Modern slavery awareness for hotel and event teams

Hospitality staff may notice signs that someone is being controlled, exploited or prevented from speaking freely. A briefing should explain how to raise a factual concern without confronting a suspected exploiter. The pattern and context matter; a single observation does not prove modern slavery. Give staff the trusted internal contact and the appropriate urgent route where someone appears in immediate danger.

UK hospitality staff introduction; recognition and safe reporting, with formal referrals handled by authorised bodies.

The practical principles

Notice possible indicators

Exploitation can involve forced labour, trafficking or control through threats and debt. A worker might appear unable to leave, have wages or documents controlled by another person, or be coached on every answer. These observations can have different explanations. Avoid assumptions based on nationality, language or appearance. Record specific behaviour and circumstances that concern you.

Keep the person’s safety central

Use the safeguarding and reporting procedure. Confronting a suspected controller or conducting your own investigation can expose the person to greater danger. If a safe opportunity arises, ask whether the person needs help without making promises you cannot keep. Use an appropriate independent interpreter arrangement where required. An accompanying person may be part of the concern.

Use the appropriate route

Call 999 for immediate danger. For other concerns, involve the designated safeguarding lead and use the appropriate police or official reporting route. Preserve factual information securely. The National Referral Mechanism has designated first-responder organisations; ordinary venue staff should pass concerns to the appropriate body rather than promise a formal referral themselves. Follow-up should protect confidentiality and avoid alerting a suspected exploiter.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: a contractor’s workers appear unable to keep their own documents and one person answers every question for them. A staff member records what they actually observed and reports through the safeguarding or management route. They do not announce an accusation in front of the group or attempt their own investigation. The responsible team can seek appropriate specialist and official assistance.

Avoid the common failure

A dramatic confrontation can increase danger for the affected person. Avoid promises about immigration outcomes, confidentiality or rescue that staff cannot deliver. Keep the report secure and retain the recipient and time. Formal referral and investigation functions belong to authorised bodies, while ordinary staff can make an accurate and timely report.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: An agency worker says someone keeps their passport and takes their wages. They look frightened when that person approaches.

Consider immediate safety, follow the safeguarding route and avoid confronting the suspected controller. Record the worker's words and relevant observations. Escalate to police or an appropriate official body through the procedure, using 999 for immediate danger.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- Observation
- location/time
- immediate danger
- safe reporting route
- person informed
- restricted record reference

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

A concern should be based on:

Observed behaviour and disclosures Specific facts are more reliable than stereotypes.

Confronting a suspected controller may:

Increase danger Use safe reporting rather than an improvised investigation.

An agency contact insists on holding every worker's documents

During induction, a third party keeps answering for a group of workers and retains their paperwork. One worker appears anxious about speaking alone. What should front-line staff do with that observation?

Compare your decision

Follow the organisation's safeguarding or exploitation-reporting route. Record factual observations and raise them discreetly with the designated person. Avoid investigating, confronting the third party or promising a particular outcome. Follow emergency arrangements for immediate danger.

Distinguish "the contact kept the folder and answered three questions" from an unverified conclusion about the employment relationship. Limit circulation to those handling the concern.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-industry-factsheets

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue's procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details