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Independent Review of the Hope for Justice Independent Modern Slavery Advocacy Model

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Executive Summary

Independent advocacy is a service that can offer particular benefit to survivors of modern slavery. The overlapping systems that survivors must navigate on their recovery journey are complex and often opaque, while the survivor is often dealing personally with trauma and its effects as a result of their exploitation. The combination of these circumstances can be profoundly disempowering and silencing for the survivor.

Hope for Justice have been providing advocacy services to survivors for over 10 years and in 2015 merged their separate legal and support teams into one advocacy team, developing the role of Independent Modern Slavery Advocate (IMSA), in response to client feedback that a single point of contact which provided socio-legal advocacy was most helpful. The advocacy team have developed a high level of expertise in the systems that their clients will need to interact with and focus on empowering the client to regain control of their circumstances and engage positively with the various support mechanisms that are available to them.

The following key outcomes have been identified, that will be assessed in this evaluation:

- Facilitating choice and empowerment of the client
- Avoiding destitution and homelessness
- Pursuing 'justice', dependent on what this means to the client
- Preventing re-trafficking
- Facilitating the client receiving all that they are entitled to that they would like to receive
- Educating both the client and professional partners on what is and what should be available for survivors of modern slavery.

“[My IMSA] values me – each time we talk... any time I communicate with [them] I feel valued.”*

*Quotes throughout the report are taken from the client/survivor interviews conducted as part of the evaluation

Findings

The Hope for Justice IMSA model, by providing a single point of contact, high-level expertise, long-term support and a commitment to advocate for their clients has a consistently positive effect on the outcomes of their clients including (but not limited to):

- Receiving appropriate housing and housing benefit
- Receiving compensation
- Overturning convictions resulting from their exploitation
- Receiving welfare benefits
- Gaining immigration status

In terms of facilitating recovery, by offering consistent, non-judgmental and trauma-informed support, the IMSA is able to foster an empowering and reliable professional relationship. This can provide stability for the client, as well as helping them to realise their own strengths and giving them hope for a better future.

This report recommends working in partnership with other organisations providing advocacy services for modern slavery survivors to build a formalised, accredited IMSA role and framework in line with other independent advocacy services, such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocates.

“They work with me for what I am fighting for.”

“The work Hope for Justice is doing is helping my emotions... Positive changes are the best thing for my emotions.”

What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent advocacy means supporting people to ensure that their voices are heard and that they understand their rights, separate to any statutory agencies that may be involved.¹ The Hope for Justice IMSA model is based on the principles of the Independent Advocacy Charter.² An important part of evaluating the IMSA model will be to assess the advocacy work that is being done in the context of supporting modern slavery survivors. Independence is seen as vital for advocacy work³ as without independence there is a risk that competing interests, such as the need to maintain state contracts, will have to be prioritised over the needs of the client. The Advocacy Charter is the standard document that guides much independent advocacy in the UK and should, therefore, be used to understand the work the IMSA team are doing; and also, to evaluate that work. The charter lists the following principles for advocacy work:

- Clarity of purpose
- Independence
- Confidentiality
- Person led
- Empowerment
- Equality and diversity
- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Safeguarding
- Supporting advocates

Independent advocacy in the anti-slavery sector

Survivors of modern slavery have long been recognised within the anti-slavery/ anti-trafficking sector as a diverse group, facing significant structural and personal challenges in trying to restore their lives. More recently, these challenges and related support needs have begun to be recognised by Government and other public institutions, however there is still clearly a significant gap between publicly funded provision and the difficulties faced by survivors on their recovery journey. Survivors experience the after-effects of trauma to varying degrees, often do not have stable immigration status and struggle to access necessary welfare benefits and secure

¹ <https://www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/understanding-advocacy>

² NDTI "The Advocacy Charter" <https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publications/new-advocacy-charter>

³ Robinson, A. & Hudson, K. (2011) 'Different yet Complementary: Two approaches to supporting victims of sexual violence in the UK', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 11(5), pp. 515-533.

housing to avoid destitution.⁵ Whilst the Government automatically provides certain support while an individual is within the National Referral Mechanism, there is often a 'cliff edge' where this support can abruptly end, risking destitution and re-trafficking.⁶

In response to this need, for over ten years Hope for Justice has worked with survivors, offering social and legal support. Following internal review and listening to the feedback of clients, the support and legal streams were merged into a single advocacy department, creating the role of Independent Modern Slavery Advocate (henceforth IMSA).

Complementary roles

The boundary between support work and independent advocacy is potentially one of the more difficult elements to explain to people outside of the organisation and has the potential to create ambiguity. This is because there can be some overlap between the daily work of the two roles; although the distinction will still remain evident. How this works in practice will be explored through the interviews and case reviews. A theoretical practical example can be used to illustrate the difference:

In a case where a client becomes homeless, both a support worker and IMSA can have an important role to play. The support worker may help the client to present as homeless to the council and write a letter stating the reasons why the client has become homeless and their accommodation needs. They may also assist the client with practical needs that arise from their situation, including attending appointments with them. The IMSA complements this vital work by focusing on advocating for the legal entitlements of the client and ensuring that the Local Authority uphold their duties under both domestic and international legislation. This often involves writing an 8+ page letter outlining the client's legal eligibility for housing, drawing upon case law, guidance and legislation, to demonstrate why the council has an obligation to provide accommodation.

⁵ City Hearts "No-one Left Behind" <https://cityhearts.global/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NRM-Report-INTERACTIVE-2.pdf>

⁶ Human Trafficking Foundation "Day 46" <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1259/day-46.pdf>

The Hope for Justice Independent Modern Slavery Advocacy model

As outlined in the Hope for Justice briefing paper on Independent Modern Slavery Advocates (2017), the foremost value added by IMSAs is enabling the voice of the survivor to be heard within a very complex situation, and ensuring that they are given meaningful choice by providing understandable explanations of legal and technical language. By not regularly providing basic-needs services, such as accommodation, the client and IMSA are able to build a collaborative relationship, that whilst still unavoidably containing a power imbalance, does not stem from the client depending on the IMSA for their provision of these services. The client is then provided with a safe space to voice concerns or disagreements with elements of their support without the perception that they are jeopardising their support.

The model grew from feedback from clients that although the work of the legal and support teams were both invaluable, navigating the two departments was adding an extra layer of stress for them. The departments were, therefore, merged and members of both teams were upskilled to be able to fulfil the role as single point of contact, acting as both social and legal independent advocate. A system was developed to ensure the full range of needs of clients were met and that there was consistency between IMSAs. This involved an established remit of work, referral criteria, long-term engagement if needed and standardised detailed documentation used to chart the process.

It became clear during the evaluation that the 'IMSA model' as led by Hope for Justice is not just a training program, but is a full framework of operation. This is seen in the documentation that is used in a standardised way for each client, which ensures full consideration of the client's circumstances and intentional planning of the advocacy work that will take place. The framework also includes an open referral criteria that is based on need rather than any other factor (e.g. pre or post NRM, access to public funds, etc) and involvement for an unspecified time period, that is purely based on the needs of the client. It was also evident that the team often worked with clients who other organisations would not work with, due to behavioural issues, etc. Whilst the team take safeguarding very seriously and have ground rules for behaviour, they will continue to work with clients that exhibit challenging behaviour and may as a result lose accommodation or other support. The ethos of the model could be described as a drive to explore every option in response to a problem and persist as far as possible in support of the client.

In response to receiving an increase in advice queries from the sector and survivors, often relating to urgent crisis situations, the team developed two complementary strands to their IMSA model; advice and 'intervention only' cases. A full evaluation of these case types was beyond the scope of this review, but form a growing part of the developing IMSA model so should be fully reviewed in the future. The 'intervention only' service engages with a client to provide support on a particular issue, rather than offering the full advocacy service. This is usually where the client is adequately supported in other areas but the expertise of the Advocacy team are specifically required in relation to one aspect of their case, which the IMSA will assist with, e.g. welfare benefit entitlement or pre-NRM advocacy to ensure access to support under the Victim Care Contract. The formal advice service provides specialist advice on survivor care in the UK, including advising on specific cases where professionals are already involved and can action the advice given.

Web of potential legal and support needs

The web of needs diagram was developed by the IMSA team to demonstrate the complexity they encountered when advocating for clients. From this diagram, the wide range of needs that clients can present with is outlined, demonstrating the need for the range of services required and the different elements of the best practice framework. The range of legal and support needs shown on the diagram were taken from the Initial Assessment document, as areas that IMSAs regularly assist clients with.

POTENTIAL LEGAL AND SUPPORT NEEDS



Advocacy is taking action to enable people to say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side, promoting social inclusion, equality and social justice.

THE ADVOCACY CHARTER

- Clarity of purpose
- Independence
- Confidentiality
- Person led
- Empowerment
- Equality and diversity
- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Safeguarding

ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

- | | |
|---|---|
| Increasing Resilience | ↑ |
| Reducing Risk | ↓ |
| Increasing chance of engagement with criminal and civil justice systems | ↑ |



Web of Needs diagram, developed and produced by Hope for Justice

The Best Practice Framework

Based on the review of the literature of independent advocacy more broadly and that which focused on the anti-slavery sector (see Appendix A), the following framework has been developed:



Framework	Explanation
<p>Empowering advocate-client relationship</p>	<p>The relationship between the client and the advocate should be one of respect. Recognition of the inherent power imbalance within the relationship is necessary so that strategies to mitigate this and promote empowerment can be used.</p> <p>The relationship should be person led, prioritising the choices made by survivors. The skills and strengths of survivors should be recognised and encouraged. The beliefs of the individual should not be a barrier to the relationship and should be respected at all times.</p> <p>Boundaries should be clearly established that emphasise the role of the professional within the relationship and do not lead to false expectations or dependence.</p> <p>Communication is vital to ensuring that the needs of the client are met and that the relationship remains as equitable as possible. As such, the use of interpreters when the client is not fluent in English is a vital part of the advocacy service. Interpreting services should be used as standard in meetings (telephone or in person) between the advocate and client, with the agreement of the client.</p>

<p>Trauma-informed approach</p>	<p>The advocate should be fully trained on the effects of trauma and how it can manifest and be able to put this knowledge into practice. However, this must be balanced with the person-led approach, being able to ‘see the person’ as well as the manifestation of their trauma. Being able to offer reassurance and consistency can be a vital part of reassuring a client who has experienced trauma, if needed creating ‘the illusion of time’ even if schedules are very tight.</p> <p>Knowledge of issues of substance abuse and the relationship between this and trauma should be part of training and practice.</p>
<p>Informed engagement with the criminal justice system</p>	<p>The advocate will need to guide the individual through any criminal justice proceedings that they are involved in. There is a serious risk of re-traumatisation for the individual during this process, therefore the role of the advocate in explaining the process, educating individuals within the system and providing trauma-informed support is vital. There is also the opportunity to explore with the client what justice means to them and how this may impact the choices they make.</p>
<p>Knowledge of complex systems</p>	<p>Independent advocates must have a detailed practical knowledge in the following areas as they relate to survivors of modern slavery, in order to ensure positive outcomes for clients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare benefits • Housing Rights • Compensation Claims • Overturning criminal convictions • Immigration and asylum • Family Law • Health Services • National Referral Mechanism • Public Law • Community Care • Fraud and Debt <p>For more on these knowledge areas and outcomes, see Appendix B.</p> <p>Whilst Independent Advocates do not need to have an exhaustive knowledge of each of these areas, a detailed working knowledge is required. As well as being able to help navigate each area, they should be able to assist in acquiring specialist legal representation if the need arises. Their working knowledge should give them the capacity to help explain complex areas to clients, and at times suggest a ‘second opinion’ if a client is not happy with the options presented. As the ‘single point of contact’ they must be able to maintain an aerial view of how the different support needs fit together and how different areas of need may overlap.</p>

<p>Supporting mental health/ wellbeing</p>	<p>The advocate should be able to signpost to mental health services when appropriate if this is the choice of the client. An awareness of the presentation of different mental health concerns may assist in this.</p> <p>A low-level therapeutic approach should be used to promote emotional health and recovery. This could be alongside other support work that is taking place. Promoting engagement in community, hobbies and interests or practising their faith can be a way of ensuring emotional resilience and should be encouraged.</p>
<p>Partnership working</p>	<p>The advocacy role is a single point of contact within a network of professionals and services. In order to help their client successfully navigate these services joint working with these groups is necessary. There must be a clear understanding of the particular role of the advocate by all parties.</p> <p>It is also through these partnerships that advocates have the opportunity to structurally advocate, by modelling trauma-informed practice and educating on trauma. There is also the opportunity to push for improved practice in other organisations and institutions by educating on the particular needs of survivors of modern slavery. However, in order for this to happen, positive professional relationships must exist.</p>
<p>Training and supervision</p>	<p>A significant amount of training is necessary to adequately fulfil the role of advocate in the anti-slavery sector. This is due to the understanding needed to fulfil the role of advocate generally, but also to be able to successfully help navigate the complexity of the available support and justice mechanisms. Between 20 and 40 hours initial training is expected in other long-established fields of independent advocacy. Training should also be regular and ongoing in order to maintain current knowledge and expertise. Advocates should be able to feed back into the organisation their ground level knowledge to enable high level policy advocacy and to improve processes and practice.</p> <p>It must be recognised that there is a significant risk of vicarious trauma and burnout in advocates, due to the nature of the work that is being undertaken. There should, therefore, be a clear and visible strategy for managing this risk and providing the necessary supervision to advocates within their role.</p>

“Once [my IMSA] became involved my mood improved, I am getting my confidence back. [My IMSA] always helps me to see the positive.”

Best Practice Framework – Evaluation of IMSA model

The summary of the IMSA model is based on the interviews and case reviews undertaken. The detailed findings from each are expanded on further on in the report.

Framework	Evaluation of Hope for Justice IMSA model
Empowering advocate-client relationship	<p>This is clearly an area that is prioritised within the department. This is borne out in survivor testimony, IMSA interviews and review of case files. The independence of the IMSA is of prime importance as the IMSA is empowered to fully act in the best interests of the client and the client trusts the IMSA to do so. The longevity of the relationship also acts as a stabilising influence within chaotic circumstances the client may be facing.</p> <p>Interpreters were recorded for all encounters with clients not fluent in English, apart from where the client initiated contact and stated they did not want interpretation.</p>
Trauma-informed approach	<p>The work done by the IMSAs that was reviewed in this evaluation complied with the Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards trauma guidance. IMSAs are aware of the presentations and consequences of trauma and are at times able to educate professionals that they engage with to improve survivor experience.</p>
Informed engagement with the criminal justice system	<p>A clear understanding of Police procedure and the prosecution process was demonstrated within the case files. The predominant risks identified within this area are of re-traumatisation and case attrition. There were documented instances of IMSAs advocating for their clients and carrying out trauma mitigation work with clients when engaging with the legal system more broadly. There were incidences where Police had failed to follow up with cases and IMSAs were able to compel them to restart investigations. Several clients had criminal convictions overturned as a result of the advocacy work done by their IMSA.</p> <p>A crucial part of advocacy (as shown in the literature review) is supporting clients through legal cases where they are a witness for the prosecution. Without advocacy, case attrition can be high as witnesses can withdraw or even disappear; as court cases can often trigger mental health and trauma relapses.</p> <p>CASE STUDY: <i>One particular case demonstrated the value added by the IMSA, where the client was involved in Operation Fort. He was a vital witness, yet had nearly faced deportation as there was an outstanding European Arrest Warrant against him. The IMSA team managed to get this rescinded through extensive advocacy work and securing specialist legal representation. The client also suffered a severe deterioration in mental health and related problems in his circumstances in the lead up to the trial. His IMSA was able to advocate for him throughout these circumstances, preventing homelessness on multiple occasions and supporting him through the court case. It seems quite clear that without the support his IMSA offered during this prolonged period the client would not have been able to give evidence.</i></p>

<p>Knowledge of complex systems</p>	<p>There is a high level of expertise evident in the documented work carried out by the IMSAs which is reflected in the positive outcomes experienced by clients. This is facilitated by a strongly collaborative working environment and an emphasis on high quality training. The complexity of client cases often relates to insecure immigration status, although there are other factors involved. Those supporting clients are often working within a system that is not adequately designed to support vulnerable individuals, therefore the drive of IMSAs to facilitate the best outcome for clients is necessary to overcome the barriers that do exist. It was noted that certain team members have developed specialisms within particular areas, such as welfare benefits, which is valuable to the team as they are able to offer advice on how to proceed within that area.</p>
<p>Supporting mental health/ wellbeing</p>	<p>In providing emotional support there can be tension between wanting to foster independence whilst also meeting the immediate needs of the client. In pursuing further training on appropriate emotional support of clients through several training courses (for example, Mental Health First Aid) the department is continuing to develop knowledge and expertise in this area. The addition of funded counselling sessions offered to clients is positive as accessing mental health services can be very difficult, yet without this the client can be “building on sand”, as stated by one IMSA.</p>
<p>Partnership working</p>	<p>Partnerships generally function very well and there is a clear respect for the work done by the Hope for Justice IMSAs from a number of organisations. Where partnerships have not functioned as well it has often been due to misunderstandings about the role and how it fits into the wider support structure around the client. The IMSA role functions best when working in partnership with support workers, solicitors, social workers and other professionals. It was clear from the case files and IMSA interviews that the IMSAs maintain a positive intention to stay removed from ‘professional territoriality’ and focus on securing positive outcomes for clients. Continuing to raise awareness of what the IMSA does and how this complements the work of other professionals involved with the client should enable consistently positive partnership working.</p>
<p>Training and supervision</p>	<p>The training program is in line with other comparable sectors and roles and fulfils the requirements of the Survivor Care Standards. Training can be seen to be successful due to the standardisation of knowledge and practices across the department. There is clearly a culture of learning and improvement within the department. When considering training of external IMSAs the replication of what occurs within head office is important. If more externally based IMSAs are taken on this will require ongoing consideration.</p> <p>One-to-one and group clinical supervision is offered to IMSAs monthly.</p>

Evaluation

This evaluation is concerned with assessing whether intended outcomes are being met, as well as assessing whether the processes in place for achieving these outcomes demonstrate the values expressed.

From the above summation of the ethos of the model and the role outline, as well as reading the provided Hope for Justice internal documentation on the role, the following key outcomes have been identified:

- Facilitating choice and empowerment of the client
- Avoiding destitution and homelessness
- Pursuing 'justice', dependent on what this means to the client
- Preventing re-trafficking
- Facilitating the client receiving all that they are entitled to that they would like to receive
- Educating both the client and professional partners on what is and what should be available for survivors of modern slavery.

For the 'Scope of the evaluation and methodology', see Appendix C.

Key findings from client interviews

Interviews were carried out with thirteen clients, asking a series of open questions followed by a set of statements to respond to on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The client/survivor interviews were carried out by a third party, who is familiar with working with survivors, to limit potential influence or power imbalance. Interpreters were used where necessary to ensure the client was able to fully understand and respond to questions.

"[My IMSA] is helping me with getting in touch with other services and knowing how to get the service."

There were several themes that emerged from the separate interviews that demonstrate the particular feelings of clients towards the model:

- **Empowering relationship:** there was a strong sense that clients felt personally valued and were viewed as more than a 'trafficking survivor' or 'trauma victim'. There were numerous references to the client having slightly different priorities to what the IMSA expected and the IMSA following the client's lead. Many referenced being supported to feel strong and capable. There were references to IMSAs offering challenge when certain behaviour or decisions were likely to lead to adverse outcomes but paired with the view that regardless of the decision the IMSA remained supportive.
- **Complexity:** there was a feeling amongst many that their situation had become so complicated that it was causing them significant stress and seemed to be beyond the capabilities of other organisations they were working with, as they were able to help in one area but not another, or did not have the required level of expertise. Many gave specific outcomes that had been achieved, such as stable housing or immigration status, that they strongly felt would not have been achieved without the support of their IMSA.
- **Benefit of consistency:** a high number of clients stated that what was so valuable to them about their IMSA was them 'coming through for them'. However, this was paired with descriptions of IMSAs being honest with them about when things were going wrong. This suggests that the team prioritise effective client communication and careful expectation management consistently, meaning that, regardless of outcome, the client feels empowered and in control.

"Without advocacy there is lots of dead ends."

"They believe in me, respect me, everything."

The responses to the set of statements demonstrate a very positive view of the IMSA role and correspond closely with the more descriptive answers given in the first part of the interview:

“I have a better understanding of my rights and entitlements as a result of working with my IMSA” **SCORE 4.85**



“My IMSA helped me understand the UK systems that I am involved in” **SCORE 4.69**



“My IMSA has helped me to secure my rights and entitlements” **SCORE 4.92**



“I feel that I am able to make informed choices for/by myself as a result of the support provided by my IMSA” **SCORE 4.92**



“I believe other people who have experienced slavery/exploitation would benefit from having an IMSA” **SCORE 4.77**



“I feel that I am safer (and at less risk from harm) as a result of working with my IMSA” **SCORE 4.77**



“I believe that having an IMSA reduces an individual’s risk of re-exploitation” **SCORE 4.92**



Key findings from IMSA interviews and case file reviews

Six interviews with IMSAs were completed and eleven anonymised full case files were reviewed.

- In every case reviewed there was a particular juncture where the intervention of the IMSA led to the resolution of an ongoing or stalled issue, or the aversion of a crisis having a severely adverse outcome. This resulted from their expertise, the positive relationship they had developed with the client and their tenacity in pushing for a solution.
- A very strong emphasis on empowerment was evident throughout the interviews. There was a consistent recognition that there is an inherent power imbalance, this cannot be removed but should be considered and mitigated through different strategies. Many referenced finding a balance between being supportive and fostering dependence; cases where clients had tried to get their IMSA to make decisions for them were referenced, with the IMSA not doing this but taking as long as needed to support the client to make their own decision.
- There was a clear knowledge of the multiple systems and institutions that clients will need to engage with and a level of expertise evident that was significantly higher than what might be expected in general support work. This was rooted in good training practices, but also in a culture of collaboration where learnings were shared and individual expertise utilised.
- Mental Health First Aid training has recently been completed which was viewed very positively by the team. Several mentioned that what they learned on the course reflected current practice which was encouraging. In response to the frequent gaps in mental health provision, Hope for Justice sought funding to commission individual short-term mental health solutions (e.g. counselling, art therapy, etc) for clients that could benefit and would like to do this.
- The complex and long-term nature of IMSA support: Some cases were live for several years, almost all for over a year. This is in contrast to much other support available which can be time-limited. What was apparent in many case files was a 'revolving door' of other professionals and support workers (this was backed up in client interviews) that could seriously undermine and interrupt support provision and create significant risk of stalling case progression or even causing homelessness or destitution. In these incidences IMSAs were able to create continuity and maintain case progression. Where cases were open for several years, this was predominately due to failures and delays in systems, e.g. in one case the challenging of a negative welfare benefit decision took more than one year just to receive a positive decision from the relevant tribunal.

"If it was not for [our IMSA] we would have ended up on the street a long time ago."

- As a single point of contact they were often called first at a moment of crisis and would work immediately to remedy the crisis, in each instance to bring a significant improvement to the situation. That there is the option, as a last resort, to pay for a hotel for the night or for a food shop to be done is important for several reasons. It can serve to interrupt a downward spiral in a client's circumstances, as they are given some breathing space and their basic needs met. This solidifies their relationship with their IMSA as it demonstrates their commitment to them in a moment of crisis. It is also positive for IMSAs as it empowers them to keep working with the client knowing that a damaging event has been averted. However, in many instances IMSAs were able to secure a temporary resolution either by advocating for statutory services to fulfil their duties (including support under the NRM) or by accessing their network of partner organisations.
- The expertise demonstrated in the engagement with legal professionals and statutory bodies is significant. The standard of arguments that are presented when challenging housing, welfare or compensation decisions are very consistent across all case files and all IMSAs. This is a clear value that the IMSA can add to the support around the client as it demonstrably goes beyond what many support workers would be expected to produce. That there is detailed knowledge across a breadth of relevant areas is very significant as many of the organisations that exist to provide such support may not be free at point of access and may only have expertise in one particular area.
- The case files contained several circumstances where clients attended an appointment with a solicitor or other professional and it was clear that they were not adequately in command of the case. In this instance the IMSA is able to bring their knowledge and experience, not to override legal advice, but to support the client to be a 'critical consumer' of professional services and seek to engage another professional if that is what the client chooses. There were a number of cases where other support workers had told them that because the solicitor had made a particular decision there was nothing further to be done. Clients were very positive about the empowerment IMSAs offered in this respect.
- An emphasis on high quality initial and ongoing training emerged. There was a strong desire to consistently develop and update knowledge based on the evolving needs of clients. Several discussed that more broadly within the organisation there was a very good attitude to training and IMSAs were encouraged to go beyond what training was offered to them and suggest other opportunities that they came across. If a training session is happening and there is appetite, other organisations can be asked to join, facilitating wider sectoral development. The initial training package for an IMSA normally takes place within a two week period and is followed by a period of 'shadowing' in the head office based team. This training has been compressed for IMSAs based in other organisations but working as part of the Hope for Justice team. There have been discussions about whether this has worked as well as the standard approach.

"I feel more in control [of the immigration process] now."

- Trauma-informed practice was clearly very important to the IMSAs. Detailed descriptions of the effects of trauma and how this impacts behaviour were given, as well as strategies used to prevent re-traumatisation. There was significant consistency in how this was reported by each IMSA, which implies strongly impacting training and a strong group knowledge and understanding in this area.
- IMSAs reported that the independence of their advocacy work was truly respected within the organisation. The development of their practice and the cases they would take on were not dependent on wider organisational goals but were led by the need found 'on the ground'.
- There is clear evidence of a person-led approach to advocacy. In a number of circumstances the client suggests making a choice that is likely to have adverse effects. In such scenarios the IMSA counsels about the various options and likely outcomes but respects the client's choice. This could be seen in an incident where a client wished to return to the city where they had been exploited due to frustration with their current circumstances. The IMSA explained why this may not be a good idea, as there were a number of dangers, but upon the insistence of the client that this was what they wanted to do, engaged in safety planning for any return to that city.

"If something bad is going to happen, [my IMSA] is straight with me – I like that."

Recommendations Based on Evaluation

- Continue to build the advice service. The level of expertise within the department has the potential to profoundly impact the sector and this could be a useful part of that dissemination of knowledge.
- For externally based IMSAs consider the opportunities to develop remote working and the workability of a short shadowing period to enhance training.
- Continue to prioritise awareness raising on the role of the IMSA and how this fits into the support network around a client.

The below recommendations are concerned with how the IMSA model could be expanded and potentially rolled out beyond Hope for Justice:

- Identify all support organisations within the area operating at a similar level doing advocacy work for inclusion within consultation.
- In recognition of the different settings in which IMSA training could take place, consider formalising the relationships the advocacy team have with external organisations with relevant expertise, such as Survivor Alliance, Advocacy Providers, AIRE Centre, Snowdrop, ATLEU, ASAP, British Red Cross, Barnardo's, etc, to work with a national oversight group to deliver training and communicate changes in the legal landscape.
- Developing a top level 'hub' of IMSA organisations that oversee training and development and professional standards, and can develop facilities such as an advice line for IMSAs and other organisations.
- The use of the title 'IMSA' may be helpful for frontline professionals and wider community who may have knowledge of the role of IDVAs and ISVAs, which may help them understand the work done in the role.
- Pursuing accreditation could help standardise practice and embed best practice within the sector.
- Developing systems for fostering the ethos of the model across different sites would need to be extensively considered. This could include an element of shadowing in different organisations or external case review for a set period of time during training.
- Strategies to ensure independence of IMSAs would need to be developed. This could involve demonstration by the organisation of the internal procedures put in place. Exploring the possibility of embedding oversight of the IMSA role with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner or Victim Commissioner could be considered, either with regards to funding or responsibility for oversight of compliance with the principles of the model.

“They help me with my dream – live and work legally in the UK.”

“Without them I couldn't have moved on in my life.”

Conclusion

There is significant positive feedback from both clients and IMSAs about the effectiveness of the IMSA model. The particular value added by the model relates to three distinct areas:

- The client/advocate relationship
- Broad yet expert knowledge of the systems survivors of modern slavery will need to engage with
- Independence

By providing a single, long-term point of contact a level of stability is provided to a client who may have needed to engage with many professionals for varying lengths of time. As it is an advocacy relationship, the particular focus is on empowering the client and ensuring their voice is heard, which is vitally important for survivors of modern slavery who have had their right to self-determination and their agency taken away from them.

The complexity of the interrelated systems that survivors have to navigate creates a significant amount of stress for them and can interrupt their recovery. As often one system can have repercussions for another system, being able to co-ordinate all interventions is a significant benefit. The level of legal advocacy that takes place is beyond what might be expected and demonstrably improves client outcomes.

The independence of the IMSA is vital. In not being dependent on the IMSA for general provision the client is provided with a safe place to express any difficulties with services and be honest about their needs and aspirations. The IMSA is also able to mount challenges with the client regarding their provision or entitlements without being limited by contractual terms they may be working under.

The IMSA model at Hope for Justice provides a tested model for responding to the significant needs and structural disadvantages survivors of modern slavery encounter and can be shown to significantly improve the outcomes for clients they work with.

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Appendix A

Review of the literature

The lack of specific support for survivors, once exited from the NRM, is a theme that runs through the academic literature and 'grey' literature of NGO and Government reports and research. As stated by Roberts, "For the majority [of survivors] there is no ongoing specialist support after the official decision as to whether they have been trafficked or not."⁷ Even whilst within the framework of NRM support, as expressed in the joint civil society report to the UN Human Rights Committee,⁸ as the period between Reasonable Grounds (RG) and Conclusive Grounds (CG) decisions can be lengthy (and support variable), before exiting there can still be a significant risk of adverse outcomes such as homelessness, destitution and re-trafficking. The report goes on to argue that despite the issuing of the 'Recovery Needs Assessment Guidance', and the theoretically unlimited extension of the 45 day support cut off, there is no evidence that this has been properly applied and that there has been a change in the support landscape for survivors. This is due to a lack of funding to Local Authorities to meet the requirements outlined in the guidance, lack of legal advice and lack of a clear pathway to secure immigration status.

The particular needs that survivors can present with, as well as the barriers to accessing the support that does exist, are common themes within the literature. The presence of 'hostile immigration environment' policies in the country in which the survivor resides has been found to have a particularly damaging effect on their situation.⁹ Also problematic were the gaps within support services as identified in the DWP Report 2017.¹⁰ Due to complexities within the state support system, and the

⁷ Roberts, K. (2018), 'Life After Trafficking: A Gap in the UK's Modern Slavery Efforts', *Anti-Trafficking Review*, 10, pp. 164-168.

⁸ Joint civil society report on trafficking and modern slavery in the UK to the UN Human Rights Committee, March 2020 <https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Submission-HRC-modern-slavery-in-UK-Jan20.pdf>

⁹ Deckert, J. et al (2018) 'Midwestern Service Provider Narratives of Migrant Experiences: Legibility, Vulnerability and Exploitation in Human Trafficking', *ASW*, 18(3), pp. 887-910.

¹⁰ Department of Work and Pensions 2017 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmworpen/803/803.pdf>

frequent lack of recognition of a CG decision as an indicator of vulnerability, there are 'pressure points' at which a modern slavery survivor becomes vulnerable to various very poor outcomes.¹¹ Additionally, Robinson discusses the need for consideration of a labour rights framework in redressing modern slavery where forced labour has taken place.¹² Accessing compensation and advocating for previous wrongful convictions to be overturned is a growing element of supporting survivors.

Survivors of modern slavery can present with a range of trauma-related mental health concerns, such as PTSD, depression, anxiety;¹³ as well as various physical health concerns.¹⁴ In order to effectively support a survivor, it is therefore necessary to practise a trauma-informed approach. What this exactly entails has been described by a number of authors and organisations. Elliot et al,¹⁵ in the context of violence against women, discuss the need to recognise the impact of violence on coping strategies; be based in relational collaboration and promote empowerment; create an atmosphere respectful of survivors need for safety, respect and acceptance; be culturally competent and sensitive; and to maximise choice for the survivor. Foot argues for the importance of trauma-informed approaches when working specifically with trafficking victims, referencing the complex PTSD often faced by survivors and the need to build this in to service provision.¹⁶ He also emphasises the importance of recognising vicarious trauma, as it is both extremely damaging to the support worker, and if not picked up early leads to 'compassion fatigue' which can impact quality of support. Evans et al emphasise the importance of building choice into all work done with individuals who have previously been in a coercive/controlling situation or it is likely the individual will be re-traumatised.¹⁷

¹¹ City Hearts "No-one Left Behind" <https://cityhearts.global/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NRM-Report-INTERACTIVE-2.pdf>

Human Trafficking Foundation "Day 46" <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1259/day-46.pdf>

¹² Robinson, C. (2015) 'Policy and Practice: Claiming Space for Labour Rights within the UK Modern Slavery Crusade', *Anti Trafficking Review*, 5, pp. 129-143.

¹³ Domoney, J. (2015) 'Mental health service responses to human trafficking: a qualitative study of professionals' experiences of providing care', *BMC Psychiatry*, 15, p. 289.

¹⁴ Greenbaum, J. (2016), 'Identifying victims of human trafficking in the emergency department', *Clinical Pediatric Emergency Medicine*, 17(4), pp. 241-248.

¹⁵ Elliot, D. et al (2005) 'Trauma-informed or trauma-denied: Principles of implementation of trauma-informed services for women', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(4), pp. 461-477.

¹⁶ Foot, K. (2020) 'Towards Trauma-Informed Professional Practices: What legal advocates and journalists can learn from each other and survivors of human trafficking', *Georgia State University Law Review*, 36(4), pp. 1129-1145.

¹⁷ Evans, M. et al (2018) 'Women's experiences of a randomised control trial', *PLoS*, 13(11), pp. 1-11.

The Human Trafficking Foundation (and partner organisations) also address the need for a trauma-informed approach in the 'Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards',¹⁸ referencing Witkin and Robjant's 'Trauma-informed Code of Conduct' (TICC). This offers advice in the core areas of applying basic therapeutic principles to contact work; providing a safe, calm and consistent approach; ensuring clarity about who the survivor is working with; demonstrating interest in immediate safety and needs; making time to 'hear' survivors; focusing on the present rather than continually reliving past trauma.

Waite and Lewis in their report on faith based organisations working in the anti-trafficking/slavery sector, emphasise the importance of respect for everyone regardless of religion, whilst summarising that most faith based organisations in the sector were able to operate with a high level of professionalism, avoiding any potentially coercive proselytising.¹⁹

Considering briefly the literature on independent advocacy for domestic abuse and sexual violence (IDVA and ISVA) there are a number of relevant themes that emerge from the literature. Brooks and Burman explore the importance of ISVAs in negotiating the criminal justice system.²⁰ They review a wide sample of research to demonstrate that the criminal justice system presents a prime opportunity for re-victimisation, which can be ameliorated through independent advocacy. They also provide evidence for the utility of independent advocacy for improving conviction rates and reducing case attrition. Finally, they state that advocacy can be pivotal in assisting victims' conceptions of justice, exploring what that looks like to them and how to achieve it.

Bybee and Sullivan in a much cited and comprehensive analysis demonstrate a quantitatively positive effect of independent advocacy for women leaving abusive relationships.²¹ They emphasise the guiding principle of 'strengths-based services' – an approach that has gained popularity over the past decade and has become

¹⁸ Human Trafficking Foundation 'Survivor Care Standards' <https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1235/slavery-and-trafficking-survivor-care-standards.pdf>

¹⁹ Waite, L. and Lewis, H. et al (2020) "Faith responses to modern slavery" https://jiflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Faith-reponses-to-modern-slavery-2020-Uni-Sheffield-and-Leeds_LowRes.pdf

²⁰ Brooks, O. and Burman, M. 'Reporting rape: Victim perspectives on advocacy support in the criminal justice process', *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 17(2), pp. 209-225.

²¹ Bybee, D. and Sullivan, C. (2002) 'The process through which an advocacy intervention resulted in positive change for battered women over time', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(1), pp. 103-132.

common in IDVA work. A strengths-based approach operates on two core beliefs: that individuals have ‘talents, knowledge and competencies’ to help them through difficult circumstances, and that people are resilient, able to thrive despite adverse circumstances. Such a program would seek to build on the recognised strengths of the individual and mobilise community to respond to the individual’s needs for resources and opportunities.

Evans et al ²² and Ferrari et al ²³ present very detailed analyses of opportunities for IDVAs to work with clients to promote emotional healing and recovery as part of the advocacy work. They particularly explore a large-pilot program in the USA, Psychological Advocacy Towards Healing (PATH), a therapeutic piece of work done by specially trained IDVAs with their clients to help deal with current emotional problems they face (with an emphasis on current symptoms and strategies to deal with them rather than exploring past trauma).

A formalised IDVA role was created in 2005 and expanded to cover most areas of the UK. ²⁴ IDVA training is an accredited course that sits alongside ‘on the job’ training requiring extensive coursework to be completed. There are subsequent “IDVA expert” accredited courses that can be undertaken to specialise in a particular area. ²⁵ ISVA accreditation was more recently developed in 2015, similar to IDVA training there are a number of modules for which coursework must be completed whilst training on the job. ²⁶ Both the IDVA and ISVA accredited training pathways and formalised roles were devised by groups of NGOs who were well established within the sector.

A number of studies emphasise the importance of advocacy going beyond the individual level and becoming structural, ²⁷ indeed it is argued that it is impossible to separate the two as the efforts undertaken for individuals will sometimes result in structural changes. However, it is still argued that advocates should be given the opportunity to use their expertise to formally advocate for structural change where appropriate.

²² Evans, M. et al (2018) ‘Women’s experiences of a randomised control trial’, PLoS, 13(11), pp. 1–11.

²³ Ferrari, G. et al (2018), ‘Psychological advocacy towards healing (PATH)’, PLoS, 13, pp. 1–17.

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²⁵ Safelives <https://safelives.org.uk/training/idvas-and-frontline-professionals/how-choose-course>

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Appendix B

Knowledge areas and outcomes

Area	Outcome
Welfare benefits	Avoid destitution, client is able to access the full subsistence they are entitled to.
Housing rights	Client avoids homelessness and is able to live in secure, long-term housing that is suitable for them.
Compensation claims	Advice on what may be available to them dependent on their situation. Client is awarded the amount of compensation they are entitled to if they wish to pursue this.
Overturning criminal convictions	Criminal convictions imposed during time in exploitation are resolved. This may involve convictions overseas and challenging European Arrest Warrants.
Immigration and asylum	Avoid deportation, achieve the immigration status the client wants and is entitled to.
Family Law	Client is able to fully participate in the processes and see a good outcome for their children and resolution of custody issues.
Health services	Ensure client is able to access the necessary services dependent on their needs.
National Referral Mechanism	Client is able to challenge negative Reasonable and/or Conclusive Grounds decisions and receive the appropriate Victim Care Contract (VCC) support.
Public law	Client is able to bring public law challenges where necessary.
Community Care	Client is able to access support under the Care Act where necessary – liaising with Community Care solicitors where challenges need to be made.
Fraud and Debt	Client is supported with fraud issues that arise as a result of their exploitation; preventing bailiff action and clearing fraudulent debts; support opening bank accounts; etc.

Appendix C

Scope of evaluation and methodology

This independent review has been commissioned by Hope for Justice to evaluate the practices and processes of the IMSA model, and to initially assess the potential for wider rollout of the model and the formalisation of the role, similar to that of Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (henceforth IDVA). This is a small-scale review completed by one researcher over a three-week period, it therefore does not claim to be a fully comprehensive evaluation of the model with a complete analysis of all metrics and outcomes. Rather, it should be viewed as an 'interim' review with the aim of assessing the work done by IMSAs and how this impacts the clients they are working with. It should also be stated that whilst other post-NRM support models exist and may be referenced within the report, it is beyond the scope of this report to compare the Hope for Justice IMSA model directly with any other operation.

This review has been undertaken to:

- Evaluate the current model in terms of outcomes and process
- Capture the 'value-added' of an IMSA working with a client who is a survivor of modern slavery
- Consider scope for wider roll-out of the 'IMSA model' nationally and the scope for accreditation

A review of the literature was carried out to build a framework of best practice for independent advocacy work with survivors of modern slavery. A detailed review of eleven anonymised case files was carried out, interviews with six IMSAs and thirteen clients were also completed.

As this was an 'interim review' style piece of work fifteen days of researcher time was agreed upon. The review was to be qualitative in nature, as Hope for Justice produce their own numerical outcomes which could not have been comprehensively audited in the timeframe of the review but will be considered within the qualitative analysis.

The process and methods for achieving the aims stated above were as follows:

1. Undertake a review of the academic and 'grey' literature on two themes, the particular needs of modern slavery survivors and evaluations of other support paradigms, and evaluation of the IDVA and ISVA roles
2. From these two literatures, develop a theoretical framework of best practice to test findings against
3. Carry out interviews with IMSAs covering a wide range of topics related to their role
4. Agree a schedule of interview questions for a third party to work through with a group of Hope for Justice clients
5. Undertake a review of eleven case files
6. Analyse the results of the above investigation using the best practice framework

Interviews with clients

Due to logistical factors a list of questions was agreed between two IMSAs, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager at Hope for Justice, and the researcher. The agreed questions asked about the help IMSAs had given, how they felt IMSA work had impacted them and their outcomes, working with Hope for Justice compared with other organisations and anything they would change. There was also a series of closed ended questions at the end to which a response of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' could be given. The purpose was explained to clients and reassurance that they could give honest answers whatever they may be, and that their responses would not be shared with their IMSA. The client/survivor interviews were carried out by a third party, who is familiar with working with survivors, to avoid potential influence or power imbalance. Interpreters were used where necessary to ensure the client was able to fully understand and respond to questions. Thirteen interviews were completed.

Responses from Independent Modern Slavery Advocates

Six semi-structured interviews were carried out by the researcher with IMSAs. These covered a number of different topics, such as building relationships, navigating services, the value added of the IMSA role and training and supervision.

Review of case files

For this review eleven anonymised case files were reviewed. The case files were selected to represent the scope of clients supported by the IMSA model, ensuring a range of different types of exploitation, genders and nationalities (including British, EEA and non-EEA survivors). The emphasis of the review was mainly on the correspondence logs and the letters and emails exchanged between IMSAs and partner organisations and other institutions. The intent of the case file review was not to produce quantitative results of outcomes, but to assess the practical application and outworking of the aims of the model.



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