodology. For more information, see Previous methodologies section in [Quality and methodology](#).

Indicator development

Monitoring indicators known to be linked to modern slavery will help the UK measure its progress towards combatting the crime. While this approach does not produce an estimated number of victims, it provides insight into both the scale and nature of modern slavery.

Each indicator (data source) has been badged in one or more of the following ways:

- legal: this provides an indication of how the introduction of the modern slavery Acts have impacted the criminal justice system and government processes across the UK
- support: this shows the level of support provided and the routes available for victims
- awareness: this demonstrates the level of awareness of modern slavery across different groups in society

The data sources have been chosen to reflect individual aspects of modern slavery, such as the pathway through the criminal justice system, the support offered to victims and the public response. This is not a comprehensive list and may be added to in the future.

In this article, each data source is discussed and evaluated separately, referencing how it is badged. We welcome comments on the approach and how it could be taken forward.

Table 1: Assignment of modern slavery indicators

Indicator	Badge		
	Legal	Support	Awareness
Police recorded crime	Yes		Yes
National Referral Mechanism	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duty to notify	Yes		Yes
The criminal justice system	Yes		
Charity support		Yes	
Modern Slavery Helpline		Yes	Yes
Public facing intelligence tools		Yes	Yes
Modern slavery statements	Yes		Yes

Source: Office for National Statistics – Modern slavery

5 . Police recorded crime

A useful source of data is police recorded crime, which has been badged as a legal and awareness indicator. It demonstrates how modern slavery offences are being reported and recorded following the introduction of the modern slavery Acts. It therefore indicates the police's awareness and visibility of the offences across the UK. Police forces can use these figures to track the number of reported offences geographically, which can inform task forces and investigations.

Data on modern slavery cases that come to the attention of the police provide valuable information. However, they are only a partial picture as many cases remain hidden and not reported or may be recorded as other offences. As police forces adjust to recording against the new modern slavery and trafficking offences, trends are likely to be influenced, meaning it is difficult to make meaningful long-term comparisons.

There are also concerns about the quality and consistency of recording across police forces. In October 2017, data from [HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services's \(HMICFRS's\) crime data integrity inspection programme](#) established the under-recording of modern slavery offences in England and Wales. To support police forces in improving the identification and understanding of modern slavery, the [modern slavery police transformation programme](#) was established. This includes police forces working closely with the [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) team to provide clear guidance on the recording of modern slavery offences.

Data from England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland cannot be combined to calculate the total number of offences in the UK. This is because they use separate offence codes and recording processes. For more information on police recorded crime data, and the legal pathway for modern slavery crimes in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

England and Wales

It is important to note that increases in modern slavery offences are most likely to reflect improvements in recording practices and increases in the general awareness of modern slavery.

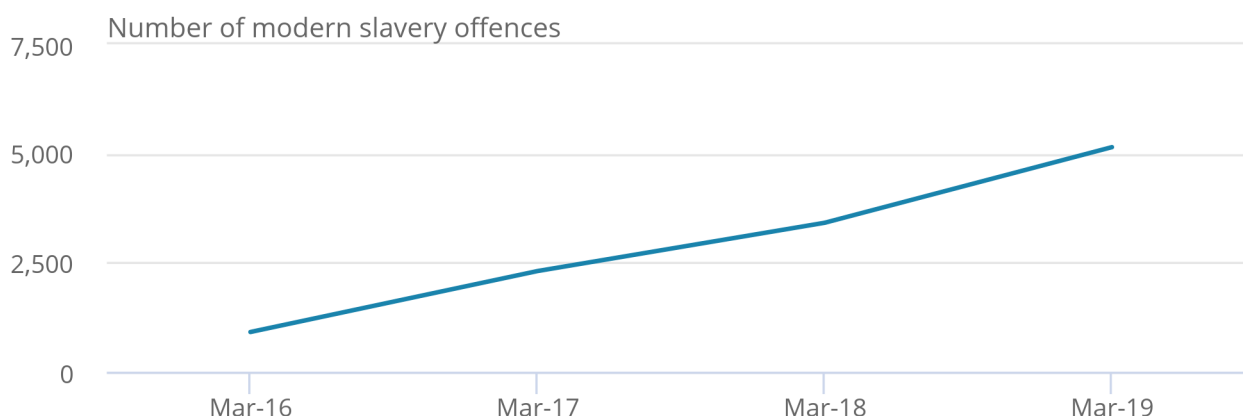
Since the year ending March 2016, there has been an increase in the number of modern slavery offences recorded by the police, from 909 to 5,144 offences in the year ending March 2019 (Figure 1, [Table 21](#)). In the year ending March 2019, there was a 51% rise in the number of modern slavery offences being recorded by the police compared with the previous year. Most noticeably, the offence “Require person to perform forced or compulsory labour” doubled in the year ending March 2019 compared with the previous year (from 611 to 1,240 offences).

Figure 1: The increase in modern slavery offences most likely reflects greater awareness of the crime and improvements in police recording practices

Number of modern slavery offences recorded by the police, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2019

Figure 1: The increase in modern slavery offences most likely reflects greater awareness of the crime and improvements in police recording practices

Number of modern slavery offences recorded by the police, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office – Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. These figures are designated as Experimental Statistics to highlight that they are based on an emerging collection.
2. Data are from 40 police forces.
3. These figures may differ compared with previously published figures as they have been extracted from the Home Office Data Hub. This is a live database that updates regularly. The status of crimes may change, and some may not be present in the aggregated database because of administration discrepancies.

The most common offences recorded under modern slavery in the year ending March 2019 were “Hold person in slavery or servitude” and “Arrange or facilitate the travel of another person with a view to exploitation”. These both contributed to almost three-quarters of all modern slavery offences, which is relatively similar to the previous year (74%, [Table 21](#)). The majority of the remaining offences were recorded as “Require person to perform forced or compulsory labour” (24%).

In the year ending March 2019, where the age and sex of the victim were known in modern slavery offences, the data showed 58% were male and 42% were female ([Table 23](#)).

Scotland

Since the year ending March 2017, there has been an increase in the number of modern slavery offences recorded, from 50 to 179 in the year ending March 2019 ([Table 41](#)). Like in England and Wales, these increases are more likely to reflect greater awareness as well as improvements in recording practices, since the introduction of the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act](#) in Scotland.

Northern Ireland

In the year ending March 2019, there were 38 modern slavery offences recorded ([Table 49](#)). The majority were recorded under "Human trafficking for non-sexual exploitation", which is the same as seen in previous years.

6 . National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was introduced in 2009 as a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking in the UK. It aims to ensure that victims receive appropriate protection and support.

The NRM has been badged under all three measures (legal, support and awareness). Monitoring the data will show the reported cases of suspected modern slavery in the UK. The referral data may reflect the levels of awareness from the first responder organisations, and data on reasonable grounds decisions can be used to monitor outcomes of these referrals. Data on conclusive grounds decisions would provide information on confirmed victim numbers. However, the Home Office is currently not publishing this information as they consider it to not represent the full picture of the decisions made. This is largely because many victims do not receive a decision within the same calendar year as their referral.

Although data from the NRM provide a good coverage for all three measures, they do not show the number of victims who enter the NRM but do not engage with the support services. Additionally, the data only provide the number of detected potential victims who have given consent to enter the NRM. They do not include those not identified or referred (see [Duty to notify](#) for more information). Trends in the data may not reflect underlying changes in prevalence and may be related to changes in awareness and identification of potential victims. For more information on the NRM, and the support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

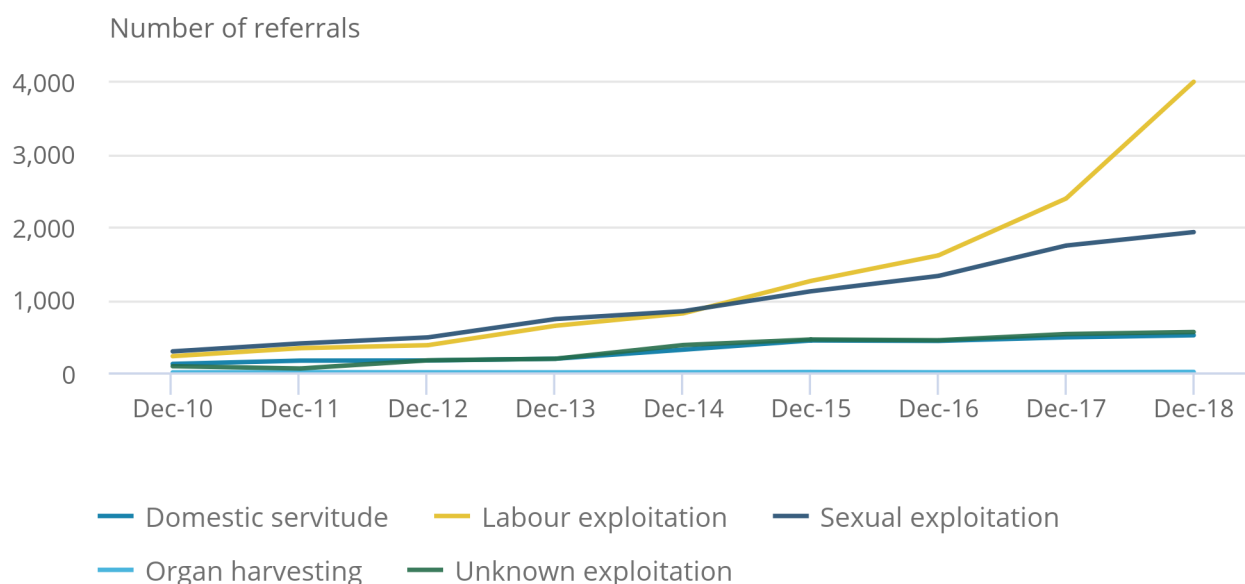
The number of referrals to the NRM has increased year on year from the year ending December 2010 (710 referrals) to the year ending December 2018 (6,985 referrals) ([Table 1](#)). Specifically, referrals for victims of labour exploitation have increased the most in volume, from 222 referrals in the year ending December 2010 to 3,990 referrals in the year ending December 2018. This represents an increase from 31% to 57% of all referrals (Figure 2). Similar to police recorded crime figures, the dramatic increase in the numbers referred to the NRM may not imply that there has been an increase in the underlying prevalence of modern slavery. Rather, it demonstrates an increasing number of victims becoming known and consenting to be referred.

Figure 2: Referrals to the National Referral Mechanism have increased for all exploitation types

Number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism by exploitation type, UK, year ending December 2010 to year ending December 2018

Figure 2: Referrals to the National Referral Mechanism have increased for all exploitation types

Number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism by exploitation type, UK, year ending December 2010 to year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office – National Referral Mechanism

Notes:

1. Data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The data were taken from the NRM system on 12 July 2019.
3. Recent changes in the categorisation of exploitation types mean that the exploitation types presented here will not align with categories in future publications.

In the year ending December 2018, 61% of referrals were for males and 39% were for females ([Table 1](#)). These proportions are similar to police recorded crime data on victims in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019 (58% and 42% respectively, [Table 23](#)). Over 8 in 10 males (83%) who were referred in the year ending December 2018 were potential victims of labour exploitation compared with 17% of females. In contrast, 63% of females who were referred in the year ending December 2018 were potential victims of sexual exploitation compared with 5% of males ([Table 3](#)).

Almost a quarter (23%) of all potential victims referred in the year ending December 2018 were UK nationals ([Table 4](#)). This varied by the age of the potential victim; 45% of victims referred who were aged under 18 years were UK nationals compared with 5% of adult referrals.

Almost half of the referrals in the year ending December 2018 were potential victims aged under 18 years (45%, [Table 1](#)). For potential victims aged 18 years and over, their consent is required for referral into the NRM; whereas, for potential victims who are or may be aged under 18 years, consent is not needed. As such, the distribution may not reflect the true picture of modern slavery but rather highlights the requirement for consent within the formal process.

Once a referral has been made, a reasonable grounds decision is made on whether the individual should go on to the next stage of the referral process. If a positive decision is made, the potential victim awaiting a conclusive grounds decision then has access to support until the decision is made. For more information on the NRM process, see [Quality and methodology](#).

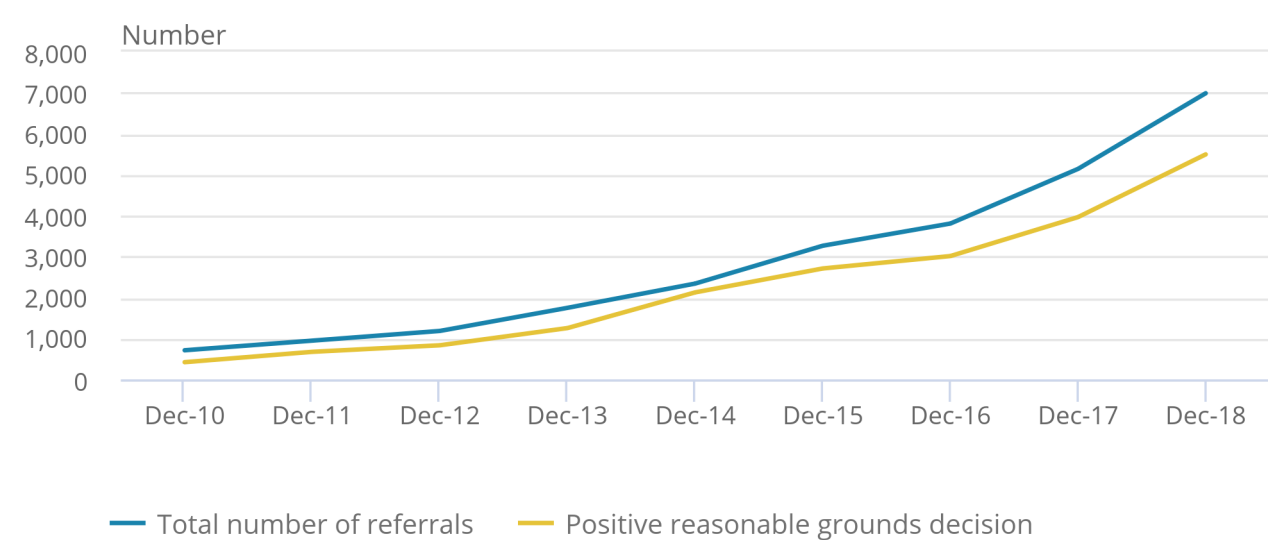
In the year ending December 2018, 79% of individuals received a positive reasonable grounds decision (Figure 3, [Tables 1 and 7](#)). This is similar to recent years, with the exception of the year ending December 2014 when 91% of individuals received a positive reasonable grounds decision.

Figure 3: The majority of individuals referred are given a positive reasonable grounds decision

Number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism and number of positive reasonable grounds decisions, UK, year ending December 2010 to year ending December 2018

Figure 3: The majority of individuals referred are given a positive reasonable grounds decision

Number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism and number of positive reasonable grounds decisions, UK, year ending December 2010 to year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office – National Referral Mechanism

Notes:

1. Data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The data were taken from the NRM system on 12 July 2019.

7 . Duty to notify

Adults who are potential victims must give consent before they are referred into the [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#). For those in England and Wales who do not provide consent, or where there is missing information, the numbers are brought to the attention of the authorities through an anonymous system called duty to notify.

The duty to notify data have been badged under the awareness and legal measures. The data help show the potential number of victims not included in the NRM data as well as the level of awareness from those specific public bodies. The number not giving consent highlights the level of potential victims not going through the formal processes set by the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

Because of complexities in the way the data are collected (for example, potential double counting of victims), the duty to notify data should be interpreted with caution. For more information on duty to notify, and the support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

Since the year ending December 2016, the number of duty to notify referrals has increased for all exploitation types (Figure 4, [Table 26](#)). This could be because of the increased awareness and visibility of exploitation types in England and Wales, which is causing an increase in referrals rather than a genuine increase in victims.

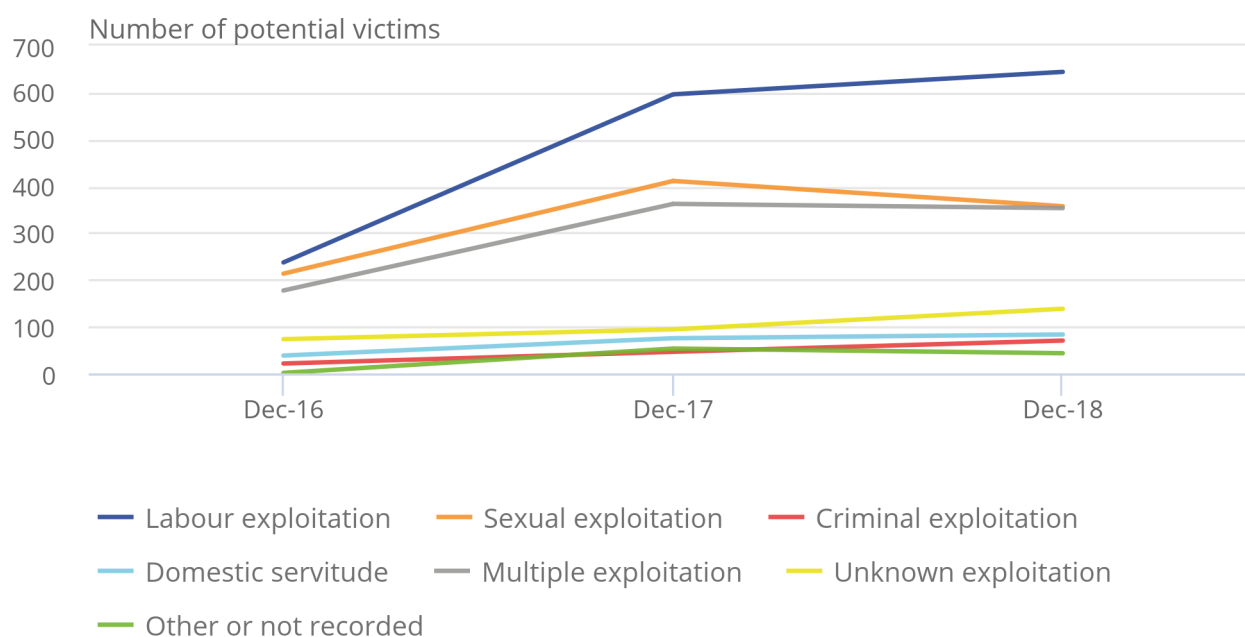
The number of reported victims for criminal exploitation has more than doubled in the year ending December 2018 compared with the year ending December 2016. However, labour exploitation has consistently been the highest type of exploitation reported. This could be because of a greater awareness and visibility of labour exploitation in England and Wales.

Figure 4: There has been an increase in the number of potential victims of all exploitation types since the year ending December 2016

Number of potential victims of modern slavery reported under the duty to notify, by exploitation type, England and Wales, year ending December 2016 to year ending December 2018

Figure 4: There has been an increase in the number of potential victims of all exploitation types since the year ending December 2016

Number of potential victims of modern slavery reported under the duty to notify, by exploitation type, England and Wales, year ending December 2016 to year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office – Duty to notify

Notes:

1. Data from duty to notify systems are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data were extracted from the system on 18 November 2019.
3. Following corrections, the duty to notify data presented here do not align with the [2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery](#).

8 . The criminal justice system

Data on modern slavery offenders and the numbers of cases reaching the courts help us to understand the criminal justice system response to modern slavery offences. The level of control and coercion perpetrators of modern slavery have over their victims is often strong but hidden. For the reasons discussed in this section, charging and prosecuting perpetrators is a challenging process.

Modern slavery cases are among the most challenging and complex to prosecute. Those challenges arise primarily in relation to the evidence of victims who are frequently vulnerable. So, building strong cases that are less reliant on victims' evidence is critical. Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors work closely together from the early stages of an investigation to build strong cases to bring perpetrators to justice. Cases often involve multiple offenders and victims, usually across other jurisdictions.

Data from the different criminal justice agencies have been badged under the legal measure. The data can be used to monitor the level and outcome of cases going through the criminal justice process. Ongoing monitoring will highlight the ability of the authorities to prosecute and convict offenders for modern slavery and support the development of strategy and policy at a national and international level.

Data for each country cannot be combined because of differences in the data collection methods and definitions of the offences and their codes. Caution should be taken when comparing across data sources, since they are collected on different bases. It is important to note that for each proceeding and prosecution case, there could be multiple charges, defendants and victims. In many cases, an offence may be reported under an offence code other than a modern slavery or human trafficking offence.

Data from the criminal justice system do not reflect the true level of modern slavery in the UK, which emphasises the need to use multiple data sources to fully understand the crime. For more information on the criminal justice system, and the legal pathway for modern slavery crimes in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

England and Wales

While the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) became law in England and Wales in 2015, this was predated by different offence codes under anti-slavery legislations. Some cases that were reported before 2015 are still ongoing so will be recorded against these previous offence codes.

When law enforcement bodies identify a modern slavery case, this is brought to the attention of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). They provide early advice on charging and prosecution assistance when bringing together evidence for the case. They work closely with the National Crime Agency (NCA) on complex cases, often collaborating across borders.

CPS records identify the number of defendants prosecuted for offences related to modern slavery by way of a modern slavery monitoring flag applied to prosecution cases. The data are accurate only to the extent that the flag has been correctly applied. The flag is applied from the time the case is referred to the CPS and remains in place even if those alleged offences or charges are subsequently amended, not charged or dropped.

Pre-charge decisions

There was a 32% increase in the number of suspects of modern slavery flagged cases referred to the CPS from the police, from the year ending March 2017 to the year ending March 2018 (from 222 to 293). This was followed by a 30% decrease from the year ending March 2018 to the year ending March 2019 (from 293 to 205) ([Table 27](#)).

There were 340 modern slavery flagged cases where the CPS finalised a charging decision in the year ending March 2019, of which 80% resulted in a legal decision (273 cases). For the majority of the remaining cases, no legal decision was made and instead they were administratively finalised (19%). For definitions, see the criminal justice system section in [Quality and methodology](#). This could be because the CPS require further evidence to make a charging decision. Since the year ending March 2015, the proportion of cases that were administratively finalised have generally increased ([Table 27](#)). This highlights the ongoing difficulties in collecting the evidence needed to prosecute.

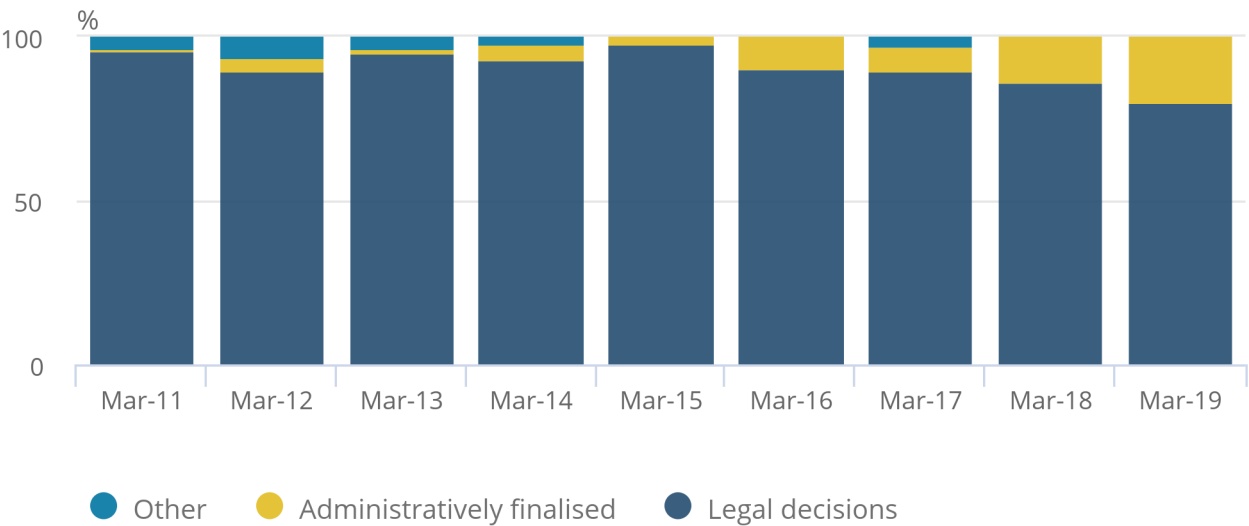
Of those cases that resulted in a legal decision, 75% resulted in a charge (205 cases) in the year ending March 2019. This is a five percentage point decrease compared with the year ending March 2011 (Figure 5, [Table 27](#)).

Figure 5: The proportion of modern slavery-related pre-charge cases that were administratively finalised increased between the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2019

Proportion of modern slavery-related pre-charge decisions that were legal decisions compared with administratively finalised, England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019

Figure 5: The proportion of modern slavery-related pre-charge cases that were administratively finalised increased between the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2019

Proportion of modern slavery-related pre-charge decisions that were legal decisions compared with administratively finalised, England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. These data are not designated as official statistics.

Prosecution and conviction outcomes

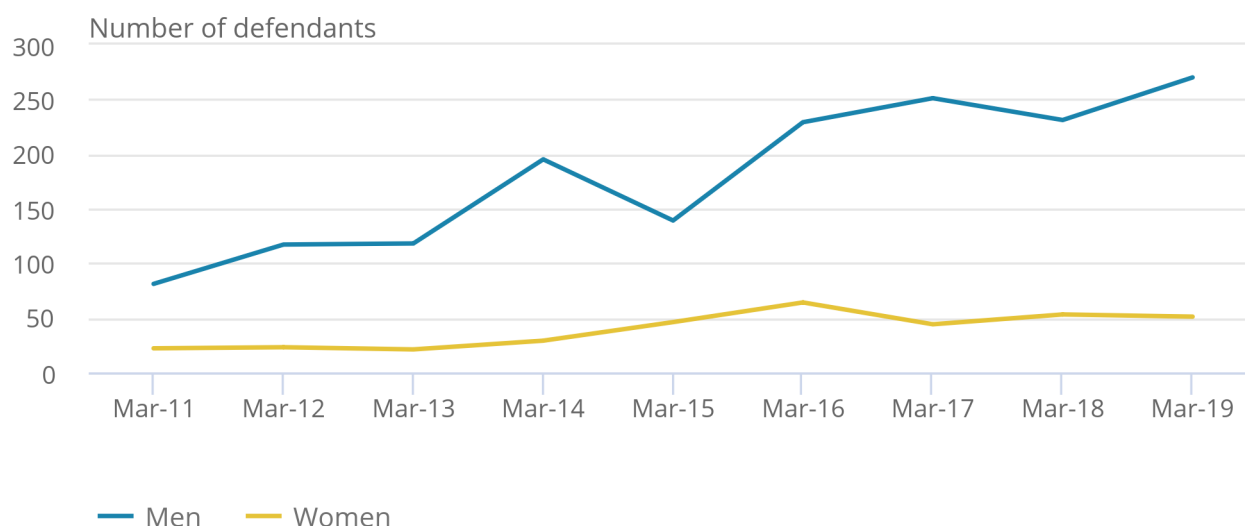
There was a total of 322 prosecutions for modern slavery-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, a 13% increase from the year ending March 2018 ([Table 27](#)). In the year ending March 2019, 84% of defendants were male and 16% were female (Figure 6, [Table 28](#)).

Figure 6: The majority of defendants in modern slavery-related cases were men

Number of defendants in modern slavery flagged prosecutions by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019

Figure 6: The majority of defendants in modern slavery-related cases were men

Number of defendants in modern slavery flagged prosecutions by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. These data are not designated as official statistics.
2. Data where the sex of the defendant was unknown have been removed.

Around 7 in 10 (68%, 219 cases) modern slavery-related prosecutions resulted in a conviction in the year ending March 2019 ([Table 27](#)). In comparison, in the year ending March 2019, the conviction rate for child sexual abuse was 79%, for domestic abuse it was 77% and for rape it was 63%. While different to modern slavery, these crime types share similarities in their sensitive, complicated and often hidden nature.

Of the 219 convictions in the year ending March 2019, 58% were because of a guilty plea and 42% secured a conviction following a trial.

Around 3 in 10 (32%, 103 cases) prosecutions did not result in a conviction. Nearly half (45%, 46 cases) of these non-convictions were because of “All other reasons”¹, which are not victim-related issues, acquittals or administrative finalisations.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) also collate data on court proceedings, but this is via extracts from court database administrative systems so may differ to CPS data. MoJ data relate to the outcomes for offenders rather than offences heard at magistrates' courts. There were 162 defendants prosecuted for modern slavery offences in the year ending December 2018. Of those, 87% (141 defendants) were prosecuted under the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) ([Table 31](#)). In the year ending December 2018, there were 42 offenders convicted of a modern slavery offence, of which 50% were under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ([Table 34](#)).

The number of defendants prosecuted and convicted of a modern slavery offence is slightly lower in volume in the year ending December 2018 compared with the year ending December 2017.

Scotland

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scotland's prosecution service, is responsible for making the final decision on whether to prosecute modern slavery cases in Scotland. The numbers of offences proceeded and convicted for modern slavery and human trafficking crimes in Scotland are low ([Tables 42 and 43](#)). The offences with records are "Immoral traffic" and "Slavery or forced labour". Since the year ending March 2014, less than 50% of proceeded modern slavery crimes have been given a conviction.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) have a team dedicated to prosecuting human trafficking and modern slavery cases. The PPS work closely with police forces and other investigators in case building and in supporting and protecting victims and witnesses throughout the prosecution process.

Since the year ending December 2013, the total numbers of offences prosecuted² in Northern Ireland are low ([Table 52](#)), with the highest total (20 prosecutions) occurring in the year ending December 2018. The numbers of offences convicted are even lower, with fewer than three convicted offences in the year ending December 2018 ([Table 54](#)).

Notes for: The criminal justice system

1. "All other reasons" includes conflict of evidence or an essential legal element missing.
2. This includes all modern slavery offences, whether it was classified as the principal offence or not.

9 . Charity support

Support and protection for potential victims of modern slavery is available across the UK. Specific charities across the UK are contracted to provide support to potential victims of modern slavery through the [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) process. The support and assistance they may provide includes:

- safe accommodation
- financial support
- medical support
- legal support
- counselling services
- language translation
- repatriation (help to return to their own country)

Data on charity support have been badged under the support measure as they provide an indication of the number of victims accepting support and subsequently the workload of the charities. They also give an indication of the profile of victims who seek support as well as the type of exploitation experienced.

While charity data provide insight into those victims receiving support, the data are largely dependent on the NRM and therefore unlikely to highlight new victims of modern slavery. Additionally, most of the charities only provide support to adult victims. Therefore, the data do not include victims who are children. Local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland are responsible for providing support for children under existing statutory child protection arrangements and legislation. The Northern Ireland Department of Health leads on the protection and safeguarding of children in Northern Ireland.

For more information on the charity data, and the support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

England and Wales

The number of potential victims supported by [The Salvation Army](#) has increased each year, in line with the increase seen in NRM positive reasonable grounds decisions. In the year ending June 2019, 2,251 potential victims entered the service to receive support through the contract, a 21% increase on the previous year ([Table 36](#)). A total of 1,542 potential victims did not enter the support service in the year ending June 2019 ([Table 40](#)).¹ The Salvation Army currently manages the delivery of specialist support to all adult victims of modern slavery and their dependents in England and Wales referred through the NRM, since the contract began in 2011. This is funded by the UK Government.

The most common types of exploitation experienced by potential victims were labour and sexual. Since the time series began in the year ending June 2012, the number of potential victims of both labour and sexual exploitation has been increasing. Labour exploitation has noticeably increased in the past few years, with a 30% increase in the year ending June 2019 compared with the previous year, while sexual exploitation has increased by 14% in the latest year ([Table 38](#)).

In the year ending June 2019, 55% of potential victims were female and 44% were male ([Table 36](#)).² The type of exploitation experienced varies by sex of victim. For example, in the year ending June 2019, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation were predominantly experienced by females (83% and 98% respectively), whereas labour exploitation was mostly experienced by males (86%) (Figure 7, [Table 39](#)).

Figure 7: The type of exploitation experienced varied by sex

Type of exploitation experienced by sex of potential victim, England and Wales, year ending June 2019

Figure 7: The type of exploitation experienced varied by sex

Type of exploitation experienced by sex of potential victim, England and Wales, year ending June 2019



Source: The Salvation Army

Notes:

1. These data are not designated as official statistics.

Scotland

Support for adult victims in Scotland is provided by two organisations, [Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance \(TARA\)](#) and [Migrant Help](#), and is funded by the Scottish Government. TARA support female victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and Migrant Help support all other adult victims.

In the year ending March 2019, 210 individuals entered the support service provided by Migrant Help ([Table 44](#)), a 30% increase compared with the previous year. The majority of these potential victims were victims of labour exploitation (70%, [Table 46](#)). In the year ending March 2019, 44 females entered the support service provided by TARA ([Table 47](#)), a 42% increase compared with the previous year. A total of 14 females did not enter the support service in the year ending March 2019 ([Table 48](#)).¹

Northern Ireland

Support for adult victims in Northern Ireland is provided by two organisations, [Migrant Help](#) and [Women's Aid](#), which are contracted by the Northern Ireland Department of Justice.

In the year ending March 2019, 18 individuals entered the support service provided by Migrant Help ([Table 56](#)). The majority of these potential victims were victims of labour exploitation (83%, [Table 58](#)). Similarly, 19 females entered the support service provided by Women's Aid in the year ending March 2019 ([Table 59](#)). The majority of these potential victims were sexually exploited (74%, [Table 60](#)) and aged between 25 and 34 years (42%, [Table 59](#)).

Notes for: Charity support

1. This can be because of the charity being unable to contact the potential victim, the victim being found to be ineligible for support or the victim declining support.
2. Less than 1% were transgender.

10 . Modern Slavery Helpline

The UK's [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) is independently operated by the anti-slavery charity Unseen. The helpline is free to call and provides victims, the public and businesses access to information and support. Reports can also be submitted online and via the app.

Unseen gathers information from the calls and reports they receive via the helpline to build a picture of modern slavery in the UK and internationally. The information is used to help identify the scale and nature of the crime in the UK and abroad.

The Modern Slavery Helpline data have been badged as both a support and awareness measure as the data can be used to monitor the levels of awareness from multiple callers. Data on the type of exploitation experienced can be used to assess the amount and type of support required for victims. Although these data are insightful, they do not provide the number of people indicated by the helpline who are confirmed as victims under the various UK modern slavery Acts and associated legislation. Additional data providing the proportion of calls detected by first responders would be beneficial to understand whether additional training is needed for first responders. It should also be noted that there may be some overlap in the number of victims known to the helpline and other data sources included in this article. For more information on the Modern Slavery Helpline, and the support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, see [Quality and methodology](#).

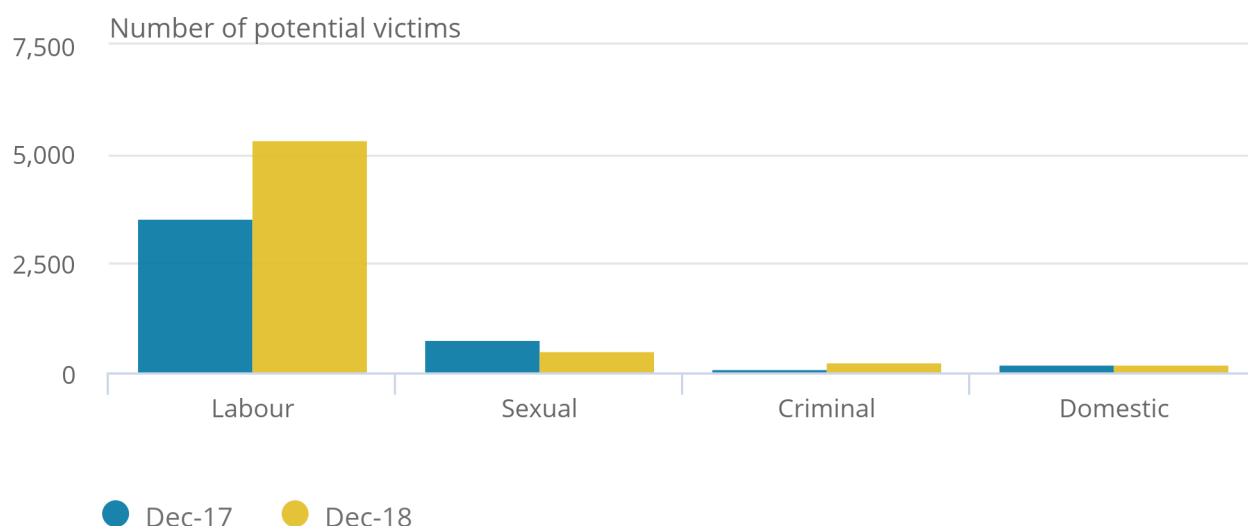
Between 2017 and 2018, the helpline saw a 68% increase in calls, webforms and app entries, which led to a 46% increase in the number of potential victims indicated ([Tables 12 and 13](#)). The type of exploitation experienced by these potential victims is shown in Figure 8 ([Table 16](#)). In both 2017 and 2018, labour was the most common exploitation type experienced by potential victims as indicated by the helpline. The number of potential victims of labour exploitation increased by 51% between 2017 and 2018, while the number of potential victims of criminal exploitation more than tripled. This could be because of the visibility of labour exploitation or a greater awareness caused by the media.

Figure 8: Labour exploitation is most commonly experienced by potential victims identified by the helpline

Types of exploitation recorded by the Modern Slavery Helpline, UK, year ending December 2017 and year ending December 2018

Figure 8: Labour exploitation is most commonly experienced by potential victims identified by the helpline

Types of exploitation recorded by the Modern Slavery Helpline, UK, year ending December 2017 and year ending December 2018



Source: Unseen – Modern Slavery Helpline

Notes:

1. Data from the Modern Slavery Helpline are not designated as official statistics.
2. “Various” and “unknown” exploitation types have been excluded.
3. The potential victims are identified from UK and international calls, webforms, and app entries.

11 . Public-facing intelligence tools

The Safe Car Wash app

The [Safe Car Wash app](#) was launched in June 2018 by [The Clewer Initiative](#) and the [Santa Marta Group](#). It is one example of an app that has been developed to enable members of the public to report modern slavery. It is well known that [certain sectors are at high risk of labour exploitation](#) such as hand car washes, nail bars and agriculture. A spectrum of exploitation could be present within these businesses, not all of which may be classed as modern slavery, including poor health and safety conditions and excessive working hours.¹

The Safe Car Wash app provides an approach to mapping car washes across the UK, while gathering information relating to modern slavery from the public. The Safe Car Wash app has been badged both as a measure of support and awareness. The number of entries on the app provides an indication of the public awareness of modern slavery and the likelihood to report it. Monitoring these figures could help understand how the public is responding to the issue. The app can also lead to successful investigations and appropriate support being provided to the victims. For more information on the Safe Car Wash app, see [Quality and methodology](#).

The app enables users to provide anonymous information about the car wash including location, workers' access to suitable clothing, cost and payment method. Users are then prompted to call the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) if their answers indicate that modern slavery may be taking place, and they can do this via the app. Data are collected on whether a user decides to call the helpline this way.

In the year ending May 2019, the Safe Car Wash app had 4,998 entries ([Table 17](#)). In 47% of those entries (2,332), the user was advised to call the Modern Slavery Helpline ([Table 18](#), Figure 9). However, of these, only 15% (361) used the app to call the helpline. It is difficult to determine if users decided to exit the app and contact the helpline via a different method. This suggests the public may not report labour exploitation. This may be because they feel they do not have enough evidence or they fear that they may make the situation worse for the workers.

As the total number of car washes is unknown, it is not possible to determine the percentage of UK car washes where it has been indicated that there is a high likelihood of modern slavery taking place. There is also a possibility that car washes may be double counted within the entries, as many users could complete an entry on the same location.

Notes for: Public-facing intelligence tools

1. For more information, see the [Labour Market Enforcement Strategy 2019 to 2020](#).

12 . Modern slavery statements

Section 54 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) requires commercial organisations within the UK, with an annual turnover of £36 million and over, to produce an annual slavery and human trafficking statement. This statement must explain the steps they are taking, or whether they are not taking any steps, to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place in their operations and supply chains. Data on modern slavery statements are currently provided by two independent non-governmental data sources: [Transparency in Supply Chains \(TISC\) report](#) and the [Modern Slavery Registry](#). Data collection and analysis are different and comparisons between sources cannot be made. For more information on the TISC report and the Modern Slavery Registry, see [Quality and methodology](#).

There is currently no legal requirement for companies to register with either of the data registers mentioned in this section. This makes it extremely difficult to measure how many eligible companies are complying and highlights the difficulty in measuring compliance using the data sources that are currently available. Following an [independent review](#) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the government has agreed to create its own online reporting service. This will help monitor compliance against an accurate number of companies that are in scope to comply.

Statements have been badged as both a legal and awareness measure. They highlight how UK companies are responding to and complying with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. They also indicate the level of corporate acknowledgement of the undetected prevalence of modern slavery. While the numbers are helpful in indicating the level of engagement and compliance, they do not show the number of modern slavery victims detected in UK supply chains.

TISC report

[TISC report](#) provide a platform that is a data register that monitors supply chains and compliance statements published under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. TISC report UK data come from numerous data sources including submissions by organisations, members of the public and from TISC report technology, which gathers and sorts data using web-scraping techniques.

TISC report found that 12,901 UK registered companies that were required to comply for one or more financial years had produced a statement at some point, either for specific financial years or with no specific year stated ([Table 19b](#)). TISC report have estimated that approximately 16,600 UK companies are required to comply. This suggests that around 75% of UK registered companies have engaged with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and produced a statement at some point.

Modern Slavery Registry

The [Modern Slavery Registry](#) is held by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. It is a free public resource that aims to increase transparency and accountability by tracking compliance statements published under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Data are collected through manual investigation and submissions made by organisations and members of the public.

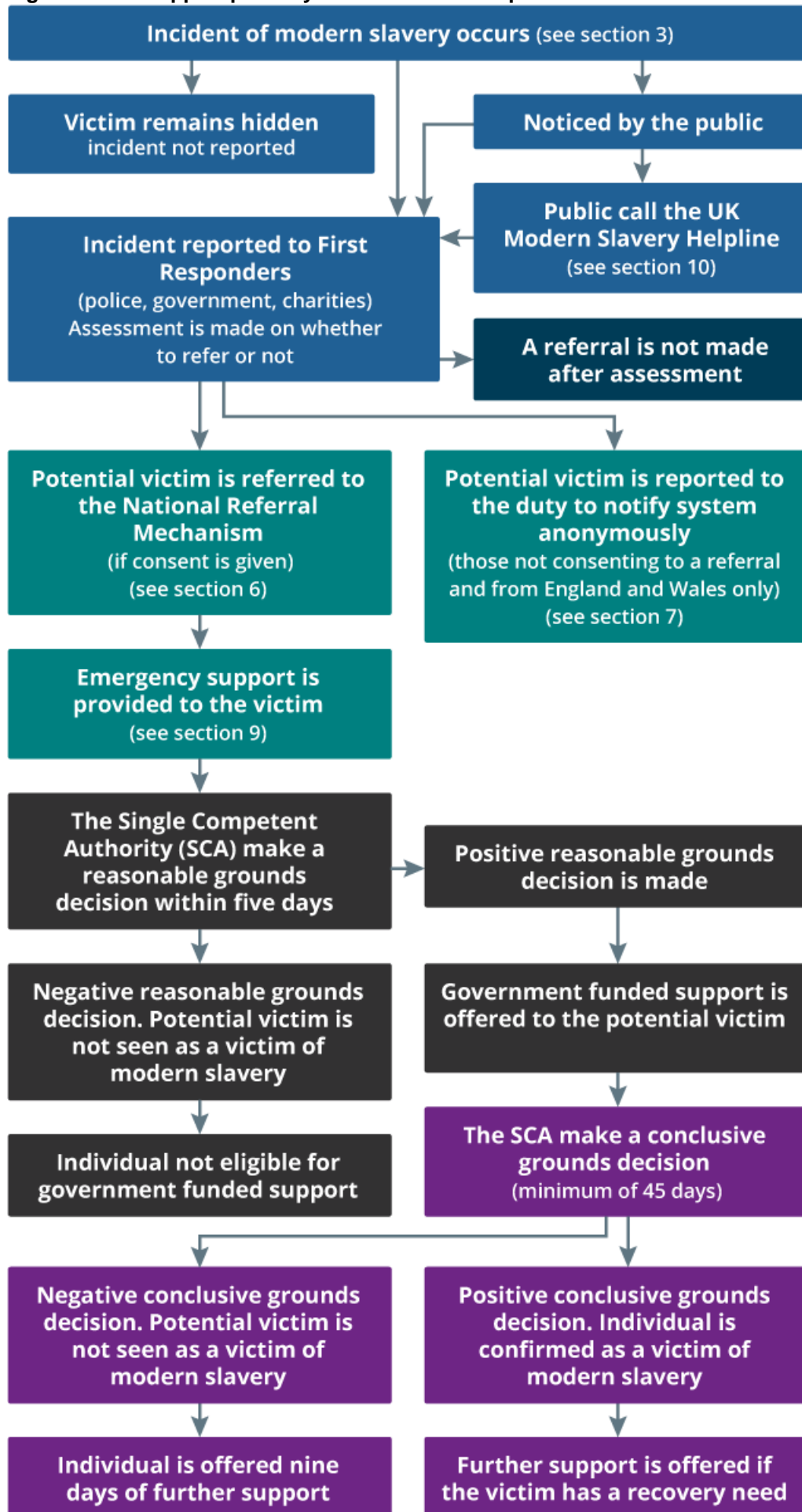
The Modern Slavery Registry found a total of 8,357 UK headquartered companies had published a statement at any point between the year ending December 2015 and December 2018 ([Table 20](#)). As expected, many of these companies (45%) first published a statement in the year ending December 2016. The Modern Slavery Registry does not calculate an estimate of the total number of UK headquartered companies required to comply. Therefore, it is uncertain what proportion of companies are complying. It should also be noted that these data refer to UK headquartered companies and therefore it is expected some companies that are in scope to comply are not included in this sample.

13 . Quality and methodology

Flowcharts

Figure 9 provides an overview of how potential adult victims of modern slavery are identified and the support they are provided through the [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) in the UK.

Figure 9: The support pathway for adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in the UK

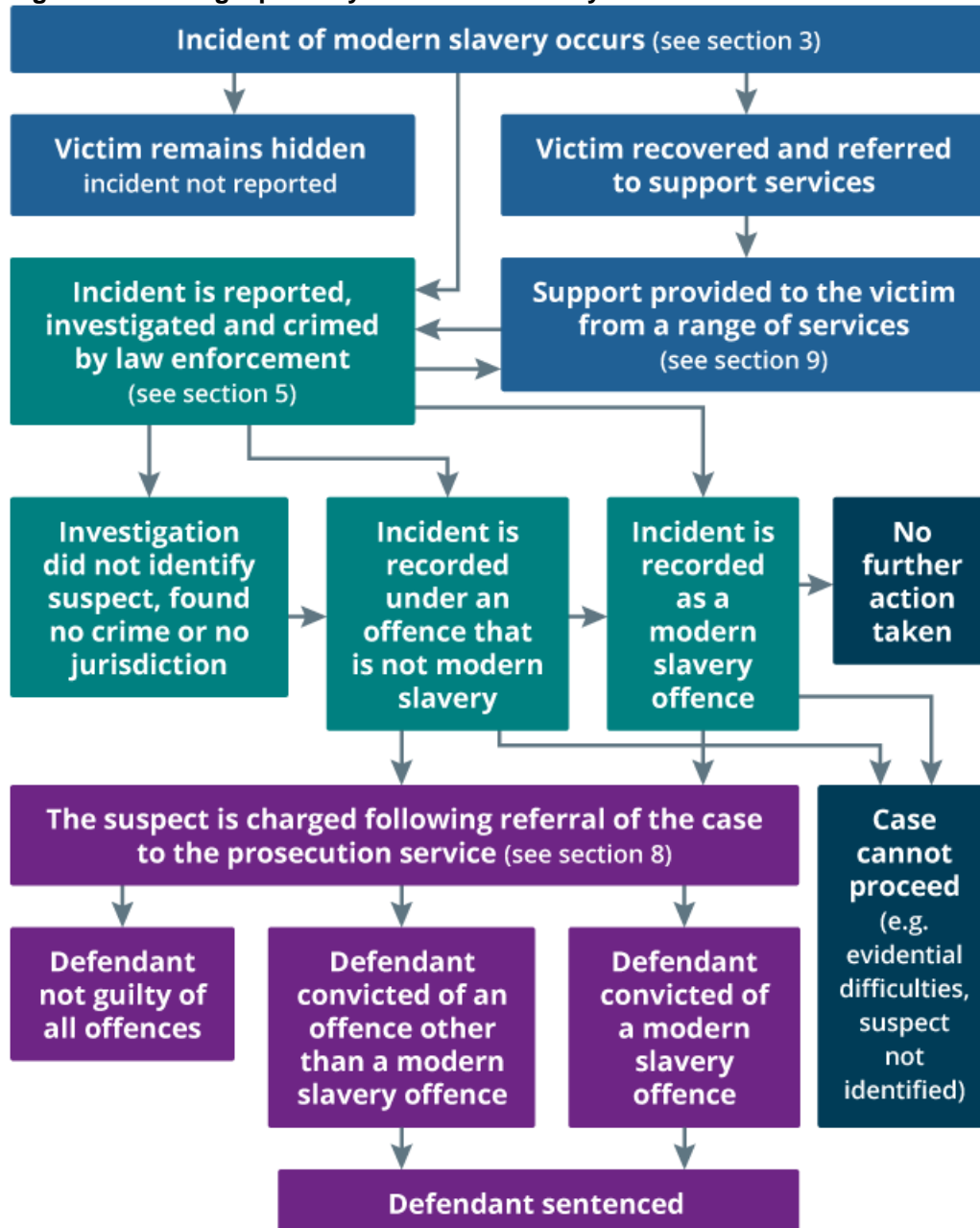


Notes:

1. This only covers the top-level stages for adults who are potential victims. Cases involving children have a slightly different process (see Section 9).
2. Differences may occur across the UK because of the different modern slavery Acts and support services available.

Figure 10 provides an overview of how cases of modern slavery are captured and flow through the [criminal justice system](#) in the UK.

Figure 10: The legal pathway for modern slavery crimes in the UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Modern slavery

Notes:

1. This only shows the top-level stages of the legal process in the UK. Differences may occur across the UK because of the different Acts, offences, prosecution services and police forces.

Data sources

The data included in this article are sourced from different organisations, and the way in which they are collected differs. Some are taken from administrative datasets that do not fall within the scope of [official statistics](#) as defined in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#). The data sources are not directly comparable, since they are collected on different bases and cover different time periods. Potential victims identified in each source may be present in more than one of the data sources included in this article. Additionally, some data sources do not cover all UK countries and cannot be combined.

Police recorded crime

[Police recorded crime](#) data from England and Wales are supplied by the Home Office. They are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. Data contained in this article only include police forces that submit data to the Home Office Data Hub and therefore exclude Humberside, South Yorkshire, Kent and Wiltshire. The figures may differ to previously published figures as they have been extracted from the Home Office Data Hub. This is a live database that updates regularly. The status of crimes may change, and some may not be present in the aggregated database because of administration discrepancies. More information on police recorded crime in England and Wales can be found in our [user guide](#).

Data from Scotland are supplied by the Scottish Government and are sourced from the Recorded Crime in Scotland [National Statistics](#). More information regarding police recorded crime in Scotland can be found in their [user guide](#). Data from Northern Ireland are supplied by the Police Service Northern Ireland and are an aggregation of offences across the districts in Northern Ireland. More information regarding police recorded crime in Northern Ireland can be found in their [user guide](#).

Police recorded crime data in England and Wales are not classified as National Statistics. Data from England and Wales used in this article are designated as [Experimental Statistics](#) as they were extracted from the Home Office Data Hub. Police recorded crime data in Scotland and Northern Ireland are classified as National Statistics.

National Referral Mechanism

The NRM was introduced in 2009 as a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking in the UK. The Single Competent Authority (SCA) was launched on 29 April 2019 and is responsible for making decisions about victims referred to the NRM. Prior to April 2019, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Home Office were responsible.

Victims of modern slavery are referred into the NRM by staff at designated [first responder organisations](#). Referrals are made via an online form that collects as much detail as possible, including the type of exploitation, to allow a referral decision to be made. The general public can refer a potential victim through the Modern Slavery Helpline who pass this information on to a first responder organisation.

The term “potential victim” is given to an individual following referral into the NRM and prior to a reasonable grounds decision. Once a referral has been made, the SCA aims to make a reasonable grounds decision within five days on whether the individual is a potential victim. A reasonable grounds decision assesses whether there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that the person is a victim of modern slavery. Within these five days, individuals can be provided immediate support through selected charities.

After the five days, if a positive reasonable grounds decision is made, the individual then has access to state-funded support for at least 45 days while the case is worked on and at least until a conclusive grounds decision is made. State-funded support could include access to relevant legal advice, accommodation, protection, and independent emotional and practical help. The term “potential victim awaiting conclusive grounds decision” is given to an individual when there is evidence that indicates they are a victim of modern slavery, but are yet to receive a conclusive grounds decision from the SCA that confirms whether they are a victim as part of the NRM process. Following investigation of a case, a conclusive grounds decision is made to assess whether, on the balance of probabilities, the person is a victim of modern slavery.

Data from the NRM are not classified as [National Statistics](#).

Duty to notify

Duty to notify was introduced on 1 November 2015 as part of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#). It is a legal requirement that requires specific public bodies to report all adults who are potential victims of modern slavery in England and Wales. As well as the NRM, the SCA have responsibility for administering duty to notify, and data are passed to the police and NCA for review. In Scotland, a very similar approach has been implemented through the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). Scottish authorities are required to notify the police of anyone who is a potential victim. Duty to notify is currently not fully implemented in Northern Ireland because of the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The term “potential victim” is given to all individuals who have been reported through the duty to notify process.

Duty to notify data are not classified as [National Statistics](#).

Criminal justice system

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority in England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and others. Law enforcement agencies are responsible for investigating modern slavery offences and referring cases to the CPS for advice and charging decisions. In cases of modern slavery, the CPS will provide early advice on lines of inquiry and evidential requirements to assist law enforcement. When all lines of inquiry have been pursued and there is sufficient evidence obtained to support a prosecution, and it is in the public interest to prosecute, prosecutors will decide to charge suspects with a criminal offence and what that offence(s) should be. Investigators and prosecutors will often work with authorities in other countries to obtain evidence or to prosecute all defendants together in one country. The CPS flag the number of cases involving human trafficking and modern slavery. If a case commences under a different offence but is then changed to a human trafficking or modern slavery charge, the case should be flagged at that stage.

Administratively finalised cases are those that have been referred to the CPS for a pre-charge decision but where no legal decision has been made. For example, the CPS may have asked the police to provide further information where there was insufficient evidence to make a charging decision or the police requested early investigative advice. The CPS may have also advised the police to charge but the suspect was not charged because they could not be located, where the suspect has died or where the case has been returned to the police and the police decide to take no further action. Administratively finalised decisions are not legal decisions and may not be the end of the case. Legal decisions are decisions to charge, prosecute or issue an out-of-court disposal.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is responsible for the administration of justice through the courts following prosecution in England and Wales. They collate data on court proceedings, and these are extracted from administrative database systems. The data include offences where there has been no police involvement, such as those prosecutions instigated by government departments, private organisations and individuals. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences, the offence with the heaviest penalty is imposed and classified as the principal offence. MoJ data in this article refer to all modern slavery offences, regardless of whether it was the principal offence.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service are responsible for making the final decision on whether to prosecute modern slavery cases in Scotland. The statistics used have been derived from data held on the Criminal History System (CHS). The CHS is a central hub used for the electronic recording of information on people accused and/or convicted of perpetrating a criminal act. It is maintained and operated by Police Scotland. Data from Scotland are supplied by the Scottish Government and are sourced from the Recorded Crime in Scotland [National Statistics](#). In Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) have a team dedicated to prosecuting human trafficking and modern slavery cases. The data have been provided by the Department of Justice and are classified as [official statistics](#).

Because of the time lag between each stage of the criminal justice system, data do not necessarily follow on from each other and caution should be taken when making comparisons. All data referenced in this article from the MoJ are [experimental statistics](#). Data from the CPS and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service are not classified as official statistics.

Charity support

[The Salvation Army](#) manage the delivery of specialist support to adult victims of modern slavery and their dependents in England and Wales referred through the NRM. This is funded by the UK Government. Data have been collated through The Salvation Army's Case Management System. Support for adult victims in Northern Ireland is provided by two organisations, [Migrant Help](#) and [Women's Aid](#), which are contracted by the Northern Ireland Department of Justice. The support in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is available for at least 45 days and at least until a conclusive grounds decision about victim status has been made.

The term "potential victim", used by charities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is given to an individual when there is evidence that indicates they are a victim of modern slavery but are yet to receive a conclusive grounds decision from the SCA that confirms whether they are a victim as part of the NRM process.

Support for adult victims in Scotland is provided by two organisations, [Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance \(TARA\)](#) and [Migrant Help](#), and is funded by the Scottish Government. The statutory period of support for adult victims in Scotland doubled on 1 April 2018 from 45 to 90 days. Based on a case-by-case assessment, potential victims can also receive support on a non-statutory basis from TARA and Migrant Help, both before a reasonable grounds decision and after the 90-day period. Therefore, the term "potential victim", used by charities in Scotland, is given to an individual when there is evidence that indicates they are a victim of modern slavery and have been supported by either charity.

Data from The Salvation Army, Migrant Help, TARA and Women's Aid are not classified as [official statistics](#).

Modern Slavery Helpline

The [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) is operated by Unseen. The helpline receives calls and reports about both UK and international cases. All these cases are included in the data presented in this article. The term "potential victim", used by the Modern Slavery Helpline, is given to an individual when there is evidence that indicates there is a potential victim of modern slavery through the information provided by the contact or caller.

Data from the Modern Slavery Helpline are not classified as [official statistics](#).

The Safe Car Wash app

The [Safe Car Wash app](#) was launched in June 2018 by [The Clewer Initiative](#) and the [Santa Marta Group](#). It is one example of an app that has been developed to enable members of the public to report modern slavery. Anonymous data collected from the app are shared with the NCA, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, and the National Police Chiefs' Council. These data help them develop the intelligence needed to lead an investigation.

Data from the Safe Car Wash App are not classified as [official statistics](#).

Statements

[Transparency in Supply Chains \(TISC\) report](#) provide a platform that monitors statements published under section 54 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#). TISC report also monitor payment practices, gender pay gap and other non-financial regulations. TISC report UK data come from numerous data sources including submissions by organisations, members of the public and from TISC report technology that gathers and sorts data using web-scraping techniques. Data in this article was extracted from their system on 14 November 2019.

The [Modern Slavery Registry](#) is held by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. It is a free public resource that aims to increase transparency and accountability by tracking statements published under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Data are collected through manual investigation and submissions made by organisations and members of the public. The registry tracks the number of statements and number of companies and whether they meet the minimum requirements set by the Modern Slavery Act 2015. A small number of companies have published a statement that refers to a time period longer than a year. These have not been included in the data in this article. Data was extracted from their system on 11 November 2019 and refer to statements that reflect a financial year that ends in the time period stated. If no date was found in the statement, the time point when the statement was identified by the Modern Slavery Registry is used.

Data from TISC report and the Modern Slavery Registry are not classified as [official statistics](#).

Previous methodologies

Previous attempts have been made to measure the number of victims, and there are currently two well-known estimates available. However, neither accurately reflect the current extent of the crime.

Multiple system estimation review

In 2014, the Home Office produced an [estimate of the scale of modern slavery in the UK](#). They estimated there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2013. To quantify the number of potential victims, the Home Office used a multiple systems estimation (MSE) approach. The method analysed the overlap between victims of modern slavery that came to the attention of various sources (for example, police forces and government organisations) and used this to estimate the “dark figure” (those victims that had not come to the attention of any of the sources used).

For various reasons (for example, data quality, model assumptions and the intrinsic variability of the multiple systems method used), there is considerable uncertainty in the estimates produced by the model. Repeating the method using slightly different model assumptions can produce differing estimates and as such, a lack of confidence in the reliability of each figure. Another issue with repeating the method surrounds the availability of the data. For example, the data collection method used at the time no longer exists. In addition, since 2014, new data sources have been introduced (the duty to notify process). These data are anonymous and cannot be used in the MSE approach as it relies on matching cases at record level across data sources.

While the MSE approach provided valuable insight, which was useful at the time in setting an overall landscape for the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), its dependence on administrative data from sources where potential victims had already been identified means that it does not necessarily represent the true extent of modern slavery in the UK. Because of the hidden nature of modern slavery, it could well be the case that many victims are not even detectable within the data sources. Given this and the methodological practicalities discussed, reproducing the estimate would be complex and the outcome would not be hugely beneficial towards combatting modern slavery in the UK.

Global Slavery Index review

The latest [Global Slavery Index](#) released in July 2018 by the Walk Free Foundation estimated the number of victims of modern slavery in 167 countries including 136,000 in the UK. The Walk Free Foundation states there is no single source providing data that are suitable for the measurement of modern slavery. The methodology used for their national estimates combines multiple sources (surveys, risk factors and population data). The surveys are conducted in 48 countries and aim to estimate the prevalence of victims of forced labour and forced marriage in those countries. Other aspects of those countries are used to build a statistical model that identifies correlations between various risk factors and the estimated prevalence of modern slavery. The risk factors are then used to give predicted prevalence rates for all countries, not just the original 48 countries.

The Walk Free Foundation has published separate data that show that the estimates for individual countries are subject to very wide error intervals. Furthermore, none of the 48 countries in which surveys were conducted are anything like the UK because there are no surveys for any country in Western Europe, North America or the developed part of Asia. This means any prediction rests on the assumption that the risk factors and predictions can be reasonably extrapolated to countries quite different from those in the original sample. In addition, the Walk Free Foundation's estimate for the UK is obtained by averaging their predicted total with the figure found by the Home Office using an MSE approach.

As part of a delta 8.7 [symposium](#) discussing this methodology, Sir Bernard Silverman's submission, [Demonstrating Risks is Not the Same as Estimating Prevalence](#), highlighted concerns with this method. While the Walk Free Foundation's work is important in identifying risk factors, especially in countries with much higher likely prevalence than the UK, the specific estimated number of 136,000 victims for the UK cannot be regarded as at all accurate or reliable.

The Walk Free Foundation are continuing to develop their prevalence estimates and have now expanded their global survey programme to over 70 countries. This data will underpin the next edition of the Global Slavery Index. In addition, research is underway to develop regional-level risk models to strengthen their understanding of country-level predictors, which are used in the estimation of country averages in the Global Slavery Index.