

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION NEWSLETTER

First Convictions under the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) 2015 & first use of Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Orders

On 15 March 2018 Robert McPhee and John Miller were sentenced to ten years and seven years imprisonment respectively. Amongst other charges both were convicted of a contravention of section 4(1) of the Human Trafficking & Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 (slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour). These are the first convictions under the Human Trafficking & Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 since it came into force on 31 May 2016.

Both men were also made subject to Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Orders. Again, these are the first orders of their kind to be imposed in Scotland since they came into force on 30 June 2017. The terms of the order mean that, for five years after the men are released from prison, both will be restricted in whom they can employ; the property they can use, and they must notify police of any travel plans out with Scotland. They are also restricted in the number of communications devices they may own.

Multi Agency Working: Police, Social Work & NHS: Central Scotland

A teenage male (aged approx. 15/16) was found lying unresponsive in Falkirk Town Centre by members of the public. Police attended and the male was taken to receive medical attention. He disclosed at that time he had been trafficked from Taiwan. When fit to be discharged, he was accommodated at a safe location whilst a Police and Social Work enquiry took place. Although the enquiry has ultimately led to no charges, a joint Police, Social Work and NHS approach has ensured that this young man remains safe and well and thriving. He was revisited by police and is settled and looking to make a life for himself in this country.

Frank was unemployed and living in Romania with his wife and young family. He was contacted by his childhood friend in November 2014. He put him in touch with a male who offered him employment and accommodation in the UK. Frank was happy to accept this opportunity as he needed work to support his family. About 2 weeks later he was sent a ticket for a flight to Glasgow and met at the airport by a male who took him to an address. Frank was told that it would cost him £75 per week for the bed space. Within weeks of arriving in the UK, Frank was forced, under the threat of violence to him and his family, to open bank accounts for a group to use. After this experience he tried to get out of the group's control without success, so he decided to sell all his belongings in order to fund a deposit for a flat of his own with a reputable landlord. He changed his telephone number several times so the group cannot contact him. He decided to contact the police and completed the NRM in 2017. He was then approached by Migrant Help who provided him with practical, emotional and moral support. Migrant Help offered Frank financial support as he struggled to take care of his family and recently lost a job. Migrant Help informed Frank about an opportunity to join Bright Future programme, the Co-op programme, which provides survivors of human trafficking with a four-week paid work placement leading to a non-competitive interview. Frank is still completing the placement, and there might be an opportunity of a job offer at the end of the placement. Frank struggled with opening a bank account because his name was fraudulently used in the past. HSBC started a pilot to help victims of human trafficking with opening bank accounts. Frank has been one of the pioneers of this initiative.

Multi Agency Working: Police & TARA : Aberdeenshire

Engagement by Police and TARA with the local authorities during February 2018 has heightened the awareness of partners locally, in terms of the requirements to identify instances of Human Trafficking and provide support to victims. This interaction resulted in front page local press coverage of the efforts being directed at tackling Human Trafficking (Press and Journal - Feb 20th 2018), which in turn has increased public awareness of the issues. The article referred to the safeguarding of a victim and appearance at court of 2 males, as a result of a Police investigation in Elgin.

““Making timely referrals about situations of exploitation from the UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline to the relevant police force is vital. At the Helpline, we work collaboratively with all partners across the UK on a multi-agency basis to ensure agencies are better informed of situations and given relevant information that they can act upon to protect potential victims and go after the criminals”

Justine Currell, Executive Director, Unseen

Multi Agency Working: Police, Modern Slavery Helpline & Social Work: Glasgow

The Modern Slavery team received a call at their HQ to state that a female possibly under 18 was being sexually exploited within a flat in Glasgow and there was concerns about her . As per protocol arrangements with the Modern Slavery helpline they contacted Police Scotland who were able to task this out to the division and identify the block of flats and thereafter the flat position with some good investigative police work. Police attended and rescued an 18 year old female in a flat who was being sexually exploited, she provided a statement to the police, she was also babysitting and looking after a five year old child who was the traffickers child who subsequently arrived at the flat a short time later and were arrested.

Due to the initial work by the Modern Slavery Helpline identifying the immediate threat risk and harm, and excellent investigations by the police, two arrests were made for Human Trafficking offences. Care packages were provided to the 18 year old female victim by TARA and local services provided by Glasgow Social work provided a care package to the child of the traffickers. A great example of multi-agency partnership working that rescued two victims.

Multi Agency Working: Police and Immigration Enforcement: Central Scotland

After several intelligence reports had been received of trafficked males working at a local Chinese restaurant in the Falkirk area, Police and colleagues from the Home Office Immigration Enforcement carried out a joint visit. The result of this visit led to some minor immigration offences being detected but more importantly one male was traced who has since disclosed that he is a victim of Human Trafficking offences. He is now under the National Referral Mechanism and has been rehoused to a safe location pending further enquiry.