



Forced Labour and Supply Chains Factsheet

Forced Labour

Jurgis was born and raised in Lithuania. One day one farmer asked him if he ever considered finding work abroad. He told Jurgis he knew someone in the UK who was looking for young men to work in a charity that would gather items and transport them to children's homes in Lithuania. He was told he would be paid £30 a day and given accommodation. A few weeks later he flew to Belfast. His employer told Jurgis he had to give him his passport to be officially registered. Keen to make sure everything was official, Jurgis handed it over and accepted the employer's help to fill in the forms as he did not speak English. Jurgis started working twelve hours per day with a fifteen minute break. He had to share his caravan with eight other men. He was given £20 per week for food. He needed to escape but he did not know how. *(Case study courtesy of the Law Centre Northern Ireland)*
Supply Chains

Supply Chains

"My name is Ravi Shanker Kumar. I think I am between 12 and 13 years old. My cousin was working in the loom and it was he, in fact, who told my uncle to go back to the village and talk to my parents so they could send me there. My parents asked if I wanted to go; I said no. However the loom owner paid them 500 rupees (\$10) and they asked me to leave. The loom owner took me from my village. He made a mark on the loom I had to use and I was told I had to weave the carpet to that mark. I always had to work by candlelight to reach the mark. I never got enough sleep and was always tired." *(Case study courtesy from Professors Zoe Trodd & Kevin Bales)*

Forced Labour

Forced labour is the act of coercing, deceiving or forcing someone into working against their will. Victims of forced labour are often controlled by their 'employers' through threats or physical harm, confiscation of identity documents and by withholding their wages. Forced labour occurs throughout the UK, often within low-skilled, low-wage jobs where labour standards and workers are unregulated, unlicensed or unenforced. Migrant populations are particularly at risk, although forced labour also occurs among British nationals.

Forced labour is most commonly found in the block paving and tarmac industry, the construction industry, agriculture, factory work and food processing industry. Victims have also been reported in car washes, nail bars and restaurants. Survivors often report being offered transportation to the UK and accommodation as part of an employment package. Many find these job opportunities on the internet, while others are told by friends and family.

Victims of forced labour may have their wages paid into bank accounts to which they have little or no access. There may also be further deductions for transport and accommodation, leaving them with little or no pay. In addition, some traffickers assist the victim to claim state benefits which the trafficker will then keep. Victims of forced labour may also be victims of debt bondage, where they are tricked into working to repay a debt that is often not legitimate. Poverty, threats, violence, surveillance and imprisonment are used to make sure they cannot leave or get help.

Supply Chains

In our commercial world, a supply chain encompasses the steps it takes to get a product or a service from the supplier to the customer. Although companies may not actively exploit workers, when their products/services require multileveled supply chains, there is a strong likelihood that at one of those levels, forced labour will occur. For example the shop selling rugs in the UK may not use forced labour in the shop, but is selling rugs produced with slave labour. The large number of subcontractors and intermediaries involved within construction, textile and agriculture supply chains make these industries very susceptible to labour exploitation.

Spot the Signs

Look out for:

- *Large numbers of workers being picked up from a house every day, or brought to the same location every day.*
- *Poor physical appearance – bad hygiene, poor diet, inappropriate clothing for their job.*
- *People who seem to be working very long hours for little or no pay.*
- *Workers who appear afraid of their employers, or who seem isolated / have very little personal freedom.*
- *Individuals with no paperwork / documentation.*
- *People working in fast turnover jobs – carwashes, farms, factories, building work, nail bars, etc.*
- *Workers who are dependent on their employers for accommodation and transport.*
- *An employer who cannot present a valid license.*

If you spot any signs call

Police (emergencies) **999**

Police (non-emergencies) **101**

Modern Slavery Helpline

0800 0121 700

Salvation Army helpline

0300 3038 151

Crimestoppers **0800 555 111**

Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority **0800 432 0804**

Migrant Help **07766 668781**

Supply Chains cont.

In the UK, in 2014, 72% of British supply chain professionals had zero visibility of their supply chains beyond their second tier with only 11% saying they have visibility along the entire chain. Ideally, the new Modern Slavery Act will help change these statistics. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 includes a clause on “Transparency in Supply Chains”. The clause requires every company with a turnover of more than £36 million operating in the UK (not only those registered here) to publish an annual slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year. The Act covers some 12,000 companies. Organisations are required to publish their statement on their website.

Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)

The GLAA regulates businesses that provide workers to the fresh produce supply chain and horticulture industry to make sure they meet

the employment standards required by law. You will need a GLAA license if you are an employment agency, a labour provider or a gangmaster who provides workers to the following sectors:

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Shellfish gathering
- Any associated processing and packaging

A labour provider must have a GLAA license to work in the regulated sectors; it is a criminal offence to supply workers without a license.

For general enquiries call 0345 602 5020

Useful resources

Home Office, 2015, Modern Slavery Strategy

Altius, 2017, The Modern day Slavery Survey, 2017 Report

Gangmasters Licensing Authority, 2014, Labour Exploitation, Spotting the Signs

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2013, Forced Labour’s Business Models and Supply Chains

Links

National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk

Gangmasters Licensing Authority: www.gla.gov.uk

International Labour Organisation: www.ilo.org