



08000 121 700

Modern Slavery Helpline Advisory Group Meeting - Minutes

21 May 2018; 2:00pm-3:30pm

Attending:

Patrick Burland (IOM)
Catherine Baker (ECPAT)
Phillipa Roberts (Hope for Justice)
James Simmonds-Read (Children's Society)
Stefan Stoyanov (UNICEF)
Euan Fraser (Human Trafficking Foundation)
Oli Lurie (Modern Slavery Helpline, Unseen)
Rachel Harper (RH) - Chair (Modern Slavery Helpline, Unseen)

Apologies: Migrant Help; Sophie Hayes Foundation

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Helpline Operations Overview and Statistics

2017 Annual Assessment. All advisory members had previously been notified in April 2018 when the 2017 Annual Assessment was published. RH offered high-level numbers from the assessment and invited feedback. Overview offered included high-level facts, such as over 3,000 calls, over 1,000 modern slavery cases, almost 5,000 potential victims indicated with 94 different nationalities reported. RH highlighted that the report offered information as to type of MS, as well as chapters focusing on: labour exploitation with a breakdown by sector, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation. RH highlighted that control methods and vulnerabilities were also included in the report for the first time.

Members asked if longer term outcomes were known or could be known, as to what PVs enter the NRM and information regarding the well-being or situation of PVs post NRM services. RH informed that the MSHRC usually does not receive or have access to outcomes *after* the NRM or weeks to months after calls to the Helpline, in part due to capacity of longer term case management from the helpline and also in part due to the lack of access to safely acquire/access that information. The MSHRC does document when an NRM application is made and the relevant first responder when known, as well as when an adult PV does not want the NRM and why – so that we can grow data around obstacles for PVs in entering the NRM.

Q1 2018 report. An early draft of the Quarter One 2018 report was shared, highlighting that there would be a focus on criminal exploitation this quarter, and that a few MS cases caused a spike in number of PVs indicated.

Expansion and growth. RH shared that the helpline had recently welcomed a full-time Helpline Communications officer, that recruitment for Helpline Advisers had continued with upcoming training, that the MSHRC is now a team of approx. 20 staff.



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III. New/Upcoming projects

Unseen App. RH announced that the Unseen phone/tablet App is to be released this summer, which will allow direct submissions of reports via the app, into an encrypted database for quick review and response by the Helpline Advisers.

Thematic reports. RH announced upcoming thematic reports to include 1) a report on Scotland, in line with the annual review of the Scottish strategy, and 2) a report on car washes.

IV. NRM digitisation

RH informed the Group that Unseen is attending meetings regarding NRM digitisation. Repeatedly, the MSHRC has seen that communications as to the process or status of an NRM application or next steps is not reaching the PV. RH informed the Group that the MSHRC has asked for access to the future digital system to see the status of a PV's NRM application when a PV calls and consents to such search, or when a PV needs information; the MSHRC is not seeking full access to all NRM records at this time.

First responder status. Again, discussion included that the MSHRC is not currently acting as a nationwide first responder, filing in NRM applications over the phone, in part because the need for a physical signature for the PV is prohibitive and in part because the MSHRC strives to facilitate an in-person NRM interview, as the first choice. Members (Hope for Justice) agreed that interviews need to be in-person, that a geographical spread is needed of first responders, with more NGO first responders. MSHRC acknowledged that it is a struggle to find first responders for in-person interviews, especially as PVs commonly are not comfortable interviewing with police initially and that any reform that necessitates interviews with/by police to access the NRM would be incomplete and serve as an obstacle to PVs accessing services.

Discussion around knowledge gaps: RH shared that the MSHRC regularly offers technical support to first responders who may not realise they are first responders and are not aware of the NRM and/or Duty to Notify, where applicable. Members (Hope for Justice and Children's Society) shared this experience within their remits and requested that the MSHRC be vocal with policy makers and in the field generally, as to knowledge gaps, needs for trainings- and ultimately obstacles for PVs' identification and NRM applications. Children Society especially noted lack of knowledge around reconsiderations and judicial review of NRM decisions.

V. Obstacles

The MSHRC has recently received an increase in cases involving criminal exploitation of UK national minors and difficulties by Local Authorities and police to safeguard the minor and provide services away from the potential exploiters.

The Children's Society urged the importance of considering the safeguarding approach for such children on a case by case basis to look at the full range of tools which can be utilised and any protective factors in place. STROs and STPOs can prove helpful in protecting children from gangs however moving children and even whole families may also be necessary where they are at risk of violence.



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The Children's Society will shortly be launching a new service in three areas of the UK, including London. This will support both internationally and internally trafficked YP who have experienced CCE and CSE and will focus on systems change in disrupting and preventing exploitation. It will include a combination of casework, therapy and intelligence gathering. Further details will follow soon.

VI. Collaboration for communications, number visibility

Throughout the meeting the impact of collaboration around communications and the Helpline number was discussed. OL provided examples of successful collaboration with partners on communications, such as with the NCA, Home Office, Scotland, Stop the Traffic, A21 and others. When partners point to the Helpline number and as campaigns and awareness grows, calls and webforms into the Helpline continue to increase. RH stressed that if a PV has only one number to call and it is for an office or program which is not 24/7, that PV is potentially left more vulnerable, on a Saturday afternoon, for example. The helpline number is crucial, in part, to serve as a central hub for the UK and facilitate production and sharing of free publications, aggregate data. Listing the Helpline number in communication, awareness efforts is also invaluable as the MSHRC is able to respond nationally, but also because it is free, confidential and 24/7.

Children's Society discussed the choice to not use 'slavery' when addressing minors. The MSHRC agrees, and materials for teens and minors uses terminology of 'abuse' and 'exploitation.'

Briefly the group discussed the best way to communicate with minors. As the MSHRC needs a system in which all written, text-like messages can be received and fielded by the Adviser on duty, versus a specific mobile/case worker, the MSHRC is still researching the most secure, feasible way to offer free, written instant messaging correspondence.

VII. Scheduling of next meeting and expected subsequent communications

The next meeting will be in September, likely in London. All members are welcome to attend the office in Bedfordshire in the future, for a meeting or individual visits.