

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner



Dear colleagues,

This bulletin provides a snapshot of the work that my office has been involved with over the last few weeks, and I invite you to follow the links for a more detailed look. Last week I gave evidence in person to the Public Bill Committee during the legislative scrutiny of the government's National Borders Bill. As COVID-19 restrictions ease I look forward to more in-person engagement,

alongside continued virtual opportunities for working with partners and stakeholders across the sector. I look forward to keeping you updated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sara Thornton', is centered below the text.

Dame Sara Thornton, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

Nationality and Borders Bill

Earlier in September the Commissioner wrote to the Home Secretary in response to the Nationality and Borders Bill which was introduced on 6 July 2021.

Dame Sara's letter refers to the Bill as a whole where measures may impact victims of modern slavery with detailed focus on Part 4 Modern Slavery. The letter highlights the potential for the legislation to make the identification of modern slavery victims harder. It raises concerns that the proposals will increase vulnerability to trafficking but may not deter migrants from putting themselves in the hands of the smugglers and traffickers. Finally, it warns that the proposal that foreign nationals sentenced to twelve months or more in prison should not receive support within the National Referral Mechanism could significantly undermine the ability to bring traffickers to justice.

Read the full letter: [IASC letter to The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary](#)

Last Thursday the Commissioner gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee, alongside Siobhán Mullaly, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons.

View the recorded committee session [here](#).

Launch: The role of the financial services sector in eradicating modern slavery

Last week the Commissioner published a [new review](#) following responses from 44 CEOs of leading financial services organisations to the joint Themis-TRIBE-IASC report *Preventing Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking: an Agenda for Action across the Financial Services Sector* (January 2021).

The review emphasises the important role that the financial sector has in the detection and eradication of modern slavery. It highlights examples of best practice within individual financial organisations and through collaborative efforts. It focuses on the approaches businesses should take to fully address modern slavery and human trafficking risk through [recommendations](#) across five areas. The recommendations focus on the need to develop relevant risk management processes and to create better systems to share intelligence. The Commissioner strongly encourages growing collective action initiatives by investors, and suggests that financial services could be a powerful force to encourage action to address significant risks in the electronics business. Finally, until the government legislates to extend Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act to cover financial portfolios, the Commissioner suggests that businesses cover these areas voluntarily in their annual modern slavery

statements.

Read the full review: [*The role of the financial sector in eradicating modern slavery: CEOs respond to the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner*](#)

Delivering a public health response to modern slavery: Response from the Home Secretary

In August the Commissioner wrote a letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP sharing the recently published interactive [framework](#) for a public health approach to modern slavery, with a focus on prevention. In the letter Dame Sara urged the government to embed such an approach into the UK's Modern Slavery Strategy, which is currently in the process of being updated. In her response this month the Home Secretary welcomed the framework and wrote "Prevention must and will ... be a key element of our approach."

Read the full letter and the Home Secretary's response [here](#).

IASC in the news

[*Dame Sara says retailers need to be more responsible to protect supply chain workers from abuse - i paper*](#)

In an i paper article last month Dame Sara expressed her belief that retailers should enact more reforms to protect supply chain workers from abuse voluntarily but ought to face penalties if their suppliers are abusing workers. She also emphasised the collective role of UK public and private bodies,

including the consumer, in the prevention of modern slavery. Read Rob Hasting's article [here](#).

[A Long Way from Vietnam - BBC Sounds](#)

The Commissioner spoke about the non-binary nature of people-smuggling and human trafficking as part of reporter Nga Pham's investigation for Radio 4 focused on people smuggling from Vietnam into the UK. Listen to the full programme [here](#).

[Special Report on Modern Slavery: shocking stories the front line of human trafficking – The Sunday Times](#)

Earlier in August the Commissioner's interview with investigative journalist Steve Boggan was referenced in his special report for the The Sunday Times Magazine which revealed the harsh realities for victims and the work being done to combat modern slavery in the UK. Read the full report [here](#).

Follow on Twitter [@UKAntiSlavery](#) and [Linked In](#) for regular updates.

Upcoming events

Practitioner Responses to Child Trafficking: Emerging Good Practice

Earlier this year the Commissioner launched a call for practitioner evidence to directly inform a conference taking place on 10-12 October at the educational institute [Cumberland Lodge](#). Conference findings will be shared with stakeholders across the modern slavery and related sectors to inform improvements in policy and practice.

Sedex webinar: In discussion with Dame Sara Thornton

On 13 October Dame Sara will join [Sedex](#) to discuss modern slavery in supply chains, challenges for businesses, and the proposed updates to the Modern Slavery Act. The virtual event is open to all and you can register for free [here](#).

West Midlands Anti Slavery Day Conference

Dame Sara will open the virtual conference on 14 October. The event will gather anti-slavery networks, police and law enforcement, health experts and councillors to explore the public health approach to Modern Slavery, and how it can be applied at local level.

Healing the Wounds of Modern Slavery: Social Policy, Therapy and the Arts - St Mary's University

Dame Sara will deliver an address on 15 October at the opening day of St. Mary's [international conference](#), which will focus on existing and emerging innovative practice responses to supporting survivors in their journey towards healing the wounds inflicted during their exploitation.

FAST International Review Conference

Dame Sara will speak at the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) conference taking place on 18-19 October. The event will engage with FAST's work, focusing on developments since the release of the [Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking](#). It will spotlight ongoing initiatives and highlight areas the Blueprint's recommendations have created tangible developments in the modern slavery and human trafficking landscape, from government policy to private sector best practices.

IOM Online Panel discussion on the impact of the Nationality and Borders

Bill

On 20 October Dame Sara will take part in a panel event hosted by the [International Organization for Migration](#) to mark Anti-Slavery Day 2021. Panellists will explore the impact of the Nationality and Borders Bill on the UK's response to modern slavery.

Public lecture: Did you know there are 40 million modern slaves in the world today?

Dame Dara will deliver a lecture at Canterbury Christ Church University On 26 October as part of its [public lecture series](#). You can book tickets [here](#).

IBA Showcase: the IBA and modern slavery

On 29 October Dame Sara will join [a panel to discuss](#) whether modern slavery in the supply chain of a company already breaches or could easily breach laws in other parts of a legal system, and how the IBA and wider legal profession can align national legal systems to combat the global issue.

Contact us

- [Click here to subscribe to our mailing list](#).
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