

Fighting Forced Labour in the Garment Sector

#EndGarmentTradeSlavery

Independent charity Crimestoppers, in partnership with Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Leicester City Council, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and De Montfort University are raising awareness of Forced Labour and the exploitation of vulnerable people in the Garment Sector in Leicestershire.

The Garment trade is one of the biggest industries in Leicestershire and there is the possibility that there are trafficked people working within this sector who are being exploited by the people who have secured their employment.

Modern slavery is a global problem and an international crime, affecting millions of people of all ages, including many victims in the UK. The most recent report¹ showed that Forced Labour, or Labour Exploitation, is the most common type of Modern Slavery in the UK. Victims are often controlled by force, threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and deception.

In 2015 Leicestershire Police set up a dedicated Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Team. During the first year there were 12 reports of MSHT. In the last 12 months, the MSHT Team have received 223 reports of MSHT.

Forced Labour is sometimes hidden, but often people are exploited in plain sight. Victims come from a variety of backgrounds; they may be UK citizens, EU migrants or from outside the EU altogether.

The following elements, individually or collectively, can indicate Forced Labour. These are:

1. Signs of physical harm or threats of such.
2. Apparent restriction of movement and confinement to a particular place or to a limited area outside the work place.
3. Debt-bondage – Tricked into working for little or no money to repay an endless cycle of debt to another person outside of their employment.
4. Paid far less than the national minimum wage or the apparent withholding of wages or excessive wage reductions from another person outside of their employment.
5. Workers potentially providing their own work wear which is inappropriate for the task being performed.
6. Retention of passports and / or identification documents by someone outside of their employment. This means workers are unable to leave or prove their identity status.
7. Threat of denunciation to the authorities where the worker is of illegal status.
8. The apparent control of a worker by another person who might bring them to work and / or try to speak for them and / or act as an intermediary.

¹ Quarter 2, April – June 2020, Statistical Summary from Unseen

Crimestoppers and partners are working hard to raise awareness of Forced Labour and help businesses and organisations identify the factors that may indicate that a member of their workforce or one they work near to or with, is being exploited.

We are encouraging your organisation to look out for these potential signs that Modern Slavery is happening:

- **Restricted Freedom**
Shows signs that their movements are being controlled or they are unable to move freely, dependant on people for transport and accommodation, travels only with other workers, does not communicate freely, given leftovers to eat, looks to suffer violence.
- **Behaviour**
Unfamiliar with English, acts as though they have been instructed, distrustful, limited or no social interaction, shows fear or anxiety, scavenges for food or resorts to crime for food and/or money.
- **Working Conditions**
Does not interact with colleagues, lacks basic training, skills or licences. Works very long hours and may be moved from one work base to another to perform other duties. Very few breaks.
- **Accommodation**
Does not know their work or home address, lives in multiple occupied houses and often with those they work with, lives in poor or substandard accommodation.
- **Finances**
No access to their earnings, has large debts, no access to bank cards or documents, wages paid into a different person's account, charged for transport to work.
- **Appearance**
Suffers with regular injuries, has injuries that appear old or cannot be explained, wears the same clothes every day.

If you have any concerns about an employee or someone you know, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or go online at [crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org), to give information 100% anonymously about Forced Labour and any other crime - or contact Leicestershire Police.

Join us in our fight against modern slavery, encourage and empower your employees and your communities to report any information on crime and make your organisation a safer place to work and your home a safer place to live.