

Council meeting 17th October 2023
Opposition motion in the name of Councillor Lucy Wakeley
Combatting Modern Slavery

Council notes:

- 1) That in January, the Council passed a motion that recognises that Refugee & asylum seekers are much more likely to be subject to both criminal and sexual exploitation as well as modern-day slavery and that Barnet Council has a duty of care towards children and vulnerable and trafficked adults in our borough.
- 2) In the year ending in June, The Metropolitan Police received 5,435 referrals where a person was a potential victim of modern slavery.
- 3) Globally, over 50 million people are in modern slavery, with there being over 100,000 victims in the UK. The latest data provided by the London Modern Slavery Leads Group shows that in the year 2020/2021, there were 72 referrals to the National Referral Mechanism from Barnet. **17** of those referrals were **children**. In the year 2021/2022 there were 80 referrals.
- 4) Those forms of modern slavery, including labour exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude, among others, are prevalent in Barnet.
- 5) At present, the only information present to officers and members on Modern Slavery are links to external organisations.
- 6) A member of the Adult Social Care, Housing and Learning & Development team attended the Human Trafficking Foundation's modern slavery Train the Trainer training in the summer and the Human Trafficking Foundation was invited to a Safeguarding Adults Managers meeting to raise awareness of indicators and the National Referral Mechanism process.
- 7) The Modern Slavery Act 2015 saw the UK become the first country in the world to introduce transparency in supply chain requirements.
- 8) Following that, Barnet Council and its subsidiary groups have established their own policies regarding Modern Slavery and are working hard to find and eradicate any form of slavery within Barnet. More, however, needs to be done.

However, considering the latest data, compounded by the impacts of COVID-19 and increased vulnerabilities, especially of women and children, not enough action is being taken.

Council therefore resolves:

- 1) Barnet London Borough Council to join the London Partnership on Modern Slavery.
- 2) To commit to appointing a multi-stakeholder and intergenerational Modern Slavery Board within the next 6 months, replacing the existing inter-departmental governance model, that co-leads and co-creates the development and implementation of a modern slavery strategy and action plan, focusing on awareness, prevention, and providing support to survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking as seen in authorities such as Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster and Haringey.

- a. The Modern Slavery Board should also act as the monitoring and evaluation body of the strategy, reporting to the relevant Committees and Cabinet on a bi-annual basis.
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- 3) To co-create these processes with Councillors, Council Officers, anti-modern slavery organisations, police and NHS wider civil society and young people.
 - 4) To have a web page on Barnet's website with information on the current state of a strategy and statistics of reported victims & survivors of modern slavery in Barnet and links to help.