



Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner  
Clive House  
70 Petty France  
London, SW1H 9EX  
[iasc@iasc.independent.gov.uk](mailto:iasc@iasc.independent.gov.uk)

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Department E-Mail: [REDACTED]

20 March 2025

Dear Rt Hon Yvette Cooper,

As we approach the ten-year anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, it is a stark reminder that our efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking must be intensified. Recent reports have highlighted the disturbing reality of modern slavery within the UK, including cases where victims were forced to work in appalling conditions in various industries.

Your leadership is crucial in addressing these pressing issues, especially with the recent Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill. While this legislation aims to strengthen UK border security and combat people-smuggling gangs, it is essential that protections for victims of modern slavery are not compromised. This bill merely restores the UK's stance on modern slavery to its pre-2023 baseline, highlighting the urgent need for further action. It is deeply concerning that the bill includes provisions to detain unaccompanied children whose age is disputed by the Home Office. These children are among the most vulnerable, and their care and wellbeing should be a primary concern. Victims of modern slavery deserve our compassion and support, and no new legislation should reduce their rights. Of all referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) this year, 31% were children, with a staggering 75% of UK nationals being children at the time of referral. We must ensure our policies protect these children and provide them with the safety and support they desperately need.

The latest National Referral Mechanism (NRM) figures show a record number of potential victims trapped in exploitation across the UK, yet prosecution rates in England and Wales remain alarmingly low. This anniversary is not just a milestone; it is a call to action for renewed commitment and decisive measures to eradicate this heinous crime.

The identification system for victims is near breaking point, and despite rising numbers of potential victims, the number of 'First Responder Organisations' (FROs) has remained unchanged since the NRM's launch in 2008. It is essential to consider both the domestic and international aspects of modern slavery. Your role as Home Secretary is pivotal in driving these efforts and ensuring that the UK remains at the forefront of the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking.



The IASC office is prepared to assist with your initiatives and is open to further discussions on these issues.

As listed in our Strategic Plan 2024-2026, these are the critical aims:

1. **Publish a Cross-Government Modern Slavery Strategy:** The last strategy was published in 2014. Without a new, coordinated approach, law enforcement lacks the direction and resources needed to rescue victims of exploitation.
2. **Incorporate Survivor Voices in Policy Design:** Policy is more effective when designed with those directly affected by it. I have submitted a business case to the Home Office to establish a Survivor Advisory Council. Your support in this is critical.
3. **Introduce Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence:** The UK is falling behind international partners on supply chain legislation, and businesses are calling for this legislation to level the playing field.

A backbench business debate to commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act is scheduled for **Thursday, 27th March**. It would be greatly appreciated if you could attend and lend your support.

We are eager to maintain a close working relationship with you and your department to ensure the UK leads the way in eradicating modern slavery.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

**Eleanor Lyons**  
**Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**