


Analysing Bedfordshire's  
response to sex-trafficking  
and proposing new  
ways forward.

# Bridging the Gaps

**2020**

Azalea 

| [www.azalea.org.uk](http://www.azalea.org.uk)

“Through this crime everything was taken from me, my control, my dignity, my future, my voice. I became hidden.”

**Sophie**  
*Trafficking Survivors*

We work with the vulnerable, exploited and trafficked.

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# Research Information



This report is designed primarily as a community led research report focused on the Bedfordshire area. Although the report is well-grounded in wide reading around the subject of sex-trafficking, there is very little information or data on the specifics of sex-trafficked women in the Bedfordshire area.

Given the specific task of this report, our findings have been in large part informed by multiple interviews with key stakeholders in the area of tackling sex-trafficking in Bedfordshire county. We have also interviewed people outside of the Bedfordshire area where we feel they have a 'best practice' model that we would like to learn from and apply in part to our recommendations for best practice in Bedfordshire.

Report recommendations are based on a gap analysis informed by stakeholder interviews. A gap analysis is a comparison between actual performance and potential performance. Recommendations can be broadly broken up into two segments. The first is the core of our findings and revolves around the formation of the Advocate Model, which is a suite of services provided to female Victims of sex-trafficking. The services were carefully composed to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation of the Victims. The second segment is focused on ancillary measures, assisting key stakeholders to become increasingly informed and effective in their efforts to support Victims of sex-trafficking.

## | What Azalea is

Azalea is a charity that has been operating since 2008 in Luton. Azalea reaches out to those that are sex-trafficked and trapped in commercial sexual exploitation, supporting them to build new lives.

Azalea's three core projects tackle the devastating damage caused to individual lives and communities by commercial sexual exploitation:

### **Encompass**

Caring for and supporting exploited women

### **Flint**

Mentoring exit for sex buyers

### **LASE (Luton Against Sexual Exploitation)**

Finding local community solutions

In addition, we are in the process of establishing the **Tamar project** which will work with trafficked women; and Through our Transplanting Programme, we equip and mentor others to care and support all trapped in commercial sexual exploitation. Azalea is also a founder member of **FACES**, which is an interfaith partnership in Luton tackling child sexual exploitation.

## | Aim of the report

The overarching aim of the report is to initiate a response that focuses on the empowerment of Survivors. The report will identify contextualised and achievable recommendations, based on a gap analysis, for those involved in the protection of sex-trafficked women in the Bedfordshire area.

## | Who we are

### **Rebekah Darnell**

Rebekah Darnell has a background in international community development working in both Cambodia and Greece. Having become aware of an increase of sex-trafficking in Greece, she decided to pursue a career in Law specialising in International Criminal Justice. She is pursuing legal studies whilst working at Azalea, a frontline charity. She has 2 1/2 years' experience supporting commercially sexually exploited women through outreach services and

working with partner agencies such as the Police.

### **Sharon Mansour**

Sharon has a background in paediatric nursing and went on to get an MSc in Global Development Management. She has worked for the NHS and in the NGO/charitable sector. Sharon has worked as a consultant as part of a grant writing team and has performed research for her dissertation and for multiple grant applications.

## Lloyds Bank Foundation

This report could not have gone forward without generous funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation. We are grateful for the good faith they have shown us, their encouragement and flexibility as we navigated the COVID lockdown.

## Who we interviewed

### **Ruth Robb**

Chief Executive Officer of Azalea

### **Karen Sampey**

Trauma Counsellor

### **Victoria Sutton-West**

Sustainability Ambassador for Responsible Gateway Heathrow Airport

### **Victoria Marks**

Director and Solicitor Anti-Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit

### **Katie Dounias**

Detective Inspector Central Intelligence Bureau Operations Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Lead

### **Chris Elliott**

Border Force Senior Officer Luton Airport

### **Kate Hardman**

Ex-Modern Slavery Advocate

### **Monica Boseff**

Open Door Foundation Romania Executive Director

### **Captain Annmarie Gifford**

The Salvation Army Faith House Project

### **Veroniki Cherneva**

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Coordinator Bedfordshire Police

### **Kathryn Halloway**

PCC of Bedfordshire

### **Justine Currell**

Director of Unseen Deputy PCC of Bedfordshire

### **Cristinia Huddleston**

Justice and Care

### **Lara Bundock**

Chief Executive Officer The Snowdrop Project

### **Minke van Til**

Co-Director Ella's House

### **Nasreen Mohsin**

Border Force Higher Officer

## Foreward

Azalea has been at the forefront of addressing sexual exploitation of women in the UK for many years.

They are constantly evaluating what they are doing and how they are doing it so they can improve their work.

The area of Luton where they focus their attention is a high risk vulnerable area for sexual exploitation. Others could learn a great deal from the way Azalea work and their transparency. Although they need to maintain the confidentiality of their clients they are open to others learning from what they themselves have learnt, sometimes the hard way.

A core component of their work has been relationships. Each person is seen as a person of inherent value and as such is worthy of the best possible care. Another component is longevity. Once they develop a relationship with a survivor they will continue to be available for as long as the person requires it.

This research is a pulling together of information gathered from a wide range of key stakeholders many of whom have been working at the 'coalface' and who have a good understanding of what is happening now and how trends are rapidly changing with modern technology. Their opinions are often cross referenced alongside other similar quotes from other stakeholders which helps to strengthen the readers understanding of the issues as well as the potential ways forward.

The report has been carefully laid out so that the information is visually pleasing and easy to read and digest.

I commend this report to you and hope that others can learn from the outcomes for their own policy and programs.

Glenn Miles PhD

# Key Terms

## | What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking has three central elements as defined by the United Nations in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol:

### The Act

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.

### The Means

By means of the 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

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, 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.<sup>1</sup>

For a list of indicators present in situations involving human trafficking please see **Appendix 1**.

## | Victim/ Survivor

Throughout the literature on sex-trafficking, the terms 'Victim' and 'Survivor' are used interchangeably. The ethos of Azalea is to refer to women at any point in the process as Survivors, thereby giving them agency. However, for the purpose of this report and the accuracy of the literature used, the two terms will be used interchangeably.

## National Referral Mechanism

“The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is defined by the Home Office as: “a framework for identifying Victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support.”<sup>2</sup>

The process to decide whether an individual has been human trafficked has two stages: first a reasonable grounds decision has to be made and then a conclusive grounds decision. When a Victim of trafficking has been identified first responders will refer their case to the NRM, unless the Victim opts not to be referred. Cases are assessed by the Single Competent Authority (SCA), which receives NRM referrals. Within 5 days, a person will be given a negative or positive reasonable grounds decision that they have been trafficked. The threshold for the reasonable grounds stage is “from the information available so far I believe but cannot prove” that the individual has been trafficked.

The NRM grants a minimum 45-day period for Victims of human trafficking if they receive a positive reasonable grounds decision. In the

45-day period a Survivor will be given access to relevant legal advice, accommodation, protection and independent emotional and practical help. The threshold for conclusive grounds is on the balance of probability “it is more likely than not” that the individual has been trafficked.

After the 45-day period, the Survivor will be found to have either positive or negative conclusive grounds that they are a Victim of trafficking. If they receive negative conclusive grounds they won't receive government assistance and are found by the Home Office to not be a Victim of Human Trafficking.

Once a conclusive grounds decision has been made (positive or negative), the individual will no longer be in the NRM system and they lose the support they were given through the system.

**For more information please visit:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>

## What do we mean by Frontline Services?

Frontline Services are professionals that have direct contact with women that have been sex-trafficked either before their identification or after. This could include doctors, Airport staff, lawyers, NGO's, local authority, fire services and the Police. It is good to recognize that even services such as doctors surgeries,

that aren't specifically designed to combat trafficking, have a role to play in supporting the women and are on the frontline.



The best and safest way for Survivors to extricate themselves from harmful situations or relationships is by personal choice.<sup>3</sup>

*- Helen Bamber Foundation (2018)*

# Executive Summary

Over the past few years, Azalea has been increasingly concerned with sex-trafficking crimes occurring in Bedfordshire. Azalea has a unique perspective into the world of sex-trafficking as we work closely with women who are on-street commercially sexually exploited. Through these relationships, Azalea has gathered first-hand reports suggesting an increasing number of international women are working in the off-street scene (i.e brothels, hotels and private residences) in Bedfordshire. In 2019, the Lloyds Bank Foundation commissioned Azalea to undertake a piece of research detailing the scope of sex-trafficking in Bedfordshire and in particular the efficiency of the frontline response.

Our overarching aim of the report is to initiate a response that focuses on the empowerment of Survivors.

This research has been done through literature reviews and stakeholder interviews. We collated the information gathered, identified common themes and gaps and used these to shape our recommendations. Interviews were conducted face to face where possible. However, with the obvious limitations of the COVID pandemic, many later interviews were over teleconference. All the interviewees were sent consent forms and copies of the questions in advance. A copy of the questions used to guide our interviews can be found in **Appendix 2**.

This report identifies a willingness from all parties involved to see the response to modern-day slavery in the Bedfordshire area improved. We were able to identify major gaps in the response and propose recommendations including the implementation of an Advocate Model which has been successfully tested by

other organizations around the country.

The report also identifies a set of recommendations under the heading of “Supporting Recommendations”. These are recommendations for frontline responders including training, raising public awareness and the creation of a short-term action group.

This report was written with the inclusion of as many stakeholders in the Bedfordshire area as possible. However, not all parties contacted responded, leaving some gaps in information. We are keen to develop our understanding in these areas and this reinforces the ancillary recommendations for increased active partnership working across the county.

Nearly two hundred years after Britain formally abolished slavery, the terrible crime of holding another human being enslaved is still widespread here. Modern slavery is hidden from view even though it is all around us.”

– Lord William Hague

## Part I: The Bigger Picture

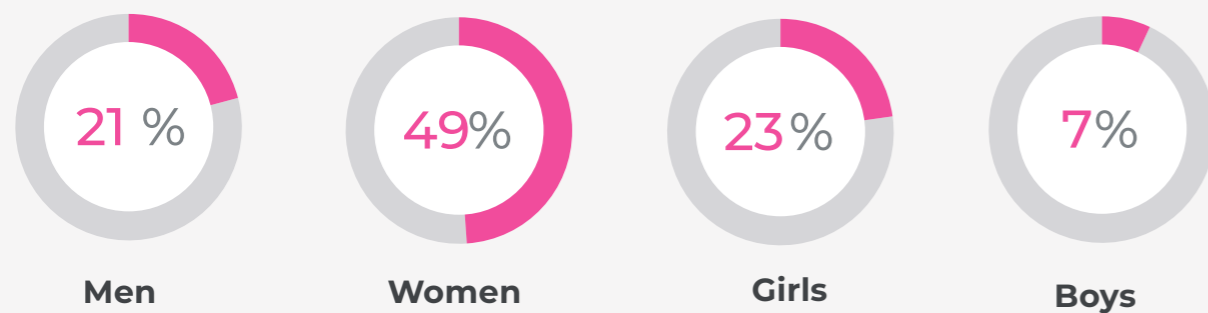
Although this report is focused on the Bedfordshire area, trafficking is always a part of a larger national and international picture. Trafficking generally crosses international borders and is therefore considered an international crime. For this reason, we are including a brief outline of the international and national picture as relevant.

### Internationally

The statistics and information from this section were taken from the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2018), produced by the United Nations.

Globally the number of detected Victims of human trafficking has risen, though it is unclear whether this is due to an increase in trafficking itself or greater efficiency in identifying Victims. In 2018 more Victims were detected than ever before, with a 40% increase of human trafficking cases from 2011 to 2016. Of this figure, more than 70% of the Victims are female, with an increasing number of female minors being identified. (See Appendix 3)

The global average of the make-up of Victims are



Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the most predominant form of global trafficking currently detected, accounting for 54% of all forms of trafficking. Females represent 96% of Victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

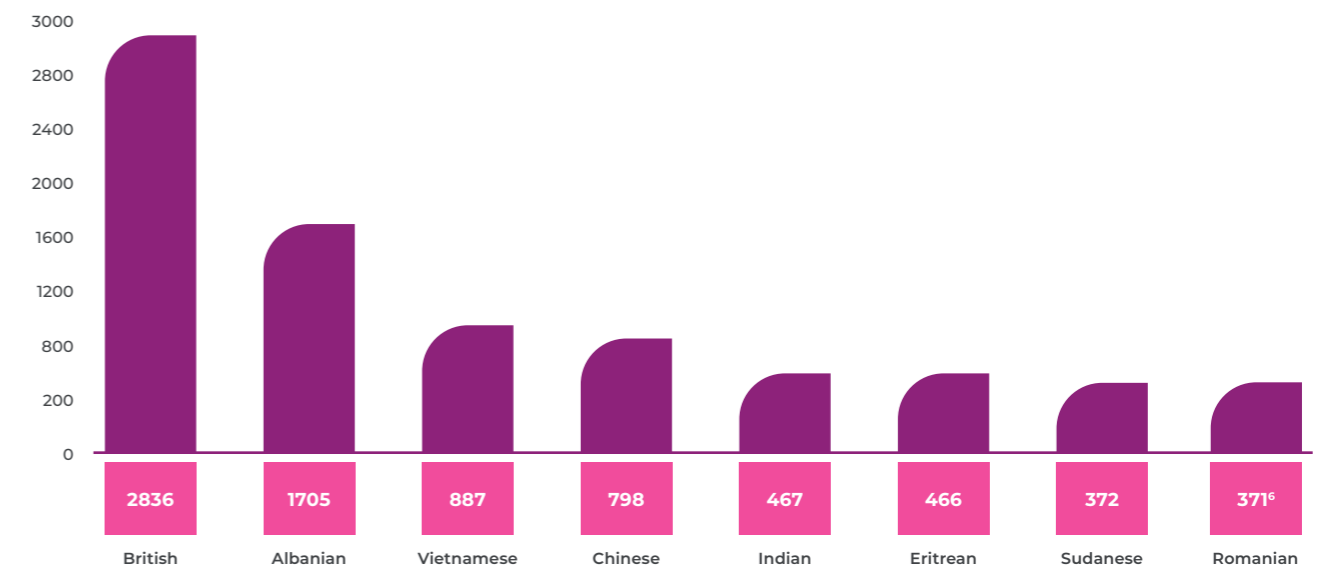
According to The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (2017), "Traffickers who exploit women for other purposes, such as forced labour, begging, and domestic servitude, commonly exert sexual violence over Victims as a means of coercion and control."<sup>5</sup> (See Appendix 4)

### Nationally

In 2019, 10,627 potential Victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM, a **52% increase from 2018**.

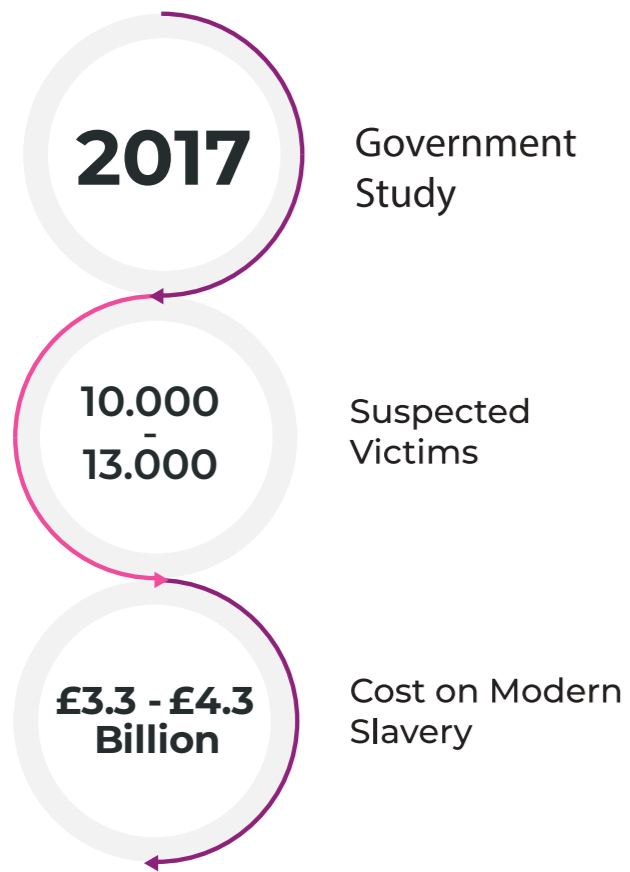
As was the case in the previous year, the majority of referrals to the NRM in 2019 were UK nationals, accounting for 27% (2,836)

of all potential Victims. The second most commonly referred nationality was Albanian (1,705 referrals) followed by Vietnamese (887 referrals). According to statistics produced by National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK in 2019, the following numbers of referrals were made:<sup>6</sup>





Although the above numbers are large enough, the recent report, from a frontline NGO, Justice and Care noted that “Nobody knows the true scale and cost of the crime, but based on a new Police data analysis tool we believe there could be at least 100,000 Victims in the UK, with the actual number likely to be even greater. According to a 2017 Government study, the economic and social cost of modern slavery was £3.3 billion – £4.3 billion, but this was based on their estimated prevalence of only 10,000 – 13,000 suspected Victims.”<sup>7</sup> (See Appendix 5)



“During research, we heard the same story from frontline workers who are hindered by the foggy national picture.”

The difficulty of obtaining comprehensive data throughout the research process emphasised the insurmountable challenge of obtaining an accurate picture of trafficking in any area. There is a lack of cohesive and reliable data and the crime of trafficking is largely a hidden one with complex international organised crime links. Each stakeholder we interviewed had a different piece of information, but even in bringing all information together, there is still an incomplete picture. Our findings are echoed by Justice and Care who found that:

“During our research across the country, we heard the same story from frontline workers who are hindered by the foggy national picture and the lack of reliable data. Several reasons explain this incomplete national picture, including the complex and hidden nature of modern slavery and the fact it is often interwoven with other crimes. There is also a serious lack in the technological ability to track it effectively.”<sup>8</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that the historically separate worlds of on-street and off-street exploitation are becoming increasingly integrated:

“There is some evidence to suggest that trafficked women are now being exploited in on-street prostitution in the capital, as well as off-street and that the nature of this exploitation is organised and controlled.

Evidence is also emerging that there is a cohort of women who are regularly moving back and forth between involvement in on and off-street prostitution, despite previous assumptions that those based on-street and those based off-street are two very disparate groups.”<sup>9</sup>

| Bindel et al. (2013)

# Bedfordshire and Luton

Bedfordshire has a complex make-up with multiple risk factors for modern-day slavery. London Luton Airport which is the nation's fifth-largest Airport, is located just outside of Luton and primarily serves low-cost airlines flying to Europe. The Airport is served by five associated hotels and hundreds of small hotels within a 10 mile radius. There are direct transport links into London and the M1 and Toddington Service Station in close proximity; both have been associated with the trafficking of people throughout the country:

“High-Risk Flights come through Luton Airport, with the highest number of low-cost flights from Eastern Europe in the country.”

| Chris Elliot, Border Force Senior Officer

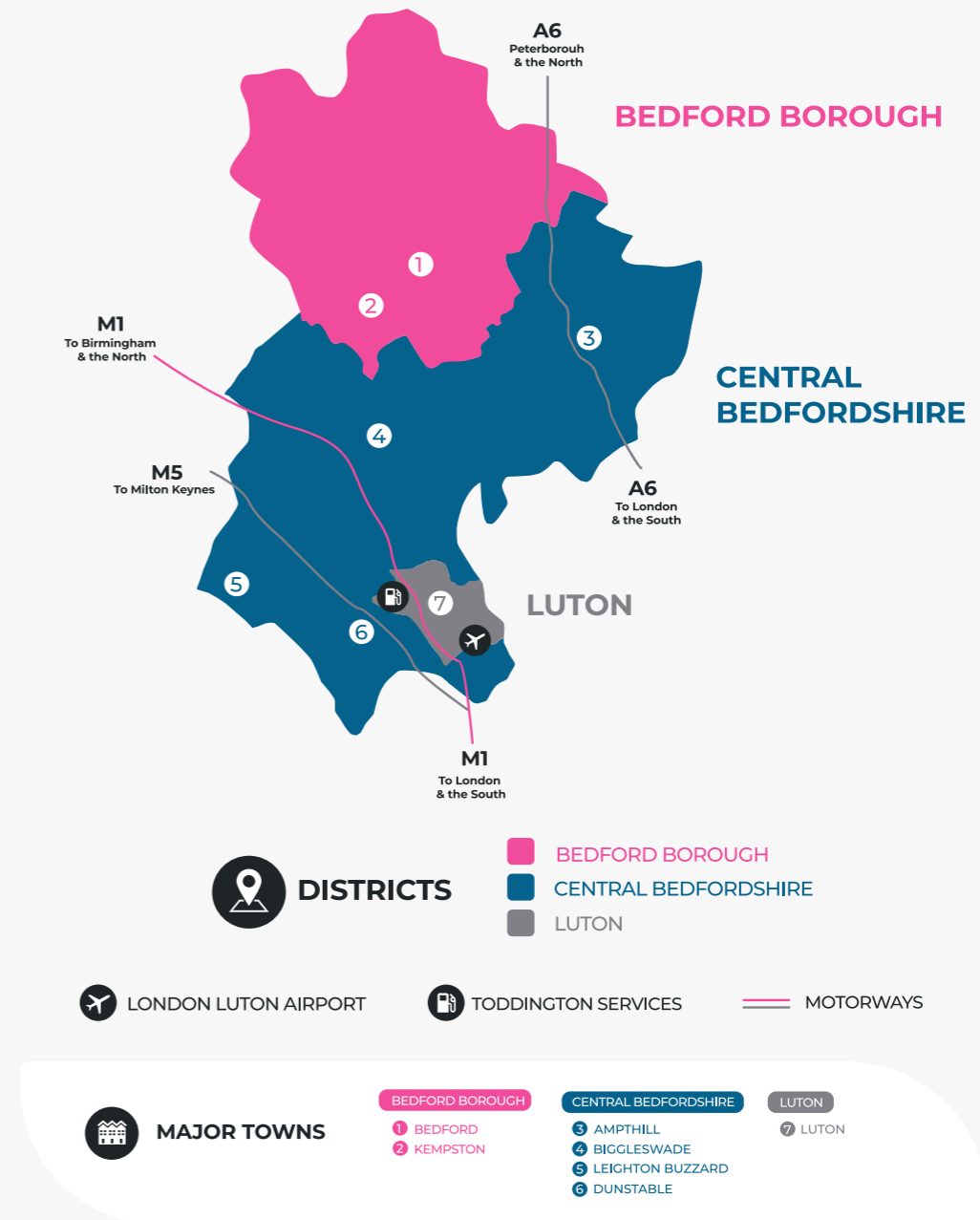
When examining crime across the three boroughs making up Bedfordshire County it becomes clear that Luton has the highest number of recorded crimes, meaning the Police in that area are already working at a high capacity. Although Bedfordshire Police are highly engaged with the battle against modern slavery in the county, it is a massively complex and time-consuming problem, with clear international organised crime links, making it challenging for any Police Force to handle in isolation. Additionally, Luton is in the bottom 25% most deprived areas in the country (Luton Government, 2019) with unemployment above the national average (Plumbpot, April 2020), putting further strain on social services and local infrastructure.

Detective Inspector Katie Dounias (modern slavery lead for Bedfordshire Police) – “The majority of Trafficking seen by Bedfordshire Police is related to sexual exploitation. We do investigate cases of labour exploitation as well as other forms of exploitation but sexual exploitation is by far more prevalent. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is almost certainly linked to organised crime in every instance. Pop-up brothels are common.”

Local stakeholder interviews and online research have shown a lack of infrastructure to support the Police and other related anti-trafficking stakeholders in the Bedfordshire area.

There are no county-based charities that are dedicated to supporting women who are trafficked. Currently, the only support available is through national support schemes such as the Modern Slavery Helpline and the Salvation Army. If a woman is identified as trafficked in Bedfordshire, she is sent to another part of the country where there are support services, most commonly she is sent to London. There are no known safehouses in Bedfordshire.

# Bedfordshire



“Bedfordshire is overlooked in terms of accommodation and support services”

| Justine Curell, Unseen

“Bedfordshire is a hotspot but it is under-resourced.”

| Justine Currel, Unseen

# Best Practice Principles

These best practice principles for support services are informed through stakeholder interviews and research. We have compiled them into five categories which we consider to be the most relevant to our recommendations.

## Partnership

No one organization can provide everything a woman will need in her journey to recovery. That is why long term, consistent and trusted partnership is key to providing the best service. In her journey, a woman will have multiple requirements including, but not limited to, safe accommodation, legal advice, counselling, social care support, a stable income and vocational training. To provide a robust and efficient care package, organizations will need to rely on each other and share information, enabling the best possible, holistic provision for the women.

**“Collaboration is key! No one organization should do everything. There are multiple skills needed. Work out where your niche is and do it well. Then partner with others to fill your gaps.”**

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

**“Multi-agency working is fundamental to the provision of appropriate care for Survivors and to the prevention of trafficking.”<sup>10</sup>**

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

## Trained Professionals

Whilst there is a time and a place for volunteer work in this sector, research has highlighted the need for trained professionals to be the main source of support in the Survivors journey. Trafficked women are highly vulnerable and the work is sensitive, requiring in-depth and ongoing training to ensure the safety of the worker and the Survivor. A paramount need for

the Survivor is consistency and safety which is difficult to achieve with an unpaid worker, due to their voluntary commitment generally being less than that of a full-time paid worker. Volunteers can act as ancillary support to professional workers, but they should never be the main point of support due to their lack of training, capacity and longevity. An auxiliary benefit to having professionals is the ability to vet, correct and enforce boundaries in the work in a way that would be inappropriate with a volunteer.

**“This kind of program can not function on volunteer work only. They need paid staff who are trained regularly.”**

| Monica Boseff

**“Believer in high-quality training. Sees this as central to doing the job well. This is technical work and the chance of secondary trauma is high.”**

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

## Victim-Centred

In a worst-case scenario, organisations will view a Victim's journey as a clinical exercise from moving the person from point A to point B in their systems. Whilst this method is efficient, it disempowers the woman. This is not the intention of the organisations but a lack of understanding and training creates this unintentional consequence.

The Victim-Centred approach recommended by multiple sources (Azalea; Helen Bamber, 2018, Human Trafficking Foundation, 2018) focuses on the women and not the aim or goal. A value underpinning this approach is empowerment. A Victim-centred approach is lengthy in nature, it cannot and should not be rushed or reduced to a one size fits all process. A Victim-Centred approach allows women to make their own decisions for their lives. The approach allows the woman to take each hurdle at her own pace and when she is ready and fully informed, irrespective of how long it takes.

**“Survivors must be placed at the centre of any decision-making process and support must be prioritised in accordance with their individual needs.”<sup>11</sup>**

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

**“Supporting Survivors to regain trust in their own ability to control their lives is a crucial step towards reducing their vulnerability and preventing re-victimisation.”<sup>12</sup>**

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

## Trauma-Informed

A trauma-informed approach to working takes into consideration the effects of traumatic experience and the devastating mental harm caused. The method ensures that at each stage of the Victim's journey every professional interacting with them is cognizant of trauma and the sensitivity, compassion and respect that is required.

According to the Helen Bamber Foundation in their report 'The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct' (2018) many Victims of trafficking develop mental health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Complex PTSD, anxiety and depression. The Victims' mental distress is rarely immediately visible as they have become experts at minimising, concealing or denying their own emotions as a survival tactic. One of the main obstacles to understanding how traumatic experiences have affected an individual is in the various ways the Victim may present their psychological distress. The spectrum of reactions from the Victim could range from panic attacks and shaking to detached hostility. If a professional is not aware that detachment and dissociation is an indicator of mental vulnerability, then it could be misconstrued as an unwillingness to escape their circumstances, which is the antithesis of what is occurring.

An understanding of trauma will also protect the professionals' own mental safety and well-being during the time they are supporting the women. Second-hand trauma and burnout are common occurrences in this line of work. Whilst mental harm to the support worker is not always avoidable, it could be better managed by proper training and boundaries within their job, leading to longevity and effectiveness for the support worker and ultimately a better service.<sup>13</sup> A trauma-informed approach also aims to reduce the re-traumatisation of Survivors by safeguarding against repeated disclosures or inappropriate responses by professionals.

"Working with traumatized women is a LONG-TERM process and people need explicit full-time training."

| Karen Sampey

## Holistic Longterm Support

The Holistic Support approach to recovery is predicated on viewing the woman as a complex being with multiple needs. She has physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual requirements as well as a host of other personal and contextual needs. Whilst addressing the physical safety and wellbeing of a Survivor of trafficking is crucial to her recovery, it should be held in balance with her other, perhaps less tangible needs. A holistic approach to recovery views the woman in her entirety, drawing together a unique care package that provides support for every aspect of her life and wellbeing. (Ruth Robb, 2020 and Human Trafficking Foundation, 2018)

"Integrated, appropriate support should be provided in collaboration with each individual person and must consider all aspects of their psychological, physical, spiritual, financial, legal and social well-being."<sup>14</sup>

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018).

"The best approach to support is by providing holistic care"

| Ruth Robb, Azalea

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appropriate support  
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social well-being."

*Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)*

# Case Study

## Amelia's story

Amelia\* grew up destitute in rural Ukraine with her mother, having never known her father. One day in her last year of school on the walk home she was taken by some male friends and gang-raped. From this point forward, Amelia's life became one of repeated sexual abuse and neglect, leaving her, at 31, alone on the streets with two young sons to care for.

At the age of 31, she was contacted online by a school friend who lived and worked in Amsterdam. Her friend offered her a job as a florist and she was told that she could live with her until she could get her own place. Her friend told her that she'd set her up with a friend of hers who was a travel agent who could help her get to Amsterdam.

Amelia was taken by bus to Poland and kept in a room without a mattress or windows for three weeks without food and water. She was repeatedly raped and abused by many different men. This was her preparation to begin work in the Red Light District in Amsterdam.

Without access to her documentation Amelia spent 9 and a half years working a window in the Redlight District. She never had access to her money and never had a day off. Every so often the Police would come to the windows to check up on her papers and her wellbeing. When they came in, she presented herself as a proud, confident and willing window worker, whilst on the inside, she told us "she was screaming for them to find something wrong on the papers or that anything was wrong, so they'd help her. She knew her documents were false and she prayed that the Police would see a mistake and take her out of the windows. They never did.

Amelia was manipulated by her traffickers to believe the Police were going to put her in jail and that the Dutch people were bad and didn't care about her.

It was only after the gentle intervention of a local NGO that Amelia gained the confidence and knowledge to leave the window. She now lives in her own apartment and is rebuilding her life in The Netherlands.

\* pseudonym used

## Part II: Key Findings

# Gaps

The following section details the gaps we identified in the current system.

## National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

After discussions with stakeholders and service providers, it became clear that the 45-day timeline of the NRM is rarely achieved. The evidence suggests that the average time a woman is in the NRM is around two years, which is due in part to a lack of capacity caused by under-resourcing. A gap exposed in the system was sending women identified in Bedfordshire to an already inundated London service since there is no county support system for them. The consequences of this are that these women join an already backlogged system, leading Victims to disengage and become disillusioned by the system, losing all confidence in organizational support. This disengagement can lead to destitution or re-trafficking. Research has also highlighted that the NRM isn't equipped to support women with complex needs. Victims that struggle with medical, mental health and addiction issues don't benefit from the current service provided.

"Clients had been waiting for 3 years, 2 years is the norm."

| Kate Hardman

"Victims often spend months or years in limbo until a decision is made; 80 percent of people referred to the NRM in 2019 were still waiting for a decision at the end of December 2019 (8,429 cases)."<sup>15</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

"A Victim with a lot of needs and complex situations (medical, mental health issues, addiction problems) will struggle to benefit from the NRM."

| Veroniki Cherneva

## Lack of Victim Engagement

The Irina Project (An American Human Trafficking Research Organisation) demonstrates in their research, the widely recognised obstacle to supporting women who have been sex-trafficked, is the ubiquity of Victim's outward lack of engagement with efforts to free her.<sup>16</sup> It is a well-known fact, reinforced by every frontline responder interviewed, that women will almost never self-declare that they are trafficked and can additionally present as uncooperative. This could be due to a variety of reasons, such as not trusting authority figures, Stockholm Syndrome, threats of violence to family members, naivety about their circumstances and seeing slavery

“Long term support is crucial for any Survivors recover without it you may as well not have been rescued at all.”

*Sophie, Snowdrop project  
(Trafficking Survivor)*

as their only option. The consequence of women either not self-identifying as trafficked or not cooperating with authorities is that many of them are released back to their traffickers and disappear into the void. Not only does this have dire effects on women's lives, but it also impedes the authority's efforts to gather information to use as evidence for convictions. When asked about this phenomenon, many of our interviewees spoke about how complex the solution is. A recurring concern in the interviews was that the women rarely felt safe enough to engage and share their experiences. To do this safely, they needed a long-term and trusting relationship with the person seeking the information, preferably someone who was completely distinct from persons of authority, such as the Police.

“It is very normal for a Victim not to disclose to a Police officer or frontline responder because of their perception and experience of men and the Police. Shame has a large part to play in this. There are a number of factors at play here, but a lot of it is to do with what they know- their worldview. There are factors keeping them silent such as intimidation, drug dependency and being in love with their captors”

| Karen Sampey

“Women will almost never self-disclose”

| Monica Boseff

“They do not trust the Police or authorities. Need to gain trust, but they are not willing to trust the Police. The first challenge is to build rapport and a good relationship”

| Veroniki Cherneva

“It's hard to get Victims to self disclose. They are naïve or trusting of the trafficker.”

| Chris Elliot

“Trying to fight UK slavery without accurate data and analysis is not working. Clearly this is one of the more hidden crimes, but unless we achieve a better understanding about the scale and nature of it across the UK, we will continue to under-invest and underestimate it. Organised crime will thrive for as long as this inadequate picture persists. We need a better grip on the reality of modern slavery.”<sup>17</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

## No long-term consistent support

Research has shown that there is a lack of long-term consistent support through the Survivor's journey. Support by Frontline Services is often short-term, sporadic and driven by the goals of the organisations involved. Whilst this serves a purpose, inconsistent and unstable relationships are detrimental to the Survivor's ability to build trust and feel safe. Victims will not disclose information easily and will not cooperate if they don't trust the person they are interacting with. The research found that continuity and consistency are key to establishing trust and therefore engagement.

The current channels of support, through the NRM, offer a one size fits all series of steps designed to help a broad spectrum of people. Offering a universal system of support to a broad spectrum of Victims is necessary. However, it eliminates the ability to focus on the individual needs of the Victims, especially if they have complex needs such as drug addiction or mental health. There is a gap of individualized care that is victim-centred and empowering.

There is little post-NRM support that focuses on helping Survivors integrate into society, become independent and have their dignity restored. Because of the sudden drop off of support at the end of the NRM, women are often left vulnerable, destitute and at risk of being re-trafficked.

“Long-term support is a further significant gap in the support system. In recent years a number of reports have concluded that lack of long-term support puts Victims of modern slavery at risk of homelessness, destitution and even re-trafficking after they exit the NRM support provision.”<sup>18</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

“There's often little continuity of support. Victims may not disclose information easily. It can be a long-term process, one to one, to build trust.”

| Victoria Marks, ATLEU

“We wish we had the time and resources to spend time with Victims, building trust and rapport. There is a need for a dedicated charity and volunteers for modern slavery.”

| Detective Inspector Katie Dounias

“It is difficult for commercial sex workers because the NRM works for such a limited time. We are usually working with women who have had years of abuse. It could be helpful for a very limited time- but it needs to feed into a long term support mechanism. More substantial, more individualized continued care needed.”

| Veroniki Cherneva

## Mental Health not Prioritized

A research project undertaken from London Universities, such as King’s College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, interviewed 150 human trafficking Survivors. The findings from the research were that almost 80% of women Survivors that were interviewed reported high levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD. The researchers spoke on specific aggravating factors when they said:

“Unadjusted odds of high levels of psychological symptoms were elevated among women who reported pretrafficking physical violence, sexual violence during trafficking, and, in the posttrafficking period, ongoing fear of the traffickers and increasing numbers of unmet social needs.”

The research concluded with “The findings of this study indicate that health care—including physical, mental, and sexual health care—must be a fundamental component of posttrafficking care”.

However, our research identified a significant gap in the involvement in the Victim’s journey by trained mental health care professionals. Through The Modern Slavery Act, Victims are entitled to counselling, but there are many barriers to this service being accessible to a majority of the women. Any woman that has complex trauma requires care that goes beyond the scope of what a standard counsellor can offer. The services in London are at capacity and a lack of interpreters is often an insurmountable obstacle to women receiving the mental healthcare they need.

“Serious mental health problems result from trafficking, including anxiety, depression, self-injurious behavior, suicidal ideation and suicide, drug and alcohol addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociative disorders and complex PTSD.”<sup>19</sup>

| American Psychological Association (2018)

“Most interpreters won’t go to counselling because it doesn’t pay. The counsellors will say that it’s too complex and refer them somewhere else. There is a long wait list.”

| Kate Hardman, Ex-Modern Slavery Advocate

## Absence of Legal Advice

Absence of Legal Advice presented as a recurring gap in Victim care. ATLEU, Justice and Care and The Snowdrop Project all emphasised how crucial good legal advice was to a Survivor and how little they saw it in reality.

Victims rarely, if ever, have a fully informed understanding of their legal rights and entitlements. Victims are entitled to legal aid but rarely access it, due to a lack of knowledge and/or legal advice. Advising them of their legal rights so that they can exercise them to their full extent is crucial to the empowerment of a Survivor. Good legal advice protects a woman, ensuring fair treatment and providing the full array of options open to her. If the woman has understanding that she is legally supported on her journey and that she is not in trouble, she is more likely to co-operate in criminal convictions of the traffickers. If there are more criminal convictions there are fewer traffickers and there is also more information on how they operate.

Legal Advocacy also provides the women with empowerment and vindication. A former employee of the current care contractor spoke about the tremendous hardship for Victims when they receive a negative conclusive grounds decision through the NRM. Women are often retraumatized when the veracity of their testimony is questioned by the Home Office.

“In 80% of cases the Victim did not want to support the Police investigation but within a month they had reversed their decision due to the intervention of the Justice and Care Victim Navigator. Demonstrating that good Victim support helps to support our justice system.”

| Cristina Huddleston, Justice and Care

“Survivors of trafficking need advice and support as early as possible. Getting legal advice early is essential, so they make informed decisions.”

| Victoria Marks, ATLEU

“A good Lawyer is essential for the women’s journey of recovery, if they are tied up in an immigration status battle, they can’t focus on moving forward.”

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

“Survivors of trafficking need advice and support as early as possible. Getting legal advice early is essential, so they make informed decisions”

*Victoria Marks, ATLEU*

“There is a huge training gap within the sector. Good quality training is desperately needed.”

Victoria Marks, ATLEU

## Lack of Training

Although research illuminated that a lot of good training was taking place, we also saw a chronic lack of training with many front line stakeholder organisations. It is essential for every person who interacts with the women on their journey to be sensitive and knowledgeable about trauma and how to interact with a sex-trafficked Victim.

The standard of support offered to women on their journey is often not acceptable. Multiple people and agencies interact with them with little or no training on how to communicate with and protect a vulnerable adult. Specific trauma training is even rarer in the field. This leads to the women being retraumatized through the process that is meant to support them. An example of an unacceptable practice is that women are expected to tell their story multiple times to strangers without adequate support, which often leads to retraumatization.

“Element of lack of understanding within Police”

| Detective Inspector Katie Dounias

“I received little adequate training at my previous employment.”

| Kate Hardman

## Limited Public Awareness

Bishop et al (2013) in their comprehensive study of Europeans’ awareness of human trafficking found that, generally speaking, the public does not easily recognise Victims of trafficking and is unaware of how to safely intervene or Advocate for them. Our interviews with stakeholders found this perception to be largely true in the Bedfordshire area.

It is important that the public understand the links between trafficking and commercial exploitation in all its forms. Fortifying ports, such as Luton Airport, against trafficking is essential. A porous border is a huge disadvantage in the fight against modern-day slavery. There is an identified gap in the public awareness of what modern-day slavery might look like in Luton Airport.

Although Border Force and Airport Police are responsible for disrupting the traffickers and assisting the women, they are doing this in tension with many other priorities. Additionally, there are many departments within the Airport who might have individual anti-trafficking training but they are not linked together and are certainly not linked to a public awareness campaign.

The Border Force does not currently work with Airport Hotels, but according to Spinks “Both human trafficking and travel are inherently global industries. Because of that, the former intersects with virtually every facet of the travel industry, including airlines, meetings and events, tour operators, but especially in hotels.” (2020).

There is little or no known modern-day slavery training that encompasses all elements of the London Luton Airport (Airport Hotels, Border Force, Airline staff, Airport services, Airport taxis etc). Individual departments do have mandatory training for modern-day slavery, but there is nothing consistently raising awareness and encouraging all departments and services to work together and with the public.

With up to 17 million passengers being served by London Luton Airport annually (International Airport Review, 2019) and 9,400 direct employees and up to 17,700 affiliated jobs, the pool of human resources at the Airport is vast and largely untapped. The lack of a joined-up media campaign that encompasses all facets of the Airport system is a major gap in the fight against trafficking in Bedfordshire.

“A lot of low-cost flights come through Luton from Eastern European countries, that makes it high risk to modern slavery”

| Chris Elliot

“Border Force would endorse a media campaign and find it beneficial to their work”

| Nasreen Mohsin

“The British public can play a unique role in the fight against trafficking by reporting concerns to the Police, but almost 60 per cent of people do not know who to tell when they spot the signs.”<sup>20</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

“30% of surveyed population confident of spotting the signs of slavery”<sup>21</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

The last survey on modern slavery showed people didn’t see the connection between aviation and human trafficking and that people don’t understand the connection between ports and human trafficking.”

| Victoria Sutton-West, Heathrow Airport



## Absence of Action-based Partnership

Multiple stakeholders expressed frustration at the lack of action in partnerships currently operating in the field of modern slavery. Good partnership was emphasised by a lot of the partners as the only way to operate in the field as no one organisation can fulfil all of the Victim's needs.

A large barrier to a Victim gaining independence and justice is the lack of communication between partners. The lack of communication slows down the process of gaining justice as mistakes need to be rectified and unpicked in order to proceed. If partners aren't working together in unison or in a timely manner then the Victim's journey can become stagnated leading to the Victim disengaging with support and potentially being vulnerable to exploitation once again.

"I think it's important to look at having more multi-agency type meetings. There are so many different professionals that a Victim is working with and this can cause disjointed information."

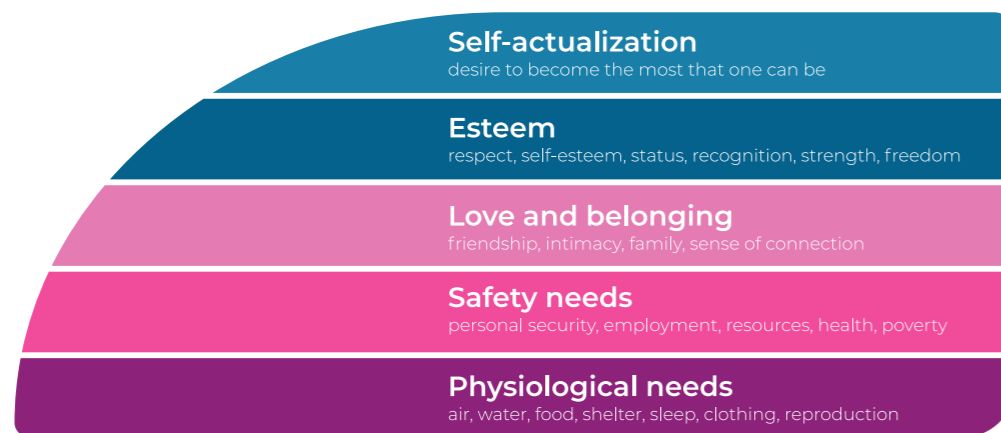
| Kate Hardman

"Who are the partners in the field that are doing things well- so can you partner with them? Collaboration is key! No one organization should do everything. There are multiple skills needed. Work out where your niche is and do it well. Then partner with others to fill your gaps."

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

## Designated County Respite House

Women that are trafficked need safe, stable accommodations before they should be expected to engage with any other proceedings such as their immigration status or Police investigations. As seen in the diagram below, a human will not be able to mentally move towards their safety needs if their foundational physiological needs are not met first.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 1943

There is no safehouse, or Respite House, in the Bedfordshire area or close by that is designated for Victims of trafficking. Currently women are being put in hotels by themselves or are being transported to already inundated London safehouses. This system is ineffective for both the Police and for the women. If a woman is put in a hotel by herself after a trafficking raid, it is highly likely that she will leave and be lost again to authorities. As you can imagine, the women will be scared, confused and potentially still under the influence of the traffickers' control resulting in her contacting the traffickers or a friend to "escape" from the Police. Not only is there a risk of flight, but being alone in an unknown environment is not a secure or safe situation for someone who is traumatised. Hotels are also often used by traffickers as a place where they arrange for clients to meet the women they are exploiting, thus putting a woman in a hotel if this has happened could trigger memories of their exploitation. Sending them to London is also equally inefficient as there is a real crisis of adequate accommodation for trafficking Survivors.

"Right at the first intervention, you need a safehouse/ place for Victims to stay. The council does not move quickly enough. Have somewhere they can be housed- like a home- cosy and safe. Where different agencies (not too many) have them there to engage over a period of days/weeks to work with the women to build a relationship with the Victim."

| Veroniki Cherneva, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Coordinator, Bedfordshire Police

## Safe Repatriation

Research has highlighted the difficulties and complexities in returning the women to their home countries. Many women are getting lost in transit or choosing not to go home because they are unaware of safe support services where they come from and that could assist them in re-integrating and healing.

"We need to develop firm partnerships in place that allow us to move them more quickly back to safehouses that we trust in their countries of origin. You still need the full contingent of staff in the UK that can quickly form a picture to send to their home country."

| Monica Boseff

"The process of returning suspected trafficked Victims to their home country from the border in the UK is highly ineffective." "We can not handle humans like we do a lost suitcase". They get calls all the time from UK Airports with solid evidence that the person has been trafficked, but they do not involve the Airport Police and the person is frequently "lost" in transit. "Happened 12 times in 2019."

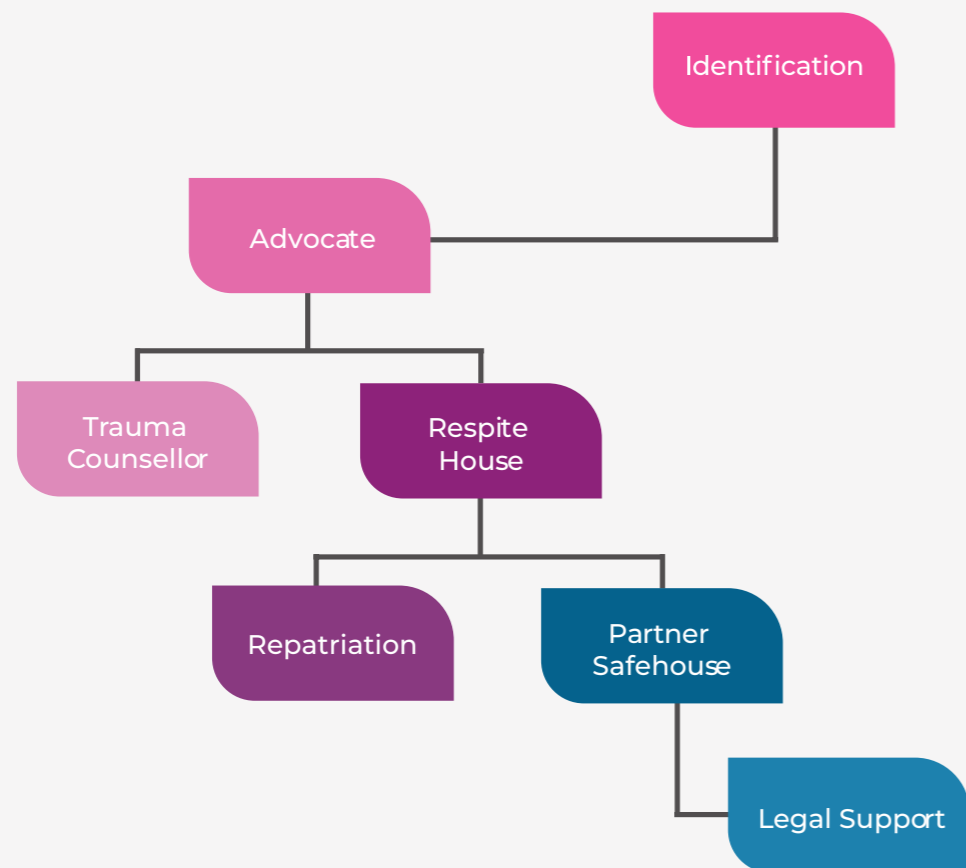
| Monica Boseff

# Core Recommendations

## The Advocate Model

In light of the above findings, we recommend implementing the **Advocate Model**, which is a suite of services that will be provided to female Victims of sex-trafficking. The model is a trauma-informed, Victim focused, holistic approach to supporting the Survivor.

An outline of the model is shown below:



Once a woman who is suspected of being trafficked is made known to the relevant authorities, she will be introduced to her Advocate.

### Example of avenues of referral to the Advocate:

- 1) Police, warrant etc.
- 2) Local Authority
- 3) Fire Department
- 4) Unseen/Salvation Army, other NGO's

In 2019 the majority (91%) of NRM referrals were investigated by Police forces in England. Police in Scotland received 5% of referrals, Welsh Police forces received 3% and the Police Service of Northern Ireland received less than 1%.<sup>22</sup>

## Advocate

Research has shown that long-term support is crucial for Survivors during their journey to recovery, and that is why the Advocate is the cornerstone of our model. With the consent of the Survivor, the Advocate will support her as a professional friend from her initial identification and throughout the rest of her journey in the UK until a suitable holistic solution is found.

### Advocates should have quite an extensive induction period including secondments for a day or up to a week in:

- The Police, modern slavery department (1-2 weeks)
- LLA (Luton Airport)
- NHS point of contact
- Border Force
- Azalea
- Trauma care introduction
- It would also be advisable for them to participate in one raid in which they will not be acting in the capacity of an Advocate so that in future they know what the women typically experience.

Advocates should have training inclusive of interaction/connection with experts in: trauma, social work, modern slavery legislation, Local Authority structure, legal systems and current modern day slavery legislation, self-care, orientation with key partners, drug and alcohol dependency, inter alia.

### The aims of the Advocate's role will be to:

- Create a safe, consistent and stable relationship with the Survivor, and stay with them from their initial declaration of being trafficked to reintegration into society
- Minimise the risk of re-traumatisation
- Provide the Survivor with access to a full and informed understanding of her rights and entitlements
- Reduce duplicate working, miscommunication and misinformation between services by providing a single point of contact
- Increase the Survivors confidence with the Police and Legal Systems with the hopes to increased participation in criminal convictions
- Act as a mediator with the Victim and partner agencies

### The role of the Advocate will involve:

- Pre- and post-NRM support and collaboration with the current government contractor of the NRM during that process, if they choose to stay in the UK
- Facilitating safe repatriation with partner agencies in home countries
- Working in partnership with key stakeholders and refer, where necessary, in order to provide a robust circle of support for the women
- Being a consistent, trustworthy figure for the women and assisting them to make informed and fully consensual decisions. The role will include an element of befriending and intentional relationship building
- Advocacy on behalf of the Survivor for her legal rights and entitlements such as permanent housing and benefits
- Creating a bespoke and empowering care package that supports her recovery, healing and reintegration into society
- Creating avenues for her to access ESOL and vocational training that could lead to dignified employment
- Liaise with the Police or lawyers on the Victim's behalf if they wish to engage
- Create a consolidated place for the Victim's case history, documentation and information

### Best practice Advocate care

Each interview we undertook, that referenced client contact jobs, emphasised the need for supervision and support. The role is high risk for secondary trauma and burn out due to the nature of what the women have experienced and the Advocate's close proximity.

“(The Justice and Care Victim Navigator, a role comparable to our Advocate) is directly supported by a team of specialists at Harley Street where they have expert counsellors in burn out and secondary traumatisation. The Navigators are also offered resilience tools and are equipped in how to manage the particular needs of a specific Victim. Justice and Care also work to identify the early signs of mental health problems having once a month one-on-ones with Navigators to help them manage their strengths and weaknesses. This is all alongside a weekly debrief meeting with all Navigators.”

| Cristina Huddleston, Justice and Care

“They provide therapy for all staff (once a month). Very passionate about the mental wellbeing of their staff.”

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

## National Referral Mechanism

If the woman chooses, she can go through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process.

The Advocate will support the Survivor through the NRM process working in close partnership with the current care contract provider. The Advocate provided to the Survivor through the NRM will focus on making sure the woman has an accurate decision regarding whether she has been trafficked and, therefore, is entitled to government support. The Advocate's role is more long term and will continue to provide support post-NRM. If the woman chooses to pursue legal action, the lawyer will continue to support them through the NRM process as well.

“The only truly effective way to obtain full, detailed and accurate accounts of trafficking histories is by establishing a working relationship of mutual trust.”<sup>23</sup>

| Helen Bamber Foundation (2018)

“Victims tend to struggle to trust the Police in the early stages of their rescue and recovery, but they will often engage with charities offering support.”<sup>24</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

“An Advocate could help ensure that copies of all documents that are related to their clients are kept in the same place and are able to be made available to the clients.”

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

“Their goal is always empowerment of the client - let them choose their life course.”

- Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop

# Case Study

## Sophie's story

Through this crime everything was taken from me, my control, my dignity, my future, my voice. I became hidden, from the years 2005- 2013 I was a statistic, a number within the figure of "potential Victims of Trafficking within the UK".

I spent years accepting that what my life had become couldn't and wouldn't ever change. It was impossible for me to speak out and nobody around me took any notice of the signs right in front of them.

However, I was extremely lucky to have been rescued four years ago, and all it took was one individual Police officer not to dismiss the signs and to look further than what you see on the surface. I then spent the standard 45 days in a safehouse. Although I am extremely grateful to have been in a safehouse, 45 days isn't enough time to establish the needs in each individual case let alone recover from them.

Long term support is crucial for any Victim's recovery. Without it you may as well not have been rescued at all. I spent the first two years of my recovery moving to four different places, all of which claimed to support Victims of Trafficking. Unfortunately, they did not have the knowledge and training so there was no recovery. Those two years were unbearable and as a result my mental health and physical health suffered hugely.

In July 2015, I hit the jackpot! The Snowdrop Project. The first charity to provide adequate and trained long term support. Having a support worker, counsellor and supportive community has changed my life drastically.

Being a Victim of Trafficking leaves its mark mentally and physically, four years on and I am still dealing with the effects of this crime but I have not had to do it alone. I found trusting anybody a challenge but Snowdrop never gave up. No matter what I was facing, feeling or doing they always stuck by my side and helped empower me to make the best decisions for myself. I cannot begin to tell you the impact and difference long term support has, but I can guarantee you that if I hadn't had it, I would not be here today.

This case study was given to us with permission from The Snowdrop Project.

## Respite House

After the initial meeting the Survivor will be encouraged to be accompanied by their Advocate to the designated county **Respite House**.

Research has shown that the primary need of a traumatized person, which a Survivor of trafficking almost certainly is, is physical and emotional safety. These needs are not being met in the current system of putting them in hotels or sending them to an inundated London. The women that are placed in hotels are left by themselves in a strange environment with little emotional support and the stay is only very temporary. A hotel environment is not conducive to making a woman feel safe and secure. We are addressing this gap by proposing a Respite House, which is a homely temporary accommodation that is staffed by women who will offer emotional and mental support to the Survivors.

A Respite House is central, in our minds, to facilitating Survivors in making informed, autonomous and consensual decisions regarding their future path. The Advocate will visit regularly to inform the Survivor of the avenues available to her for her journey to recovery and explain her rights and entitlements.

### Some basic principles for the Respite House would be:

- Women only
- At a location geographically removed from possible risk
- Security measures taken into account
- Everyone would have their own rooms
- It should be as homely and comfortable as possible
- There would be no uniformed officers allowed in the house
- The maximum length of stay would be two weeks. After the two weeks they would ideally be moved on to a more permanent safehouse (either nationally or abroad).

The idea for a Respite House is, as far as we know, a new one. As such the implementation and detail of it is beyond the scope of this report. However, we would recommend it be actioned by a short term task force (see Supporting Recommendations below) in the Bedfordshire area.

"Number one rule for someone with trauma is safety. If safety isn't established you CAN NOT work with them. Physical and emotional safety"

| Karen Sampey

"People who have been trafficked tend to not trust people in uniforms."

| Kate Hardman

"The need for physical shelter is an absolute priority. It is essential for Survivors' safety and well-being that they are not left homeless, or in manifestly unsuitable accommodation for any length of time."<sup>25</sup>

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

## Trauma Counsellor

Our recommendation is that a Trauma Counsellor be introduced as soon as a woman is located to the Respite House. This allows an appropriately trained professional to assess the Survivor's mental health needs and to provide professional care that is sensitive to her circumstances.

We would place the utmost importance on the mental health of a Survivor and would assert that this should be a priority of everyone that interacts with her. A lack of sensitivity, respect and professionalism in the early stages of a Survivor's journey can lead to devastating long-term effects.

Whilst the Advocate will be trained in basic trauma care, it is imperative that the Survivor is introduced to a Trauma Counsellor as soon as possible. A Trauma Counsellor is an expert in traumatised people and their responses. In cases of modern day slavery an expert level of knowledge in interaction with traumatized persons is essential.

The Trauma Counsellor will work with the Survivor with full compliance to confidentiality. However, as appropriate and with consent, they will be able to guide woman through appropriate disclosures with regard to civil and criminal prosecutions as well as navigating other systems requiring information about her background.

The aim of introducing this role into the Survivor's journey is to avoid retraumatization of the Survivor by making her recount her story multiple times to individuals who may not be trained in how to treat a vulnerable person. The Trauma Counsellor will work closely with the Advocate, who is her single point of contact for partner agencies.

It is important to emphasize that any sharing of the Survivor's information will be done with her full consent and knowledge.

Beyond the initial stage of collating her background information it is vital that the Survivor has access to a mental health professional throughout her recovery journey. The Survivor's mental health needs will be substantial and complex. An Ex-Modern Slavery Advocate suggested that a standard NHS counsellor would struggle to provide support to a Victim of sex-trafficking. Through the NRM, trafficking Victims are entitled to counselling but due to a variety of reasons and lack of capacity, there can be difficulties in accessing the mental health support they need.

*"Trauma is extremely complicated and all people deal with it differently. It is a LONG TERM process and people need explicit full-time training. Consistency is the most important part of this. If you have someone dipping in and out of this process you can keep destabilizing the Victim and it creates an unsafe environment."*

**Karen Sampey**

## Partner Safehouses

### Domestic

If the Survivor chooses to stay in the UK they will be moved from the Respite House to a more permanent safehouse with a partner agency. The partner agency and the Advocate will initially look at creating a safehouse that is designated for use by services in Bedfordshire, as there currently is none. The purpose of the safehouse is distinguished from the Respite House as it will provide long term accommodation and will therefore be designed differently. The Advocate will visit regularly and foster a trusting relationship with the woman, using the visits to empower and inform the Survivor of her rights and entitlements. The Advocate will create a care plan for the Survivor that will support her to reintegrate into society and independent living.

### Abroad

If the woman makes the decision to go to her home country then the Advocate will contact a vetted and trusted safehouse in their home country and support them in their journey to repatriation.

As a part of this report we interviewed the director of one such safehouse in Romania. She had been providing emergency shelter to Victims of trafficking for 8 years. The model employed by this particular safehouse included a lawyer, social worker, psychologist and security guards. This safehouse worked to reintegrate women into their local community with the ability to live independent lives. They also supported women in cases against traffickers and have been highly successful in securing convictions. The director of the safehouse was eager to work in partnership with authorities in the UK to assist in the repatriation of the women and also in aiding in prosecutions.

When a woman's home country is identified, we believe best practice is to notify the partner safehouse in the appropriate country. This means they are aware of the woman and can prepare and give advice regardless of whether she returns home or not. The director of the safehouse emphasized that the sooner the Survivor can get back to her home country, the better. She explained that they would be best placed to help the Survivor on the journey to recovery as they understand their culture and national nuances. As much as is deemed appropriate, the Advocate will work with the home country safehouse to encourage repatriation.

Once vetted and deemed credible, safehouses like the one in Romania should be added to Bedfordshire's network of partners. The safehouse will be informed as soon as a national from their country is identified and they will help with the process of successful repatriation. The preferred and safest way for a Survivor to be returned home is in the company of the Advocate who would ensure that the Survivor is received directly by an employee of the safehouse who would then take over care and rehabilitation.

“They get calls all the time from UK Airports with solid evidence that the person has been trafficked, but they do not involve the Airport Police and the person is frequently “lost” in transit from the UK to Romania. This happened 12 times in 2019.”

| Monica Boseff

“Good care does not necessarily mean Survivors need to stay in the UK. Many would welcome the opportunity to return home but lack support to make the journey safely, to recover when they return home or to keep in touch with Police investigations in the UK.”<sup>26</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

## Legal Support

At the domestic safehouse a specialized Lawyer will be introduced to the Survivor. Survivors of trafficking generally do not know how to Advocate for themselves within the British system, that is why a specialised Lawyer is crucial.

One of the values of the Advocate Model is the empowerment of the Survivor to make her own decisions. A vital component in her empowerment is giving her an opportunity to be informed of her legal rights and entitlements. Once she is informed of all the alternatives available to her, then she will be able to decide which route she wants to take and be empowered by being able to decide her own destiny. The alternative is that she will have little information or choice and simply feel like her life is still out of her control and is being decided by someone else. Early legal advice results in a quicker conclusion to legal problems facing her, which will result in a quicker path to stability for the woman as she won't have immigration or criminal issues looming over her life.

An important step for everyone is seeing traffickers being brought to justice. Seeing her traffickers being held accountable for their crimes could serve as vindication and empowerment for the woman. It is good for her to know that what happened to her was wrong. In order to have a successful criminal conviction the Survivor's involvement is key. With enough support and encouragement from the Lawyer and Advocate, the woman could be in a position to support the Police in their investigation and give key evidence to secure a conviction. Cristina Huddleston from Justice and Care spoke on this in our interview with her:

“in 80% of cases the Victim did not want to support the Police investigation but within a month they reversed their decision (there is a remaining 20% who say a definite no). This demonstrates that good Victim support helps to support our justice system.”

| Cristina Huddleston, Justice and Care

“If the Survivors don't want to engage with the investigation there is very little the Police can do to build a case. So if they are building a case without information from the Victim, then the investigation is based on secondary evidence and it becomes much more difficult.”

| Veroniki Cherneva

### The Lawyer's role involves providing advice on:

- Immigration, including asylum claims
- Seeking compensation from the state for Human Rights Act breaches
- Bringing compensation claims against traffickers (in the Employment Tribunal or High Court)
- Welfare entitlements
- Long term housing solutions
- Adult social care services
- Family Law where there have been instances of domestic violence
- Public Law including unlawful detention
- Criminal Law

If the woman chooses to engage with the NRM then the lawyer will support her through that resource, challenging the process and advocating for the woman if necessary.

“Early legal advice will mean that issues are more likely to be resolved early on, potentially preventing cases ending up in costly litigation and unnecessary trauma. Support providers should help outline the options, the process and make and support referrals for Survivors who would like specialist legal advice on their options.”<sup>27</sup>

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

“Victims cannot access free immigration advice before entering the NRM as legal aid is not available. This means that many Victims do not understand how entering the NRM will affect them. This means many Victims are not genuinely in a position to give ‘informed consent’ and others are too fearful to enter the system at all.”

| Victoria Marks, ATLEU

“Far too many criminals run riot, trafficking vulnerable people in and out of the UK, and within our communities. Until we significantly increase prosecution and conviction rates, they will continue to consider trafficking and slavery as a low risk, high return activity. Working with our regional and global partner countries, we need a renewed focus at our borders, across Police investigations and in our justice system.”<sup>28</sup>

| Justice and Care (2020)

# Case Study

## Emina's story

'Mergim was my first boyfriend. We got talking after he hung around my school. I was very shy but he gave me a phone and we started talking more and more. One day he kissed me and we were seen by a neighbour. My family was furious. My father hit me and shouted, saying he disowned me and that I'd brought shame on the family. Then he tried to get me to marry an elderly man that I hardly knew because he needed the money to pay his gambling debts.

'Mergim said that if I loved him I would come to live with him. I did not want to be forced into marriage with a man I did not love or even know. I felt I had no choice. Mergim picked me up the next day and drove me to another country. He took me to a hotel. Once we were inside our room he locked the door. He told me I had to work as a prostitute and this would be my future. I was in shock and refused but then he started beating me. He locked me in the hotel room for two days with no food until I gave in. 'He made me start working that night, having sex with clients that we met in the bar. There were other girls working for Mergim and when one tried to leave, he cut her face. Then Mergim took us back to my country and made us work as prostitutes there too. One day I escaped and went to my aunt's house but he found me and threatened my aunt with a gun, saying I was his property. He forced me to carry on working but my aunt helped me to plan how to leave. One day I took my chance and escaped. I travelled by plane and then in a lorry to the UK. When I got here I claimed asylum. I was 17 years old.'

When Emina came to ATLEU she was waiting for a decision on her asylum claim and to find out if she would be accepted as a Victim of trafficking. The government turned down Emina's trafficking case. ATLEU challenged their decision and threatened to take the government to court because the decision had not been made properly and they had failed to consider that Emina was trafficked when she was just a child. A little over a week later, the government agreed to reconsider her case. 'I was very upset when the government didn't accept me. I was crying the whole time because they did not believe me. When you sent the appeal and we got the decision I was very pleased. I felt like the government was taking the case seriously and that I had another chance.'

Emina has very severe and complex post-traumatic stress disorder because of her exploitation. She also became pregnant and had nothing for her baby so friends of ATLEU donated a van full of newborn essentials. Our volunteer Radha was on the phone with Emina when she went into labour and called the ambulance when the time arrived. After a long wait, the government decided that Emina was a Victim of trafficking and has granted her refugee status. This means that Emina can now finish her education and hopefully go to university where, one day, she would like to study accountancy or law. Most importantly, Emina and her child now live in safety.

*This case study was taken from the ATLEU Annual Report 2017.*

## Long-term Support

A Victim-centred approach emphasises and encourages a person's individuality by providing bespoke care packages and support that is based on that woman's wants, desires and hopes for the future. Each person is unique and this is not invalidated once someone has been trafficked. In many cases of trafficking, a person is violated to the point that they don't know what they want or need or have the ability to express their desires or thoughts. They are subjugated, either by the Trafficker as a control tactic or by themselves as a survival mechanism. Tailoring the care package to the Victim's choices and respecting her decisions for her own life empowers the woman and helps restore her self-belief.

Each person is unique and so each care package should be unique. The main priorities for every person will be ensuring that they receive appropriate housing and benefits, so that they can have their basic needs met. Once those needs have been met the Advocate will work collaboratively with the woman to create a care package that supports the woman into independent living. The care package would include things like English lessons, skill training, volunteering and long-term counselling. The support will end where deemed appropriate by the Advocate where they can see that the woman can function on her own two feet. We anticipate that this will be a long-term journey and will range over many years.

**"Their goal is always empowerment of the client- let them choose their life course."**

| Lara Bundock, The Snowdrop Project

**"Supporting Survivors to regain trust in their own ability to control their lives is a crucial step towards reducing their vulnerability and preventing re- victimisation."<sup>29</sup>**

| Human Trafficking Foundation (2018)

# Supporting Recommendations

Through our research we have identified three preventive measures that could be put in place to best equip and inform frontline stakeholders in their work to combat sex-trafficking.

## Robust and Widespread Training

We have encountered a chronic lack of understanding of trauma and how to support a Victim of sex-trafficking amongst frontline workers. We have identified through our interviews a lack of prioritising training for support workers and frontline responders. Kate Hardman, an ex-modern slavery Advocate, said that the organisation she used to work for only provided a week of shadowing as their training. However, that was not sufficient enough to be prepared and enable her to do her job to a sufficient standard. Training will not only prepare and equip staff to know how to respond appropriately to Victims but it will also assist in safeguarding the welfare of the service providers.

According to the Human Trafficking Foundation, training to work frontline with Trafficking Survivors should include a comprehensive introduction in each of the following areas:

- “Equality, Diversity and Non- discrimination;
- Health and Safety;
- Accepting and making referrals;
- Informed consent;
- Disclosure and confidentiality;
- Data protection and GDPR compliance;
- Professional boundaries;
- Risk identification and management;
- Supporting and safeguarding vulnerable adults and children;
- Working with service users with particularly complex needs;
- Working with interpreters;
- Staff support and care, including risks of vicarious traumatisation for staff;
- Human trafficking and modern slavery;
- Asylum and immigration systems;
- Entitlements under Article 12 Council of Europe Convention for Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- A trauma-informed approach to working with and supporting trafficked people and use of the trauma-informed code of conduct;
- Welfare rights and entitlements;

- Working with the Police and criminal justice system (including rights of witnesses);
- Working with local authorities and the role of a local authority's statutory duties and powers; around safeguarding and support;
- Long term support planning.”<sup>30</sup>

“It is also vitally important when working with vulnerable people who have been through such a high level of trauma that you have the right training or knowledge. From my own experiences, I found the places I lived that didn't have it were more detrimental to my long-term recovery compared to Snowdrop where because of their knowledge and training I have been able to grow in independence, confidence and strength with the ability to now make choices for the future I have back.”

| Sophie, The Snowdrop Project

## Action-based Partnership

One of the underlying values of the report and our desired outcome is that the response should be through action-based, trusting, collaborative partnership. Common feedback amongst stakeholders was that there was a lot of talk and no action in the already existing partnership within the Bedfordshire network. That is why the recommendations from this report are specific actions that can be shared and implemented by a range of partners. Azalea is planning to launch a short-term task force that will focus on implementing the recommendations that will coincide with the launch of the report. We will invite key stakeholders that we see as best-placed to support the recommendations to come to fruition. Our hope is that this will produce long-term action-based partnership in Bedfordshire and a robust response to sex traffickers that does not rely on one organisation.

## Public Awareness Campaign within Luton Airport

We would strongly recommend that Luton Airport partners with a human trafficking charity to run a similar campaign to Heathrow's “Can you see me?” media campaign. Listed below are several of the reasons why London Luton Airport has been highlighted as a high-risk port.

- In the U.K. London Luton is the highest recipient of multiple, daily, low-cost flights from Europe;
- The Airport has multiple transportation links, making it easy to move Victims quickly;
- The socio-economic make-up of the area and unemployment rates;
- Higher crime rates in Luton.

We feel the Airport has an untapped resource in the general public who could aid them in their efforts to combat trafficking. A well thought through media campaign highlighting the correlation between aviation and trafficking could mobilize the general public, heighten awareness and increase referrals to frontline responders.



Our gap analysis highlighted the general public as being generally ignorant or misinformed of the connection between Airports, human trafficking and indicators of which to be aware of. By raising the awareness of human trafficking in the Airport through films, posters and information stands there would be the dual benefit of raising awareness within the general public, utilizing them as a resource, while additionally demonstrating to traffickers that the Airport is vigilant in prioritizing the protection of Victims and the prosecution of perpetrators.

Currently the Police and Border Force bear the sole weight of tackling the issue, whilst having to balance other priorities such as terrorism, drug trafficking and immigration violations. By creating an informed and alert general public, the Airport can utilize the larger human resources of the Airport, including travellers and Airport staff, thus creating a larger net of vigilance. A well-executed campaign could be the tipping point in the general public reporting what they've seen to appropriate authorities as opposed to walking away.

#### **Catalyst for action for many who would not normally respond**

“Public awareness is key, as well as building awareness within specific sectors (i.e. taxi drivers, although reactions and receptivity vary)”

| Victoria Sutton West, Heathrow Airport

“Key partnerships that need to be in place: Getting everybody on board within the Airport.”

| Chris Elliot, Border Force Senior Officer, Luton Airport

“High Risk Flights come through Luton Airport. Low cost airlines from eastern Europe. They get the lowest cost eastern European flights than any other Airport.”

| Chris Elliot, Border Force Senior Officer, Luton Airport

"Slavery is theft - theft of a life, theft of work, theft of any property or produce, theft even of the children a slave might have borne."

- *Kevin Bales, Co-Founder of Free the Slave*

# Report Summary

Sharon Mansour and Rebekah Darnell have been working together on a community-based research report evaluating how to best support women trapped in sex-trafficking in regaining their freedom. The best practices explained in the report are key to the findings and recommendations presented, for example, expediency should never be prioritised over empowerment. The key findings are the gaps discovered and recommendations are how we best see these gaps being filled.

## Key findings

Our key findings were manifold, from the systemic lack of support through to misunderstanding of the system and a lack of capacity to help people navigate what is now a multiple stakeholder, complex and political process. The report demonstrates that the current system is not working as efficiently as it could be. This is attributed to various pressures and restraints applied to front-line stakeholders meaning they are not able to provide a system of support that serves women trapped in sex-trafficking.

The report interviews highlight that Bedfordshire is lacking a cohesive and robust action-based partnership and that any existing service struggled to include staff that was focused on Victim empowerment. The report also discovered a lack of trauma-informed care. Another key finding was the absence of short-term safe housing in the Bedfordshire (and surrounding) area for the women to be placed after they were identified. These challenges are not insurmountable and, through the report recommendations, we hope to alter the current landscape making the service more effective and holistic.

## Recommendations

Report recommendations can be broken into two components: The Advocate Model and Supporting Recommendations.

### The Advocate Model can be broken down into its five different sections:

- The Advocate is the cornerstone of this report and is the role that will remedy many of the gaps we identified.
- A Respite House is a substitute for the current system of placing women in hotels.
- A Trauma Counsellor is vital as an expert in their field and will mitigate against retraumatization.


- Partner Safehouses and early engagement with them – domestic and abroad - will ensure the women's basic needs are taken care of in a fluid and culturally sensitive way.
- Legal Support should be offered to the women as many Survivors are wrapped up in legal cases of which they have little understanding and little to no legal support.

### Our Supporting Recommendations are:

- Robust and Widespread Training for all Frontline Stakeholders.
- Action-based Partnership within Bedfordshire that will create a robust and cohesive service for the women.
- Public Awareness Campaign within Luton Airport to fortify one of the biggest ports into Bedfordshire against trafficking.

## What next

Azalea, with key partners, is committed to making Bedfordshire a place where Traffickers will be caught and prosecuted and Survivors will be holistically supported. For more information on Azalea or for ways to get involved please visit [www.azalea.org.uk](http://www.azalea.org.uk).



“Slavery is not a horror safely confined to the past; it continues to exist throughout the world.”

- Kevin Bales, Co-Founder of *Free the Slaves*

# Appendices

**Appendix 1:** Trafficking indicators

**Appendix 2:** Interview Questions

**Appendix 3:** Vulnerability Factors

**Appendix 4:** How the Traffickers work

**Appendix 5:** Why Trafficking happens

## Appendix 1: Trafficking indicators

In order to be vigilant in spotting sex-trafficking, it is essential to familiarise yourself with indicators of trafficking. **This list is taken directly from the United Nations “Human Trafficking Indicators” (2010)** and is not meant to be exhaustive but be a launching point. Some of these indicators may be present and some may not, the absence of an indicator does not mean that trafficking has not taken place.

### General Indicators

**People who have been trafficked may:**

- Believe that they must work against their will
- Be unable to leave their work environment
- Show signs that their movements are being controlled
- Feel that they cannot leave
- Show fear or anxiety
- Be subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault
- Suffer injuries or impairments typical of certain jobs or control measures
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of the application of control measures
- Be distrustful of the authorities
- Be threatened with being handed over to the authorities
- Be afraid of revealing their immigration status
- Not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, as those documents are being held by someone else
- Have false identity or travel documents
- Be found in or connected to a type of location likely to be used for exploiting people
- Be unfamiliar with the local language
- Not know their home or work address
- Allow others to speak for them when addressed directly
- Act as if they were instructed by someone else
- Be forced to work under certain conditions
- Be disciplined through punishment
- Be unable to negotiate working conditions
- Receive little or no payment
- Have no access to their earnings
- Work excessively long hours over long periods
- Not have any days off

- Live in poor or sub-standard accommodations
- Have no access to medical care
- Have limited or no social interaction
- Have limited contact with their families or with people outside of their immediate environment
- Be unable to communicate freely with others
- Be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- Be in a situation of dependence
- Come from a place known to be a source of human trafficking
- Have had the fees for their transport to the country of destination paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back by working or providing services in the destination
- Have acted on the basis of false promises

## Sex-trafficking Indicators

### People who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation may:

- Be of any age, although the age may vary according to the location and the market
- Move from one brothel to the next or work in various locations
- Be escorted whenever they go to and return from work and other outside activities
- Have tattoos or other marks indicating “ownership” by their exploiters
- Work long hours or have few, if any, days off
- Sleep where they work
- Live or travel in a group, sometimes with other women, who do not speak the same language
- Have very few items of clothing
- Have clothes that are mostly the kind typically worn for doing sex work
- Only know how to say sex-related words in the local language or in the language of the client group
- Have no cash of their own
- Be unable to show an identity document

**For more information:** [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/unodc\\_indicators\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/unodc_indicators_en_1.pdf)

# Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. What has been your experience/knowledge of modern slavery/human trafficking in the Bedfordshire area?
2. What do you think that the County/your organization does well to prevent trafficking?
3. Who do you perceive as being the most important areas/stakeholders in reducing trafficking in the Bedfordshire area?
4. What are the key partnerships that you think are in place or need to be in place?
5. What is in place that you are aware of regarding training and protocols?
6. What would you see as the main obstacles in making the system more effective?
7. If you had to highlight gaps in the system what would they be?
8. Who do you work most closely with, with regards to trafficking?
9. How much emphasis should be put on educating the public?
10. What would you recommend as solutions to the issue?

# Appendix 3: Vulnerability Factors

## What makes a woman vulnerable?

Many complex factors lead to the trafficking of an individual. To combat sex-trafficking holistically, it is imperative to understand the root causal factors that can expose someone to exploitation. To successfully assist and protect people from harm there needs to be an understanding of what makes them vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation, as well as an assessment of societal factors which contribute to an environment in which trafficking and exploitation can flourish.

For the sake of brevity, and in an attempt to transcend national and cultural nuances, conditions are described only in general terms.

### Age

Child Victims are especially vulnerable to trafficking because of their immaturity and lack of experience; they tend to have a naive trust in adults who may not have their best interests at heart. A trafficked child is more susceptible to re-trafficking as the trauma from the initial exploitation can lead to a suppression of their physical and mental development leading to attachment, developmental and social difficulties and a higher likelihood of continued victimization.<sup>31</sup>

### Gender Discrimination

Many cultures have a world view that perpetuates inequality between the sexes. This inequality is made evident by the fact that Victims of trafficking are 72% female. Factors such as gendered poverty, lack of viable employment opportunities, lack of control over financial resources and limited access to education are all factors that can exacerbate the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking. Other factors such as gender-based violence, discriminatory labour and migration

laws and women's vulnerability during the conflict and post-conflict crises also contribute to the disparity of women being trafficked compared to men.<sup>32</sup>

“Compared to men, women are more likely to leave their home country for another in order to escape poor living conditions, intolerable social or cultural conditions, violence, oppression, or traditional sex-roles.”<sup>33</sup>

| R. A. Bishop et al. (2013)

### Limited Access to Education

Globally, it is more likely that girls will miss out on going to school compared to boys. Girls are four times more likely to not attend school compared to boys that come from the same background. The poorer the girl, the less likely that she will complete primary school. The likelihood is further reduced if she lives in a rural area or has a disability. This is due to the prevalence of barriers such as child marriage, religious and traditional practices, unequal legal rights and cultural norms that postulate that simply because they are girls they should not be educated.<sup>34</sup>

Lack of education can lead to social stagnation, lack of economic opportunities and financial dependence on either the State or someone else. The consequences from a lack of education can place a woman in a situation that makes her extremely vulnerable to victimization and being taken advantage of by traffickers.<sup>35</sup>

“Children and adults who are illiterate or uneducated are more susceptible to victimisation.”<sup>36</sup>

| Anuradha Koirala (2017)

“Women are twice as likely to leave their country as men, possibly because of little education and fewer resources.”<sup>37</sup> ”

| R. A. Bishop et al. (2013)

### Poverty/ Economic Crisis

Poverty is one of the biggest vulnerability factors for human trafficking. Many Victims will be lured to the destination countries through promises of a better job and improved standard of living. The Victim's family will be used by the trafficker as leverage in order to keep the person in bondage, especially if the Victim is sending money home as the sole breadwinner of the family. The diminutive wage the trafficked person is sometimes allowed to keep would seem like a lot of money in the context of their home currency which leads to a more pliable commodity for the trafficker.<sup>38</sup>

### Social and Cultural Exclusion

Marginalised groups have a higher chance of being trafficked as they lack the vital support and institutionalized

human rights that are available to more socialised sects of the community. This support comes in forms of protection from the government, law enforcement, families, job opportunities and neighbourhood vigilance.<sup>39</sup>

## Addictions

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, addiction and human trafficking have a complex but an often close relationship:

**“Recruitment through substance use:** Traffickers may target individuals with existing substance abuse issues to recruit into a trafficking situation.

**Control through substance addiction:** Traffickers may also use substance addiction to keep Victims in a trafficking situation. It can be framed as a reward or punishment, or as a way to decrease the Victim’s ability to resist trafficking and abuse.

**Substance abuse as a coping mechanism:** Some Victims of human trafficking may abuse substances as a response to the trauma of trafficking victimization.”<sup>40</sup>

## Mental Health

Studies have shown that people with severe mental illness are more vulnerable to being trafficked. Moreover, the process of being trafficked more often than not results in the Victim developing intense complex trauma and can be strongly associated with psychosis,

including schizophrenia. In addition to psychosis, Survivors of sex-trafficking are susceptible to depression, anxiety, PTSD, self-harm and attempted suicide. The social stigma of being a “sex worker”, combined with the trauma and abuse, can result in the Victim feeling dehumanized. The extreme social degradation is then further compounded by the mental illness and/or addiction and associated stigmatization, leaving the Victim in complete isolation and vulnerable to further victimization.<sup>41</sup>

A further complication is that people who suffer from psychosis, either from being sexually abused or from substance abuse, may experience hallucinations. Medical professionals have expressed that it is often difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the Survivor’s history as the hallucinations blur delusions with reality. The prevalence of mental illness is often exploited by Traffickers who rely on the woman presenting herself as mentally unstable, so they can undermine and negate her agency in case she should try to escape.<sup>42</sup>

## Pregnancy

Pregnancy can be used as a tactic to coerce and emotionally manipulate the Survivor by using her child to keep her emotionally bound to her exploiter. The child’s need can be weaponized against the Survivor as a control tactic to keep her working for longer and harder, even using threats against the child’s life to ensure compliance. Becoming pregnant whilst being sex-trafficked and the continuous sexual assault is very common:

“In a survey of sex-trafficking Survivors in the United States, 71.2 per cent of 66 respondents reported at least one unwanted pregnancy during the period of their exploitation, and 21.2 per cent reported five or more pregnancies.

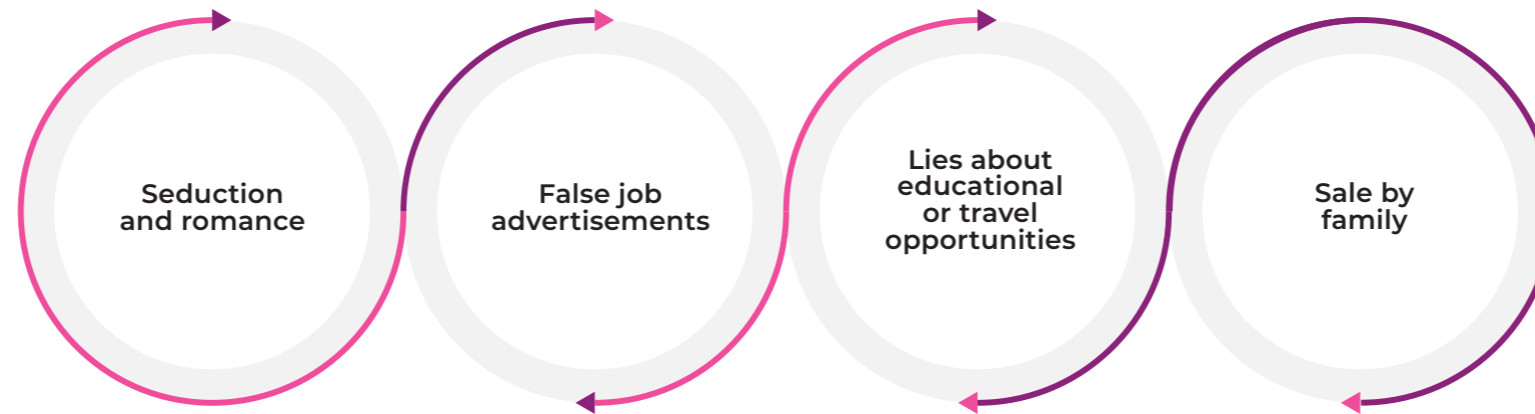
A study from the United Kingdom showed that the health professional group most likely to encounter trafficked persons is maternity services professionals”<sup>43</sup>

| Stoklosa et al. (2017)

“Some traffickers recruit directly from substance use disorder treatment facilities”<sup>44</sup>

- Stoklosa et al. (2017)

# Appendix 4: How the Traffickers Work



## Loverboy

Traffickers use deceptive recruitment methods such as the “loverboy” technique. Vulnerable girls are befriended by men who pretend to be their boyfriends. These men gain their trust by giving them attention, affection and gifts. The early stage of the relationship is often referred to as the grooming stage, where the key objective of the ‘loverboy’ is to gain the Victim’s trust whilst simultaneously isolating them from their family and community. The loverboy will coerce the girl into agreeing to go travelling with a friend, who will then exploit and traffick the Victim. The ubiquity of this method is due to the ease of manipulation the romance can have over the women, with women going willingly into the hands of traffickers and often paying their own way there.<sup>45</sup>

“Loverboy is the most common scenario of recruitment”

| Monica ” Monica Bose

## Sextortion

Annemarie, who works for The Salvation Army Netherlands, spoke on a new and growing recruitment tactic. According to Annemarie, due to the advent of social media, a burgeoning method that traffickers will use, that is connected to the “loverboy” method, is ‘sextortion’. This is where a trafficker will use online platforms to connect with vulnerable, young women and fake an online intimate relationship with them. When they have gained their trust they will, in the guise of a loving boyfriend, extract naked photos from the women. The traffickers will then use their naked photos to extort and blackmail them. They will make threats of sharing their naked photos with their family or with the whole world if the women do not comply with their demands. The women will then be blackmailed to perform a variety of sexual acts either online or in person, having their own naked body weaponized against them.

# False Job Offers

Traffickers prey on the weak and vulnerable. This is particularly evident by their presence in impoverished countries, grooming and targeting people who live in destitution and deprivation. Traffickers will use enticing and convincing job offers based in wealthier countries to lure people into exploitation. Traffickers will post the job vacancies in legitimate media, using shell companies and bogus websites to support the lie. To people living in abject poverty the traffickers' job offer and promise of a better life will be received as a miracle and the trafficker will be viewed as a guardian angel. They will be personally indebted and grateful to their "saviour" for "helping" them. This is seen in how people from Nigeria will often refer to their trafficker as their travel agent. (Kate Hardman) On their journey and first few days in their receiving country, exploitation and slavery will be the furthest thing in the Victim's mind from the "dream come true" they are experiencing. But once settled into their accommodation, the exploitation is made abundantly clear. It is common practice for the Victim to have all their travel documentation and passport taken off them. A common exploitative device used by their trafficker is the concept of a 'travel debt'. The trafficker will say to the Victim that it cost them a lot of money to bring them over to the receiving country and now they have to work and won't get their passport back until the debt is paid off. That debt, however, is infinite and will never be paid off.<sup>46</sup>

**"Unfortunately, many migrants seek opportunities based upon rumours and information heard from smugglers and other migrants who may have falsely depicted life abroad as an adventure"<sup>47</sup>**

| R. A. Bishop et al. (2013)

# Sale by Family

In parts of the world, families will sell their own children to traffickers. Incomprehensible levels of poverty put pressure on desperate families to alleviate their financial hardships resulting in parents having to resort to selling a child into slavery.<sup>48</sup>

# Breaking in Stage

The 'breaking in' is a common technique used by traffickers during the acquisition period, the objective of this process is to break the spirit of the Victims. On arrival to their destination, the Victim's documents will be taken off them by the traffickers. Then they will then be subjugated to a prolonged and varied series of emotional and physical abuses. Common tactics used will be rape, torture, intimidation, degradation and forced consumption of drugs. Another common tactic is to have the new arrivals witness the murder of another Victim forcing their psyche to go into a self-preserving state of submission.<sup>49</sup>



# Appendix 5: Why Trafficking Happens

## Trafficking happens because:

**It is highly profitable. The profits are higher than almost any other industry globally**

- On average, in wealthier economies, the annual profits generated from one Victim of forced sexual exploitation can be around \$100,000 US. Sex-trafficking worldwide generates a \$99 billion profit and trafficking as a whole makes a \$150 billion profit.<sup>50</sup>
- “While only 19% of Victims are trafficked for sex, sexual exploitation earns 66% of the global profits of human trafficking. The average annual profits generated by each woman in forced sexual servitude (\$100,000) is estimated to be six times more than the average profits generated by each trafficking Victim worldwide (\$21,800).”<sup>51</sup> Human Rights First (2017)
- Sexual Trafficking can create a return on investment ranging from 100% to 1,000%<sup>52</sup>

### It is hard to identify, trafficking is a ‘hidden crime’

Human trafficking is the result of a network of highly organised criminals that work on the margins of society that use fear and violence to stay under the detection of law enforcement. There have been very few convictions in the UK compared to the actual scope of what is happening. Due to the lack of convictions, there is limited data on how and where the criminals operate and therefore there is limited information for law enforcement to tackle it.<sup>53</sup>

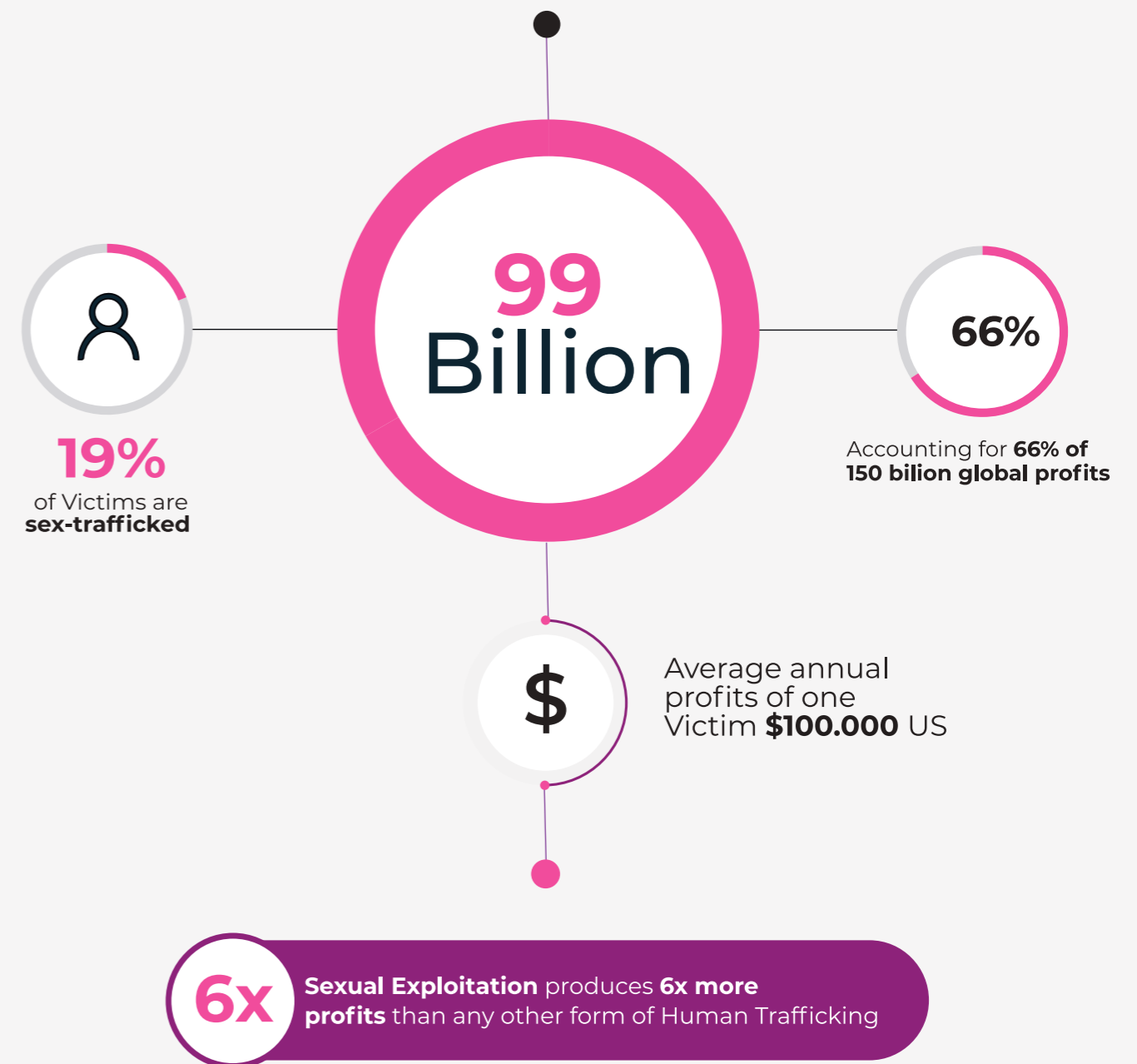
As identified earlier in the report, as a gap, due to its clandestine nature there is a scarcity of systematic empirical research. This results in a misinformed and naive population, creating a conducive climate for trafficking to continue.

“As the number of Victims discovered has skyrocketed in the last five years, convictions have barely increased. In the year ending March 2019, there were 322 completed prosecutions for modern slavery-related crimes and 219 convictions served. During the same period, 7,525 adults and children were identified as potential Victims of modern slavery.”<sup>54</sup>

| Justice and Care, 2020



## Sex-Trafficking Annual global profits



## Humans are a reusable commodity

Unlike drugs humans being can be used again and again for exploitative purposes, making the risk of the crime more worthwhile to the traffickers.<sup>55</sup>

## There is demand

As long as there are people willing to purchase humans for whatever exploitive means they want, there will be people willing to meet their demand.<sup>56</sup>

The law of supply and demand, as defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica, is an economic theory that describes the relationship between the quantity of a product and the price the consumer pays. A rare commodity and high demand results in a high purchase price for the product or service, and vice versa.

This economic theory can be used to describe the correlation between the demand for sex workers and the supply of trafficked women to fulfil the need. Therefore according to the theory, if you take away the demand then the supply should dry up. In order to eradicate demand, there will need to be an entirely different approach that addresses a list of contributory factors that leads a man, and an assenting community, to commodify sex from unwilling participants.<sup>57</sup>

“Trafficking grows when there is cultural tolerance, commoditization of human beings, demand for commercial sex, inadequate regulations, weak enforcement, lack of political will, corruption, and greed.”<sup>58</sup>

- R. A. Bishop et al. (2013)

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