

General Election Recommendations from the UK Anti-Slavery Sector

In advance of the forthcoming General Election, our organisations ask that all political parties express a renewed commitment to tackling modern slavery in the UK and around the world.

Policy makers and those delivering services must prioritise engaging and consulting with communities at risk and survivors in a consistent and meaningful manner. This is essential to ensuring that our collective response meets survivors' needs and reflects their hopes and sense of justice.

In addition to pledging to tackle modern slavery in election manifestos, we ask that any future government to commit to the following principles to guide their Anti-Slavery Strategy.

Prevent Modern Slavery

Action must be taken across a range of policy areas in order to minimise the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking amongst at-risk communities both in the UK and globally. Hostile immigration policies, the lack of meaningful protection for workers, restrictive visas, inadequate child protection, homelessness and many other intersecting policies create vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Any future government must therefore commit to adopting a holistic approach to minimise such vulnerabilities.

Prioritise Sustainable Recovery

In responding to survivors of modern slavery, it is essential that the Government adopt a survivor-centred and human rights-based approach. Recent years have shown that an immigration and law enforcement-led approach to modern slavery is ineffective both for ensuring adequate protection for survivors and for holding traffickers to account. Equally, the conflation of modern slavery with immigration has not only heightened vulnerability to exploitation, it has also undermined survivors' recovery.

Survivors must be able to realise their rights to support, protection and justice, as contained in international law. This requires that survivors are able to access assistance including financial support, safe accommodation, legal aid advice and representation, long-term independent advocacy and support, compensation, and leave to remain. This requires a cross-government strategy.

Uphold Justice

Responsibility must underpin the government's anti-slavery strategy. Modern slavery remains a low-risk, high-profit crime: relatively few traffickers are convicted and sentences are lenient. Survivors rarely receive compensation from those who exploit them. Businesses should be held accountable for their responsibility to identify and mitigate forced labour in their operations and supply chains.

We encourage the future government to commit to the vision in which perpetrators are held to account, victims are compensated, and businesses act responsibly.

Signed by:

1. Hope for Justice
2. The Salvation Army
3. Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit (ATLEU)
4. SOHTIS (Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland)
5. Anti-Slavery International
6. Snowdrop Project
7. Hope at Home
8. Migrant Help
9. Causeway

10. Justice and Care
11. West London Welcome
12. Sophie Hayes Foundation
13. Bawso
14. Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse, St. Mary's University
15. Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)
16. Medaille Trust
17. JustRight Scotland
18. ECPAT UK (Every Child Protected Against Trafficking)
19. Status Now 4 All (SN4A)
20. Birmingham Asylum & Refugee Association (BARA)
21. Midlands Asylum & Refugee Action Group (MARAG)
22. René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights.
23. Unseen
24. Kalayaan
25. Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)
26. Kanlungan Filipino Consortium
27. Migrant Health and Care Workers
28. Glass Door Homeless Charity
29. Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG)
30. Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)
31. TRIBE Freedom Foundation
32. Stolen Dreams
33. Youth for Freedom Collective
34. Arise Foundation
35. The William Gomes Podcast
36. Southwark Against Modern Slavery
37. Helen Bamber Foundation
38. BASNET - UK BME AntiSlavery Network
39. AFRUCA Safeguarding Children
40. Palm Cove Society
41. After Exploitation
42. The Voice of Domestic Workers
43. Hestia
44. Association of Labour Providers
45. A21
46. Scottish Refugee Council
47. The Vavengers
48. Invisible Traffick
49. Hibiscus
50. It's a Penalty
51. Shiva Foundation
52. Southeast and East Asian Centre (SEEAC)
53. The Anti-Slavery Collective
54. Jesuit Refugee Service UK
55. Azalea
56. Worker Support Centre (WSC)
57. Coalition to Stop Slavery
58. Ella's
59. International Justice Mission UK