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# Mapping the Contours of Modern Slavery in Greater Manchester

## Key Findings

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## The Project

The research reported here arose from an N8 Policing Small Grant that aimed to map the contours of modern slavery as they appeared in 2015 data recorded for the Greater Manchester area by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) – formerly the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). The MSHTU oversees the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is the formal process through which victims of modern slavery in the UK are officially identified and supported. In 2015 GMP filed 581 intelligence logs pertaining to Modern Slavery as it became defined under the 2015 Modern Slavery Act. These intelligence logs derived from 333 enquiries lodged in the Modern Slavery Data Tool (MSDT). Many intelligence logs and enquiries refer to the same suspects and offenders. Hence, the 333 enquiries pertained to just 120 suspects and 102 victims. Omissions in the datasets were rectified and backfilled where possible and records were linked before being thoroughly anonymised. The vast majority of jobs in the 2015 MSDT were generated within GMP itself, with only 4% coming from external sources (NGOs or another police force).

## Victims

The victim population known to GMP in 2015 was two thirds female and one third male. Almost a quarter of victims known to GMP were children; many more were young adults. The degree of missing police data in relation to victims' nationalities – 46% were recorded as of unknown nationality - raises questions about the degree to which those rescued are – or can be - engaged with by the police. Those victims who were known to the police were predominantly Eastern European. The proportion of child victims known to GMP (23%) was almost twice as high as the proportion from Greater Manchester processed through the NRM (12%). Conversely, the proportion of non-EU nationals known to GMP (7%) was almost half those processed through the NRM (13%). The proportion of male victims identified in Manchester and processed in the NRM was also slightly higher than the proportion known to the police. This was almost certainly a product of the lesser proportion of children processed through the NRM, given that this population of children was exclusively female.
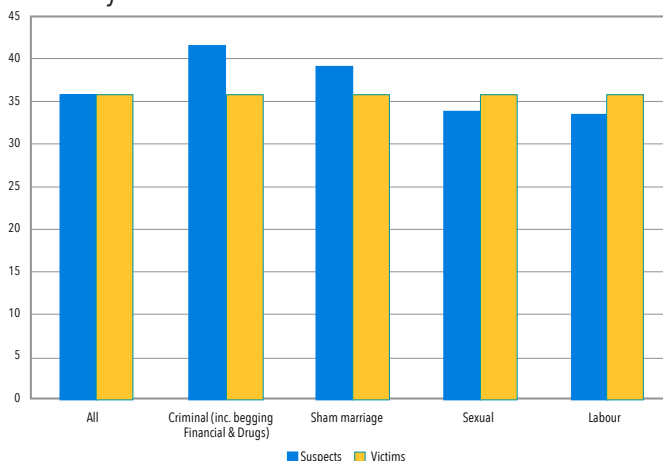


*Figure 1  Mean Ages of Suspects and Victims*

## Suspects

Suspects known to GMP were predominantly adults: one third were male; two thirds female (as indicted in Figure 1). Suspects were on average ten years older than victims, but there was considerable variation by type of modern slavery. For example, the mean age of suspects involved in criminal forms of exploitation, including begging, frauds and drugs was 40 compared to 20 for victims. Likewise, victims of sexual exploitation were on average 11 years younger than suspects. Conversely, suspects and victims of labour exploitation tended to be about the same age, i.e. early 30s. Among suspects, British, Romanian and Hungarian nationals were the predominant groups. Only one in five suspects derived from outside the European Union. One in three victims known to GMP in 2015 hailed from the same country as the suspect.

A more detailed breakdown of the crime codes deployed by GMP in 2015 revealed that arranging travel to come into the UK for the purpose of exploitation was a substantial part (44% or more) of the activity of suspects. This group was two-thirds male (65%) and almost solely adult (98%). One in seven male modern slavery suspects were identified as perpetrating acts of violence or sexual violence directly against (predominantly female) victims, suggesting that other forms of entrapment and indebtedness were in play in most instances of modern slavery that came to the police's attention during this period. Network analyses of the cases known to the police in 2015 suggested that most suspects were operating in relative isolation (as conveyed in the  columns on the left of Figure 2), most involved in just one crime of exploitation against one victim and a minority (one in five) involved in two crimes (as conveyed in the third column from the left of Figure 2). However, there was some evidence of low-level organisation among a minority of offenders (as conveyed by the 4th, 5th , 6th, 7th and 8th columns from the left of Figure 2). British suspects were more likely to be connected to other suspects and victims from other nationalities than non-British suspects.

## Geography

The geographical distribution of the cases known to GMP correlated broadly with areas scoring more highly on Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This may be a result of increased police activity in these areas, reflect the economic markets operating in areas with a higher deprivation score, or the vulnerability of the populace residing in poor neighbourhoods. Mapping the precise locations where victims and suspects were found was confined to only 38 cases for which postcode data was recorded in 2015. The analysis revealed a concentration of modern slavery – particularly sexual exploitation - in the City Centre as well as two other northern towns.
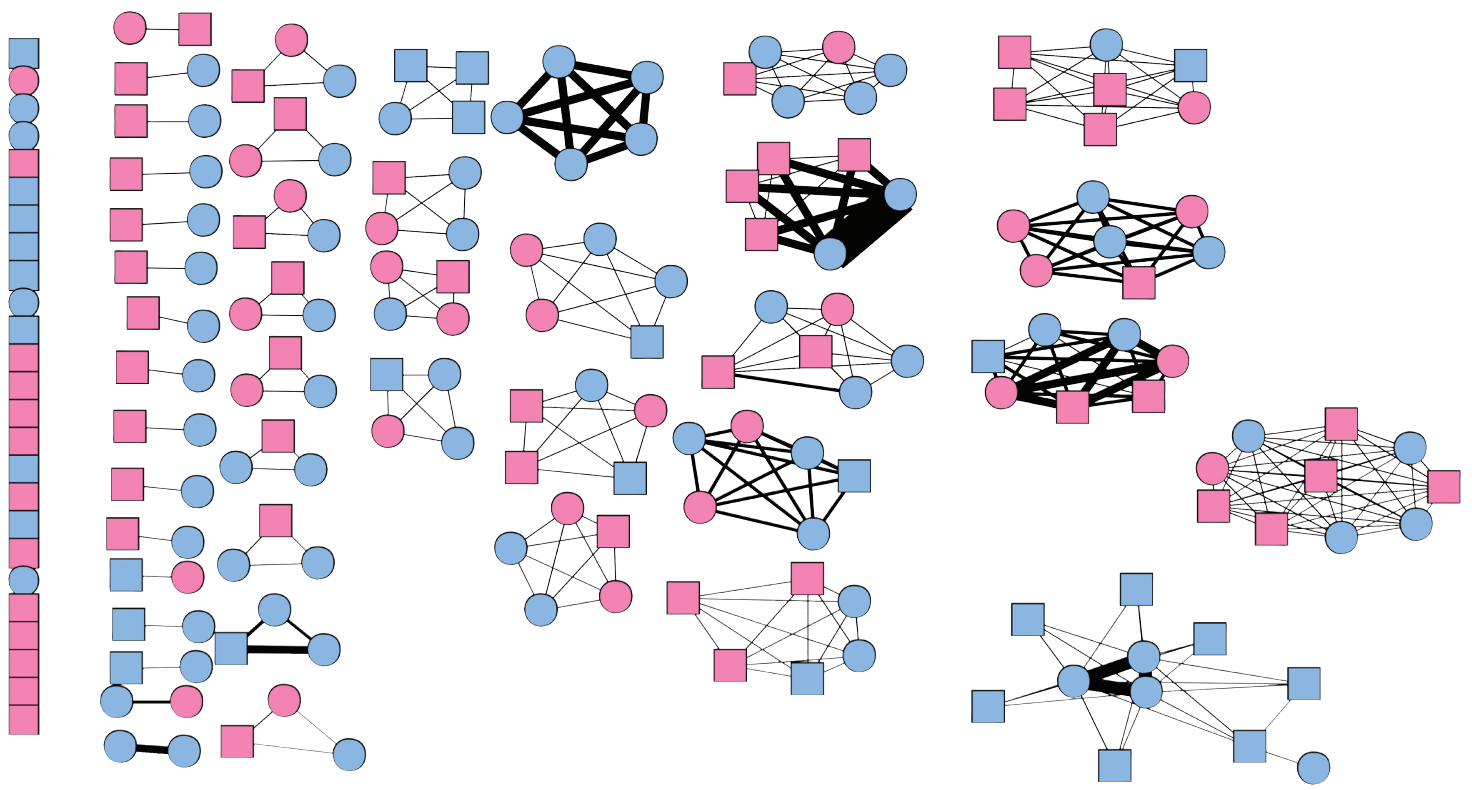
| Attribute | Class | Code |
|-----------|-------|------|
| Gender | Male | Blue |
| | Female | Pink |

| Attribute | Class | Code |
|-----------|-------|------|
| Role | Suspect | Circle |
| | Victim | Square |

*Figure 2 Network Structures of Cases Known to GMP in 2015*
*Note that thicker lines convey that multiple charges were brought in these cases. The absence of a connecting line, as with the cases on the far left, signifies that suspects and victims were not linked in intelligence reports at that time.*

## Outcomes

The distribution of modern slavery exploitation types in the MSDT was a little different to that which was reported about victims located in Manchester and processed through the National Referral Mechanism in 2015. While 36% of victims in the NRM in 2015 claimed labour exploitation, the figure derived from GMP's MSDT was 29%. Conversely, 27% of victims known to the NRM in 2015 claimed sexual exploitation compared to 47% of those known to GMP that same year. For other forms of exploitation, the NRM figures were generally higher than those in the MSDT (e.g. Sham marriage – NRM 7%, MSDT 4%; Begging – NRM 7%, MSDT 2%). These differences may reflect time lags and attrition in the system as well as the different demographic profiles of the two groups.

In 2015 Greater Manchester cases in the NRM appeared to have been resolved more quickly than elsewhere in the UK. They also generated more positive outcomes for victims. However, as is the case across the UK, non-EU victims rarely received positive outcomes. Indeed, no non-EU victims in Greater Manchester received a positive conclusive grounds decision in 2015. Although two-thirds of victims who received a positive conclusive grounds decision were adults, children in the NRM were more likely to get a positive outcome: they represent a tenth of cases but almost a third of positive conclusive grounds decisions. Seemingly better outcomes for women relative to men in the NRM have to be understood against the greater number of children and young adults among the population of female victims. Closer

inspection of the NRM and MSDT datasets revealed the volume of police work needed to produce positive outcomes. Only 44 of the suspects identified – just one in three - in the 2015 dataset were ultimately charged. Only 39 victims – one for every 14 intelligence logs - received a positive conclusive decision through the NRM.

## Data Integrity

The MSDT provided the most detailed dataset available for modern slavery in Greater Manchester in 2015. However, police intelligence databases are only as useful as they are complete. Gaps in the data represent missed opportunities to see the connections between crimes. Erroneous entries, for example, when unknown victims are named 'Jane Doe' can also convey a picture of crime that is more organised than it actually is. In 2015 basic data with regards to age, ethnicity, exploitation type, postcode and even gender – some of which could be sourced from elsewhere – was often missing. This also highlighted a further issue regarding the interconnectivity – or lack of it – between information systems within GMP. Much of the data cleansing and matching that took place as part of this project required manual searches on multiple data sources, most of which could be connected and updated automatically. Rectifying such omissions would vastly improve the intelligence picture and shine a spotlight on the outcomes of criminal justice intervention. There may be a need to identify other support-based outcomes that derive from police intervention within the MSDT, particularly in cases where victims do not wish to cooperate with the police.

# New Questions

It is noteworthy that facilitating travel for exploitation represented a substantial part of the intelligence picture with regard to suspects in Greater Manchester in 2015. It is also noteworthy that British suspects were most connected to suspects from other nationalities. Efforts to tackle the more organised aspects of modern slavery should address this interface with British offenders as these may facilitate longevity in a market that is shaped by rapidly shifting patterns of migration and border control. Care needs to be taken to ensure that knowledge of the breakdown of the international business of modern slavery is not obscured in favour of coding by exploitation type. More information needs to be retained about the role suspects play in modern slavery, whether in terms of facilitating travel, direct exploitation, or the perpetration of violence and sexual violence.

That said, it is important to recognise that the majority of modern slavery offences appeared to be occurring in relative isolation to each other. This appearance may be due to gaps in intelligence, but it more likely reflects the reclassification of generalist low level criminal activity under new modern slavery legislation. In localities where low paid work and illicit industries create opportunities for new arrivals, the indebted and undocumented workers, loosely organised forms of exploitation are a key feature of the crimes that get counted as modern slavery. The generational gap between exploiters and exploited, often of the same nationality, together with the gendered patterning of exploitation, evidence the need to address the ways in which modern slavery is organised through communities and in response to economic circumstances as much as via organised crime networks.

A more complete database could, over time, reveal where lessons can be learnt from one locality to another, both in terms of the neighbourhoods where modern slavery typically occurs and in terms of the police responses most likely to generate prosecutions of offenders and positive outcomes for victims. The relative absence of non-EU nationals in the 2015 MSDT merits further investigation, as does the relative absence of minors identified in Manchester in the NRM that same year. Whilst the predominance of EU nationals may reflect the relationship between modern slavery and the local market for unskilled labour in Europe, it is at odds with the reports of international bodies as well as NGOs locally.

Such anomalies raise new questions about what counts as success in police action against modern slavery. Bringing charges against suspects is the most obvious indicator, but there are others of no less importance. Sourcing more intelligence from the public and NGO sector, greater knowledge of what happens to victims once an arrest has been made, improved outcomes for a diversity of victims in the NRM, improvements in reporting and detection in particular localities, and knowledge of the degree of organisation among offenders are also outcomes to be striven for. Subsequent analyses of data recorded in the MSDT will reveal the degree to which these outcomes are being achieved year on year.

For further information about this research, or the full report on which it is based, please contact **david.gadd@manchester.ac.uk** or **rosemary.broad@manchester.ac.uk**