



MEDAILLE TRUST
REFUGEE AND FREEDOM FROM MODERN SLAVERY

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023



IN THIS EDITION:

- **Abused and exploited:**
An Albanian woman's story of suffering and redemption
- **Medaille invests**
in Prevent initiative
in Albania
- **Illegal Migration**
Bill passed
- **Medaille expands**
safe house provision
in Merseyside

GUIDE

- 3 **Welcome from CEO**
- 4 **Illegal Migration bill passes**
- 5 **Medaille Launches First Regional Conferences**
- 6 **Abused and Exploited - Rachel's Story**
- 7 **Locked away and forced to grow cannabis – Arben's story**
- 8 **Medaille Expands Safe House Provision In Merseyside**
- 9 **Investment against poverty and trafficking in Albania**
- 10 **Updates from the services**
- 12 **Preventing exploitation**
- 13 **Giftaid**
- 15 **Meet Ben Ryan**



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WELCOME

The summer is here and, typically for the UK, as soon as the school summer holidays start the weather becomes unpredictable and has us having to cover all clothing options and reaching for umbrellas, coats and jumpers alongside the sunscreen! As I write this, parts of southern Europe are experiencing some very hot weather which have led to devastating forest fires on the Greek island of Rhodes and other areas. Our hearts go out to all those displaced and who have lost their homes or businesses as a result of this natural disaster. One of the countries with a land border to Greece is Albania and that country too has been sweltering in the last few weeks.

The statistics tell us that Albania is still the highest source country of adult victims of modern slavery in the UK, as it has been for many years. For this reason it has long been a focus of our work to prevent modern slavery, teaming up with our valued and trusted partners Mary Ward Loreto. In an effort to address one of the key drivers of modern slavery from Albania, poverty, Medaille Trust has just launched an entrepreneurship academy and our first cohort of entrepreneurs has completed the course. We committed to supporting one enterprise and are in the process of exploring the purchase of a commercial dehydrator to enable a

small NGO in Northern Albania to expand their work which supports local growers of forest fruits (you can read more about this on page 9).

There has been much focus recently on the Illegal Migration Bill recently and we put a lot of effort to try to steer the modern slavery aspects of the proposed bill along a different path to that proposed. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful, but will be continuing our advocacy efforts to highlight the realities for those in the UK fleeing exploitation. We too want to prevent people from making dangerous sea crossings to the UK but our efforts will be in the main source country to enable people to have alternative options so they don't have to accept spurious offers of work from criminal gangs.

Thank you again to all of you who support our work prayerfully, practically and financially. We do not take your support for granted.



Garry Smith Chief Executive

Medaille Trust is one of the UK's leading charities in the fight against modern slavery. Our innovative model is based on three principles: Prevent, Protect and Pursue.

Our Prevent work includes advocacy and awareness raising work in the UK and a new Albanian project with an entrepreneurship academy helping to provide meaningful alternatives to those who might otherwise be at risk of exploitation.

Our Protect work provides direct and tailored support to victims of modern slavery. We are one of the UK's largest providers of survivor services, with ten safehouses and six outreach hubs, staffed round the clock by specialist staff, working with more than 600 men, women and dependent children each year.

Our Pursue work helps survivors to engage with police and within the legal system to seek justice and to secure convictions against their perpetrators.

We were founded by Sister Ann Teresa SSJA and our work continues to be inspired by her example and commitment to the Catholic Social Teaching principles of human dignity, compassion and solidarity with the vulnerable. All our work embodies a commitment to personalised support, recognising the dignity and agency of our service users and empowering them on a path to a life that is free from slavery and exploitation.

Thank you for your interest in our work and your commitment to ending modern slavery. If you would like to know more please get in touch.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL PASSES

The Illegal Migration Bill has now become law after passing votes in the House of Commons and the House of Lords and receiving Royal Assent on 20 July. The Illegal Migration Bill is part of the government's wider strategy to end Channel crossings. It does this by preventing anyone who arrives by irregular means from having any access to the asylum system or modern slavery support.

The new law says that if modern slavery victims have arrived here illegally, they will be liable to detention and deportation unless they are cooperating with a criminal investigation or prosecution and are required to remain in the UK. The bill had originally said this rule will apply retrospectively to March 7, 2023 when it was published in Parliament. However the Government agreed to an amendment from the House of Lords not to apply the rule retrospectively. This means that the new deportation rule will not apply to modern slavery victims in our safe houses up to the time the bill was passed.

Medaille Trust has expressed concern that the new rules to deport modern slavery victims who arrive illegally could put their lives at risk as their deportation could mean driving them back into the arms of ruthless criminals from whom they have fled. Over the years we have supported many victims who, by virtue of the fact they were trafficked, can be classified as having entered the UK illegally.

Many of them (like Rachel on page 6) would be terrified at the prospect of being returned to their home country and having to face the criminals who exploited and trafficked them. Many of them would refuse to testify against their traffickers out of fear for themselves and their family. The bill, as revised at the report stage in the Commons, allows a person to challenge their removal by arguing that they would face 'a real, imminent and foreseeable risk of serious and irreversible harm' if they were to be sent to the territory specified in the removal notice. They will have a week to bring such a claim from their place of detention.

The bill also said that any victim of modern slavery who comes to the UK illegally, as most do, will automatically have their asylum claim declared inadmissible. Medaille and other anti-slavery charities expressed concern that the bill could close the door on many people who have been trafficked, abused and exploited and have approached us for refuge and protection.

MEDAILLE LAUNCHES FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCES

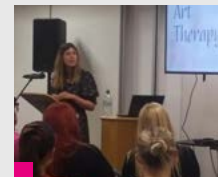
In July, Medaille held its first two regional conferences for staff in London and Manchester. The regional conferences brought together staff from our services across the country to network, share experiences and discuss emerging issues in the provision of protection and support for victims of modern slavery. Here are some highlights from the conferences.



CEO Garry Smith opens London regional conference stressing the importance of staff wellbeing and announces free wellbeing hours for staff, among other initiatives. Garry updates staff on Medaille's Prevent work and plans to provide opportunities for Albanians so they don't fall prey to ruthless traffickers.



Director of Engagement and Strategic Development Ben Ryan discusses the Illegal Migration Bill



London East Service Manager Ellen Lennox talks about initiatives to help victims of modern slavery recover and start rebuilding their lives.



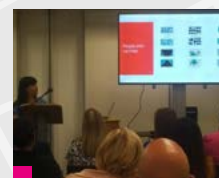
Moving On Project Volunteers in the North share their experience working for Medaille.



London West Senior Service Manager Dimple Ananda and Caseworker Aniksha Pindoria share their experience on delivery of staff wellbeing initiatives.



Caseworker Hannah Moccia describes how the Central Service supported a terminally ill resident to ensure she was as happy as possible in her final days.



Sara Tenant from the Moving On Project explains the "Right to Remain Toolkit"



Director of Police and Justice Partnerships, Marcus Dawson updates staff on Medaille's collaboration with law enforcement agencies.



Mersey Senior Service Manager Naomi Mumba-Dobson updates the conference on a massively successful allotment project at the safe house.



Caseworker Flo Cooper moves attendees to laughter and smiles with a humorous and uplifting presentation to close the conference.



ABUSED AND EXPLOITED – RACHEL'S STORY OF SUFFERING AND REDEMPTION

Rachel is an Albanian resident of one of our safe houses. One of five children, she was in primary school when a family friend sexually abused her. Instead of supporting her, Rachel's father blamed her for the assault, saying she had brought it on herself. He beat her so badly that she fell down the stairs. She was then taken for an operation to "recreate her virginity".

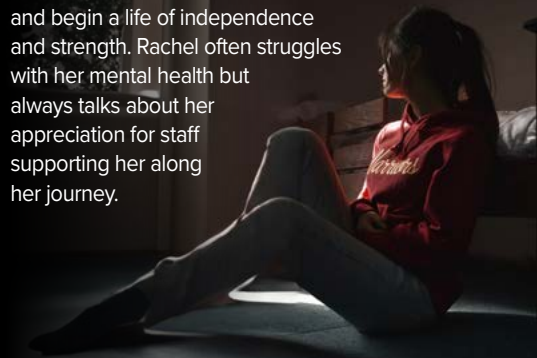
Despite her terrible ordeal, Rachel continued to study hard at school and then went off to university. Shortly after graduating from university she got a part-time job in Marketing while she also cared for her sick mother. At this point, Rachel met a man in a coffee shop who she described as charming. She told her parents about him, but her father was not supportive. After her mother died, Rachel grew closer to her new boyfriend. Her mother had left her jewellery and savings, and Rachel and her partner began using this.

Rachel began living with her partner but soon saw another side to him. He would come home late and drunk and started abusing her physically and emotionally. As their money dried up, her partner told her she should sell her body so he could pay off his debts. Rachel was initially against this but felt emotionally tied to him and feared losing the one connection she had in the world. She therefore agreed. Her partner sold her to many men for sex, took all the money, and forced her to take drugs and alcohol. When Rachel became pregnant, he tried to force her to have an abortion saying she could not work if she was pregnant. When she refused, he beat and raped her. Rachel fled to her father's house as she had nowhere else to go. Her father was unhappy that she was unmarried and about to raise a child without a father. Rachel

struggled with her mental health throughout her pregnancy and gave birth alone in a hospital.

Shortly after her baby was born, Rachel's ex-partner reappeared and wanted to reconcile. Soon, he started talking about wanting to send her back to work. Rachel refused and began to work at an agency, but he would turn up at work and threaten her, resulting in her boss firing her. The harassment continued, with him attacking her house and assaulting her in front of her daughter. Rachel reported him to the police and got a restraining order against him, but he ignored this. When Rachel found another job, he found out and showed up at her workplace. He demanded Rachel resume sex work for him and threatened her and her daughter, saying if she reported him again to the police, he would kill her.

Fearing for her life, Rachel fled to the UK, entering illegally and then going to stay with her sister, who was already living here. She contacted the Salvation Army and was able to access supported safe housing at Medaille Trust. Medaille staff worked with her to ensure she had a subsistence allowance, access to health services, emotional support, legal advice, trauma-informed counselling services, education, and in-house activities, including Yoga and Zumba. She and her daughter also enjoy trips to the zoo and other outings organised by the staff. Rachel recently received Discretionary Leave to Remain, meaning she can apply in 5 years for Indefinite Leave to Remain. She is ready to move on and live independently with her daughter through Local Authority housing. She wants to start to work and begin a life of independence and strength. Rachel often struggles with her mental health but always talks about her appreciation for staff supporting her along her journey.



LOCKED AWAY AND FORCED TO GROW CANNABIS – ARBEN'S STORY

Arben is an Albanian man who was trafficked to the UK last year. He paid people smugglers £3,500 in Calais. Once he had arrived in the UK, Arben's father paid the smugglers a further £1,500. Arben claimed asylum on arrival and while he was staying in an immigration facility his smugglers contacted him saying he owed them a favour.

Arben knew no one in the UK and was very scared of the traffickers who made it clear to him that they would find him if he didn't agree to their demands. He had heard stories of people being hurt or of their families back home being threatened by the trafficking gangs.

Arben soon began living with his traffickers. He had to cook for them and clean the house but was not paid anything. After a month, he was taken to another house where the traffickers were cultivating cannabis. He was told he had to look after the plants. Alone and with no money Arben looked after the plants. He was not allowed to leave the house and his captors brought him food.

One day, there was a robbery and people came looking for weed and money. Seeing an opportunity, Arben ran away but the traffickers contacted him. They blamed him for the robbery and said he now owed them £25,000. They told him they knew where his family was living.

Arben then met another person who said he could work for him after speaking to his traffickers. Arben was then sent to a remote cottage where he was locked inside and again responsible for tending to cannabis plants. One day the police raided the property and Arben was arrested for cannabis cultivation. While in Police custody, Arben told them his story. He was referred to the National Referral Mechanism (mechanism for assessing whether someone is a potential victim of modern slavery) and was then transferred to one of our safe houses where he began receiving a range of support.

When the Home Office assessed Arben's case they gave him a Negative Reasonable Grounds Decision (they didn't think he was actually a victim of modern slavery). However Medaille Trust and his lawyer submitted a request for reconsideration. The negative decision was overturned and he received a Positive Reasonable Grounds decision.

We will continue to support Arben as he rebuilds his life and look towards a brighter future.



MEDAILLE EXPANDS SAFE HOUSE PROVISION IN MERSEYSIDE



In May, the Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Malcolm McMahon, declared open a new wing of our safe house in Merseyside. The new wing which was part-funded by the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation adds eight more rooms to the existing 10. The house now accommodates 18 male survivors of modern slavery.

Unveiling a plaque to declare the new wing of the house open, the Archbishop prayed for the project to go from success to success and stressed the need for assistance to be provided to those who need help and support. A representative of the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation said he was impressed by the modern and functional facility. He said it will be conducive to the residents' recovery as they begin to plan the next stage of their journey to increased freedom and independence.

Medaille's Mersey Senior Service Manager Naomi Mumba-Dobson said: *"The eight new beds will help us continue in our mission to provide accommodation*



and support to victims and survivors of modern slavery by giving people a lovely and warm place that they can use for their recovery and reflection period."

In a message to guests, CEO of Medaille Trust Garry Smith said: *"The number of victims of modern slavery is sadly growing significantly every year. Last year 129 men were referred to our survivor services in the North-West. We must continue to respond to this increase with much-needed support for those who escape and seek refuge and protection."*

One of the survivors of modern slavery related his experience coming to live at the Mersey safe house. He said: *"I was really nervous when I arrived, but I was given a warm welcome, and from that day to this, my life has changed for the better. I have been shown kindness by every member of staff, and they helped me regain my confidence. I have been given access to various local services so I can build a promising future in front of me. I would like to thank all members of staff for the help and support they have given me."*

Medaille Trust is now trying to raise just over four hundred thousand pounds to further improve the Mersey safe house with a counselling room, a sports and recreation room, a multi-faith prayer room, and a training room, among other facilities. To donate please visit www.medaille-trust.org.uk/donate



INVESTMENT AGAINST POVERTY AND TRAFFICKING IN ALBANIA

An Albanian small enterprise which buys, dries and markets fruits and vegetables from poor farmers will soon be able to expand their business with an investment from the Albanian Entrepreneurship Academy. The Albanian Entrepreneurship Academy, a partnership between Medaille Trust, Ethical Good and nine NGOs was launched last year by our CEO Garry Smith. Speaking at the event, the Managing Director of Ethical Good, Duncan Parker said *"we know that one of the drivers of modern slavery is poverty and often people will feel forced to accept spurious offers of employment in the UK because they feel they have no hope of employment by staying in Albania"*.

The Entrepreneurship Academy aimed to support five enterprises in Albania to produce sustainable business plans so that they could thrive and offer employment in their communities so people wouldn't be tempted into the hands of ruthless traffickers. One of the five enterprises accepted for the academy is run by QSNNN, an NGO based in Fushë-Arrëz in the North of Albania – a poverty-stricken area notorious for recruitment by traffickers because of the lack of opportunity there. QSNNN is already supporting the community in a variety of ways, but wanted to develop their social enterprise which purchased fruit, vegetables and

herbs from local growers, dried them and then packaged them for sale in local markets. Joseph Bistransky from QSNNN said *"We know we already had a business model that was supporting growers, but we felt that with support this could be even stronger and allow us to help more local growers and also provide much needed income for our own NGO to support other programmes"*. At the town hall session at the culmination of the academy, QSNNN presented the business plan they had worked on demonstrating how with a small investment they would be able to purchase a commercial dryer which would increase their capacity and prolong the season for their work and so multiply their income. Given the volume of people being trafficked from this part of Albania, along with the demonstrated potential impact on the local community, Medaille Trust has chosen to partner with QSNNN to support their work in order to try to prevent more people being trafficked to the UK. CEO Garry Smith said *"I am excited to see how this partnership will develop over the coming years. The prevention of human trafficking is a key strand of our work and to partner with a respected NGO who is already working at the heart of one of the most vulnerable communities in Albania is a real privilege and a great opportunity to help in the global fight against modern slavery"*.



UPDATES FROM THE SERVICES



Staff volunteers and residents of the Coastal safe house enjoy a BBQ in the garden to ensure Summer isn't wasted.



By contributing their time and skills our volunteers play a key role in delivering the mission of this charity to help survivors of modern slavery recover and rebuild their lives. Coordinator of Moving on Project Hampshire Stevie Waight thanked our volunteers Faith and Beth with some flowers for Volunteers Week.



Two modern slavery survivors from one of our London safe houses met King Charles and Queen Camilla during Coronation celebrations in May. They performed for the Royals as part of the group Drama for Healing.



Former Secretary of State for Justice and South Swindon MP Sir Robert Buckland visited our Central service to open our 10th safe house. He had the opportunity to chat to staff and residents of the safe house



Under the expert guidance of gardener Emily, our Mersey house staff and residents have been having massive success with the allotment. Here Emily shows the allotment to guests at the opening of the new wing of the Mersey House.



Dancing and feasting together were all part of the Eid celebrations at our London West safe house



PREVENTING EXPLOITATION

The latest worldwide estimates of the scale of modern slavery suggest there are almost 50 million people around the world living in modern slavery, and it's happening to 122,000 people in the UK.

Medaille Trust has one mission: to end modern slavery. One of the ways we seek to do this is by preventing exploitation from happening in the first place.

Through raising awareness of modern slavery in the UK and supporting economic development in Albania, we aim to make communities more resilient and equip vulnerable people with alternative solutions to trafficking.

Your support could help make communities stronger and vulnerable people more resilient to risks of trafficking and exploitation.

£20 could help us raise awareness of modern slavery through delivering talks and presentations to local community groups, faith groups, schools and other organisations.

£30 could go towards our work with other organisations, enabling us to amplify our voice in the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery

£60 could help support our Albania Coordinator, recently recruited to support and develop our work in Albania, while monitoring local trends and initiatives.



£10 a month could help develop our communications and social media campaigns, encouraging more people to spot the signs of modern slavery in their own community.

£20 a month could support our Albania Entrepreneurship Academy, helping to develop sustainable local businesses which can offer employment opportunities to Albanian people.

Please pledge your support and make a donation. If you can, please *giftaid it*. Thank you.

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Please know that every £ makes a difference.



MEET BEN RYAN

Ben Ryan is the newest member of our management team. He started in July as our Executive Director: Engagement and Strategic Development (Deputy CEO). Here our Director of Communications Mark Bhagwandin speaks to Ben Ryan.



MB: Welcome Ben. Tell us a bit about your background.

BR: I've always been fascinated by the questions of how you can get politics and policy-makers to engage with ethics and big moral questions, and how you can get religious groups and charities to apply their principles and beliefs in a really practical way that has policy implications. Throughout my career I've tried to marry the two. I was Head of Research at an organization called Theos, which was doing research on religion and society and trying to influence the climate of decision making to take better account of religious and ethical questions. While there I wrote reports and books, among other things, on ethics in migration, the future of European politics, and on the faith charity sector. More recently I worked for the Church of England as their national policy adviser on all matters to do with modern slavery, the criminal justice system and migration policy, which involved engaging with parliamentarians and officials on challenging and developing different approaches to those policy areas.

MB: What made you want to work for Medaille?

BR: Earlier this year I saw a line from Pope Francis calling on people to become 'missionaries of human dignity, against human trafficking and every form of exploitation'. I had already been working for some time on the policy issues around migration and modern slavery, but I think the Pope identified something there which speaks to me about the mission of Medaille, which is our calling to work as champions of human dignity, challenging a society and a world that is too often indifferent to the plight of victims of slavery. It's exciting to have the opportunity to contribute to that work.

MB: Ben, this is a new role at Medaille. Tell us a bit more about it.

BR: Executive Director for Engagement and Strategic Development is a long job title but, essentially, I'll be overseeing anything to do with advocacy, comms and media, fundraising and volunteers, and working with other senior leaders on the future development and strategy of Medaille. That includes all things concerned with raising the profile of the charity and more broadly the issues of modern slavery. My hope is to develop a louder and distinctive voice for Medaille; one that is attractive, positive and trustworthy, but also capable of challenging and confronting the different ways in which society continues to turn a blind eye towards exploitation.

MB: You are no stranger to Medaille, having served as a Trustee. What do you think is the most rewarding thing about working for Medaille?

BR: It comes back to seeing an organisation with a vocation and I think Medaille combines that calling to work on an immensely important issue with an incredible record of innovative and exciting projects.

MB: Tell us something interesting about yourself

BR: My dad is a world-renowned academic expert on magic. Which is admittedly more of an interesting fact about him than me.



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