



Anti Slavery Day



Today, Friday 18 October, is Anti-Slavery day and Sussex Police is showing support and continuing commitment for stopping all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.

It reminds us to take a closer look in our communities for this hidden crime.

Building on our previous external campaign in January which centred on spotting the signs of modern slavery, our two-week October campaign focuses on industries associated with modern slavery, the plight of victims and how we work in partnership with other agencies to tackle this horrendous crime.

Detective Superintendent Jeff Riley who leads Sussex Police's fight against modern slavery said: "Modern slavery is a serious crime and main offences carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. It is often hidden in plain sight and is happening in our neighbourhoods and high streets.

"Modern slavery is complex and is often connected with other high profile organised crimes including knife crime, county line drug activity and sexual exploitation. All of these crimes trade in human misery and exploit people for profit.

"People from the UK and abroad are preyed upon by unscrupulous individuals promising employment, education opportunities and a better quality of life. The reality is, these people find themselves exploited and sometimes forced into criminality.

"They can have their identity documents taken, limited or no access to their own bank account, their lives completely controlled and they can be in fear of their lives and reprisals for their family.

"People living and working in the community are key to helping us and our partner agencies tackle modern slavery.

"I am asking you to take a closer look when you are shopping in your high street, travelling to work or enjoying a day out with your family. If you see something that you think is unusual, report it.

"Modern slavery is happening in your community and with your help we can tackle modern slavery, catch those responsible and safeguard victims making Sussex safer."

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne said: "Modern slavery and exploitation is often a hidden crime and for that reason, we don't always know the true extent of it, even though it is happening all around us. Working with partners, my office continues to raise awareness of the issue in order to better identify victims and provide much needed specialist support.

"I'm pleased that Sussex Police are showing ongoing commitment to tackling this heinous crime, with targeted campaigns to help the public better understand its complex nature and how to spot the signs. I hope this will increase the number of reports and successful convictions."

Police investigate reports of modern slavery and equally importantly help to identify and safeguard vulnerable people, whether from with the UK or overseas, who are at risk of becoming victims to it.

Since January, 320 reports of potential victims of modern slavery have been reported in Sussex, involving people originating from both the UK and overseas. At the end of 2018, 47 potential victims were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is a framework for identifying potential victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support.

If you think you have information that might identify or locate a potential victim or suspect for modern slavery, or someone you know is a victim of modern slavery, or even a location where you think exploitation might be happening, please report it online or call us on 101 (always call 999 in an emergency).

You can also contact the national Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 or the Salvation Army Modern Slavery helpline on 0300 303 8151, or the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

We are working with Crimestoppers and are using a mobile ad van featuring key messages to continue to raise awareness in Sussex. It will be placed at key points on the main road network in East and West Sussex and be static in towns centres from Monday 21 to Thursday 24 October. If you see the ad van, if possible take a photo if it is safe to do so, not if you are driving and share on your social media

account using the #takeacloserlook

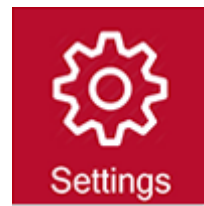
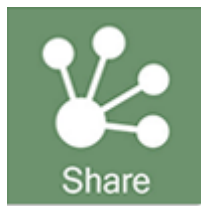
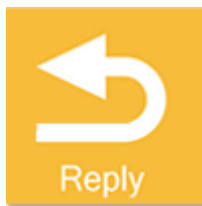
Support the campaign by following Sussex Police Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts and sharing the posts. We'll be using the #Itscloserthanyouthink

You can find more information on our Modern Slavery advice webpages

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