Minutes of the CPG Meeting on Human Trafficking

Date: Tuesday, 12th June 2018
Time: 08:15am – 9:15am
Venue: Conference Room A (Ground Floor), Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

- Joyce Watson AM (JW)
- Stephen Chapman, Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator, Welsh Government (SC)
- David Rowlands AM (DR)
- Ian Williams (IW), Assembly Member Support Staff (AMSS), David Rowlands AM
- Mutale Merrill OBE, Chief Executive, BAWSO (MM)
- Ryland Doyle, Researcher for Mike Hedges AM (RD)
- Rachel Allen, Police & Crime Commissioner, Jeff Cuthbert’s, Office (RA)
- Dan Michel, Detective Inspector, South Wales Police (DM)
- Eleri Cubbage, Research/Comms for Lynne Neagle AM
- Madeleine Rees (MR), Office of Jayne Bryant AM
- Simon Borja, Director of Project Development, Safer Wales Ltd (SB)
- Samsunear Ali, Deputy CEO at BAWSO
- Helena Hunt, Policy Team Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (HH)

Minutes of meeting

JW distributed copies of her recent article in The Parliamentarians magazine on Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking.

JW is the Vice-Chair of the Commonwealth Women’s Parliamentarians.

JW said the work being done in Wales is being showcased and recognised worldwide.

JW said some of the issues being considered by the CWP are trafficking, FGM, rape of women in India and attitudes towards it, and the inability for women to own land and property, leading to them becoming desperate in life.

JW said devolution has allowed Wales to have a voice. Pre-devolution, the appointment of a representative on the CWP would have been at a UK level. Devolution has allowed Wales to have its own voice in the international landscape.

JW acknowledged that KAW has recently been awarded an MBE for her work in the area of tackling human trafficking and modern slavery.

JW asked for approval of the minutes of meeting on the 17th October 2017.

NP asked for any clarifications and suggested amendments from members to be sent to him by email following the meeting.

JW highlighted a typo in the previous minutes related to workers working 10 hours a day and not 10 hours a year. NP confirmed this would be corrected.

SC said since Wales started this journey, more people in exploitation are being identified. The process for bringing people to justice can take 1-2 years. Prosecutions remain low at this very time. 34 people were identified as slaves in 2012, to 193 in 2017. Of the 193, it is
made up of children, men and women. Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTA) are now in place in Wales. Wales is one of 3 areas in the UK where this project, funded by the Home Office, is being tested. The project is being done in partnership with Barnardo’s Cymru. In 2016, local authorities only referred 4 children as being exploited. The ICTA pilot started on 30th January 2017. Since 30th January 2017, 93 children have been found in Wales and are being safeguarded. 75% of them are girls and 70% for sexual exploitation. Barnardos have done a fantastic job. All of the cases have been crisis. Investigations can be difficult. A team approach is being undertaken to tackle this issue by working with local authorities, the police, and partners, including NGO’s like BOWSO, the CPS, Police and Crime Commissioners.

Greater Manchester identified 76 and Hampshire 84. There is an investigation into all these cases.

This year, in the first quarter, 53 people have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

More cases are being investigated and brought to justice.

Until 2015, there was no offence as slavery and until the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act. Although cases can start off as modern slavery, they can end up with charges of rape, money laundering, robbery and drugs. There is a code for modern slavery and so going forward it will be clear how many cases there are. Julian Williams the Chief Constable of Gwent chairs a threat group where law and enforcement join together, where the emphasis is on disrupting and making arrests where possible. BBC recently did an investigation around car washes and labour exploitation issues. Police are engaged and action is being taken in this area, including action by Julian Williams.

KAW is doing a marvellous job in making sure people are getting trained. It’s gone from 2014, just shy of 2000 people being trained, to 8000 last year. KAW chairs the UK training group and through KAW’s group, a really good conference came to Wales in April and was all about the aviation and hospitality industries response.

SC distributed copies of the code of practice and spoke on some of the provisions in it as it relates to the requirements of producing a slavery statement on websites. The aim is to make all supply chains free of slave labour. The Welsh Government is signed up to it and the hope is by the end of the year all local authorities will be signed up. 10-12 are signed up already, including Cardiff. Jeff Cuthbert spoke to other police commissioners about this and now all for commissioners and police forces are signed up for it.

IW said the CPS and police are now more switched on to this abhorrent trade. But, last year’s report that was put out by the inspectorate on modern slavery and her criticism was that most forces in the UK weren’t up to the mark. The report praised Greater Manchester and said they have greater awareness on these issues. It’s good to see more referrals going through.

SC said Greater Manchester were in a good position at the time of the report. They were 1 of 3 forces at the time that had a dedicated Modern Slavery unit. The Metropolitan Police, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. Since then Gwent and North Wales police have dedicated units. Areas that have dedicated units have greater activity because of the increased focus.

SC said KAW from the CPS, working with the police, have developed a three-day course for senior investigating officers, cross prosecutors and advocates at a hydra centre.
DM said it is fantastic training and allows role playing to occur. The training was invaluable for a case that arose.

IW said this is happening in plain sight, in car washes.

RA said not all forces were inspected by the inspectorate. All forces will be inspected this year.

RA said there are some challenges in terms of prosecutions.

DR said if all agencies were involved, with all agencies targeting car washes, it would be easy to catch them. Personnel changes on a regular basis at these car washes.

SC said HMRC have a dedicated resource looking at this issue in Wales. Joint activity is taking place to tackle this issue and to arrest people. Through working with the police, the first prosecution took place in England and Wales in Swansea around a month ago, with two men going to prison.

RA said PCC, JC and JW held a very successful event in January in the Senedd. The event raised awareness of what modern slavery means today. PCC, JC will be working closely with KAW to look at position in Gwent and to learn where we are in Gwent and what more we need to do on a partnership basis in the future.

RA said work was being done with the faith community and the organisations of three events later in the year to help refuges and asylum seekers.

RA said a collaborative approach was being taken to ensure there was training being provided on the code of practice.

MM said that BAWSO, Safer Wales and New Pathways help survivors and victims’ at risk of slavery, including accommodation and outreach services. Co-producing events with survivors should be key to holding events.

RA agreed with MM and said that sometimes it can be difficult for survivors to speak out, making it difficult for them to speak on stage. This is what happened for the seminar in January.

JW said in the last minutes of the meeting a hub was suggested to allow people to communicate centrally.

SC said the only hub that is available currently to use is the UK Modern slavery hotline.

NP said a hub in the extended sense could be used. Central resources for organisations to access in order for them to get the latest information and best practices. Resources should be polled together to raise awareness on Facebook, with the aid of advertising.

KAW said tweets go out regularly, with stakeholders spreading the message successfully. KAW said securing funding for a central hub, using social media, is currently limited.

KAW said the 12 themes of slavery allows the profile of key areas of modern slavery and trafficking to be raised on social media.

SC said the Live Fear Free website and Modern Slavery unit is being used to pool resources currently. Crime Stopped Cymru is doing a fantastic job and all organisations around the table are doing amazing.
NP said Twitter is a great platform to speak to a receptive, already engaged, audience. Facebook is a great platform to speak to members of the public that may not be engaged within politics or political campaigns.

MM said for the 18th October all organisations can align each other's initiatives together and coordinate.

KAW said the leadership group will co-ordinate events and campaign for anti-slavery week.

SC said that the Modern Slavery helpline are about to launch a smart phone app. The app will aim to spot the signs of modern slavery and allow people to report.

JW asked for it to be agreed at the meeting that a coordinated message and strapline would go out in October, as well as a Thunderclap campaign.

The next CPG meeting can be held in early September to agree a strapline and the messaging for anti-slavery week.

NP said this would be a good time to utilise government ministers and for them to also spread the message.

RA said that there will be extra resources in Connect Gwent for modern slavery and human trafficking.