

Human Trafficking

The role of the Anti Human Trafficking Co-ordinator, its effectiveness and achievements:

1. The role of the Anti Human Trafficking Co-ordinator (AHTC)

1.1 Tackling human trafficking requires co-ordinated action cutting across the boundaries of the four Governments in the UK. The response in Wales has been bolstered by the appointment of an AHTC. The aim of the role is to make Wales a hostile place for human trafficking and co-ordinate the best possible support for victims who have been trafficked.

1.2 The Welsh Government is the only Government within the UK to employ an AHTC. Creation of the post followed from the work of the Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking, chaired by Joyce Watson AM. The post was a commitment in the Welsh Government Programme for Government and has been in existence since 4 April 2011. Stephen Chapman is the second AHTC and took up post in November 2012.

1.3 The AHTC is part of the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Team, within the Community Safety Division of the Welsh Government. This allows the role to be integrated within the wider Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse agenda.

2. Effectiveness and achievement

2.1 In his first year, the current AHTC has formed links with a wide range of individuals and organisations, from both statutory and non-statutory devolved organisations and Non Governmental Organisations, to raise awareness and co-ordinate joined up activities to tackle human trafficking in Wales.

2.2 A Wales Anti Human Trafficking Leadership Group has been established with the purpose of providing strategic leadership and has developed a Delivery Plan to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's aim of making Wales hostile to human trafficking and providing the best possible support for victims who have been trafficked.

2.3 Data capture and intelligence sharing were identified as a key area for improvement in the first annual report of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking presented to Parliament in 2012. This Group, which is chaired by the Home Office Minister for Security, has oversight of the UK approach to tackling human trafficking. This includes the UK Government's Human Trafficking Strategy and the UK's compliance with EU and international requirements.

2.4 The need for a robust evidence base has been recognised in Wales. The current figure of 34 referrals recorded on the 2012 UK Human Trafficking Centre National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data is thought to be just the 'tip of the iceberg.' In 2009, the UK Government introduced the NRM, which is a multi agency framework designed for agencies involved in human trafficking cases to co-operate, share information about potential victims and facilitate their access to support. Victims are referred to this process by First Responder organisations and the Competent Authority (either the UK Human Trafficking Centre or Home Office Immigration) decides on their human trafficking status.

2.5 Building an evidence base on the scale of human trafficking in Wales is one of the strategic objectives of the Leadership Group. The AHTC is working with partners to produce 'primary and secondary data sets' to inform the level of human trafficking in Wales. The primary data set is the UK NRM, referred to above, and the number of cases dealt with in the Criminal Justice System. A Senior Research Officer from the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services is supporting the work identifying secondary data sets.

2.6 The Welsh Government has also commissioned a 'Review of Violence Against Women, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services' and human trafficking is included within its scope. This Review, which is being undertaken by the University of Central Lancashire, will report to the Minister by the end of 2013, with findings published in the New Year. The AHTC has also been co-opted onto the Home Office Joint Strategy Group's 'Task and Finish Data Group' which is developing the evidence base for the UK.

2.7 The Chief Executive of Denbighshire County Council, Mohammed Mehmet, leads on human trafficking on behalf of the Public Services Leadership Group (PSLG). In this role, he continues to raise awareness of anti human trafficking to other Chief Executives across Wales.

2.8 In March 2013, the AHTC secured agreement from the Home Office's NRM Review Group, for Welsh organisations Bawso and New Pathways, to be recognised as First Responder organisations. The intention is by giving this role to two Non Government Organisations, victims of human trafficking will have the confidence to refer themselves to the NRM. As well as providing these victims with support secured from the NRM process, the data will provide intelligence which may be used to bring traffickers to justice and also assist in building the evidence base.

2.9 Building on the success of the Gwent Consultation Group on Human Trafficking, which was established to bring a multi agency approach to dealing with human trafficking in Gwent, Anti Human Trafficking Fora have been established for Cardiff, South Wales and Western Bay. The purpose of these Fora is sharing 'good practice' on information/intelligence and delivering 'local' initiatives. Anti Human Trafficking Fora are being developed for North Wales and the Dyfed-Powys areas.

2.10 The AHTC has worked with the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and other partner organisations to develop a training programme for Senior Investigating Officers. The two-day programme, which is delivered from the 'Hydra Centre' at South Wales Police HQ, is being rolled out to Senior Investigating Officers, initially in South Wales Police, and then across the other three Forces in Wales. This is a first for Wales and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has recognised the training programme to be 'good practice' for cascading across the UK.

2.11 The AHTC is working with colleagues on an initiative, led by the Crown Prosecution Service, on the introduction of Joint Investigation Teams for cases of human trafficking. Other partners include the National Crime Agency, Police, Home Office Immigration and Gangmasters Licensing Authority.

2.12 In March 2013, ACPO launched 'Operation Eagle', an ongoing initiative to improve the response to human trafficking and organised immigration crime. The objective of this operation, is to raise awareness, increase the amount of information received and improve co-ordination and operational activities of all Police Forces across England and Wales. All four Welsh Police Forces are engaged in preventative, pro-active anti human trafficking operations. The AHTC is working with the Single Point of Contact within each of the Forces and helping share good practice across Wales.

2.13 As part of the Wales Anti Human Trafficking Leadership Group Delivery Plan, the Welsh Government Web-Pages on Human Trafficking have been reviewed and updated to provide a single reference point of information for professionals, practitioners and the public. The AHTC is responsible for maintaining the web-pages and ensuring the information is relevant and updated.

2.14 The Cardiff Anti Human Trafficking Forum has piloted their first Human Trafficking Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and, following positive feedback, this process is being used for all future cases involving potential victims of human trafficking. The Human Trafficking Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference is led by Bawso and involves a number of multi agency partners. The AHTC is cascading this 'good practice' across Wales.

2.15 In June 2013, the AHTC arranged for a visit to the UK Human Trafficking Centre of Welsh NRM First Responders, the four Welsh Police Force Strategic Leads and Single Points of Contact and Welsh Government Community Cohesion Co-ordinators. The visit included a UK and Wales Human Trafficking Intelligence Briefing by the Head of the UK Human Trafficking Centre, the role of the Tactical Advisors, explanation of the NRM process and the ability to speak with staff on any issues.

2.16 To mark Anti Slavery Day (Friday October 18th 2013) a North East Wales Anti Human Trafficking Conference was held in Wrexham. This conference was attended by over 100 practitioners and Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Local Government and Government Business, gave the keynote address.

3. The effectiveness of multi-agency working between UK and Welsh Government departments and other bodies such as health boards and the Police:

3.1 The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group, referred to above, has oversight of the UK's efforts to combat human trafficking. The Group is chaired by the Home Office Minister for Security and comprises Ministers from other Whitehall Government Departments, the Wales Office and Scotland Office, the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Welsh Government. From the Welsh Government, the Minister for Local Government and Government Business and the AHTC attend.

3.2 Wales is represented by the AHTC on a number of UK Groups: the UK Threat Reduction Board, the UK Human Trafficking Strategy Board, the Home Office Joint Strategy Group (Non Government Organisations), Home Office NRM Oversight Review Group and the Home Office Child Trafficking Information Sharing Forum. In addition, the AHTC is a member of the Wales Border Management Group and a number of other key strategic and operational groups.

3.3 The AHTC meets regularly with Officials from the Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Justice, the Scottish Government, Northern Ireland Executive and other UK partners to discuss and share good practice in tackling human trafficking.

3.4 The AHTC works closely with all four Welsh Police Forces, the National Crime Agency and other law enforcement agencies. This includes the England and Wales ACPO Strategic Lead for Migration Crime and Related Matters, Shaun Sawyer the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police. Jeff Farrar, Chief Constable of Gwent Police, leads in Wales to ensure all four Welsh Police Forces work in collaboration.

3.5 The ACPO aim is to ensure Police activities on human trafficking will make the UK a more hostile place for traffickers, facilitators and exploiters to operate. As set out in response to question 1 above, as part of 'Operation Eagle', Strategic and Single Points of Contact in all Police Forces have been identified to take a lead to improve the Police response to human trafficking. The AHTC has ensured 'good practice' is being shared by bringing together the four Welsh Police Force members who lead on 'Operation Eagle'.

3.6 The Police, Health Boards and other relevant Welsh Government Departments are represented on the Wales Anti Human Trafficking Leadership Group and the Regional Anti Human Trafficking Fora.

4. The role of Local Authorities in identification and awareness raising

4.1 As stated above, the Chief Executive of Denbighshire County Council, Mohammed Mehmet, has been identified as the PSLG lead on Anti Human Trafficking. Mr Mehmet, as the North Wales representative on the PSLG, is promoting the work on Anglesey to Chief Executives of the North Wales Local Authorities and then with Chief Executives of all Welsh Local Authorities, to support the Welsh Government's aim of making Wales hostile to human trafficking and to support victims who have been trafficked.

4.2 The Chief Executive of Denbighshire County Council supported the Chief Executive of Anglesey County Council, on a successful bid to the Welsh Government Regional Collaboration Fund, for a North Wales Regional Anti Human Trafficking Co-ordinator. The North Wales Regional AHTC was appointed in October 2013.

4.3 The AHTC, in collaboration with the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Co-ordinators in the 22 Welsh Local Authorities, is delivering training to raise the awareness of human trafficking, explain how to report incidents and how to refer victims to the UK Human Trafficking Centre using the NRM.

5. How the recommendations of the Council of Europe 2012 'GRETA' report and the 2009 SOLACE report on human trafficking are being taken forward and plans for future work:

5.1 The Welsh Government response to the GRETA Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Report '*Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings by the United Kingdom 2012*' has been to work with partners to introduce and build on the recommendations. The effectiveness of this response and achievements to date are detailed above.

5.2 The Chief Executive of Denbighshire County Council's 'Champion' role includes reinforcing the awareness of the 2009 SOLACE report '*The role of Local Authorities in addressing human trafficking*'.