

## March 28, 2019: Modern Slavery Business Event

**Chris Webb, Deputy Crime Commissioner for Lancashire**, introduced the event and gave some background.

### **Wendy Walker, LANPAC, Vice Chair**

[Lancashire Partnership Against Crime \(LANPAC\)](#) is a collaboration between Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Businesses and Public Services working together to reduce levels of crime and disorder across the county. The Partnership is a registered charity and its primary role is to support various crime prevention and community safety schemes throughout Lancashire. It comprises 200 businesses and private sector organisations who pay a fee varying from £5, for businesses of less than 5 people, to a maximum of £500.

Wendy shared her personal interest in the subject from the 2004 cockle pickers tragedy, prior to which there had been a number of housing issues and public disorders which had not led to action although later it transpired that the cockle pickers were being bullied by the gangmasters.

### **Sion Hall, PLASP Coordinator**

Sion gave background to the Partnership and then outlined the various types of human trafficking:

Sexual Exploitation.

- Operation Hexton - two Romanian girls had been tricked into coming to the UK in the belief they were going to work as cleaners. Instead they were beaten and put to work as prostitutes. These were respectable girls from respectable families, fortunately rescued after two weeks after a tip off. Typically girls bring in £500 to £600 per day with no days off.
- With a move into hotels by traffickers, night porters need to note girls being booked in for one night with men visiting.
- One female was flown into the UK on her own, was in a hotel within half an hour, and the first customer arrived 20 minutes later.
- A 17 year old Slovakian girl had been picked up on the street and bundled into a van, trafficked across Europe, raped and brought to Burnley where she was finally rescued.
- A woman sold into marriage to an illegal immigrant, so he could stay in the UK, was rescued when she was discovered in an unrelated incident.

Forced Labour. The NCA notes that this is the form of modern day slavery with the highest numbers.

Forced Criminality. A respectable Romanian couple reported to a Police Station in Blackburn when their situation had deteriorated to the extent they could stand it no longer. They owed money from travel and had had been threatened with violence. They had previously been arrested three times for shoplifting in top end stores but had been too afraid to say anything.

Cannabis Factories. The 2015 Modern Slavery Act made it a defence in law if a person had been enforced to commit criminal acts. When questioned, individuals taken from cannabis factories have sometimes not even known what country they are in.

Enforced Begging. Gangs put trafficked individuals on the street who can earn a lot of money, none of which they get.

Domestic Servitude. Mainly cleaners and nannies, often Filipino, who because of immigration legislation are tied to the family they come into the UK to work for. It is a weakness in immigration law which traffickers capitalise on, and which is currently being looked at.

Forced Marriage. In Nelson a woman was tricked into marriage and locked up and systematically threatened and beaten. She was put to work for ten men. When rescued her legs and feet were so swollen from standing up that she needed hospital treatment.

Organ Donation. Only 3 cases in the UK and none performed in the UK. The demand is enormous and organs – eyes and kidneys – can bring £10,000

Children. County Lines is the big one with child trafficking and there is always the question of whether the child is a criminal or a victim. Lancashire has its fair share. There was a Midlands case of a 14 year old stabbed to death.

179 countries have signed up to the Palermo Protocol

The NCA quoted number is now accepted as an underestimate the true number being tens of thousands if not the 136,000 in the Global Slavery Index.

For organisations:

- The need for signs specific to organisations
- There can be an unclear relationship between victims and the adult they are with
- Sometimes victims are branded to indicate ownership
- Traffickers brief victims on how to account for injuries
- The need to make it easier for victims to come forward – remove barriers
- Combat ideas of: “that’s my life”; “I’m better off than at home”
- Businesses may be paying the correct wage but traffickers get the money
- There was a case of two Afghans in Burnley being paid a pittance and sleeping on “dog” blankets.
- Mini buses bring workers into workplaces without it being apparent that they are trafficked

### **Beth Coggan-Lennox, Modern Slavery Helpline**

- Unseen exists to support victims, inform adults and children, and influence Government and Government bodies
- Calls have come from outside the UK, from victims themselves, and from families
- Eight major industries of concern include Agriculture, Construction, Hospitality, Fisheries, Transport, Care
- Organisations with a turnover of over £36m have to provide and publish a statement on what they are doing to prevent trafficking in their organisation and its supply chains. The penalty is an unlimited fine.
- [Back2Source](#) is a continuous improvement scheme for all organisations regardless of size, sector or structure. The scheme is designed to promote continuous improvement to mitigate the risk of modern slavery in an organisation's own operations or supply chains. The idea is to “name and fame” rather than “name and shame”

## **Paul Elms, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)**

Li Hua – known in the UK as Patrick – was the sole survivor of the Morecambe Bay Cockle Pickers Tragedy. He had a wife and child and he speaks of how he thought he was going to die and questioned why God would allow it. He ditched his waterproofs and swam in pitch dark and freezing water until spotted by a helicopter. He is now back with his family, all healthy, with a job if not a lot of money and forever grateful. . The incident led to a complex operation by Lancashire Police across the Globe. The number of cockle pickers quoted is 23 but it could have been (a lot) more. It was a wake up call from which arose the GLA

Li Hua came from a small village in South China and had worked out that 5 or 6 years in the UK would earn him enough to buy houses for his family. He paid £20,000 to Snake Head gangs and his family was also indebted to the same amount. He expected a flight to the UK but instead it was a horrendous 12 month journey via Russia, including 6 months in Moscow in a house with 20 people.

### The GLAA

- The GLA morphed into the GLAA in 2017 and has 137 staff, half home based. The GLAA conducts its own investigations but also works in partnerships
- There is a UK labour market of 10 million workers (under the GLAA terms of reference) and GLAA trains companies in necessary practice
- Nail bars are linked with money laundering
- UK is a significant destination country for labour exploitation and debt bondage is a big issue.
- There was an example of a man living in a dog kennel for 40 years without neighbours doing anything
- The number of Vietnamese victims is rising, including children

### The law:

- You can look at the top 100 companies on the Internet and see the standard of their statements. 48% haven't bothered at all
- The Welsh Government has elected not to deal with any company that doesn't have a statement
- GLAA works with policy operations and partnerships which means all employment issues can be dealt with e.g. Health and Safety

### How can businesses help?

- Senior buy in and a firm commitment to the cause
- Marshalls (Head Office in Huddersfield) are a company that delivers paving slabs to 100s of construction sites. Drivers are trained to spot the signs and vehicles carry a sign – “End Modern Slavery” plus the Helpline.
- Consider joining a protocol or making a statement
- Have an internal referral mechanism
- Don't underestimate the consequences of getting it wrong
- Business practice can influence customers
- The Clewer Car Wash App has six simple questions and the app locates where you are.
- Leaflets can be printed from the GLAA website
- GLAA can be contacted on 0800 432 0804 or via their website [www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk)

## Gary Spratt and Pall Miller, Libre Solutions

- [Libre Solutions](#) is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to combat modern slavery by advising on transparency in supply chain reporting, and developing strategies to end slavery within businesses and supply chains.
- *"You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."* William Wilberforce, Prior to the Abolition Vote, 1789
- Spice Girls T-shirts sold to raise money for Comic Relief's "gender justice" campaign were made at a factory in Bangladesh where women earn the equivalent of 35p an hour.
- Libre Solutions did the field work for a study of nail bars in two boroughs in Greater Manchester and located 78 dedicated nail bars of which 38 were identified as having concerns of malpractice. Only seven of these were registered as businesses with Companies House. Many of the practices observed were consistent with the findings of the IASC report '[Combating modern slavery experienced by Vietnamese Nationals en route to and within the UK](#)'.
- Organised crime groups focus on unskilled workers, contacting employers with the offer of minimum wage workers.
- An example of how modern day slavery can happen in plain sight is illustrated by the case of a cleaner who had worked in a college for many years, even sleeping in the college on occasions, with no-one suspecting he was a slave.
- For the public sector a database of approved contractors would help employers avoid unwittingly employing trafficked personnel in their work force.
- The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office is committed to improving monitoring, and enforcing compliance on the requirement for employers with a turnover of over £36m to produce an anti-slavery statement.
- Proposed changes to the Modern Slavery (2015) legislation will bring public sector employers with a "turnover" of over £36m into the same requirement as the private sector.
- The likely consequences of Brexit would be a shortage of labour, increased demand for low skilled workers, increased opportunities for organised crime, and increased vulnerability for potential victims of modern day slavery.
- There is the potential for modern day slavery directly, or in supply chains, in every business regardless of size, which puts a moral responsibility on businesses to do what they can to ensure high ethical standards as an employer.
- Businesses should play their part in tackling modern day slavery by ethical procurement and practice and by educating employees to be aware of potential exploitation in other workers.
- Traffickers will avoid businesses that have a "neighbourhood watch" style of practice clearly publicised.
- Having a clear ethical operation helps the reputation of business and minimises the possibility of litigation.
- Libre solutions offer bespoke training, health checks, assessment of supply chain risk, and they advise on compliance statements, or a declaration for those where a compliance statement isn't legally required.
- An ethical employment policy puts a business ahead of the game e.g. Co-op and M&S, and protects and enhances the name of the business.