



One minute guide

Modern Slavery Learning Review

September 2019

Overview

Modern Slavery is an umbrella term for activities when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service (definition by Unseen) It can include human trafficking, forced labour, servitude and one person being 'owned' by another.

In April 2019 the Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) produced a learning review after the conviction and imprisonment of 4 individuals under the Modern Slavery Act. Two British adult female victims had been held in domestic servitude, denied food and been subject to systematic and sustained physical abuse. They were found by Police after neighbours complained about noise levels.

Whilst neither victim had care and support needs as defined by the Care Act 2014, and the case did not meet the criteria for a full Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR), the SAR panel felt that a learning review was appropriate as it afforded an opportunity to make recommendations to single agencies around areas which may benefit from evaluation.

This One Minute Guide is designed to share the learning with colleagues to ensure all agencies have the opportunity to consider their practice and make any changes they feel appropriate.

Health

The Review noted that a Primary Care Practitioner involved with one of the victims had used the terms 'learning difficulty' and 'learning disability' interchangeably. This suggested that primary care providers may wish to give consideration as to how these terms are used on patient recording systems. Whilst differentiating between a learning difficulty and learning disability can be complex, a learning disability is linked to overall cognitive impairment whereas a learning difficulty, such as Dyslexia, does not affect general intelligence. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk).

It was noted by the panel that the GP of the victims had not been informed of their experiences, and that this was important to ensure they received the right care after their trauma. It was therefore a recommendation for the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure information was shared, where appropriate, with primary care providers in the future.

GPs were also recommended to be more professionally curious and give consideration to questioning bruising to identify issues of assault or harm. Half of Coventry's GP Practices to date have taken up the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) training which increases knowledge of domestic violence and abuse with reference to coercion and control, and more training is being rolled out to GPs across Coventry to further increase awareness around this type of risk.

Police

The panel heard that one victim had refused help from Victim Support and, as they had moved away from Coventry, were not assured that they would be offered ongoing support in their new area of residence. There were also concerns that the same vulnerable victim may have remained in contact with one of the perpetrators via social media (which gives an insight into the impactful and long-term effects of grooming). West Midlands Police were asked to consider whether they had done all they could to offer victim support to this individual, and the Clinical Commissioning Group were asked to consider whether any supportive services could be offered via the victim's GP in their new area by strengthening partnership working with the victim and gaining their consent to share information between GP Practices.

Multi-agency

The review identified that several agencies had noted the victims attending appointments with other adults, often described as cousins but not named. The panel therefore recommended that all colleagues should make attempts to identify accompanying individuals, routinely recording the names of all individuals present. The panel also noted that, where possible, it would be good practice for all service users/patients to be seen alone to confirm they are happy to have those accompanying them during their visit/appointment.

CSAB

The panel understood that whilst the offences took place in 2016/17 when understanding around modern slavery was more limited, it would be useful for strategic partners to consider how to raise awareness of the many facets of modern slavery and coercion and control amongst professionals.

The Board were also advised to share the learning outcomes from the review with professionals, the Deputy Chief Executive of Coventry City Council and the Judge who presided over family court proceedings relevant to the case.

So – what now?

How confident are you that you can spot the signs of abuse and would know what to do?

- A feature of this learning review is that both victims were British females, and so did not fit the generally held stereotype of modern slavery victims (individuals trafficked to the UK from overseas). For more information about what modern slavery can look like visit <https://www.unseenuk.org/>
- If you feel as though you would like to be upskilled around any of the issues contained in this Guide please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-awareness-booklet to access a modern slavery awareness booklet.
- The CSAB general training brochure is updated annually, with the current version is available at www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/5646/csab_training_brochure_20192020

To contact CSAB please visit our website at www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/233/coventry_safeguarding_adults_board or Tweet to us at @CoventryCSCP.