

July 5, 2019: Meeting with Sir Peter Fahy

Mark Wiggin, Sion Hall and Anthony Brown met with Sir Peter Fahy to mull over some issues about the role of the Diocese in planning our strategy for a Diocese free of modern day slavery by 2025. Peter is a member of the board of trustee of Salford Diocese which takes in Caritas Salford.

We had a wide ranging discussion on how the Catholic Church needs to respond to modern day slavery and how we might use the inter-diocesan conference in autumn to guide our priorities and actions.

Below are some thoughts arising from the meeting and discussions afterwards.

Ethical investment and ethical employment policies are key. What can parishioners and parishes do? What would a parish free of modern day slavery look like? Might there be a Vatican or SMG approved badge?

At Diocesan level might we pursue membership of one of the Slavery Free Alliance type initiatives currently being adopted within the public or private sectors; or given its size and nature, and the expertise within it, might the Catholic Church in England and Wales pursue an independent approach leading to its own anti-slavery charter such as the one approved unanimously by Manchester City Council on July 18, 2018?

1. *Ensure its corporate procurement team is trained to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.*
2. *Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.*
3. *Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.*
4. *Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not be treated unfairly for belonging to one.*
5. *Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.*
6. *Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.*
7. *Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.*
8. *Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.*
9. *Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.*
10. *Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.*

Modern Day Slavery hasn't happened in isolation, it is linked with all aspects of Catholic Social Teaching including not only inequality but the environment. Awareness might perhaps be raised via input from people like Catholic theologian Anna Rowlands. See for example [how she speaks](#) on living wages and other social economic questions, particularly relating to work – issues first raised in an encyclical letter – Rerum Novarum - by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. What then became known as Catholic Social Teaching was a response to new issues facing European society as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the social transformation this brought about.

The [Citizens UK](#) approach aims to empower the individual against the force of commerce and government and Caritas Salford subscribes to [Manchester Citizens](#)

The inter-diocesan conference in the autumn will aim to:

- Share experience and what learned from it
- Identify areas for development using [Pastoral Orientations](#)
- Start the process of formulating a strategy which can be developed after the conference at diocesan level with further sharing and learning to follow later.

For Salford Diocese we hope the conference will help us develop a set of actions, these actions to form a mandate for Salford Diocesan trustees to endorse.