

Realisation of a Regionalised Collaborative Response to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Reverend Brian Gregory BEM

*Founder Chairman of The Friendship Foundation (UK – Romania)
contact@thefriendshipfoundation.co.uk, gregory.brian@btinternet.com*

Abstract

It has long been recognised that Government and law enforcement agencies cannot tackle human trafficking alone. Modern slavery and human trafficking demand a collaborative response from statutory agencies, community groups, public services, faith communities and voluntary organisations. As early as 2004, one London borough set up a coalition of people from the area to raise awareness of human trafficking and from this there developed one of the first of many regional multi-agency partnerships in this field. According to the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner in his Strategic Plan 2015 - 2017, 'such partnerships should share information, intelligence and experience, leverage resources and allow for strategic planning and must be focused on achieving clear overarching outcomes: increased identifications of potential victims, improved care and support for victims, and increased investigations and prosecutions of the criminals.'

This present paper describes various forms of partnerships in England and Wales which, in effect, aim to fulfil the Commissioner's stated priority. It goes on to look at how cooperation between the numerous regional partnerships is achieved by means of a national coordinators' forum. The paper describes in particular one of the largest regional multi-agency partnership in the field of modern slavery and human trafficking in the country as an example of best practice. The paper seeks to be an inspiration and an aid to others throughout the United Kingdom and further afield in their efforts to establish their own local expression of a regional multi-agency partnership.

Keywords: Human trafficking, multi-agency response, coordinators' forum.

INTRODUCTION

Slavery has been a part of human history since the beginning of civilization. The Mesopotamian Code of Hammurabi of the 18th century BC, for example, refers to three social classes, the third of which is slaves. Incidentally, expert examination of the laws apparently show a progressive weakening of the rights of women, and increasing severity in the treatment of slaves. [1]

Although slavery is no longer legal anywhere in the world, human trafficking remains an international problem and an estimated 45.8 million people are living in some form of modern slavery in 167 countries, with 1.24 million being in Europe.[2]

Definitions of modern-day slavery can be found in the 1956 UN supplementary convention, which says: "debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage and the delivery of a child for the exploitation of that child are all slavery-like practices and require criminalisation and abolishment". The 1930 Forced Labour Convention defines forced labour as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily".

At that time, the main remedy in preventing trafficking was seen to be 'increased knowledge, international cooperation, criminalization of trafficking and the contribution of civil society. In addition, the public opinion was seen as the main factor behind the success in the fight against trafficking.' [3] These are the very same remedies currently proposed as a means of combating human trafficking today.

In the British Government's Strategy document of 2011, the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, acknowledged that 'Government and law enforcement agencies cannot tackle human trafficking alone. The voluntary sector, through its expertise and its commitment to dealing with the effects of trafficking is a vital partner.' [4]

It is of note that, at that time, our partner charity in Romania, Pro Prietenia Arad, supported by my charity, The Friendship Foundation (UK – Romania), mounted a series of annual symposia in Arad on human trafficking. The first, in December 2011, was entitled "Preventing Human Trafficking – With an "Emphasis on the Cooperation between Civil Society and Specialized Government Agencies." A

second in October 2012 included the Seminar “Trafficking in Human Beings – a Multidisciplinary Approach of the Prevention and Combatting Aspects.” [5]

PARTNERSHIP WORKING OFFICIALLY PRIORITISED

The Modern Slavery Act of 2015 [6] authorised the appointment of the UK’s first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. In his first Strategic Plan published later that year [7], the new Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, lays out his priorities, the third of which is ‘to identify, promote and facilitate best practice in partnership working, and to encourage improved data sharing and high quality research into key issues.’

Priority 3 states that ‘modern slavery is a complex and multi-faceted issue and one which therefore requires a comprehensive multidisciplinary response from government departments, law enforcement agencies and civil society groups representing many sectors of society. Coordinated partnerships between these groups are vitally important in ensuring an effective and sustained response.’

Priority 3 goes on to propose that ‘such partnerships should share information, intelligence and experience, leverage resources and allow for strategic planning and must be focussed on achieving clear overarching outcomes: increased identifications of potential victims, improved care and support for victims, and increased investigations and prosecutions of the criminals.’

The way this priority is going to be achieved is proposed under five headings: Partnership Models, Vulnerable Communities, Data Capture and Data Sharing, Awareness Raising and, lastly, External Research. This is followed by a list of eight far-reaching indicators to help measure how effectively the partnership is achieving. [8]

PARTNERSHIPS ALREADY UP- AND - RUNNING

As early as 2004, the London Borough of Croydon set up a coalition of people from the area to raise awareness of human trafficking, and from there developed one of the first of many regional multi-agency partnerships. Over the years several modern slavery and human trafficking partnerships have been established throughout England and Wales, each taking on bespoke characteristics best suited to their area whilst, effectively, fulfilling the Commissioner’s stated priority.

The Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) [9], a London-based charity with an Advisory Forum formed of NGOs, experts, civil servants and frontline practitioners from around the UK, assists in coordinating a national network of these regional partnerships. The Foundation brings together, through the National Network Coordinators’ Anti-Slavery Forum (NNCF) [10] coordinators from the various anti-slavery and human trafficking multi-agency networks and partnerships from across England and Wales. The Human Trafficking Foundation established the NNCF to promote inter-regional cooperation and sharing of best practice within the UK. The NNCF aims to act as a conduit between regional partnerships and key policy-makers, by informing the Home Office’s Modern Slavery Unit and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner of trends in exploitation and other areas of concern identified by frontline practitioners.

At the time of writing there are understood to be fourteen partnerships in the country which are members of the HTF coordinators’ forum with, it is believed, three others preparing to join. Because of the essentially bespoke nature of each partnership, it is possible in a paper of this nature, to give only the name of each group and to draw out a few salient features. Fuller information each member group, together with contact details for each, can be found on the HTF website.

Bedfordshire Against Modern Slavery (BAMS):

Formed in 2012. Key members are a former councillor, Bedfordshire Police and Soroptimist International. Also includes health and social care workers, NGOs, and Yarwood Detention Centre.

Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network:

Formed in December 2012. Members include Cheshire Police Service, Adult Safeguarding, National Health Service, Department of Work and Pensions, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and the

UK Human Trafficking Centre. Phase One, developmental stage. Phase 2, linking with non-statutory organisations and NGOs. Phase 3, Business Community.

Croydon Community Against Trafficking (CCAT):

Formed in 2004. A coalition of people who work to raise awareness. A model 'Your Community Against Human Trafficking' is available for other areas.

Derby & Derbyshire Partnership:

Undertakes outreach and education in the community, public services, faith communities and voluntary and community sectors. It is an advisory and operational body making recommendations to Police, Council, Safeguarding Boards, and others.

East Midlands Anti-Human Trafficking Partnership:

To respond to incidents through a victim-centred, multidisciplinary and collaborative approach.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight:

Formed by Hampshire Constabulary in 2013. Has been funded and chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, supported by a steering group of nine agencies and coordinated by the Medaille Trust. Has 5 subgroups, 4 names under the 4 P's – Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare, and 1 group on the Isle of Wight.

South-East Anti-Slavery Partnership:

Formed in 2014. Coordinated through the SE Strategic Partnership for Migration. Key to development is the links with regional law enforcement agencies and other regional partnership coordinated through HTC. Produced a short training film aimed at stimulating professional curiosity.

Tri-borough network Kensington, Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham:

Formed as ECAT in 2012 by two year EU funding. Continues within a multi-agency, coordinated response to human trafficking across Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.

West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network:

Formed in 2008/2009. Over 55 members from statutory and non-statutory agencies. Recent new members include a housing association, 'Business in the Community' and Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RSPA)

West-Yorkshire Anti Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network:

Formed in November 2014. Represents the five districts of Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Kirklees and Calderdale and facilitated by Hope for Justice, an anti-slavery NGO, assisted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire.

Welsh Anti-Trafficking Network:

Covers the whole of Wales with five Regional Anti-Slavery fora – Cardiff & the Vale, Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and Western Bay – operating under a Wales Anti-Slavery Operational Delivery Group which in turn operates under the Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group. The latter is comprised of key individuals from the Welsh Government Departments and is coordinated by the Wales Anti-Slavery Coordinator. The Leadership Group has a Delivery Plan for tackling slavery in Wales.

There are also Partnerships in Kent & Essex, Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE MODERN SLAVERY RESPONSE NETWORK

Greater Manchester (GM) is a metropolitan county in North West England with a population of 2.8 million. It encompasses one of the largest metropolitan areas in the UK. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is the fourth largest police service in the UK with 6,500 police officers, 519 Volunteer Special Constables, 739 Police Community Support Officers and 2,741 police staff.

GMP is currently considered to be leading the way nationally in terms of the response to modern slavery, both from a policing and a wider partnership perspective. A Modern Slavery Coordination Unit (MSCU) has been formed, as part of Programme Challenger [11], which, amongst other things, has developed an NGO forum that initially met monthly (now quarterly). This provides an opportunity for charities and voluntary sector agencies to share practice, discuss solutions and for the MSCU to work with the NGOs to develop the most effective and sustainable support services in the community.

In November 2015, anti-trafficking charity STOP THE TRAFFIK (STT) won the tender for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) [12] funded post of 'Network Coordinator' in the MSCU. The NGO Network Coordinator is now included in the following list of personnel sharing the one office:

An NGO Network Coordinator, a probation officer, three detectives, a data mapping practitioner, a Local Authority tactical adviser, a Local Authority safeguarding lead, a police operational support officer, a fire prevention and safety coordinator (1 day per week), and a criminal and financial investigator (Immigration). As part of the team, but located elsewhere, are also a member of the Department of Works and Pensions together with a member of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

The NGO Network Coordinator chairs the quarterly meetings of the NGO Forum which includes intelligence slides and discussion with 38 NGOs in attendance including key partners with a slavery and trafficking focus (e.g. Medaille, City Hearts, Afruca, Barnardo's, Hope For Justice) plus those who may come across potential modern slavery victims (NGOs working with street sex workers, homeless, asylum seekers and refugees, young people, etc.).

The GMP NGO Network Coordinator's Key Targets include:

Focus Area 1 - Information Sharing: To share the picture of Modern Slavery in GM with key partners. To encourage more referrals into the Modern Slavery Coordination Unit.

Focus Area 2 - Victim Protection: To provide training and awareness raising to increase victim identification. To coordinate the provision of an Emergency Potential Victim refuge. To coordinate the provision of Community Support and Integration for Victims following rescue/post National Referral Mechanism (NRM). To coordinate the provision of opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships or jobs for victims.

Focus Area 3 – Awareness Raising: To raise public awareness of the issue of Modern Slavery.

Feedback from NGOs who attend the Forum include:

"You have managed to create a really supportive forum for shared learning and development." - "A friendly and informative hub to share information and ideas." - "A good forum to gain knowledge of what is happening regionally and nationally."

The GMP NGO Network Coordinator is also a member of the National Network Coordinators' Anti-Slavery Forum (NNCF) referred to earlier.

CONCLUSIONS

When the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, opened the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Modern Slavery Week of Action in October 2015, he urged police to 'be brave' in their partnerships with other agencies. In as much as the word can refer to 'a new and hopeful period

resulting from major changes' there is evidence already of an increasing 'bravery' as police forces around the country play a major role in helping form more and more regional partnerships.

At the same time, the then Chief Constable of GMP, Sir Peter Fahy, pointed out that a lot of places are trying to move away from partnership, into integration. He said, "There is no point in having partnerships in separate buildings with case conferences, separate meetings and all the rest of it. That makes it very difficult."

"The big progress we have made" he said, no doubt referring particularly to the situation in GMP, "is having more integrated teams, where you have police, health workers, and social services all in the same office, every single day, talking about the case, working out which agency has the best information, the best skills, the best means of addressing the issues."

Naturally, the degree to which police and local agencies achieve partnership, or go on to a level of integration, is a matter of scale and local considerations. In the matter of modern slavery and human trafficking, regional partnerships should be open to the possibility of both and aspire to achieve the optimum level of either.

It is encouraging that the Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) are having a marked effect on the setting up of regional multi-agency networks and partnerships, both in providing funding and/or administrative assistance. Certainly, a representative of the PCC seems always to be a welcome presence in the group. Amongst the other funding opportunities that may exist, one of the latest is the Santa Marta Group, an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference to help eradicate human trafficking.

The setting-up of regional multi-agency collaborative partnerships and networks must continue, and the work of the Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF), through its National Network Coordinators' Forum, is a matter of importance in promoting inter-regional cooperation and sharing best practice nationally within the UK.

REFERENCES & FOOTNOTES

- [1] Fenshaw F.Charles – "Widow, Orphan and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature" (Journal of Near Eastern Studies Vol. 21, No. 2 Apr., 1962, pp.129-139
- [2] 2016 Global Slavery Index provides a map, country by country, of the estimated prevalence of modern slavery, together with information about steps each government has taken to respond to this issue. This information allows an objective comparison and assessment of both the problem and adequacy of the response in 167 countries.
- [3] "A Short History of Trafficking in Persons" by Kristiina Kangaspunta, published in Issue 1 of the UNICRI's 'Freedom from Fear Magazine' October 2008
- [4] 'Human Trafficking: The Government's Strategy' ISBN: 978-1-84987-563-9 July 2011, p.8 para.19
- [5] The Symposium Objectives were: a) to create a functional network between NGOs and experts working in the field of human trafficking. b) to bridge the communication and stir cooperation between the institutions, NGOs and national and international experts whose area of interest and activity is represented by the fight to combat and prevent human trafficking. c) to aid the process of combating and preventing human trafficking and to better the respective working methods pertaining to this endeavour. d) transfer of ethical principles in the leadership of state institutions, as well as preventing and combating corruption in public institutions. e) know-how exchange on issues relating to the assistance and protection of victims of human trafficking.
- [6] Modern Slavery Act 2015 An Act to make provision about slavery, servitude and forced labour and about human trafficking, including provision for an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner; and for connected purposes. Royal Assent 26 March 2015
- [7] Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Strategic Plan 2015-17 Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 42 (10)(a) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. October 2015
- [8] Ibid. pp.23-24

- [9] The Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) is a UK-based charity which grew out of the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking. HTF was created in order to support and add value to the work of the many charities and agencies operating to combat human trafficking in the UK. Its Chairman is Anthony Steen CBE
- [10] The National Network Coordinators' Forum (NNCF) brings together the coordinators of the various regional anti-slavery networks and partnerships operating throughout the UK. Formed by the Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) in 2015, its Terms of Reference can be found on the HTF website, and include the following Aims and Objectives:
- a) To build fully supportive relationships between regional organisations and established partnerships across the UK.
 - b) To facilitate the sharing of experiences and expertise between regional organisations and established partnerships across the UK.
 - c) To encourage the development and identification of best practice, trends and patterns.
 - d) To remain abreast of current developments and initiatives relating to slavery and human trafficking.
 - e) To identify areas in which the support provided to victims of trafficking is insufficient, highlight the consequences of those deficiencies and work to develop practical solutions and inform policy makers.
 - f) To have oversight of any training being provided by partners; share best practice and knowledge of good modules between networks.
 - g) To share the experiences and information gathered by frontline professionals, where appropriate and necessary, with the Home Office and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the nature and extent of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK.
- [11] The purpose of GMP's Modern Slavery Coordination Unit is: 1) Operational Support, 2) Investigation Review, 3) Training, and 4) Intelligence Collection. Each of these is explained more fully on a Data Sheet available by emailing HannahE.Flint@gmp.pnn.org
- [12] A Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is an elected official in England and Wales charged with securing efficient and effective policing of a police area. The PCC for Greater Manchester is currently the Former Labour MP Tony Lloyd.