

London's taxi drivers have given their backing to a new app aimed at eradicating modern slavery in the hand car wash industry.

The capital's 10,000 black cab drivers, represented by the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, LTDA, are being encouraged to support the Safe Car Wash App, an unprecedented attempt to map the extent of slavery in hand car washes in London and across the country.

Steve McNamara, LTDA General Secretary, said: "London's taxi drivers are the eyes and ears of the city, driving its streets multiple times a day.

"We want London to be a safe place to live, work and travel, free from crimes like modern slavery in hand car washes. We welcome the Safe Car Wash App and the potential it has to raise awareness of this abuse and help the police to tackle the problem."

The app has been launched by [The Clewer Initiative](#), the Church of England's campaign against modern slavery, and the [Santa Marta Group](#), the Catholic Church's anti-slavery project amid concerns about slavery and exploitation in Britain's 18,000 hand car washes.

Drivers can download the app for free on to Apple or Android devices. Users can open the app when they are at the car wash and pinpoint their exact location using GPS.

They will then be taken through a series of indicators of modern slavery. These range from practical details - such as whether workers have suitable protective clothing - to behavioural clues, such as whether they appear withdrawn. If the answers indicate a high likelihood, users will be directed to the Modern Slavery Helpline.

Data from the app will be anonymised and shared with the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

The support from taxi drivers in London comes as the Minister for Crime, Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Women, Victoria Atkins, gave her backing to the app.

She said: "The Government cannot tackle modern slavery alone, and collaboration with law enforcement agencies and local communities through faith groups such as The Clewer Initiative, is vital in helping us to crack down on those who seek to exploit vulnerable people.

"The data that will be gathered from the Safe Car Wash App will prove invaluable to the National Crime Agency and the GLAA in building a more comprehensive intelligence picture of the scale of exploitation in hand car washes and will help to better target resources for operational activity."

The app is backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Other groups backing the app include Kevin Hyland, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the National Police Chiefs' Council and [the Local](#)

Notes to editors:

A decade ago there were few hand car washes in the UK but estimates now suggest that there are more than 18,000 in Britain's high streets, at the sides of motorways, and on abandoned garage forecourts.

Many are run as legitimate businesses, but some exploit, force and threaten their workers, trapping them in modern slavery. No reliable data currently exists as to the scale of the problem, with the result that subsequent responses have proved inadequate.

In order to help to develop a more accurate picture as to the scale of the problem Nottingham University's Rights Lab have agreed to analyse the data collected from the app over a six-month period and to report back in early 2019.

The Clewer Initiative was launched in October with the backing of the Prime Minister Theresa May and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The three-year programme is working to help the Church of England's 42 dioceses support victims of modern slavery and identify the signs of exploitation in their local communities.

The Santa Marta Group has members in over 30 countries and brings together the heads of national and international police and law enforcement agencies along with international organisations to look at how they can work with the Church to help victims.

The App asks drivers to spot the possible signs of slavery including whether workers have access to suitable clothing such as gloves and boots.

Where there are concerns, people are invited to call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. **Do not confront anyone at the hand car wash and make sure you are in a safe place before making the call.** If someone is in immediate danger then call 999.

The indicators are:

Do the workers have access to suitable protective clothing? Look out for gloves and boots.

Is there evidence of workers living on site? Can you see a caravan or mattresses and bedding?

Does anyone appear controlling or intimidating?

Does the body language of the workers appear withdrawn or fearful?

Do there appear to be minors working at the car wash?

Did you pay less than £6.70 for the car wash?

Does the car wash only accept cash?

Did they offer a receipt?

Did you have to pay the manager?

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