

Promoting victim engagement in modern slavery and human trafficking police investigations

Project examining the determinants of impact in victim-centred police practices for successful victim engagement in human trafficking and modern slavery investigations.

Key details

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Police region	North West
Level of research	Professional/work based
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Date due for completion	March 2026

Research context

In Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) police investigations, victims' cooperation is crucial to effectively protect them. Anecdotal data and empirical examinations of police operations indicate a need to rebalance investigative goals to avoid the relegation of victim engagement and their safeguarding. There has not yet, however, been independent and empirical analysis as to what the critical factors underlying effective police engagement with MSHT victims are.

The project aims to:

- map current victim-centred investigative practices in MSHT investigations
- identify factors that might be associated with and influence successful engagement with MSHT victims

- identify and categorise blockages (actual and perceived) for efficient implementation of victim-centred approaches
- identify and assess determinants of victims' willingness to engage with the police

Empirical findings and recommendations will inform the co-development of research-informed victim-centred guidance for successful victim engagement in MSHT operations.

Research methodology

The project adopts a mixed-method approach, combining data science with qualitative insights from practitioners and victims to assess investigative approaches and examine the determinants of impact in victim-centred police practices for successful victim engagement