



Craig Whittaker MP

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Modern Slavery and Lord McColl's Private Member's Bill

Thank you for contacting me about modern slavery.

Tackling human trafficking and modern slavery is a top priority for this Government, and I am personally committed to stamping out this abhorrent crime. It is crucial that we provide support for victims of this heinous crime, and I am proud that we already exceed our international obligation in providing support to victims through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the system for identifying and supporting victims. Support services are provided to enable victims to leave situations of exploitation, receive specialist care, and begin to rebuild their lives.

The Government has made clear that it is committed to continually improving support and assistance provided before, during, and after the NRM for victims of modern slavery. That is why in October 2017 a comprehensive package of reforms to the NRM was announced. The reforms include measures to significantly increase the period of 'move on' support for victims from 14 to 45 days, helping to create a smoother transition out of care. This will be in addition to the minimum 45 days of support victims already receive before a final decision is reached, increasing the total period to at least 90 days. Government funded 'places of safety' will be created which will provide up to three days of immediate support to victims rescued out of a situation of exploitation by law enforcement, as well as up to 6 months of 'drop-in' services for confirmed victims transitioning out of the NRM. These reforms will ensure the NRM operates as a bridge that supports victims to leave situations of exploitation and enables them to begin to recover and rebuild their lives.

On the issue of Lord McColl's Victim Support Bill, I know that the Government is grateful for Lord McColl's commitment to ensuring that victims of modern slavery are identified and receive the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives. I welcome the opportunity that his Bill has presented for debate and discussion around how support for victims can be improved.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP