

February 20, 2020: Meeting to take forward action arising from the In Plain Sight Conference on October 15 2019

Further discussion took place involving representatives from the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, Santa Marta Group, Religious Orders who have undertaken and supported much of the work thus far, Diocesan representatives, and some of the service providers and support agencies, all of whom were encouraged by the day and the strong support of Cardinal Nichols. Cardinal Vincent has laid out our agenda as a Church to work in partnership with one another and with others, collating our involvement so far as a firm basis upon which to build strategically and locally in a non-competitive and collaborative spirit based on prayer and Catholic Social Teaching.

As expressions of solidarity and compassion to protect the dignity of those involved, this needs to be done in a number of ways, not least:

Raising awareness within the Church of trafficking and how to report it.

We know that human trafficking and modern slavery are crimes which can carry life imprisonment. Despite this, people everywhere hesitate even to report their concerns to the Police, if they know how, and most in the Church are unsure how to identify it and any action they can take. We also may unknowingly support modern slavery by buying products and services which are sustained and made possible by it.

Advocating for change

Pressing for changes by advocacy with Police, Home Office and other public and private bodies which allow this to continue and to grow almost unchecked.

Supporting victims

Continuing to develop a range of coordinated services across the Church and with its local partners by drawing together people and agencies and which are fit for purpose.

The future

The discussions have led to a unanimous determination to work together collaboratively. As a firm basis and first step, we plan to develop a shared declaration to help us to move forward as one Church on this matter. Further actions will follow this and we will send an update in the future.