



KALAYAAN

justice for migrant domestic workers

Public Announcement

BREAKING POINT: Why the UK Government needs to act NOW to protect slavery survivors

Kalayaan is a designated First Responder to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), **the one and only system** the UK has to identify and safeguard potential slavery survivors whilst their referrals are being considered by the UK Government.

Statutory and voluntary sector First Responder Organisations are appointed by the UK Government. NRM referrals can only be made by First Responder Organisations. There is no formal application process to become a First Responder, there is no specific statutory funding for the role and no qualification or specific training is mandated.

Kalayaan sits on numerous stakeholder groups with the UK Government as part of our commitment to **uphold the rights of migrant domestic workers and safeguard this workforce and other vulnerable populations in the UK.**

We have been a First Responder since the NRM was established in 2009. In this time, we have seen other organisations appointed as First Responders whilst others have decided to step down from this role. To this day, we see statutory First Responders who are unaware of their legal duties to refer children to the NRM, and for adults, to make referrals or complete Duty to Notify requests.

It has been the case for several years now (far too long in the context of increasing awareness campaigns and resultant increases in the numbers of survivors coming forward and being identified by First Responders), that there has been a lack of acknowledgment by the UK Government of the need to recruit and train more, as well as existing, First Responder Organisations.

The system has become overwhelmed and appears to be at breaking point. Some statutory First Responder Organisations remain unaware of their legal responsibilities, and non-statutory First Responders do not have the capacity to cope. This has the very real result that survivors, already victims of severe human rights violations, are unable to be referred to the NRM and access support. Without being identified and provided support, **survivors are at real risk of further harm and abuse, including treatment that amounts to slavery.**

This situation cannot be allowed to continue. We implore the UK Government to act NOW and suggest the following:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URGENT CONSIDERATION

- Consider and decide on existing applications from specialist front line organisations to become a First Responder Organisation
- Establish a recruitment process without further delay for prospective organisations to apply
- Develop and maintain a nationwide training programme for both statutory and non-statutory First Responder Organisations
- Provide funding for First Responder Organisations to carry out their roles

Rita Gava, Director and Virginia Mantouvalou, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

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