Agents for Change

SURVIVOR PEER RESEARCHERS BRIDGE THE EVIDENCE AND INCLUSION GAP

The **Anti Trafficking Monitoring** Group

Authors: this briefing has been written by Kimberley Hutchison, KJ and Nancy Esiovwa with additional support and editing by Anna Sereni

Design and layout: Meaden Creative ISBN: 978-0-900918-85-8

Cover photo: radeboj11 / AdobeStock

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Acknowledgements

The ATMG would particularly like to thank Survivor Alliance; Dr Andrea Nicholson; Dr Christopher O'Connell; Ella Parry Davies; Robyn Mayol and our Advisory Board members for contributing to and supporting this work.

We would also like to thank the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Henry Scutt for funding the ATMG. The views expressed in this report are not intended to reflect the opinions of the funders.

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Foreword

This briefing shares reflections on the lessons and challenges of a small research team originally formed to conduct research on long-term outcomes for survivors of slavery in the UK in 2020. The team consisted of three women with lived experience of modern slavery and the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG).[1] Co-written by survivors and non-survivors of slavery or exploitation, this briefing shares our collective and individual reflections on the process of working and learning together to date. We define this as participatory research[2] and the team as peer researchers. In order to highlight the different narratives in this briefing, it is written with language that reflects the project as seen by the peer researchers collectively and individually.

As ATMG hosted the project, the briefing also shares the responses and perspective of the coalition on the training provided to the research team as well as reflecting on the relationship between peer researchers and the ATMG as the host. The briefing uses text boxes to distinguish between these different voices.

Survivor Alliance peer-reviewed this briefing and co-developed the peer researcher training curriculum.

The following recommendations are intended to assist a variety of stakeholders when considering their role and approach to survivor inclusion. We hope survivors, practitioners, civil society organisations and the UK Government will find the learning and reflections contained within this briefing useful.

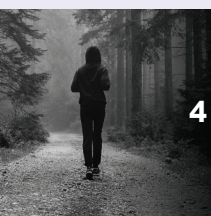
Practical recommendations:

- When conducting advocacy or contributing to research, people must be appropriately paid for any work undertaken,[3] and the London Living Wage should be used as a baseline for helping to calculate salaries and payments.
- There should be consideration of other practical support that might be required to enable survivors to participate in research. This could include support with childcare costs and paying for travel and accommodation in advance, rather than expecting individuals to pay for these and reclaim expenses.
- Researchers contributing to or working on projects that require them to engage in situations when traumatic events, narratives and stories might arise should have prior warning and the opportunity to withdraw as well as access to provisions such as reflective practice, or clinical supervision.
- Where organisations are co-producing research with survivors, a commitment to ongoing awareness and consideration of power dynamics across the work is recommended and encouraged.

[1] The seventeen organisations belonging to the ATMG are: Anti-Slavery International, Ashiana, Bawso, Eastern European Resource Centre, ECPAT UK, Flourish NI, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), Helen Bamber Foundation, Hope for Justice, JustRight Scotland, Kalayaan, Law Centre (NI), Scottish Refugee Council, The Children's Law Centre, The Snowdrop Project, TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, a service run by Community Safety Glasgow) and UNICEF UK

[2] Andrea Cornwall and Rachel Jeweks, 'What is Participatory Research?' SOAS University, (1995) https://www.academia.edu/1937270/What_is_participatory_research

[3] Where this is not prohibited by the current immigration rules.

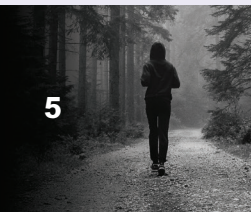


Policy and legal recommendations:

- All potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking who are in the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be supported to recover and move on from their experiences. This should include engaging in paid work. Without this, contributions to the anti-slavery movement by survivors will remain limited which limits the potential for learning in the anti-slavery movement. People with lived experience are missing in anti-slavery research and policy making. Access to work would make sure people with lived experience are offered the choice to play a central and constant role to contribute to policy making and system building in a meaningful way, as well as providing a practical route to rebuilding their lives.
- More opportunities for training and access to higher and tertiary education should be made available to survivors of slavery. There is a growing body of community-based participatory research that focuses on those communities that do not possess formal educational training but whose work is still valid. Alternative education must be better championed and made more accessible. In traditional education, tuition fees continue to rise for all students accessing higher education. People who are seeking asylum in the UK are not usually eligible for student finance or home-rate tuition fees, which are reserved for UK nationals.
- The Government's recent "skills revolution" announcement in England aims to increase lifelong learning and help people retrain for jobs. However, this will not change the complicated rules that determine who is eligible to receive funding from the Adult Education Budget. From September 2021, EU nationals without settled status will no longer be eligible for funding from the budget which has clear implications for European survivors who enter the NRM after the June registration deadline for registration. More must be done to fund access to higher education through scholarship opportunities.
- Challenges arise when income from work affects benefit entitlements or renders people ineligible for certain entitlements such as legal aid. Survivors should not be worse off for engaging in paid work, yet they increasingly are. Survivors who are closest to the situations we seek to learn more about are legally kept from engaging in research unless they volunteer, and for those without the right to work this can bring serious penalties. As a result, the system has limited the pool of peer-researchers. This limits advancements aiming to balance the scales of survivor leadership in the anti-slavery movement.
- Badly framed immigration and discretionary leave policies mean survivors are stuck in the immigration system, often for many years, causing them to feel demotivated and lose confidence. Without secure, durable periods of leave to remain, survivors lack the security to engage in work of this nature. We recommend all survivors have permission to work while in the NRM for a minimum of 12 months following a positive conclusive grounds decision.

Co-producing research with survivors

- We encourage partners and stakeholders to explore different approaches to co-produced research. Approaching multiple survivor led agencies for survivor participants can help diversify engagement. More must be done to enable survivors to lead on research from the outset. As part of this, greater understanding is needed on the benefits and challenges of survivors and non-survivors working collaboratively.
- More consideration should be given to the challenges and realities of training researchers as well as researchers' own challenges with learning. Significant time is required to understand learning needs and how these can be properly supported when developing research projects with survivor researchers.



Introduction

The UK anti-slavery response is out of balance. People with lived experience of modern slavery and human trafficking are rarely included in the development of research or policy. We know survivor participation is a crucial yet often missing element to anti-slavery efforts, and although our views and experiences are not universal, we believe our reflections can provide some insight into other survivors' experiences and views.

> ***A victim of modern slavery and human trafficking has no control over the decisions made regarding their life: they have no agency, no voice, they are spoken over, looked over, ignored and they can feel like they have no identity. Once they have escaped their abuse, often support is then decided for them and many survivors feel that once again they have no control over their life. At times, it can feel like an extension of their abuse. Often, support systems have been created by people without lived experience of slavery, or without direct survivor input. Although some services gather feedback or evaluate the services they provide to trafficked persons there is no agreed standard on how people with lived experience should be included in service development or research.***

This briefing does not claim to have balanced the scales but we hope this work will serve as a tool for reflection for other survivors, practitioners and stakeholders.

In addition, a discussion over terminology emerged during this project and as a team we discussed words and phrases such as 'modern slavery', 'human trafficking' and 'survivor'.

As peer researchers, we did not ascribe to a strict definition of modern slavery because it is a purposefully broad term and it can cover many different exploitative acts. This term is understood in different ways and has at times been sensationalised in the anti-slavery movement. Given the scope of this briefing, we were unable to go into a detailed discussion on the definition of modern slavery but for the purposes of this work, we used the term modern slavery because it resonates with our personal experiences. We also used the term human trafficking interchangeably with modern slavery as we believe it can be a key component of slavery.

For us the word "survivor" also carries important connotations. It is a prominent way of describing people who have left situations of modern slavery. We considered how and by whom the word is used in the UK anti-slavery sector in order to encourage more dialogue and exploration on approaches to terminology. Importantly, we believe these conversations should always include people with lived experience. While drafting this briefing we reflected on what the term survivor meant to each of us.

The term survivor resonates with our personal experience and is distinctive from victimhood, helping us to feel empowered. However, it also felt like the term was often ascribed by other people:

> ***Other people have attached the term to me, and other people see me in this way. There is little alternative to the word, apart from maybe 'lived experience', which feels generic. I've spent a lot of time thinking of a replacement term that might resonate with people who have been exploited, and I am yet to find an alternative.***

After discussion, we opted to use the terms 'survivor' and 'lived experience' interchangeably and this is reflected throughout the briefing.

This report explains how people with lived experience should be actively involved as leading participants in developing research and advocacy that aims to influence anti-slavery policy. As individuals who have experienced modern slavery, we recognise the many narratives and identities in this space and acknowledge we cannot represent all people with lived experience of slavery.

We do not suggest all people with lived experience of slavery should take up roles of advocacy, policy and research. Instead, we explore how and whether survivors might engage in these areas should they want to, and the challenges that can arise in doing so. We believe there is value in sharing the different stages of this exploratory work and we hope that it helps to position survivors as 'agents for change'[4] in the anti-slavery movement.

This briefing was produced between November 2020 and May 2021 through a series of virtual workshops. It outlines approaches to participatory action research and shares the experiences, learning and reflections of the research team. In doing so, it recognises the benefits of working in this way, while at the same time offers an honest appraisal of the challenges and limitations of this approach.

The aims of this briefing are to:

- Highlight the importance of co-production to the wider anti-slavery movement;
- Highlight key considerations when approaching this work, including the types of barriers that can prevent or affect survivor engagement and suggestions for addressing these; and
- Share our views as survivors and non-survivors on the co-production of research, exploring how and whether survivors might and should engage in co-produced research and the realities of this.

Part one of this briefing provides an overview of ATMG's research project on long-term survivor outcomes in the UK in 2020, and how some of the research team as people with lived experience of modern slavery were recruited. It also includes a summary of the training provided from the perspective of ATMG who in partnership with others, developed the content and delivered the training.

[4] McKenzie, S. (2012). In Murphy, L.T. (2014). Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 47–53

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the research on survivor outcomes did not take place as it was not possible to travel and conduct face to face interviews. In response to this, and to make sure important learning was not lost, we worked with ATMG to reflect on the preparation and training work which had been done and to share learning on co-production. Part two of this briefing encapsulates our reflections, learning and the views of ATMG as the host coalition before making practical recommendations to partners actively seeking to engage survivors in research.

PART 1:
An overview of the 2020 research project

In January 2020, we were invited to meet with ATMG to discuss a new research project the coalition was embarking on. The aim of the research was to collect and analyse the views of people with lived experience of modern slavery, their understanding and expectations of the NRM, and what outcomes they believed to be most valuable to recovery. At its heart, the NRM should be a safeguarding mechanism. Principally, it exists to assess risk and allow someone who has been identified as potentially enslaved or trafficked to receive support so their case can be investigated and they can access entitlements designed to help them to get justice and recover.

At the heart of the research methodology was co-production with individuals who have experienced slavery. Recognising that, by virtue of lived experience, survivors of slavery can bring valuable experiential knowledge and expertise to the anti-slavery movement. For this project, the plan was that survivors as peer researchers would co-design and lead on elements of the research process. In doing so, the understanding was that it might lead to findings that were more meaningful and relevant to the research participants as well as survivors generally.

We were recruited as peer researchers to interview other survivors on their experiences of support services in the UK. We would analyse findings and write up results as well as help to shape recommendations with ATMG. Following a series of meetings with the ATMG coordinator, the research team was formed and several training workshops commenced in London during March 2020. Unfortunately, the training and research preparations ended abruptly because of the outbreak of Covid-19, which made travel and meeting for training and interviews impossible.

The research aimed for peer researchers to interview survivors of slavery about their experiences of support in the NRM, with the hope of doing two things:

- Understand what outcomes survivors believe to be most valuable to their recovery; and
- Build a picture of the current support systems in place and the extent to which they are able to support survivors to achieve the outcomes most valued by them.

In addition, because ATMG recognised the need for, and benefits of, survivors leading on research design and development, the coalition wanted to communicate transparently about the process of engaging survivors as peer researchers. Understanding the ways in which survivors know their experiences and how they choose to share that knowledge[5] was a key aspect of the research.

[5] Minh Dang, Doctoral Researcher, University of Nottingham, Rights Lab, Epistemology of Survival: A Working Paper, (2019) available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f63a5d9f07f54b839f35c9/t/608a86a2cca78f426f318268/1619691172203/DangM_EpistemologyofSurvival_WorkingPaper_Jan2019.pdf

In the UK, more people are self-identifying and self-organising as survivors of slavery; despite this, there is little evidence that survivors' voices are informing decisions made by policymakers and service providers. The Survivors' Voices Charter, a tool to improve engagement with abuse survivors by individuals and organisations, notes there is a lack of "active and intentional involvement of survivors in shaping research, professional training, practice development and other areas of public and communal life."[6] Similarly, many contemporary scholars note that it is quite unusual for the voice of the survivor to feature significantly in debates on national laws. Instead, "these are typically focused on prevention and prosecution, and not on the survivor, with the identification of, and treatment for survivors remaining problematic."[7]

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For us, narratives of slavery often carry a stigma, and surviving the experience can mean that people view you in a certain way that is often limited. Narratives of protection and support stereotype us into the role of a perpetual victim or service recipient. They assume we are incapable of making our own life decisions and do not take into consideration our full experiences, knowledge or expertise.

> ***Survivors have a certificate in life experience, but at times, it feels like this is not valued. Survivors should have the option of engaging in research and policy as peers and not just as recipients of support. This could include, setting agendas, scoping courses of action, terms of reference, devising research questions, event schedules, and evaluation. Survivors should be able to play a central and consistent role in policy making.***

To increase the involvement of survivors in research and policy, it is vital that information about co-production between survivors and non-survivors is shared. This includes being open and transparent about the potential challenges arising in co-produced research, which can help to explore the suitability of this work for people with lived experience of slavery.

[6] Turning Pain into Power A Charter for Organisations Engaging Abuse Survivors in Projects, Research & Service Development, available at: https://survivorsvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Survivors-Charter-Final-V1-for-Piloting-Oct-2018.pdf

[7] Dr Andrea Nicholson, A Survivor-Centric Approach: The Importance of Contemporary Slave Narratives to the Anti-Slavery Agenda, (2019), available at: https://nottingham-repository.worktribe.com/output/3716982

For this original project, it is important to note that we did not lead on developing the initial phases of the project. The research question, and our recruitment as peer researchers, was led by ATMG. We were invited to join the project once the research question had been defined, and the consultant and advisory board were appointed. However, we were going to lead on key areas of the research project such as interviewing participants and analysing the data we produced.

The research team comprised of us – three survivors of Modern Slavery with a shared experience of the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – and the ATMG's researcher and coordinator. We worked closely with Survivor Alliance, a survivor-led NGO that acted as a consultant to the project, supporting our training and providing us with field mentoring and support; and an advisory board consisting of academics and civil society organisations that were appointed to support us and advise on different issues arising from the process.[8]

Budget

The research project had limited resources and a small budget to support the logistics of conducting the research around the UK, including hotels, childcare provisions and travel. The budget was also used to:

- Pay for our time as research consultants and time spent travelling across the UK.
- Provide additional support to enable us to engage fully in the project, including paying for childcare for our children.

Survivor Alliance were also recruited as project consultants, and supported the development of training content, as well as preparing us to conduct interviews with peers. In addition, there was the intention that Survivor Alliance would provide one-to-one support to us as peer researchers throughout the life of the project including while travelling around the UK to conduct interviews or attend training. This recognised that the research process might trigger traumatic memories or lead to circumstances in which individuals might need support.

As consultants, we were paid hourly, in line with the London living wage[9] and time sheets were completed together with the ATMG coordinator at the end of each calendar month.

As the research project ended prematurely, much of the planned expenditure did not take place. After discussing the underspend and the ways funding could be re-allocated, our consultancy fees were increased slightly in order to develop this briefing. The diagram on the next page sets out the expenditure at the time of publication as well as some additional projected costs.

It is important to note that the ATMG coordinator's time is not calculated in this expenditure as this salary is part of ATMG core costs. However, the coordinator spent a considerable amount of time planning and developing this work. A coordination role should be factored into the costs of any similar piece of work.

Without funding for childcare, several of us would not have been able to engage in the project. A nursery was located within the vicinity of the offices where the training was held and childcare continued until the postponement of the project due to Covid-19. For those of us who needed childcare services during the drafting and devising of this briefing, childcare was also paid for during some of the virtual meetings to enable our participation.

[8] Advisory Board members: Dr Andrea Nicholson, University of Nottingham, Debbie Beadle, Rachel Witkin, The Helen Bamber Foundation, Wanjiku Mbugua, BAWSO.

[9] The Mayor of London, London Living Wage, available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/london-living-wage

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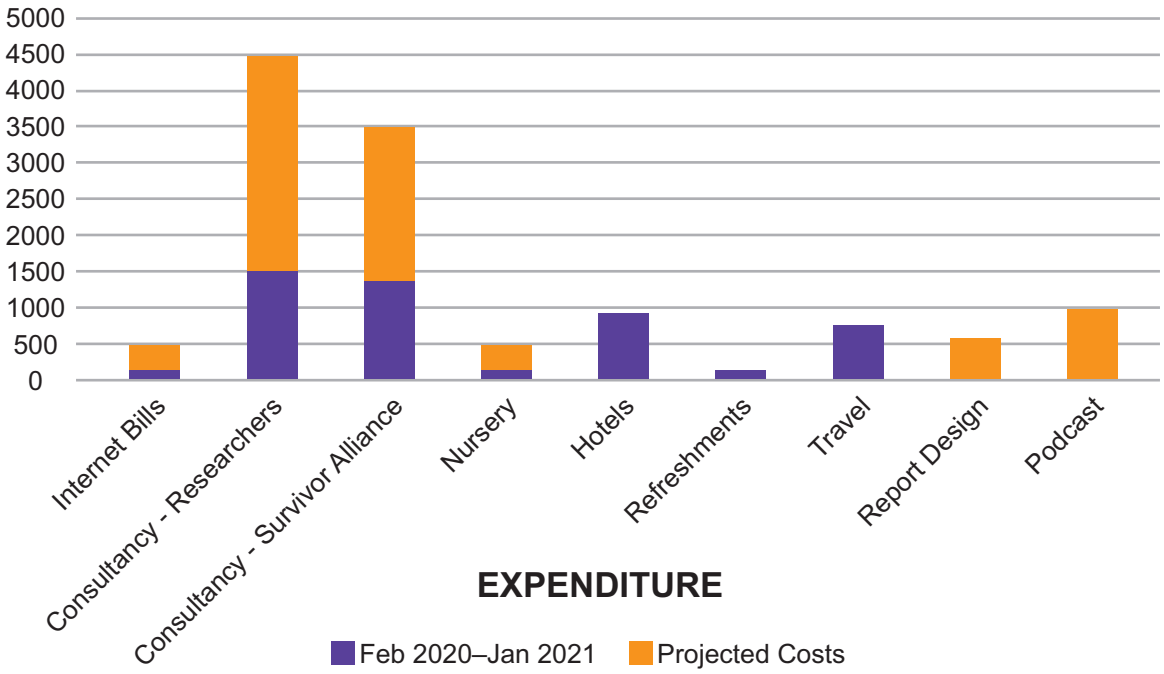
Figure 1: **PROJECT COSTS**



*Survivor Alliance costs vary and are project-specific.

Training the research team

To make sure the research was conducted ethically and to high research standards, significant consideration was given to training approaches. Members of the team had varying experience of conducting or being part of research projects. Given the timeframe for the research project, the training sessions and content were designed by ATMG, Survivor Alliance, The Helen Bamber Foundation and a number of academics working on anti-slavery related issues. These partners discussed the "best place to start from", with regard to training and preparing the researchers for field research and felt that the team would benefit from an introduction to research, including approaches, concepts, ethics, safeguarding, communication and self-care. Reflections and challenges arising in devising training content and delivery are shared in part two of this briefing.

Examples of the training content for the sessions that were completed are as follows:

Training Session 1: Initial meeting of the research team with the ATMG and Survivor Alliance.

This session provided an overview of project commitment and requirements, known as "the last day to bail". Once the team met there was a discussion about the expectations and responsibilities of the work, including discussing boundaries between members of the research team, and the interviewees. There was also discussion on ways in which the research might affect the team members. As there was a great deal of travel planned around the UK interviewing other survivors, the team agreed that as far as possible the interviews would be conducted in person, one-on-one with other survivors but the ATMG coordinator would be on hand, outside the interview space should additional support be required. However, if a participant requested someone accompany them to the interview, we would try to facilitate this.

Training Session 2, led by Dr Christopher O'Connell

Dr O'Connell provided an introduction and interactive overview of the four main research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, mixed and action based research. Establishing research as an on-going process and identifying this project as action based research, the team completed a workshop based around a fictitious research project to help familiarize the group with wider research practices.

Shortly after the training workshops commenced, they were postponed due to the outbreak of Covid-19. When the pandemic continued into the summer of 2020, it became clear that the research had to be postponed indefinitely and the remaining training sessions did not take place. The remaining sessions would have focused on developing interviewing techniques reiterating the need for self-care, safeguarding, self-awareness and reflective journaling of the process. With regard to self-care, The Helen Bamber Foundation agreed to lead on the development and delivery of this training. Central to these sessions was studying the Trauma Informed Code of Conduct,[10] as well as considering how these techniques might apply in practice and practising role plays of interviews with each member of the research team.

[10] The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct for All Professionals 23 Working With Survivors of Trafficking and Slavery (TiCC) Rachel Witkin and Dr. Katy Robjant, Helen Bamber Foundation (2018).

PART 2: Learning, reflections and challenges

While the research project was curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we remained in contact. After discussion, and it became clear that the research would not continue due to the prolonged nature of the pandemic, we agreed to co-produce a write-up of the project's initial stages through a series of twelve workshops.

We hope that by sharing our experiences of co-production and exploration of survivor inclusion, we can support and encourage a new approach to collaboration between survivors and non-survivors. Collaboration is not always easy to achieve when it involves people with different skills, assumptions, values and priorities – but it is precisely these different perspectives that can add value to research.

Collaboration is not always easy to achieve when it involves people with different skills, assumptions, values and priorities – but it is precisely these different perspectives that can add value to research.

> *When I was first asked to join this research I thought it was a good idea for survivors to be involved in carrying out research on the issues that most affect survivors. There was a lot of discussion about how this might affect me, as someone who had experienced modern slavery and I too thought about this, but I saw it differently. For me, it was empowering. Being part of a team that was trying to create impact and change and being able to communicate this through research.*

Travel, accommodation and working environment

The ATMG coordinator arranged a series of virtual and in-person discussions to inform us about how the project would develop over the year, before the first training session.

We were invited to London to start the project in March 2020. The ATMG funded our hotel accommodation, and nursery places for those of us with children. We met at Kings Cross Station before taking our children to nursery and travelling on to offices where the training would take place.

Reflecting on the planning, there was a great deal to consider and arrange. Logistics felt like something that should not be overlooked or minimised. We all had many different responsibilities and external demands on our time. It might have been easier if the building where we met was within walking distance of one of the main train stations, but given that the survivors came from different areas this may have only benefited some survivors and put others at a disadvantage. My son and I benefited from travelling to the meetings. Although it was for training, it felt like some short vacation, being out of the house in a new environment and meeting new faces.

This kind of project requires a significant amount of planning, coordination and resources and this should not be underestimated. During planning, it is important that participants' and researchers' various responsibilities and commitments are taken into account. We lived in different parts of the UK and had different commitments, including children, and other work in addition to and alongside this project. Trying to find a time and space for everyone to meet was challenging. A private law firm provided pro bono space at their offices. This included a private conference room with lunch and refreshments throughout the day. This was a comfortable, private and safe environment and it helped us to focus on the meetings and training we were undertaking.

Joining the research team

We were recruited to join the project in different ways. There were no formal selection criteria. Following legal advice and guidance on the rules around paid and voluntary work, the only definite requirement was that every member of the research team had to have the right to work in the UK. The ATMG coordinator met with each of us to discuss the outline of the project and our potential involvement. Something that stood out in this process was that meeting and engaging with us felt like an organic process, more so than traditional approaches to recruitment and consultancy. We recognise this was in part the result of the coordinator having previously worked with group members, but we found this to be a personal approach that was valuable in helping to build trust.

Knowing how poor my public transport links were, the coordinator and safeguarding manager travelled from London to where I lived. We met in a local coffee shop and talked. We got to know each other. It was personable and I felt empowered and respected this approach. I was not greeted with an application form, instead I was met on my own terms. I respected and appreciated the time taken to invest in my participation.

We brought different levels of understanding, knowledge and expertise to the group and being invited to join the research team meant different things for us. People with lived experience of modern slavery and human trafficking should have the opportunity to shape policy and research because many of us have experienced the reality of policies and legal frameworks designed to support exploited people. For us, this work was a chance to use our direct and detailed experience to inform the way the system currently operates regarding survivor support. In contributing to this work and listening to examples of how the current system has affected survivors' lives, it would provide us with the opportunity to shape policy based on the interviews we would be conducting. Our experiences of the NRM would help in developing research questions for participants.

People with lived experience of modern slavery and human trafficking should have the opportunity to shape policy and research because many of us have experienced the reality of policies and legal frameworks designed to support exploited people.

Our participation was not limited to being research participants. Instead our knowledge and skills would add value to trafficked people's experiences, because we too had experiences of the UK NRM and we believed this shared experience would positively inform the research methodology. Our role as survivor researchers meant we would see the people we were interviewing beyond the narrative that they are only people who experienced slavery. As members of the research team we were demonstrating our individual capabilities in a way that moves beyond victimhood.

As members of the research team we were demonstrating our individual capabilities in a way that moves beyond victimhood.

> *Being asked to be involved in this project provided that sense of value and worth. It also meant having something to look forward to, a sense of direction and control over personal decisions regarding career and employment, often removed due to criminalisation, and it also instilled a sense of hope regarding future career choices. Coming together with other survivors created a sense of belonging. It was refreshing to be able to share, discuss and understand experiences without fear of judgement, being silenced or being fed bureaucratic excuses and justifications.*

By co-developing elements of the research methodology and leading on the data collection for the research as well as analysing the research findings, and co-authoring a report, we felt we were working collaboratively to understand and change survivor experiences in the UK. These actions could also help change how the government and other stakeholders think, and encourage more survivor perspectives in the anti-slavery movement. We believed it would allow survivors to be heard, given a voice and be able to input into decision making processes.

> ***"It made me feel valued and more important. It gave me hope on developing my skills, confidence and self-esteem by looking at the systems I had experienced and trying to improve them."***

Limitations in co-production

Our involvement in this project was a generally positive experience but there were limitations around co-production in this context. The design of and planning for the research project was not peer led, meaning ATMG developed the core elements of the research design, including defining the research question, managing the budget and selecting and appointing the advisory board. The training sessions and their content were developed in partnership by ATMG, Survivor Alliance, Dr Andrea Nicholson, Dr Chris O'Connell and The Helen Bamber Foundation.

With ATMG effectively acting as facilitator and owning and managing the budget for the work, this approach inevitably influenced the scope and content of the research, and potentially limited what learning could be shared from the initiative. Looking ahead, it would be beneficial to consider what aspects of this approach might need to be changed so that survivors can lead on the development of research and policy solutions from the outset, including providing funding to survivors to develop projects from their inception. It would be valuable to understand what would be required for people with lived experience to lead on the design of these elements, and the logistics involved in doing so. This might mean ATMG outsources the research to a survivor group entirely. Alternatively, it might mean the coalition recruit survivors to the membership or staff team at Anti-Slavery International.

Co-production is difficult to achieve in the context of structural inequality. As a group of women working together, we also brought different biases and experience to the group. This inequality in power is rooted in our different experiences, but also because of "wider social and economic differences which need to be recognised and this inequality needs to be continually addressed in the ongoing relationships."[11]

There are multiple structures of inequality, both in anti-slavery work and beyond, including gender, race and class. For the purposes of this briefing we consider the dynamics of power that existed between us as survivors and non-survivors which were linked to wider, structural inequality. We recognised the power dynamics between us and did what we could to minimise these, including distinguishing what elements would be developed by ATMG from those developed and informed by us. However, as we did not lead on the project design from the outset, there was a limit to the

[11] Involve, Guidance on co-producing a research project, (2018), available at: https://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Copro_Guidance_Feb19.pdf

extent the work was co-designed and produced. We had responsibility over key decisions once we had been recruited and the project framework was designed, but we did not lead from the outset.

Through this work, we became conscious of power dynamics and believe this is an important factor of community based, participatory research that needs to be continually recognised and worked through.

Training

When thinking about approaches to the co-production of research that aims to influence policy, it is important to discuss the training we engaged in before the project ended. Five training sessions were planned, but due to Covid-19 only two of these took place. The training sessions were held at the offices of a private law firm in London and introduced us to the concept of research, the different ways it is conducted, how evidence is collected, analysed and the findings shared.

Collectively, we all benefited from the training. The sessions that took place were delivered clearly and were interactive, involving the whole research team. The sessions felt professional, and meeting everyone face to face before the training started helped us to speak directly with the trainers, so that we understood their involvement, how their skills differed and how they were supporting us with the progression of the project.

> ***Coming together for the training, and meeting my fellow researchers was an experience itself. For me, the journey to London, hotel and the environment the team met in, put into perspective the degree, nature or seriousness of the project. I was present and willing to learn about the research process (it was new to me). The work proposed was clear, and I felt able to understand the task ahead and how we would conduct the research.***

We find it useful to reflect on the session that introduced us to research and its relevance to the type of investigation we were hoping to carry out. The session was developed by ATMG and Dr Chris O'Connell and was planned on the presumption that none of us had conducted much research before joining this project. On reflection, this was a sensible assumption, as we all had different levels of experience, but it might have been useful if we had been able to set out what research skills we felt we needed to conduct the research. Learning and understanding takes time, and these factors can also affect the power dynamics of a research team.

> ***I felt power dynamics at times, I knew I did not have a degree, I had not completed work like this before. This was in my mind.***

The time and resources we had to carry out this research were limited and the elements moved quickly. ATMG reflects on some of the challenges and realities of training researchers later in this briefing, but here we provide an honest reflection on the training delivered during this project.

Developing work of this nature and trying to decide what training is needed and what it should include is challenging. As members of the research team, we had varying experiences of conducting research and we were unfamiliar with the process and concepts of conducting research; it felt like there were lots of elements we might miss or not understand. Reflective journaling was an example of this. We were introduced to this approach as a way to crystalise our own thoughts and feelings as we analysed the data collected from the interviews. Although we discussed this approach and the reasons behind it, it felt like a big task, and at times some of us questioned our confidence with regard to conducting the research because there was pressure to learn quickly. This example reveals that while learning is a valuable component of co-produced policy and research, it can be difficult and challenging and also takes a considerable amount of time and energy. Also, sharing a learning space with people who might have degrees or experienced university education and who are familiar with research processes can feel intimidating.

It should not be underestimated how much time is needed to devise and deliver training in projects of this nature. Of equal importance is the pace of delivery. In this project we had limited time and resources so the project moved quickly. We believe that the speed at which training is delivered can affect participants' learning. Time must be given to be able to repeat concepts and practice them so that participants have the confidence to embed them in research practices.

In our training we had space to reflect, and sessions for us to discuss how best to handle challenges we might encounter, such as disclosure from interviewees, safeguarding and privacy. The sessions we took part in acted as a useful springboard into these conversations and helped us to begin to apply research principles to situations we might encounter when carrying out interviews.

> ***For me it was also learning about the professionalism of the workplace. My confidence grew in learning new skills and knowledge, I benefited from having paid work experience in a professional role, developed research skills and an opportunity to influence research and hopefully improve support services for survivors.***

For example, we had discussions about the importance limiting our bias and preconceptions so we could approach each interview open to the experiences of the interviewee. As researchers in this project we had all been recipients of support in the NRM, so if an interviewee's response resonated with us, we had to be alert to this, and make sure we did not miss subsequent details in the interviewee's response.

Ethical principles

Ethical approaches and principles were important elements of this work. We had to consider the impact this work might have on us if we were interviewing people who had experienced slavery. We needed to consider how our interactions might be triggering, and in what ways this might affect the research findings. In our experience, triggering can bring difficult memories to the surface, and to prioritise our self-care we aimed to build in strategies for challenges that might arise when conducting the research.

There is a wealth of guidance and research on ethical principles for conducting research with human subjects,[12] yet there is little published guidance or research on the ethics of conducting research with exploited people. By extension, little is known about approaches that include people with lived experience as primary researchers in the anti-slavery movement.

There is little published guidance or research on the ethics of conducting research with exploited people.

In 2003, The World Health Organization published recommendations on ethical and safe approaches for interviewing trafficked women.[13] Its aim was to build a sound understanding of the risks, ethical considerations and practical realities related to trafficking of women, though the extent to which it was informed by the views and experiences of exploited people is unknown.

The COVID 19 pandemic and lockdowns in each country in the UK meant that we were unable to conduct the research or interview research participants. However, we should still reflect on our approaches around interviewing. We also considered the impact of this work on the survivors we would be interviewing. We understand that often organisations that support survivors are responsible for arranging access to them for research purposes. In our experience, at times this can feel like people with lived experience are following the procedures set out by an organisation which can affect participation.

We aimed to devise and agree follow-up procedures with all participants through people they trusted. To the best of our ability, we would seek confirmation that additional psychological support would be offered to the participants should issues arise following the interview, but we could not guarantee this.

For us, it was important that participants had as many options as possible. Before, during and after the interviews, we would explain we were not providing any additional services or access to support, and that we were not affiliated with the Government. Participants would be able to choose when and where they were interviewed. We agreed survivors would be provided the interview questions before the interviews. It would be made clear who would be attending and conducting the interview as well as who would be a point of contact outside or beyond the interview space. Participants would also be given information on timelines for the work involved, and would be given the ability to redact their comments or reflections at any stage before publication, including in the drafting of the report.

[12] Belmont Report, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, (1979), available at: https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf

[13] Health Policy Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with support from the Daphne Programme of the European Commission and the World Health Organization, Health and Safety Recommendations for interviewing trafficked women, (2003), available at: https://www.who.int/mip/2003/other_documents/en/Ethical_Safety-GWH.pdf

Workshops were planned to familiarise us with conducting interviews with research participants, and during these we would respond to scenarios where a participant might need to end the interview abruptly, or if they disclosed matters that meant they or we might be put at risk of harm. Thinking about the wider impact of trauma, as a team, we acknowledge research with vulnerable adults raises several ethical implications. At the same time, considering these implications requires recognition "that distress expressed in interviews when recalling traumatic or upsetting events is not necessarily equivalent to harm."[14]

> ***We have all experienced trauma. This is something we share with other people with lived experience of slavery. By engaging in this conversation and helping to inform and shape policies that affect us, we will have a voice to create change for other survivors across the UK.***

Working through approaches to self-care, and the wellbeing of those we planned to interview, we were exploring ethics collaboratively. We needed to strike a balance between being overly protected in this process and maintaining our agency, while at the same time minimising the risks that might arise. It was impossible to predict what might happen in the process of carrying out the research but it felt important and right to consider the various possibilities and how we could work to mitigate and reflect on them to inform future work.

Although the project did not have the resources to provide us with specific therapeutic support, reflective practice was embedded as an approach to research, and training on trauma-informed approaches when working with survivors of modern slavery was embedded in the training programme. This was in addition to Survivor Alliance's providing one-to-one support when we would have been travelling throughout the UK.

Survivor Alliance also supported ATMG in the development of individual support plan templates. These were not connected to the support plans or recovery needs assessments currently used in services supporting exploited people in the UK. Instead, they consisted of a series of questions, asking us to reflect on what actions or steps we could take to improve our wellbeing if we felt anxious, stressed or affected by the work we were carrying out. They remained private to each of us. We hoped that in completing these, we would self-assess and develop our own approaches in dealing with some of the challenges of peer-research. We could then use this to inform the write-up of the work and share challenges and learning.

The limited scope of the project and its abrupt end meant that some of the ethical considerations we were exploring and experimenting with could not be developed, tested or evaluated. We share our reflections on ethical approaches to interviewing participants below, and we recommend more guidance on working with, and interviewing, people with lived experience of modern slavery is developed.[15]

[14] Dignity and respect': An example of service user leadership and co-production in mental health research: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/hex.12963

[15] Through the development of this work, some members of the research team and the ATMG coordinator were also working with Survivor Alliance and Dr Andrea Nicholson to establish ethical guidelines for conducting interviews with survivors of slavery and human trafficking: 'Co-produced ethical principles for research with survivors of slavery and human trafficking', expected summer (2021)

Terminology

Many of the documents and information we received at the start of the project and throughout it, including information that would be given to participants, included the term 'survivor'. This was the case from the outset, and started before our involvement. We did not consider, or discuss the use of the term until we started drafting this briefing.

'Survivor' is heavily used in the UK anti-slavery movement, often by people without lived experience of slavery or human trafficking. Research has demonstrated people relate or identify with this term once it is used, (often by non-survivors).[16]

> ***Other people have attached the term to me, and other people see me in this way.***

For us, the term 'survivor' is ambiguous and undefined, and in certain contexts this can be powerful. Its use in anti-slavery narratives is prominent and the UK Government are also now actively using the term in their policy responses.[17] Although the term is difficult to define and means different things to different people, the Government use it to describe the inclusion of people with lived experience in policy development.[18]

It is not clear when victimhood ends, and survivorship begins especially for those people who might have experienced slavery historically. The majority of NRM related policy and guidance describes victims of modern slavery, although the Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales, v 2.0,[19] makes reference to "survivors" but only in relation to re-exploitation. There appears to be little discussion on definitions for survivors of modern slavery by survivors who might have experienced the NRM, beyond academic research.

Once a person exits the NRM, a process often described as a journey or period of "recovery and reflection",[20] it is not clear if at any stage individuals have been asked about the terms ascribed to them in policy, guidance or practice.

The term 'survivor' is generally applied to anyone who has experienced a form of abuse or trauma. Through discussion it was agreed that the word survivor made a distinction between 'victim' (a limiting term) and 'survivor' (an empowering term). In addition, we felt that a victim was someone considered to have recently experienced abuse and the word 'survivor' alludes to someone's leaving a difficult experience behind, and coming out of a situation stronger. We discussed other terms too, including those used by other people with lived experience of slavery, such as 'educator';[21] however we did not identify with these terms.

[16] Dr Andrea Nicholson, A Survivor-Centric Approach: The Importance of Contemporary Slave Narratives to the Anti-Slavery Agenda, (2018) available at: https://nottingham-repository.worktribe.com/output/3716982 page,270.
[17] UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery 2020, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927111/FINAL-_2020_Modern_Slavery_Report_14-10-20.pdf page 16.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Statutory Guidance for England and Wales, v2.0, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950690/January_2021_-_Modern_Slavery_Statutory_Guidance__E_W__Non-Statutory_Guidance__S_NI__v2.pdf
[20] Ibid, 17.
[21] Ibid, 4.

During the course of developing this briefing we decided we would use the term survivor and people with lived experience interchangeably, because we had different opinions on references to lived experience in that they do not definitively refer to what stage we might be at in terms of our individual recovery. We encourage project and policy responses that seek to support or work with exploited people to reflect on the language used when doing so, and where possible be willing to have active and collaborative discussions on language from the outset of project development.

Challenges and barriers

The research project identified a number of challenges that people with lived experience, or survivors of slavery face when conducting research. We encountered practical barriers during the initial research project and while drafting this report. There were also challenges around learning and training, while other barriers persisted legally or at a policy level.

We set out these challenges and barriers in the hope of illustrating to other survivors and stakeholders the type of issues that can limit the participation of people with lived experience of modern slavery from working on similar projects. We acknowledge that some of these challenges are unique to our experiences in this work, and lack the reflections of a wider cohort of people. However, we feel many of the challenges we identify will be relevant and resonate with other survivors and practitioners. By extension, these barriers demonstrate that not all survivors should or indeed can participate in devising policy and research solutions, and that serious consideration is required before doing so.

Practical, organisational and wellbeing

Practical challenges arose during the research project concerning planning and time-management. While it is crucial that people from different backgrounds across the UK are able to engage in similar projects, for this to happen, careful consideration has to be given to a range of factors. It is often said people need to be at a point in their recovery where they are able to commit fully to projects similar to this. While true, this is a broad statement and difficult to define. It is important for people to feel at a place in their recovery that means that they can engage in decent work; however, they must also be able to balance a number of different commitments, and those helping to facilitate engagement must consider this. Trying to coordinate a team of researchers with a variety of commitments, needs and expectations and caring responsibilities takes significant time and care. Consideration must be given to providing comfortable accommodation, travel, daily stipends for food and a safe and suitable environment to work in. In this project, our individual commitments included caring for children, or family, and/or other employment.

In addition, there must be willingness by the lead or host organisation to review organisational policies and approaches to make sure these are adequate. Some policies might need to be reviewed, and there should be willingness to change or update policies where necessary.

For example, during the course of this project, we encountered problems accessing petty cash for expenses incurred during the training or to do with preparing the research. At the time the training and preparation work for the research project commenced, Anti-Slavery International did not operate a petty cash system, meaning purchasing meals and hot food was, at times, difficult and required the coordinator to purchase items on our behalf causing unnecessary awkwardness. This also meant taxis for travel had to be pre-booked. At times this created an awkward dynamic, as it meant items had to be purchased for us in advance, removing some of our autonomy.

There were also challenges when considering wellbeing. As we set out above, this was both in terms of our individual wellbeing as researchers and the wellbeing of those we were hoping to interview. With limited resources, we were not able to access clinical supervision. In addition, we discussed the extent to which we should consider and reflect on our own wellbeing as researchers in the context of this project. There was a concern that an approach with a lot of focus on researchers' individual wellbeing might stray into our individual recovery. If stressful situations arose in the field, or if someone disclosed traumatic events, it might affect us or cause us stress and anxiety.

We would recommend that researchers working on projects that require them to engage in situations where traumatic events, narratives and stories might arise, have access to support or a mechanism that enables them to reflect on the work and situations they are encountering. In this project, we were seeking a balance between needing to be prepared for and being mindful of the risks of research with vulnerable groups, while at the same time being treated professionally as peer researchers. In terms of wellbeing, it is important that a range of options are explored such as reflective practice, clinical supervision or staff support – but each of these aids and their limitations must be carefully considered and clearly understood by all.

As the host coalition of this work, ATMG offer feedback on challenges surrounding training below, and set out important considerations they hope to take forward in future work.

Learning and training

For ATMG, there were challenges in devising the content for the training sessions as well as in their delivery. It was difficult to know what experience each researcher had before this project, and so the content was developed by considering key themes: understanding research approaches, wellbeing and reflective practice and interviewing techniques. On reflection, the research team should have been consulted on their training needs and the sessions then planned on this basis. In addition, the team should have had the opportunity to input into and amend the sessions.

A key learning point was that considerable time is needed to devise and deliver training. There are many challenges that can arise when training peer researchers. Little is known about the realities of co-produced research and to what extent researchers feel confident and comfortable to use established skills in training of this nature. We weren't able to test the practical benefits of the training approach we took because the research section of the project was unable to commence, but we are able to share some of the challenges of our approach.

There should be space and time to be able to comfortably and confidently discuss the training topics, as well as to acknowledge that this can be difficult if prior experience *[of a concept like]* interviewing has been primarily through a Home Office or police interview. It is easy to see how people might conflate research like this with Home Office or Police interviews, so to account for personal experiences, allowances must be made. For example, in this research project, more time should have been made available to the research team in the number of training sessions that were provided. Also, more support, interaction and reflection on training needs could have been considered.

Practical challenges during Covid-19

This briefing was co-produced during the Covid-19 pandemic and all meetings took place virtually. As before, it was challenging to manage changing priorities, including work and family. It was difficult for us to be able to meet because, due to a range of responsibilities and personal circumstances, we couldn't meet during normal office or working hours. Working virtually was draining, and, because we were working online, at times the connection was lost or interrupted. We had to manage childcare because the meetings would often coincide with nursery or afterschool clubs finishing. Completing work over videoconferencing felt more challenging than working together in the same space and the energy we could bring to the sessions felt restricted because of these challenges. There is also the practical importance of securing funding for wifi and being able to provide suitable devices for work of this nature.

Legal and policy barriers

Right to work

During the initial scoping phase, ATMG engaged with a number of potential peer researchers who were at different stages of their immigration applications and NRM journey to explore whether they could be involved in the project. Some individuals had the right to work while others did not, or had not sought permission to work via the Shortage Occupation List.[22] ATMG sought legal advice on ways to overcome the challenge of how to include people who did not have the right to work in the project. This included exploring volunteering options and providing a small honorarium to potential researchers who did not have the right to work in the UK. However, there is a legal barrier to compensating individuals for their time and engagement in 'work' if they do not have the right to work in the UK. The Home Office's guidelines on 'illegal working' make a distinction between voluntary work and volunteering, with the latter not involving a contract or any form of mutuality of obligation. Voluntary work is defined as follows:

> *"In relation to voluntary work, an individual without the right to work is committing a criminal offence and an employer is liable for penalty if there are contractual obligations."*[23]

The legal distinction between volunteering and voluntary work can be quite complex, and the guidance is extremely unclear when trying to assess whether an activity is voluntary work or volunteering. Although the Home Office make a distinction between voluntary work and volunteering, unhelpfully they do not cover or define volunteering in this right to work guide.

The legal distinction between volunteering and voluntary work can be quite complex, and the guidance is extremely unclear.

[22] Immigration Rules Appendix Shortage Occupation List, available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-shortage-occupation-list

[23] An employer's guide to right to work, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946589/An_employer_s_guide_to_right_to_work_checks.pdf

ATMG concluded that the legal restrictions around work of any type meant that the research team would need to be limited to individuals who had the right to work in the UK, and that they were unable to ask people without the right to work to engage or take part in any aspect of the project delivery as researchers. Had we attempted to include people without the right to work in the project on a voluntary basis, in addition to the lack of legal clarity as to the permissibility of this, there would have likely been issues around how tasks were allocated. It could also have created tension within the research team if some team members were being paid and others not.

This was an unfortunate and frustrating position and we believe it reveals contradictions in the UK's approach to learning how to reduce the prevalence of modern slavery. We all had the right to work, and engaged in this project from a position of relative stability in our lives. However, people who might have benefited from joining the research team[24], and from whose experience and engagement the project would have benefitted, were restricted from doing so because they lacked the right to work. The UK Government say they recognise the needs of survivors and that their voices are a vital component to inform future responses to the issue. However, by omitting the experiences of survivors who do not have the right to work, they are inevitably unable to inform any policy response. In the 2020 Annual Report on Modern Slavery the Government said:

> ***We are committed to embedding the survivors' voice in future policy [...] to inform future policy changes, placing survivors at the core of policy development.[25]***

But the parameters of this inclusion remain vague and appear limited to securing direct feedback from survivors on the support they have received. It is also unclear how such feedback is acted on. The delays in waiting for an NRM decision have been reported on many times since the NRM's inception in 2009,[26] and without the ability to work, this can feel like a time of limbo, as well as affecting mental health and imposing practical difficulties on providing for and caring for children or other family members.

Delays in waiting for an NRM decision can feel like a time of limbo, affecting mental health and imposing practical difficulties on providing for and caring for children or other family members.

[24] Access to work for survivors of slavery to enable independence and sustainable freedom (2021), available at: https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Coalition_AccessToWork_report_v3.pdf

[25] 2020 UK Annual Report on Modern slavery, (2020) available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927111/FINAL-_2020_Modern_Slavery_Report_14-10-20.pdf page 28

[26] The Independent, Surge in suspected modern slavery victims waiting years for Home Office decisions, figures show, 2nd January 2020, available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/modern-slavery-victims-home-office-decisions-delays-nrm-a9261331.html

A recent study found that for victims of trafficking to enjoy stability and the ability to rebuild their lives, their economic wellbeing was critical.[27]

> ***Survivors share similar dreams: to have freedom and change our lives to be better people; it means survivors know which direction they want to take to improve their lives, they know the support they need and also the changes they would like to see in the systems currently in place to support them.***

Vague policies such as the guidelines on 'illegal working' actively block efforts to encourage survivors to take part in anti-slavery research and advocacy as peers and colleagues, rather than as recipients of support, and "risks creating law and policy in abstract which does not meet the aims of prevention, protection and prosecution."[28]

> ***There is no encouragement from the government for those who are trying not to be a burden to the UK system.***

The barriers around the right to work limited the diversity of the research team for the project, as well as the learning that could be shared.

Connected to this are poor immigration and discretionary leave policies. Many people without the right to work are also stuck in the immigration system, often for many years. Without secure, durable periods of leave to remain, people lack the security to engage in work of this nature. Survivor participation in this kind of project may well be limited by concerns they have over their status because of the practicalities of everyday life. Insecure and uncertain immigration status means individuals might feel unable to commit to a piece of research.

Income: means testing and legal aid eligibility threshold

Each researcher had different levels of income before and during the research project and during the development of this briefing. We each had to consider and be mindful of the impact participation could have on our ability to receive certain benefits and our eligibility for legal aid. For example, those of us in receipt of means tested[29] subsistence in the adult victim care contract Recovery Needs Assessment[30], or in receipt of other benefits such as legal aid, could have been left financially worse off for engaging in this project – or even pushed over the legal aid threshold, threatening our ability to continue with legal cases linked to our exploitation. Benefit payments are often dependent on hours worked, which can lead to benefits being cut or reduced. By extension, projects of this nature are often for limited periods, and the benefit system can require people to re-apply for benefits if they cease due to additional income from ad-hoc or temporary work. This is time-consuming and can be stressful.

[27] David Okech, Stephen Vandiver McGarity, Nathan Hansen, Abigail C Burns & Waylon Howard (2018) Financial Capability and Sociodemographic Factors among Survivors of Human Trafficking, Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work, 15:2, 123-136, DOI: 10.1080/23761407.2017.1419154
[28] The SAGE Handbook of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery (260)
[29] Civil Legal Aid, means-tested income, available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/civil-legal-aid-means-testing
[30] Ibid, 19 page 54.

This briefing has explored some of the issues arising from the immigration rules and the right to work. While people should be compensated for time spent engaging on any project, including service feedback or consultancy for a research project, rates of pay must be considered carefully. For example, if earnings are recouped through the benefit system because benefit payments are reduced due to additional income, or if expenses are not met or childcare is not covered, participants can find themselves at a financial disadvantage. This is detrimental to our ability to engage, and can also cause stress and worry. We believe people should be paid at least in line with the London Living Wage, but recommend that organisations that employ survivors should make sure they are able to provide or signpost advice around benefits and the implications of taking up temporary or part time work.

Income and legal aid eligibility

People in the National Referral Mechanism are entitled to legal aid, but this provision is also means tested. In practice, not everyone in the NRM is able to access legal aid and this can be a barrier to engaging in decent work, including research and/or advocacy, as well as accessing justice and other recovery entitlements.

There are different tests associated with being eligible for legal aid. For the purposes of this briefing the most relevant is the income test.

> The income test means that anyone, including survivors of trafficking, who has a monthly income of over £733 (after deductions for (for example) housing or dependents) is not eligible for legal aid, even if they are in the NRM. This has implications for survivors who work. It means that for some people, accessing subsistence payments could push them over the eligibility threshold for legal aid. It also includes survivors who are in sex work who are not eligible for legal aid due to their earnings.[31]

Subsistence payments in the NRM are not means tested because they are provided to support recovery and reflection, but these payments are considered a type of income by the Legal Aid Agency when assessing eligibility. It seems totally wrong that people who receive NRM subsistence payments, which are part of their recovery entitlements, are at risk of being left ineligible for legal aid, another recovery entitlement. Some benefits, such as Universal Credit, income support and job seekers allowance are 'passported', meaning if you are in receipt of one of these benefits you are automatically eligible for legal aid in regards to the income test. Similarly, individuals who are in receipt of asylum support, are also passported through both tests for legal aid for advice on their immigration.

However, people not seeking immigration advice who are not in receipt of a relevant benefit appear to have no passported rights, and instead face the difficulty of making sure any income, whether related to their NRM subsistence or part-time work, does not make them ineligible for legal aid. For survivors whose trafficking has left them with ongoing legal issues, this can present a barrier preventing them from participating in short consultancies.

There needs to be more understanding of and mitigation to the challenges of engaging in decent work and the effects this can have on other entitlements and benefits. We continuously had to review the hours we worked in this project to make sure we were not worse off for participating, and indeed could afford to participate and be paid for this work.

[31] 'Subsistence payments and legal aid for victims of trafficking. Accessing one entitlement to lose another' (2021) Joint briefing Anti-Slavery International, ATLEU, Human Trafficking Foundation, Simpson Millar https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Legal-aid-and-the-income-test_.pdf

Conclusion and recommendations

This briefing shares the reflections of a small research team, and the ways in which we have navigated practical and theoretical challenges whilst developing co-produced research. Together with the ATMG, we have shared our thoughts on these approaches and in conclusion, we jointly make a series of recommendations that we believe can help reduce the current barriers around survivor inclusion. We invite practitioners and organisations to consider approaching anti-slavery responses in ways that can involve people with lived experience of slavery.

These recommendations are intended to assist a variety of stakeholders when considering their role and approach to survivor inclusion. We hope survivors, practitioners, civil society organisations and the UK Government will find the learning and reflections contained within this briefing useful.

The following recommendations propose changes to certain policies as well as making practical recommendations on some of the barriers we identified during this work. At the same time, they demonstrate that more needs to be done to make sure people with lived experience have the opportunity to contribute to the anti-slavery movement as equals, colleagues and experts – and not just as recipients of support.

Practical recommendations:

- When conducting advocacy, or contributing to research, people must be appropriately paid for any work undertaken,[32] and the London Living Wage should be used as a baseline for helping to calculate salaries and payments. Examples of work might include attending and speaking at events, responding to consultations or improving services for trafficked persons, and in the co-production advocacy, policy and research.
- There should be consideration of other practical support that might be required to enable survivors to participate in research. This could include support with childcare costs and paying for travel and accommodation in advance, rather than expecting individuals to pay for these and reclaim expenses.
- Researchers contributing to or working on projects that require them to engage in situations where traumatic events, narratives and stories might arise should have prior warning and the opportunity to withdraw as well as access to provisions such as reflective practice, or clinical supervision.
- When organisations are co-producing research with survivors, a commitment to ongoing awareness and consideration of power dynamics across the work is recommended and encouraged.

[32] Where this is not prohibited by the current immigration rules.

Policy and legal recommendations:

- All potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking who are in the NRM should be supported to recover and move on from their experiences. This should include engaging in paid work. Without this, contributions to the anti-slavery movement by survivors will remain limited, which limits the potential for learning in the anti-slavery movement. People with lived experience are missing in anti-slavery research and policy making. Access to work would make sure people with lived experience are offered the choice to play a central and constant role to contribute to policy making and system building in a meaningful way, as well as providing a practical route to rebuilding their lives.
- More opportunities for training and access to higher and tertiary education should be made available to survivors of slavery. There is a growing body of community-based participatory research that focuses on those communities that do not possess formal educational training but whose work is still valid. Alternative education must be better championed and made more accessible. In traditional education, tuition fees continue to rise for all students accessing higher education. People who are seeking asylum in the UK are not usually eligible for student finance or home-rate tuition fees, which are reserved for UK nationals.
- The Government's recent "skills revolution" announcement in England aims to increase lifelong learning and help people retrain for jobs. However this will not change the complicated rules that determine who is eligible to receive funding from the Adult Education Budget. From September 2021, EU nationals without settled status will no longer be eligible for funding from the budget which has clear implications for European survivors who enter the NRM after the June registration deadline. More must be done to fund access to higher education through scholarship opportunities.
- Challenges arise when income from work affects benefit entitlements or renders people ineligible for certain entitlements such as legal aid. Survivors should not be worse off for engaging in paid work, yet they increasingly are. Survivors who are closest to the situations we seek to learn more about are legally kept from engaging in research unless they volunteer, and for those without the right to work this can bring serious penalties. As a result, the system has limited the pool of peer-researchers. This limits advancements aiming to balance the scales of survivor leadership in the anti-slavery movement.
- Badly designed immigration and discretionary leave policies mean survivors are stuck in the immigration system, often for many years, causing them to feel demotivated and lose confidence. Without secure durable periods of leave to remain, survivors lack the security to engage in work of this nature. We recommend all survivors have permission to work while in the NRM for a minimum of 12 months following a positive conclusive grounds decision.

Co-producing research with survivors

- We encourage partners and stakeholders to explore different approaches to co-produced research. Approaching multiple survivor led agencies for survivor participants can help diversify engagement. More must be done to enable survivors to lead on research from the outset. As part of this, greater understanding is needed on the benefits and challenges of survivors and non-survivors working collaboratively.
- More consideration should be given to the challenges and realities of training researchers as well as researchers' own challenges with learning. Significant time is required to understand learning needs and how these can be properly supported when developing research projects with survivor researchers.

ATMG members and co-production

ATMG and its members are committed to putting the voices of those that are all too often unheard at the forefront of our work. As we work towards a more equitable anti-slavery movement, our vision is one in which people with lived experience are able to lead on the development of advocacy and research that seeks to better inform policy. The following examples highlight the work of several ATMG members and their diverse approaches to co-production.

Kalayaan

Kalayaan, which was founded out of a campaign by migrant domestic workers for their rights, has a long history of working with migrant domestic workers as allies and peers. Campaigning and parliamentary work is often led by domestic worker run groups such as Voice of Domestic Workers and Filipino Domestic Worker Association (FDWA) which are both run by migrant domestic workers. For example, in the campaign to restore the original rights to the Overseas Domestic Worker (ODW) visa, Kalayaan held a parliamentary launch event[33] in partnership with Voice of Domestic Workers in November 2020. People with lived experience led on organising the event and attended as organisers, speakers and participants and shared their learning on the risks of the current (restricted) visa and the changes needed to the immigration rules to enable ODW visa holders to exercise rights and keep safe. Meetings with Ministers and the Home Office are always attended in coalition with migrant domestic worker representatives, and Union allies. Research and practical work is always informed by migrant domestic workers – for example, Kalayaan has in 2020 been asked by the Home Office to review the leaflet that should be issued to workers when they attend the Visa Application Centre abroad. Kalayaan has so far facilitated one focus group with members of Voice of Domestic Workers and is hoping to do another with FDWA. These will inform findings for the Home Office.

JustRight Scotland – Lived experience inclusion briefing

The Scottish Anti-Trafficking and Exploitation Centre (SATEC) at JustRight Scotland has been working alongside inspirational women with lived experience of trafficking to enable their experience and voices to shape responses to human trafficking in Scotland.

To this end, SATEC supported these women in 2019 to present their views to the Scottish Government consultation on the Duty to Notify provision of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015. This culminated with a group of women meeting with Humza Yusuf, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice in Scotland, to share their views on the Scottish Government's response to combating trafficking in Scotland. SATEC also worked with these women to provide their responses to the Scottish Government's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy Review in 2020 and the Scottish Government's Equally Safe consultation on tackling male demand for prostitution at the end of 2020.

[33] Why a UK committed to ending slavery needs to return to pre-2012 Overseas Domestic Worker visa, event information available at: https://twitter.com/Kalayaan/status/1328748502189568003?s=20

In 2020, SATEC supported a woman to share her views on combating trafficking in Scotland on a national television news programme marking EU Anti-Trafficking day.

Following a request from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), SATEC worked with a number of women to review the information leaflet for victims of trafficking on criminal injuries compensation. In 2021, CICA re-designed the leaflet taking into consideration several recommendations made by the women to improve accessibility to the scheme for victims of trafficking.

Throughout 2020, SATEC worked with women with lived experience of trafficking to co-deliver an EU AMIF funded project ASSIST: Gender Specific Legal Assistance and Integration Support for Third Country National Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation[34] (led by the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), in partnership with the SOLWODI (Germany), BeFree (Italy), SURT (Spain) and the European Network of Migrant Women (SATEC).

Through ASSIST, we co-produced an information leaflet for trafficked migrant women on their rights and support in Scotland (available in five languages) and co-developed and co-delivered a Peer Support model of integration assistance for female survivors of sexual exploitation. The project concluded with the development of a Best Practice Principles report[35] and short film created with the women, where they highlighted the importance of lived experience in developing and shaping responses to human trafficking. The report and film were presented at a national dissemination event in December 2020, which included speakers from the Scottish Government, Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, Rights Lab (University of Nottingham), and Anti-Slavery International.

An honorarium was provided in recognition for all the work the women contributed to the project, with all expenses including childcare costs being met by the funding. Psychological support was also made available to the women throughout the project.

Following the overwhelmingly positive feedback on the Peer Support model from the women involved, JustRight Scotland has committed to secure funding to continue this important work, as well as to continue to support and facilitate the voices of lived experience to inform and influence anti-trafficking work.

Focus on Labour Exploitation – Feminist Participatory Action Research with Workers in High-Risk Sectors

Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) is a research and policy organisation working towards an end to labour exploitation. To achieve this, FLEX seeks to make sure it is accountable to and accurately represents the interests of people experiencing or at risk of labour exploitation. FLEX established and coordinates the Labour Exploitation Advisory Group – a platform to promote discussion and collaboration among organisations working with survivors and those at risk of exploitation in the UK. FLEX also involves at-risk workers directly in its research and advocacy work through participatory research approaches.

[34] More information on the ASSIST project and the resources produced through the project can be found here https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/our-work/trafficking-and-exploitation

[35] JustRight Scotland, Assisting Trafficked Women: Best practice principles of gender-specific legal assistance and integration supports to third country national female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, 2020, available at: https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/JRScot_ASSIST_Report-FINAL.pdf

Most recently, as part of a multi-year research project, FLEX has been conducting Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) with women and young migrant workers in three high-risk sectors for labour abuse and exploitation: commercial cleaning, hospitality and app-based delivery. FPAR is an approach where the experience, knowledge and perspectives of the group or community being researched are not just acknowledged but form the foundation of the research. What makes it "feminist" is a focus on engaging with women, migrants and other minoritized and traditionally "othered" groups to highlight and challenge intersecting forms of oppression including poverty, racism and gender inequality.

As part of its FPAR approach, FLEX is engaging workers from the three sectors as paid Peer Researchers in all aspects of research. With training and ongoing support from FLEX, Peer Researchers are shaping the research questions, collecting data through peer-to-peer interviews and focus groups, developing policy recommendations, and voicing their priorities for change to journalists and policymakers. The first working paper from this research, *"If I Could Change Anything About My Work…": Participatory Research with Cleaners in the UK,*[36] was published in January 2021. In March 2021, FLEX published a handbook, *Experts by Experience: Conducting Feminist Participatory Action Research with Workers in High-Risk Sectors*,[37] reflecting on and sharing learnings from this approach.

[36] Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), "If I Could Change Anything About My Work...": Participatory Research With Cleaners In The UK, Available at:
https://www.labourexploitation.org/publications/if-i-could-change-anything-about-my-work%E2%80%9D-participatory-research-cleaners-uk
[37] Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), Experts by Experience: Conducting Feminist Participatory Action Research with Workers in High-Risk Sectors, available at:
https://www.labourexploitation.org/publications/experts-experience-conducting-feminist-participatory-action-research-workers-high-risk

The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG) was founded in May 2009 to monitor the United Kingdom's implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005), which came into effect in the UK on 1 April 2009. Following the UK's decision to opt into the EU Directive on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings (2011/36), which entered into force on 5 April 2013, the ATMG also monitors the obligations set out in this framework.

The seventeen organisations belonging to the ATMG are:

Anti-Slavery International
Ashiana
Bawso
Eastern European Resource Centre
ECPAT UK
Flourish NI
Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)
Helen Bamber Foundation
Hope for Justice
JustRight Scotland
Kalayaan
Law Centre (NI)
Scottish Refugee Council
The Children's Law Centre
The Snowdrop Project
TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, a service run by Community Safety Glasgow)
UNICEF UK

The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group
c/o Anti-Slavery International
Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard
Broomgrove Road
London SW9 9TL
United Kingdom

For further information see: **www.antislavery.org/atmg**

The **Anti Trafficking Monitoring** Group

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION