

**MODERN SLAVERY
& HUMAN RIGHTS** | POLICY &
EVIDENCE
CENTRE

Led by the Bingham Centre

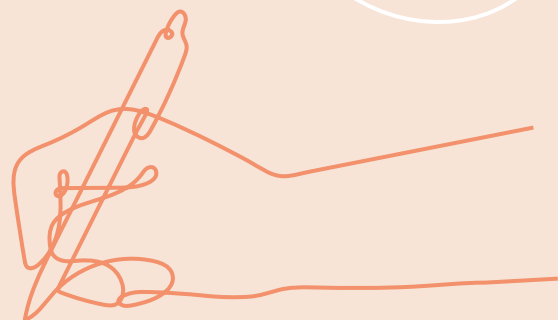
Impact report

2019 - 2022



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Foreword

Slavery is a complex phenomenon and a pervasive scar on humanity. The control of another person, the exploitation of their body and labour, and the removal of their rights, is a degradation of all concerned. It is all too easy to see this as a problem of another time or of other places, but it is a problem of our time and our place too. Our choices in the UK of consumption, investment and attentiveness are critical to the extent to which slavery flourishes or is challenged elsewhere. We can choose to check on the ethical provenance of our fashion or food; we can choose better investment practices; we can choose to legislate meaningfully.



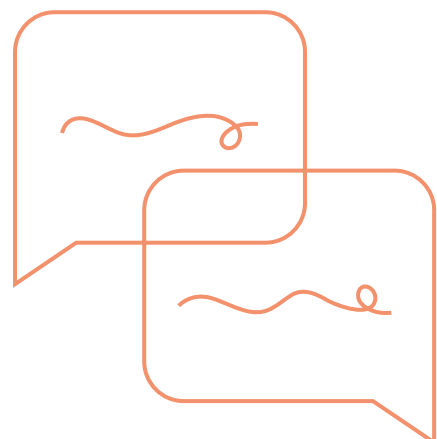
But it is not simple to do this, even if it is clear we should. Slavery is complex – it is and always has been deeply but not always very visibly intertwined in economic and social practices. That’s why it has taken so long for us to recognise its pervasiveness in our own history.

To tackle slavery requires a multiplicity of skills and relentless determination to expose the evidence and draw the best conclusions. That’s why the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre is so important and why it is rapidly establishing itself as a critical friend to, and a vital underpinning of, better policy in the UK.

It is a privilege for the Arts and Humanities Research Council to be able to support the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. To study the humanities is to study how we may best flourish as human beings, and the obstacles to that flourishing. Slavery, entangled as it is in historical behaviours, economic inequalities, and political choice is one of the greatest inhumanities we can inflict on each other.

It is a collective duty to work together to eradicate slavery from our world, and the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre is one of our finest and most essential guiding lights.

Professor Christopher Smith
Executive Chair
Arts and Humanities Research Council
May 2023



Introduction

We all want a world where people are protected from modern slavery by effective, evidence-based laws and policies.

Today, although awareness of modern slavery has undoubtedly increased, the policy solutions are still far from sufficient. The Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and both new and protracted international conflicts such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine have all significantly increased vulnerability to modern slavery and thrown up fresh challenges to our existing laws and policies to protect people from exploitation. The need for evidence-based solutions to this great contemporary global challenge is all the more urgent.



There is, however, a fundamental problem: there is still a chasm between the people and groups working to address modern slavery, from academic researchers to people affected by modern slavery and those working directly with them, on the one hand, and those who create policies and laws addressing the issue on the other. Modern slavery academic research has been lacking an institution whose raison d'être is to bridge that divide, by focusing research projects on directly informing policy.

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC) was established in 2019 to fill this gap in the research and policy infrastructure.

With that mission in mind, we have striven to design new approaches to academic research. From establishing beyond-academia collaborations in research projects, to translating evidence into accessible recommendations and facilitating direct connections with policymakers, we have been laser-focused on effectively informing policy.

We have also worked hard to make our funded research more equitable and better informed by people with lived experience, as it helps produce research that is more accurate and impactful.

Finally, we have made big efforts to facilitate new collaborations, bringing people together from previously separate areas so that everyone can learn from each other and create more effective solutions to address modern slavery.

In this report we summarise the impact we have made in the first three years of our existence. If you would like to learn more than the snapshot in this document, I recommend reading the full version of this report that we have published on our [website](#).

We hope you find it useful. As a values-based organisation, we are committed to being open and reflexive, and to strive for constant improvement by learning from our experience, so we would welcome your feedback on this report, including any suggestions about how we can increase our impact in future.

Murray Hunt
Director

Who we are

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC) was created by the investment of public funding to enhance the understanding of modern slavery and transform the effectiveness of laws and policies designed to address it.

It's designed to provide independent, impartial and authoritative insight and analysis on modern slavery based on the high quality research it funds and co-creates, aiming to have a transformational impact on the understanding of modern slavery and the policy responses to it.

The Centre works to create a 'network of networks' to bring together academics, policymakers, legislators, businesses, civil society, survivors and the public on a scale not seen before in the UK to collaborate on solving this global challenge. The Modern Slavery PEC's approach is rooted in human rights.

Led by the [Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law](#) (part of the [British Institute of International and Comparative Law \(BIICL\)](#)) the Centre is a consortium of universities and Independent Research Organisations consisting of the [Rights Lab](#) at the University of Nottingham, the [Wilberforce Institute](#) at the University of Hull, the [Centre for the Study of International Slavery](#) at the University of Liverpool, the [Bonavero Institute on Human Rights](#) at the University of Oxford and the [Alan Turing Institute](#). The Modern Slavery PEC is funded and actively supported by the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) on behalf of [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#), from the Strategic Priorities Fund.

Read more about the Modern Slavery PEC at modernslaverypec.org.



- The Modern Slavery PEC's vision is a world where everyone is protected from exploitation by effective laws and policies, informed by evidence.
- Our mission is to enhance understanding of modern slavery across the globe and transform the effectiveness of laws and policies designed to address it.

Why we exist

There are many individuals, groups and organisations working to address modern slavery, including funders and researchers, policymakers, civil society and others, with differing objectives and approaches, but all with the shared goal to eradicate modern slavery and support survivors' wellbeing and recovery.

The Centre was set up to improve the quality of the evidence and knowledge base to influence policies and laws, by bringing different disciplines, individuals and organisations together and facilitating new collaborations in modern slavery research, a priority recognised among many working to address modern slavery. We also work to meaningfully include people with lived experience of modern slavery in research and policymaking.

The Centre has a unique role within modern slavery research, as a research funder, knowledge broker, convenor of connections between people and producer of expert analysis, with policy impact at its core. As a new initiative, we have had the opportunity and scope to work in a different way from established practices and formalised institutional structures; improving our approach based on feedback and learnings, and substantial and meaningful engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience of modern slavery.

In our work, we are guided by a set of core values to which we are committed. We aspire to be:

- **Independent** – we approach issues critically and without bias, letting the research and evidence guide our perspective;
- **Inclusive** – we seek to include everyone interested in addressing modern slavery and amplify diverse voices wherever possible, especially of those directly affected by modern slavery;
- **Transparent** – we answer questions with honesty and openness. We don't mislead or hide behind ambiguity;
- **Rigorous** – we maintain a high-quality standard for all of our outputs;
- **Collaborative** – We know that modern slavery can only be solved if people work together. We create relevant connections between partners to build on our collective knowledge and make progress.

How we work and measure our impact

What we do:

- We fund and co-create impartial research to provide insight and analysis on modern slavery;
- We translate the evidence produced by our funded teams into practical recommendations for decision-makers to drive real policy change;
- We facilitate connections between researchers and relevant policymakers and decisionmakers to inform their work;
- We facilitate new collaborations and connections in modern slavery research between those who have not previously worked together, for example academics, policymakers, legislators, businesses, civil society, survivors;
- We work to make sure people with lived experience of modern slavery meaningfully influence our work;
- We promote evidence to wider audiences to enhance the understanding of modern slavery more widely.

The Centre has identified five short-term outcomes, against which we measure the impact of our work:

1. Policymakers, businesses, and organisations increasingly know about, access, understand and use evidence in decision-making;
2. A portfolio of high-quality, more diverse Modern Slavery PEC funded research informs on evidence gaps;
3. Improved understanding of needs and perspectives of survivors is built into research, policies, and laws;
4. Improved and greater collaboration and information sharing to address modern slavery;
5. Modern Slavery PEC is an exemplar of good practice within the modern slavery research sector;

Demonstrating the Modern Slavery PEC's impact is complex as there are not singular metrics or indicators of success of these outcomes. Furthermore, individual activities and outputs contribute to these short-term outcomes in different ways and to different extents, and we also expect that some impacts will materialise over a longer period of time. As a result, this report summarises the impact of the Modern Slavery PEC since its inception in 2019 till the end of 2022, based on a range of qualitative and quantitative data collected by the Centre. We have also surveyed and interviewed stakeholders, including policymakers and funded research teams. For further detail on how we assess our impact see our website at modernslaverypec.org/resources/impact-report. If you have any comments or feedback on this report, please contact Niki Kalyvides, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at n.kalyvides@modernslaverypec.org.

Our impact – feedback from others

We have carried out an extensive consultation with people working to address modern slavery in various roles, asking them how they see the role and impact of the Modern Slavery PEC.

Almost all of the people we have consulted were very positive about the Centre; indicating strong satisfaction with our work and expressing interest in working with us in the future. Positive characteristics identified include the Centre's multilateral stakeholder approach, responsiveness of activity to policy priorities, staff expertise and usefulness of research outputs. The Modern Slavery PEC's collaborative approach was also praised by policymakers, specifically the Centre's ability to link different stakeholders, develop research collaboratively and its funding for research in new areas

The breadth and significance of the Modern Slavery PEC's activities has also been cited by several important actors who influence modern slavery policy.

'[you] do incredibly important work, and work with a range of very talented researchers and staff from all different backgrounds.' **UK policymaker**

'From our perspective, we feel the [Modern Slavery] PEC has performed very well... A lot of the PEC work will without doubt influence the direction of our strategy ... it will be a very helpful foundation for us to use.' **UK policymaker**

'It has become a well-respected institution pretty quickly.' **Academic**

'After a slow start, due to mobilisation issues, there was a step change. We've seen lots of research; good policy papers; and it's become a good 'go to' knowledge hub on modern slavery issue.' **Academic**

'It's refreshing to be around people that actually cared about the values.... who truly listened....who were happy to receive corrections when something wasn't done correctly, respectfully, and make changes.' **CEO of anti-slavery organisation**

'The Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre has established itself both nationally and internationally as a credible research actor and has commissioned a significant range of research' the UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact, '[ICAI follow-up review of 2020-21 reports.](#)'

Policy impact

Impact on laws, policies and practices addressing modern slavery is at the heart of the Modern Slavery PEC's work. We work to bridge the gap between research and policymaking and increase knowledge, access, understanding, and use of evidence and expert analysis in decision-making.

- We focus on ensuring all our funded research is relevant, timely, trustworthy and accessible to decision-makers;
- We translate the evidence produced by our funded teams into practical recommendations and disseminate them to key decisionmakers;
- We facilitate engagement between funded researchers and policymakers, practitioners and businesses;
- We have established strong collaborative relationships with UK policymakers and international partners.

We approach achieving policy impact in three different ways:

1. Influencing the direct use of evidence in policy decisions and informing legislation and scrutiny of Government (instrumental impact);
2. Supporting policymakers to access and understand evidence in modern slavery policy and decision-making (conceptual impact);
3. Building relationships between policymakers, the Modern Slavery PEC and the wider modern slavery research sector (enduring connectivity).

The Modern Slavery PEC has built trusting and ongoing relationships with a wide number and variety of policymakers. These include officials working on modern slavery at the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, and the Scottish and Welsh Governments, as well as other policy actors across departments relevant to particular pieces of research, whom we have brought together to discuss research gaps and findings. In 2022 alone, the Centre held over 80 meetings with policymakers, including with Ministers. Interviewed and surveyed policymakers valued the strength of the relationships with the Modern Slavery PEC with repeated references to the Centre's role as a 'critical friend'.

Having met with some of the researchers at [Modern Slavery] PEC, I feel confident in their research. UK policymaker

80 In 2022, the Centre held over 80 meetings with policymakers.

17 In 2022, the Centre facilitated 17 meetings between policymakers and researchers to discuss research findings.

'I would say the biggest value is they don't just send you a report, fire and forget they do follow it up and give you the opportunity to scrutinise it and they do tailor those meetings to who they're speaking to.... that's made all the difference to what I've drawn out of their reports.' **UK policymaker**

Key attributes of our work were its accessibility and effectiveness in communicating key findings in a concise way. These include:

- **Seven policy briefs**, which synthesise evidence on a topic, rate its quality and make recommendations for policymakers.
- **22 Research Summaries**, co-produced with funded research teams, summarising the project findings and tailored to specific audiences.

The majority of policymakers who responded to our survey had used Modern Slavery PEC-funded research in areas of their work and reported that the Centre's work had contributed to their understanding of the evidence on modern slavery.

Case study: [Working to impact policy and practice to address forced labour in the Malaysian medical gloves supply chain](#)

In 2020, the Modern Slavery PEC funded 11 research projects on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on modern slavery. They included a project focused on forced labour issues in the production of medical gloves in Malaysia, and supply to the UK's National Health Service (NHS), during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to publishing a full research report, the Modern Slavery PEC team worked closely together with the research team to produce an accessible Research Summary of key findings and recommendations, disseminated directly to key policymakers and decisionmakers within the NHS. The Modern Slavery PEC supported the research team to present the research at two specially organised policy roundtables – one with UK government departments, and the other with governments of the US, Canada, UK, Australia, and New Zealand.

The impact of this work was cited in the [Home Office 2020/21 Modern Slavery Statement](#), which noted that the research and engagement had supported an increased collective understanding of the risks of modern slavery in PPE supply chains and the development of relevant responses.

The Centre published **7** policy briefs synthesising evidence on a wider topic and **22** Research Summaries, co-produced with funded teams, summarising project findings.

Policy impact: informing laws, policies and practice

Influencing and informing laws and policies is always a collaborative effort, and rarely can one organisation claim exclusively to have influenced policy successes. Below are examples of impact on laws, policies and practice on modern slavery in line with recommendations based on evidence produced by Modern Slavery PEC-funded research:

- **Informing government strategies with evidence.** The Centre informed the UK Government's review of its 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy by co-hosting a roundtable with the Home Office for researchers on the role of evidence in the Government's overall strategic approach to the challenge. The Centre is actively engaging with the Scottish Government to inform its review of its Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy e.g., through [written submissions](#).
- **Changes to guidance on survivor support**, such as the Statutory Guidance for Modern Slavery Victim Identification and Support in England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) which was updated to make legal aid entitlements clearer, in line with the recommendations made by a Modern Slavery PEC funded research project on [access to legal advice for survivors of modern slavery](#), following engagement between the Modern Slavery PEC and officials in the Ministry of Justice.
- **Improvements to data publications.** Examples include additional [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) data](#) published by the Home Office on the UK Data Service (UKDS), in line with the recommendations featured in the Centre's [policy briefing](#) on identification of potential victims, and a [statistical bulletin](#) that, for the first time, included data on the links between modern slavery, small boat Channel crossings and asylum, in line with the Centre's [detailed recommendations](#). This has greatly enhanced the ability of researchers and civil society to understand trends and patterns in the scale and nature of modern slavery in the UK and to scrutinise claims about alleged abuse of the modern slavery laws.
- **Informing Parliamentary scrutiny**, for example the UK Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) cited the Centre's evidence several times in its report on the modern slavery provisions of the Nationality and Borders Bill. The evidence was also relied upon in parliamentary debates, with one clause (now section 63 of the Nationality and Borders Act) being amended in a way that reflected a recommendation made by the Centre. Furthermore, the Centre's Director of Research gave oral evidence to the International Development Sub-Committee on the work of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI), which was subsequently cited in the government's response and the ICAI's 2022 Impact report.
- Following engagement, the UK Department for International Trade invited the Modern Slavery PEC to provide **expert input to support technical discussions** amongst G7 officials on best practices to prevent, identify and eliminate forced labour in global supply chains. Those discussions led to G7 Trade Ministers issuing a [joint statement](#).

The work of the Centre has also been cited in a number of published policy documents across a range of stakeholders, including the [Home Office modern slavery statement](#), the [UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's annual reports](#) and the Director of Labour Market Enforcement's [Strategy](#).

The Centre's profile and expertise has also meant that the Modern Slavery PEC was commissioned to carry out research projects, including by the Office of Theresa May MP to assess the case for a Global Commission on Modern Slavery and by the FCDO to examine survivor engagement in international development programmes and policies, with an additional research project on the role of financial markets in addressing modern slavery in supply chains starting in 2023. The Centre's Scoping Study, [Assessing the case for a Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#), has provided the basis for ongoing international discussions about establishing a Global Commission, for which the UK announced its support in April 2023.

Learning

One of the challenges of influencing policy is that policymaking often takes place at rapid and unpredictable timescales, with the recent period being particularly uncertain for modern slavery policy. For example, in 2022 the UK Government committed to bring forward a new Modern Slavery Bill, but this has not yet been introduced to Parliament. The Illegal Migration Bill, currently before Parliament, introduces far reaching and controversial changes to the Modern Slavery Act. The post of UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner has been vacant since April 2022.

To continually produce policy-impactful work in this context, we have maintained trusting and consistent relationships with policymakers to keep up to date with changing policy, and use a 'forward look' planning process to chart how policy priorities align with planned research. We also use flexible mechanisms to fund research with different timescales, responsive to the current policy landscape and develop different types of outputs to inform public and parliamentary debates.

'The products that they produce, which they present to us, have been very high quality. They understand the need to be practical. They're not producing advocacy papers that are disconnected from the current state of the world.' **UK policymaker**

'They are good at holding really open and trusted conversations – and playing the critical friend function has been particularly helpful [so]...it does feel like a very collaborative and trusting relationship which is great.' **UK policymaker**

Working with business and other actors

The Centre also works to embed evidence with a wider spectrum of actors, including businesses, NGOs and the wider academic sector.

Our work has focussed on sharing evidence gaps and research findings and learning from others. For example, in 2022, the Centre held:

- 20 meetings with NGOs that are either survivor-led or that engage closely with survivors;
- 13 meetings with academic networks or centres that have a focus on research-policy engagement or specifically on modern slavery;
- Five meetings with local government umbrella bodies or associations;
- Four meetings with business stakeholders and one business roundtable, alongside the Centre participating in meetings of the Bingham Centre Business Network. Feedback from these events suggests they have been successful at identifying evidence gaps and contributing to businesses' understanding of evidence on modern slavery.

Case study: working with businesses

Discussions at our business roundtables on evidence gaps on modern slavery in supply chains have closely informed the development of a funding call focused on the challenges for businesses in managing modern slavery risks in long and complex supply chains.

The funded research team shared emerging findings at a subsequent business roundtable in July 2022, with the [report](#) published in November 2022 attracting further interest from UK and international organisations. This feedback cycle exemplifies the Centre's work engaging business in modern slavery research, leading to the production of evidence relevant for ethically oriented businesses, informed at every stage by the close engagement of expert practitioners.

However, it can be challenging to involve businesses in individual research projects, because businesses often work to shorter timeframes than academic researchers, needing findings more quickly than the research process is able to produce them. They also tend to have a particular need for very specific research findings, practical toolkits and guidance which can be applied to their day-to-day business practices which academic research is not always best placed to produce.

In 2022, the Centre held:

5	meetings with local government umbrella bodies or associations	13	meetings with academic networks or centres
20	meetings with survivor-led or survivor engages NGOs	5	meetings with business networks

Research

Prior to the inception of the Modern Slavery PEC, independent scrutiny of progress towards addressing modern slavery in both the domestic and international arenas noted strategic weaknesses in the lack of systematic use of research and evidence to inform interventions. Traditionally, the vast majority of funding for modern slavery research in the UK was allocated to academics alone, with limited emphasis on including other stakeholders in research. Many of these stakeholders, including policymakers, practitioners and others working on modern slavery, identified the lack of relevance of academic research to areas relevant to their day-to-day practice as a major problem.

In light of that, one of the Centre's priorities is the involvement of a more diverse range of people and organisations with distinctive expertise in our funded research. In 2020, we carried out a wide-ranging [consultation](#) on our research priorities, which identified four priority research areas for the Centre, with an additional one to address emerging and cross-cutting issues, such as the impact of Covid-19. The priority research areas are:

1. preventing modern slavery;
2. understanding survivor needs and enhancing victim support;
3. modern slavery in business supply chains;
4. the effectiveness of legal enforcement measures.

We have funded 40 teams to undertake research projects in these areas, led by world-class researchers and focused on impact on policy and practice. In line with our values, all our research projects must be collaborative and include academic and non-academic partners. In addition, the Centre has undertaken evidence reviews and developed policy briefs on specific themes, in collaboration with Modern Slavery PEC Research Fellows and consortium partners. See Annex B for the full list of our funded projects.

The work we've done directly with the PEC we are very pleased with. ...The research products that have come out have been good, backed up by very detailed research'
UK policymaker

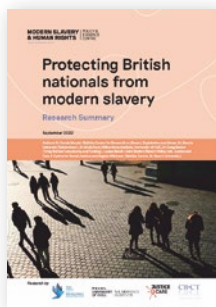
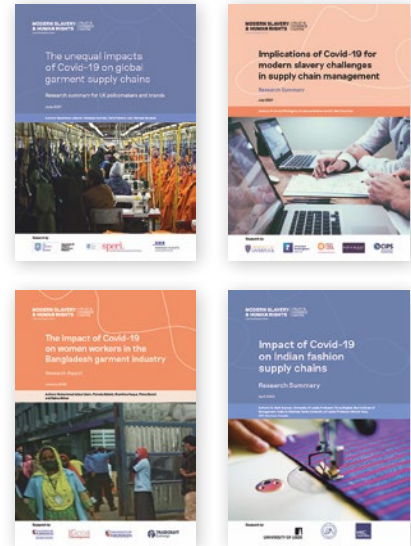
'They have worked on subjects that are interesting.....the quality of the research is high, and I have read every single piece of research. I really have no criticism as to the quality of the work. It's amazing.' **CEO of an anti-slavery organisation**

Examples of our published research

Covid-19 and global supply chains

A wide range of research funded by the Modern Slavery PEC confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic increased vulnerability to forced labour for workers across the world. Whilst some promising business practices emerged in response, others may have exacerbated vulnerability to modern slavery.

Our research in this area included projects on global garment supply chains (led by the University of Sheffield), pandemic response by big UK-based businesses (led by the University of Liverpool), women in the Bangladesh garment industry (led by the University of Aberdeen), and Indian fashion supply chains (led by the University of Leeds).



Protecting British nationals from modern slavery

Research led by St Mary's University Twickenham found that UK frontline professionals miss many opportunities to protect British nationals from modern slavery, leaving survivors to face "a cycle of closed doors", caused by confusion over what support they are entitled to.

Forced labour in Malaysian medical glove industry

A research project led by Newcastle University surveyed people working in the medical glove industry in Malaysia, which produces the majority of medical gloves used by the UK's NHS, and found that forced labour issues are endemic and have worsened during the pandemic.



Meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience of modern slavery

Research led by the University of Liverpool found that meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience of modern slavery in development programmes makes them more effective, pointing to improved efficacy, innovation, sustainability, and programmes' improved ability to address root causes of exploitation. The research was commissioned and funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Consumers' role in addressing modern slavery

Research carried out by researchers from the University of Melbourne, Royal Holloway University of London and the University of Glasgow found that raising awareness of modern slavery alone has limited effectiveness and that using consumer power can be most effectively extended to their role as citizens and mobilised to pressure decisionmakers.



What works in modern slavery prevention?

Research led by the University of Sheffield examined current labour and sexual exploitation prevention initiatives in the UK, with the findings pointing to the holistic nature of prevention. The research developed twelve principles for prevention programmes, including prioritising community-based and survivor-led initiatives, and 'whole systems' responses.

Groundwork for investors addressing modern slavery

Research carried out by the Bingham Centre and the Alan Turing Institute has laid the groundwork for developing better data solutions for investors to address modern slavery in investment portfolios.



Policy briefs

To make cutting-edge research accessible to decision-makers, we publish policy briefs and Explainers that review and synthesise evidence on key policy questions. Examples include:

- [The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on modern slavery globally and in the UK.](#)
- [Effectiveness of mandatory human rights due diligence legislation.](#)
- [The effectiveness of forced labour import bans.](#)
- [The links between modern slavery and international development.](#)

'I think it has prompted a lot of research that might otherwise have been much harder to fund. And I have seen lots of good projects, with good researchers, that have produced things that are interesting, credible and valuable.' **Academic**

Increasing diversity of research

We have worked to distribute research funding as equitably as we can within our funding rules to a diverse group of organisations. We require our funded projects to include non-academic partners, with several partnerships continuing their collaboration beyond the projects funded by the Centre and at least eight research teams receiving follow-on funding from a range of funders.

We have also worked closely with our funders AHRC to change our funding rules to increase the limit of the allocation of the funding for NGOs from 30% to 50% of the project budgets and allow UK-registered charities to lead projects. We have also held special webinars for NGOs to support their capacity to undertake academic research.

Learning

Power dynamics in modern slavery research, including the Centre's role as funder and academic ways of working, impact on the equity, quality and fairness of research partnerships. As a result, we've worked closely with research teams to understand what they feel creates productive working relationships, and how we can support these. Areas they've highlighted include:

- Alignment of objectives from the outset;
- Good and regular communication across the team;
- Team value and respect for diversity of experience; roles and responsibilities appropriately tailored to team member and organisation's strengths, expertise and networks with clear ownership and responsibility for different areas of work;
- Good project management with dedicated time and resource for collaboration.

The Centre has funded research team members from a diverse range of disciplines, including modern slavery, politics, data science, management, law and public health. We have sought to fund projects using innovative methods, for example including survivors as peer researchers or using AI to gather survivors' views on the UK's support system.

We're working to improve accessibility to our funding opportunities. We draft our research calls in simple English, share them widely and hold special webinars to answer any potential questions.

40

The Centre funded researchers representing 40 academic institutions, 20 NGOs, four private sector organisations and a number of other organisations.

'They have completely flipped the script of what is knowledge. They've developed a way of working that's different, that's inclusive. The next step is to mainstream it.'
CEO of an anti-slavery organisation.

Supporting research teams for high quality and impactful research

To support the quality and policy impact of research, the Centre provides ongoing and tailored support to research teams throughout their projects, including advising on ethics, research design, methods, policy impact, facilitating engagements with policymakers and providing feedback on draft outputs.

Many researchers we interviewed said that this support and connections facilitated by the Centre improved their knowledge and experience, including in areas such as engagement with people with lived experience, research project management, and different approaches to research in different types of institutions. One research team noted the importance of our *'general continuous and consistent interest in the research and guidance on how to generate impact. Right balance of interest and advice that shaped the research and keeping the actual research process at an arms length'*.

Learning

Modern slavery research can be a disparate field, with different actors having different methods and potentials for research. The Modern Slavery PEC has sought to support teams to maximise the policy impact of their research, at the same time as maintaining the balance for supporting the independence and rigour of the research. Over the past years the Centre has adapted its approach to supporting research teams to ensure:

- Shared and agreed expectations of project objectives, approach and outputs and understanding of team ways of working;
- Expertise-driven support, tailored and flexible to the needs of research teams and projects;
- Focussed policy impact discussions with research teams.

Improved relevance of research

Responding to the findings of our consultation on research priorities, we have tried to improve the relevance of our funded research to decision-makers. We have involved relevant actors, including people with lived experience, in the development of our funding calls and selection panels to make sure the selected projects respond to their needs. This made the funded research more relevant to policymakers. It has proved important to set out clear expectations for external stakeholders, allowing sufficient resource for flexible training and support and for communicating results of this participation.

In order to ensure diverse and relevant expertise in these processes, we have also created a Peer Review College comprising of 50 experts working on modern slavery to advise us on the funding calls.

50

members of the Peer Review College advising the Centre on the funding calls.

Meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience

Meaningful survivor inclusion in research and policymaking is one of the key principles of the Modern Slavery PEC's research, not only because it's the right thing to do, but also it is essential for improving policies addressing modern slavery and informing them with real experience of people who have been through it. We have dedicated significant resource to embedding lived experience as an essential part of research and policy in this area, within the Centre and across modern slavery research more generally.

10%

of those who have engaged with us in a formal way (for example applying for funding opportunities) and completed a diversity survey, identified as survivors of modern slavery.

Survivor inclusion in funding operations

As a funder of modern slavery research, we have an important role to play in including survivor voice and have developed our approach as a result of continuous learning, both from the people with lived experience who have worked with us, and from others' work in this area.

Initially, the Centre worked with consultants with lived experience of modern slavery in the development of research calls and assessment of applications for funding research projects. Participants felt that as a result of their participation, they had greater understanding of research application processes, topics within modern slavery research, improvements in confidence and self-worth, communication skills and practical workplace skills.

Recognising the importance of resource and expertise dedicated to this agenda, the Centre recruited a Lived Experience Engagement Manager and Lived Experience Engagement Coordinator to lead on the Centre's survivor engagement work. This includes the creation of a Lived Experience Advisory Panel, developed to ensure that lived experience perspectives are embedded in the activities of the Centre. We have also created a working group of nine diverse civil society organisations to identify, discuss and consolidate good practice in the inclusion of survivors.

'One thing they have done particularly well is enhancing the inclusion of survivors that work has been brilliant.' **Academic**

'I've seen the survivors on the grant assessment panels, and they're reading these research proposals, which are sometimes very academic, and they're just really insightful....how they pick out whether there's any attention in proposals to the victims voices, and whether that is being handled in a way that they always wanted to be handled as a survivor.' **Advisory Board Member**

Survivor inclusion in research

We strive to make sure that people with lived experience of modern slavery are at the centre of research the Modern Slavery PEC funds, as well as being those who actively participate as researchers and in other decision-making positions.

We require survivor involvement where appropriate and have funded many research projects which include survivors in different ways, including as peer researchers, as advisory board members and leading engagement with policymakers.

Survivors have also informed the design of research, providing feedback on methodological tools such as survey questions and interview guides. One project created a curriculum to train and support survivors to become peer researchers.

The Centre has also produced a number of tools to support best practice, including a bespoke [Safeguarding Policy](#), a set of [meeting rules](#) creating safe spaces for participants, and application guidance materials tailored for survivors.

Case study: [survivor engagement in policy and programmes](#)

In 2022, the FCDO funded the Modern Slavery PEC to undertake a research project to assess the best practice in engagement of lived experience in international policy and programmes on modern slavery. The project was co-designed and co-produced with a rich and diverse mix of expertise including individuals with lived experience.

All who participated in the project, including policymakers, had a positive experience and felt the research methods and findings were of high quality. They considered the ambitious regional approach and the inclusion of new voices, including on to the project design, as most valuable.

'What I think the PEC has done amazingly well, is that they have been more front footed, and more attentive in a very sensitive way, than any other academic endeavour I have come across, in including the voices of victims of modern slavery. And that's really hard work to do.' **Advisory Board Member**

Learning

There is strong will among those working on modern slavery research that improving and increasing meaningful engagement of people with lived experience in research is important. We have learned from emerging good practice, from a variety of organisations and programmes, including:

- Keeping open, equitable and ethical partnerships, consciously addressing existing power dynamics;
- Agreeing principles and values, for example trust, transparency and inclusion;
- Allowing for sufficient, flexible and relevant training and development;
- Equitably remunerating project participants for their time and expertise, and taking into account wider costs such as caseworkers, translation and other expenses.

Improved collaboration and information sharing

Key to the mission of the Modern Slavery PEC is building a 'network of networks' to facilitate collaboration, generate new thinking and diversify modern slavery research, without duplicating what already exists. We value inclusive partnerships that bring together organisations and individuals with different knowledge, experiences and perspectives to improve research and make sure that funding opportunities are shared equitably.

The Centre has:

- over **2,000** contacts on its database across academia, businesses, NGOs and government;
- over **2,500** followers on Twitter, over **5,000** on LinkedIn, and nearly **2,000** newsletter subscribers;
- **1,900** newsletter subscribers, with over **40%** of recipients opening the emails on average;
- published **40** blogs;
- recorded **7** podcasts;
- Received media coverage in key outlets, including the BBC Newsnight, the Times and the Telegraph.
- In work to address modern slavery, some groups have not traditionally worked together and we have sought to find new ways to facilitate this. For example we created a mailing list which now has over **200** members, to which any member can contribute, enabling people working on modern slavery to connect with their peers. Though the group has been successful in terms of sharing opportunities, it has not been the space to facilitate discussion. As a result, we are constantly working to increase the number and diversity of members of our network to facilitate new connections and learn from each other. Examples include:
 - In 2021 and 2022 the Modern Slavery PEC held **20** introductory meetings with civil society organisations that are either led by, or closely engage with, survivors of modern slavery.
 - In 2022 the Modern Slavery PEC held **12** introductory meetings with academics and policy-facing academic centres or networks. The Modern Slavery PEC also joined the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN).

In addition to funding research team partnerships, we bring different teams together to exchange learnings and experiences on issues such as research methods and their importance for policy impact.

'The fundamental thing for me is that MS PEC [Modern Slavery PEC] provides an opportunity to fuse the work of academics and practitioners..... that is absolutely essential to get anywhere. You can't have them sitting in silos because one needs to support the other and they need resources and the PEC is a very good way of doing that' **Policy Lead, UK NGO**

The Centre has taken various opportunities to share learnings in an accessible way that encourages meaningful change.

- In 2020, the Modern Slavery PEC hosted a [global conference](#) on assisting and supporting survivors of modern slavery, organised in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK, bringing together over 250 survivor advocates and professionals from over 30 countries.
- The Centre has used its convening power and experience to organise three events that support capacity building, including a workshop on equitable and collaborative [research partnerships between academics and civil society](#) and an event to support [smaller NGOs to partner on research projects](#). These events combine expert guest speakers with the Modern Slavery PEC's own learnings, drawing on the Centre's extensive networks across the anti-slavery sector. We have also published blogs with key lessons and published the recordings of the events as podcasts to increase their reach.
- The Centre also co-hosted an event with the Human Trafficking Research Network to share its work on policy impact and survivor engagement for early career researchers as part of efforts to diversify academics engaging with the Centre.

Members of the Modern Slavery PEC team have been invited to speak at numerous events and conferences. For example members of the Centre's team have been invited to share their expertise at:

- Partnership for Conflict, Crime & Security Research (PaCCS) 2021 conference 'Maximising Impact from Serious Organised Crime Research';
- Monitoring & Evaluation of Trafficking in Persons (METIP) 2022 conference 'Equitable and inclusive monitoring, evaluation and research in the anti-trafficking movement';
- Two Westminster Legal Policy Forum events in 2021 on research and evidence to improve the legal and policy framework for modern slavery;
- Cumberland Lodge workshop 'Practitioner Responses to Child Trafficking: Emerging Good Practice'

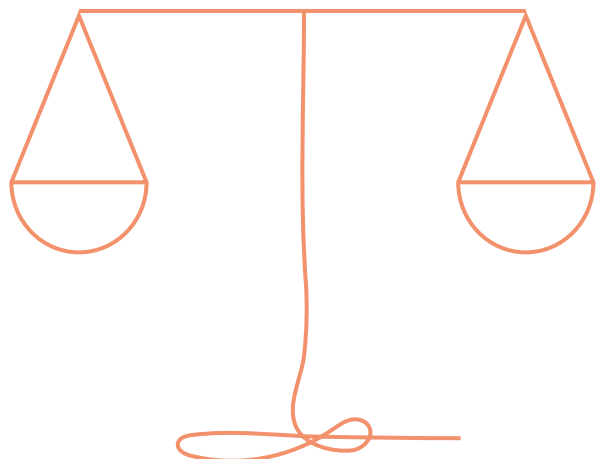
'I think the way they present the research has been done very well, and they are good at drawing in the right individuals to engage with at their events. It's high-quality research being backed up by very clear communications.' **Advisory Board Member**

Striving for best practice

Committed investment from the Strategic Priorities Fund via UKRI and AHRC, and dedicated staff resource has meant that the Modern Slavery PEC has been able to trial, learn and improve on approaches in research operations, collaboration, support to other actors and outputs. As explained in other areas of this report, these include changes to funding mechanisms to improve equity, more diverse research processes and bespoke support to research teams on policy impact and partnerships.

Case study: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan](#)

In 2022, the Modern Slavery PEC published its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan](#). The strategy set out four objectives and actions we plan to take over the next year, including the funding of a research project assessing diversity in modern slavery research and make recommendations for funders such as the Modern Slavery PEC. The Action Plan has been well received, with the Centre invited to speak at UK BME Anti-Slavery Network's (BASNET) 2022 conference on 'Race and ethnicity in modern slavery research'. In a Modern Slavery PEC [podcast](#), BASNET's CEO Debbie Ariyo described the Centre as playing 'a leading role' and that the 'key changes [...] seeing are in relation to research, and how we do research... and for the first time ever in this country, saying we encourage charities to apply as the lead partner'.



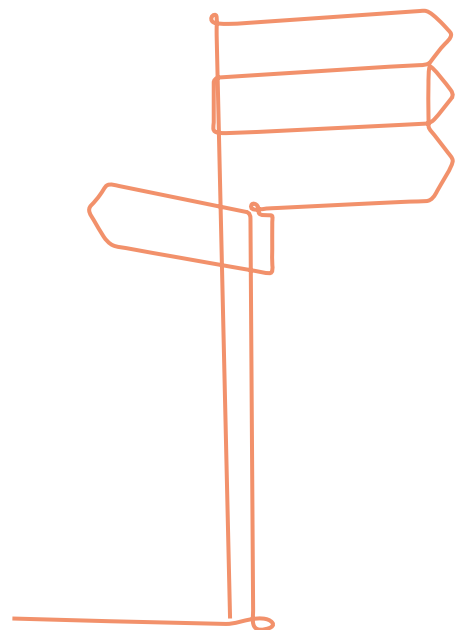
Sharing learnings in an accessible way that encourages meaningful change in areas relating to modern slavery is an important part of the Modern Slavery PEC's approach to being an exemplar on good practice. The Centre has taken various opportunities to do this including participation at conferences and events, and the dissemination of published communications on the website.

Learning

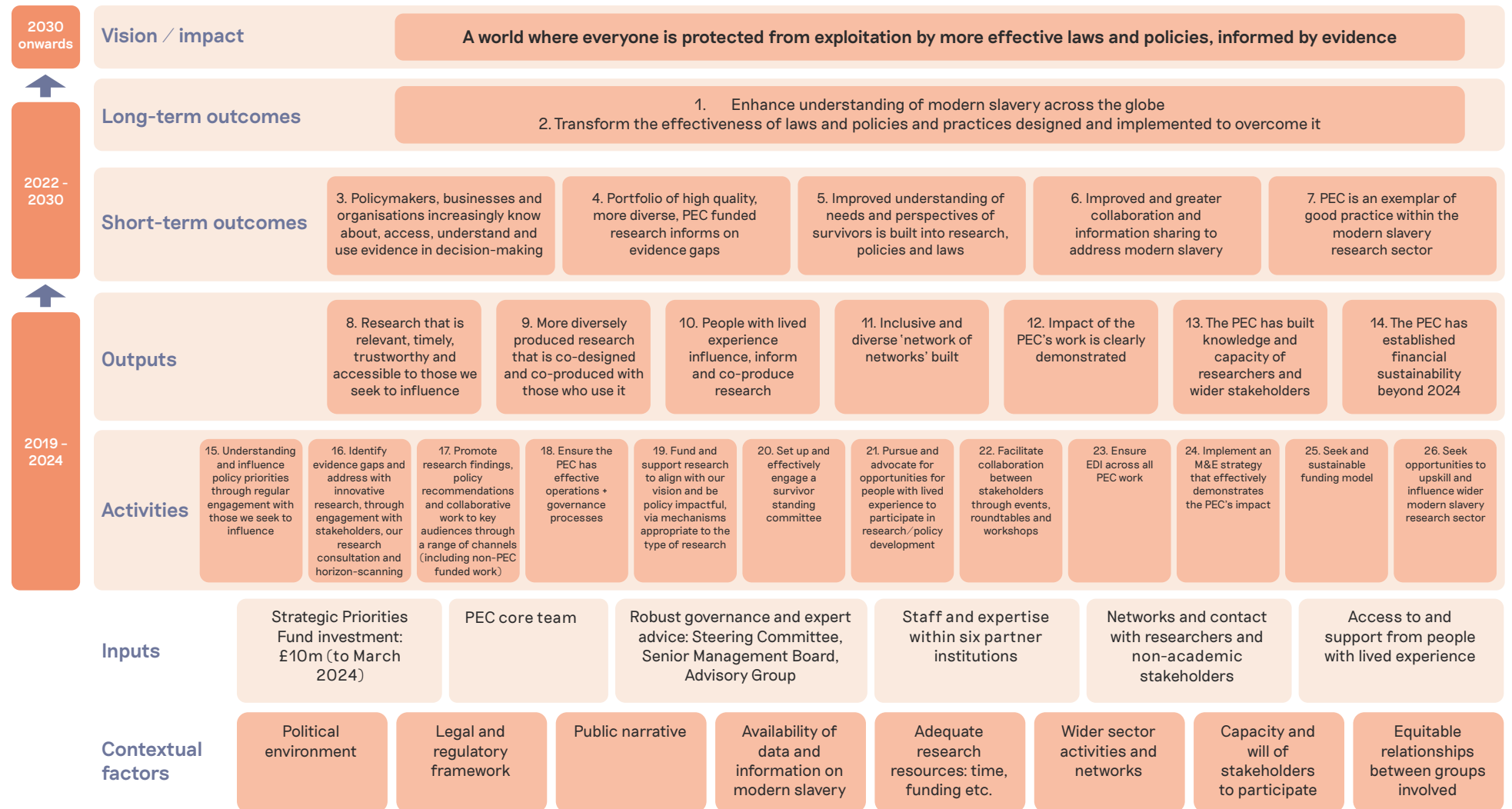
It has been imperative for the Centre's work to monitor and evaluate the success of these activities and learn from the challenges we have faced, which we do to improve our work. Some key considerations for this:

- Dedicated tools and resources for monitoring and evaluation activities;
- Seeking views of different stakeholders involved in processes, with tailored means;
- Creating an atmosphere for honesty and openness, for example with options for anonymity;
- Attaching accountability and responsibility for feedback to be acted upon

They have powerfully established standards not just for the PEC, but for others too... so the role they play in knowledge production is vital. They have become custodians of ethical knowledge production And they have managed to do this in an incredibly short period of time.' **CEO of an anti-slavery organisation**



Annex A: Theory of Change



Annex B: list of funded projects

Project type	Title	Date of publication
Consortium projects	Interactive workshops for regional partnerships	Oct-20
	Effectiveness of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act	Mar-21
	The top 20 source countries for modern slavery in the UK	Apr-21
	Access to legal advice and representation for survivors of modern slavery in England	May-21
	Data for investor action on modern slavery	Jun-21
	Evidence review on operation of the section 45 statutory defence	Apr-22
	Data: trust, security and privacy in addressing modern slavery	Expected June 2023
Open call: Impact of Covid-19 on modern slavery	Impacts of Covid-19 on displaced agricultural workers in the Middle East	May-21
	Impacts of Covid-19 on human trafficking in Sudan	May-21
	Forced labour in the Malaysian medical gloves supply chain	Jun-21
	Good practice in protecting people from modern slavery during the Covid-19 pandemic	Jun-21
	The unequal impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on global garment supply chains	Jun-21
	Impact of Covid-19 on management of supply chains	Jul-21
	Impact of Covid-19 on Romanian and Bulgarian workers in UK agriculture	Jul-21
	Building local resilience to modern slavery in Kenya and Senegal after Covid-19	Oct-21
	Preventing exploitation of women in Bangladesh garment industry	Jan-22
	Impact of Covid-19 on Indian fashion supply chains	Apr-22
Impact of Covid-19 on informal workplaces in the UK	Dec-22	
Open call: Victim and survivor recovery	Improving support for British survivors of modern slavery	Sep-22
	Outcomes for young people with lived experience of modern slavery	Oct-22
	Core outcomes for adult survivors of modern slavery	Feb 2023
	Mental wellbeing for survivors of modern slavery	Expected May 2023
	Scotland: survivor-informed support for trafficked children	Expected June 2023
Open call: Data science	Ethical AI technology to improve survivor support and UK policy	Expected Dec 2023

Open call: Wider laws + policies	Effects of visas for agriculture & care on migrant workers' vulnerabilities in the UK workforce	Expected June 2023
	Harnessing UK trade and investment to address Indo-Pacific modern slavery risks	Expected June 2023
	Internal trafficking and exploitation of children and young people with SEND within England and Wales.	Expected Sept 2023
	Survivors of Modern Slavery in Prisons: The Blind Spot of the UK Anti-Slavery Regime	Expected Sept 2023
	Prevention of Modern Slavery within Sex Work: the role of Adult Services Websites	Expected Sept 2023
Responsive research	Consumer attitudes towards modern slavery	Oct-21
	What does or could work to prevent modern slavery in the UK?	Mar-22
	How businesses can establish visibility and influence over long and complex supply chains	Nov-22
	Survivors' experiences of accessing legal advice, and impact on recovery and outcomes	Jan-23
	Evaluation of the provision of distributed technology to adults accessing NRM support	Expected June 2023
	Improving EDI in modern slavery research	Expected June 2023
	Improving the identification of adults who have lived experience of modern slavery in the UK	Expected June 2023
	Realigning Modern Slavery and Climate Change for Equitable Governance and Action	Expected Nov 2023
	Turning Evidence into Action: Developing Policies to Address Uyghur Forced Labour in Green Technology Supply Chains	Expected Nov 2023
	Intersecting sustainabilities: Protecting both people and planet in supply chains	Expected Dec 2023
External funding	Assessing the case for a global commission on modern slavery	Jul-22
	Survivor involvement in international development policy and programmes	Nov-22
	Financial markets and modern slavery	Expected Jul-23
Policy Briefs	PEC Policy Brief on Covid-19's impact on identification of modern slavery cases in the UK	Mar-21
	PEC Policy Brief on Modern Slavery and International Development	Apr-21
	PEC Policy Brief on UK Government Modern Slavery Strategy Review	Nov-21
	PEC Policy Brief on Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on modern slavery	Nov-21
Policy Brief/ consortium project	PEC Policy Brief on Effectiveness of Forced Labour Import Bans	Jul-21
	PEC Policy Brief on Effectiveness of mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence legislation	May-22
	PEC Policy Brief on Public procurement - key for addressing modern slavery in supply chains?	Nov-22
Submissions	PEC submission on international development strategy	Sep-21
	PEC submission to JCHR on the Nationality and Borders Bill	Nov-21
	PEC submission to Labour Market Enforcement Strategy 2023 to 2024: call for evidence	Jun-22

MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS | POLICY & EVIDENCE CENTRE

Led by the Bingham Centre

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC) was created by the investment of public funding to enhance understanding of modern slavery and transform the effectiveness of law and policies designed to address it. The Centre funds and co-creates high quality research with a focus on policy impact, and brings together academics, policymakers, businesses, civil society, survivors and the public on a scale not seen before in the UK to collaborate on solving this global challenge.

The Centre is a consortium of six academic organisations led by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and is funded by the Art and Humanities Research Council on behalf of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Our partners:



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