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# **Establishing modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence in Adult Social Care:**

A commissioning  
officer's guide





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## Nine care home workers have been safeguarded as part of a modern slavery operation in North Wales.

Investigators from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) rescued the workers from an address in Llangollen on Wednesday and Thursday (22 and 23 March 2023).

The nine workers, four male and five female, are aged between 24 and 38, and are primarily from the state of Kerala in southern India.<sup>1</sup>

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is aimed at commissioning officers and managers within local authority adult social care teams. It provides advice on how to set up effective local systems to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in adult social care. As you will see, you will need to establish effective ways of communicating your plans both to other internal stakeholders, including both those more senior and more junior to you within your local authority, and to appropriate representatives from external organisations including any providers that you have who deliver or supervise care on your behalf.

## How was this guide produced?

This guide is the result of a 10-month project funded by a grant from Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement conducted between December 2022 and September 2023 and facilitated by Dr Caroline Emberson of Nottingham University Business School and the Rights Lab. The Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham is the world's leading and largest group of modern slavery researchers.

Our team develops research to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7: ending modern slavery by 2030. Our 80+ researchers work across four research programmes—Business and Economies; Measurement and Geographies; Law and Policy; and Wellbeing and Society—to deliver new and cutting-edge research that provides rigorous data, evidence and discoveries for the anti-slavery effort. Our team leads for stakeholder impact and engagement translate research findings for key stakeholders via policy analysis, briefings and training, and work with partners on filling evidence gaps. Across all five research programmes, we work to ensure all our research is survivor-informed.

Supported by Mike Taylor, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, and Guy Head and Amanda Whittaker-Brown of the Local Government Association, Caroline worked with local council officers from East Riding, Nottinghamshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council whose adult social care teams participated in the group workshops from which the action plans and implementation guidelines that you will read about here were developed. Particular thanks are due to Tim Brock, Gemma Shelton and Tracy Petersen, who represented each of the three piloting local authorities, and the following people from these authorities' adult social care teams who freely shared their professional expertise: Corina Bailey, Sarah Beucher, Andy Biddle, Laura Chambers, Dom Dew, Adele Droham, Nick Durnan, Donna Hoyle, Zoe Ford, Debbie Foster, Michael Fowler, Darren Fleetham, Emma Jackson-Dunn, David Jones, David Joyce, Ross Leather, Emma Matthews, Julie Miller, Carol Pickburn, Katy Ricks, Lindsay Robinson, Tina Tate, Anna Smith, Sharon Smith, Jane Walker, Rachel Whitchurch and Debbie Young. Without their involvement this guide could not have been produced.



# How to use this guide

We recommend that you look first at the [table of contents](#) to locate sub-sections of interest to you. You may then wish to skim read the whole guide, looking at the main headings and diagrams. Read the more detailed bullet points for those sections in which you have a particular interest.

Should you wish to do this, [Appendix I](#) provides further detail of how to facilitate your own group action planning workshop.

This guide focuses on the actions required to develop modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence processes and procedures for adult social care from scratch. It does not assume any prior knowledge about modern slavery and is designed to help you get started. As your approach matures, or if you have already developed some modern slavery procedures in this area, you may find other resources, such as the [SHIVA self-assessment scorecard](#) or the [LGA council guide to modern slavery](#) useful.

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## What is known about modern slavery risk in adult social care?

Care has been identified by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority as a sector where there is high risk of labour exploitation, including severe forms such as modern slavery. Illegal and questionable practices include withholding or paying sub-minimum wages; providing sub-standard and overcrowded accommodation; health and safety concerns related to excessive working hours, back-to-back shift working and a lack of training; poor access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and some reports of debt bondage, where workers were required to continue to work to pay off large debts, or receiving just one meal a day instead of pay.<sup>2</sup> Risk mapping, undertaken by one London Borough Council and an unnamed county council reported by the SHIVA foundation, identified high spend in residential care activities for the elderly and disabled as one of the three local authority sectors at highest risk of harbouring labour exploitation.<sup>3</sup>

The profile of those at risk has changed over time. In the late 2010s, monitoring suggested that those abused tended to be female and aged between 26-45 years old. Bulgarian nationals were over-represented in the early GLAA reporting figures, with slightly more reports of abuse received from the East and South-East England. More recently in 2023, GLAA investigations have revealed the vulnerability of other groups of non-British nationals, notably groups of Indian nationals working on student visas in Wales.<sup>4</sup>

In its June 2023 partnership bulletin, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) reported a significant increase in reports of exploitation in social care, with the 23 reported cases from this sector accounting for over a quarter of all reports of modern slavery and human trafficking in the previous three months. The GLAA noted that,

“where the gender of the exploiters has been recorded, exploiters were typically female. British was the most recorded nationality. The most common means of exploiting the victims was inadequate pay, followed by workers paying inflated fees, which can lead to debt bondage (where a worker finds themselves working to pay off an unpayable debt owed to someone else perhaps, for example, incurred as a fee for finding them the job) and long working hours”<sup>5</sup>

**GLAA 2023  
investigations:**

**23  
cases**

**of exploitation  
in social care  
environments  
reported in 3  
months**



Likewise, the UK anti-slavery charity Unseen reported a 1,024% increase in the number of reported cases of potential victims in care work to the Modern Slavery helpline, up from 15 cases involving 63 people in 2021 to 708 people in 106 separate cases in 2022.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of calls to the Modern Slavery Helpline during 2022 reveals high number of care workers from Indian, Nigeria and Zimbabwe calling for assistance.<sup>7</sup>

**Charity Unseen reported a 1,024% increase in the number of reported cases of potential victims**

The changing structural demographics of the adult social care industry in England may contribute to this exploitation risk. The introduction of the Overseas Recruitment Programme for social care has resulted in a rise in migrant workers, who may have limited understanding of UK employment rights, arriving from new source countries to work in the social care sector. The widespread use of agencies to provide particularly domiciliary and live-in care, some of whom have been found to exploit novice carers, has been identified as another potential driver of exploitation.<sup>8</sup> The sector exhibits low rates of unionisation and the widespread use of temporary contracts places limits on workers' rights. The trend towards a more decentralised, adult social care market, where care is provided by many small organisations, has also been identified as a potential

driver of increased risk in the sector.<sup>9</sup> And, although the sector is regulated by the Care Quality Commission, a body charged with ensuring care quality in the UK through regular inspections of certain providers of residential, nursing home and domiciliary care, introductory agencies who facilitate staff recruitment but do not supervise care are required neither to register with the regulator nor to undergo periodic inspections.<sup>10</sup>

The risks may be greater in informalised care, where services may be provided without a care plan or structured evaluation. For example, some live-in care workers, many of whom migrate between the UK and their home country on a cyclical basis (a phenomenon known as circular migration), have been found to have specific vulnerabilities due to the business models of live-in care provision; information asymmetry between care workers and placement agencies; carers' employment status; the emotionally and physically intensive nature of live-in care work; blurring of boundaries between work and private life; barriers to exercising rights at work and individual risk and resilience factors.<sup>11</sup> Research has uncovered attempts by some placement agencies to exploit particularly novice live-in care-workers through the illegal deduction of an allowance for their accommodation and some workers are reported to have found themselves in a situation akin to debt bondage.<sup>12</sup> Recent media reports describe shocking cases of the abuse of migrant workers – including excessive working hours, sub-standard accommodation and extortionate

“The widespread use of agencies to provide particularly domiciliary and live-in care, some of whom have been found to exploit novice carers, has been identified as another potential driver of exploitation.”

exit penalties where care workers have been forced to repay recruitment and immigration fees when they resign.<sup>13</sup>

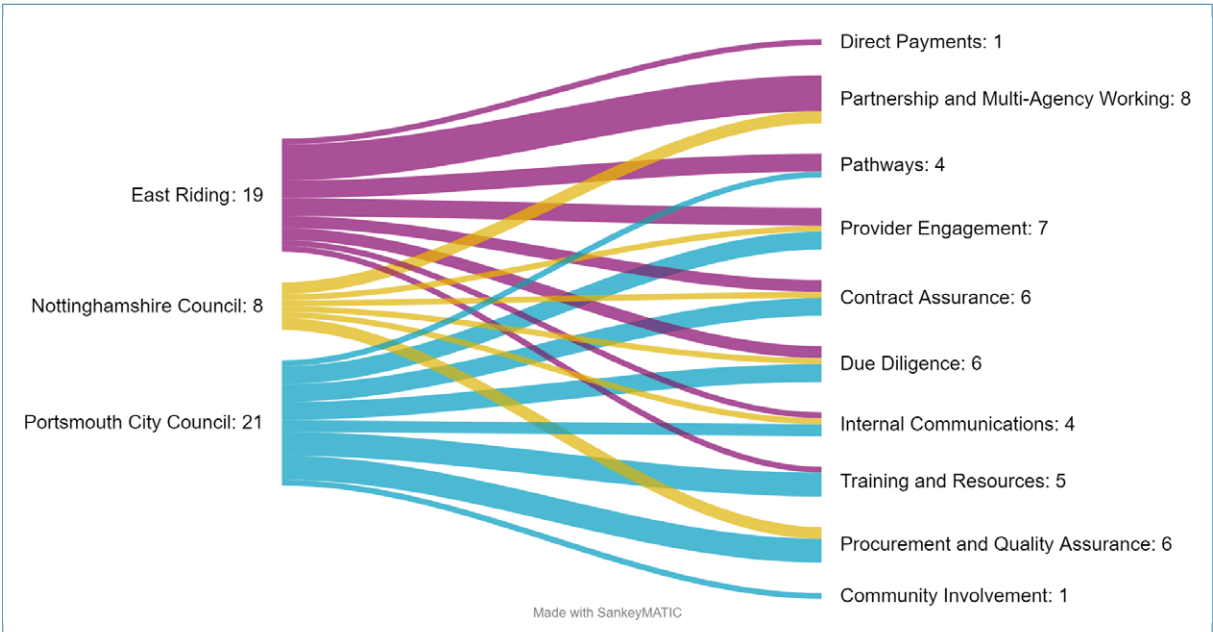
Establishing modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence procedures to detect and remediate the risk of modern slavery in adult social care requires a cross-functional, multi-agency approach. Some of the key actors involved are identified in the figure.



# Where do I start?

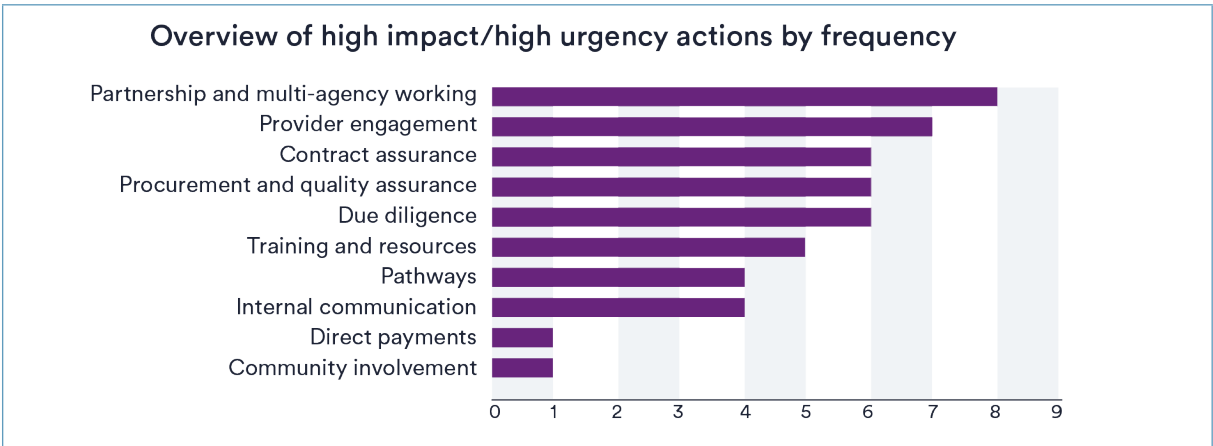
You may wish to focus your attention first on urgent, high impact, activities. The three councils with whom this guide was created were Nottinghamshire County Council, a two-tier local authority with a high number of providers, and East Riding and Portsmouth City Council, both unitary authorities with differing scales of adult social care provision. These councils’ adult social care professionals identified the following activities as the most impactful and urgent for them, and decided to focus their attention first on these to reduce the risk of modern slavery within their adult social care services.

Figure 2: Categories of urgent/ high impact activities identified by our three piloting authorities



The sections that follow give more detail about the actions our piloting authorities proposed in each of these categories in rank order, as shown below.

Figure 3: Ranking of urgent, high impact actions identified by our three piloting Local Authorities



## Establishing partnership and multi-agency working

Two out of three of our participating council’s highlighted the adoption of a multi-agency approach to modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence as central to success – in practice these efforts are often driven by local anti-slavery partnerships headed up by the local police. In the third council’s area, their local anti-slavery partnership had ceased temporarily to meet – something that we know has also been the case in other geographical areas – although this partnership was re-established during the piloting period.

- To adopt a partnership approach and bring about or participate in multi-agency working, you will need to identify, join or, if these do not currently exist, help to convene working groups through which you can facilitate the flow of information between local authority personnel and key external stakeholders including other organisations, especially: voluntary organisations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Barnados; the Home Office; your local police force; and your regional Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) commissioning group.
- You will need to identify appropriate linkages with your Safeguarding Adults Board. You will need to develop and test policy and procedures for the referral and assessment of suspected cases of modern slavery. This will support you in meeting the local authority’s statutory obligations as a First Responder under the National Referral Mechanism.

### Local Authority responsibilities as a First Responder

First Responders are employees from organisations authorised to refer potential victims of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism. Their role is to identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery into support, where appropriate. The Local Government Association offers First Responder Training for Council- and other organisations’ employees.

More information is available at [National Police Chief’s Council Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit Website](#).

**More about National Referral Mechanism**

- You may also wish to engage with representatives from other teams within the local authority, include trading standards and front-line service personnel, who can support you with recognising and challenging modern slavery in locations where illegal employment or operating practices are emerging. This type of support might be most relevant for those service users using personal care budgets or small domiciliary agencies.

The text box that follows is designed to enable you to identify the stage of multi-agency development within your region/authority area and to choose the most appropriate next steps. Although a phased approach is suggested, in reality, some actions from individual phases may need to be conducted in parallel.



**Table 1: How to identify the developmental stage of your partnerships and recommendations for next steps<sup>14</sup>**

### **Stage 1 forming: Establish mission and common goal for the region/ partnership organisation**

- ✓ Anti-slavery engagement not a competitive issue
- ✓ Clarity needed on the ambition and goal of the group
- ✓ Acceptance of leadership responsibility, members need to establish level of support and resources within their organisations, support by leadership of member organisations
- ✓ Learning about the legal framework, clarity on the limits of collaboration
- ✓ Active engagement against modern slavery and frank conversation about challenges and missing knowledge and capabilities

### **Stage 2 storming: Understanding and addressing challenges**

- ✓ Improved understanding of why modern slavery is currently a problem in the sector, understanding why current mechanisms are insufficient, learning about modern slavery, learning how modern slavery enters the supply chain
- ✓ Creating routes to influence other sector stakeholders, awareness that joint language and consistent communication between members strengthens each other and increases likelihood of success
- ✓ Willingness to 'own' the topic in the organisation, establish internal, cross-functional team

### **Stage 3 norming: Increasing modern slavery knowledge throughout the sector**

- ✓ Increased understanding of prevailing sectoral conditions for example, migrant workforce patterns, regional prevalence within UK social care
- ✓ Routine collaboration both within the organisation/ partnership and including external bodies for example the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Care Quality Commission and the Police, and with a range of state and civil society actors
- ✓ Differentiation and understanding of modern slavery by type of adult social care provision for example, residential care and nursing homes; domiciliary and specialist provision such as supported living and live-in care

### **Stage 4 performing: Implementation of measures**

- ✓ **Adapting existing procedures based on intelligence** (for example, contract management and review, recruitment and human resource checks, whistleblowing)
- ✓ Evaluation and development of modern slavery risk and checks in new and alternative care delivery systems to create better jobs and reduce system risk: introduction of initially voluntary provider self-assessment; inclusion in social and workforce auditing procedures based upon expanded risk profiling; right to work/ disclosure and barring system document checks; introduction of mandatory inductions for all new care staff (including those in domiciliary, live-in and personal assistant roles)
- ✓ Using anti-slavery NGOs infrastructure (modern slavery helpline) and resources, interaction with authorities, professional bodies, auditing bodies, exchanging intelligence and case experiences
- ✓ Routine identification of modern slavery training for new recruits throughout the local authority and its providers

Links with key stakeholders will allow you to stay up-to-date with the latest national and local intelligence, support sharing of criminal exploiters' emergent tactics and encourage consistency and best practice in terms of the effectiveness of the most appropriate responses.

- Your modern slavery lead is more than likely connected already with some or all of these bodies and, if so, you can simply tap into these information systems through their existing links.
- You may also wish to double-check that you have effective cross-partner oversight through your local Safeguarding Adults Board. This is crucial. Your Safeguarding Adults Board is the lead multi-agency body.
- You can use regional ADASS's boards to facilitate more effective oversight of those providers who work across local authority boundaries.
- Following a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) model, some of our piloting local authorities extended the geographical scope of locally established Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (or SERAC) teams described in more detail in the sub-section headed 'Convening a Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC)'.

### **Engaging providers**

The councils that we worked with adopted an incremental approach to provider engagement. They took opportunities to showcase their modern slavery initiatives at provider days organised for other purposes, at which they introduced the topic of modern slavery by delivering short 'teaser' or 'spotlight' presentations highlighting modern slavery risk in adult social care, or by setting up a modern slavery awareness stall at a marketplace event.

- To start with, you may wish to begin basic awareness training with providers.
- You may wish to consider the introduction of mechanisms for provider voice and engagement. This could be as simple as sourcing and providing **modern slavery posters** which include details of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority help-line number for providers to display in their staff common rooms.
- As the Public Procurement Act comes into force, new rules will apply to all public procurement, including that related to adult social care. It is beyond the scope of these guidelines to provide specific legal information or advice, but you may wish to work with your legal and procurement departments to ensure that you communicate with, and manage the expectations of, your contracted adult social care providers and suppliers in the light of these and other recent changes to the Public Contracting Regulations (2015).
- In one local authority, the adult social care team decided to work with the provider sector to adopt a regional approach to the management of modern slavery as part of a co-ordinated approach. This was championed by the Director of Adult Social Services who was also chair of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Regional Board.
- As you start to introduce checks, described in more detail on the following pages, you will also need to ensure that your messaging about these new requirements is consistent across both your internal and external service providers.

Expanding your due diligence

One local authority recognised the need to include the, ever-changing, modern slavery risk within its strategic risk management register. Other pilot authorities identified actions both to evaluate and review modern slavery risk within their existing contract portfolios and to build this risk assessment into their selection criteria for contracts awarded in the future.

- An important component of every local authority’s governance and risk management is its corporate risk register. This register includes a list of those areas recognised by the Council which may have a negative impact on council activities, and which therefore require management attention. Our piloting authorities identified the need to ensure that the risk of modern slavery within your adult social care services is included on your strategic risk register.
- As an initial step, you may wish to analyse your existing contracts and services to identify areas of greatest risk. Rather than conducting your risk analysis based upon the relative size of your procurement spend, as you might have done for product supply chains in sectors with a high risk of modern slavery, **we advise that you focus upon any spot-market purchasing within domiciliary, live-in and residential care and nursing home provision and conduct a pareto analysis based upon the number of providers in each service category from whom you procure, focusing upon your main providers of ancillary services (such as cleaning services, medical and food supplies). Within your main provider markets, you may also wish to identify ‘riskier’ providers by comparing labour churn with the sector average in your area, or for your region more generally. You could then choose to focus on providers and categories with a higher-than-average turnover of direct care staff since these businesses may be ‘riskier’ than those with a more stable workforce.**
- You may also wish to define a standard set of due diligence questions related to modern slavery and include these in your standard review protocol. As its starting point, one of our councils used the modern slavery contract clauses suggested in Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains Guidance: Annex D
- You can then incorporate and review the formal assessments of modern slavery risk that you build into your routine provider risk-rating processes, specifying additional contractual requirements for agencies and contracted providers.
- The exact nature of modern slavery is subject to change as perpetrators find new means to exploit workers and evade the attention of those in authority working to prevent it. Our piloting authorities identified a need to monitor the adult social care sector to identify the changing nature of modern slavery risk and engage in a reflective review of existing due diligence processes to ensure the closure of any newly emerging loopholes.



Assuring quality procurement

You may wish to define what exactly you mean by modern slavery, get providers to sign up to a declaration of intent, develop a set of questions to include in your standard review questions and introduce more sophisticated risk assessment criteria for your largest contracts:

- You may wish to include a definition of modern slavery within your contracting terms and conditions. The UK Government’s Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance for England and Wales provides a useful starting point.
- One of our local authorities planned to feature modern slavery in its contract specification. It proposed to do this in a similar way to that which it had adopted to handle the issue of tobacco use – by asking contracted providers to sign up to a voluntary ‘Declaration’ of intent, described in more detail below.

**Figure 4: A declaration of intent**

Nottinghamshire county and Nottingham city council encourage key partnering public and private organisations to commit to taking action on modern slavery.

By applying the principles underpinning its Tobacco Declaration to action against modern slavery, public and private organisations partnering with the council to deliver adult social care can signal their commitment to ensuring decent working conditions for everyone within the adult social care workforce and make a positive contribution to helping to eradicate modern slavery from their local communities.

Adapted from Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City declaration on tobacco control.

- You could develop a set of, relevant and proportionate, questions related to modern slavery for inclusion in your quality-assured, tendering processes.
- You might wish to provide an assessment of market-based modern slavery risk, and a review of the service providers’ modern slavery statements in contractual ‘gateway’ procurement processes – for example, those used for large contracts over a certain threshold level which require the preparation of a detailed business case.





Contract assurance

The risk of modern slavery can arise at various points in the management of a contract. Therefore you may wish to include modern slavery criterion expressly throughout your contract management processes- as part of the pre-selection and tendering procedures described earlier, at the point of contract review and for subsequent performance monitoring, for example in the form of in-house or external provider auditing:

- You can include known risk factors, such as evidence of unusually high labour turnover, as part of your routine contract review processes, checking the labour turnover of both providers and any temporary staffing agencies that they use. Be alert to the fact that the risks may be higher when agencies, with whom the provider may not be in regular contact, are called upon to supply staff at short notice.
- You may wish to develop a provider audit protocol for members of your audit team to use. In this protocol you might want to include information detailing how to spot the signs of modern slavery. As a generic guide, you may find the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority leaflet **Spot the Signs of Labour Exploitation** a useful starting point. When undertaking social care audits, it is a good idea to include checks on the authenticity of workers’ National Insurance numbers since there have been reports from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority of some exploited workers being made to work using fake numbers.

Defining pathways

You may need to think both about risk identification, sharing information with other bodies, and the referral pathways through which concerns can be highlighted.

- You may wish to specify procedural pathways to determine how modern slavery risk can be included as part of your existing risk assessment processes for both internal and external adult social care service providers.
- Should risks become evident, you may also need to define to whom these risks should be signposted; including how you intend to share information with the representatives of bodies with whom you are working in partnership (and discussed in the earlier part of this section on establishing partnerships and multi-agency working).
- The definition of a whistleblowing mechanism for managing identified concerns could be an important element of your approach to collecting information when things go wrong.



Handling internal communications

Our experience during the pilot suggests that you may also wish to involve your safeguarding, human resources and legal teams in the early stages of your activities. Ensure that you get buy-in from senior management and, when implementing you plans, be prepared for staff changes and re-organisations:

- Include safeguarding, legal and human resources colleagues in email exchanges as you identify your training requirements and decide the wording of any new contractual clauses.
- Your human resource and legal colleagues may already have links to existing modern slavery networks and may be able to signpost you to other groups working in this area.
- If your initiatives are to be successful, you will need to ensure that you have buy-in from the senior leadership within your organisation. As one of the representatives explained, “getting buy-in at the top is important to get things done”.
- Take advantage of the opportunities offered to introduce changes to procedures in line with your local action plans.
- The timing of interventions may need to be flexible, but your classification of those actions deemed high urgency and importance can help you identify where to focus your attention.

Managing direct payment risk

While much of your adult social care provision may be managed through institutional residential care and nursing home care or supervised domiciliary care agencies, the local authority personnel we worked with highlighted the modern slavery risk faced by the isolated staff working for those in receipt of personal budgets used to arrange personalised care and personal assistants paid for by self-funders:

- One of our pilot local authorities decided to form a project team to decide how to introduce checks for and oversight of personal assistants funded through direct payments and personal budgets.

Involving your local community

Modern slavery can often be hidden in plain sight. You may wish alert your local community to the risks and keep them informed about what you are doing:

- Another of our piloting local authorities aimed to develop communication materials for its wider community of constituents, utilising a regularly distributed community magazine to highlight the Council’s anti-slavery stance.



Training and resources

Two of our three pilot authorities identified the need to develop training resources and conduct general awareness training, both for local authority adult social care colleagues and the staff of external providers, as well as more specialist interventions to encourage professional curiosity among adult social care procurers and commissioners.

You will need to consider how best to raise awareness about the risks of modern slavery posed in the adult social care sector among your other local authority colleagues in the adult social care team, the managers and care staff within the organisations who provide care services on your behalf, and among people who use these services – especially those who might be relatively isolated agency workers paid for out of personal health budgets, direct payments or the clients’ own funds.

- In addition to generalised, awareness raising training for internal and external adult social care staff, you may also wish to consider the development of more specialised courses targeted at those who procure and commission adult social care services to encourage professional curiosity.
- To ensure that everyone is routinely trained from now on, you may wish to work with colleagues in your human resource department to ensure that both general awareness raising and more specialised professional development is incorporated into your corporate learning and development programmes. To fulfil these needs, one of our local authorities investigated the development of a specialist, e-learning, module which depicts a variety of different scene setting scenarios within a care setting to be used within their new starter induction process and for those setting out in business as self-employed carers.
- You may wish to source an e-learning module to raise awareness either from a specialist provider of modern slavery training for the public sector such as that produced by the Government Commercial College or the module developed specifically for Adult Social Care by East Riding Council.



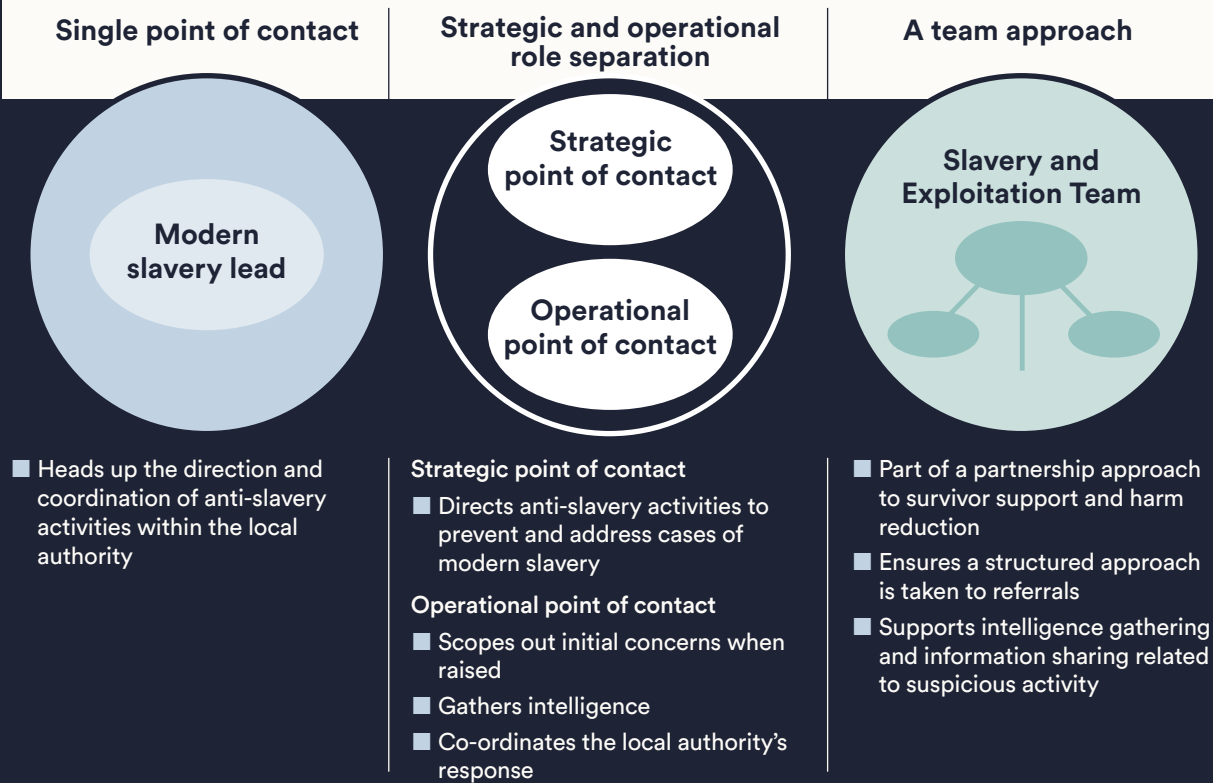
Convening a Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC)

The Care Act 2014 places a duty upon local authorities to make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves because of these needs. This duty of care extends to those citizens who may be victims of modern slavery, including human trafficking and other severe forms of exploitation. Should a citizen’s need not meet the criteria specified under the Care Act, support can still be provided through a Slavery and Exploitation Team.

What is a Slavery and Exploitation Team?

Based within community protection, the Slavery and Exploitation Team (SET) at Nottingham deal with referrals about possible exploitation. The team’s approach has been to develop a structure through which professionals can refer known or suspected victims of exploitation, slavery and human trafficking and share their knowledge about situations where suspicious activity has been highlighted. It takes a partnership approach to the support of victims and the reduction of harm.

As an alternative, some authorities have appointed both a strategic and operational point of contact for modern slavery. The operational lead scopes out any initial concerns with the respective agencies, gathers wider intelligence, including from organisations such as energy suppliers, to generate a picture of the potential exploitation and co-ordinates the local authority’s response. This may be a single agency response in the form of a visit from a body such as the police, a housing officer or social worker, or a multi- agency response in the form of a group visit. Other local authorities have engaged actively with fire service colleagues, who have the statutory right to inspect private premises, resulting in a significant rise in the number of cases of exploitation coming to light. You will need to weigh up the likely benefits and drawbacks of each approach for your circumstances.





## A slavery exploitation risk assessment conference (SERAC) approach

Central to the Slavery and Exploitation Team's (SET) current responsibilities in Nottingham is the co-ordination and chairing of a monthly Slavery Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC) meeting. Prior to the meeting, the team receives and reviews all SERAC referrals and deals with any queries raised, either by internal colleagues or their external partners. The SET team seek to establish the background to each case and to work with partners to identify specific action plans. While SET may on some occasions take on the lead-agency role, this more often remains with the referring agency. SET may also offer support in the form of joint agency visits to ensure a victim-centred approach from the first intervention. Over the past year, the SET team has worked to promote and communicate about slavery and exploitation issues, delivering presentations to highlight its work and the current referral pathways to be used by internal colleagues and external partners, including Nottinghamshire County Council. The team also deliver workshops for social workers and has developed short briefing materials on cuckooing (the practice of taking over the home of a vulnerable person in order to establish a base for illegal activities such as drug dealing, typically as part of a county lines operation) and the reality of slavery and exploitation with the Safeguarding and Adults Board, SET also delivers bespoke training to newly qualified social workers.

Members of the authority's adult safeguarding team attend regular SERAC meetings and, if a social worker is allocated a modern slavery case, they will contribute to this multi-agency process. Where there are concerns about the risk to a particular citizen, the adult safeguarding team also hold multi-agency strategy meetings. The adult safeguarding team lead this multi-agency approach and involve the police, health and housing in the identification of protective options to assist the citizen.

## Safeguarding procedures

You may need to introduce a central repository to securely hold emerging case information about potential victims, in case this is needed later for referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

## National Referral Mechanism

Each local authority has a duty to notify the Home Office about any potential victim of modern slavery. Those identified as a potential victim may then choose whether to enter the National Referral Mechanism. Details of the process are available from the [Guidance on the NRM for potential adult victims of modern slavery - England and Wales](#). The National Referral Mechanism form should be used if an adult victim consents to provide their personal details and wants to apply for government funded specialist support. Where adult victims wish to remain anonymous and do not want this support, the Duty to Notify option should be selected.

Adapted from: [Nottingham City Council Modern Slavery Statement 1 April 2021-31 March 2022](#).

## What next?

This section reports on some of the gaps that may still exist in your due diligence practices even after your initial round of action planning. These gaps have been identified through comparison of the initial action plans prepared by each of our piloting councils with the [OECD due diligence guidance](#) for responsible business conduct, the [LGA council guide to tackling modern slavery](#) and the [SHIVA online self-assessment scorecard](#) for local authorities produced in 2022. For ease of use, the eight thematic areas identified by the SHIVA foundation have been used to organise the remainder of this section. In addition to reading this part of the guide and you may wish to assess your progress in more detail by reading these two guides in full and, in particular, to evaluate your progress using the 'maturity matrix' within the LGA guide. The intention here is not to replicate their content, but rather to highlight some possible next steps on your journey.

### The use of modern slavery policies and statements

Many organisations write a modern slavery policy. You may wish to find out if you have one already (they are often published on your organisation's web site, alongside or embedded within a Modern Slavery Statement, described further below) or you may need to (find someone to) draft one.

The Modern Slavery Act (2015) places a duty on some commercial organisations to report annually on the steps that they have taken to eradicate slavery from their organisation and their supply chains. The UK government has declared its intention to extent this duty to public authorities such as local authorities and, at the time of writing, many local authorities, like those involved in this pilot work, have already started to produce voluntary statements. If your local authority has one it can, again, usually be found via a link on your organisation's home page. The [Local Government Association portal](#) also houses the modern slavery statements of over 170 local authorities. As you start your due-diligence work, you may wish either to liaise with whoever it is who has written the statement for your organisation, or to identify an individual, perhaps the modern slavery lead described later in this section, who can start to collate information about what you are doing so that this can be included in any subsequently published account. The Local Government Association has published an [aide memoir](#) on how to write and publish a modern slavery statement.

While a modern slavery policy might be in force for years without any material change, you should aim to update your statement annually. For further guidance about what you may wish to include in your statement, you may find it useful to read about [research that has examined the content of local authority statements](#) in detail.

“While a modern slavery policy might be in force for years without any material change, you should aim to update your statement annually.”

## Internal awareness training

You may wish to work with Human Resources to embed your modern slavery training into new starter inductions and further, role-specific, training for specialist functional roles, such as procurement, commissioning and safeguarding. You will also want to ensure that you communicate the latest insights into modern slavery risk into specialist courses for your social care colleagues. It is important that, as well as a ‘top-down’ element, your training offers opportunities for the professionals being trained to contribute their insights into how changing professional practices in the sector may be affecting the nature and scale of local modern slavery risk. If you are using an external provider, you may also wish to allocate some time to an explanation of how your local remediation processes work (such as, what exactly are people expected to do in your organisation if they have concerns that somebody may be a victim of modern slavery?). Some organisations include metrics related to their internal training as a key-performance indicator of their developing capabilities to address modern slavery risk and publish these in their modern slavery statements.

## Finding a modern slavery lead

The [SHIVA self-assessment scorecard](#) and best practice within other local authorities suggests that you may wish to consider either nominating a lead person, operational and strategic points of contact roles, or a team of people like Nottingham’s Slavery and Exploitation Team, to take responsibility for modern slavery.

Your modern slavery lead may be in the best position to co-ordinate the assessment of relative risks across local authority operations, they will need to have the ear of senior leadership so that effective mitigation opportunities can be identified and actioned and they may take the lead in internal and external communications about your modern slavery approach. They may also act as a central point of contact for information about incidents of modern slavery and how they have been addressed.

If you have one already, your modern slavery ‘lead’ might also be representing you on multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the [Modern Slavery Network](#) of the Local Government Association.

## Risk assessment

In addition to carrying out an initial risk assessment of your adult social care providers and suppliers, it is important that risk assessment practices are embedded in your normal quality assurance management systems. You will also need to think about how, when and where to feed this into management reporting so that you can track the effects of your actions and identify and communicate important trends within and beyond the organisation. As part of this approach, you may wish to sign up to bulletins from bodies such as the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority who publish a quarterly intelligence report describing for different sectors, including social care, the quantity and features of exploitation that has been reported to them.

“You will also need to think about how, when and where to feed this into management reporting so that you can track the effects of your actions...”

## Procurement protocols and supplier engagement

You may wish also to implement systems that track the proportion of contracts that you have risk assessed as a proportion of your procurement portfolio and set long-term targets for completing a thorough risk assessment. It is important to communicate your intentions to providers and other external stakeholders and to engage in two-way information sharing, for example with your modern slavery lead, to ensure that you are aware of and responding to any risks that become apparent through local authority risk detection processes.

## Audit protocols

While our councils did not identify audit activities as high impact/high urgency activities, the need to introduce and embed modern slavery into existing provider auditing systems, perhaps in the form of smart spot checks, was recognised. One of our local authorities planned to introduce a desk-based system for the review of providers’ quarterly returns for information related to labour turnover, new recruits and agency usage. When incorporating either on-site or desk-based checks, you may also wish to think about how to identify and assess actual and potential adverse impacts, including how to track any corrective and preventative actions which may arise. You will also need to ensure that audit outcomes are reported to your modern slavery leads/ team and fed into applicable remediation protocols to ensure corrective and preventative actions are taken.



“When incorporating either on-site or desk-based checks, you may also wish to think about how to identify and assess actual and potential adverse impacts, including how to track any corrective and preventative actions which may arise.”



Reporting and remediation protocols

Local authorities identified robust whistle-blowing procedures for modern slavery concerns as central to effective reporting and remediation protocols. You will need to ensure that you have a robust remediation pathway. The relationships that you develop through your Safeguarding Adults Board will be critical here. When dealing with specific cases, it is of vital importance that all the information you gather is available in one place as this may be needed provide support for what is known as a ‘positive grounds decision’ if a potential victim chooses to enter the ‘National Referral Mechanism’ (NRM). You may also wish to consider which communication channels to use to co-ordinate information flows with and between your modern slavery leads/team and to decide in advance who needs to know what throughout all levels of your organisation. As with all systems, these processes will need to be monitored and their effectiveness subject to management review.

Wider modern slavery collaboration

Our participating local authorities highlighted engagement with external stakeholder with an interest in modern slavery as crucial to their high impact/high urgency action plans. The more regular and numerous interactions that you have with external bodies such as the police, the Home Office, care sector unions and other non-governmental organisations working in the sector, maybe through your local anti-slavery partnership group, the more embedded you will become and the more you will be able to adapt your systems to cease, prevent or mitigate newly emerging forms of risk. These bodies might also be able to provide intelligence which can help you track the success of your risk.

A public health approach to the design of systems for local service delivery

The following figures describe how you might build upon your multi-agency action plans to develop a public health approach to move towards a more systematic approach to modern slavery that is prevention-led and data driven.<sup>15</sup>



Table 2: Regional- and local-level factors in a public health framework to address modern slavery	
Existing components of the framework	Practical implications?
Multi-agency partnerships	<div>Additional characteristics include:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ sustainable funding/resource</li><li>■ multi-disciplinarity</li><li>■ safeguarding leads from different institutions involved, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Local Authority/NHS safeguarding leads</li><li>» action oriented</li><li>» effort to share a common language</li><li>» clear escalation routes to ‘systems leaders’</li></ul></li></ul>
Public awareness, education, readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Coordinated campaigns, for example, Crimestoppers; possibly using a ‘social communications’ approach that is tailored to local people</li><li>■ ‘All of locality’ awareness/ ownership</li></ul>
Community resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ A broad concept that requires explaining and developing</li></ul>
Some suggestions for additional components	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Bespoke local strategies/ context-driven, fully resourced response; for example, rural/urban context differences</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ways of bringing survivors together for peer support</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Early-warning systems/local community sentinel-type mechanisms</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Well-resourced, mandated, locally integrated infrastructure to support survivors</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ People with power and authority to drive change in local partnerships</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Use of a range of policing tools that reduce risks of perpetration for example civil orders</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Political and senior leadership – ‘system leadership’</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Trusting relationships with at-risk populations and local authority figures for example, youth work, community organisations</li></ul>	

Table 3: Service design components of a public health approach to modern slavery support for survivors and people at risk

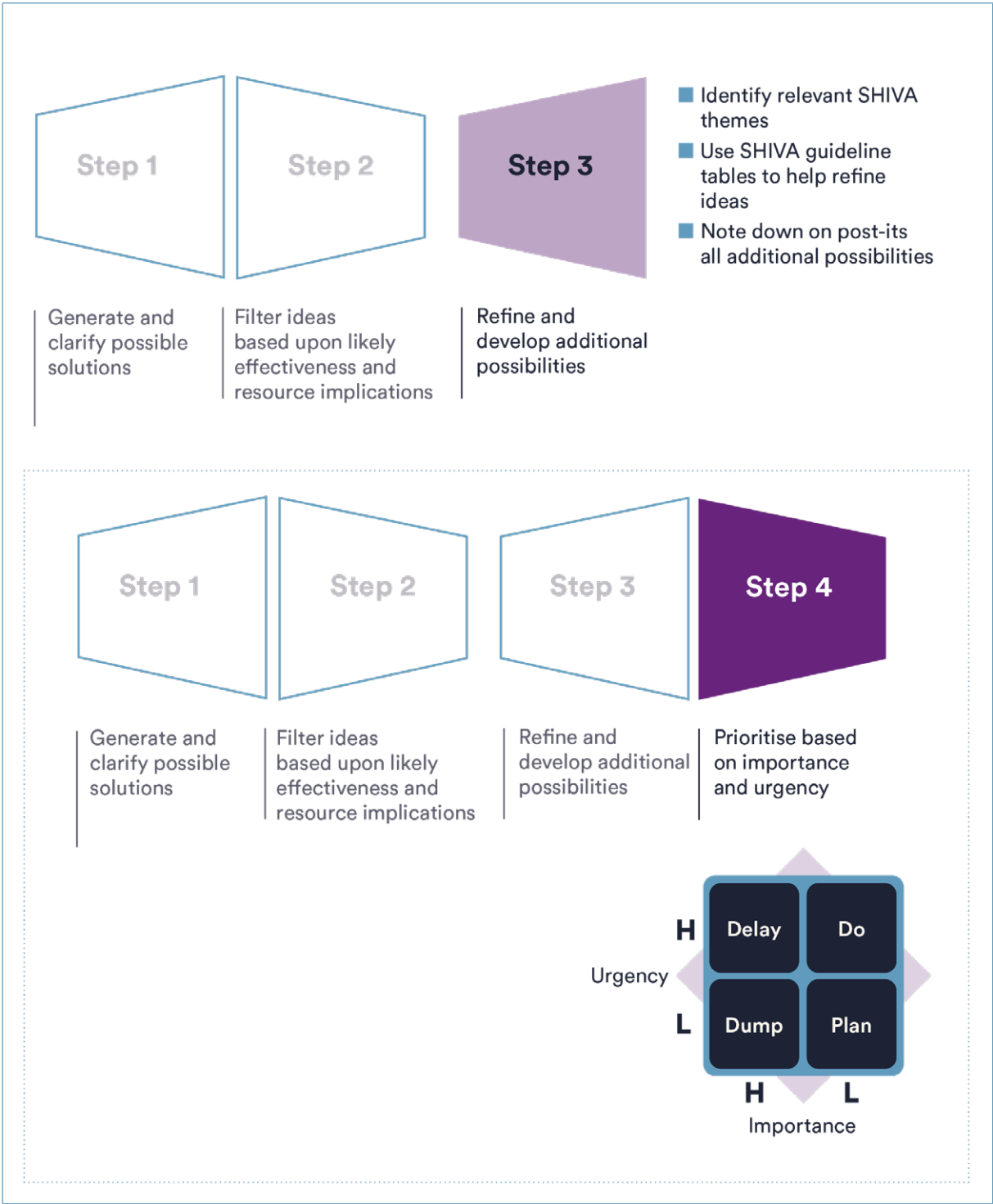
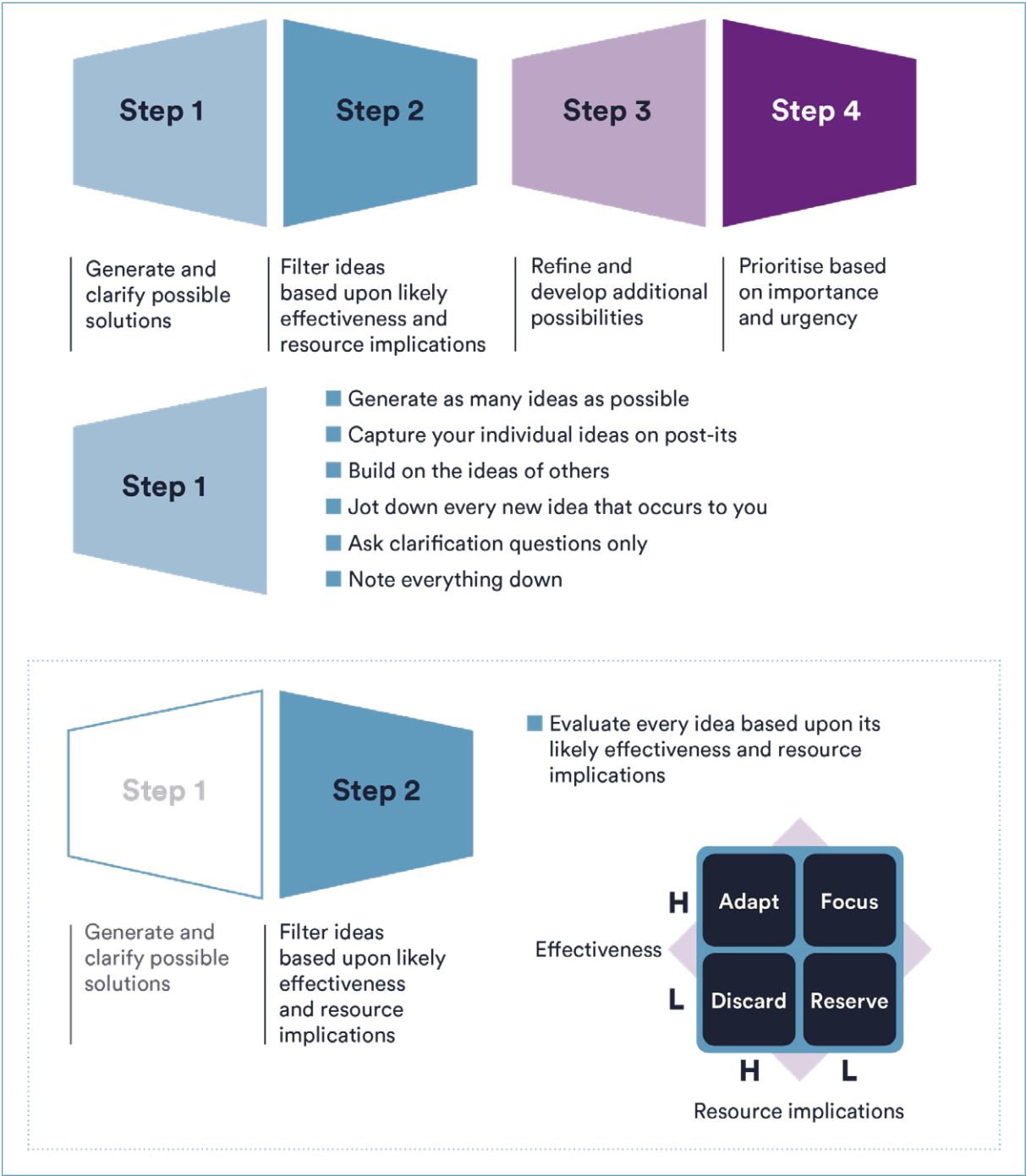
Component of service design	Description
Responsive	<p>Rapid, early-stage response services for victims/survivors and people at risk that focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) safety</li><li>ii) meeting survivors’ immediate needs</li><li>iii) dignity and autonomy.</li></ul> <p>Responsiveness also includes ensuring services are designed to enable survivors to access entitlements throughout recovery</p>
Planning	<p>Transparent design processes that identify clear responsibilities, operational procedures and allocation of personnel across services including social care, social work, police, border force, labour inspectorates and health services</p>
Reporting	<p>Clear reporting structures and mechanisms with actionable outcomes</p>
Specialist	<p>Development and adequate resourcing of services designed to meet specific needs, bearing in mind intersecting vulnerabilities and ability to access services for example, outreach services, free legal advice</p>
Mainstreaming	<p>Ensuring mainstream services are ‘modern slavery aware’ and responsive for example ‘Making Every Contact Count’ approach</p>
Training	<p>Adequately trained practitioners</p>
Survivor-informed	<p>Involving survivors in the design of services</p>
Diverse	<p>A diverse, especially ethnically diverse, workforce of service delivery practitioners</p>
Coordinated	<p>Coordinated services between multi-disciplinary professionals. Design is wrap-around, holistic, personalised/tailored, long-term survivor care that meets specified standards</p>
Evaluated	<p>In-built, robust development and testing of tools and interventions</p>

Source: Infographic and tables adapted from [Refining a public health approach to modern slavery](#) Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner’s Office. More information about how to adopt a public health approach to adult social care provision can be found [here](#).

“The more regular and numerous interactions that you have with external bodies such as the police, the Home Office, care sector unions and other non-governmental organisations working in the sector, maybe through your local anti-slavery partnership group, the more embedded you will become and the more you will be able to adapt your systems to cease, prevent or mitigate newly emerging forms of risk.”



# Appendix I: A four-step approach for a development workshop to build a team action plan for modern slavery due diligence and risk assessment



# Other useful resources

Local Government Association (2022) [Council guide to tackling modern slavery](#) (including the ‘maturity matrix’)

OECD (2018) [Due diligence guidance for responsible business conduct](#)

SHIVA (2022) [A self-assessment scorecard and supporting guidance for local authorities](#)

UK Government (2023) [Public Procurement Note 02/23 Tackling modern slavery in government supply chains](#)

# Endnotes

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