



Issue: October, 2020

Anti-Slavery Day edition

Human trafficking and exploitation is still happening despite COVID-19 restrictions.

Vietnamese Law Enforcement Secondment: October 2020

A six month secondment of two officers from the Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security (MPS) to Police Scotland commenced earlier this month. This is the first secondment of its kind and it is hoped that the officers will learn more about policing in the United Kingdom as well as assisting during interactions with the Vietnamese community.



**PEOPLE SHOULD NOT
BE BOUGHT AND SOLD**

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IS HAPPENING IN SCOTLAND**

Operation PERCEPTIVE: Covid-19 period 2020

Police Scotland recognised that there may be a greater risk of exploitation in the agriculture and fishing industries as Covid-19 altered the social and economic landscape in Scotland. So far they have carried out 40 visits to premises in these sectors to gather information on labour requirements, recruitment and to look for indicators of human trafficking. Three of the premises have been revisited by multi-agency teams to investigate human trafficking concerns and a number of potential victims of trafficking have been identified and safeguarded. This work continues to ensure that those vulnerable to exploitation and to using exploited labour are actively sought out during these challenging times.

Awareness Raising!

If you see buildings lit up red on 18 October, it is to mark Anti-Slavery Day.

Anyone who has concerns regarding alleged human trafficking or criminal activity in their area should contact Police Scotland on 101 or 999 in an emergency. The Modern Slavery Helpline can also be contacted on 08000 121 700 or raise concerns online at <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/scotland>.

Wei's story:

This case study illustrates how Migrant Help's Victims of Slavery Support Service in Scotland supported a highly vulnerable service user despite the challenges presented by lockdown and remote working. Some non-vital facts, such as names and locations, have been changed to help protect the identity of the individual concerned.

Wei's National Referral Mechanism (NRM) form stated that he was trafficked from China, through Europe, and ultimately into the UK. On his way to the UK, Wei was forced to work for many months in a kitchen. He was not able to keep the money earned, but was instead made to give the money to his traffickers. Wei was moved by his traffickers to the UK, where the traffickers intended to put Wei and others to work on a cannabis farm.

Wei ultimately managed to avoid working on the cannabis farm. He was picked up by law enforcement and referred into Migrant Help, where he was able to access support.

Migrant Help supported Wei in numerous ways, including linking him with a GP, The Anchor service (for psychological trauma support) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

Wei initially stayed in Migrant Help's safe accommodation, before transferring to outreach support after claiming asylum. Unfortunately, for a variety of complex reasons, exacerbated by the effects of lockdown on his mental health, Wei self-harmed while in outreach support, attempting suicide. Wei was well looked after in hospital with appropriate assessments and he was discharged once stable.

Wei's adviser, working closely with the Anchor and other Migrant Help staff, put a safety plan in place, which included encouraging Wei to establish routine in his life, including re-engaging in studying English and listening to music. Wei's adviser also purchased books for Wei to read and study as a way of giving him focus in his life, and linked him with meditation videos online.

Wei's adviser quickly arranged counselling sessions for Wei, so that each week Wei could spend an hour talking to a counsellor at Migrant Help's facilities. Every Friday, a staff member made sure to attend the office in order to support these meetings. Wei found these sessions incredibly helpful, and after 6 sessions, his mental health

had considerably improved.

However, it was not only these counselling sessions that helped Wei improve his mental health and move through this extremely challenging time. Wei's adviser spent hours and hours talking to Wei, often outside of working hours and while also supporting many other clients. Time and again, the adviser was able to work with Wei to access a happier place, digging deeply into what Wei had going for him in his life and how he could focus productively on these things. One of the positive indicators was Wei's family back home, and the adviser helped Wei understand how important he was to his family. Wei also had a love for running and the adviser helped Wei re-connect with this and start running again.

Wei's adviser listened to so many things Wei had to say and wanted to get off his chest, offering him the space to release anxieties from his system, lightening his load and greatly improving his mental health.

At the time of writing, Wei reports positive mental health and that he is in a far different place from the day he attempted to take his life. Without question, if it was not for the tireless support of Wei's adviser at Migrant Help, who was internally recognised for her exceptional handling of this and other situations during the pandemic, the outcome for Wei is unlikely to have been as positive.

Very recently, Wei was able to safely exit Migrant Help's service. He is doing well and has a new flatmate who he gets along with well, and he has also been given a place to learn English at a college in Glasgow.



Human Trafficking is a serious and complex crime

Human Trafficking Victims given digital devices during pandemic

TARA are a support service for trafficking survivors, helping identify and support women who may have been trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

The TARA Service are currently supporting 73 women, most of whom are seeking asylum or have refugee status and have very limited incomes. The TARA Service recognise this and ensure women access various supports from other organisations such as help with food, clothing and other essential items.

One consequence of COVID-19 is that it has become evident that the women TARA support are in need of digital access. Many women reported that they did not have access to a TV, smart-device or the internet. As a result of this women reported loneliness, isolation, over-thinking, increased trauma symptoms, boredom, being unable to access educational resources (ESOL classes), being unable to engage with support services and many of them were unaware of the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

The TARA Service began to advocate on their behalf, sourcing digital devices from various charities; including Refuweegee (countless devices requested!), the Victim Support Fund (9 applications made) and more recently Connecting Scotland. The TARA Service recently applied to and secured twenty devices from Connecting Scotland (10 iPad's and 10 Chromebooks) and 20 Mi-Fi devices (data for 12 months) at zero cost to the service and the women supported.

These items were allocated to women at socially distanced sessions whereby devices were set up for women and a member of the TARA team showed them how the devices operate. Women were extremely grateful. Many of them were happy to have some-

thing 'new', as they often receive second-hand possessions from charities.

TARA would like to thank Refuweegee, Victim Support Scotland and Connecting Scotland for providing devices, as they have already proved to be invaluable resources for women in the service. Women can now socialise with friends, access self-help tools (meditation, yoga etc), learn English, attend appointments with their lawyers, psychologists and other practitioners and participate in college classes. Women will also be able to use the devices for fun!

The Scottish Government has provided TARA (and Migrant Help) with greater flexibility through their funding agreements and TARA are exploring how this can provide sustainable digital access for service users.

Two women have explained how the devices have been of benefit to them:

'Thank you for the iPad. I am an asylum seeker with limited access to many things and my children can be bored because they don't have access to most of what other children enjoy in their home. The iPad and the Wi-Fi made a big change to my life and children, my daughter can learn online and do her school assignments easily and I can too. Life can be better. Thank you for this privilege.'

'The chromebook and Wi-Fi has been very useful to me. I can surf the internet, use whatsapp to talk with family and friends, play games, watch movies. It is perfect for me and I am so happy. Thank you very much.'



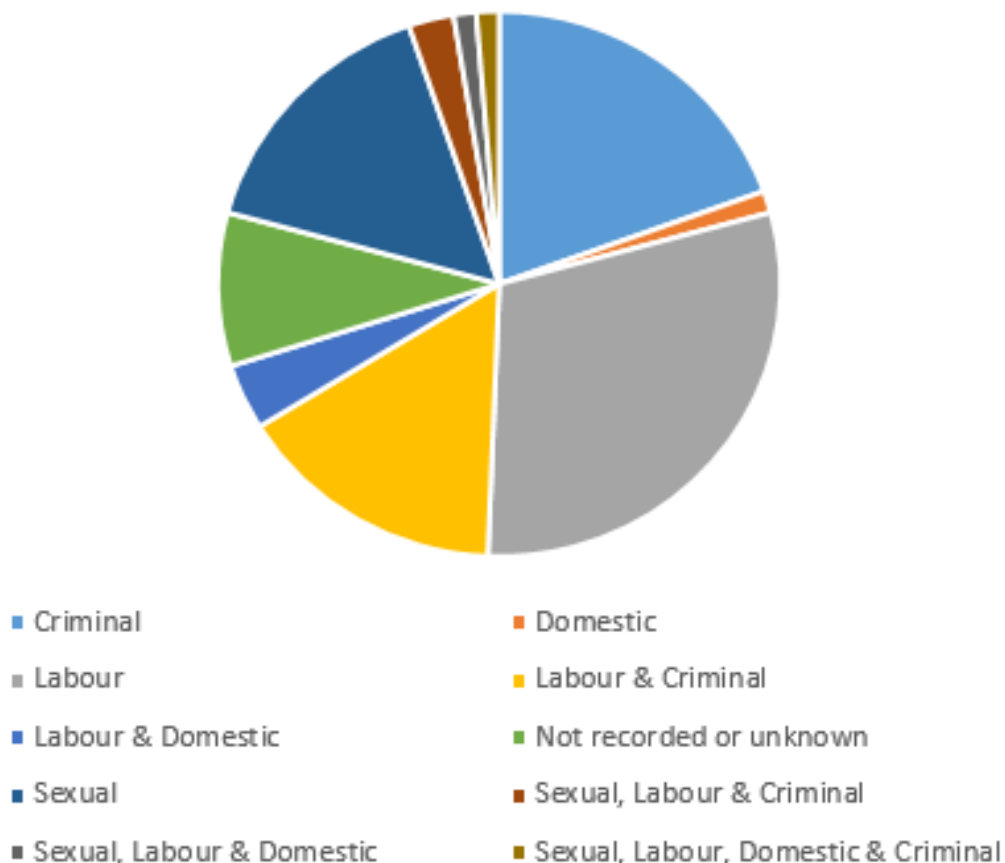
National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Q2 overview

On 17 September 2020 the Home Office Single Competent Authority released Quarter 2 figures for 2020 (1 April – 30 June)

Key insights:

- **77 referrals** from Scotland in Q2 2020, a decrease of **27%** on 2019 Q2 (106 referrals). There were 105 referrals from Scotland in Q1 2020.
- 52 males and 24 females were referred in Q2 2020. In a single case gender was not recorded.
- 56 referrals were for adults with 18 referrals for children in Q2 2020. For 3 referrals, age was not recorded.
- **Vietnamese (20 referrals)** was the biggest single nationality grouping, followed by Albanian (8), UK (6), Chinese (6) and Iranian (6)
- 42 referrals from Scotland in Q2 2020 involved labour exploitation, followed by criminal exploitation (30 referrals) and sexual exploitation (16) **[NB: a referral can include multiple exploitation types]**.
- Overall UK referrals for Q2 2020 (2,209) are 5% lower than in Q2 2019 (2,320)

National Referral Mechanism Statistics Q2



SOHTIS is a charity that supports survivors of trafficking in Scotland.

Project Light

Poverty, homelessness, poor mental health, isolation, addiction and the effects of COVID-19 all make people more vulnerable to trafficking and are often the experience of those who are being exploited or have been victims of trafficking.

We know that there are many people in our villages, towns and cities that are and have been exploited, they are hidden in plain sight and are often accessing services such as food banks, homeless hostels, drop in centres or statutory services. Project Light aims to reach the most vulnerable who are being or have been exploited, bringing recovery and the first steps to lasting freedom.

The project has now been underway for three months and despite COVID-19 restrictions, increased demand has resulted in the project, initially planned for Edinburgh, to be expanded to include work in Aberdeen. Effective contingency planning has enabled work with an increased number of NGO's and statutory services who support vulnerable people, strengthening their understanding of human trafficking.

In addition to increasing knowledge, Project Light is providing ongoing, expert guidance to organisations as they embed procedures which lead to the identification of trafficked people in their practice. It is also supporting key workers directly regarding specific trafficking concerns and enabling increased reporting to the Modern Slavery Helpline. As a result of this initial work, the project has been able to identify a significant number of potential victims, support one individual to enter the NRM and access crisis care and is currently working with Police Scotland to build intelligence on other Operations.

For more information or to get involved, contact enquiries@sohtis.org.



SOHTIS

Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland

Project ESOL

Over 90% of potential victims of human trafficking recovered in Scotland in 2019 were non-native English speakers. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers have a respected and trusted role in supporting those with no or low level English language and assisting students adjust to life in Scotland. They often become more familiar with the lives and struggles their students face than any other professional, putting them in a unique position to identify trafficking concerns and support survivors.

Funded by the National Lottery and supported by experienced ESOL practitioners, Project ESOL is equipping teachers in community and further education settings to identify potential victims and support survivors of trafficking in their classrooms. Tailored CPD workshops are delivered which raise confidence and affirm teachers in their practice as well as providing tools and trauma informed teaching techniques which avoid triggers and build hope.

SOHTIS is committed to the development of quality and innovative resources including lesson plans which empower students to know the signs of trafficking, have the necessary vocabulary and know where and how to access help when they need it. These are being added to regularly and are available to download at www.sohtis.org. CPD sessions and tailored support is available on request.

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Contact: human.trafficking@gov.scot