

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION NEWSLETTER

Operation Heathyard - West Lothian 2nd December 2016

Led by officers in West Lothian and supported by partners including West Lothian Council, National Crime Agency and Greater Manchester Police. The operation involved males from Slovenia being trafficked for the purposes of labour exploitation and forced criminality. Four Slovenian nationals were arrested at addresses in Livingston, Bathgate and Salford and were charged with human trafficking offences.

A reception centre was established by the National Human Trafficking Unit, Migrant Help and NCA Victim Team.

Operation Synopsis - Day of action - 9th February 2017

This is an ongoing investigation, involving Police Scotland, the Metropolitan Police and the Slovakian Police. The operation relates to the trafficking of a number of Slovakian females aged approximately 18-25 years of age, who have been trafficked from Slovakia to the UK for the purposes of sham marriages.

Between 9th and 13th February 2017, all agencies carried out enforcement operations to trace and arrest suspects in Scotland and Slovakia.

The Glasgow aspect of the operation took place on Thursday 9th February 2017, four addresses were searched, four Slovakian nationals and one Nepalese male, were detained. Home Office Immigration Enforcement, Slovakian Police officers and the Europol mobile office supported the operation. The arrested persons appeared at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 10th February 2017, charged with offences under Asylum and Immigration Act and Organised Crime.

On 13th February 2017, four further males were arrested in Slovakia and have since appeared in court there in relation to Human Trafficking offences.

For more information please contact human.trafficking@gov.scot
04 October 2017

Precious, 19, is from West Africa and was trafficked for domestic servitude and prostitution.

After her dad died, Precious was physically abused by her step mother and was sexually assaulted by her step mother's partner.

Precious was trafficked for domestic servitude twice before she was ten and after trying to escape on several occasions she was groomed by a woman who eventually would traffick her to the UK.

Precious said: "The woman who sent me to the UK made me get my eyebrows and a beauty spot tattooed on my face to make me look older. I was then escorted to the airport and then travelled alone to the UK. I was given a letter and money and a number to call, and I was then transported to a house in London where I was raped.

"I was told I would need to do prostitution for three years in order to pay off my debt so after this I was taken by the traffickers to parties and clubs across the UK including London, Manchester and Glasgow.

"This continued for years and at the age of 17 it was arranged for me to come to Glasgow but at this point I was pregnant and scared that I would die during childbirth as this is what happened to my mum.

"One day I managed to escape the house in Glasgow and get help from the police where I disclosed my real age. The police put me in touch with TARA who provided me with a place of safety and also helped me get access to ante natal care and social services.

"Thankfully I now live independently with my children, I'm in a healthy relationship and I hope one day to be able to return to education - I'm just so glad I have now escaped my nightmare and can get on with my life."

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“Proactively combating human trafficking is something Scotland should pride itself on. Police Scotland and Border Force officials in the region have successfully rescued victims and identified perpetrators. The operations outlined in this newsletter demonstrate commendable commitment, professionalism and hard work in tackling trafficking. I look forward to the next newsletter to learn more about the positive work taking place in Scotland”.

Kevin Hyland Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

Operation Acervose - Monday 15th May 2017

A further multi-agency action day to raise awareness of human trafficking and to identify and recover potential trafficking victims was conducted. Around 500 officers including 50 from partner agencies visited 80 premises and locations in all 13 geographical divisions of Scotland including fisheries, car washes and nail bars. This formed part of a National Crime Agency coordinated, ongoing response to the threat of modern slavery and human trafficking across the UK. During the multi-agency operation a child aged 15, who displayed indicators of trafficking, was found working in a nail bar. Police Scotland officers were supported by colleagues from HM Revenue and Customs, Immigration Enforcement, British Transport Police and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

Joint Investigation Teams

Police Scotland are currently participating in four JIT's, three of which are with Romania in relation to trafficking for the purposes of prostitution and one with Slovakia in relation to Sham marriages.

Disrupting Perpetrators Activity - Border Force

In August 2017, Border Force Officials at Glasgow Airport dealt with 19 cases where there were safeguarding concerns about individuals who were traveling from Romania to Scotland. 12 individuals¹ were refused entry due to concerns that they were potential victims of trafficking and vulnerable to exploitation. One individual was assessed as being a potential trafficker: The individual claimed to have been to the UK 10 times in the last 10 years and usually travelled into Doncaster or Luton. He stayed for 2 months at a time and found casual work for cash in hand. He claimed to be staying in a B&B but could not provide details. The individual claimed he was travelling with his high school student girlfriend of 6 months and treating her to the trip as a birthday present. The individual was with a young Romanian female who had been refused admission due to safeguarding concerns. The individual was refused entry due to suspect intentions in the UK and tenuous link to accompanying female.

Border Force liaise with the Romanian Consulate and NGO Groups if any nationals are refused entry due to safeguarding concerns.

¹ The other 7 cases were not deemed as victims after thorough investigations and checks were carried out.