

CELG(4) HT 2

National Assembly for Wales

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into: Human Trafficking

Response from: Bawso



## Human Trafficking

### About Bawso

Bawso was set up in 1995 to primarily deliver specialist services to BME communities who are vulnerable. It now delivers training programs to women and children through women's workshop projects. Bawso currently supports more than 3000 people annually this includes women, children, men and young people. It has 14 projects delivering preventative programs, and support projects that specialise in Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and Human Trafficking all these projects focus on working with vulnerable people to live independently.

Human trafficking is an abuse of human rights and over the recent years Bawso has been identifying victims through its existing projects and established a need to develop a project for human trafficking in Wales. In March 2009 it was announced that the UK Government was to expand their support services for victims of trafficking. This increased the number of beds available nationally from 35 to 54. From this Bawso was awarded a grant for two years to develop the first human trafficking project in Wales which is called Diogel.

In July 2011 the Salvation Army attained the UK trafficking contract and contracted Bawso to continue providing support for victims of human trafficking in Wales. Due to identified needs the project expanded from 6 to 10 units of accommodation and 20 outreach units under which both men and women can be supported. Through the assessment of needs we submitted a proposal to WAG for additional accommodation which we received and were able to provide extra 3 units of accommodation in North Wales.

Since inception the Diogel projects in Wales have supported 47 individuals who have been trafficked for Sexual Exploitation, Labour Exploitation and Domestic Servitude.

## Response to Questions

### **1. The role of the Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator, including its effectiveness and achievements so far**

The Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator role is to make Wales a hostile place for Human Trafficking to exist and to coordinate the best possible support for the victims of trafficking in Wales. This includes raising the profile of human trafficking across Wales, through multi-agency working and by coordinating organisational response. To Provide an evidence base on the scale of human trafficking in Wales and be a central point on matters relating to human trafficking in Wales. The role of the AHTC is also identifying where developments are taking place and effects on other relevant policies or strategies.

The effectiveness and achievements of the AHTC so far has been the coordination of initiatives to tackle human trafficking by forming a leadership group which brings together representatives from key agencies (Police, Health, Education, Social Services, CPS and the third sector).

Information is provided to agencies of the scale, types and location of human trafficking in Wales which has improved the sharing of intelligence and recording of incidents using the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and cases within the Criminal Justice System.

The AHTC is working with partners to develop a better 'evidence base' which reflects the level of human trafficking. The recent commitment by WG to establish the post of Regional Anti Human trafficking Co-ordinators across Wales will ensure that the breadth of Wales is covered.

Bawso and New Pathways were designated as first responders in 2012 as a result of the AHTC input.

The profile of Human Trafficking has been raised by the appointment of the AHTC and over the last year we have seen an increase of trafficked victims accessing our trafficking project Diogel.

There is clear evidence of collaboration through the four regions in Wales by the setting up of Regional Human Trafficking Forums.

Two conferences have been held in North and South Wales to raise awareness and two more are planned for 2014.

The AHTC is placed with the VAWDA team within community safety which ensures better integration with the VAWDA agenda.

Awareness raising sessions are being delivered to key stakeholders across Wales. For example Local authorities, Police, Criminal Justice and third sector organisation

## **2. The effectiveness of multi-agency working between UK and Welsh Government departments and other bodies such as health boards and the police;**

The AHTC has provided leadership to ensure that there is multi-agency work between Welsh agencies with national ones. Delivering a Wales day at the UKHTC in Birmingham was beneficial to build practitioners' understanding of HT as well as gain useful insights of patterns and trends.

There is a lot of evidence to demonstrate of close collaboration with the police. However, engagement with other departments such as health and education is lacking. Collaboration with agencies in departments such as health and education is vital because in some instances they are the first port of call for victims of trafficking.

## **3. The role of local authorities in identification and awareness raising; and**

Local authorities can play a pivotal role in the fight against human trafficking through by including it on the agenda. A good practice example of where this has taken place is Cardiff. Following an enquiry into Human Trafficking in 2010, the local authority initiated further scoping of the issue which culminated in the appointment of a named person to lead on the work stream. Consequently, a Cardiff Multi-Agency Anti-Human Trafficking Forum was established in summer 2012 to facilitate and develop integrated working arrangement focusing on victim identification and support as well as prevention of human trafficking. To date the forum has established a Multi-Agency Human Trafficking Response Task Group and developed a localised Response Pathway. The forum has also developed a human trafficking dissemination and training strategy which took effect in July 2013 by rolling out a series of Master Classes for practitioners. The next stage in the training will be delivery of raising awareness training to front line staff. It would greatly benefit other LA to emulate the work being done in Cardiff.

## **4. 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**

Wales is clearly a leader in delivering in the fight against human trafficking. The appointment of the only AHTC in the UK attests to its commitment to making Wales a hostile place for traffickers. However, it sometimes encounters challenges due to the

complex nature of devolved and non devolved powers. For example, in the field of action against human trafficking, criminal law and victim care are devolved matters, whereas border and immigration control, including the identification of trafficking victims, are reserved matters dealt with by the central UK government. Education and health which are linked to the prevention of human trafficking, the protection of, and assistance to victims of trafficking are also devolved.

CPS in Wales has demonstrated commitments improve the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions human trafficking related offences. They have developed training on human trafficking for investigators which in consultation with third sector organizations.

There are clear procedures for child victims of human trafficking, unless age disputes occur. However the situation is different for adult victims where there is a postcode lottery of services to some extent. For example there is no accommodation provision for male victims of trafficking who are 40% of the cases.

In addition, whereas there seems to be reasonable provision of accommodation and other physical requirements, however access to qualified counselors specializing in this area remains a challenge. Our experience as an organization shows that it is extremely difficult to access specialist counseling for victims because of very long waiting lists. In some instances Bawso has had to access such services from the Helen Bamber Foundation in London, which has resource implications. Best practice can be obtained from Scotland where a psychiatrist is attached to the TARA project to not only provide emotional support to victims, but also to build knowledge and understanding of the impact of trafficking.