



DEBATE PACK

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The Modern Slavery Act 2015 five years on

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Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on The Modern Slavery Act 2015 five years on is scheduled for Thursday 19 March 2020 at 1.30pm. The Member leading the debate is Rt Hon Maria Miller MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

Legislation to tackle modern slavery was enacted across all UK jurisdictions in 2015. The [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) (MSA) received royal assent on 26 March 2015. The [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) and the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Criminal Justice and Support for Victims\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#) were passed in Scotland and Northern Ireland, respectively. The legislation provides for victim support measures and law enforcement powers throughout the UK.

There have been a number of reviews into how the MSA is operating in practice and whether there is adequate provision for victims.

As Home Secretary, Theresa May set up [an independent review of the 2015 Act](#) a year after it came into force. The review, by barrister Caroline Haughey QC, found that the MSA had set “an international benchmark to which other jurisdictions aspire”. It found that slavery remained under-reported, but the operational response was improving. However, the review said there were problems, including a lack of consistency between law enforcement and criminal justice agencies and poor-quality intelligence at all levels. The review recommended better training and a more structured approach to prosecuting and preventing slavery.

In April 2017 the [Work and Pensions Committee published a report following its inquiry into victims of modern slavery](#). The Chair, Frank Field MP, said there was “a shocking lack of awareness and co-ordination in the front-line services dealing with modern slavery” and called for an “urgent review” to ensure some minimum safeguards for victims were in place.

On 2 May 2018 the Public Accounts Committee published a [report](#) which found that potential victims were being made to wait too long for a decision on whether they would be treated as victims of modern slavery. It also found that there was a lack of evidence about care standards, and of what happens to victims after they have gone through the system.

On 30 July 2018, the Home Office announced plans to launch an independent review of the MSA, to be conducted by Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP, and Baroness Butler-Sloss. The review was established to look into the operation and effectiveness of the Act and suggest potential improvements. It focussed on four areas:

- The Independent anti-Slavery Commissioner
- Transparency in supply chains

- Independent Child Trafficking Advocates
- The legal application of the Act, including:
 - The definition of exploitation
 - Reparation orders
 - The statutory defence

Four interim reports on these issues were published in December 2018, January, and March 2019.

The [final report of the Review](#) was published in May 2019. It summarised the interim reports and provided a definitive list of recommendations, as well as commenting on some other issues identified in the course of the Review.

The Government published its [response](#) to the review on 9 July 2019, along with a [consultation](#) on proposed measures to strengthen the transparency in supply chains provisions. The consultation closed in September 2019 and the Government is analysing the responses.

2. Statistics

Since the introduction of the Act in 2015, there have been just over 15,400 offences of 'modern slavery' recorded by the police. The number of recorded offences has been rising every year, with 4,613 being recorded in 2018 (calendar year) and 5,219 already recorded up until September in 2019.

The 15,400 offences have resulted so far in at least 665 charges being laid (as of September 2019), amounting to around 5% of cases for which an outcome has been recorded so far. In 41% of cases where an outcome was recorded, the investigation had been completed without a suspect having been identified.

The table below shows the detailed outcomes, as recorded at the end of the year, for these recorded offences.

SUMMARY OF RECORDED CRIME AND PROSECUTIONS FOR 'MODERN SLAVERY'					
England and Wales					
	2015 (from March)	2016	2017	2018	2019 (to Sept.)
Total offences recorded	581	1,795	3,210	4,613	5,219
Outcome recorded at end of year:					
Charged/Summonsed	102	157	192	122	92
Investigation complete - no suspect identified	145	612	1,143	1,655	1,585
Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	89	393	865	1,429	1,249
Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	160	355	488	567	291
Responsibility for further investigation transferred to another body	6	38	161	197	133
Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	8	17	26	27	31
Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest	2	4	38	15	13
Out-of-court (informal)	0	0	1	0	1
Out-of-court (formal)	0	1	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	1
Taken into consideration	1	0	0	0	0
Not yet assigned an outcome	62	161	292	601	1,823
Total outcomes	575	1,738	3,206	4,613	5,219

Source: Home Office, [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) (30 January 2020): tables 'Police recorded crime open data Police Force Area tables from year ending March 2013 onwards' and 'Outcomes open data, various years'.

Notes: a) Police recorded crime figures are for administrative purposes and are not designated as official statistics. They remain subject to revision.
 b) The outcomes shown here are the sum of outcomes listed at the end of each financial year. These are not revised when, for example, charges are later laid. This means that the figures likely undercount the number of charges and other disposals other than 'investigation complete'.
 c) 'Other' includes 'Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action.'

The latest prosecutions statistics only take us as far as the end of December 2018. Between the introduction of the Act in 2015 and the end of 2018, there were at least 276 prosecutions for 'modern slavery', which resulted in 34 convictions. Note that the way in which these statistics are recorded means this number only captures cases where 'modern slavery' was the principal or most serious offence for which a defendant was prosecuted, so they might undercount the total number of people prosecuted for this offence type.

Thirty of the 34 defendants convicted were sentenced to immediate custody, with most being sentenced to more than 4 years and the largest share being sentenced to 4-7 years. The longest sentence imposed (in one case) was more than 10 years and less than life.¹

The full sentencing outcomes are shown in the table below. Figures for 2019 are due to be released in May 2020.

SUMMARY OF PROSECUTIONS FOR 'MODERN SLAVERY'	
England and Wales	
	Total March 2015 to December 2018
Prosecutions	
Proceeded against	276
Convicted, of which sentenced to:	34
Total Immediate Custody	30
Total Community Sentence	1
Fine	2
Total Otherwise Dealt With	1
Custodial sentence length:	
1 year or less	1
More than 1 year, less than 4 years	9
More than 4 years, less than 7 years	16
More than 7 years	4

Source: Ministry of Justice, [Criminal justice statistics quarterly December 2018](#), Outcomes by offence data tool.

Notes: These relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

¹ The data is no more specific than this.

3. Media

3.1 Press releases

[IASC Call for Evidence: Use of the Modern Slavery Act's Section 45 statutory defence](#)

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

17 January 2020

[New measures announced to make sure government supply chains are free from modern slavery](#)

Cabinet Office

18 September 2019

[New system to simplify and speed up modern slavery referrals](#)

Home Office

3 September 2019

[Prime Minister announces new international modern slavery and migration envoy](#)

Justice and Care

14 June 2019

[Government to launch new modern slavery research centre](#)

HM Government

9 July 2019

3.2 Articles and blogs

[Child slavery victims 'falling through cracks' as Home Office delays support promised four years ago](#)

Independent

5 March 2020

[Prison Reform Trust response to the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's \(IASC\) Call for Evidence: Use of the Modern Slavery Act's Section 45 statutory defence](#)

Prison Reform Trust

1 March 2020

[British woman repeatedly trafficked for sex after Home Office failures](#)

Guardian

16 February 2020

[Surge in suspected modern slavery victims waiting years for Home Office decisions, figures show](#)

Independent

2 January 2020

[The awkward phenomenon of modern slavery](#)

Shout Out UK

10 December 2019

[Charity fund manager moves to tackle modern slavery](#)

Guardian

17 November 2019

[The Times view on how county lines drug dealing is linked to modern slavery: Lines of Control](#)

Times

11 November 2019

[Modern Slavery Act needs sharper teeth](#)

Times

7 November 2019

[Slavery in supply chains](#)

LocalGov

20 September 2019

[Criminals can't claim they were trafficked, says anti-slavery tsar](#)

Times

23 July 2019

[UK doing more than any other country to end scourge of modern slavery](#)

Telegraph

17 July 2019

[Government to launch new modern slavery research centre](#)

Home Office

9 July 2019

[OPINION: UK expands its modern slavery law, but will it work?](#)

Thomson Reuters Foundation News

3 July 2019

[Modern slavery: What has Theresa May done to tackle it?](#)

BBC News

11 June 2019

[Modern Slavery: Ministers 'must act quickly' on strengthening laws](#)

BBC News

22 May 2019

[Government leads the way in tackling modern slavery in public procurement](#)

Home Office

27 March 2019

4. Parliamentary material

4.1 Statements

[Modern Slavery: Written statement](#)

09 July 2019 | HCWS1704

[Modern Slavery: Written statement](#)

22 May 2019 | HCWS1578

4.2 Debates

[Modern Slavery Act: Independent Review](#)

HC Deb 19 June 2019 cc126-47WH

4.3 Parliamentary questions

[Slavery: Prosecutions](#)

12 Mar 2020 | House of Commons | 26951

Asked by: Reed, Steve

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 757, on Slavery: Prosecutions, how many prosecutions there have been involving child victims under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in each year since 2015.

Answering member: Michael Ellis | **Department:** Attorney General

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) records all offences charged under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and within those, the offences that involve child abuse are flagged. Since the Act came into force and up to the end of September 2019, the number of Modern Slavery Act offences flagged as child abuse is as follows:

2015-2016: 1

2016-2017: 21

2017-2018: 26

2018-2019: 8

April-Sept 2019: 3

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences, the final outcome of the prosecution

proceeding, or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

[Human Trafficking](#)

11 Mar 2020 | HL1945

Asked by: Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to incorporate EU Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims into UK law.

Answering member: Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

The Government is committed to eradicating human trafficking and the scourge of modern slavery.

The UK currently gives effect to obligations on modern slavery under The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT), Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36), through the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and policy guidance.

At the end of the EU Exit transition period in December 2020, the UK will no longer be bound by EU law. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 and relevant policy guidance will be unaffected. The UK will remain bound by international obligations in relation to preventing and combatting human trafficking and modern slavery.

[Human Trafficking: Victims](#)

10 Mar 2020 | HL1876

Asked by: Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish guidance about identifying and supporting victims of human trafficking as required under section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Answering member: Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

The Government recognises that publishing statutory guidance under section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 is important in ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives.

We aim to publish the guidance as soon as possible.

[Children in Care: Human Trafficking](#)

10 Mar 2020 | HL1875

Asked by: Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what mechanisms are in place to monitor the number of children identified as potential victims of human trafficking who go missing from local authority care.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | **Department:** Department for Education

Information on the number of looked after children who have been identified as potential victims of human trafficking and who go missing from care is not held centrally.

The latest figures on looked after children who go missing in England as at 31 March are published in Table G1 of the statistical release 'Children Looked after in England including adoptions: 2018 to 2019', which is attached and is also available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

Slavery and trafficking of children is a very serious offence and the government is committed to protecting children from this harm. The response to trafficking should be primarily about protecting victims and bringing those who exploit them to justice.

Local authorities are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area, including child victims of modern slavery. The department's statutory guidance for local authorities on care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery is clear on authorities' duties to work with local partners to protect child victims of modern slavery from further risk from their traffickers and preventing exploitation from taking place. In particular, there should be a clear understanding between the local authority and the police of their respective roles in planning for this protection and responding if a child victim of modern slavery goes missing.

Section 48 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 makes provisions for Independent Child Trafficking Advocates, which have been renamed Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs). ICTGs are an independent source of advice for trafficked children; somebody who can speak up on their behalf and act in the best interests of the child. Currently, ICTGs have been rolled out to one third of local authorities in England and Wales and the government remains committed to a national rollout.

Attachment: [HL1874 HL1875 Table](#) (Excel SpreadSheet, 154.5 KB)

[Human Trafficking](#)

09 Mar 2020 | HL1879

Asked by: Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) prosecutions, and (2) convictions, for human trafficking-related offences there were in each of the last five calendar years.

Answering member: Lord Keen of Elie | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice has published data on the number of people prosecuted and convicted in England and Wales up to the year ending December 2018 for the following human trafficking-related offences

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation;

Human trafficking for non-sexual exploitation;

Arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation;

Commit offence of kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of arranging travel with view to exploitation; and

Commit offence other than kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of arranging travel with view to exploitation.

Note that the first two offences in this list, were superseded in 2015 by the latter three offences (arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation, commit offence of kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of arranging travel with view to exploitation, commit offence other than kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of arranging travel with view to exploitation), all of which are under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Figures can be found in the table attached. If an offence does not appear in the table, it means there were no prosecutions or convictions for it in the period given.

Attachment: [HL1879 TABLE](#) (Excel SpreadSheet, 22.53 KB)

[Human Trafficking: Children](#)

24 Feb 2020 | House of Commons | 758

Asked by: Reed, Steve

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of potential child victims of trafficking currently not supported by an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) have been rolled out in one third of local authorities in England and Wales. If a child presents indicators of trafficking in these areas, first responder organisations have a responsibility to make a referral to the ICTG service.

The Home Office will publish its next evaluation of the ICTG service later this year, which will provide further updates on outcomes of the service including the number of children it supports.

The Government is currently considering improvements to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 made by the Independent Review in 2019, which considered Section 48, which makes provision for ICTGs. The Government remains committed to the national roll out of ICTGs.

[Slavery: Prosecutions](#)

24 Feb 2020 | House of Commons | 757

Asked by: Reed, Steve

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions there have been under the Modern Slavery Act since 2015 for cases involving child victims.

Answering member: Michael Ellis | **Department:** Attorney General

The CPS records all offences charged under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and within those, the offences that involve child abuse are flagged. Since the Act came into force and up to the end of September 2019, the CPS has prosecuted 59 Modern Slavery Act offences involving child abuse.

Cases referred to the CPS by the police as modern slavery are often prosecuted under other legislation. The CPS has prosecuted 209 defendants for human trafficking offences involving child abuse, from 2015/16 to September 2019.

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences or the final outcome of the prosecution proceeding or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

[Conditions of Employment](#)

13 Feb 2020 | House of Commons | 13451

Asked by: Lucas, Caroline

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to (a) protect and (b) improve the rights of workers in the global information and communications technology sector through its (i) policies on and (ii) processes for procuring that technology throughout the government estate.

Answering member: Jeremy Quin | **Department:** Cabinet Office

This Government is committed to ethical and responsible procurement in all sectors, including the technology sector. This includes working with suppliers to identify and avoid the risk of modern slavery in Government Department's supply chains, as part of wider Government action to tackle compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.

The Government is taking forward initiatives to tackle modern slavery in supply chains. In September 2019 we published new guidance to help Government departments identify and avoid the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains during procurement processes. It also sets out how existing contracts can be risk assessed and suggests measures to manage the risks identified. The Guidance contains several tools to support this work, including:

An online training course on ethical procurement following a partnership between the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), Government Commercial Function and the Home Office.

A Modern Slavery Assessment Tool to support public bodies assess their own supply base for modern slavery risks.

In 2019, we also published the updated 'Supplier Code of Conduct v2', which sets the standards and behaviours expected from suppliers (and separately grant recipients), and reiterates the government's approach to working with suppliers.

Crown Commercial Service's Standard Contract includes a Schedule which sets out the behaviours expected of all government suppliers, including those in the ICT industry. The schedule covers several areas of worker's rights, including equality and accessibility, security of income, working hours and modern slavery.

Additionally, the Crown Commercial Service has partnered with Electronics Watch, a multi-stakeholder initiative, to improve conditions for workers at factory level in government ICT hardware supply chains. Electronics Watch's work has led to workers in government supply chains being reimbursed for recruitment fees they paid. Government is also piloting a programme to improve responsible recruitment in parts of our health sector supply chains in South East Asia.

[Human Trafficking: Children](#)

05 Nov 2019 | House of Commons | 5115

Asked by: Forbes, Ms Lisa

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect vulnerable children from human trafficking.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

The trafficking of children is an appalling crime. Where children are found to be victims of modern slavery or trafficking the Government is committed to protecting their safety and welfare.

Local authorities are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area including child victims of modern slavery. Local children's services will work in close co-operation with the police and other statutory agencies to offer potentially trafficked children the support they require.

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs), recently renamed from Independent Child Trafficking Advocates, are additional to this statutory support and are an independent source of advice for trafficked children and somebody who can speak up on their behalf.

This year, the Government has successfully rolled out ICTGs to one third of all local authorities in England and Wales. Where the service is available, all children that are potential victims of trafficking are eligible for support.

Government has welcomed the findings of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which included a specific set of recommendations relating the wider roll out of ICTGs. In-line with the Government's response, published in July 2019, we are currently considering the Review's recommendations on ICTGs and will provide a further update to Parliament ahead of national roll out.

[Migrant Workers: Latin America](#)

04 Nov 2019 | House of Commons | 6395

Asked by: Coyle, Neil

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle labour exploitation of nationals of Latin American countries living in the UK.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

The Government is committed tackling labour exploitation. Through the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Immigration Act 2016 we have given law enforcement bodies stronger powers to tackle labour exploitation.

Law enforcement agencies continue to work closely to investigate all reported cases of labour exploitation, which can involve different communities in the UK, including nationals of Latin American countries.

We recently published our Annual Modern Slavery Report for 2019, which sets out work that has been undertaken over the last year to tackle modern slavery in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>.

[Slavery: Victims](#)

01 Nov 2019 | HL230

Asked by: Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring the law in respect of the treatment and care of modern slavery victims in England and Wales in line with the standards in force in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Answering member: Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

The Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery; ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives and that those responsible are prosecuted. In July 2018, the Government commissioned an independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, led by Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss to ensure our legislative framework remains truly world-leading. The Government welcomed the findings of the Independent Review and has accepted or partially accepted the majority of the Review's recommendations.

The Government also recognises the importance of publishing statutory guidance to ensure that victims are provided with the support they need and deserve. We have made significant progress in developing statutory guidance for England and Wales under Section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, setting out the indicators someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support to which victims are entitled, and the process for determining whether someone is a victim. This will be published in the coming months.

[Slavery](#)

08 Oct 2019 | House of Commons | 294234

Asked by: Norris, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the announcement by the former Prime Minister the Rt Hon. Theresa May at the centenary conference of the International Labour Organisation on 11 June 2019 of the creation of an International Modern Slavery and Migration Envoy, by what date that post will be appointed, what the remit of that post is; and for what reasons that post is responsible for both modern slavery and migration.

Answering member: Mrs Heather Wheeler | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

One of the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act was the establishment of an international modern slavery envoy, to represent the UK in international discussions on modern slavery and to advance the government's objectives on this vital agenda.

HMG expects to announce the name of the successful candidate shortly.

The FCO have agreed with other relevant Government Departments that this role will be most effective if it is combined with the existing migration envoy role. In international settings, trafficking and migration are often covered in the same dialogues, and we believe that similar skills would be required for both components of the role. This also reflects the joint roles of some of our interlocutors in key capitals. However it is important that trafficking should not be seen through a purely migration prism, and vice versa.

[Exploitation: Children and Young People](#)

04 Oct 2019 | House of Commons | 290919

Asked by: Brown, Lyn

To ask the Attorney General, what support he is providing to the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that Modern Slavery Act 2015 provisions and associated guidance relating to the avoidance of unnecessary prosecution of children and young people who have been groomed, exploited or trafficked as part of county lines criminal activity is followed in full.

Answering member: Michael Ellis | **Department:** Attorney General

The Law Officers superintend the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS is the principal prosecuting authority in England and Wales with responsibility for charging decisions in criminal cases.

The CPS has published clear legal guidance which recognises the principle of non-prosecution of victims of trafficking or slavery. It has delivered training on the steps to be taken, where there is a reason to believe that a suspect or defendant in a criminal case might be a victim. In those circumstances, the prosecutor will consider what further evidence or information might be required and will review whether the prosecution should proceed or not. The guidance sets out that where there is sufficient evidence that the accused is a victim and the conditions provided for in section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are met, the case should not be charged or proceeded with.

[Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

05 Sep 2019 | House of Commons | 280138

Asked by: Coaker, Vernon

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation will be required as a result of the Government's response to the review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

In response to the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, on the 9 July the Home Office launched a public consultation to gather views on proposals to strengthen section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. The proposals under consideration – including extending the reporting requirement to public sector organisations, requiring organisations to report on specific topics and introducing a new civil penalty regime – would require changes to primary legislation. Following the consultation, the Home Office will make any necessary legislative changes as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

The full Government response to the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was published in July 2019 and is available via the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act>

[Slavery: Victims](#)

29 Jul 2019 | House of Commons | 278558

Asked by: Burgon, Richard

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of victims of modern slavery in prison.

Answering member: Edward Argar | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

The Government introduced a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery (both under and over the age of 18), to protect those very vulnerable people who were previously being unfairly prosecuted for crimes they were forced to commit by their exploiters – notably cannabis cultivation. We are aware of concerns from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the police that the defence is open to abuse from opportunistic criminals who are not victims, to escape justice for their crimes. That is why my rt hon Friend the Home Secretary asked the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act to examine how the statutory defence was working in practice.

The report of the review was published in May. It found that the defence strikes the correct balance between protecting genuine victims and preventing misuse from opportunistic criminals. My rt hon Friend the Home Secretary is considering the review's findings, and the Home Office will work closely with the CPS and law enforcement agencies to take the report's recommendations forward. A copy of the final report of the Independent Modern Slavery Act Review can be found via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act-final-report>

To determine how many people who at some point in their lives have been victims of modern slavery are currently in custody would require a search of individual records and could not be done without incurring disproportionate cost.

[Children: Exploitation](#)

22 Jul 2019 | House of Commons | 275719

Asked by: Brown, Lyn

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policy of the recommendations of the Children's Society report, Counting Lives: Responding to Children Who Are Criminally Exploited, published in July 2019 on (a) amending the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to include a definition of child criminal exploitation, (b) introducing with the Department for Education a cross-Departmental strategy against child criminal exploitation including changes to relevant statutory guidance, (c) introducing universal access to Independent Child Trafficking Advocates providing support throughout childhood and the transition into adulthood and (d) ensuring that all local safeguarding partnerships maintain an assessment of how many children are at risk of child criminal exploitation in their areas and use that assessment in planning their early intervention and prevention activities.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

Criminal exploitation in the form of county lines has a devastating impact on those affected and we must work together to identify and

safeguard the victims and potential victims of this form of exploitation as early as possible.

We welcome the report published by the Children's Society and will consider its findings carefully as we continue to develop and strengthen our response to county lines.

In 2018, the Department for Education revised the Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance to reflect the risks to include specific mention of the risks to children from county lines, criminal exploitation and other harms from outside the home.

New arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, must be implemented by safeguarding partners by the end of September 2019. It will be for local determination what the arrangements cover, but they must set out how all children, including those at risk of child criminal exploitation, will be kept safe. In order to bring transparency about the activities undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period, setting out what they have done as a result of the arrangements and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

The Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 considered the definition of exploitation under the Act and found it is sufficiently flexible to meet a range of new and emerging forms of modern slavery.

In addition, there is an existing, published definition of child criminal exploitation in the Serious Violence Strategy. The strategy is available https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf

Section 48 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 which makes provisions for Independent Child Trafficking Advocates was also considered by the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In-line with one of the Review's recommendations, Independent Child Trafficking Advocates have recently been renamed Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs).

ICTGs are an additional source of advice and support for all trafficked children and somebody who can advocate on their behalf. The current service model provides one-to-one support for children who lack a figure of parental responsibility for them in the UK and an expert ICTG regional practice co-ordinator whose role will be to focus on children who do have a figure of parental responsibility for them in the UK. The ICTG regional practice co-ordinator works with statutory bodies including the police, social workers and the Criminal Justice System to foster effective multi-agency working to safeguard these vulnerable children.

The Government remains committed to rolling out ICTGs nationally with the service currently being available in one third of local authorities in England and Wales. The Government Response to the Independent Review was published on 9 July and is available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act>

[Business: Slavery](#)

15 Jul 2019 | House of Commons | 273755

Asked by: McCarthy, Kerry

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking in (a) the UK and (b) overseas to tackle (a) working conditions and (b) exploitation in the food supply chain.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, large businesses with a turnover of £36m or more are required to publish annual modern slavery statements detailing the steps they are taking to prevent modern slavery in their UK operations and global supply chains. The requirement applies to all sectors, including agriculture. The Government is committed to doing more and will shortly be launching a consultation to strengthen the transparency in supply chains legislation, making it harder for companies to avoid scrutiny.

The Home Office regularly engages with businesses across a range of sectors to accelerate progress in tackling modern slavery in global supply chains.

The Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority (GLAA) licenses UK businesses which provide workers to the farming, food processing and shellfish gathering sectors to make sure they meet the employment standards required by law; and carries out inspections and enforcement activity. The GLAA also partner with businesses such as Sainsbury's to deliver training sessions to their suppliers, equipping them to better identify and manage risks in their supply chains.

[Slavery](#)

02 Jul 2019 | House of Commons | 267196

Asked by: Field, Frank

To the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary-Under-Secretary of State for Health of 19 June 2019, Official Report, column 145WH, what steps his Department has taken since it sent a letter to the CEOs of 17,000 businesses regarding the audit of compliance with the requirement to produce modern slavery supply chain statements.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

The Home Office has written twice to approximately 17,000 organisations identified as being required to prepare a Modern Slavery Statement under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. As a result almost 4,000 organisations have registered to receive tools and

guidance from the Home Office to support effective reporting under the Act.

The Home Office is commencing an audit of compliance and organisations which persist in flouting their obligations risk being publicly named. The Home Office is also developing a central registry for modern slavery statements published under the Act to enable the Government to continually monitor compliance.

5. Organisations and further reading

5.1 House of Commons papers

Home Office, [Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015: Final Report](#), CP 100, May 2019.

5.2 Government departments, public bodies and other organisations

Anti-Slavery International et al, [Joint civil society report on trafficking and modern slavery in the UK to the UN Human Rights Committee](#), January 2020

HM Government, [2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery](#), October 2019

CBI, [Transparency in supply chains response to the government's consultation on strengthening the UK'S Modern Slavery Act](#), September 2019

CORE, [Transparency in Supply Chains Consultation](#), 16 September 2019

Home Office, [Transparency in supply chains consultation](#), 9 July 2019

HM Government, [UK government response to the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), 9 July 2019

House of Commons Library, [Independent review of the Modern Slavery Act](#), Debate Pack CPD-2019-0160, 19 June 2019

Sancroft-Tussell, [Eliminating Modern Slavery in Public Procurement](#), May 2019

House of Commons Library, [Modern slavery and victim support](#), Debate Pack CDP-2019-0073, 26 March 2019

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