

**WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
30 NOVEMBER 2017****HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF
CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES
(HMICFRS) INSPECTION REPORT - 'STOLEN
FREEDOM: THE POLICING RESPONSE TO MODERN
SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING'**

Recommendation

1. The West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) are invited to consider the HMICFRS' Inspection Report - 'Stolen Freedom: The Policing Response to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking', determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny or make any comments

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of the current approach taken by West Mercia Police to address modern day slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) and outline the proposed response to the recommendations set out in HMICFRS' recent report.

Context

3. Modern slavery can include human trafficking, slavery, forced labour and domestic servitude. This includes victims that have been brought from overseas and vulnerable people in the UK, being forced to illegally work against their will in different industries, including brothels, cannabis farms, nail bars and farms.
4. The number of MSHT victims is believed to be higher than official estimates as many victims are unwilling or unable to report it. Within West Mercia since January 2017 to date there have been 34 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for West Mercia and 37 modern slavery crimes recorded for West Mercia.

West Mercia's approach

5. The force has a strategic lead at Detective Superintendent level, a Detective Inspector acts as a tactical lead, supported by a 'Threat Desk' within the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB). This includes a Detective Sergeant and a Field Intelligence Officer who are subject matter experts.
6. FIB currently monitor and review incidents, crimes and intelligence reports and provide advice either as part of pre-planned operations or live incidents. FIB also support national operations, such as Project Aidant – which is a week of intensification each month driven by the National Crime Agency (NCA).

7. Training in Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) is currently provided on a variety of courses and is being delivered by an experienced Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) and subject matter experts. At this training MSHT legislation is covered, local examples provided and other aspects of vulnerability referenced.

8. FIB put on a very successful Modern Slavery Awareness Conference, in March 2017. There were a variety of speakers, including representation from the National Police Chief Council (NPCC), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), NCA and Gangmaster & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). They all provided an overview of MSHT within their organisations, opportunities for joint working and real life examples.

9. The thematic leads and Threat Desk staff has developed strong working relationships with partner agencies and NGOs to improve Information flow and joint working.

10. The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) has commissioned MSHT Local Problem Profiles to be created by January 2018, similar to the Serious Organised Crime Profiles. These will be supplied to each local policing area to assist with partnership working and linking into Adult and Child Safeguarding Boards and Crime Safety Partnerships (CSP's).

HMICFRS Inspection findings

11. HMICFRS undertook its inspection between November 2016 and March 2017. To inform the inspection, all forces in England and Wales including West Mercia were required to submit certain data, documents and a self-assessment to HMICFRS. Additionally, ten forces were subject to an onsite inspection and further scrutiny. West Mercia were not one of these ten forces

12. In October 2017 HMICFRS published its findings into the police's response to the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in England and Wales. This is a national thematic report and as such there are no specific force reports. A copy of the report is attached at appendix A

13. The report sets out eleven recommendations for crime agencies to consider when improving their response to the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Seven of the recommendations are specific to all police forces.

West Mercia's response to the recommendations

14. The Force has considered the recommendations set out in the inspection report. Outlined below are all the recommendations and the force response to them.

Leadership

15. Within six months, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) should assure themselves that their roles and responsibilities in tackling the organised crime groups linked to modern slavery and human trafficking at a national and international level are clear and understood by all law enforcement agencies.

16. Within twelve months, forces should review their leadership and governance arrangements for modern slavery and human trafficking, to ensure that:

- Senior leaders prioritise the response to modern slavery and human trafficking;
- Every incident of modern slavery identified to police is allocated appropriate resources with the skills, experience and capacity to investigate it effectively;
- Forces develop effective partnership arrangements to co-ordinate activity in order to share information and safeguard victims; and
- Performance and quality assurance measures are in place to allow senior leaders to assess the nature and quality of the service provided to victims.

Force Response:

Modern Slavery Human Trafficking is currently a Priority on the Alliance Control Strategy.

West Mercia Police has a Strategic Lead, Tactical Lead and a Threat Desk within FIB with subject matter experts

Relevant Leads attend the Regional MSHT Strategic Governance Group meetings.

Officers have been identified from Local Policing Areas to attend the College of Policing accredited Modern Slavery Specialist Investigator Course.

Along with working alongside LPA Safeguarding Boards West Mercia Police is considering setting up an Anti-Slavery Network. However, at the same time West Mercia Police are also considering the option / benefits of joining the established West Midlands Police Anti-Slavery Network. A current concern of joining the West Midlands Police Network would likely be a financial implication to each PCC and likelihood of this network remaining West Midlands centric because of its demand profile.

The local MSHT problem profiles will allow local Superintendents to work with their safeguarding boards and deepen joint multi-agency working.

All SIOs have been advised to follow the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) which sets out a clear methodology for officers to follow when conducting an investigation into MSHT.

FIB are currently creating a Dashboard for a variety of audiences, detailing key performance information.

In recognition of Modern Slavery Human Trafficking sitting within the Vulnerability arena, consideration is being given to the transference of thematic lead from Supt Intel to Supt Vulnerability– this is due to the closer working and synergy to the safeguarding boards.

This approach would allow the Intelligence Lead / Thematic Desk to focus on the MSHT intelligence requirements which are currently Red RAG rated.

Intelligence

17. Within six months, the NCA should have a process in place to maximise the use of all the data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify forms (where they contain actionable intelligence), and include within this steps to ensure that:

- all NRM forms submitted by partner agencies are developed and appropriately forwarded to relevant forces as soon as possible to ensure that identified victims are flagged up and investigations can commence, with a clear audit process to show how and when they have been assessed and shared; and
- all NRM forms are compiled in a format that is accurate, searchable, and enables the assessment of information for intelligence purposes.

18. Within six months, forces should have in place active information-sharing agreements with other agencies to facilitate speedy exchange of intelligence and in order to safeguard victims better and to identify suspects as early as possible.

Force Response:

All NRM forms are currently being sent into the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) who triage and ensure the forms are sent for investigation / crime recording.

Modern Slavery is on the Control Strategy and each operation is reported on within the current taking process. The Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) and Officers in Case (OICs) provide regular updates as to the progress and / or support requirements.

The Intelligence Requirements have been refreshed (July 2017) and tasking has been requested of each LPA to fill these requirements.

West Mercia Police commissioned a Threat Assessment of MSHT and as a result the strategic lead has created a delivery plan.

A partnership information sharing document is being developed by the West Midlands Region, and , as long as it's fit for purpose West Mercia Police will utilise the document to share intelligence with partners.

FIB are currently developing a data sharing agreement, which can be signed up to by all relevant partner agencies.

Force and local tasking have been redesigned to ensure there is a clear thread between the Alliance and local priorities. Modern Slavery Intelligence Requirements feature from force to local tasking. Now that local intelligence units manage the live briefing pages these requirements can more easily be translated into actionable tasking for LPA officers / staff going forward. This process will mean the intelligence requirements are being fulfilled and will also contribute to more focused and meaningful intelligence submissions.

The Strategic Lead has also consulted with the office of the PCC, who has offered support to create the MSHT Local Problem Profiles.

Victim identification and initial response

19. Immediately, forces should ensure that all victims carrying out criminal acts under compulsion attributable to slavery or exploitation are afforded the protection of early and continuing consideration of the applicability of the section 45 defence.

20. Immediately, forces should take steps to ensure they are fully compliant with the NRM process as it evolves and are implementing the requirement placed upon them under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to notify the Home Office of any individual suspected to be an adult victim of modern slavery or human trafficking.

Force Response:

FIB is currently raising the awareness of Section 45 to all SIOs and Custody Facilities. Furthermore FIB are in liaison with CPS and other forces as to whether a document exists to serve on the solicitors of potential victims to ensure they are aware of the defence. If a document does not exist, FIB will look to develop one.

FIB monitor and review incidents, crimes and intelligence reports to ensure potential victims are identified at the earliest opportunity, but also that the relevant crime is raised and NRM / MS1 process is followed.

FIB currently applies PNC Markers to all victims and suspects of Modern Slavery and also applies the same markers to our local systems.

Crime recording

21. Immediately, forces should take steps to ensure they fully comply with national crime recording standard (NCRS) requirements for offences identified as modern slavery and human trafficking and that sufficient audit capacity is available to the force crime registrar to provide reassurance that each force is identifying and managing any gaps in its crime-recording accuracy for these types of offences.

Force Response:

FIB monitor and review incidents, crimes and intelligence reports to ensure potential victims are identified at the earliest opportunity, but also that the relevant crime is raised and NRM / MS1 process is followed.

The Force Crime Registrar incorporates Modern Slavery into the Audit & Assurance schedule as a thematic audit having regard for the Home Office Data Quality Assurance Manual tests. Findings are reported to the ACC Local Policing for executive oversight and direction. On a more tactical and operational level, inaccuracies are shared with Crime Data Integrity (CDI) SPOCS (C/Insp level), on local policing areas for correction and shared learning with themes discussed at the bi-monthly CDI tactical group meeting chaired by Head of Analysis & Service Improvement.

Investigation

22. Immediately, forces should ensure that allegations or indications of modern slavery and human trafficking are thoroughly investigated and effectively supervised by teams and individuals with the skills and experience to undertake them (this should include the use where appropriate of joint intelligence teams and other means to obtain intelligence and evidence from agencies overseas).

Force Response:

West Mercia Police have identified nominees to attend the College of Policing MS Specialist Investigators course to improve effectiveness of investigation and increase advisory resilience to front line staff.

West Mercia Police also promote the use of the APP, and its key actions to use when dealing with a MSHT investigation.

For all MSHT investigations FIB will run all victim and suspect identities via the SIENA system, a Europol Intelligence System.

The tactical lead currently provides advice and support to investigators and access to NCA MSHT Tac Advisors is also available.

Furthermore, if there is any crime in action relating to MSHT there is 24/7 advice available from Specialist Ops Support.

The thematic lead / Threat Desk utilise the MSHTU on a regular basis, this relationship was developed greatly due to a West Mercia Police Officer being seconded to the team. This officer has now become an NCA officer with the unit.

FIB and Operational Planning are currently working up a plan to ensure Reception Centre across all areas will be available, as and when required.

Prevention

23. Immediately, forces should review their use of preventative powers under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to ensure that opportunities to restrict the activities of those deemed to pose a clear threat to others in respect of modern slavery and human trafficking offences are exploited.

Force Response:

FIB are in the process of raising the awareness of prevention powers with SIOs.

FIB are exploring opportunities with Organised Crime prevention orders and all relevant MSHT orders with CPS and Force Legal.

Learning

24. Within twelve months, the College of Policing should ensure that forces are provided with high-quality, legally-validated learning products on modern slavery and human trafficking, in order to raise awareness and capability among all frontline staff.

25. Within twelve months, the College of Policing should work to improve knowledge and expertise in investigators up to senior investigating officer level, drawing on the experiences of all police forces. This should include improved understanding of the use of joint intelligence teams (JITs) and other means to obtain intelligence and evidence from agencies overseas, and the use of preventative orders.

Force Response:

The College of Policing have released two approved MSHT courses. Firstly they have a 2.5 hours awareness course, aimed at front line officers. West Mercia have sent 2 Learning & Development Trainers on this course, who are now able to provide this training.

The second course the College of Policing has approved is the Modern Slavery Specialist Investigator course. This is a 4 days course aimed at DC / DS level who will provide advice and / or be the OIC for a MSHT investigation.

Officers have been identified from Local Policing Areas to attend the College of Policing accredited Modern Slavery Specialist Investigator Course.

The Transformation Team are currently developing an SIO CPD style input, which West Mercia will send officers to.

Furthermore the Transformation Team have developed a series of Roadshows detailing best practice and a local context. West Mercia Police will send officers.

The FIB and Vulnerability Intranet pages have been developed and relevant information / links are provided on the web pages for guidance.

The PCC's Responsibilities

26. The PCC has a specific duty to respond to the Home Secretary when HMICFRS publish force inspection reports. Whilst this duty does not extend to national thematic reports, the PCC still has a responsibility hold the Chief Constable to account and provide reassurance to the community.

27. In relation to this inspection report the PCC has published a media release in response to the report. Ongoing oversight of the force response will be via one of the core groups established to address all HMICFRS inspection recommendations and the Service Improvement Board.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – 'Stolen freedom the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking' (HMICFRS October 2017)

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal & Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)