**All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery**

**AGM, 27th November, 3pm**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees**: Vernon Coaker MP (Chair), Lord Alton, Lord McColl, Maggie Throup MP, Alex Norris MP, Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Gareth Snell MP, Lord Russell, Heidi Allen MP, Baroness Hamwee, Stephanie Peacock MP, Jess Phillips MP, Euan Fraser (Secretariat), Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer and Clare Gollop (Devon and Cornwall Police)

**Apologies:** Baroness Butler-Sloss (Co-Chair), Andrew Selous MP, Sarah Champion MP

1. **Annual General Meeting: Election of officers and Appointment of Secretariat**

Vernon Coaker MP proposed the re-election of all officers as follows:

Chair: Vernon Coaker MP

Chair: Baroness Butler-Sloss

Vice Chair: Jess Phillips MP

Vice Chair: Andrew Selous MP

Vice Chair: Sarah Champion

Secretary: Maggie Throup

Secretary: Lord McColl

Treasurer: Heidi Allen

**All attendees agreed to the re-election of officers.**

Vernon Coaker MP proposed re-appointing the Human Trafficking Foundation as secretariat to the APPG. **All attendees agreed.**

Vernon Coaker MP proposed re-appointing Anthony Steen as special advisor to the APPG. **All attendees agreed.**

1. **Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer, Devon and Cornwall Police, National Police Lead for Modern Slavery**

Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer provided an overview of the national police response to modern slavery and the work of the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit. Please see update attached.

There has been a significant increase in the number of modern slavery police operations: from 188 when the Police Transformation Unit began work in February 2017, to 1,120 live operations as of October 2018. One third of these operations relate to the exploitation of children. As regards child exploitation he expressed his preference for ‘child criminal exploitation’ rather than ‘county lines’.

There has been an increase in the number of specialist investigators and intelligence officers.

One case is currently ongoing involving over 200 victims.

As a result of this increased in police activity, we know considerably more about causation and the need for international cooperation. He said it was important to learn the lessons from these operations and that there is considerable work to do to mainstream the response. There is great need to look at the totality of an individual’s vulnerability, especially as regards children.

Conviction rates for trafficking and slavery offences are equivalent to or higher than that of other forms of violence (eg rape). There is, however, a significant attrition rate with only 4% of investigations leading to conviction, this is due in part to the length of time it takes to secure a conviction, as well as the quality of support provided to survivors, and a scarcity of expert prosecutors.

He said that to fully address this crime it requires long-term commitment rather than short-term funding. He also indicated the importance of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner working closely with the Children and Victims Commissioners.

Lord Alton asked what responsibility is there for the public to act as the eyes and ears to identify instances of trafficking? CC Shaun Sawyer noted the uplift in public awareness and the options for the public to report trafficking via the Modern Slavery Helpline or various apps. He spoke of the need to do more raise awareness and understanding amongst young people, and that more prevention work is required.

Lord McColl asked about the importance of victim support to police operations. CC Shaun Sawyer agreed that victim care is very important: the better it is the easier it will be to secure convictions.

Rosena Allin-Khan MP asked for information about trends. Clare Gollop explained that they now have a better understanding of how victims met their traffickers, which allows them to develop more targeted interventions. They understand more about international context, which can inform the response in the UK in terms of support provided. They have learnt about money flows and can work with banks to identify suspicious activity. They understand the structure of the organised crime groups involved, which have a less traditional hierarchy and so are more difficult to disrupt. Finally they know more about the picture as it varies across the country: previously it was believed there was a rural/metropolitan divide, whereas now there is a less clear distinction.

Gareth Snell MP asked if trafficking groups were evolving as the police response improves. Clare Gollop said that there isn’t sufficient need for them to change yet, but they are very flexible and will exploit people in multiple ways.

Heidi Allen MP asked if there traffickers will change their approach and, for example, shift from exploiting victims in car washes to exploiting them in agriculture? Clare Gollop explained that they move between exploitation types and exploitation is almost always multiple.

Baroness Hamwee asked about the problem of foreign national victims being detained in immigration detention. CC Shaun Sawyer said he was aware of that as a problem. Guidance says that concerns about victims’ welfare and safeguarding needs are to be prioritised over immigration control. Have done training on this but more work needs to be done.

Lord Russell asked if police are using skills learned from anti-terrorism to profile traffickers. CC Shaun Sawyer said that there isn’t sufficient evidence base to do so yet. Clare Gollop said that the Prime Minister’s modern slavery task force has helped bring security services into the anti-trafficking discussions.

Lord Alton asked about the exploitation of overseas domestic workers and the problem of diplomatic immunity. CC Shaun Sawyer agreed that it was a significant issue. He also said that workers should be allowed to remain to give evidence against their exploiters if they wish to do so.

Vernon Coaker MP said we must all do more to hear from victims themselves to understand what they have gone through and their experience in the UK.

Lord McColl asked if anything can be done to stop car washes operating with cash in order to make the money easier to trace as in the case of Norway? CC Shaun Sawyer wasn’t sure if that would be possible, but said that more could be done in terms of awareness and training, as well as regarding trading standards.

Lord Russell asked for a summary of lessons learned and what steps should be taken next. CC Shaun Sawyer said that although the UK has done well, the problem is bigger than expected. There is a need to tighten the definition of modern slavery. There is a need to work from the community upwards. An evidence base has now been established, and there is a need to push on. This means learning from good practice elsewhere. He recommended that the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner work closely with the Victims and Children Commissioner. He said that the public needs to be aware that this is a British problem.

Euan Fraser asked if research had been done to look at whether long-term support leads to higher conviction rates. Clare Gollop said that although there are no statistics, the Cabinet Office has looked at the factors in the attrition rate between charge and conviction and support/safeguarding is a factor.

CC Shaun Sawyer thanked the APPG for inviting him and Clare to come to provide an update on the police response. He reiterated the need for long-term commitment to addressing this issue, including funding for the modern slavery Police Transformation Unit.

Vernon Coaker MP thanked Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer and Clare Gollop for their time and their work.

**Meeting Ends 3.45pm**