

30 DAYS TO ACT

TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WILL BE DETAINED ON "EVEN WIDER SCALE" UNDER STEALTH CHANGES

BACKGROUND

A new campaign is [calling on MPs](#) to help halt plans which would put slavery survivors at even greater risk of detention.

The Government previously [denied recording](#) the number of trafficking victims detained in prison-like settings, but charities have since proven that more than 1,400 potential victims, recognised by Home Office decision makers, are still [detained each year](#) due to their immigration status.

Now, a new policy will make it **even harder** for wrongfully detained survivors to be released. MPs have until Thursday 22 April to act.

THE CHANGES

Survivors are already detained in huge numbers, despite guidance stating that there must be a 'public order' reason to do so.

Now, under the changes passed through Parliament without debate, survivors referred by the authorities and recognised as 'potential trafficking victims' by the Home Office, will not automatically be considered too 'at risk' to detain.

The new guidance will expect exploited people to give **further evidence** of 'future harm', via a medical professional, before they are recognised as too vulnerable to be held in prison-like settings. Experts warn the move will lead to survivors being detained on an even wider scale, and for longer.

MPs have 30 days to act. [Ask your MP to sign the 'fatal Early Day Motion' in Parliament, to secure a debate and stop these rules coming into force this May.](#)

Detention 'safeguards' are *already* failing to protect exploited people. [2,914 potential trafficking victims have been detained since 2019.](#)

Now, non-profits warn that survivors will be at even greater risk of detention under the planned changes.

LACK OF SCRUTINY

The Government has used a mechanism to pass the changes called a negative 'Statutory Instrument' (SI). An SI [allows Government to make changes](#) to guidance, under the banner of an existing Act of Parliament. A 'negative SI' is not subject to Parliamentary debate or scrutiny, and the only way to annul this is through a 'fatal' Early Day Motion (EDM), which can be signed by MPs to force a debate on the issue.

YOUR MP MUST ACT

Parliament has only 30 days to stop the changes to detention policy coming into force. John McDonnell MP has tabled an Early Day Motion to stop the change, and the Government is more likely to grant a debate if MPs, like yours, sign before the 22 April deadline. [Take action by tweeting your MP now.](#)

WHAT IS IMMIGRATION DETENTION?

Immigration detention is the act of holding people in prison-like settings because of their immigration status. In the UK, most people held in immigration detention centres [are asylum seekers](#).

The risk of severe [psychological](#), [physical health](#), and [financial harm](#) caused by detention is well-documented. These vulnerabilities can make it even harder for survivors of trafficking to recover after exploitation.

Unlike a prison sentence, immigration detention has [no time limit](#). People can be held for 'administrative purposes', indefinitely. However, detention centres have prison-level security, and detainees are not guaranteed [access to legal advice websites](#).

A growing proportion of people are [now detained in prisons](#), with even greater restrictions on liberty and even [poorer access to legal representation](#) than those in detention centres.

Now the Government has announced plans to [open another detention centre](#), to hold women, despite an earlier pledge to reduce the use of detention after the Windrush Scandal.