

Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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| Date: | 22 June 2016 |
| Classification: | General Release |
| Title: | Human Trafficking Foundation – London Project to assist local authorities to fulfil their new statutory obligations around human trafficking |
| Report of: | Tamara Barnett, Projects Leader, Human Trafficking Foundation, tamara@humantraffickingfoundation.org |
| Cabinet Member Portfolio | Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health: Cabinet Member for Public Protection Cabinet Member for Children and Young People |
| Wards Involved: | All |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The issue

The Foundation is leading a two-year project to engage statutory authorities in London with the plight of victims of human trafficking, in light of the new Modern Slavery Act and Care Act, both of which have given local authorities new statutory responsibilities in this area. Councils are struggling with these new responsibilities and already a number of judicial reviews are underway.

Our Chair, Anthony Steen CBE, was formerly the Home Secretary's Special Envoy during the passage of the Modern Slavery Bill and was then the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson's special envoy on human trafficking. Hence the Foundation has worked closely with statutory authorities for many years and understands the challenges local authorities face. When resources are strained, local authorities need solutions for how to maximise their effectiveness and achieve more with the same or even less resource. We have therefore started to work with local authorities in London and NGOs to carry out this work.

(i) **Problem 1 – Identification:**

There is considerable evidence that London is a hub for human trafficking and slavery in the UK – a truly heinous crime involving some of the most vulnerable people in our city - and yet many staff in statutory authorities, from social workers to housing officers, struggle to identify many cases. Hence large numbers of cases in Westminster, from slavery in homes and hotels to cases similar to the Rochdale case of trafficked children or the Connors case of trafficked homeless men, carry on under the authorities' jurisdiction, in places such as maternity wards, children's homes and licensed businesses. By tackling trafficking you also tend to be able to tackle other organised related criminality such as drug crime and illegal migration indirectly as well.

(ii) **Problem 2 – Lack of support when exiting the Government safe houses:**

After they finish receiving the Government provided statutory 45 days of care, there is very little or often nothing in place in local authorities to provide any specialist support for victims of trafficking, even though they have recourse to public funds, and so many get lost in a tragic and repetitive cycle of exploitation. (Case examples on page 6)

(ii) **Problem 3 – Inadequate services for child victims of trafficking:**

While adults receive special trafficking support for a minimum 45 days, children are meant to be protected by broader safeguarding laws and receive no specialist service. As a result, many vulnerable children go, for example, into inappropriate foster care and go missing or fall into criminal activities.

While London initially led the way in the field of trafficking, we are now some way behind many other regions of the UK, where, for example, in places such as Sheffield, Northern Ireland and the West Midlands, post-safe house (45 day) support is now provided to victims of trafficking.

1.2 **Objectives**

Overall objectives

Our project aims to assist authorities to correctly fulfil their obligations in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act, Care Act and other related legislation.

We plan to both demonstrate and create ways for your council to be as effective as possible, within their resources' constraints, in supporting victims of trafficking in your constituency.

We will be doing this by:

- outlining what these responsibilities are,
- spreading best practice and creating clear protocols,
- improving the way you gather intelligence,

- developing ways for you to access funding for any new initiatives you may want to create alongside this work,
- creating pan-London partnerships,
- working out risk factor indicators so you can prioritise the most urgent cases in light of constraints on resources etc.

Our overall objectives include a desire to:

- ensure local authorities comply with their new statutory duties under the Modern Slavery Act and Care Act
- improve the capabilities of local authority staff to recognise victims and so increase the number identified, and
- prevent victims in your borough from being re-trafficked by helping you to provide suitable support to children, and adults after they leave a safe house.
- increase the intelligence local authorities receive on trafficking
- Increase multiagency work with local authorities and other statutory authorities, such as the NHS, NGOs, and hard to reach diaspora communities

Possible outputs (tbc)

- As part of this two year project (potentially, tbc, working alongside London Councils and a leading child trafficking NGO), we will be having a Conference in October for local authorities, police, NHS and other statutory and non-statutory agencies in London.

The broad aim of this conference is to highlight the issues and where gaps in services are for victims of trafficking, and then provide models of best practice already happening around the country.

- Plan to create NGO and statutory authority combined pan London partnership(s), as already exists in other parts of the UK, and support them in creating practical, realistic models of best practice for ways to meet their obligations around human trafficking. The plan would ideally create four pan-London groups (north, south, east and west) supported by MOPAC, since trafficking travels across borders (the report Silence on Violence found that badly organised raids on brothels in one London borough meant there was a rise in street prostitution involving the same women in a different borough). These partnerships would also instigate other statutory authorities, such as the NHS, to better assist you in this work.
- Create (with the LGA, tbc) a Topic Guide on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery, with a clear outline of local authority responsibilities in each area and with examples of good practice based on our work with London local authorities, and on the Care Standards.

We are aware that WCC has a best practice model in place within its tri-borough VAWG programme, led by Meghan Field, and we have met with her

about this work and how we can spread this model as best practice to other councils we are in discussions.

- There is a plan to create, possibly with a pan London body, a statement of best practice commitments for local authorities to sign up to, similar to the Bucharest Declaration (an EU Commission funded declaration for EU countries, led by the Human Trafficking Foundation and ECPAT UK).
- The Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Office is producing a trafficking risk indicators model, similar to that which exists for children, for local authorities to identify the most at risk victims who need statutory support after they leave Government safe houses.

It is estimated that the high risk cohort may only account for 10% of victims leaving safe houses. This is a small, manageable group, but one that is at high risk of being re-trafficked and with often severe needs that should be prioritised as part of adult safeguarding.

We are in discussions about piloting this model in London and working out suitable risk factors so councils can prioritise the most urgent cases, given constraint on resources.

- Create ways for you to better work with diaspora communities. WCC has good models in place in terms of referral pathways. However WCC still faces a severe challenge in receiving intelligence and gaining referrals from many communities seeing significant levels of trafficking in the borough (for example Chinese women being exploited in massage parlours, North African children being exploited in restaurant kitchens etc.).

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

It is recommended that the Committee:

- I. Promote the free October conference to relevant councillors and officers related to community safety, child and adult safeguarding, housing and Violence Against Women and Girls on how local authorities can best tackle human trafficking in light of the Modern Day Slavery and Care Acts.
- II. Consider how WCC can contribute to the agenda of this conference and have broader input.
- III. Write to relevant Directors in ASC, Children's and Public Protection recommending that they work with the Human Trafficking Foundation to:
 - identify victims leaving safe houses to ensure that the ongoing support we provide is compliant with new legislation and represents best practice

- improve access to intelligence
- improve our access to intelligence
- ask the Director of Children's to provide a briefing on how WCC protects child victims of trafficking
- asks the Director of Adult Safeguarding and Director of Housing to provide a briefing on how WCC support adult victims of trafficking after they are recognised as trafficked, have leave to remain and have left a safe house.

Appendix 1

About the Human Trafficking Foundation

Our Chairman, Anthony Steen CBE, was formerly the Home Secretary's Special Envoy during the passage of the Modern Slavery Bill and was then the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson's special envoy on human trafficking.

The Human Trafficking Foundation grew out of the work of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking, which had been set up by Anthony Steen who, together with the Rt Hon. Clare Short and Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, established the Foundation specifically to target human trafficking.

The Foundation is a leading NGO in the human trafficking sector, running a forum with over 100 NGOs in attendance on a quarterly basis, with the aim of bringing together NGOs throughout the country and in working groups to produce reports and best practice initiatives. It is also the secretariat for the APPG on Human Trafficking and runs a project in Europe and the Balkan Peninsula.

Case examples and quotes of interest

Quotes from Shadow City re human trafficking concerns in Westminster

“They saw vans arrive three times a week from Lithuania in one area in Westminster alone to sell men to different gangmasters. ...I was told that Lincoln’s Inn Fields is one of the traffickers’ target bases and that Passage, a homeless drop-in support centre near Victoria, is also targeted. One soup run in central Westminster was “regularly targeted two to three times a night!”

“A number of charities and other stakeholders working in Westminster said there were known cases of slavery taking place in Embassies. While Arab embassies were regularly pointed out to me as potential residences of slavery, one stakeholder told me, “The idea that it is just Saudi diplomats doing this is ridiculous.” One NGO confirmed this by stating that they felt that there was a “very serious” problem with domestic servitude within Central American embassies and had seen cases of workers being treated as slaves.”

“While there are organisations who work with the Chinese community who also work with the police and boroughs, more formalised multi-agency work in this area could dramatically improve the intelligence the police have on this ‘silent’ community.”

“SC&O7 did tell Westminster that that they “would find it helpful to have support from Westminster City Council (WCC) in using civil enforcement powers, such as planning, to take out infrastructure used by traffickers”.

Human trafficking case examples from a report on the lack of support after exiting a safehouse

“My experience with clients who have been through the 45 days [Recovery and Reflection] period is that they end up on the streets again and they are so incredibly vulnerable because their wounds have been opened up, they have only had 45 days to deal with those wounds, and it’s not fair, but after 45 days they’re out... then in a blink of an eye it’s gone” Homeless NGO service provider

“When I moved out of the [Safe] house I went to a bed and breakfast and I got harassed by men, so another abuse again. I moved to North London, Hammersmith and Wembley, so I stayed in three bed and breakfast places. I was in that place for 6 months. The first one in North London, which had guys there, I was in for one month. The second one I stayed in for two days because the traffickers had taken me to that place before, and a girl who saw me, called me by my name, and I thought it was not safe for me so I asked to be moved. Now they moved me to West London London in a temporary accommodation. I have been there for seven months.” A human trafficking victim

“Maria was first identified by social services when she was 17 years old. Maria disclosed that she had been forced to have sex with Asian men for money. Maria then moved to live with some unrelated adults with whom she said she felt safe. However, two months later a

referral was made to the police from a medical centre stating that Maria had attended the medical centre with her boyfriend's adult sister, saying that she had fallen off a bike. Both women were found to have cigarette burns on their feet and Maria had deep wounds to her legs and lower back that were infected. On discovering this, police and an allocated social worker persuaded Maria to leave that flat and stay in local authority accommodation."

Maria has since been moved a number of times, and in two of those places she claimed she was abused again, and in another place was accused of abuse, and has been dealt with by approximately 32 different professionals

Example of children at risk

"When Quan was found he told officials he was 15, but they did not believe him, marking his age down as 19 instead. That meant Quan was sent directly to an adult immigration centre. There, charity workers noted he man seemed far too young to be in the centre. They called in lawyers who argued he should have a proper age assessment by social services, which should take place outside the repressive confines of the detention centre.

But Quan was afraid. He told his lawyers he was terrified that if he was released his traffickers would get to him. So they scrambled to find secure accommodation and begged immigration officials not to release him until they had.

But quietly, late on a Friday evening, Quan was released with just the address of a community centre in south London written a slip of paper. Workers there say he arrived but disappeared soon afterwards. He has not been heard of since. It took the police a month to collect CCTV footage, and only then did they see Quan boarding a train, possibly with someone else. It is feared that he, like so many other Vietnamese young people, has been picked up by traffickers."

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Shadow City by Andrew Boff AM, 2013 report on human trafficking in London and how the Metropolitan Police and local authorities can respond
- Beyond the Safehouse – a HTF report on the lack of support provided once victims of trafficking leave a safe house
http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Life%20Beyond%20the%20Safe%20House_0.pdf
- Best Practice Trafficking Care Standards
<http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/trafficking-survivor-care-standards>
- <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Shadow-City.pdf>
- The report which helped lead to the Modern Slavery Act and summarises key issues across all areas
http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Slavery_Full_Report_WEB%285%29.pdf