

Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy – Consultation – Case Studies



INTRODUCTION

As part of the background to the consultation on the draft Scottish strategy to tackle trafficking and exploitation, the Strategy Implementation Group felt it would be helpful for those reading the document to have some case studies that would illustrate some of the facets of trafficking and exploitation in Scotland today.

All of the cases below are real life examples, but with the details and names changed.

Robert

Robert flew to the UK from Eastern Europe. He saw an advert online about a job in Glasgow as a builder. It was well paid job and the accommodation was guaranteed as well. He had just lost his job and he was not able to pay up the rent for his flat so he decided to try his luck. Robert had to pay for his ticket to Glasgow and he was told not to worry about anything else.

When Robert arrived at the airport, he was picked up by two males from his own country who took him to suburbs of Glasgow, to a 3 bedroom flat. There were already 10 people staying in there. Robert had to share his room with other 3 people. He was given a mattress to sleep on and some food. He was told that the next day they would tell him about the job because they were waiting on the confirmation from the building site.

The next day Robert was wakened early and told to get ready. He didn't know where he was going but followed. He was told not to ask questions. Robert was taken to the town and given leaflets to distribute on the streets. He was given a map with marked area and a GPS device. Robert was told that he had to go round and distribute the leaflets around and the GPS device measured the mileage for him. He was told that he would be paid according to the registered mileage on the device. Robert asked about the building site job, but he was told to mind his own business, not to ask questions, and follow the tasks given to him. Robert gritted his teeth and decided that he would do as he was told because he needed money. He worked long hours from 7 am until 6 pm. He hardly had any breaks during his working time because he was told that the GPS device sent the signal to the boss who monitored the work and he had to have certain mileage on his GPS before he got paid. After work Robert had to return to the meeting point and wait to be picked up. He was usually hungry and tired.

Robert was to be paid monthly. He put up with the mistreatment and overcrowding in the flat because he believed that he would get paid good money at the end of the

month. One day Robert discovered that he and others were locked in the flat. He asked for the key because he wanted to go out but he was told that it was for his safety as they stayed in an area with a bad reputation. He stopped questioning it as well.

Once a month two big men came to the flat and paid the wages. Robert was paid only £25 and told that the rest of the money had to cover his rent, food and transport to and from work. A fight broke out and Robert was physically abused. His nose was broken and bleeding heavily but he was not allowed to go to hospital. The next day Robert carried out his work. He didn't know what to do, every time he asked a question, he was given the silent treatment. One day Robert was accused of stealing food from another person, he was told that he would need to pay because he was a thief and that month he was given only £10.

Robert wanted to escape but he didn't have anywhere to go, he didn't know the language and was afraid of being physically attacked. What is more, the traffickers were in the possession of his ID because they said that they would help with obtaining a NI number. He asked for it but he was laughed at and he felt hopeless, he didn't think he would ever get it back.

One day he met a person from his own country on the street and they started talking. This man said that he could help him, but Robert didn't want to leave without his ID. He returned back to the flat and on that day he told the trafficker that he wanted to leave. He was physically abused again and told that he couldn't go. He was locked in the room. He hid his phone in the room and then he phoned the police, who came to the premises and took him to Migrant Help.

Robert was very scared when he arrived at Migrant Help and didn't want to talk about what had happened to him. He had nightmares at night and he felt ashamed that he didn't deal with what happened to him in a better way. It took a lot of time for Robert to build up his trust in humanity and smile again.

At the end of his reflection period, Robert was able to find a job in a chocolate factory. He was happy to have some security in his life and stand on his own feet. Robert decided to stay in the UK for the time being to earn some money, but he was planning to return back home in the near future.

Suzanne – aged 14

Suzanne is 14 years old and is from a country in Africa. She first came to the attention of social work when she tried to enrol in a local school. She was accompanied by her uncle who told teachers that she had come to live with him and his wife. School staff alerted social work as Suzanne was poorly dressed, spoke very little English and did not have any documents with her proving her identity.

During an initial meeting with a social worker, Suzanne was accompanied by her uncle and aunt who spoke very good English and helped her to explain her story. She tells her social worker that she had been brought to the UK by an older man from her village. He had kept her in a house somewhere in England for several weeks and was 'bad' to her. She became upset and did not say much more. Her aunt explained that her family had paid for Suzanne to come to the UK to get a better life and that she could now live with her and her three young children. Her main priority is Suzanne getting enrolled in a local school so that she can learn English.

Social work paid a home visit and find that the home is clean although overcrowded but Suzanne's cousins seem well and happy. However Suzanne was sharing a room with two younger children and still appeared withdrawn. She once again became upset when the social worker asked her about her time in England. Suzanne did not appear to have any immigration paperwork and seemed uncertain about her current immigration status. She voiced concerns that she did not know for sure if the people she was living with were actually her relatives as the last time she saw her uncle was when she was only 5 years old.

Several months later, Suzanne presented to social work and told them that her relationship with her uncle and aunt had broken down and that she was afraid to go back to the house. Suzanne was accommodated in a children's unit where she disclosed that the man who originally brought her to the UK was someone she met in her home country and he had promised to help her. When she arrived in the UK he had sexually abused her while she was staying with him.

Suzanne was identified as a victim of trafficking and was granted Refugee Status. Despite now having refugee status, Suzanne remains vulnerable to exploitation particularly as the circumstances of her arrival in Scotland, and the extent or otherwise to which her 'family' were aware of the trafficking, remain unclear.

Suzanne is currently living with a foster carer and is benefitting from having a nurturing and safe environment. She is attending school and is progressing well.

Sam – 17

Sam is from Asia and has recently been detained in a Young Offenders' Institution (YOI) and charged with crimes relating to cannabis cultivation. As Sam is seventeen years old and is subject to immigration control, the Police also made a child protection referral to the local Social Work team.

Sam was apprehended during a raid on a cannabis factory in a small rural community where he had been living in cramped and unsanitary conditions. When he was found, Sam told the Police that he hadn't eaten that day and that he had been beaten by his employer the previous week after he tried to leave the house.

During a police interview, Sam explained that he was watering cannabis plants in order to repay a debt to the people who had brought him to the UK. He told them that he cannot return to his home country as he still owes those people money and would not be safe in his home village. Sam stated that he was seventeen but seems unsure of his birth date and does not have any identity documents. He spoke limited English but YOI staff sourced a local interpreter.

After several weeks, staff expressed concern that Sam regularly used the centre's internet facilities and made frequent phone calls from the centre's telephones even though he claimed not to know anyone in the UK.

Sam was later released on bail pending trial to an address provided by social work. The address was in a homeless hostel in a small rural town near to where he had been working.

Hostel staff subsequently told Sam's social worker that he had an expensive new mobile phone and had recently bought some new clothes. He said that a friend had lent him some money for these purchases but when he was questioned further about his 'friend' he became agitated and used his lack of English to avoid answering the question stating that 'I do not understand'.

Four days after his release from the YOI, Sam was seen in the morning leaving the hostel and he did not return. The police were contacted and he was reported as a missing child but his whereabouts remain unknown.

Jaroslava (in her own words)

My name is Jaroslava. I come from Eastern Europe. I lived with my family and I am Roma. Our life there was very hard and it was difficult for me to find work to support my family. One day a very good friend told me that he could get me work in the UK. He told me that I would be able to earn enough money to send some home to my family. I thought that I would be working in a sandwich factory and that they would provide me with somewhere to stay. My friend told me that this would cost a small amount of money to arrange but that I could pay him back a little each month from my wages.

I knew that the work would be hard but I was excited that I was going to live in London and be able to send money home to support my family. I hoped that I would learn English and be able to get a better job as a waitress or working in a bar.

My friend bought me a ticket for the bus, gave me some money to buy food on the journey and told me that his friend Arnost would meet me at the station in London. Everyone on the bus was going to look for a better life in the UK or was going to visit relatives who were here. I had some cousins in Glasgow and was hoping to visit

them when I could get time off even though I hadn't seen them since I was a little girl.

It was dark when we got to London and I was very tired but Arnost was there to meet me and was very kind. We took a black London taxi to his flat where he told me to rest and that in the morning he would take me to the sandwich factory to start work. I was a bit worried about being alone in a flat with a strange man but as Arnost had been good I told myself I was being silly.

The next morning after breakfast Arnost's friend came to collect us and drive us to the factory. We drove for a little while and stopped at a house. Arnost said he had to talk to someone but that I should come in too and have a coffee.

When we got into the house Arnost suddenly changed. He started to shout at me and said that I owed him money which he needed now. I explained that I didn't have it and he told me I would have to become a prostitute to pay him back. I was shocked and confused. I told him that I wouldn't do that, that I would cook and clean for him and pay him back as soon as I got my first wages from the factory but he laughed and called me stupid. He told me I was naive to think that I could get a job in the UK and surely I must have known that I was going to work in a brothel. I started to cry and became very scared. I was still saying that I wouldn't do it when Arnost slapped me and raped me saying that this was what I deserved, that I'd better get used to it and that this is what he would do if I ever disobeyed him again.

When it was over Arnost left the house and a woman appeared and helped me. The other woman tried to comfort me and told me it would be ok, that it wasn't so bad. I was too scared to say anything.

I was taken upstairs to a bedroom where I was told I would sleep. I heard them lock the door and then I slept. I woke up and was told that a man had paid to have sex with me and that I'd better behave myself or Arnost would kill me. A young man came into the room. Although he saw my black eye and the bruises and although I cried he still had sex with me.

After that I learned to take myself away in my head, I learnt to smile at the men and to pretend that it was all ok – life was easier and less painful that way. Arnost would come to see me every day and take the money that the men had paid – I never saw any. One day I made a mistake and asked Arnost if I had paid back the money I owed him. He hit me hard, laughed and walked out of the room. I used to have to see 5/6 men for sex every day.

Two months after I arrived in London an old man from my country had sex with me. He was as old as my grandfather and that made me cry. I told him what had happened but he said that it was none of his business. He must have felt guilty though because after he finished he gave me 30 pounds. It was the first money I had since arriving in London. Early the next morning when everyone was sleeping I

left the house. Somehow I got to the bus station and got a bus to Glasgow. I called my cousins when I arrived and they told me what bus to get to their house.

I didn't tell them what had happened to me in London as I was too ashamed. They had very little money and told me that they couldn't afford to keep me that I would have to find some work. My Aunt took me to one side and said that if I was really desperate she knew some people who would pay me money for sex. I felt sick. I ran out of the house and into a busy street I got on the first bus I could see and ended up in the city centre. Someone told me that the local government could help me and took me to the Hamish Allan Centre. They gave me a place to stay for the night and the next morning I met a kind woman and I told her a little of what had happened to me. She was obviously very worried about me and asked if I would like to meet a worker from a women's project who could help.

The TARA Service came out that afternoon to see me and when they explained who they were I started to cry. I told them about what had happened and they agreed to try to help me.

They found me somewhere safe to stay and I had someone visit me every day. At weekends one of the workers would come out to see me, sometimes she would take me out other times we would go to the supermarket or go for a drive. They gave me money to buy food and a mobile telephone. They helped me see a doctor and when I found out I had hepatitis helped me understand what that meant. I wanted to stay in Scotland and work and they helped me find some work experience and I attended an ESOL class to learn English as a second language.

As I got to know the staff better I told them more about what had happened to me. They arranged for me to meet with the police in Glasgow so I could tell them what had happened. As I was very scared my TARA worker came with me and sat beside me when I told everything. They arranged for my statement to be shared with their colleagues in London where I was raped and exploited.

Eventually I just wanted to go home. I wanted to see my family. I was very scared and didn't want my family to know that I'd been raped and forced to be a prostitute. The TARA arranged for me to go back to my home country and meet with an anti-trafficking organisation there.

I now have a job working in a children's hospital and am continuing to learn English. I'm taking driving lessons too! Although it is still very hard when I remember or dream about what happened in London I feel hopeful for my future.

This last case study is set out in a different format in that it focuses on the perpetrators, rather than the victims. It illustrates the fact that trafficking happens within the UK and Scotland and is not confined to victims being brought into this country from elsewhere in the world.

This case arose from an intelligence led police operation investigating the human trafficking of persons within the United Kingdom for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The investigation involved Police forces in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Evidence identified a number of premises in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Belfast and Cardiff being used as brothels, and identified the main subjects of the operation. Enquiries established that Stephen Adam Craig and Sarah Ashley Beuken were involved in the operation and management of brothels throughout the United Kingdom.

The accused were involved to varying degrees in the running of a “call-girl” business with a large number of brothels. Customers called a central number advertised in the Daily Sport or on websites and were directed to their nearest brothel to meet with the prostitute, who in turn paid a proportion of her earnings to the business. The prostitutes were frequently moved, or asked to move, between the various locations possibly according to supply and demand in individual areas. The trafficking related to movements to and from the various addresses. The evidence against the accused was primarily direct eye witness evidence, which was supplemented by documentary and surveillance evidence. This evidence established the accused as being connected, and involved in the criminal enterprise of running brothels at various locations in Scotland and Northern Ireland, England and Wales, and in trafficking within the United Kingdom for that purpose.

Both pled guilty and received a prison sentence.



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