

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

5th November 2019

Modern Slavery Overview Report



Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adults & Health Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities, Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) along with the local partnership working to address the issue including the wider awareness raising activity taking place.

Executive summary

- 2 This report aims to outline a range of activity related to modern slavery which includes the linkage to the wider safeguarding partnerships and multi-agency working taking place.
- 3 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 ('the Act') introduced new measures to prevent and protect victims of modern slavery which include:
 - (a) two new civil orders to prevent modern slavery.
 - (b) creating the role of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and its associated functions.
 - (c) the requirement for certain commercial businesses to produce transparency statements.
 - (d) provision for the support and protection of modern slavery victims.
- 4 Modern Slavery covers a range of issues, and includes (not limited to) sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal

exploitation. Durham County Council has a role in raising awareness of these issues to support prevention and early intervention.

- 5 MSHT is often linked to organised crime and often includes horrendous crimes which unfortunately have increased in recent years both locally and nationally. Although it continues to be relatively low in County Durham, an increase is evident, which in part may be attributed to a widened alertness to the issues as a result of awareness and training activity that has taken place.
- 6 Durham County Council, Transformation and Partnerships and specifically the Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) seeks assurance of local arrangements including updates from Durham Constabulary.
- 7 MSHT can affect both children and adults and tackling these deplorable issues needs a joined-up partnership approach, close working relationships and cross connectivity between the LSAB and Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) is in place.
- 8 The Government has introduced several measures, including the role of local authorities. The LSAB has taken the lead for a variety of actions and measures over the last year to proactively help ensure the rates of MSHT remain low for the County.
- 9 The Council plays a key role in reducing and preventing instances of MSHT in County Durham which includes:
 - a duty to do all they can to reasonably prevent crime and disorder
 - to make referrals to the Home Office for suspected victims of modern slavery through the Government framework, the National Referral Mechanism and the duty to notify
 - to support victims of MSHT if identified in line with any related legislation and guidance such as the Care Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Homelessness legislation with social care, accommodation or financial support.
 - to ensure MSHT does not exist within any of the Council supply chains through robust and ethical procurement activities.
 - to publish a Modern Slavery Statement.

Recommendation(s)

- 10 The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
 - (a) Note the content of the report.

Background

- 11 In December 2017, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner published “Modern Slavery a Council Guide”. This guidance outlines the role councils play in tackling modern slavery, from identifying and reporting instances and support for victims to procurement and supply of services. A further Councillor guidance note was issued in September 2019 (links to both these documents attached at background papers).
- 12 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance, which accompanies the Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a category of abuse. This means a proportion of adults with care and support needs may also fall within the scope of local safeguarding arrangements. With that in mind, the governance of modern slavery sits with the Local Safeguarding Adults Board.

National Context

Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Key Information

- 13 Introduced under s52 of ‘the Act’ applies to certain agencies such as police forces and local authorities. All victims should be reported under the duty to notify to the home office.
- 14 The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the government’s framework for identifying victims of trafficking and modern slavery following receipt of notifications. Nationally, local authorities have utilised this mechanism for dealing with young people exploited by county lines drug dealing networks, as well as children trafficked into the UK.
- 15 An independent review of ‘the Act’ highlighted gaps in provision nationally for victims immediately extracted from situations of MSHT, during 2019 the Home Office has been undertaking a national tender exercise which will address:
 - Places of Safety – for provision of a 3-day period of support and advice to assist those recovered by law enforcement and to support victims to determine whether they want to engage in NRM.
 - Support Services for Recovery and Reflection - providing accommodation or outreach support depending on the needs of victims.
 - 24 Hour referral services - to refer victims into the NRM for provision of a recovery and reflection period.
 - Transport - of vulnerable victims and their dependents.
 - Translation - to ensure that victims have the information they need in a language they understand.

- Subsistence - a means of providing financial support to victims.
 - Post National Referral Mechanism support services - for confirmed victims with leave to remain in the UK for up to 6 months after leaving support to aid transition back in to society.
- 16 In October 2018 the HM Government UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery informed that in 2017, there were 5,143 potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism (a 35% increase from 2016), of whom 41% (2,121) were children.
 - 17 The same report showed a significant increase on the number of modern slavery crimes recorded by the police. In the year to March 2018, police in England and Wales recorded 3,337 modern slavery offences, a 49% increase on the previous year.
 - 18 The National Audit Office report Tackling Serious and Organised Crime (June 2019) tells us that there were 6,993 potential modern slavery and human trafficking victims in 2018, a 36% increase on 2017 (above).
 - 19 The first successful prosecution of gang leaders, for the trafficking of Vietnamese women took place in 2018, and since there have been further prosecution cases that have been well reported in the national media.

Local Context

- 20 The National Crime Agency published statistics show 23 referrals were made to the NRM for Durham in 2018-2019 (10 adults and 13 children) and is illustrative that modern slavery exists at a local level.
- 21 This section offers an illustrative example of some of the work that has taken place in support of raising awareness of the MSHT agenda locally and in meeting requirements of 'the Act'.
- 22 Durham County Council as best practice published its Modern Slavery Statement on the Transparency and Accountability pages of the DCC website. A later inclusion within 'the Act' outlining a duty placed upon Councils to publish such statements.
- 23 Durham County Council approved and launched its Modern Slavery Charter in October 2018 with a focus upon Prevention, Protection and Partnership working (Appendix 2). This Charter supports the approach of the local police particularly in relation to the prevention of MSHT and protection of victims.
- 24 An action plan to monitor progress against the Charter is in place.

- 25 Recently, as part of the review of the LSAB performance framework modern slavery is included to assist with building a local picture of the size and prevalence of modern slavery.
- 26 The DSCP has strong links through its Criminal and Exploitation Group to monitor local issues relating to County Lines and Criminal Exploitation of Children.
- 27 Durham County Council Adults and Health Service are currently exploring the pathways for support for adult victims of MSHT with links to the LSAB for those who are most vulnerable. The LSAB receives regular updates of the number of adults affected in County Durham.
- 28 Local Awareness Raising, Training and Impact.
- 29 Since 2016, Durham County Council (DCC) have worked closely with other local authorities and police forces in the regional to address modern slavery and human trafficking.
- 30 Potential victims being supported through key Council services, which may include:
- Housing Solutions
 - Adults and Health Service
 - Children and Young People Service
 - Civil Contingencies (in large scale emergency situations)
- 31 In addition to the above, voluntary sector organisations such as the British Red Cross and Hope for Justice support victims across the region.
- 32 In 2017, the LSAB agreed a Task & Finish Group should explore sexual exploitation and trafficking, review data and develop pathways to support practitioners to make appropriate reports.
- 33 This group worked in collaboration with partners and Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board to develop an 'At a Glance' toolkit with a focus upon recognising and responding to sexual exploitation and MSHT. It supports front line staff with guidance for appropriate signposting and/or onward reporting for victims.
- 34 The Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner has supported raising awareness of sexual exploitation with dedicated training sessions delivered by Changing Lives with 117 staff across Durham and Darlington accessing the sessions which were supported by the LSAB.
- 35 In May 2017, partners had the opportunity to access a regional event with a focus upon the regional progress made in relation to MSHT.

- 36 In November 2017 the LSAB shared a key update with partners, namely “The Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery” - statutory guidance issued for local authorities by the Department for Education.
- 37 A notable success following the publication of the DCC Modern Slavery Charter relates to Corporate Procurement and their commitment to build upon previous work and s54 of ‘the Act’ for transparency in supply chains. Corporate Procurement staff recently completed the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) training for Ethical Procurement & Supply and in turn can now utilise the Corporate Ethics kitemark.
- 38 The LSAB and Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) held a joint safeguarding week in November 2018. This event included a focus upon prevention and early intervention with Modern Slavery.
- 39 A range of social media activity took place throughout Safeguarding Week with a message of #Tell Someone. It was supported and shared by partners across the safeguarding partnerships. At the close of the week a wide range of agencies, providers and stakeholders took the opportunity to access a range of briefings which included modern slavery. A total of 146 delegates attended the briefings with survey findings showing 95% of respondents felt they received relevant and useful information.
- 40 The LSAB and Durham Constabulary worked collaboratively to develop and deliver Modern Slavery briefings to over 500 staff during 2018, with briefings being made available to all partners and wider stakeholders by contacting the LSAB Business Unit (sabbusinessunit@durham.gov.uk).
- 41 The LSAB continues to share key messages about modern slavery via its e-bulletins. These bulletins aim to increase awareness of modern slavery and wider related issues, key messages in 2018-2019 included:
- (i) Social Media Campaign (DCC) Anti-Slavery Day
 - (ii) Launch of the national Safe Carwash mobile app
 - (iii) Sharing of the Home Office Consultation for wider partner input
 - (iv) Increasing awareness of County Lines Guidance across all partners
 - (v) The Independent Review of ‘the Act’ progress
 - (vi) The national annual report of modern slavery
- 42 In May 2019, it was agreed that the local working arrangements for missing and exploited children should include criminal exploitation and county lines.

Next Steps

- 43 Locally, a commitment continues to exist in respect of joined up approaches and work has taken place under the partnerships remit alongside key partners. This includes working with Durham County Council Adults & Health Service (DCCAHS), DCC Housing Solutions, Durham Constabulary and the LSAB and DSCP.
- 44 Durham Constabulary continue to work closely with DCC Housing Solutions addressing the immediate support for victims of modern slavery in our area. The anticipated provision and immediate support provision expected in 2020 will help to address this issue at a local level.
- 45 Following the NRM reforms and independent review of the 'Act' any subsequent updates and guidance will be regularly cascaded under the partnerships umbrella.
- 46 In the context of safeguarding and closer working, the LSAB and DSCP continue to consider joined up approaches where appropriate and agreed a joint Safeguarding Week in November 2019 which will place focus upon MSHT, County Lines and Criminal Exploitation.
- 47 To raise awareness across wider communities, modern slavery information will be posted to DCC Customer Access Points across County Durham.

Conclusion

- 48 Durham County Council continues to work collaboratively with statutory partners and wider stakeholders in raising awareness of modern slavery, human trafficking and related issues such as county lines and criminal exploitation.
- 49 The Council continues to focus achieving its commitment to the Modern Slavery Charter and supporting the prevention of modern slavery and protection of potential victims.

Background papers

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines, Home Office \(2018\).](#)

[Tackling Modern Slavery: A Council Guide, Local Government Association \(2017\).](#)

[Councillor Guide to Tackling Modern Slavery, Local Government Association \(updated September 2019\).](#)

Other useful documents

- Previous Cabinet reports / None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

It is expected that any legislative requirements for the protection of children or adults be met in line with 'the Act', Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the Care Act 2014 and any wider related legislation. There is no legal requirement for the Council to adopt a Modern Slavery Charter it represents good practice and helps to demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting its obligations under the statutory guidance and Modern Slavery, a Council Guide. The Council also has a Modern Slavery Statement in place in line with Section 52 of 'the Act'.

Finance

If decommissioning takes place of any contracts due to slavery or trafficking issues identified, the Council may incur costs from any future commissioning activity.

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Those subject to slavery and human trafficking are often from diverse communities. The Council aims to raise awareness, to help to identify victims of trafficking or slavery across all protected characteristics and particularly age, disability and race.

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

Legislation and related policy for the protection of any victims identified is used to inform single agency and any multi-agency working. It includes for example, the Modern Slavery Act 2015, EU Directive Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its Victims, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights 2010.

Crime and Disorder

Adult safeguarding and safeguarding children agendas link with Modern Slavery/Trafficking. Partners of the police such as the Council and the local safeguarding boards continue to review related policies and procedures.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

Corporate Procurement ensure the Council is meeting its requirements and has systems in place to identify any potential issues with procured services.

Appendix 2: DCC Modern Slavery Charter



Our Charter Commitment against Modern Slavery

Durham County Council as a public sector organisation recognises that Modern Slavery is a crime, and as such, we collectively take a stand against Modern Slavery and its occurrence in Durham. We have agreed 3 key aims for our Charter:

1. Prevention

- Improve public awareness of modern slavery and provide advice and support to people on how to protect themselves from modern slavery.
- Provide a range of awareness raising to all DCC employees in understanding the nature of modern slavery and recognising the signs.
- Ensure Corporate Procurement staff will continue to work towards the ethical procurement and supply, to prevent the existence of modern slavery in any of our supply chains.

2. Protection

- Promote safeguarding policies for children and adults to all employees and the wider workforce to help to protect those most vulnerable.
- Provide consistent messages to all DCC employees on how to respond to modern slavery and ensure they comply with our employee code of conduct for equality and diversity.
- Support all employees and our contractors to adopt and understand whistle blowing to help to identify victims and protect them at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote that concerns or knowledge of modern slavery should be reported to the Police on 101.

3. Partnership

- Promote consistent messages to DCC employees, the public and partners, including all Area Action Partnerships across County Durham.
- Support inter-agency working across all partners in the prevention of Modern Slavery and reporting requirements of the National Referral Mechanism.
- Measure the effectiveness of our activities to inform wider partnerships.

