

SCOTTISH CRIME & DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



HUMAN TRAFFICKING INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

28 NOVEMBER 2011

© Copyright SCDEA 2010. All rights reserved.

Foreword

Human trafficking is an appalling crime that has a devastating impact on victims. There are few crimes worse in terms of undermining what it feels like to be a human being, and that is why it rightly draws an emotional response from us all. For those specialised serious organised crime groups (SOCGs) involved in it, it represents a lucrative business activity. All they care about is maximising profit, and these callous individuals are immune to the human misery that is inflicted upon their victims.

Scottish policing has put its hands up and acknowledged for some time that there are gaps in our intelligence regarding human trafficking. That's why, backed by Scottish Government investment, the first dedicated human trafficking resource was established in 2010 at the Scottish Intelligence Coordination Unit (SICU). Its job has been to assess the scale and extent of human trafficking in Scotland, and the organised crime groups involved. The team has been working with law enforcement agencies and voluntary sector organisations to share information to start to bridge the intelligence gap and improve our collective awareness and understanding of this crime.

The team's work has included bringing together law enforcement, government and a range of victim support organisations. A number of new resources have also been developed to help improve awareness of human trafficking within law enforcement, including a new training package for probationer police officers to help them identify victims of human trafficking.

There has been an understandable desire to put a scale on the size of the human trafficking problem we face. Our assessment is that the information currently available from existing sources does not present an accurate picture of what is truly taking place, and there needs to be caution about drawing conclusions from it. Knowing whether you are one of 10 victims or one of a hundred doesn't change the hell you have been through. So collectively, we need to move on from looking to 'prove' that this is an issue to one in which we accept it is an issue and concentrate on developing our knowledge where it will count. Count for the victims, and count against the traffickers.

The summary of the latest Scottish police intelligence we publish in this document is a further step forward in this process – but we accept ourselves that it is only a step on what will be a longer journey. Law enforcement knowledge and understanding on human trafficking is currently weighted more towards sexual exploitation than child trafficking, domestic servitude and labour exploitation. That's because there is a better flow of intelligence on the sex trade. We now need to delve deeper into understanding the networks that serious organised crime groups use to perpetrate these crimes, and that is particularly true of ethnic minority crime groups.

Human trafficking will not be tackled by law enforcement alone. The key to improving our intelligence on human trafficking involves raising awareness among communities and improving victim support to give them more confidence to speak to the authorities about their experiences. Collaboration is central to achieving that. The better we become at sharing information, the more likely we are to build better knowledge on human trafficking in Scotland which will ultimately lead to the more effective action that we all want to see.

**Gordon Meldrum QPM
Deputy Chief Constable
Director General
SCDEA**

Background to the SCDEA National Strategic Intelligence Assessment

A national strategic intelligence assessment was completed in August 2011 to provide a strategic picture of the nature and extent of all forms of human trafficking that are impacting on Scotland.

The research carried out to inform this was taken from a wide variety of sources. Numerous partner agencies, including law enforcement and other public sector and voluntary agencies were consulted. Academic and open source material was also reviewed where it was deemed relevant to improving understanding of the intelligence received. This collaborative approach aimed to provide the best intelligence picture relating to human trafficking that was available to law enforcement in Scotland.

Challenges

Obtaining intelligence on human trafficking was found to be challenging for a number of reasons including:

- the limited availability of intelligence currently held by law enforcement in Scotland
- a lack of knowledge and understanding of human trafficking both in law enforcement and partner agencies
- difficulties in penetrating hidden communities and populations

Despite these challenges a number of key findings and assessments were made and these are included below. Assessments are included on human trafficking broken down into the various distinct types of trafficking including trafficking for sexual exploitation, trafficking for labour exploitation, trafficking for domestic servitude and child trafficking. The issue of internal trafficking has been addressed within each relevant section. There has been no intelligence found during research relating to trafficking for organ harvesting in Scotland, or the rest of the UK.

Key Findings and Assessments

The Strategic Intelligence Picture

Research has indicated that intelligence in relation to human trafficking, as well as studies of its scale and extent, tend to come mainly from limited qualitative research. This research is also often heavily reliant on testimonies of trafficking victims and information from service providers and agencies that come in contact with these victims. It is clear that much less information is available in relation to the networks that human trafficking offenders use to perpetrate their crimes and this represents a significant challenge to the policing of this problem.

- 73 individuals were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from Scottish agencies between 1st April 2009 and 31st July 2010. It is assessed that of these 73 individuals, 18 are known or suspected to have been either trafficked or secondary trafficked into Scotland.
- It is assessed that at present the NRM cannot be taken as an accurate measure of the **scale** of human trafficking within Scotland.
- Of the 73 referrals to the NRM, 1 individual was a British national. Based on limited data, it is assessed that this should not be considered an indication that British nationals are not becoming victims of trafficking, but rather they are either not coming to the attention of services or are not having their cases referred.
- Intelligence indicates that human trafficking operations are varied and range in complexity, ranging from one or two individual perpetrators, to several specialist individuals performing roles across a variety of different stages of various trafficking processes.
- Much of the intelligence reporting relates to trafficking which can be described as intra-community. Traffickers have been seen to often target individuals from within their own ethnic or national community.
- England is a nexus country used by trafficking networks impacting on Scotland, with London emerging as the most common point of entry to the UK.
- It is generally accepted that the scale of human trafficking is difficult to ascertain. Despite several recent studies being compiled in Scotland in relation to human trafficking, as yet there have been no robust or reliable estimates of scale produced.

The Involvement of Serious Organised Crime Groups in Human Trafficking

- Intelligence indicates that Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs) are involved in human trafficking in Scotland and there is the potential for significant profits to be made from trafficking.
- The extent of the involvement of SOCGs in human trafficking in Scotland remains difficult to assess.
- Human trafficking has been reported through the SOCG mapping process by seven of the eight Scottish police forces, the UKBA and HMRC.

Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation

SOCGs in Scotland involved in organised prostitution are also known to have been involved in trafficking people for sexual exploitation. There is a greater quantity of intelligence held in Scotland in regards to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation than any other type, due to the fact victims are more likely to be observed during law enforcement activity. Victims of other forms of trafficking, or intelligence related to their circumstances, are less likely to come to the attention of law enforcement. The following key findings are based on the limited and often untested intelligence currently available to law enforcement in Scotland and the reliability of these findings should be understood appropriately with the intelligence grading.

- It is assessed that even if the cost to a customer of using a victim trafficked for sexual exploitation is less than the average cost of a sex worker, there is still a clear opportunity to gain considerable profits from trafficking individuals for sexual exploitation.
- One SOCG is reported to have operated 10 brothels with earnings from this enterprise estimated between £30,000 and £50,000 (GBP) per week. Tentative intelligence also provides that one SOCG spent £50,000 (GBP) in an eight-month period on advertising sexual services in one newspaper.
- It is estimated the profits accrued from one female sex worker can be in excess of £48,000 (GBP) per year which exceeds the price for purchasing a trafficking victim provided by intelligence.
- Information relating to how much of the prostitution market is controlled by serious organised crime and how these groups operate in relation to moving and controlling their workers represents an intelligence gap.

Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Labour Exploitation

Trafficking for forced labour remains an area with significant intelligence gaps. Research indicates it is the broadest and most varied form of trafficking as individuals can be trafficked for a wide variety of labour in a wide variety of legal or illegal industries. While trafficking for sexual exploitation is carried out to provide one type of service or commodity, labour exploitation can potentially involve a very large number of commodities and services across a wide variety of economic sectors.

- While the current intelligence picture is poor, it is assessed that there is considerable potential for this type of trafficking occurring within Scotland.
- Intelligence indicates 7 separate trafficking networks may have facilitated the trafficking of human beings for labour exploitation within Scotland from late 2009 to November 2010.
- It is assessed that those employed within the informal labour market, especially migrants, represent a population that are vulnerable to trafficking.
- It is assessed that Chinese and Vietnamese nationals without leave to remain in the UK represent a population which are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, though at present it is difficult to determine if trafficking is taking place.
- Intelligence from partner agencies indicates that trafficking in persons for the purpose of committing benefit fraud has been encountered in the United Kingdom. Historical intelligence also indicates individuals within Scotland have been active in this type of trafficking.
- Individuals are trafficked to work in legitimate industries, albeit under illegal conditions, but they are also trafficked for the purposes of exploiting them in criminal enterprises. Offending carried out by trafficked victims and their traffickers has included prostitution, theft, shoplifting and benefit fraud.

Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude

This area of human trafficking remains the most difficult for law enforcement to penetrate. Nonetheless, indications from cases in Scotland are corroborated by intelligence from across the UK and Europe and provide the following key findings.

- During 2009-2010, four separate modi operandi (MO) have been encountered by law enforcement in Scotland in relation to human trafficking for domestic servitude.
- Two of the four MOs have involved the trafficking of minors, though in both of these cases the exact age of the victim is unknown.
- Each of the four networks involved foreign nationals as perpetrators and in each case they were of the same nationality as the victims.

Child Trafficking

While the trafficking of children may also involve sexual and labour exploitation, it is generally discussed separately in literature relating to human trafficking.

- During the subject period, 18 children were referred to the NRM by Scottish agencies, though research has confirmed just one case in which the individual was the victim of trafficking into Scotland.
- The reasons why individuals emerge in Scotland who are suspected of having been trafficked elsewhere, most commonly England, are not fully understood.
- Open source research has indicated that young British females may be vulnerable to recruitment into prostitution by young males who become their boyfriends and use their influence to force them into prostitution

Key Themes Identified

Several key themes were highlighted in the report including:

- the challenge of obtaining intelligence related to ethnic minority SOCGs in Scotland
- problems with understanding trafficking and a lack of knowledge of the legislation in place to prohibit it
- the challenge of understanding the financial aspects of human trafficking and how the proceeds of this crime are laundered or sent out of the country

The report demonstrated that human trafficking in a variety of forms has been reported across many police force areas in Scotland, with several indicators of trafficking having been reported relating to all force areas. It is further highlighted that there are several populations and communities across Scotland that can be described as vulnerable to trafficking and therefore it is assessed that trafficking may be impacting on these communities. It is clear that there is the potential to earn considerable profits from human trafficking in Scotland and it is assessed it will be an area of criminality which continues to be attractive to both indigenous and non-indigenous SOCGs.

The report also highlighted several areas where current intelligence gathering and collation can be improved. It is assessed that this will lead to further improvements in the national intelligence picture and the overall response of Scottish law enforcement to tackling human trafficking as it is occurring across Scotland and impacting on Scottish communities.