The Passage

Navigating homelessness: Housing challenges faced by survivors of modern slavery

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The Passage: leading national innovation

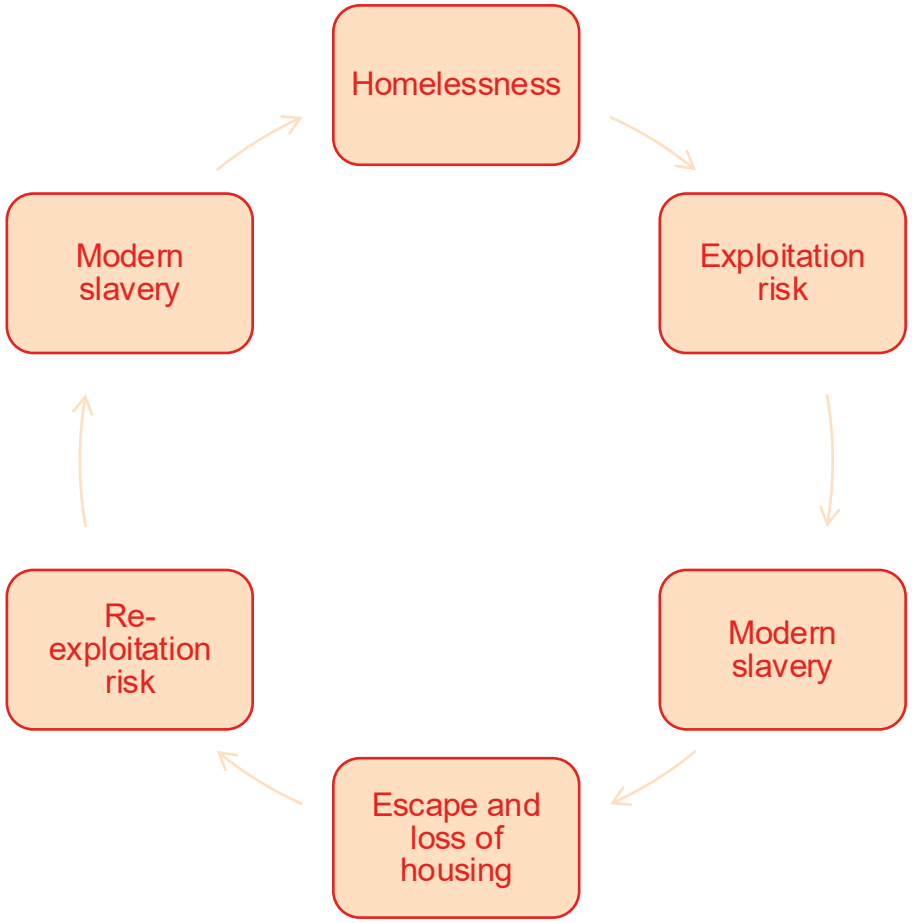
Homelessness NGO based in London, UK

- 40+ years supporting people facing homelessness
- 3,000+ people supported every year

The Passage Modern Slavery Programme

- Created a support service in 2018
- Supported over 300 survivors experiencing homelessness
- Publishes national and international research studies annually

Modern slavery and homelessness: the cycle of vulnerability



Survivor voices

"I just want somewhere I can have peace, even if it's an empty space."

"I had to leave the safehouse because I was pregnant and it wasn't suitable for a mother and baby. They moved me to an [asylum] hotel, and I stayed there for a few weeks before having an emergency caesarean."

"I was living with a friend, but that friend asked me to move out. So, I found myself not having anywhere else to go. That's why I ended up being exploited."

Four dimensions of housing exclusion

Dimension	UK Application
Availability	Bed shortages in London, lack of specialist provision in some regions, regional disparities
Accessibility	Geographic dislocation, disability access
Eligibility	Immigration status, housing entitlements, priority need criteria
Suitability	Trauma-informed environments, autonomy, cultural proximity

Systemic failures

- **Instability and unsafe placements are systemic, not exceptional.** Hotels, hidden homelessness
- **Eligibility is misapplied.** Entitlements misunderstood, complex needs unmet
- **Local authority responses are fragmented.** Referrals passed between agencies without resolution
- **Data and training gaps remain.** No shared housing data; limited modern slavery knowledge in housing teams

The consequences

- Housing is the weakest link in the NRM safety net.
- Instability increases risk of re-exploitation and re-traumatisation.
- Modern slavery is not recognised as a distinct category in housing systems.
- Statutory guidance fails to reflect lived realities: survivors accessing outreach support are invisible in the Homelessness Reduction Code of Guidance.
- Fragmented local authority responses create a “ping-pong” effect that leaves survivors without a route to safety.

What needs to change

- Amending Chapter 25 of the Homelessness Reduction Code of Guidance
- Recognising modern slavery in housing systems
- Publishing housing status data for survivors (held by the Home Office)
- Standardising and evaluating training
- Scaling Modern Slavery Coordinators/Leads nationally

Interview with Mila Mihaylov: a survivor’s perspective

Further reading

Navigating homelessness: Housing challenges faced by survivors of modern slavery (Full report)

Navigating homelessness: Housing challenges faced by survivors of modern slavery (Research summary)

Reframing support: housing and safeguarding for survivors of modern slavery outside formal identification (Policy brief)

Modern Slavery Service Five Year Report

Enhancing modern slavery prevention within the homelessness sector in the UK

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Everyone deserves a place to call home

Thank you

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