

# COLLECTIVE THINKING

AUGUST 2024

*everyday* UNDERSTANDING  
THE REAL COST  
OF YOUR NAILS  
*slavery*

**OUR  
SUMMER  
ISSUE**

DO JUST ONE THING  
TO STAMP OUT  
EVERYDAY SLAVERY

**PLUS**  
SURVIVOR STORY  
FROM A NAIL BAR

THE  
**ANTI-SLAVERY**  
COLLECTIVE

# From our CEO

**S**lavery can often feel like a thing from the past, something that happened a long time ago. Or if it is happening today

it's going on elsewhere, and to other people. In fact in the UK, you could be within a mile of someone living in extreme exploitation. And those men, women and children may be more visible than you think. Modern slavery and human trafficking is a business, the commodification of human beings is exceptionally lucrative for traffickers. There continues to be a huge global demand for forced or exploitation labour. It happens in factories, sweatshops, farms, and mines far away, as well as in homes, nail bars, car washes, and massage parlours on your high street. Often without knowing it, slavery can touch our lives in the products we buy and the services we use.



Whether that's a decision we make in hiring the agency with the great value cleaners who hardly speak any English, the summer nails that seem too cheap to be true, or the football shirt we buy off a beach stall on holiday.

We have been thinking a lot about the small things we can each do to say no to modern slavery. We know that exploitation is often hard to spot, and that people stuck in modern slavery might not trust outsiders or even recognise that they have been trafficked or exploited. We want to give everyone the confidence and the information to just do one thing to help.

Read on to find out more

*Sarah Woodcock*

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## Everyday Slavery

### The Price of Your Summer Nails

Slavery is happening today, and it's happening here in the UK. Through our *Everyday Slavery* campaign we want to shine a light on different forms of modern slavery and raise awareness of how it happens, where it happens, and what you can do about it. It is thought that 130,000+ people are living in extreme exploitation in the UK today. These men, women and children may be from the UK or overseas and have been trafficked and exploited through false promises, coercion, or violence. They could be living and working in plain sight in your town, and in ways that may not be immediately recognised as slavery.

With summer finally in full swing, many people are visiting nail salons before they go on holiday. Exploitation can take place in budget salons, where demand for low-cost treatments like acrylic nails is high. Victims, mostly young women and girls, can be in debt to employers, deliberately isolated from friends and family, and trapped in a situation where violence and abuse are regular.

#### SIGNS OF EXPLOITATION



Very low prices



Long working days without clear breaks



Workers who are withdrawn, who don't engage with others and seem nervous or scared, particularly of the owner or manager



Dirty salon conditions or workers who look disheveled



Living areas that are on the same premises



Workers who speak very little English and may look younger than working age

**NONE OF THESE SIGNS MEAN SOMEONE IS AUTOMATICALLY BEING EXPLOITED, BUT THE MORE SIGNS YOU CAN RECOGNISE, THE MORE LIKELY A WORKER IS TO BE A VICTIM OF EXPLOITATION.**



# A Child's Story

***Linh was rescued from a UK nail bar after a member of the public alerted the police to children working on the premises.***

In Vietnam, Linh lived with her mother and three younger siblings. Their father had travelled away to find work, but had not returned. The family lived and slept in one room and struggled financially, often going without food. Linh went with her mother to the nearest town several hours away to look for some work. They met a man who said he could find them work in the UK. The journey to the UK was long, dark, and Linh was often scared.

Since Linh has been in the UK, she has been held captive in premises and made to cook and clean for others. She is made to work for long hours with no pay or protective equipment at a nail bar in a local town. Rice and bottled water are delivered every couple of days and she is told that the work she is doing is paying off her debt to be brought to the UK. She is not given any money or told how much she owes. Linh is told that if she does not pay back her debt, her family in Vietnam will be harmed, and that if she tries to escape she will be found and killed. This form of debt bondage is a common way for traffickers to wield huge control over their victims. The debt continues to grow, and there is no realistic hope of ever paying it back.

When Linh was found, the police got her to safety. She settled into a foster placement, attended asylum interviews, got back into education and found a local church. Linh has grown in confidence and self-esteem, and whilst she still needs significant support to recover from the trauma of the abuse she suffered, she is now thriving.

In this case, all it took was one member of the public to take a second look and make a phone call.

[Story via Barnardo's]

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