

Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner

Topic: Modern Slavery

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Purpose of briefing

To brief the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on the current position and any associated issues relating to Modern Slavery

Background

As defined by the National Crime Agency (NCA), Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) is the term used in the UK to refer to those offences included in the Modern Slavery Act.

A National MHST Network currently led by Mark Burns-Williamson, the PCC for West Yorkshire and the APCC lead for MHST provides the forum for PCCs to discuss modern slavery and human trafficking issues and encourage PCCs to include modern slavery and human trafficking in their plans, particularly around raising awareness of the nature and scale of the issue, and share and promote good practice. The importance of this Network was highlighted in a report produced by HMICFRS in 2016. A further HMICFRS report in 2017 noted that there were different levels of interest being shown by PCCs, but where there had been significant interest shown, including direct investment, this had acted as an important stimulus to help improve the response to the issue.

A PCC MHST Toolkit is available and is regularly updated. Multi-agency MSHT Networks have proved to be particularly successful in developing a common understanding of the nature and scale of the issue and agreeing collaborative solutions.

Current issues

- Collaboration across partner agencies is essential to ensure an appropriate response as is an understanding of the nature and scale of the issue in our area and the total number of victims identified, not just those in the National Referral Mechanism.
- Governance of MSHT sits with Adult Safeguarding Boards in Durham and Darlington.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has recently been produced to agree roles and responsibilities.
- MSHT is often linked to other crime types such as child exploitation, assault, fraud, drug trafficking, money laundering and firearms.
- Having a clear understanding of what partnerships exist and what their aims and objectives are in relation to MSHT and exploitation is crucial to providing an effective response thus avoiding duplication and or gaps in provision.
- The MHST Toolkit specifically designed for PCCs, sets out responsibilities in holding others to account and ensuring there is an effective, collaborative multi-agency response to MSHT and exploitation.
- We are in the process of setting up a MSHT Network.

Decisions needed

None pending.

Partnership involvement

Multi-agency meetings have taken place in the past, organised and led by Durham County Council Adult Safeguarding Business Manager. These were suspended several months ago, and partnership working is now focused on the work that the Force does with the two Local Authorities. Agreement has been reached that the OPCC will, in future, have representation on the Durham Adult Safeguarding Board

Police involvement

The Force currently take the lead on this area of work.

People to meet

Force Safeguarding lead, DCC and DBC Safeguarding Adults leads.