

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM

Policing Modern Slavery

Frank Dawtry Memorial Lecture

12 March 2021

Independent
Anti-Slavery
Commissioner

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – familiar policing challenges

- What is MSHT and what does the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner do?
- Falling prosecutions
- Serious organised crime and policing structures
- Evidence-based policing
- Inclusion

Modern slavery and the Commissioner's role



METRICS

40 million people were victims of modern slavery. This includes:

- 25 million people in forced labour
- 15 million people in forced marriage



GENDER

Women and girls accounted for 71 per cent of modern slavery victims.

PREVALENCE

There were 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people in the world in 2016.

There were 5.9 adult victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 adults in the world and 4.4 child victims for every 1,000 children in the world.



DEBT BONDAGE

Debt bondage affected half of all victims of forced labour imposed by private actors.



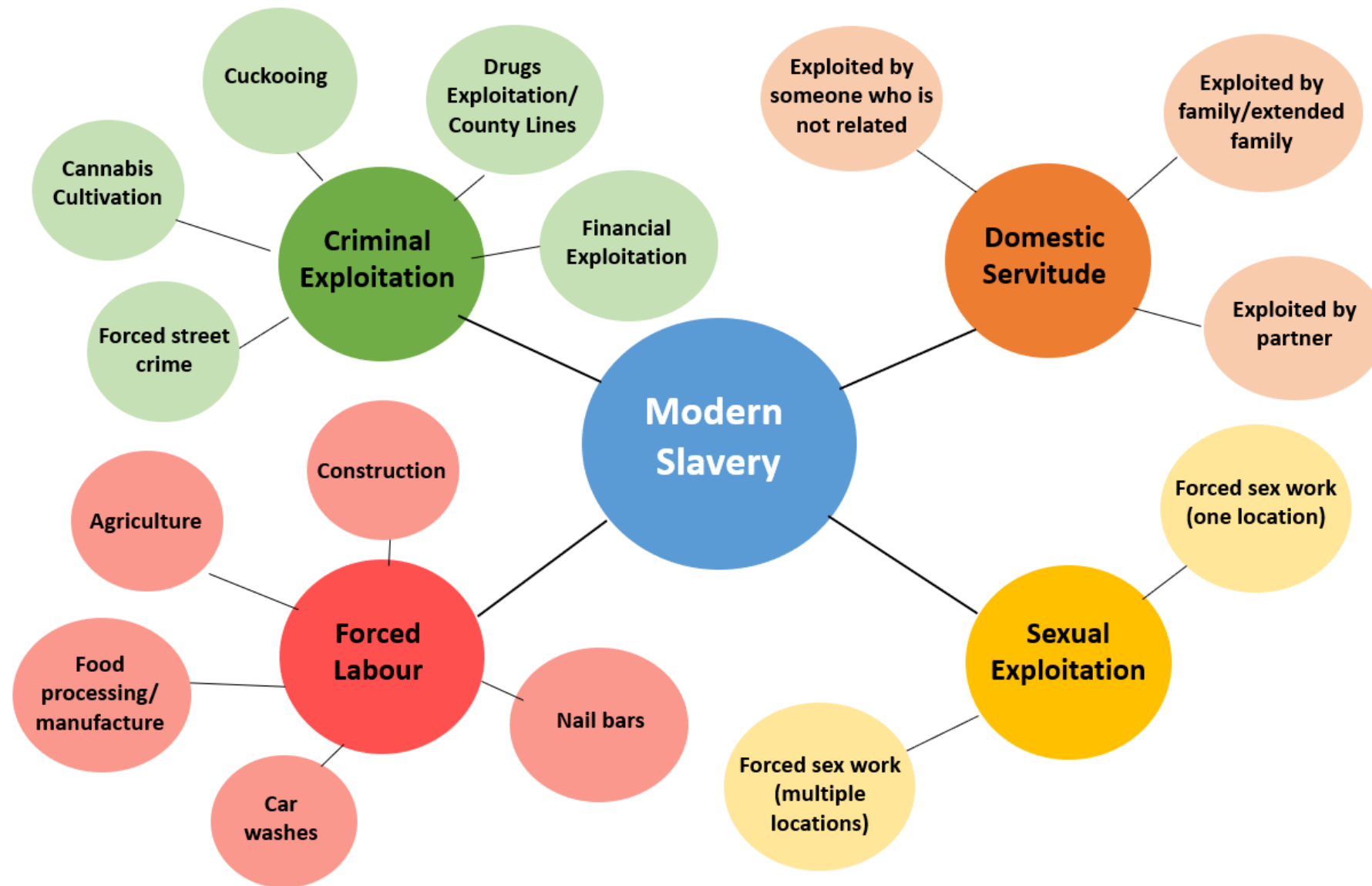
CHILDREN

One in four victims of modern slavery were children.

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, 89 MILLION PEOPLE EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF MODERN SLAVERY FOR PERIODS OF TIME RANGING FROM A FEW DAYS TO THE WHOLE FIVE YEARS.

Report by The International Labour Office (ILO), Walk Free Foundation and International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2017.

On any given day in 2016



Role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

- Created by Part 4 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Accountable through the strategic plan and annual reports, which the Secretary of State lays before Parliament
- Specified public authorities are under a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner –
 - Law enforcement and border security
 - Local government
 - Health bodies
 - Regulators (GLAA)

Role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

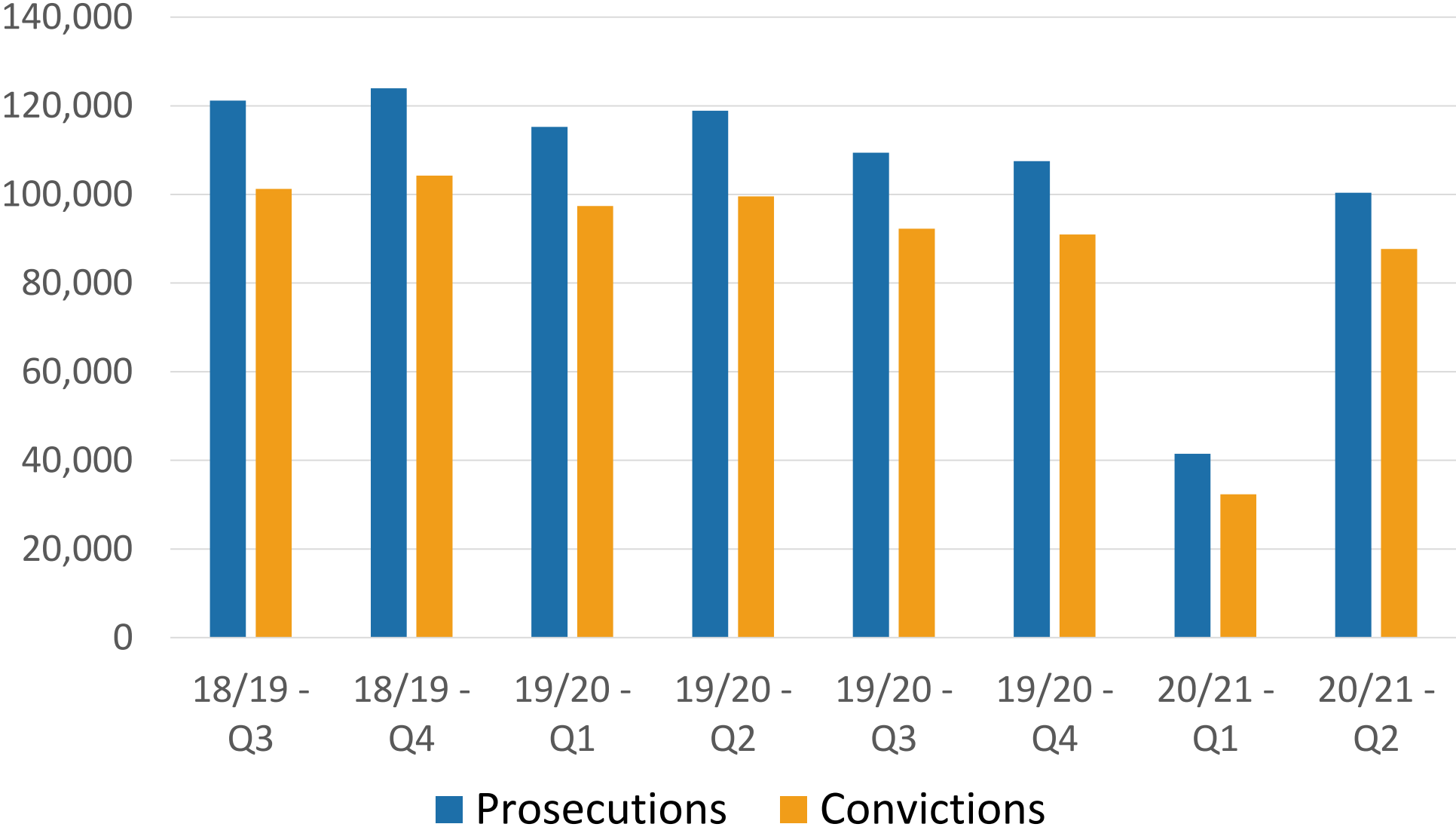
41. General functions of Commissioner

- (1) The Commissioner must encourage good practice in –
 - (a) the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences;
 - (b) the identification of victims of those offences.

Prosecutions are falling

Year prior to	Q2 2019	Q2 2020	
Prosecutions	331	261	↓21%
Convictions	243	191	↓21%
Legal Decisions	284	336	↑18%
Charge rate	80%	69%	

Prosecutions and Convictions, England & Wales



Quarter	19/20 – Q3	19/20 – Q4	20/21 – Q1	20/21 – Q2	Rolling Year to Date
Prosecutions	109,425	107,497	41,508	100,377	358,807
Convictions	92,281	90,959	32,331	87,697	303,268

Quarter	18/19 – Q3	18/19 – Q4	19/20 – Q1	19/20 – Q2	Rolling Year to Date
Prosecutions	121,191	123,939	115,228	118,896	479,254
Convictions	101,245	104,259	97,410	99,580	402,494

But more operational activity recorded

- The number of live operations has increased to at least 1,763 as of April 2020, a rise of 28.9% (393) from April 2019. **Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit (MSOIC) (2020)**
- Modern slavery investigations frequently the isolated efforts of well-motivated and tenacious individuals who use informal networks to negotiate their way through the police system.

Barriers to successful prosecution

- Victim engagement and evidence
- Investigations are complex, complicated and resource intensive
- Reluctance to mount intelligence-driven operations
- Low levels of investigative expertise – no record of who has attended the excellent four day course
- Linked to wider issues of third party digital evidence, resources, criminal justice delays
- Police culture?

Modern slavery as serious organised crime

- Modern slavery is a trade in people. The International Labour Organization estimated that slavery generates US\$150bn in profits every year. ***Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour, ILO (2017)***
- The National Crime Agency (NCA) assesses that most modern slavery and human trafficking is driven by organised crime, with more sophisticated groups highly likely to engage in slavery and trafficking alongside other crime, including financial and immigration crime.
- However, only 8% of all live police modern slavery cases are assessed as serious and organised crime – many are not attracting the additional capabilities available such as financial investigators or support from the Regional Organised Crime Units or NCA. ***Overview of Live Modern Slavery Operations in UK Policing, MSOIC (June 2019)***

Modern slavery as serious organised crime

- Policing response to modern slavery needs to adopt the methods, resources and tactics ordinarily deployed when effectively responding to other serious and organised crime threats.
- We need to adopt an intelligent whole system approach which supports investigations from the local to the regional to the national and beyond.
- Cooperation and coordination between police forces and partnership agencies is essential to gather evidence, prosecute offenders and safeguard potential victims. There is no framework in place to support a consistent coordinated operational response across the 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Serious organised crime and police capabilities

“How should the police service confront an increasingly understood and serious organised crime threat to our country? ... specialist resources devoted by the police service to addressing this threat are unco-ordinated and, in effect, inadequate and have been for many years.”

**Sir Paul Stephenson QPM, John Harris Memorial Lecture
(2010)**

Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry

“Lynne Owens suggested to us that the policing of serious and organised crime is not in the same place as counter-terrorism, in relation to national capabilities and structures.”

***Policing for the future*, Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry report (October 2018)**

Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry

“At a national and regional level, forces need to pool resources and capabilities to a far greater extent, particularly for online crimes such as fraud, but also in complex areas where crimes often cross force borders, such as organised crime, county lines and modern slavery.”

***Policing for the future*, Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry report (October 2018)**

Sir Craig Mackey Review

“This review will help strengthen our response to these sickening crimes, building on the existing success of the NCA.

The threat is growing, and offenders are becoming more sophisticated. Serious and organised criminals exploit children and ruthlessly target the most vulnerable in our society, ruining lives and blighting communities.

We are committed to tackling crime and keeping our streets safe and I’m glad Sir Craig will bring his significant expertise and experience to this review, which will help ensure our system is fit for the modern world.”

Home Secretary Priti Patel (29 October 2019)

Sir Craig Mackey Review

- Review announced by the Government in October 2019 “to identify ways of bolstering the response to threats such as county lines, people trafficking, drugs, child sexual exploitation, fraud and illicit finance”.
- Recommendations around the status, roles and responsibilities of the NCA, regional organised crime units, and other national agencies pursuing serious criminality.
- Review led by Sir Craig Mackey QPM and delivered to Brandon Lewis, former Minister for Security “in Spring 2020” – never published.

Evidence-based policing

- ‘To combat modern slavery successfully ... government will need to build much stronger information and understanding of perpetrators and victims that it has now’. ***Reducing modern slavery, National Audit Office (December 2017)***
- Policies, programmes and interventions need to be better targeted
- What are the predictors of slavery risk?
- But continuing barriers to data sharing
- And insufficient focus on experimentation and what works

Evidence-based policing

“Evidence-based policing is the use of the best available research on the outcomes of police work to implement guidelines and evaluate agencies, units, and officers. **Put more simply, evidence-based policing uses research to guide practice and evaluate practitioners. It uses the best evidence to shape the best practice.** It is a systematic effort to parse out and codify unsystematic ‘experience’ as the basis for police work, refining it by ongoing systematic testing of hypotheses.”

Evidence-Based Policing, Lawrence W. Sherman (July 1998)

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Inclusion - The intersection of modern slavery and organised immigration crime

“Foreign nationals may try to enter the UK through clandestine means. This may be a desperate choice at great financial cost, to seek asylum, or because they have been compelled, deceived or coerced by criminals for the purposes of servitude, slavery or other exploitation. Irrespective of the reasons, those entering the UK through this method are first and foremost victims and should be treated as such. Clandestine entry is likely to be the symptom of wider organised crime.”

International Authorised Professional Practice, College of Policing

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“On 24 November 2019, ten men were found struggling to breathe in the back of a lorry in the same county. So far, so similar – several people in the back of a lorry without enough oxygen. But this time, these men were not described as victims. Instead, they were all arrested on suspicion of immigration offences. At the time of discovery, the only difference was that in the first case the people were found dead and in the second they were found alive. It seems UK immigration policy has now sunk so low that being labelled a criminal or a victim is determined by whether you are found alive or dead.

“A lorry-load of corpses in Essex, but no trafficking charges in court” in openDemocracy, Emily Kenway (October 2020)

Lessons from Windrush

“I have serious concerns that these failings demonstrate an institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the issue of race.”

Windrush Lessons Learned Review, Wendy Williams
(March 2020)

**WOMEN
IN THE
SHADOWS**



The Clewer
Initiative

Independent
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