

Greater Manchester Anti-Trafficking and Slavery NGO Forum

Greater Manchester Anti-Trafficking and Slavery NGO Forum Minutes

8th March 2024

Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Attendees:

- Mischa Macaskill (Causeway) – Chair
- Sian Payne (GMCA)
- Eleanor McParland (We Are Survivors)
- Matthew Young (Causeway)
- Sarah Hunt (Causeway)
- Ruth Orange (Causeway)
- Bethan Rudgley (British Red Cross)
- Ana Gomez (Sophie Hayes Foundation)
- Christianah Awodiji (Manchester City Council)
- Alexandra Cavendish (Causeway)
- Petra Smrckova (Medaille Trust)
- Mark Woodland (Greater Manchester Police)
- George Lane (Manchester Airport Chaplaincy)
- Karolina Spokaite (Manchester Airport Civil Aviation)
- Marcus Dawson (Medaille Trust)
- Eliza Stachowksa (Hope For Justice)
- Brian Talabi (Afruca)
- Connell Hopkins (Trafford Council)
- Naeema Ahmed (Afruca)
- Mischa Macaskill (Causeway)
- Kat Metcalfe (GMP)
- Patrick O'Dowd (Caritas Salford)
- Megan Hadfield (University of Manchester)
- Qwen Page-Roberts (GMCA)
- Mark Flannery (GMP Bolton)
- Hannah Spittal (Medaille Trust)
- Sam Baxendale (Medaille Trust)
- Andrew Proudlove (Manchester Airport)
- Anthony Brown (Caritas Salford)
- Nicky Furlong (Merseyside PCC)

Action Points and Connections:

- Mischa to connect Naeema and George to discuss information for care workers on arrival.
- George and Andrew to look into awareness sessions with taxis at the Airport again as they were very well received last time and it helped generate information. Kat Metcalfe would be happy to link in and help with George with that.
- Mischa to send impact report from Booth Centre to all members.
- Mischa to connect Gwen and Patrick to discuss the new accomm project.
- Mischa to circulate a list of 'Marks' to forum participants.
- Mischa to circulate the policy and sector updates stats.
- Chris to have a look at Gendered wait times for CG and RG decisions and potentially feedback.
- Sian to forward Mischa news about Barnardos.

- Sian to follow up with Jenny and Qwen about out of force RGs as they may be at more risk because they are not receiving support anymore.
- Mischa to connect Mark to Barnardos for more advice and training regarding care leavers
- If anyone would like more information or training on transitional safeguarding, contact Sian Payne.
- Chris to confirm if Modern Slavery training is compulsory for all police officers
- Mischa to update strategic plans with suggestions from members.

Meeting Minutes and Action Points

Key Areas and Discussion Points

Agenda

*NGO Forum Strategy and Updates
Member Spotlight: Mark Woodland
Services Spotlight: Advocacy Advice Line
Programme Challenger Updates
Policy and Sector Updates*

Introduction

- Two events in the following week in honour of international women's day, hosted by Afruca and Causeway

Obstacles and Positive News from members:

- Hannah Spittal and Sam Baxendale (Medaille Trust)– Service users have been supported to find employment, subject access requests are proving difficult to source.
- Gwen (GMCA) – Has been working on an emergency response to housing issues and homelessness rates.
- Mark (GMP) – Looking at people missing from care, particularly Juvenile, developing some good projects to raise awareness. Noticing a drop-off once they care leavers hit 18. Quite a big number of children's who have been adopted and then moved into the care system as they get older. Trying to work with Barnardo's to look at this issue.
- Anthony Brown (Caritas) – Positives: a new a double decker Freedom bus that is funded by the police to raise awareness. PLASP has launched a pledge on February 8th. Problems: biggest problem has been the changes to the law which makes it more difficult to support victims of modern slavery. Difficult to convince people of the truth of the matter due to the narratives perpetuated and re-enforced by the government.
- Nicky Furlong – Hoping to have the freedom bus in Merseyside and doing an awareness week for modern slavery, hoping to get Liverpool businesses to sign up to the pledge. Lots of people want to join the network they are creating. Main negative, data – partners feel like they can't share data due to data protection issues.

- Chris Geneux – Positive: two full-time staff should be joining the MSU team. Detective Constables, hopefully can join us at the forum one day. Another positive, SCA has seen a big delay in reasonable grounds decision previously but it looks like movement is being made on that now. Seen a huge drop in adult sexual exploitation referrals, seems to be a national issue. Believes police need to be a bit more pro-active in working with partner organisations.
- Brian Talabi (Afruca) – Things are going well in terms of referrals and engagement. Still a lot of issues around youth anti-social behaviour that need to be addressed. Been doing work with partner organisations about why people are going missing, been doing focus groups in the community as well.
- George (Manchester Chaplaincy) – Manchester airport has changed its approach towards modern slavery, believes it has taken its responsibilities under Modern Slavery Act very seriously. Using the Blue Heart (UN recognised) symbol about combatting modern slavery. Hoping the badge will be worn by many different people at the airport and it will raise awareness for individuals going through the airport and they can recognise what it means.
- Karolina (Airport) – Biggest challenge is the communication within the airport. More people are getting involved with their raising awareness. They now train all security officers about spotting the signs. Been using the challenger programme posters in the arrivals department and using different languages. Trying to be more targeted in the deployment of posters.
- Naeema (BASNET) – Part of a network of groups, focuses on two areas this year: safehouses and care sector. Trying to identify gaps in the sector, especially for women. Trying to address how to help with the women that are destitute, not just being exploited due to the ripple effect. Aim to bring TSA providers around the table and discuss accommodations and improvements. Mentioned difficulty of getting legal aid solicitors. Seeing people getting threatened because they have NRPF.
- Mark Woodland (GMP) – Positive, run the Manchester Male Domestic Abuse Working group, this is getting all the local authorities to chip in and secure a male refuge space. Not sure if it is accessible for NRPF individuals. Negative, victims code – 12 formal rights that victim of crime have, right 1 is to be understood or to understand, neurodiverse people are not being factored into this.
- Eliza Statowska – Positive: Lots of service users getting compensation. Negative: Tough to access legal advice and long-term housing. Difficulty with the reconsideration changes needing to be received within 30 days as this is increased pressure on the service.
- Marcus and Petra (Medaille) – Positive: they have been identified as working very well by the police.
- Kat Metcalfe – Developed a resource that has piloted to young people about My Friend Ben, to show what he experiences to raise awareness of exploitation. Another positive is they will be training Greater Manchester Probation staff about modern slavery. Difficulty is tracking the reach of training.

- Sarah Hunt – Positive: Made good connections with solicitor firms to get age assessments challenged due to receiving referrals that are underage but disputed.
- Alexandra Cavendish – Negative: Lack of legal aid solicitors means Causeway staff having to write/support more asylum appeals with service users.
- Megan: Booth Centre RESS Project is going well, offering personal-led support for people at risk of homelessness due to immigration status. Impact report is out now. One obstacle, increasing numbers day by day, same or restricted budget. 48 people sleeping rough outside of the town hall after being thrown out of NASS.
- Christiana (City of Manc Council)– Challenges for newly granted refugees, lack of a pathway for housing for refugees, want to develop a pathway. Positive: MCC is still standing and surviving! Working towards being a Local Authority of Sanctuary.
- Ana Gomez (Sophie Hayes Foundation)– Positive: Starting a new cohort, will have a referral partner online event on the 19th March. Negative: Finding that people are not reporting Modern Slavery that they have identified. Launching a lunch and learn for people to have more awareness about how to refer. Wants us to think about how we can give practical advice and support about NRM referrals to get non-NRM providers to refer. Sophie Hayes Foundation can accept referrals from self-declared NRM service users.
- Bethan (Red Cross) - Very difficult capacity-wise, lack of legal aid provision.
- Patrick O’Dowd (Caritas) – Increased number of people coming forwards after receiving a positive asylum decision. Seeking to open a new 19-bed accommodation project. Scheme will be targeted at ‘low risk and low need’ subject to planning approval.
- Ruth Orange (Causeway) – Going to start working with Pre-NRM for Cheshire East and Manchester. New cuckooing thing that is happening in Newcastle, vulnerable people being targeted with XL bully breeding. They will be given a pregnant dog and then made to handle it until the puppies are born and the cycle will continue. Or people will be given dogs and then made to work instead of paying for the dog.
- Matthew Young (Causway) – New research project about survivors needs that has been co-produced with survivors, the findings will be coming out soon. Looking at ways to use AI to rapidly anonymize data about survivors needs.
- Gemma Gaskell (Diversity Matters) – Positive: trying to see how we can link domestic servitude to domestic abuse and use the legislation to better support people. Had positive training with Kat Metcalfe.
- Eleanor (We are Survivors) – Offer a trauma-informed therapy service for male survivors of abuse. Excited to work with forum to develop understanding of Modern Slavery within their services and develop working relationships.

- Connell (Trafford Council)– Wants to identify training that can be done for Trafford Council Staff Members as they strengthen their approach to Modern Slavery.

Strategic Plan

- Mischa has developed a strategic plan for 2024 – 26 based on feedback from previous forum.
- Asked for feedback if anything else should be added to this.
- Members raised they would like to include a call to action based on poor legal aid provision.
- Members asked to include employability or employment opportunities for survivors in Greater Manchester. Members raised it might be helpful to highlight benefit for economy and survivors if they and the right to work. Mischa to find previous research into this and work with Sophie Hayes and forum members to facilitate a response.
- Members asked to include the creation of a SPOC or Modern Slavery commitment from each local authority.
- Members happy with strategic vision and happy to review at the start of every meeting.

Questions:

- Better pathway from child services through to adult services, is anything in place, can it be strengthened if so? Complex transitional safeguarding strategies are being developed in GM and Oldham is the furthest ahead but more can be done and Sian is happy to help facilitate anybody that wants to help with this direct issue.
- Can we cost out in cashable terms in terms of repeat victimisations within Modern Slavery? Mischa can find and circulate. Hestia or University of Nottingham may have resources about this.

Member Spotlight: Mark Woodland

- 1 Victim Service Co-Ordinator in each borough and 2 in Manchester. Mark is based in Trafford, and the lead for Challenger/ Modern Slavery, as well as other thematic leads.
- Aims to give victims a voice.
- Good point of contact if any issues with the criminal justice system or if you are experiencing blockages as he is well networked.
- Works in a strategic post and is meant to look at what the police is doing, CPS, Courts, LA's, third sector and statutory. Meant to encourage them to all push in the same direction and achieve good things through collaboratively work.
- Leads on Male Domestic Abuse and Neurodiversity.
- Has a plan, wants to get the police recognising, accepting and responding to neurodiversity better than they do.
- His idea is that there is in house neurodivergent training support groups in Trafford, so he wants that in all boroughs in greater Manchester for the police. Start to then get non-neurodiverse officers to recognise what they neurodivergent people bring and what it looks like behaviourally. Once that is fully implemented in Trafford, he then wants to roll that out.
- Wants the police to understand how non-answering of questions can be explained, resistance to being grabbed etc... in relation to neurodiversity.
- Chris: Might look like it is mandatory for proper modern slavery training for all police officers, cannot be confirmed but he thinks it is slowly moving forward.

- **Question:** How do we know who the 'Mark' of other Boroughs is – he will circulate a list to Mischa.

Policy and Sector Updates:

- Shared key data from 2023 end of year summary (NRMs and DTNs)
- Question, women wait time was a lot higher than men or women to get an RG and CG, why could that be?
 - o Inconclusive but it could be due to something to do with sexual exploitation cases that take longer to investigate or they may be historic.
 - o Causeway/ Hope for Justice raised that even when couples get referred together, it takes longer for the women to get the RG decision than the Men.
 - o Pre-NRM service to be set up to help survivors during this time.
 - o Is there variance in this number regionally for RG's and CG's? – Chris to look into

Matthew Young:

- Rwanda Treaty and Bill:
 - o Amendment made so that there are protections for people with RG's if they get sent to Rwanda.
 - o If these amendments go through, there could be a potentially massive risk for PVOHT.
 - o 30-day limit on reconsideration requests at the moment.
 - o Guidance is causing a lot of risks to the service users, especially in relation to the new guidance to expedite decision making process.
 - o Could be a blanket negative decision policy for certain demographics that will be hard to challenge and people find it hard to get support to challenge it.
 - o Public order disqualification – update of risk of re-trafficking will now be considered.
 - o **Mischa asked to the forum: How can we fill these gaps whilst gaps in policy remain?**
 - o Sian update from Barnardos: "As a result of work to review funding commitments for 24/25, it was decided to support a revised model of the service, the revised model will focus on a needs based hybrid service for children's services delivering services based on child's needs assessments. Children with parental support can receive exceptional case funding on a case by case basis".

Chris Geneux (Modern Slavery Figures)

- Moving forward, we will be presenting the data from the previous quarter in these meetings to ensure the data is correct

Questions:

- If someone gets a negative RG, can they go back into the referral system?
 - o We think it'd be a struggle if it's the same case that is reported.
- Who is collating the evidence to supply an objective basis for peoples RG claims if the exploitation happened overseas.
 - o Mainly NGO's but nobody specifically. IECA will read the referral form only, maybe read guidance.

- Sian: Believes it is key for them to follow-up on out of force exploitation RG's, they may be at more risk because they are not receiving support anymore.

Programme Challenger Updates:

- Positive stuff to update on: Interim care offer for individuals facing delays to RGs.
 - o Hopefully looking at rolling a service in the next couple of months.
- Also, a new victim navigator has been appointed/offered, hopefully they will be starting with GMCA by the end of the month
 - o Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery partnership review being completed by Uni of Manchester, and will be starting soon
 - o Really want feedback from members of the forum.
- Now in Phase 2 of the review of what is happening in the care sector, trying to get people to understand what is going on across the sector and understand the issue.

Advocacy Advice Line:

- Runs an advocacy team at hope for justice for survivors and it is outside of the MSVCC, offers 1-1 case work.
- New Advocacy Advice line set up for survivors and professionals accessible at any stage within or after the NRM.
- Capacity is quite low to take on new cases due to having a team of four people only.
- Has been interested in what could help survivors more, what the new service provides is focused on survivor care, looking longer-term what are the problems the survivors face and how can they be solved.
 - o They will offer tailored long-term on-going advice.
 - o Focus on knowledge sharing and empowerment.
 - o Flexible services that tends to be issue focused.
- Numbers have plateaued since lockdown has finished.
- Lots of questions about therapy/counselling/immigration/reconsiderations previously.
- Since 2024, been lots of questions about re-instating support maybe after falling on hard times since leaving the MSVCC. Emphasising need for post-NRM support.

AOB:

- Booth Centre is hosting a charity football match, needs some players to fill the pitch on Friday 3rd May – 15:00pm – 19:00pm.