MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS | POLICY & EVIDENCE CENTRE

Led by the Bingham Centre

Targeted call for rapid research

Assessing the potential of interventions to prevent modern slavery in the UK

Published: 21 May 2021 (updated 30 June)

Call Overview

About the Call

The aim of this research project will be to improve understanding of the potential for different interventions to prevent modern slavery in the UK.

The scope is limited to those programmes and activities aiming to prevent modern slavery in the UK that have been developed by government, non-government and civil society actors.

The objectives are to:

A. Assess interventions to prevent modern slavery, both from the point of view of protecting people being exploited and preventing offending, for each type of modern slavery (i.e. those recorded by the UK's National Referral Mechanism)

B. Assess how prevention interventions have had wider impacts, focusing in particular on the equity of outcomes, and including an assessment of cost-effectiveness.

C. Examine the extent to which survivors, and the perspectives of those with lived experience, have been included in all aspects of design and delivery, identifying best practice.

D. Explore relevant issues concerning the implementation of interventions, looking at, e.g. context, duration and other factors affecting success.

E. Consider evidence about interventions delivered to prevent related crime types, such as violence against women and girls, to understand how relevant evidence could be applied to modern slavery prevention.

A maximum budget of £70,000 at 100% full economic cost (FEC) is allocated for this project. The Modern Slavery PEC expects to fund one project for this work. Projects must be led by a UK higher education institution or approved research organisation eligible to receive UKRI funding, and the project must be in collaboration with at least one UK based third sector organisation.

Key Dates

Action/Activity	Deadline
Call announcement	21 May 2021
Call webinar	7 June 2021, 2-3:30pm
Call deadline	18 June 2021 4pm
Decision to successful team	w/c 5 July 2021
Project start	15 July 2021 (latest)
Delivery of final outputs	31st October 2021

Call Webinar

We will hold a webinar for prospective applicants to provide them with the opportunity to hear more details and ask questions they might have on Monday on 7 June from 2:00pm-3:30pm. Please sign up to it via Eventbrite.

Introduction

About the PEC

The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (the 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 prevent it.

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

The Centre 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 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 with a track record in worldclass work on modern slavery. The Modern Slavery PEC is funded and actively supported by the Art and Humanities Research Council on behalf of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), from the Strategic Priorities Fund.

We support research to provide innovative, independent, impartial and authoritative insight and analysis on modern slavery. Our aim is to drive policy change and have a transformational impact on the understanding of modern slavery and the responses to it.

We aim to change the way in which modern slavery research is done through our guiding principles of effectiveness, equity and survivor-involvement. We aspire to facilitate new collaborations in modern slavery research between those who have not previously worked together. By doing so, we hope to bring together the many different actors in the modern slavery space to maximise their collective influence.

We intend to set the foundations for new collaborations to evolve in all the work that we carry out or support. We expect all research that the Modern Slavery PEC funds to support diversity of researchers and interdisciplinarity.

Background and context for this call

Prevention of modern slavery is a priority research area for the Modern Slavery PEC.[1] We undertook a consultation with stakeholders to inform the PEC's research priorities and there was strong interest in the area of prevention. There is a desire for work in this area that can establish the effectiveness of interventions and the equity of outcomes, includes perspectives of those with lived experience, and makes better use of data.[2] The need for better evidence on prevention has also been highlighted in the UK Government's research priorities for modern slavery[3], and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's strategic plan.[4]

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[1] The Modern Slavery PEC Strategy 2021-2024: https://modernslaverypec.org/resources/strategy

[2] https://modernslaverypec.org/resources/report-consultation-on-the-modern-slavery-pec-research-priorities

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907527/2018_UK_Annual_Report_on_Modern_Slavery.pdf Page 58

[4] https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1329/independent-anti-slavery-commissioners-strategic-plan-19-21-screen-readable.pdf

There have been many modern slavery prevention interventions delivered at local, national, and international levels. These interventions include, but are not limited to, the following types of activity: communications and awareness-raising campaigns; education initiatives; civil orders to deter offending; multi-agency partnerships and industry standards. Most interventions to date have focused on protecting vulnerable people from exploitation, rather than reducing offending activity. **There are recognised evidence gaps about which interventions are, or could be, effective in preventing modern slavery victimisation and offending.[5]** Existing research initiatives, such as the Walk Free Foundation's Promising Practices database of evaluations[6], and Delta 8.7 Policy Guides[7], have mapped existing interventions and evaluations, finding that very few interventions have been subject to robust impact evaluation. This means there is very limited evidence to establish definitively 'what works' in preventing modern slavery. However, policymakers, practitioners and funders need guidance to help them identify and prioritise those interventions which have the greatest potential and consider how to allocate resources in a way that is effective and equitable to prevent modern slavery. Modern slavery itself is a complex set of different types of exploitation, so 'what works' for tackling one type of modern slavery might not work for other types of modern slavery. There is therefore a pressing need for new research that can deliver a robust, nuanced and context-specific assessment of the range of potential for different interventions to prevent modern slavery that can help policymakers in their decision-making.

The outputs from this research project will contribute to the evidence base for policymakers and funders who are considering how best to support prevention efforts within the current landscape of limited evidence. The Modern Slavery PEC will use the findings to influence ongoing policy development, such as how prevention could be factored into the Government's planned review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy, and the Home Office's ongoing consideration around establishing a Modern Slavery Prevention Fund.[8]

In accordance with the Modern Slavery PEC's strategic objective of facilitating collaboration, successful teams will work cooperatively with the Modern Slavery PEC to ensure alignment with our objectives as well as to maximise impact.

Aim, scope, and objectives of the research

The aim of this research project will be to improve understanding of the potential for different interventions to prevent modern slavery in the UK. The successful applicant/s will produce an assessment of different interventions to prevent modern slavery in the UK, based on available research evidence, in order to inform and guide future efforts in this area.

The scope is limited to those programmes and activities aiming to prevent modern slavery in the UK that have been developed by government, non-government and civil society actors. The project is not expected to include analysis of the broader legal or policy frameworks that may impact on the scale and nature of modern slavery more generally. For example, the policy and legal frameworks around regulation of the labour market and regulation of buying and selling sex would be considered out of scope for this particular call. These are areas the Modern Slavery PEC is planning to address through research in the future.

The objectives are to:

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[5] This was identified by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact in their October 2020 report on the UK's response to modern slavery through the aid programme: https://icai.independent.gov.uk/review/the-uks-approach-to-tackling-modern-slavery-through-the-aid-programme/

[6] https://www.walkfree.org/projects/promising-practices/

[7] https://delta87.org/resources/policy-guides/

[8]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972517/CCS207_CCS0820091708-001_Sovereign_Borders_Web_Accessible.pdf Page 34

F. Assess interventions to prevent modern slavery, both from the point of view of protecting people being exploited and preventing offending, for each type of modern slavery (i.e. those recorded by the UK's National Referral Mechanism)

G. Assess how prevention interventions have had wider impacts, focusing in particular on the equity of outcomes, and including an assessment of cost-effectiveness.

H. Examine the extent to which survivors, and the perspectives of those with lived experience, have been included in all aspects of design and delivery, identifying best practice.

I. Explore relevant issues concerning the implementation of interventions, looking at, e.g. context, duration and other factors affecting success.

J. Consider evidence about interventions delivered to prevent related crime types, such as violence against women and girls, to understand how relevant evidence could be applied to modern slavery prevention.

Essential elements of the research

The successful applicant will be expected to develop a methodology in collaboration with the Modern Slavery PEC. This must include the following components:

- Scope/define the programmes and activities to be included as modern slavery prevention interventions for the purposes of the research, and the parameters of the search
    - In light of the aim and objectives of this research, and the time constraints for delivery of outputs, applicants will be expected to propose an initial suggested scope including inclusion/exclusion criteria and justification.
- Gather and review interventions to inform UK policy.
    - We expect this to be done using desk-based methods (literature review) which may be complemented by other techniques of data collection such as surveys, interviews and/or focus groups
    - A mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence will be required to reflect the wide range of interventions and involvement/engagement with civil society organisations and those with lived experience.
- Develop a systematic, clear and logical assessment framework aligning with the Modern Slavery PEC's guiding principles for research to grade intervention types that delivers a judgement regarding:
    - the high/medium/low potential to prevent modern slavery
    - equity of outcomes
    - survivor involvement
- Grade the quality of evidence informing these assessments.
    - The Modern Slavery PEC has previously used a 'traffic light' system in policy briefings[9]

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[9] See, for example the Modern Slavery PEC Policy Brief 'Modern slavery and international development: Future opportunities for policy and evidence in the UK' https://modernslaverypec.org/resources/modern-slavery-international-development

Required outputs

The successful applicant will deliver a full report as well as a summary briefing for policymakers. The outputs will be co-produced with the PEC team so there should be ample time included in the proposed project timeline for the sharing of drafts to enable comments and feedback to be incorporated.

- The full report should be no more than 10,000 words (excluding references/annexes)
- The summary briefing should be no more than (2000 words).

The Modern Slavery PEC would welcome proposals that include innovative ideas for presenting data, e.g. with visualisation of results in a format to enhance understanding and to support communication.

The project team will also be invited to present interim findings at a suitable mid-point during the research.

Project milestones and timeline

Milestones and timeline	
Application process	
Action/Activity	**Deadline**
Call announcement	21st May 2021
Call webinar	7th June 2021 (2pm)
Call deadline	18th June 2021 (4pm)
Decision to successful team	w/c 5th July 2021
Project start	15th July 2021 (latest)
Project milestones and deliverables	
Action/Activity	**Deadline**
Revised workplan and methodology (provided to PEC by project team)	23rd July 2021
Presentation of interim findings	End-September 2021
Delivery of full draft of project report	8th October 2021
Delivery of summary briefing for policymakers	15th October 2021
Delivery of final outputs	31st October 2021

Additional information for applicants

Ways of working with the PEC

Collaboration and co-operation are key values for the Modern Slavery PEC. As such we will work jointly with the successful research team from the outset and will co-design and co-create research outputs that are timely, relevant, accessible, and have the potential to deliver policy impact. The Modern Slavery PEC and the successful research team will agree regular touchpoints throughout the project cycle to facilitate this collaboration.

Ethics and Safeguarding

There may be a need to collect primary data, e.g. via survey, semi-structured interviews or focus groups, from key informants and organisations that work in this sector, in which case the applicant should outline their proposed plans and processes for gaining ethical approval before data collection begins. It is not a requirement for this project to undertake new research directly involving vulnerable groups or those who have experienced modern slavery. However, the Modern Slavery PEC would welcome applications that involves those with lived experience in the design and/or implementation of the project and it may be appropriate to include reference to organisational policies and processes around safeguarding.

Data protection/GDPR

All data must be collated and stored in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 and, if necessary, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016. Applicants should detail their systems and processes for dealing with data securely. Proposals must cover how data will be transported/transferred, handled, analysed and stored, including retention schedules, within the Ethics Statement.
Any and all datasets produced in the course of this research will remain the property of the successful applicant. The final report will be co-branded with the Modern Slavery PEC, whilst the summary briefing will be branded as a PEC output (example). Both the successful applicant and the Modern Slavery PEC will be free to use the final report as they wish after the end date of the project.

Budget

A maximum budget of £70,000 at 100% full economic cost (FEC) is allocated for this project. The Modern Slavery PEC expects to fund one project for this work.

The project must be led by a UK higher education institution or approved research organisation which is eligible to receive UKRI funding[10], and the project must be in collaboration with at least one UK based third sector organisation. Higher education institutes and approved research organisations will receive 80% FEC. UK based third sector organisations are eligible to collaborate as consultants and will be funded at 100% FEC through the lead organisation. International organisations are not eligible for this particular call. The combined third sector organisation budget must account for no more than 30% of the total cost.

We request that Principal and Co-Investigators are involved in only one application submission. There is no limit to the number of applications a higher education, research organisation can submit, nor to the number of applications a third sector organisation can collaborate on.

Eligible Costs

We will fund costs which are in line with AHRC's policies[11], with the following exceptions:
- All staff costs, including academic time, must be costed as Directly Incurred due to the profiling of the award. We unfortunately cannot pay DA (Directly Allocated) Investigator costs
- Any costs for travel must be realistic under the current circumstances and we request that any activity involving travel has appropriate mitigations and alternatives suggested
- Given the short term nature of the project we will not be awarding costs for equipment such as audio recording equipment or laptops

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[10] https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/
[11] https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/guides/research-funding-guide1/ (from page 52)

- The design of the written outputs will be arranged by the Modern Slavery PEC and so design costs will not be eligible
- Dissemination activities will be led by the PEC in collaboration with the research team. Costs relating to dissemination should therefore not be included as part of the application.

Application process

To apply for this call applications must be made through our online form (at https://modernslaverypec.submit.com/show/2 or through are website at https://modernslaverypec.org/latest/call-research-prevention-modern-slavery-uk) and include the following attachments/sections. All applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel convened by the Modern Slavery PEC that will include external independent reviewers. Applications will be scored with points awarded according to the weightings indicated in brackets for the following attachments/sections:

1. **Project Narrative** (4 pages max) outlining how the research team intend to approach the project, including:
   a. A clear explanation and justification for the chosen approach and methodology responding to the aims and objectives and key elements outlined in this call (50 points)
   b. A detailed timeline incorporating the milestones and deliverables outlined in this call document (10 points)
   c. Details and relevant experience of each team member involved in the delivery of the project, and a description of why they and their organisations are best placed to undertake this work (10 points)
   d. A description of how the project will support an equitable partnership between the higher education/research organisations and the third sector organisations (10 points)
2. **Ethics Statement** (1 page max) describing the methods and safeguards which will be put in place for working with vulnerable people and/or their data (10 points)
3. **Budget Table** (a template can be downloaded on the online form) detailing the costs of each organisation (5 points)
4. **Justification of Resources** (1 page max) explaining the reasons why each budget line is being requested (excluding Estates and Indirects) (5 points)

Call webinar

We will hold a webinar for prospective applicants on the 7 June from 2:00pm-3:30pm. The webinar will provide applicants with the opportunity to hear more about the Modern Slavery PEC and its objectives, offer an overview of the call, the application process and give more information on how the successful bid team will collaborate with the Modern Slavery PEC during the research. The session will end with a Q&A session for applicants to clarify any queries they might have on the call.

Sign up to attend the call webinar on Eventbrite.

Contacting the Modern Slavery PEC

The Modern Slavery PEC team can be contacted at office@modernslaverypec.org. Please allow two working days for a response.