

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) and Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre

About

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) and the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC, or the Centre) are both committed to developing a collaborative approach to policy-relevant modern slavery research. They have already established a variety of mechanisms for collaboration and aspire to deepen their collaboration on projects which align with both organisations' research priorities.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out how the IASC and the Modern Slavery PEC already collaborate and how they propose to deepen that collaboration. It also covers how the IASC may support research relevant to her statutory remit whilst also providing advice and guidance to the Modern Slavery PEC as a member of the Advisory Group. The Centre's mission is to enhance understanding of modern slavery across the globe and transform the effectiveness of laws and policies designed to overcome it. This MoU reflects the strategic roles that both the IASC and the Centre play in relation to research and evidence on modern slavery in the UK.

This MoU was last updated on 20 October 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

IASC statutory remit

The IASC has a UK-wide remit as set out in Part 4 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences and the identification of victims. To meet this remit, the IASC has stated her objectives and priorities for the period 2019-2021 in her [Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#). This includes the priority *Getting value from research and innovation*.

Under Part 4 Section 41 of the Act ("General functions of Commissioner"), (3) The things that the Commissioner may do in pursuance of subsection (1) include—

- (c) undertaking or supporting (financially or otherwise) the carrying out of research.

In May 2019 the IASC submitted a business case to the Home Office for the 2019 Spending Review which included the case for a research budget that would enable the commissioning of research. The IASC received no additional funding.¹ The IASC therefore works with a range of organisations to support and encourage research that is policy and practice relevant.

¹ [See 4.3.1 of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2019-2020.](#)

IASC and Modern Slavery PEC

The Modern Slavery PEC is a consortium of universities and Independent Research Organisations, funded and actively supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), with input from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), with funding awarded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) from the Strategic Priorities Fund as a result of collaboration with the UK Home Office. The Modern Slavery PEC's approach to commissioning research is set out in the Modern Slavery PEC [Strategy](#), published in April 2021.

The IASC is an 'ex officio' member of the Modern Slavery PEC Advisory Group, offering advice and guidance to the Centre's Senior Management Board. In addition, the IASC and her team supports the work of the Centre's core team via monthly stakeholder update meetings. The IASC is committed to supporting the Modern Slavery PEC as set out in the IASC Strategic Plan (2019-2021): "I will be an active member of the Centre's advisory board and will promote the use of their research findings to inform policy."² The IASC also sets out how the Centre's research priorities align with the IASC strategic priorities in the Annual Report 2019-2020.³ The IASC Office Research and Innovation Lead sits on the Centre's Research Co-ordination Group, which supports the strategic management of the Centre's research portfolio.

As a member of the Modern Slavery PEC's Advisory Group, the IASC is covered by the Centre's Framework for Managing Conflicts of Interest, which supports a proportionate, transparent and scrutable process for managing conflicts of interest.

Research support protocol

As set out in her statutory remit and strategic plan, the IASC has a focus on developing strategic partnerships to support policy and practice relevant research. This [online form](#) outlines the IASC approach to research requests to the office and has been developed in consultation with the IASC Advisory Panel.

The IASC position in relation to considering support for any research bid is predicated on whether research aligns with the strategic plan and meets a specific evidence gap. Formal or informal support (including letters of support) sets out why there is a need for research on a particular theme and does not offer support for specific funding bids. The IASC position in relation to supporting Modern Slavery PEC-funded research bids reflects the same approach.

IASC "support" equates to in-kind/soft support and is not financial. Research support may include:

- Co-design of project objectives
- Collaboration through research project lifetime
- Feedback on research themes and methodology
- Contribution to stakeholder working group meetings

² [See 4.3.3 of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2019-2020.](#)

³ [See 4.3.10 of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2019-2020.](#)

- Convening, contributing to and/or co-designing roundtables or events
- Requests for data
- Feedback on final reports
- Dissemination of research outputs

The IASC Office may suggest research ideas to the Centre, received through IASC's online stakeholder form.