

A human rights-centred approach to addressing modern slavery and human trafficking

Speaker Bios

Dr Alicia Heys, University of Hull



Dr Alicia Heys is a Reader in Modern Slavery at the Wilberforce Institute, part of the University of Hull. She is a Co-Lead of the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre where she leads the research stream on legal enforcement, and she Chairs the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership – a strategic network of over 60 organisations working to improve identification, safeguarding, and criminal justice responses across the region. Her research focuses on bridging the gap between academia and practice, with expertise in legal and policy responses to modern slavery and human trafficking. Her recent work has examined the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act, including barriers to prosecutions and convictions and the role of financial investigations. Her ongoing work explores survivor engagement with the criminal justice system, civil orders, and the statutory defence. She also examines representations of victimhood, and the links between conflict, displacement, and exploitation.



Bee Damara, King's College London, University of Leicester

Bee Damara works at the intersection of research, practice, and survivor-led advocacy in the field of modern slavery and human trafficking. Drawing on project-based work with young refugees, alongside experience in survivor movement building and academic research, she brings a multi-perspective approach to analysing systems that respond to exploitation. Her work interrogates how definitions of modern slavery intersect with postcolonial theory and decolonial critiques, particularly in relation to how these shape policy, intervention, and everyday understandings of freedom. She has contributed to research on health outcomes and interventions, with an emphasis on improving support services, embedding lived experience expertise, and informing prevention strategies.



Brandon Thomas, Unseen

Brandon has a background in asset management and brings his professional expertise to Unseen's business services team, combining it with his lived experience of modern slavery and exploitation in the financial service sector, to drive meaningful change. He began his journey with Unseen in 2022 as a survivor consultant, working closely with the policy and research team to ensure legislation meets the real needs of survivors. He has worked alongside universities across the UK on research projects that have fed into legislation, advised the Home Affairs Select Committee at UK Parliament on what recovery should look like for survivors and most recently was part of the team supporting the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's proposed draft legislation on UK Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence.



Christine Mutshipay, Modern Slavery PEC

Christine Mutshipay is the Lived Experience Engagement Co-ordinator at the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. She is a survivor of sexual exploitation and trafficking, now using her lived experiences to advocate for and support women and girls across the country. Christine has a background in advanced children and family social work. She has recently finished her MA in Human Trafficking, Migration & Organised Crime, and holds two further degrees in Working with Children, Young People and Families, and Advanced Children and Family-Based Social Work. Christine is a Lived Experience Coordinator at the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre, and volunteers for Emerge Worldwide; an organisation committed to raising awareness of sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls.



Eleanor Lyons, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

Eleanor began her three-year term as Commissioner in December 2023, an independent role to ‘encourage good practice sharing’ amongst all those with a role to play in tackling every aspect of modern slavery and human trafficking in the UK. The Commissioner works closely with victims of modern slavery. Alongside this, the Commissioner works with charities and civil society, law enforcement bodies, local government, devolved administrations, the UK Government, health authorities, regulators, businesses, and international partners to identify and share best practice. The Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner has a UK-wide mission to encourage good practice in the prevention of individuals from becoming exploited and revictimized; the protection of victims through increased identification and professional support; and the successful prosecutions of modern slavery offences. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner, Eleanor was Deputy Children’s Commissioner for England, advocating and championing for the rights of all children in England, and particularly those who were vulnerable, in care, or in contact with social services.

Ella Cockbain, UCL



Ella Cockbain is Professor of Human Trafficking and Exploitation at UCL and a Visiting Research Fellow at Leiden University, the Netherlands. She leads UCL's Research Group on Human Trafficking, Smuggling and Exploitation and is committed to encouraging more nuanced, evidence-informed, and ethical responses to these complex social issues. She has worked with a wide range of stakeholders across civil society, public sector and private sector organisations. Recent publications include her latest book *Evaluating Anti-Trafficking Interventions: Critical reflections and lessons from the field* (UCL Press, with co-editors Aiden Sidebottom and Sheldon X. Zhang). She is the co-lead (with Chris Pósch) of a major new study into the scale and nature of labour market non-compliance in the UK, commissioned by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement. The project will launch with an international conference on precarious work and labour market exploitation on 13 and 14 May in London. Co-hosted by UCL and the Fair Work Agency, the Working Lives Conference is currently open for booking.

Emily Death, Sophie Hayes Foundation



Emily Death has been the CEO of Sophie Hayes Foundation since January 2024. Sophie Hayes Foundation is a small UK charity supporting women survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking, on their journeys to long-term independence and sustainable freedom from re-exploitation, through the provision of skills and opportunities for employment, education, and community integration. Emily leads the organisation's strategic development, financial management, delivery of survivor services, fundraising and partnerships, policy and advocacy campaigns, and staff team. Prior to this, Emily worked as Director of the international political development consultancy Global Partners Governance and as Head of Unit at the Alliance of Liberals & Democrats for Europe Party in Brussels. Emily is a passionate believer in equity, freedom, and human rights. Her proudest achievements have been in the field of gender equality.

Jane Lasonder, Lived Experience Advisory Panel, Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre

Jane Lasonder is a member of the PEC's Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP). She is also Vice Chair of ISTAC (International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council) of the ODIHR/OSCE and is Chair of Hope for Justice's International Survivor Council. She has contributed to the work of the European Parliament, the UN, OSCE/ODIHR, WHO and the media on human trafficking, amongst others. Jane is also an author and has published three books, the latest called 'Health and Slavery' - a guide book for health care workers on awareness, published internationally by Springer publishers. She is an award-winning photographer too. Jane is a member of the Interparliamentary Taskforce on Human Trafficking (ITHT), the first global consortium to convene leading lawmakers, government leaders, stakeholders and lived-experience experts committed to stopping the human suffering caused by human trafficking through partnership in policy solutions. Jane is an international speaker. As a survivor of child trafficking, Jane shares her expertise with organisations and groups interested in increasing their knowledge of modern slavery and human trafficking, including school-age children, teens and medical students. She is also working with the British Embassy in Bucharest and partners in Romania, developing training material and providing training to health care workers. She has also given training to border force guards and the police. Jane was awarded the Anti-Slavery Award for 'Outstanding Contribution to the fight against modern slavery' in the 'Empowering survivor voices' category by the The Human Trafficking Foundation in October 2024.



Dr Marija Jovanovic, Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford

Marija is a human rights lawyer with a research interest in modern slavery and human trafficking, business and human rights, labour rights, migration and refugee law, and regional human rights regimes. She is a Research Fellow in Business and Human Rights at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and a Co-Investigator on behalf of the Bonavero Institute at the Modern Slavery and Human Rights PEC, both at the University of Oxford. She also holds a Senior Lectureship at the Essex Law School. Marija is the author of State Responsibility for 'Modern Slavery' in Human Rights Law (Oxford University Press, 2023)



and she currently leads programme of research investigating labour exploitation and legal and policy frameworks relevant for shaping responses to it.

Dr Martin Buttle, Better Work Lead, CCLA Investment Management

Martin joined CCLA Investment Management in 2022 to spearhead the Better Work pillar of the firm’s sustainability strategy. In this capacity, he coordinates the ‘Find it, Fix it, Prevent it’ investor initiative; manages the UK and Global benchmarks on Modern Slavery; and leads strategic portfolio engagements regarding the Living Wage, Decent Work, and Business and Human Rights. With over 20 years’ experience in Business and Human Rights spanning academia, consultancy, and the non-profit sector, Martin’s expertise focuses on the fashion, food, finance, and retail industries. He previously served as the apparel & textiles lead at the Ethical Trading Initiative, where he managed complex, multi-stakeholder human rights programmes in India, Turkey, and the UK. Martin has contributed to several high-level international advisory groups, including the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector and the Business Commission to Tackle Inequality Working Group on Living Wages and Living Incomes.



Modupe Debbie Ariyo, AFRUCA, BASNET

Debbie Ariyo is Chief Executive of AFRUCA Safeguarding Children. Debbie founded AFRUCA in May 2001 to address child safeguarding and child trafficking issues in African diaspora communities across the UK and provide services to help support children and families and rehabilitate victims. Debbie’s background was in the UK civil service where she worked in a range of policy roles across different government departments. A noted expert in Safeguarding Children, Debbie has specialised expertise in addressing socio-cultural factors affecting the protection and safeguarding of children of Black and African origins in the UK and Europe. Debbie believes strongly in strengthening community empowerment to safeguard children. She founded BASNET – the UK BME Anti-Slavery Network in 2019 – to help promote racial equity, diversity and inclusion in the UK anti-trafficking sector.





Murray Hunt, Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre

Murray Hunt is the Director of the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), created to enhance understanding of modern slavery and transform the effectiveness of law and policies designed to address it.

From 2004 to 2017, Murray was Legal Adviser to the Joint Committee on Human Rights in the UK Parliament, and prior to that was a practising barrister at Matrix, which he helped to establish in 2000. He was also the Director of the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) until 2024. Murray is also working with the Attorney General's Office as an Independent Adviser to provide legal and policy advice on matters relating to the rule of law.

Olly Glasson, Lived Experience Advisory Manager, Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre

As well as being a survivor of trafficking, Olly has extensive experience in creating spaces for survivors of modern slavery to feed directly into modern slavery policy and imbedding lived experience within organisations working to address modern slavery, including research, service delivery and NGOs. Her role at the Modern Slavery PEC sees her leading on the Centre's commitment to survivor inclusion, ensuring everything the Centre does has survivor expertise woven through it. She oversees the governance of their lived experience engagement work, and founded the Centres Lived Experience Advisory Panel, who advise on all aspects of the Centres work. Olly is particularly passionate about justice and ensuring survivors receive adequate support throughout their recovery journeys. In addition, she is an international speaker and survivor leader who provides independent consultancy services and sits on various working groups operating within the UK exploitation sector.



Dr Patrick Burland, IOM

Dr Patrick Burland, is a Senior Project and Policy Officer, Protection and Labour Mobility Division at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the UK. He has recently led a project analysing data from the National Referral Mechanism which was funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (MSPEC). And was co-investigator on an MSPEC funded research study on the response to survivors of modern slavery in prison in the UK. He was a co-investigator on research about human trafficking in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria and has worked on counter-trafficking projects implemented in Ethiopia, Indonesia and the Philippines. In 2017 he won a Human Trafficking Foundation Anti-Slavery Day media award for best written opinion piece dealing with modern slavery.



Rowshan Hannan, Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre

Rowshan Hannan joined the Modern Slavery PEC from the international development sector. As a Senior Director she oversaw research and governance programmes in conflict affected areas, including the Middle East and Southern Africa. Rowshan also worked as a Humanitarian Adviser with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, providing advisory support in protracted conflicts as well as in other humanitarian emergencies. Rowshan has held elected office at the local level in the UK, working directly with policymakers at local, regional and national levels. She has also worked with governments across the global south to strengthen democratic accountability.



Sam Dowsing, Fair Work Agency

Sam Dowsing is the Director of Strategy and Impact at the Fair Work Agency, where she leads the organisation's strategic planning, performance and impact framework to ensure effective delivery of labour market enforcement and worker protection. Sam brings a strong background in public sector strategy, analytics and prevention having spent her career in safeguarding roles. Sam joined the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority in 2018 as Head of Business Change, progressing to Head of Governance in 2020 and then Director of Strategy and Impact in 2023. Across these roles, she has led

organisational transformation, strengthened governance and performance, and driven a more evidence-led, impact-focused approach to tackling labour exploitation and serious non-compliance.

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM, University of Nottingham

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM is a Professor of Modern Slavery Policy at the Rights Lab in the University of Nottingham where her focus is on research in the area of prevention, business responses, supply chains, and the role of the financial sector in tackling modern slavery. She is particularly focussed on the important role of investors and works as a modern slavery consultant for CCLA Investment Management. Dame Sara completed a three-year term as the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner in April 2022, a role in which she spearheaded the UK's fight against human trafficking and modern slavery. She joined the Metropolitan Police Service in 1986. During her 33-year career within policing she served as Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police from 2007 until 2015. She was the national lead on intelligence; Vice-Chair of ACPO Terrorism and Allied Matters; Director of the Police National Assessment Centre; and ACPO Vice-President. She was the first Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council from 2015 to 2019. She was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 2006, made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2011 and a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2019. She is an Honorary Air Commodore in the Royal Air Force supporting the work of the auxiliary police squadron and the Chair of the Police Foundation. She is a graduate of Durham and Cambridge Universities and holds honorary doctorates from Durham University, Oxford Brookes and Buckinghamshire New University. In 2022 she was awarded the Human Trafficking Foundation Trustee Award for Outstanding Contribution in the Fight against Modern Slavery.





Dr Sofia Gonzalez De Aguinaga, British Institute for International and Comparative Law

Dr Sofia Gonzalez De Aguinaga is a Research Leader in Business, ESG and Modern Slavery at the British Institute for International and Comparative Law and holds a PhD on Business Ethics and Sustainability from King's College London. For the last five years her research has focused on the effectiveness of supply chain regulations including the Modern Slavery Act, human rights due diligence laws, and forced labour import bans. Her research has also explored the role of investors and public procurement authorities. She also coordinates the Bingham Centre's Business Network, which is a group of leading UK multinationals working on rule of law issues including human rights.



Tatiana Gren-Jardan, Justice and Care

Tatiana is a leading specialist in the field of modern slavery and human trafficking, with more than two decades of experience across international organisations, government, and the non-profit sector. Her work has consistently focused on strengthening policy, improving victim support, and advancing coordinated, evidence-based responses to exploitation. Since 2019, Tatiana has served as Head of Policy and Advocacy at Justice and Care, where she leads the organisation's strategic engagement with government, policymakers, and sector partners. Her work centres on shaping national approaches to prevention, victim support, and criminal justice reform. Prior to this, Tatiana held senior roles including Director of Strategy for the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, where she oversaw the development and implementation of the Commissioner's strategic priorities, and Director of the Human Trafficking Foundation, leading cross-sector collaboration and policy development to strengthen the UK's response to trafficking.