

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Nottingham		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20 Social Work and Social Policy		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping anti-slavery practice and policy in the UK at a local and national level		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> January 2017 – September 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Alison Gardner	Nottingham Research Fellow	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2017 – ongoing
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> January 2017 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Gardner's research on building communities which are resilient to modern slavery influenced local and national public policy and practice in three ways. <b>Firstly</b>, by improving communication within a new local antislavery partnership in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, Gardner <b>built capacity and improved modern slavery prevention practices</b>. <b>Secondly</b>, by disseminating this approach to other local authorities, Gardner's work <b>improved front-line coordination and increased victim identification</b>. <b>Thirdly</b>, by having her key approaches taken up by the <b>Home Office</b> and embedded within new statutory guidance issued under Section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act (UK Home Office): this <b>brought locality-based and multi-agency responses into implementation guidance for the first time</b>.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>The aim of Gardner's research is to address the question, 'How can we create communities that are resilient against modern slavery?' For Gardner, resilience implies developing a sustainable social and economic context in which exploitation cannot easily become established or persist, a community that - over the longer term - can become 'slavery-free'. Her research made an original contribution by bringing public management and administration perspectives to bear on modern slavery policies and practices for the first time. (R1,3,6) The research and practice elements of Gardner's work have been integrally interwoven from the outset. This dynamic is reflected in outputs, which combine traditional academic articles (R3,4,6) alongside co-produced practice reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, and toolkits (R1,2,5). The rapidity with which the work gained traction amongst academic peers and policymakers alike was made possible by Gardner's 15 years' experience in policymaking at a national level with the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Local Government Association and local authorities. Her doctoral work (2012-2016) about local government allowed her to transition from policy into academia whilst retaining a strong network and a deep understanding of the needs and processes of policy making and makers.</p> <p><b>Stage One.</b> Between April and September 2017, and again in 2019-20 Gardner initiated and led research with the Office of the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) <b>This research pointed to the implementation gap between anti-slavery legislation and front-line practice</b>, in particular emerging challenges in the implementation of the UK's 2015 Modern Slavery Act. Highlighting the framing of the UK's antislavery policy at a national level, Gardner's evidence suggested a consistent failure to build leadership and capacity at a local level. Moreover, it showed differentiated engagement with antislavery policy from crucial local</p>		

partner organisations (such as UK local authorities and the voluntary sector), which demonstrated a lack of coordination, accountability and resources (R1,3).

**Stage Two: Gardner then translated these findings for policy-makers and other antislavery actors in 2017 through recommendations to strengthen local implementation** (R2-5) emphasising the need for more proactive support for local policy networks and communities engaged in antislavery activity, embracing different conceptions of the policy challenge beyond a criminal justice perspective.

Critically, Gardner's research identified gaps that her collaborative work with the policy community and research-led resources then helped to fill. She led a series of action learning workshops about how local partnerships could adapt performance management tools to deliver antislavery work and collaborated on further research to understand the impact of local media and awareness campaigns (R4,5). Gardner also translated her findings into an online toolkit and interactive database (R2), with new and curated online resources for antislavery partnerships.

**Stage 3:** In 2018 and following the uptake of the toolkit, Gardner's work culminated in a **new conceptual framework for building anti-slavery resilience at a community level**, with reference to models of resilience and a dynamic, systemic approach to monitoring 'social determinants' as a means to describe interdependencies between personal, locality, legislative and structural influences (R6). This article underpinned three successful bids for funding (G1-3) GCRF Global Cities Free of Slavery, a UKRI COVID Rapid Response project looking at the impacts of pandemics on survivors, and a further AHRC- funded project on implications of COVID-19 for anti-trafficking responses in Senegal and Kenya).

### 3. References to the research

#### Publications:

R1. **Gardner, A.** (2018 1<sup>st</sup> Edition; 2020 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), *Collaborating for Freedom: Anti-Slavery Partnerships in the UK* (London: Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner). Research report, available at <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1186/collaborating-for-freedom-anti-slavery-partnerships-in-the-uk.pdf>

R2. *Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit* (compiled and co-curated by **Gardner**), available at <http://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk/>

R3. **Gardner, A.** (2018). An idea whose time has come?: modern slavery, multiple streams approach and multi-layer policy implementation. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 10(13), 461-481. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huy022>

R4. Birks, J & **Gardner, A.** (2019), Introducing the Slave Next Door, *Anti Trafficking Review* 13:66-81. <https://doi.org/10.14197/atr.201219135>

R5. Ward, E. & **Gardner, A.** (2018), *A short guide to performance management for local anti-slavery partnerships* (Nottingham: Rights Lab), available at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/resources/reports-and-briefings/past-reports-and-briefings/2018/november/performance-management-guide.pdf>

R6. **Gardner, A.**, Northall, P & Brewster, B. (2020), Alison Gardner, Phil Northall & Ben Brewster (2020): Building Slavery-free Communities: A Resilience Framework, *Journal of Human Trafficking*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2020.1777828>

#### Indicators of quality / research funding:

R1&2. Commissioned by the first UK Antislavery Commissioner

R6: Underpinned 3 grants:

G1: GCRF Slavery Free Communities, 2019-2021, UKRI GCRF Global Engagement Network, £151,783 (PI Pinheiro; **Co-I Gardner**).

G2: COVID-19 Risk and response: Impacts and Mitigations for Modern Slavery Victims, Survivors and Vulnerable Populations, 2020-2021, UKRI £428,570 (PI Brotherton **Co-Is** Wright, Such, Lucas, **Gardner**, Wyman, Trodd).

G3: Building Local Resilience to Modern Slavery and human Trafficking After COVID-19: Action-Research in Senegal and Kenya, 2020-2021, AHRC £149,000 (**PI Gardner**).

#### 4. Details of the impact

Gardner's research (R1-6) influenced public policy in three ways, starting with locality-based capacity-building and eventually influencing the content of national statutory guidance.

**1. Building capacity and improved modern slavery prevention efforts of diverse local agencies.** In January 2017, Gardner's concept of a 'slavery-free community' (R1,2,3) and the accompanying multi-part approach to becoming slavery-free **became an integral aspect of the action plan and communications of one of the UK's first city and county-wide antislavery partnerships** - the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Modern Slavery Partnership (NNMSP), evidenced through citation in its minutes of January 2017 (A). The action plan helped to **rapidly and comprehensively build local capacity, which in turn improved the prevention practices of the local agencies involved**: Over 90% of 1,100 front-line service providers undertaking awareness and safeguarding training between March 2017 and December 2019 felt that their knowledge of modern slavery had increased and that they were now more confident in dealing with cases of modern slavery (A).

Gardner and her team then led the NNMSP in the development of a **new inter-agency 'problem profile'**, drawing on the findings of her work on resilience (R6) which **helped develop the county's strategic approach**. The Chair of the NNMSP attested to the positive impact that the embedding of Gardner's vision for a slavery-free Nottinghamshire had had in the partnership, stating that it had, "*provided a strong focus to our strategy and campaigns, helping to build awareness of the local impacts of modern slavery, and to create stronger local institutional and policy responses to the issue*" (A). The Director of Intelligence (including Modern Slavery) and Force Authorising Officer for Nottinghamshire Police credited Gardner and her team's work in the partnership with enabling them to "*think more broadly and critically and strategically about slavery and exploitation at both a local and global level*" (B).

#### **2. Diffusion of Gardner's approach to other local authorities improved front-line coordination, and increased victim identification**

Gardner's online toolkit (R2), was launched in August 2018 and between August 2018 and September 2020 had 8,808 unique users from countries including the UK, USA, Australia and Ireland, with 275 registrations to access specialist training materials (C) These resources i) motivated another local authority to initiate a new multi-agency partnership, ii) led to new forms of collaboration and better reporting. This in turn led to iii) better prevention and victim identification:

i) The co-ordinator of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Modern Slavery Action Group (LLRMSG) accessed the report and toolkit. She credits them with having **enabled LLRMSG to initiate its activities in Leicestershire and to develop quickly**: "*Your toolkit was key in...deciding which agencies should be members of the group. Thus, ensuring representation of law enforcement agencies, statutory agencies, charities and NGOs (as well as businesses). The toolkit served as a hub of easy access to relevant information, guidance, legislation and protocols*" (D).

ii) **Gardner's work informed Sandwell Council's refreshed approach to multi-agency working.** In July 2019, Sandwell Council Leaders signed the Slavery Free Community Charter – explicitly based on Gardner's work (R1-3) and a direct copy of her Nottingham pledge - to

demonstrate their commitment to addressing modern slavery (E). They worked to promote the message and start to help members of the public to understand what modern slavery is and how to respond. **As a result of this, they began for the first time to receive referrals from members of the public** (E). The new approach – informed by the partnership report and toolkit with expert input directly from Gardner - allowed Sandwell to diagnose that they had become “*trapped in a cycle of response and were living in downstream operations*” (E). They **undertook a root and branch reform of their modern slavery work**, making changes to their approach, awareness and operation protocols.

iii) **Sandwell’s new approach radically improved prevention and detection work.** As a result of the new systems they put in place, Sandwell Council: **increased referrals from 47 to 171 in a 12-month period – an increase of over 350%; undertook 406 victim screenings and 468 multi-agency interventions; trained 133 first responders and 1253 professionals from government agencies and Civil Society Organisations to recognise and report on modern slavery.** The success of their work led to a shortlist for Thompson Reuters Foundation Stop Slavery award in 2019. The panel noted that Sandwell had “*demonstrated determination in identifying victims and providing comprehensive post-identification support, leading to a complete change in direction, including setting up victim pathways and the Slavery Free Sandwell Pledge*” (E). Sandwell Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Project Manager acknowledged that she had “*adapted several of the ideas developed through your (Gardner’s) slavery-free communities work for application in Sandwell. In particular your work was valuable in developing our Slavery-Free Sandwell pledge and resulted in local political and civic leaders signing up to our slavery-free charter, which underpins our ongoing action to address modern slavery*” (F).

### **3. The positive impacts of this locality-based work were shared with the Home Office, who embedded a new locality focus in its research priorities and statutory guidance**

Building on this experience of establishing and embedding locality-based modern slavery partnership work and encouraging uptake of the approach beyond Nottingham (R1,2). Gardner provided input to the Home Office’s new agenda and priorities (G), published in October 2018 as part of its annual report. The list of research priorities included, *for the first time*, a focus on spatial variations in vulnerability and resilience (G).

Gardner then pursued the need for a locality focus in modern slavery policy implementation through input to new statutory guidance. The March 2019 version of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 Statutory Guidance for England and Wales *did not mention* local antislavery partnerships. Gardner provided written feedback to the Home Office Modern Slavery Unit (MSU) on this version. The Home Office listened to her feedback and as a result, in the final version, not only were anti-slavery partnerships mentioned multiple times, **the guidance endorsed Gardner’s anti-slavery partnership toolkit (R2) for identifying examples of promising and effective practice and training** (G). The guidance also featured prominent and expanded reference to multi-agency working throughout (e.g. p.5, 37, 75 in G), with Gardner’s contributions evident in the clear emphasis on the role of partnerships in establishing “*sustainable changes to behaviour, practice, skills and expertise*” of partners (p.38), and the role of civil society in partnership arrangements generally (G, p.75).

The engagement with her work by UK central government was then continued in a **recommendation made by the UK Government’s Director of Labour Market Enforcement** in the 2019/2020 Labour Market Enforcement Strategy. Citing Gardner’s 2017 collaborative report with IASC (1), the Director recommended that enforcement bodies work with local strategic partnerships and anti-slavery networks, “*with a particular focus on addressing serious, persistent and deliberate non-compliance*”. He described **Gardner’s report** as “*the most comprehensive overview of these networks*” and suggested it **should be a “key reference point for enforcement bodies including the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority**” (H, p.114-115).

## **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- A. NNMSP evidence:
  - 1. Minutes of meeting and action plan.
  - 2. Training data.
  - 3. Stakeholder letter from NNMSP Chair.
  
- B. Stakeholder letter from Director of Intelligence (including Modern Slavery) and Force Authorising Officer for Nottinghamshire Police.
  
- C. Quantitative toolkit user information.
  
- D. Stakeholder letter from Leicester Modern Slavery Partnership lead.
  
- E. Sandwell Council Annual Report on Responses to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
  
- F. Stakeholder letter from Sandwell Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Project Manager.
  
- G. Combined HMG Reports:
  - 1. Home Office 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery Modern Slavery Unit Research Strategy.
  - 2. Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Statutory Guidance Version 0.1 (first draft of Home Office Statutory Guidance).
  - 3. Gardner's feedback on submission to HO Guidance Correspondence with the LGA.
  - 4. Correspondence with the Home Office.
  - 5. Published statutory guidance version final HO Statutory Guidance.
  
- H. 2019/2020 Labour Market Enforcement Strategy.