

TITLE OF REPORT: Modern Day Slavery update

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Modern Day Slavery legislation and how we respond strategically and operationally within Gateshead.

Background

1. Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking is happening on a local, regional, national and global scale however the true extent is unknown. There is no particular victim profile. They can be a child or an adult. However, it is likely that the person is already vulnerable in some way and could be of a minority or socially excluded group.
2. Some of the reasons people may be vulnerable to slavery or trafficking may include poverty, limited opportunities for education and employment, unstable social and political conditions, economic imbalances and war. Victims can be passed from one trafficker to another and may be subject to more than one type of abuse, slavery or exploitation.
3. The Modern Day Slavery Act 2015 was introduced in July 2015 and consolidates slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and Human Trafficking into one act with maximum life sentences. The Act ensures that Police and other law enforcement agencies have the powers they need to pursue, disrupt and bring to justice those engaged in Modern Slavery activities.

Modern Slavery Act

4. The Modern Slavery Act (2015) introduced various new measures to tackle modern slavery including:
 - Consolidating existing slavery and trafficking offences
 - Increasing the maximum penalties for slavery and trafficking offences
 - Establishing the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
 - Introducing new measures for the protection and support of victims, slavery and trafficking
 - Creating a statutory duty for businesses over a certain threshold to make public statements on the transparency of their supply chains

5. Section 52 of the Act has created a statutory duty for specified public authorities (including the Local Authority) to notify the Home Office when they have reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking. A notification to the Home Office will either be:
 - A referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for children and adults (who consent)
 - An anonymised notification to the Home Office for adults who do not consent

Types and Indicators of Modern Day Slavery

6. There are four recognised types of Modern Day Slavery:
 - **Forced / Bonded Labour** – Victims (often legitimate migrant workers) reach a destination country having been promised work and a chance for a better life. Often they are found legitimate work (factories, takeaways, food packaging, recycling) and given accommodation but are forced to forfeit their wages as payments for expenses. Essential documents and access to information is often withheld and verbal and physical violence can be used or threatened.
 - **Sexual Exploitation** – Victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will. Whilst women and children make up the majority of victims, men can also be affected.
 - **Criminal Exploitation** – Victims are often controlled and maltreated and forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will.
 - **Domestic Servitude** – Once their employment transfers into a situation whereby they cannot move around freely or leave, it is enslavement.
7. Possible indicators of Modern Day slavery are numerous. These can include physical appearance, isolation, poor living conditions, few or no personal possessions (including passports, bank details, visas), restricted freedom of movement, unusual travel times. Victims are often reluctant to seek help, or are often frightened and unsure of who to trust.

Role for Local Authorities

8. Both the Modern Slavery Act and Care Act (2014) have given Local Authorities new statutory responsibilities in this area. In terms of the Care Act, it outlines Modern Slavery as one of the ten categories of abuse within Safeguarding Adults. The Modern Slavery Act places statutory duties on local authorities to respond when they judge someone to be a victim of modern slavery.
9. Key areas where local authorities can respond are around:

- **Victim Identification and response** – local authority staff need to be able to recognise the signs that indicate that someone may be a victim. A range of frontline council services may be the only public services that interact with victims, providing opportunities to spot the signs or receive intelligence that they are victims; an example may be when identifying and addressing rough sleeping and homelessness.
- **Victim support** – local authority staff may need to attend to the immediate physiological needs of victims, as well as the longer term social and psychological needs
- **Assisting with the repatriation of** victims - local authority staff may need to attend to the immediate physiological needs of victims, as well as the longer term social and psychological needs
- **Prevention and disruption of crime** – local authorities may have a role in assisting the police in disrupting organised criminal networks and reducing demand for victims of modern slavery in their area. This might be through their licensing and inspection powers: Trading Standards, planning enforcement, licensing, environmental health, anti-social behaviour and safeguarding powers can minimise the harm of modern slavery and organised crime on local people and communities. An example may be around inspecting houses in multiple occupation or gaining access to premises where victims may be working.
- **Working in partnership** – local authorities will need to cooperate with other agencies, including the third sector, the police and immigration services, as well as other levels of government and the public sector.
- **Awareness Raising** - local authorities have a vital role to play in raising awareness of the issues locally. Local community groups can work together with the police, Local authorities and other stakeholders to identify trafficking in the local area

Gateshead Strategic Exploitation Group

10. The Gateshead Strategic Exploitation Group is a joint sub-group of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board. It is Chaired by a Chief Inspector from Northumbria Police and Co-ordinated by the Business Managers from both Boards. The Strategic Exploitation Group membership includes representatives from a wide range of organisations including the statutory and voluntary sectors. The remit of the group includes Child and Adult Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation.
11. The Strategic Exploitation Group has approved the operational response to Modern Slavery outlined below. The group have committed to the production of an overarching Modern Day Slavery Strategy that will feed into the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Community

Safety Board. This will also link to a regional Modern Slavery Strategy that is currently being co-ordinated by the Safeguarding Adults lead of Northumberland County Council.

12. The Strategic Exploitation Group has oversight of the multi-agency children's MSET (Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked) meeting which takes place on a monthly basis. As an example of caseloads, 9 children were discussed in detail at the meeting in December 2017.
13. The Strategic Exploitation Group have also produced a draft framework for responding to Victims of Sexual Exploitation in Gateshead. The guidance is relevant for all cases of Adult Sexual Exploitation, regardless of whether the individual meets the Safeguarding Adult definition or if the individual is also a victim of Modern Day Slavery. The final draft will be submitted to the Safeguarding Adults Board for approval in early 2018. The guidance provides information on referral routes, screening and case management. The Strategic Exploitation Group have also agreed to the establishment of an operational Sexual Exploitation Group (SEG) which will provide a multi-agency forum for partners to discuss Adult Sexual Exploitation referrals and cases in Gateshead. The Group will be responsible for:
 - Analysing trend information and repeats for all referrals
 - Supporting the Sanctuary South social worker, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Safeguarding Adult Team with open cases
 - Mapping hotspot areas within Gateshead
 - Sharing good practice
14. The Strategic Exploitation Group have commissioned Hope for Justice to undertake training for front line practitioners in Gateshead during December 2017 and January 2018.

Gateshead Modern Slavery Concept of Operations

15. The operational response to Modern Day Slavery in Gateshead is co-ordinated by the Resilience and Emergency Planning Team which is located within the Communities and Environment Directorate.
16. A Gateshead Council Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation (MSTE) Concept of Operations (ConOps) – September 2017 has been developed to provide an overview as to how a response to issues in the Gateshead area would look like, whether this is an adult or a child.
17. The purpose of the document is to provide a framework that supports a multi-agency approach to supporting people who have been subject to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation in the following situations:

- Responding to acute/no notice incidents within normal service operating capacity
 - Co-ordination of pre-planned operations
 - Escalation to an emergency/major incident situation including the activation of a Victim Reception Centre under the Emergency Response Process
18. The document supports a Multi-Agency response to an issue but focuses very much on what roles and responsibilities the council and partner organisations may undertake within that response.
19. The Concept of Operations:
- Describes agreed single and multi-agency aims and objectives
 - Identifies appropriate powers, policies and procedures
 - Describes access routes to agency services
 - Provides an overview of council services for victims of MSTE
 - Supports the activation and staffing of a Victim Reception Centre
 - Ensures Multi-Agency Organisations incorporate this within their own Emergency Plans
20. The plan also details:
- The single point of contact for any calls received which is Gateshead Council Care Call on 0191 478 7665 which is then coordinated by the Emergency Response Team
 - the communication processes and key contacts
 - how Gateshead Council services can be accessed during working hours; Out of Hours and in an Emergency Situation/Major Incident
 - a process for pre-planned operations, escalation processes and the various response levels
 - the victim approach and working practice
21. A copy of the document is attached as Appendix 1.
22. The Concept of Operations document has been tested over the last 12 months during Operation Bridler and this is attached as a case study in Appendix 2. However on this occasion there were no children involved but this provides an overview of this would operate in any particular situation.

Conclusion

23. Within Gateshead we have responded pro-actively to the Modern Day Slavery agenda. There is multi-agency Governance via the Strategic Exploitation Group and an agreed operational framework for Modern Day Slavery which has been tested. Work is ongoing with the production of an overarching Modern Day Slavery strategy, the roll out of training, the co-ordination of the Children's Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Group and the establishment of the Adult's Sexual Exploitation Group.

Recommendations

24. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Consider and comment on the progress report
- Indicate whether it is satisfied with the progress achieved

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Case Study - Operation Bridler

1. Operation Bridler was a joint investigation with the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Northumbria Police. This involved victims and offenders that were resident in both Gateshead and Newcastle and was designed to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery related issues within the area. To facilitate this, the Resilience Teams in both Gateshead and Newcastle have been working with services and partner agencies to develop appropriate support response arrangements.
2. Operation Bridler took place across Gateshead, Newcastle and the Manchester areas on the morning of Monday 19 June 2017, led by the National Crime Agency in conjunction with Northumbria Police.
3. As part of the operation, there were 4 properties visited within the central area of Gateshead, 3 properties within Newcastle and 1 within the Manchester area. There were 3 suspects arrested (1 from Gateshead and 2 from Newcastle).
4. A total of 10 potential victims were spoken to (8 in the Northumbria Police area – 5 from the Gateshead area, 3 from the Newcastle area, and 2 from the Manchester area). 5 females from the Gateshead area attended Victim Reception Centres in Newcastle and Washington, and were offered safeguarding advice. However all the females declined support and wanted to return to their home addresses. There were no children involved in this operation.
5. A Community Engagement Process was implemented by Northumbria Police and key messages were developed for affected councillors and local communities. This monitored any tensions within communities arising from the operation with a specific communication and engagement plan implemented.
6. A number of press releases were circulated following the operation and links are included below:

https://www.northumbria.police.uk/news_and_events/latest_news/2017/06/22/we_join_the_nca_in_a_crackdown_on_modern_day_slavery_in_our_region/

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/six-arrests-police-bust-human-13222026>

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/1122-international-human-trafficking-arrests-in-uk>
7. A Multi-Agency Planning Group was implemented to coordinate the arrangements with key partner organisations being led by Newcastle. This has been replicated in Gateshead and a Planning Team was also implemented with council services to facilitate this and ensure that the necessary planning and resources are identified ensuring support is provided to the operation from a Gateshead perspective.