

Swyddfa Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu, Gwent
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent

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Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu ar gyfer Gwent | Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent:
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Chair, Communities, Equality & Local Government Committee

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National Assembly for Wales

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into: Human Trafficking

Response from: Gwent Office and Crime Commissioner Police

7th January 2014

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of 4th December 2013. Please find below my views on the matters highlighted in your letter.

Question: The role of the Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator, including its effectiveness and achievements so far;

Answer: Tackling Human Trafficking requires co-ordinated action cutting across the Political and Agency boundaries in the UK. The response in Wales has been bolstered by the appointment of an Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator (AHTC), who champions the fight against exploitation with Police Forces, Public Authorities and Charity Organisations. The Welsh Government is the only Government within the UK to employ an AHTC and should be applauded for their commitment in this area. Not only does the AHTC advise the Minister, he also raises awareness of Human Trafficking and contributes to policy development across the Welsh Government. Some of the achievements so far include the Cardiff Anti Human Trafficking Forum piloting their first Human Trafficking Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and following positive feedback are using this process for all future cases involving potential victims of Human Trafficking. The AHTC is working with colleagues on an initiative led by the Crown Prosecution Service on the introduction of Joint Investigation Teams for cases of human trafficking, such as the National Crime Agency, Home office Immigration and Gangmasters Licensing Authority. In March 2013 Operation Eagle was launched. The objective of this operation is to raise awareness, increase the amount of information received and improve co-ordination and operation activities of all Police Forces across England and Wales. All four Welsh Police Forces are engaged in preventative and pro-active anti human trafficking operations. I believe the role is very effective and the above demonstrates the achievements to date.

Question: the effectiveness of the relationship between the Co-ordinator and the Police and Crime Commissioners

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Answer: The relationship between the AHTC and the Force is very positive. There probably needs to be more interaction between the AHTC and the OPCC in relation to policy development and in future the link to victim services which will come within the PCC remit from October 2014. I have already made contact to discuss these issues with the AHTC as soon as possible.

Question: The effectiveness of multi-agency working between UK and Welsh Government departments;

Answer: There is a large amount of multi agency work being carried out in the field of Human Trafficking. The AHTC represents Wales on a number of UK Groups including the UK Threat Reduction Board, The UK Human Trafficking Strategy Board, the Home Office Joint Strategy Group, and the Home Office Child Trafficking Information Sharing Forum. In addition the AHTC is a member of the Wales Border Management Group and a number of key strategic and operational groups. The AHTC is also now part of the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse (VAWDA) team within the Community Safety Division of the Welsh Government. Awareness raising sessions are being delivered to key stakeholders across Wales including Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, Criminal Justice Partners, and NGO'S.

Question: What mechanisms are in place for sharing intelligence between Police and Crime Commissioners and agencies in Wales;

Answer: Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 covers the legality of the exchange of intelligence. That exchange is extremely effective at an operational level, as shown by the exchange of intelligence between Operation Imperial and Trading Standards in the Gwent Police area. However, more intelligence sharing needs to be developed between all Public Authorities. The GAIN process is a very useful mechanism to maximise this. The Regional Intelligence Unit based in Bridgend is in the process of preparing a problem profile in relation to the extent of the problem of Human Trafficking regionally. All 3 Southern Wales Forces have contributed to this by submitting information and intelligence on their problems locally. When complete I am advised this will be shared with PCC'S and relevant agencies.

As far as Gwent is concerned a Multi Agency HT forum has been set up which meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by a DI. Intelligence and information is shared between partners in this forum with a review of recent cases and the dissemination of any lessons learned.

Question: Whether victim support services are adequate and responsive;

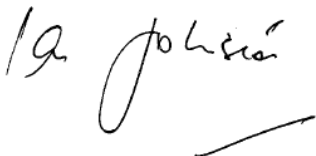
Answer: Victim Support have developed a referral pathway for all agencies who may encounter a potential victim of adult trafficking. This was developed with the Anti-Trafficking Partnership in Bristol, and part of that pathway is a referral to Victim Support for emotional and practical support for that victim. This is not currently an established pathway in Wales and is possibly an area for improvement, although Victim Support will take referrals through the normal process for victims of trafficking. Victim Support have held awareness raising sessions with their volunteers and are working on a training package. This may be an area that requires further discussion as part of my developing Commissioning Strategy.

Question: Whether you consider that awareness of human trafficking and how to refer victims into the National Referral Mechanism is consistent across police forces in Wales;

Answer: In June 2013, the AHTC arranged for Welsh National Referral Mechanism (WNRM) First Responders, the four Welsh Police Force Strategic Leads and Single Points of Contact and Welsh Government Community Cohesion Co-ordinators to visit the UK Human Trafficking Centre. The visit included a UK and Wales Human Trafficking Intelligence Briefing by the head of UKHTC and also an explanation of the role of the Tactical Advisors and of the NRM process. Work is continually being done with other first responders such as BAWSO and New Pathways to ensure that there is consistency with both police and partners in terms of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism. The Southern Welsh Forces have engaged regionally to try and establish a stronger intelligence picture of the extent of this problem. The police recognise the need to work closely with other agencies to improve the intelligence picture of this area of criminality. Gwent Police are very aware, particularly with our experiences of Operation Imperial, of the National Referral Mechanism. We have worked with UKHTC of the National Crime Agency and successfully engaged in the process with victims.

I hope you have found my responses to be helpful. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**I Johnston, QPM
Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent**