



The Responsible Car Wash Scheme features in Crimewatch report on car wash employee exploitation

Public warned to look out for three signs of modern slavery

September 21st 2021: BBC flagship programme, *Crimewatch Live*, this week features the Responsible Car Wash Scheme ([RCWS](#)) in a report on labour exploitation in hand car washes. The programme outlines how members of the public can spot signs of abuse and malpractice and help in the fight against them.

Spokespeople from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and The Clewer Initiative also appear to explain the issues with some hand car washes. These include non-payment of the national living wage, health and safety breaches and, in some cases, modern slavery. They also detail their initiatives to ensure that hand car washes are law-abiding, responsible businesses.

Teresa Sayers, managing director, RCWS says: “Potential indicators of worker exploitation include low cost of a wash, cash-only payment options and a lack of protective equipment and clothing being used by workers. We ask car owners and drivers to choose responsible car washes that offer a fair wash. That means looking after their workers, protecting the environment, caring for their customers and trading legally. Operators that meet our RCWS standard will display the RCWS logo.”

Darryl Dixon from the GLAA says: “We want to help the public make informed decisions about where they take their cars to be washed. There is a clear choice between using a fully compliant operator that has been through the RCWS accreditation process and verified by audits and spot-checks, and one that simply has not.”

Caroline Virgo, Director of The Clewer Initiative, says: “One easy way for members of the public to be on the alert is to download The Safe Car Wash app. It’s really quick and easy to use – it asks a series of questions related to signs of modern slavery and helps the user know if they should get in touch with the Modern Slavery Helpline. The app has received 7500 reports of exploitation concerns and 47% of these have gone through to the helpline.”

You can [download the Safe Car Wash app here](#).

The flagship programme was filmed in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire at Waves car wash. Waves is located in the Tesco Extra car park and is one of the first car washes in the UK to be accredited by the RCWS. BBC’s *Crimewatch Live*: episode 11 was aired on BBC One on Monday September 20th (now on iplayer).

Notes to editors

Members of the public using a car hand wash should be alert for the following:

- A suspiciously low cost: anything under £9 is unlikely to be viable if workers are receiving the national living wage.
- A request for cash only and a refusal to accept other methods of payment.
- A lack of protective clothing and equipment: for example, operatives should be equipped with gloves and waterproof shoes.

Find out more about the RCWS and [how car wash operators can apply to become members here](#).

Attached: image of RCWS logo

About RCWS <https://rcws.org.uk/>

The Responsible Car Wash Scheme (RCWS) is a not-for-profit organisation founded to promote compliance and raise standards in the car wash industry. It aims to be a positive force in improving conditions for workers and upholding their statutory rights. Launched in October 2018 at the House of Lords, the scheme has the backing of National and Local Government, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Police, the Health and Safety Executive, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Environment Agency and the charity Unseen, all of whom have assisted in its development.

RCWS supporters

- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement
- Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC)
- The Environment Agency
- The Health and Safety Executive
- Asda
- Morrisons
- Tesco
- Sainsbury's
- BP
- The Car Wash Association
- CPV
- Waves
- Unseen

