Minutes of the CPG Meeting on Human Trafficking

Date: Tuesday, 12th November 2019  
Time: 08:15am  
Venue: Conference Room A (Ground Floor), Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

- Joyce Watson AM (JW)  
- Stephen Chapman, Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator, Welsh Government (SC)  
- Nitesh Patel, Communications Officer for Joyce Watson AM (NP)  
- Ryland Doyle, Communications and Research Officer, Mike Hedges AM (RD)  
- David Rowlands AM, South Wale East (DR)  
- Liz, Intern, National Assembly for Wales (LI)  
- Simon Borja, Director of Project Development, Safer Wales Ltd (SB)  
- Themba Moyo, Outreach, BAWSO (TM)  
- Tony Julian, Victim of Trafficking (TJ)  
- Rakshanda Shahzad, Head of Services for South Wales, BAWSO (RS)

Apologies

- Kim Ann Williamson MBE, Senior Operational Business Manager, CPS Wales  
- Mutale Merrill OBE, Chief Executive, BAWSO

Minutes

JW re-elected unanimously as Chair of Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking and BAWSO as the secretariat.

Minutes of meeting of 12th March 2019 approved as accurate with no objections.

JW said that over the past 12 months a number of developments have taken place around modern slavery and human trafficking, both in Wales and across the UK.

There were nearly 7,000 suspected victims of modern slavery across the UK last year. This includes six potential cases of people’s organs being harvested. Of that total around 45% were children.

Of the almost 7,000 people referred to a Home Office scheme to combat modern slavery and help potential victims, almost a quarter, were born and raised in the UK, up from 820 such referrals in 2017.

Police in North Wales are dealing with an increasing number of cases involving modern slavery and human trafficking. The force investigated 72 reports in the last 12 months, with the overwhelming majority of victims being white, British and under 20 years old.
New data from the National Crime Agency shows a 30 per cent increase in reports of modern slavery cases across Wales in 2018.

Despite the rapid rise in potential victims, the conviction rate is only around 2% of reported slavery-related crimes.

Eight human traffickers were jailed in July this year following the UK's biggest ever modern slavery prosecution.

The five men and three women, who were members of a Polish organised crime group, enslaved hundreds of desperate and vulnerable people.

Last week, three men were arrested on allegations that staff at two care homes were victims of modern day slavery in Danygraig Nursing Home in Newport and Ashville Residential Care Home in Brithdir.

In June this year, it was reported that in Neath a man was kept as a slave and put to work for more than two years by scrap dealer Anthony Howard Baker. He kept the victim in squalid conditions while his teenage son Harvey Baker subjected the labourer to repeated and serious assaults. When police found the victim following a tip-off he had a broken jaw from the consistent beatings.

JW said that it’s positive that at least people now can recognise what’s going on and they know where to go for support.

TJ went through his experience of being trafficked and additional information provided by TM.

SC said there is no one type of trafficking victim. In the case of Darrell Semester, he was held for 13 years and got no pay. The price of no pay meant Darrell was worth £200,000-300,000. All victims in the past had to go across the border for male victims. We’ve now got refuges where we can put men. Men come with a lot of issues, often substance misuse. When men get rescued, it’s only the beginning in terms of support. Wales MARAC coordinator is funded from the proceeds of crime and a member of BAWSO’s staff.

RS said that if the MARAC wasn’t in place, it would be difficult to deal with cases and to help high risk victims. It’s working great to provide support.

SC said all 22 local authorities and 6 regional safeguarding boards engaged. People often exploit people that come over to the UK on domestic worker visas and work long hours for nothing. Data shows that 251 reports of slavery were made in Wales last year. In the first six months of this year, there have been 143 reports. The increase is down to raising awareness. Throughout better awareness raising, members of the public are coming forward and contacting the police. Police are becoming actively engaged.

SC said the ‘Baker & Baker’ case, a neighbour in Neath rang the police on suspicious activity. The police turn up and who had been on the awareness raising training. She spotted the signs of slavery in a 20 year old man on the scene when visiting. The police straight away arrest two men, took the male victim to hospital and found that he had been severely beaten for 2 years and with open wounds. The Bakers got between 6-10 imprisonment. This case took 5 months to bring to justice.
DR asked how people are informed about what to do and how to seek help. SC said when people leave prisons, people are told about it. There is a schools program on how to stay safe and how to report if they see anything. The Modern Slavery helpline is always a gateway for support, as well as adverts on sides of buses. Once people are in the NRM, they get support. In Wales, adults get support from BAWSO.

SC said we can’t sit back and that we’re on the journey to bring about justice. All four police forces currently have live investigations going on.

SC said that the Home Office funded the ICTA/guardian scheme. When the scheme was offered to cover only three local authorities, SC wrote a case for consideration to include all 22 local authorities. Our independent child trafficking advocates work with all 22 local authorities and foster carers.

**SC said that for the next meeting he could invite Alice Davis, who heads up the Barnardo’s child trafficking scheme**

JW said that when she gave evidence in Westminster years ago on work being done in Wales to tackle trafficking, she argued that a guardship system was essential to put in the trafficking/modern slavery bill.

SC said that on Saturday, Prof. Bella Arora, had the British American Project with the British Embassy in Washington at a convention in Cardiff and brought along 25 work studies to present on what we do. The Americas were really interested in what we’re doing.

**SC said that he could bring a Senior investigating officer to the next meeting.**

DB said that the key is to get to the key agencies that come in contact with those that are potential victims of trafficking. SC said that training with key agencies and voluntary sector are trained.

DR said he was surprised to not have a police presence at the meeting. NP said that the South Wales Police contacts are invited. SC said that Dan Michel is now with the violence prevention unit. SC said that he can bring a senior investigating officer and Helen Woodwood to the next meeting.

LI asked if some of the victims go back to the perpetrators. RS that could happen and are at risk of re-trafficking, but they wouldn’t do that within the support network. But it could happen, especially if they don’t have recourse to public funds and when there are serious issues.

JW said that perpetrators often have a wide network of connections to find victims.

It was agreed that the next meeting could take place in March 2020.