

The Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking

Thursday 4th June, 5.30-7pm, at the Scottish Parliament.

Attendance:

Christina McKelvie MSP
Jenny Marra MSP
Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Roderick Campbell MSP
Alisdair Duncan
Andrew Beattie
Andy Bevan
Angela Reilly
David Thomson
Euan Fraser
Fiona Black
Fiona Panetta
Gordon MacDonald
Hazel Watson
Helen Martin
Iain Whyte
Jane Stewart

Jill Sutherland
Karen Wylie
Keith Moore-Milne
Kirsty Thomson
Laura Owens
Lexi Smart
Lydia Moore
Mei-Ling McNamara
Marion Donaldson
Melanie Tosh
Milla Harju
Nadia Maloney
Paul McGarry
Rebecca Marek
Rebecca Wallace
Sheri Johngrass
Stephanie Collins
Steve Rawbone

Apologies:

Billie Wealleans
Euan Page
Heather Simpson
Jacci Stoyle
Janice Wilson
Jeni Bainbridge
Jenny Kemp
Jim Laird

Kathy Betteridge
Laura Tomson
Louise Johnson
Melissa Hill
Neil Whettam
Pam Cairns
Paul Rigby
Ruth Weston
Steve Malloch

Agenda:

1. Open
2. Adopt minute of meeting on Thursday 5th March, 2015
3. AGM – including adopting office bearers
4. Alisdair Duncan, *Business Change & Development Officer at Gangmaster's Licensing Authority (GLA)*, & Fiona Panetta, *Enforcement Officer at GLA (Scotland based)*
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Q & A
5. Helen Martin, *Assistant Secretary at Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)*
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Q & A
6. AoB
7. Close

Agenda item 2:

Christina McKelvie (CM) and Hazel Watson (HW) adopted the minutes from 15th March 2015

Agenda item 3:

Election of office bearers:

- Co-conveners – CM and Jenny Marra (JM) were nominated and second to stay in post by Malcolm Chisholm MSP (MC) and Gordon MacDonald (GM). Both accepted.
- Secretariat – Andy Bevan (AB) tenders resignation after two years. Euan Fraser unanimously adopted as the new secretariat.

Agenda item 4:

Presentation from Alisdair Duncan (AD):

- Showed a video of the cockle picker incident to set the context of GLA's work.
- Also shared a case study from 2009/10 regarding construction workers from Poland
 - Police stated it wasn't a police matter in the early days
 - Accounts were open but the funds were used for materials
 - Promised £8.10 per hour with increases – this never happened.
 - The labourers lived in a derelict pub on mattresses with no electricity
 - Eurojust (between Poland & the UK) assembled a 'joint investigation team'
 - 120+ victims kept appearing
 - They pinpointed the ring leader and this led to other recognising other suspected perpetrators & victims
 - Trouble finding the trafficking – wanted on a European Arrest Warrant and was later found in Sheffield
 - 220 victims were found in total
- Note, GLA's remit is shellfish gathering and food growing, not construction.

Q&A:

- GM – why doesn't it cover construction?
 - AD – potential for it to expand following section 55 of the Modern Day Slavery Act (reserved to Westminster). Currently a gap in Scotland.
 - **JM – this is something we should pick up once the Scottish bill is through**
 - Fiona Panetta (FP) – we've seen an increase in referrals and GLA are working very closely with the Human Trafficking Unit.
 - AD – trafficking for the purpose of forced labour exploitation is beginning to overtake trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- JM – what role can the trade unions play?
 - Helen Martin (HM) – this situation involves vulnerable workers and the employers often refuse trade union access

Agenda item 5:

Presentation from HM:

- Started by referring to the Article 4 definition from the European Trafficking Convention to illustrate the point that what constitutes forced labour can sometimes be hard to understand...

- Can be clear cut but more often can be difficult
- Poor employment practice is not necessarily trafficking
- At what point does it become trafficking?
- It's difficult to be precise with numbers for forced labour but it's probably into the 1000s within the UK and these include agency workers, migrant workers and long chains of employment.
 - 880,000 people trafficked in Europe
 - 11,000-13,000 in the UK
- Common industries – agriculture, construction, maritime, food processing, hotels and leisure.
- The common denominator is vulnerability.
- Why do people use forced labour?
 - People make lots of money from it
 - Customers want cheap items
- How to tackle it?
 - Recognise severe and routine abuse
 - Disrupt the market
 - Encourage transparency in the food chains
 - Do separate international/domestic
- Inspection
 - GLA is a good example of how it can be done but they are underfunded and resourced
 - Good procurement and employment practice should be encouraged
- Collective bargaining should be used
- Reserved vs. devolved
 - Much of this area of work is reserved
 - Eg. Agricultural Boards are reserved – that said, there are soft powers that can be used

Q&A:

- Mei-Ling McNamara (MM) asked about the recent case in Fort William regarding the hotel workers. Bangladeshi victims (visas issued); issues around identification; the case lasted ages.
 - AD mentioned about the NRM and three new pilot programmes
 - JM requested further information about the trial
 - Jim Laird (JL - CPG member) was not in attendance but was at the trial
 - **JM to get some information from JL**
- Jill Sutherland (JS) asked about the Westminster & Holyrood bills with regard to immigration. Can immigration get into the Scottish bill somehow? **JS to send an email to JM detailing her point.**
- Iain Whyte (IW) asked about the likelihood of more resources being released to address this?
 - AD – we can always do with more.
 - FP – there's a need for more powers – eg Arrest. They currently have no power of arrest in Scotland. Change would require legislative change.
 - JM – training for public agencies can be pushed after the bill is through
- JM asked if there is a campaign we can get behind for forced labourers? Is there a role for the trade unions?
 - HM – definitely a role for trade unions. Limited by the scale of the challenge and limited capacity.
- Is slave free branding a realistic possibility?

- Pros & cons surrounding this. There is a danger that unbranded items would continue regardless, so what's the impact?
- IW asked about care homes
 - HM acknowledged that employment practices in care homes are shocking.

Agenda item 6:

JM provided a brief update on the bill and mentioned that it was progressing well.

Agenda item 7:

JM closed the meeting.