

Minutes of Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking

Meeting – 26th January 2015 – 14:00 – 15:00

Dining Room 1, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Present

Joyce Watson AM (JW)

Nitesh Patel (NP) – Communications Officer, Joyce Watson AM

Dr Mwenya Chimba (MC) – BAWSO

Stephen Chapman (SC) – Welsh Government

James Bushell (JB) – IJM UK

Dan Boucher (DB) – CARE

Sarah Thomas (ST) – NewPathways

Item 1 - Apologies

Bethan Jenkins AM

Barbara Natasegara – SaferWales

Bernie Bowen-Thomson – SaferWales

Item 2 and 3

JW and BAWSO/Safer Wales confirmed as Chair and Secretariat of the group by members of the group in attendance. MC said that SaferWales have expressed to her that they are happy to continue in the Secretariat role alongside BAWSO.

Item 4

JW said that a lot of movement had taken place in tackling Human Trafficking in terms of legislation and through campaigns for change on this issue since the group last met in 2014.

JW referred to the CPG on Human Trafficking report in 2010 and the recommendations within that report. 2015 was an opportunity to review the progress made over the past 5 years and whether each of the recommendations within the report have been met.

JW said that 2015 was also a time for the CPG to consider what the group wants to achieve over the next 5 years.

JW referred to the recent appointment of an Anti-Slavery Commissioner for England and Wales and welcomed that the appointment followed the example shown by the Welsh Government in appointing their own Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in Wales.

JW told the group that she had asked a question in the Assembly in November 2014 on how the roles will overlap and work together.

JW said that the draft Modern Slavery was progressing well in Parliament and that now was an opportunity for people across Wales and organisations to work to ensure that the necessary amendments are made to the draft bill.

An agreement from Yvette Cooper's (YC) office has been gathered to attend a future meeting to talk about Human Trafficking if her schedule permits prior to the 2015 general election.

Item 5

JW went through each of the 7 recommendations in the 2010 CPG report.

SC confirmed that a people's forum of Wales to deliver training and awareness raising events is developing well in the west of Wales and coming into line with work already being done in the North and South of Wales.

SC said that training is being provided via a 3 hour face to face session, a full day first-responder course and a 3 day specialist crime and modern slavery course for the Police Force and CPS. The course for the Police and CPS is the first course in the UK where Police and Prosecutors train together. The training is worth CPD points for the legal profession. Around 90 people have been trained on the course so far. Further courses will be held throughout Wales in 2015.

Police in Scotland and NI are also interested in the courses being provided in Wales. Great interest and feedback has been provided on the course. The course provides providers with the skills and confidence to deal with Human Trafficking issues and in providing victim support.

SC said that enormous progress has been made and most notably that BAWSO and New Patchways are now first responders. These organisations are now training different organisations such as Social Services within Local Authorities.

DB asked if ECPAT UK had a presence in Wales in terms of support provided. SC said that they and many different organisations do provide support in various ways in tackling issues around Human Trafficking.

SC said that there is currently a review taking place on the NRM.

MC said that there have been attempts to set up a pathway in Wales so that organisations know what to do when faced with possible cases of Human Trafficking.

SC said that the Multi Agency Referral Risk Assessment Conference is now also being used to help trafficked victims.

ST said that the foundations for all 7 recommendations within the 2010 report are there and improvements are being made to ensure better joint up working between different organisations helping victims. There is a greater understanding by organisations and those working in this area of the challenges and ways in which to help victims.

SC said that the Modern Slavery Bill and review of the NRM are two of the biggest changes in this area currently going through.

JW asked the group to consider what the key targets for the group are for the next 12 months ahead.

MC expressed concerns that the engagement from some organisations in Wales with the legislative changes being progressed in the Modern Slavery Bill appear to be low. Said that more needs to be done to communicate what the changes in law will mean within Wales.

DB said that the next few months are hugely important with the legislative changes. The next few months during amendment stages are very important in ensuring amendments to the Bill are made. Once it is on the statute books the chance to shape changes will be lost.

Under the current Bill, victims in Wales will have fewer rights than in Scotland and NI.

The online Petition by CARE aims to tackle the deficiencies within the draft bill.

JB said that he would push the petition amongst his contacts.

MC suggested an email could be circulated to members of the group on way forward for the year ahead and so that they can feed into the forward working agenda.

JW said that a focused purpose would have to be defined for the meeting with YC.

JW said that the key focus in the short term has to be to influence the Bill before it becomes legislation. The members of the meeting agreed that this should be the focus in the short term for the group and its members.

JW said that the long term focus then has to be to ensure that members and organisations are able to apply and understand the changes in legislation made through the bill.

MC said that the changes being made via the NRM review could mean their organisation are no longer First Responders.

MC repeated that there are many organisations on the ground that may not be aware of all of the changes being made to the NRM and through legislation.

NP expressed the view that a considerable number of changes have taken place since JW's report 5 years ago, most notably in the form of the trafficking coordinator and there are many unknowns such as the outcomes of the NRM review and any amendments that will be made to the Modern Slavery Bill.

JW said that planning for Budget issues is essential throughout the process of change and to ensure that sufficient money is there to support victims of trafficking.

JB said that awareness raising is a key driver in being able to find victims of trafficking worldwide.

SC said that following the domestic abuse agenda is a targeted way of being able to forward the agenda for trafficking in terms of more training, awareness raising and finding advocates to support the cause.

SC has met with Kevin Hyland (KH) a number of times. Kevin is driven by enforcement. SC has emphasised to him that victim support is also key. SC said that KH has expressed support for the work being done in Wales.

NP asked if the roles of the coordinator in Wales and the commissioner in England/Wales complement each other. SC confirmed that they do and that he would like coordinators in Scotland and NI to work with.

Forward agenda

The group agreed that the forward working agenda should be to:

- **influence the third reading in the Lords. DB agreed to send via email a list of Welsh peers.**
- **Awareness raising of what the changes in legislation will mean for organisations working to help victims.**
- **Work to ensure that the necessary budgets are in place to support victims and organisations working in the area of tackling Human Trafficking.**
- **NP suggested that the CPG have another general meeting after the draft Modern Slavery Bill has been passed and that the meeting with YC should take place separately. The group agreed with this.**

Item 6

Minutes of meeting of the 3rd February 2014 approved.

Item 7

None