



Knowledge and Library Services (KLS)

Impact stories

Title: A KLS literature search contributed to a rapid evidence assessment (REA) on modern slavery and public health, leading to an impactful publication on this issue of contemporary urgency.

User testimonial: *“KLS made the job of finding and retrieving material for a rapid evidence assessment quick and streamlined. The research problem we faced was complex and the evidence base, diffuse. The Service enabled a clearly defined search that ensured specificity and, ultimately, a timely output to inform the public health community”* **Liz Such, Research Fellow, School of Health and Related Research (SchARR)**

Challenge:

Modern slavery is a complex and hidden crime that violates basic human rights. As such, there are multiple public health implications. Work in this field is very underdeveloped with law enforcement taking a lead in policy and practice. We needed to answer questions on how public health had approached the issue in the UK and overseas and how it had been addressed in practice. Does a ‘public health approach’ add value to addressing modern slavery?

Solution:

To achieve our aims we began a REA. Working in partnership, KLS and a seconded academic researcher identified the terms and scope of a systematic review. The findings from the review would be supplemented by a consultative exercise with multiple stakeholders. The REA was co-developed with KLS professionals; they helped define the search terms, selected the databases and were able to access health policy databases not generally accessible to external researchers. Outputs were quick, the search delivered high specificity and full-text sourcing enabled the researcher to rapidly develop policy and practice findings for PHE and the broader public health community.

Impact:

The outcome was a successful and impactful publication with PHE and University of Sheffield (UoS) colleagues on an issue of contemporary urgency: modern slavery. An online report was published on gov.uk “[Modern Slavery and public health.](#)”

Additional impacts included:

- an eposter: “[Is modern slavery a public health issue?](#)”
- invitations to present findings to the Health Equity board
- developmental discussions with medical students at University of Sheffield and in practice; PHE Yorkshire and Humber (YH) and the YH regional anti-slavery coordinator for the police
- tweet of report by the UK anti-slavery commissioner, amongst others
- analysis submission currently under review at *BMJ*

Success factors:

The success factors and benefits included:

- clear goals
- solidifying relationships between PHE and UoS added value and enabled secondment to work effectively
- ethos of partnership between KLS and researchers
- strict timelines
- face-to-face contact supplemented by on-line discussion
- work was funded by MRC and was therefore work coming at minimal cost to PHE

Contact:

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