

Introduction from Unseen's Director and Bedfordshire's Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner - Justine Currell

'It is great to see so many community groups and charities across Bedfordshire participating in awareness-raising activities and training to improve knowledge and understanding of modern slavery across the county. The UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline, run from offices in Bedfordshire, is seeing an increase in the number of calls and contacts it receives about situations of modern slavery. However, the number of calls from Bedfordshire has declined in recent months so work through the Anti-Slavery Partnership is key in ensuring that people know about the Helpline and how they can get advice and support if they are in a situation or are concerned about someone else in a situation. Our collective action will ensure that vulnerable people can be safeguarded and protected and our increasing understanding of modern slavery will help to prevent it in the first place.'

**Polish British Integration Centre Learn How to Spot the Signs of Modern Slavery**

In July, Unseen's Anti-Slavery Partnership Coordinator for Bedfordshire delivered training to the Bedford-based Polish British Integration Centre (PBIC) to learn how to spot the signs of modern slavery as frontline staff in an advisory role, who help and support migrants to integrate into the community. The organisation was established in 2007 and works across Bedfordshire, with services including social and integrational events, general advice on housing and healthcare, and careers advice.

Iwo Jakubowski, a staff member at the PBIC said: "The workshops allowed me to understand what modern slavery is and how to handle such cases if I ever encounter them. It was very informative and conducted in a professional manner."

Zofia Brady, a fellow staff member said: "The workshops really opened my eyes when it comes to modern slavery. I never thought about how often it happens and how many people it impacts."

For more information, please visit pbic.org.uk

Coming Up: Anti-Slavery Day – 18 October

Anti-Slavery Day is approaching, on Thursday 18 October. On Wednesday 17 October, the National Crime Agency's Invisible People Exhibition will be on display in Bedford Town Centre. Unseen will be running a stall to raise awareness of modern slavery. On Thursday 18 October, the display will be held at Melson Square (The Mall) in Luton.

Women's Aid in Luton Learn How to Spot Signs of Modern Slavery

The signs of modern slavery are prevalent in domestic abuse and staff at Women's Aid in Luton were recently provided training from Unseen's ASP Coordinator for Bedfordshire to spot the signs of modern slavery. One staff member described the training as "thought provoking and informative" while another said she would "apply her knowledge to her work when assessing a client's vulnerabilities." Women's Aid in Luton run refuges across the town. womensaidinluton.org

Luton's Young Person's Event



In September, Healthwatch Luton and Luton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group ran the Luton's Young Person's Event, giving young people in Luton an opportunity to get their voices heard and find out what local services are available.

In attendance were Luton Borough Council, ResoLUTiONs, Terrence Higgins Trust and Next Generation Youth Theatre (www.ngyt.co.uk). NGYT work in Luton to develop, nurture and inspire young creatives aged 0-25. Within their work they also create educational theatre and as part of this event they were commissioned to create what proved to be a powerful and informative performance about County Lines, a crime which the UK Home Secretary recently announced he was taking action against.



Unseen ran a stall to raise awareness of modern slavery and the Modern Slavery Helpline (pictured).

#ItHappensToBoysToo Campaign

In September, Bedfordshire Police joined forces with Bedford Borough Council, Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the #ItHappensToBoysToo campaign. Local sports personalities and role models in Bedfordshire are helping raise awareness that boys and young men can be the victims of CSE, as part of a new social media awareness campaign.

The aim of #ItHappensToBoysToo is to continue to raise awareness of CSE, which is a form of modern slavery, but also to highlight that boys and young men can also be victims of this form of abuse. It also aims to increase the number of cases which are reported, including to the Modern Slavery Helpline, as it is believed boys find it harder than girls to disclose what is happening.

CSE is a form of child abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It sees children and young people under 18 involved in exploitative situations, contexts or inappropriate relationships where the young person receives 'something', such as accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts or even affection, as a result of them performing, or being involved in, sexual activities.

Detective Superintendent Nick Bellingham said: "Children at risk of CSE are not exclusive to one gender; it happens to boys too. Any child can be exploited. Protecting vulnerable children is everyone's business, and we all need to be alert, to know what to look out for and where to go for advice, as well as having the confidence to report any acts of abuse safe in the knowledge that they will be acted on.

"Partnership working is key to fighting this important issue so I'm pleased that Bedfordshire is uniting in this campaign to help put an end to the suffering of these children who are being exploited."



Olympians Kriss Akabusi and Etienne Stott are supporting the #ItHappensToBoysToo campaign

Modern Slavery Helpline Statistics and Reports

For all modern slavery statistics related to Bedfordshire released by the Modern Slavery Helpline, please [click here](#).