

News story: New action to tackle modern slavery and support victims

The government has announced a package of fresh support to assist child victims of modern slavery and fund innovative ways to improve our response to this abhorrent crime.

During a speech to the McCain Institute in London, where she was presented with an award in recognition of her work fighting modern slavery, Prime Minister Theresa May announced a £5 million fund to test new approaches to tackling this crime.

The fund is now open for applications, and is the second round of an £11 million Modern Slavery Innovation Fund designed to build the evidence base around new approaches to tackle modern slavery around the world. So far it has supported projects such as GoodWeave and AllianceHR to tackle modern slavery in supply chains linked to UK companies in India and South Africa, and The Salvation Army and Retrak which are supporting victims in Nigeria, the Philippines and Ethiopia.

Speaking at the event last night Prime Minister Theresa May said:

More than 40 million men, women and children are suffering in modern slavery across the world, with between 10,000 and 13,000 in the UK alone.

That is why – first as Home Secretary and now as Prime Minister – I made tackling modern slavery a personal mission.

The announcement comes as Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins announced to Parliament that the latest Independent Child Trafficking Advocates scheme, run in partnership with Barnardo's, would officially open next week in the West Midlands. So far, the early adopter sites have helped over 200 children who are potential victims of modern slavery access support and help as they rebuild their lives.

Speaking in a Westminster Hall debate yesterday, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

It is horrendous that victims of modern slavery have their freedom denied and that is why this government is absolutely determined to do all we can to tackle this crime.

Today, I am delighted to announce that the Independent Child Trafficking Advocates service will be extended to children in the West Midlands next week. These advocates provide invaluable specialist support to child victims of modern slavery.

The minister also announced that the service will be rolled out to help children in the East Midlands from January 2019, and in Croydon from April 2019. Last year, across the three new sites over 480 children were referred into the National Referral Mechanism.

Barnardo's Chief Executive Javed Khan said:

We are really pleased the Home Office has announced the expansion of our Independent Child Trafficking Advocates Service to vulnerable children in the West Midlands, East Midlands and Croydon.

It's crucial all trafficked children get the help they need to recover from the exploitation and trauma they have suffered. And children at risk of this horrific crime must be protected from harm.

By developing this much-needed service we will be able to support more children who are trafficked into the UK or from one part of the UK to another. We will also be able to upskill more professionals working with children to understand their vulnerabilities, including the risk of being trafficked internally.