

16 January 2017

## **Modern Slavery**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland OBE, will be attending the meeting to discuss his work and the role of councils in tackling modern slavery.

The report provides an overview of the work that is already underway in a number of areas and asks members for suggestions on how the LGA can best support local authorities in tackling modern slavery.

### **Recommendations**

That the SSC Board are asked to:

1. Note the Government's agenda around modern slavery, the statutory responsibilities local authorities have related to tackling modern slavery and the important role councils can therefore play in addressing this crime.
2. Note the work already underway in councils and regional partnerships to raise awareness of the issues and to tackle modern slavery.
3. Consider in light of the work of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner how best the LGA can support councils around this agenda, and in particular the way forward proposed in paragraph 16.

### **Actions**

Officers to action as directed by members.

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## **Modern Slavery**

### **Background**

1. In March 2015 the Modern Slavery Act received Royal Assent, putting local authorities under a duty to notify the Home Office when they identify victims of modern slavery.
2. Since the Act came into force there have been a number of announcements from the Government, including a new transformation fund and the creation of a new taskforce, chaired by the Prime Minister. This paper provides an overview of the work underway to tackle the issue.

### **Modern Slavery**

3. Modern slavery is a form of organised crime in which people are treated as commodities and are exploited for criminal gain. It is an umbrella term that encompasses different forms of exploitation including human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. This exploitation can be hidden in plain sight and include car washes, nail bars, farms, factories, private homes and massage parlours. The true extent of modern slavery in the UK is significant; an estimate from the Home Office in 2013 stated that there were between 10,000 – 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, though it has been suggested that this is an underestimate.
4. The latest figures from the National Crime Agency, published in December 2016, show that 1,002 potential victims were referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) between April and June 2016, compared with 3,266 potential victims referred in 2015. Albania, Vietnam and the UK are the most common nationalities of the potential victims referred, though there were referrals from 70 different nationalities.

### **Government and Parliament**

5. Since the Modern Slavery Act came into force there have been a number of further announcements from the Government including:
  - 5.1. In July 2016 the Prime Minister set out her ambition to tackle modern slavery and announced that she will chair a Modern Slavery Taskforce, bringing together the relevant government departments to coordinate and drive further progress in tackling modern slavery. The Prime Minister also stated that the Government will be using over £33 million from the aid budget to create a 5-year International Modern Slavery Fund.
  - 5.2. The membership of the Taskforce was announced in September 2016, and includes the Home Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Justice and Communities and Local Government, the Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), formerly the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. A range of key partners for the Taskforce were also publicly identified. Alongside the LGA these included the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Interpol and the security services.

- 5.3. In October 2016 the Home Secretary announced a transformation fund of £8.5 million to help law enforcement agencies to tackle modern slavery. The funding will be until 2018-19 and is meant to help law enforcement agencies through providing high quality intelligence and analysis to assess the threat at a national and regional level, and an improved operational response throughout the investigative process.
- 5.4. In October the Government produced a number of materials for authorities on the NRM, outlining the processes for notifying the Government, the process for victims under 18, the forms, and what to do if a victim wants to remain anonymous (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-duty-to-notify>). The NRM was created in 2009 to provide a framework to refer potential victims and ensure that they receive appropriate support. Councils have been under a statutory duty to notify the Home Office of any individuals they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking so they can be referred to the NRM since 1 November 2015.
6. There have also been further discussions in the House of Lords regarding issues around transparency in supply chains. Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act deals with this issue and states that a commercial organisation with a turnover of more than £36 million and that supplies goods or services must publish an annual “slavery and human trafficking statement” which is available prominently on their homepage and website. The Act does not expressly include or exclude local authorities, but a private members bill in the House of Lords, introduced by Baroness Young Of Hornsey, would extend this duty to local authorities as well. The Bill is currently waiting its second reading in the House of Commons, which is expected on the 13 January. If the Bill is enacted in its current form this would have an impact on local authorities, though the Government has not signalled that it supports the Bill.

### **Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**

7. The Modern Slavery Act also created the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences as well as the identification of victims of those offences.
8. Kevin Hyland’s appointment as the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner was confirmed in July 2015. In his last [annual report](#) he identified that though significant progress on the issue had been made there was still further work to be done to ensure that best practice was adopted across all agencies. He is keen to engage with councils around this agenda, and is attending the Board to speak about his work.
9. The priorities for the Commissioner for 2015-2017 are:
- 9.1. Ensuring improved victim identification and care, including improvements to the NRM; and supporting the production of appropriate standards in the Statutory Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Victims of Modern Slavery in England and Wales, which is currently being developed by the Home Office.
- 9.2. Driving an improved law enforcement and criminal justice response, including work on data collection and knowledge management systems.

- 9.3. Promoting best practice in partnership working.
- 9.4. Private sector engagement to encourage supply chain transparency and combating labour exploitation, including working with the newly reformed GLAA.
- 9.5. Encouraging effective and targeted international collaboration.
- 10. The Commissioner has supported the creation of number of resources for local government and the emergency services:  
[www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/resources](http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/resources).

## **Councils**

- 11. Councils have a statutory role in tackling modern slavery, and are identified as a key partners in the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. At the heart of councils' responsibilities are those to safeguard child and vulnerable adult victims. As already mentioned councils also have a responsibility to identify potential victims and make referrals to the NRM, and the Modern Slavery Act placed a duty on local authorities to collaborate with the Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
- 12. Councils are already involved in a variety of ways in tackling modern slavery:
  - 12.1. There are an increasing number of regional or sub-regional multi-agency partnerships dedicated to tackling this issue in which councils are active including the South West Anti-Slavery Partnership, which is directed by a Regional Board and has five local anti-slavery partnerships working based on the following police force areas: Avon and Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire, and Dorset. There are other regional partnerships covering the East Midlands, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the South East and the West Midlands.
  - 12.2. South East England Councils and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration have commissioned a film aimed at public sector workers and raising their awareness of modern slavery and how to spot the signs of it in their everyday work and held an Anti-Slavery Day Conference in 2016 for Surrey and Sussex chief executives.
  - 12.3. London Councils, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Metropolitan Police, the Anti-Slavery Commissioner and various national voluntary sector bodies have been working with NHS England to raise awareness of modern slavery. NHS England has also worked with these partners to commission the development of Level 1 multi-agency training for councils, the health service and emergency services. This will provide training on raising awareness of modern slavery on a train-the-trainer model. The plan is to pilot the training in London and then roll it out across England and Wales.
  - 12.4. Individual councils such as the London Borough of Croydon have developed action plans for tackling modern slavery and have been arranging training of their own and partners' staff. Brentwood, Colchester, Cornwall and Croydon among a number of authorities, have also been considering how they can increase transparency around

modern slavery in their supply chains. Brentwood for example is reviewing its tender documentation, taking legal advice on including an anti-slavery clause in its standard terms and conditions and requiring new suppliers to sign a statement that they are not involved in modern slavery.

## **LGA**

13. The LGA has already received an invite to participate in the Prime Minister's Taskforce. Lord Porter will be attending in the future, following the first meeting of the Taskforce which met in November. The LGA has also received numerous requests from a number of different Government Departments including the Home Office and DCLG to participate in different working groups. This is an issue that cuts across both the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and the Community Wellbeing Board and officers are working together jointly on the requests.
14. To assist councils around this agenda the LGA has also created a dedicated resource on modern slavery on the website: [http://www.local.gov.uk/community-safety/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/8112488/ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/community-safety/-/journal_content/56/10180/8112488/ARTICLE)
15. The LGA's Productivity team has also developed a work stream to support councils around increasing transparency in the supply chain around modern slavery, and are gathering examples of good practice in this area.
16. With councils already working closely with partners on a regional basis, being involved in the development of awareness training packages, and with well-defined responsibilities around safeguarding, the LGA could best assist councils make a contribution to tackling this issue by supporting efforts to raise awareness, highlighting the training available and helping share good practice. In particular the LGA could:
  - 16.1. Support the roll-out of the Level 1 training developed by NHS England and encourage councils to take it up.
  - 16.2. Identify and promote examples of good practice by councils and partners in addressing modern slavery.
  - 16.3. Publish a guide for councillors and councils to the topic and the role councils have in addressing modern slavery to raise awareness of the issue.
17. Members may also wish to explore with the Anti-Slavery Commissioner where he thinks the LGA could assist his work and support councils on tackling modern slavery.

## **Implications for Wales**

18. Councils in Wales are subject to the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Welsh Government is tackling the issue through the employment of an Anti-Slavery Coordinator, Stephen Chapman. His role is to make Wales hostile to slavery and to co-ordinate the best possible support for survivors. The Welsh Government has also set up the Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group with membership from the Home Office, the National Crime Agency, Welsh local authorities and the WLGA amongst others.

### **Financial Implications**

19. Additional resources may be needed to take forward some elements of work, but funding for this may be available from partners like NHS England.

### **Next steps**

20. Members are asked to:

- 20.1. Note the Government's agenda around modern slavery, the statutory responsibilities local authorities have related to tackling modern slavery and the important role councils can therefore play in addressing this crime.
- 20.2. Note the work already underway in councils and regional partnerships to raise awareness of the issues and to tackle modern slavery.
- 20.3. Consider in light of the work of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner how best the LGA can support councils around this agenda, and in particular the way forward proposed in paragraph 16.