

The Human Trafficking Foundation

London Project to assist local authorities to
fulfil their new statutory obligations around
human trafficking

London falling behind

London initially led the way in the field of fighting human trafficking, but we are now some way behind many other regions of the UK. For example, in areas such as Wales, Sheffield, Manchester, Northern Ireland and the West Midlands, post-safe house support (that is, support for victims provided after the statutory Home Office funded 45 days) is now provided to victims of trafficking; and multiagency partnerships between the police and local authorities and others have been set up to fight modern day slavery.

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New Statutory Responsibilities

The Foundation is leading a two-year project to engage statutory authorities in London with the plight of victims of human trafficking, in light of the new Modern Slavery Act and Care Act, both of which have given local authorities new statutory responsibilities in this area.

The Human Trafficking Foundation

When resources are strained, local authorities need solutions for how to maximise their effectiveness and achieve more with the same or even less resource. We have therefore started to work with local authorities in London and NGOs to carry out this work.

Our Chair, Anthony Steen CBE, was formerly the Home Secretary's Special Envoy on Human Trafficking during the passage of the Modern Slavery Bill and was then the Mayor of London's special envoy on human trafficking. Hence the Foundation has worked closely with statutory authorities for many years and understands the challenges local authorities face.

Help protect your council from Judicial Review and ensure vulnerable people are protected

Councils are struggling with the new responsibilities under these Acts and already a number of expensive judicial reviews against councils are underway.

Our project aims to assist authorities to correctly fulfil their obligations in accordance with these Acts and other related legislation, by creating ways for your council to be as effective as possible, within its resources' constraints, in supporting victims of trafficking.

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Problem 1 – Identification:

There is considerable evidence that London is a hub for human trafficking and slavery in the UK – a truly heinous crime involving some of the most vulnerable people in our city - and yet many staff in statutory authorities, from social workers to housing officers, struggle to identify many cases, even though there is now a **statutory duty to notify** the Home Office about potential victims.

Hence large numbers of cases in London, from slavery in brothels, homes and hotels, to cases similar to the Rochdale case of trafficked children, or the Connors case of trafficked homeless men, carry on under the authorities' jurisdiction, in places such as children's homes and licensed businesses.

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Statistics and case examples on the lack of identification

“The CSJ Report on Human Trafficking found that in 2012 **only 37 out of a total of 433 local authorities across the UK made any referrals** of trafficked children to the NRM.

“Of the 43 per cent of London Safeguarding Children Boards that responded to the CSJ survey, **only 57 per cent had implemented the London Safeguarding Trafficked Children Toolkit** and Guidance and 36 per cent had developed a child trafficking subgroup.”

- Almost three fifths (56.7%) of social workers surveyed thought you had to cross an international border to be a human trafficking victim.
- 46.7% of social workers and 33% of teachers could not recognise a child, brought over to the UK to live with a family and carrying out chores in their house while not going to school, as a human trafficking victim
- Over a quarter (26.7%) of social workers could not recognise a child being brought over to tend cannabis as a potential victim of human trafficking.
- 60% of those surveyed could not recognise a homeless man working for free for long hours as a potential victim of trafficking

Shadow City London Survey

“They saw vans arrive three times a week from Lithuania in one area in Westminster alone to sell men to different gangmasters. ...I was told that Lincoln’s Inn Fields is one of the traffickers’ target bases and that Passage, a homeless drop-in support centre near Victoria, is also targeted. **One soup run in central Westminster was “regularly targeted two to three times a night!”**

“There are horrifying stories around the lack of care in some of these children’s care homes. A victim of the ... gang revealed in court that one night she was taken back to her care home in a cab; but when she arrived the care home staff refused to pay for her fare. The cab driver therefore decided to drive her back to the ... grooming gang where she was raped.”

“The key underlying difficulty in assessing the scale of ‘localised grooming’ is the inconsistent recognition of child sexual exploitation by frontline practitioners and the failure to record relevant information at a local level. (CEOP Out of Sight Out of Mind)

During the court case, where an Oxford-based gang were charged with the grooming and sex trafficking of girls, a school support worker stated that “nine out of ten social workers” in Oxford knew that young girls were being groomed with drugs and were being sexually exploited... A report following the Rochdale case also found that social workers were too willing to see the abuse as consensual and had not passed on intelligence to police which could have led to earlier arrests.”

“One trafficker.. had several domestic slaves .. who she beat and tortured. Yet she was a respected member of the community, working with [a London] council... We heard of cases of traffickers being social workers.. and lawyers; and the facilitation of trafficking often took place in open environments such as churches and at community events.”

Problem 2 – Lack of support when exiting Government safe houses :

After adult victims of trafficking finish receiving the Government provided statutory “45 days” of care, there is very little or often nothing in place in local authorities to provide any specialist support for victims of trafficking, even when they have recourse to public funds, and so many get lost in a tragic and repetitive cycle of exploitation.

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Quotes from Beyond the Safehouse Report

http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Life%20Beyond%20the%20Safe%20House_0.pdf

“My experience with clients who have been through the 45 days [Recovery and Reflection] period is that they end up on the streets again and they are so incredibly vulnerable because their wounds have been opened up, they have only had 45 days to deal with those wounds, and it’s not fair, but after 45 days they’re out... then in a blink of an eye it’s gone” Homeless NGO service provider

“When I moved out of the [Safe] house I went to a bed and breakfast and I got harassed by men, so another abuse again. I moved to North London, Hammersmith and Wembley, so I stayed in three bed and breakfast places. I was in that place for 6 months. The first one in North London, which had guys there, I was in for one month. The second one I stayed in for two days because the traffickers had taken me to that place before , and a girl who saw me, called me by my name, and I thought it was not safe for me so I asked to be moved. Now they moved me to West London in a temporary accommodation. I have been there for seven months.” A human trafficking victim

Problem 3 – Inadequate services for child victims of trafficking :

While adult victims of trafficking receive specialist trafficking support for a minimum 45 days, children who are accommodated and looked after under the Children's Act (2004) usually receive no specialist services.

As a result, many vulnerable children may go into inappropriate care placements or accommodation. This can result in them being at risk of exploitation, in for example criminal activities. There is also increasing evidence that children are continuing to go missing, with inadequate monitoring structures in place.

The story of Quan

When Quan was found he told officials he was 15, but they did not believe him, marking his age down as 19 instead. That meant Quan was sent directly to an adult immigration centre. There, charity workers noted he man seemed far too young to be in the centre. They called in lawyers who argued he should have a proper age assessment by social services, which should take place outside the repressive confines of the detention centre.

But Quan was afraid. He told his lawyers he was terrified that if he was released his traffickers would get to him. So they scrambled to find secure accommodation and begged immigration officials not to release him until they had.

But quietly, late on a Friday evening, Quan was released with just the address of a community centre in south London written a slip of paper. Workers there say he arrived but disappeared soon afterwards. He has not been heard of since. It took the police a month to collect CCTV footage, and only then did they see Quan boarding a train, possibly with someone else. It is feared that he, like so many other Vietnamese young people, has been picked up by traffickers.

Overall objectives

- * Working with your departments to identify where gaps exist
- * Spread knowledge of best practice and assist in drafting protocols and pathways
- * Ensure local authorities comply with their new statutory duties under the Modern Slavery Act and Care Act
- * Improve the capabilities of local authority staff to recognise victims and so increase the number identified
- * Prevent victims in your borough from being re-trafficked by helping you to provide suitable support to children, and adults after they leave a safe house.
- * Increase the intelligence local authorities receive on trafficking
- * Increase multiagency work in local authorities and other statutory authorities, such as with the NHS, NGOs, and hard to reach diaspora communities, and assist in creating pan-London partnerships

CONTACT DETAILS

We would welcome working with your Council to help you better protect victims of human trafficking in your borough and to ensure your staff adhere to their new statutory duties

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