



**VERA BAIRD**<sup>QC</sup>  
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to share our views on the progress that has been made in the three years since the Modern Slavery Act 2015 came into force and what further action is needed to tackle this crime.

## **1.0 The current scale and nature of Modern Slavery – the situation in Northumbria**

- 1.1 The Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit published a report providing details with regard to the regional nature and scale of Modern Day Slavery, showing that the main types of MDS in the North East Region are sexual exploitation, forced labour and criminal exploitation.
- 1.2 The level of recorded Modern Day Slavery crime and the number of operations are significantly higher in Northumbria in comparison to the two other forces in our region.
- 1.3 Since 2015, I have worked with the Chief Constable to develop a dedicated Modern Day Slavery strategy and improvement plan in Northumbria. The Strategy and improvement plan reflects the four P's, (prosecute, pursue, prevent and protect) and are regularly reviewed against independent report such as the Caroline Haughey report and the HMICFRS Stolen Freedom report. Modern Day Slavery features in my Police and Crime Plan as a priority and sits within the Force Control Strategy, the Strategic Threat Risk Assessment (STRA) and the Chief Constable's delivery plan.
- 1.4 Sanctuary became Northumbria Police's dedicated response to Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in April 2015, following a successful home office innovation bid of £3.5 million. This money allowed the expansion of the Sanctuary victim team including additional social care and third sector resource, as part of a two year project which operated both north and south of the Tyne to tackle and investigate perpetrators who commit / attempt to commit sexual exploitation and to safeguard and support vulnerable adults and children who are victims of CSE/ SE and Human Trafficking or at risk of CSE/ SE and Human Trafficking. The Sanctuary response has now been absorbed into the Complex Abuse Investigation Unit, supported by two multi agency victim teams.

## **2.0 The impact of the Modern Slavery Act**

- 2.1 The introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, simplified legislation and brought sexual exploitation and human trafficking under one roof. Part one of the act consolidates the current offences of slavery and human trafficking whilst increasing the maximum penalty for such offences. Part 2 provides for two new civil preventative orders, the Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order and the Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order. Part 3 establishes the office of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner and sets out the function of the Commissioner and part 4 introduces a duty on specified public authorities to notify the National Crime Agency about suspected victims of human Trafficking and makes general provisions.
- 2.2 The recent HMICFRS Stolen Freedom report recognised that Northumbria were one of six forces which in 2016, made over half of the police referrals (53 %) to the National Referral Mechanism alongside Greater Manchester Police, Metropolitan Police Service, South Yorkshire Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police.

- 2.3 Following the success of the four Modern Day slavery investigations which have been finalised at court, Northumbria Police have 12 Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and 3 Slavery and trafficking Risk Orders
- 2.4 I have ensured Northumbria Police make good use of the preventative powers provided under the Modern Day Slavery legislation. At present, seven Slavery Trafficking Prevention orders and three Interim Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders have been obtained. The seven Slavery trafficking and prevention orders have come with convictions with the offenders receiving custodial sentences. The three interim orders have all been breached with the offenders leaving the country. Prior to this, the details of the interim orders were provided to Op Dragoon, Firearms Support Unit (FSU) and motor patrols under the Sanctuary disruption model.
- 2.5 Since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, Northumbria Police have been able to successfully use the legislation of arrange/ facilitate trafficking for Child Sexual Exploitation investigations.
- 3.0 **How to increase the understanding and reporting of Modern Day Slavery offences.**
- 3.1 To increase the understanding of Modern Slavery, Northumbria Police have shown significant commitment to training officers. The Modern Slavery partnership coordinator provides training to trainers, the MDS National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) package is mandatory for all front line officers. Training has been provided to SIO's and all complex investigations have an Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) oversight. Northumbria Police took 50 places for a regional MDS training day and have taken the regional lead to provide MDS course over a four day period. This investment in training, increasing officers understanding of MDS and the signs and indicators and increases the reporting of MDS offences.
- 3.2 All front facing officers and CSO's have completed mandatory training in Modern Slavery and the statutory defence offered by S.45, where victims have a defence in law where there is evidence that they carried out the criminal acts due to the fact of being victims of Modern Slavery. Victims are referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and all aspects of allegation of Modern Day Slavery are investigated.
- 3.3 It is important to raise awareness with partners and within industry. In Northumbria Hope for Justice support the coordination of partnerships and agencies to strengthen multi agency relationships, raise awareness and provide training for local authorities in relation to Modern Day Slavery. We have secured money from the Police Transformation Fund to host a partnership conference on MDS, planned for October 2018.
- 3.4 Northumbria Police have effective partnership arrangements to co-ordinate activity in order to share information and safeguard victims. Enhancing the work embedded within the Complex abuse multi agency victim teams, Northumbria Police have worked with the six Local Authorities and stakeholders to establish Modern Slavery and Trafficking response plans which set out the roles and responsibilities of each agency. This allows us not only to respond to planned investigations but also allows the Police and partners to work together for unplanned investigations whereby the victim may have mental health problems, health problems, housing requirement, language barriers or care and support needs. The effective partnership arrangements allow for all these provisions, for the victim to be supported and safeguarded.

- 3.5 In Northumbria, there is a Detective Superintendent who has the strategic portfolio responsibility for Modern Day Slavery and is regional lead to ensure that there are effective partnership arrangements and intelligence exchange between regional forces. Northumbria Police have established intelligence links with Safeguarding partners. There are a number of structured and embedded pathways to share information which include; Missing Sexually Exploited and Trafficked meetings (MSET), Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG), Force Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TTCG) and Regional TCG. The creation of the National Foreign Offenders desk at Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB), which collates and coordinates intelligence for dissemination, has further strengthened intelligence sharing pathways.
- 3.6 A Detective Chief Inspector take the operational lead for Sanctuary and delivers training to safeguarding partners including Children and Adult services, health and housing to raise awareness and help embed partnership working. Using PIF funding secured as part of Operation Sanctuary, Northumbria police have appointed a modern day slavery partnership coordinator from Hope for Justice on a two year contract, who is assisting in strengthening those partnership arrangements and providing training to strategic Local Authority leads.
- 3.7 There is a requirement for the Gangmaster & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to work with industries to work with the employees within the industries who are well placed to spot victims of labour exploitation early. Awareness sessions should be delivered to provide detail of the reporting mechanisms for Modern Day slavery and posters displayed in premises common with labour exploitation, such as food industries, agricultural industries and car washes.
- 3.8 We have raised awareness of MDS with the public through campaigns which have supported and reinforced my Police and Crime Plan priorities, with a focus on vulnerability. In March a campaign was launched using the strap line 'See it, Tackle it, Stop it'. To maximise impact the vehicle of football was used to promote the campaign and the video was watched by over 90,000 people. To ensure this campaign was inclusive further work has been completed to promote it with female sports in the region. This includes regional local netball, hockey and gymnastics through their local twitter accounts.

#### 4.0 **The impact of County Lines**

At present within the region there are only three mapped Organised Crime Groups (OCG's) with links to County Lines, two of which are in the Northumbria area. A new County Lines national project is underway and this includes the recruitment of a regional County Lines Intelligence Analyst and Coordinator that will assist with the tracking and identification of activity in this area.

- 4.1 I recognise the potential impact that County Lines has on the vulnerable and communities, so I have supported the force to employ a strategy of immediate intervention when potential County Lines offenders are identified. Thus far no 'line' has been identified as operating within the Northumbria police force boundaries.
- 5.0 **What success in tackling Modern Slavery would look like and what benchmarks should be used to measure**
- 5.1 In Northumbria success to us comes in the detail of Operation Cluster which was a large scale modern day slavery investigation into forced labour and sexual exploitation. The offenders were part of an organised crime group that trafficked vulnerable people from Slovakia and the Czech Republic to work for next to nothing in the UK. This was

an incredibly complex investigation to prove the conspiracy between the members of the organised crime group. The victims were extremely vulnerable and had complex needs and support and they were scared of the impact of cooperating with the police and the OCG and associates tried to intimidate them not to cooperate either directly or through family members. The investigation included a large scale financial investigation as well as forced labour and sexual exploitation. The small team of detectives had a difficult task managing the collation and disclosure of a vast amount of third party material and disclosure issues including telecomm enquiries. Following an 18 month long investigation, 6 offenders were found guilty of conspiracy to traffic people, conspiracy to launder money, conspiracy to carry out forced/ compulsory labour. In total the 6 offenders were sentenced to 40 years imprisonment and 5 of the offenders were given Slavery trafficking prevention orders.

- 5.2 The strength in our multi-agency working has contributed to the success in tackling MDS in Northumbria and our approach to supporting and safeguarding victims of MDS has been recognised by the NCA. The complex abuse investigation team, working closely with partner organisations have investigated perpetrators of MDS and have been successful in securing four prosecutions at Crown Court.
- 5.3 Northumbria Police have undertaken a benchmarking exercise against the national Action Plan to develop our MDS strategy and improvement plan against the following areas;
- Leadership and governance
  - Intelligence
  - Victims
  - Investigations
  - Training

## **6.0 Current levels of support for victims and how can it be improved.**

- 6.1 I am very pleased that recent feedback from both the National Crime Agency and Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit is extremely positive about the arrangements we have in place. During an internal and multi-agency debrief, it was recognised by the NCA that Northumbria Police's dedicated response to tackling CSE and MDS is to be considered as national best practice and that Northumbria Police is regarded as one of the leading forces in the country for safeguarding Modern Day Slavery victims.
- 6.2 The 'What Works Team' from Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit, also came into Northumbria Police and conducted an audit on MDS investigations and stated that they were the best overall MDS investigations, from all the Forces that they have audited
- 6.3 Through our Supporting Victims fund I have commissioned a local charity, Changing Lives, to deliver two key projects to support victims. The first one provides vital support to survivors of sexual exploitation by individuals or organised gangs. This includes women who are involved in ongoing prosecutions and those victims who have chosen not to give evidence within criminal trials. The second project works with vulnerable individuals and Changing Lives have developed a model which provides specialist support to hidden victims of MDS. This support is provided through an emergency 'safe house' and by working closely with victims to establish their needs, Changing Lives broker appropriate support for victims.

6.4 I have made supporting victims a key priority within my Police and Crime Plan and Northumbria Police work with key partners to provide wrap around support to victims of MDS. By working closely with social services, an assessment of the victim's need is undertaken in order to identify relevant support. This can be finding temporary safe accommodation, helping access appropriate medical treatment, signposting to agencies that help victims cope with their experience and aid recovery.

6.5 The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is under reform to look at opportunities to improve the way the existing process operates. Through the support of the NRM, victims received practical support. As a result of the review the key changes made were;

- The length of move on support for victims who have received a positive conclusive grounds decision increased from 14 days to 45 days. This is in addition to the 45 days victims received after a positive reasonable grounds decision
- The Government will fund 'places of safety' so that adult victims leaving exploitative situations can be given support, including safe accommodation and advice for 3 days before deciding whether to enter the NRM
- Victims who receive a positive conclusive grounds decision will also have access to drop in services for up to six months after they leave NRM support

**7.0 How the police and immigration system's response to Modern Slavery offences could be improved?**

7.1 Modern Slavery crimes are most often perpetrated by Organised Crime Groups who operate regionally, nationally and internationally. Cooperation and intelligence sharing with overseas law enforcement is vital to effectively prosecute offenders and deny them the profits of their crimes. This is vital to ongoing to success in this area of work.

7.2 To improve the response to modern slavery, Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) checks should be conducted on all Foreign National Offenders as a minimum requirement in all modern slavery and other serious and organised crime investigations.

7.3 Forces and Immigration should increase the disruption of offenders especially where exploitation is suspected and victims will not disclose. This can be done by better use of GAIN Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN).