

New contract to deliver improved support for modern slavery victims

Potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery will be able to access more flexible support under an improved service.

The new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract, awarded to The Salvation Army today (Monday 29 June), will provide a service that better meets the needs of each victim, including those with specialist and complex needs.

As part of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), it will ensure the safeguarding and protection of victims as well as provide tailored support to individual recovery needs, lifting victims out of situations of exploitation and putting them in a position where they can begin to rebuild their lives.

The new contract will go live later this year, following a period of transition from the current service.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

The government is a world leader in tackling modern slavery, but we are always striving to improve support for victims so that they can get their lives back on track.

The new Victim Care Contract builds on the wide-ranging support the government already provides and ensures that people affected by this abhorrent crime receive personalised, professional care.

Under the current service, victims of modern slavery who have been referred by a designated First Responder, such as a specified charity worker or a law enforcement officer, can access support.

This includes accommodation, where needed, as well as financial support and access to a support worker.

The new contract will continue to provide this support and will also introduce new services for victims. For example, during the first year of the contract the government will work with law enforcement partners to test the set-up and operation of a new provision of Places of Safety.

This new service is aimed at the most vulnerable victims rescued from exploitation and will provide them with a safe place for up to three working days to consider if they want to enter the NRM.

Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, leader of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland, said:

The Salvation Army has been privileged to work alongside our partners to support thousands of victims of modern slavery as they rebuild their lives.

We are grateful for the opportunity to not only continue to serve these most vulnerable people but that through the new Victim Care Contract we can extend the support available to them at all stages of their recovery.

Working closely with the Home Office and our partners, we will build on the improvements and partnerships we have delivered over the past nine years, continue to add value to the entitlements survivors of slavery receive and ensure their needs are properly managed and respected.

The Salvation Army will remain at the forefront of the fight to help today's survivors overcome the challenges they face and protect other vulnerable people from becoming the victims of the future.

As with the existing contract, all victims' needs will be individually determined on entry to the service, continually re-assessed throughout and considered again when they are preparing to leave.

But the new contract will allow for more specialised services to meet those needs, including varied accommodation and improved support for those with complex requirements.

In addition, the new contract will introduce journey plans to help victims work with their support worker to recover from and reflect on their experiences, and then begin to move on to independence outside of the service.

The new contract is part of the government's ongoing efforts to improve the system of identification and support for modern slavery victims.