

**REPORT TO POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
26th March 2021**

THEMED ITEM - EXPLOITATION

**Report Title: Exploitation – preventing Modern Slavery / Forced
Marriage / Honour-based Crime**

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Panel's themed item of 'Exploitation' is a wide-ranging topic. The Panel has requested a background report from the PCC on exploitation, with specific reference to the prevention of modern slavery, forced marriage and honour-based crime.
- 1.2 From the PCC's perspective, the theme of 'exploitation prevention' primarily relates to two of the strategic priorities set out in his Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021, being:
 - Strategic Priority 1, 'Vulnerability' (which includes the response by police and partners to human trafficking, forced marriages, FGM, CSE and other hidden harm such as honour-based violence, coercive control, stalking and harassment).
[A detailed progress update on the PCC's delivery of this strategic priority was reported to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) at its previous meeting held on 29 January 2021]
 - Strategic Priority 2, 'Prevention and Early Intervention' (which includes the prevention of CSE and FGM).
[A detailed progress update on the PCC's delivery of this strategic priority was reported to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) at its recent meeting held on 20 November 2020]

2 Information

Modern Slavery / People Trafficking

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is an infographic ('Overview of Modern Slavery in the Thames Valley – 2019') which provides a picture of activity for all of 2019 (not the period '1 July to 30 September' as incorrectly stated above the table). The Infographic includes data from police, NRM (National Referral Mechanism)

referrals, and data from Willow (a service supporting victims of exploitation of all types that funded by the OPCC).

2.2 Attached at Appendix 2 is a short presentation by the OPCC to the 'Modern Slavery National Networking Meeting' held on 1 October 2019. This summarises PCC activity in this service area and how our thinking has evolved since 2014. This resulted in the Independent Trauma Advisors (ITA) pilot services to begin with, followed by the Victims First 'Willow Project'. In turn, this was followed by the new Victims First Specialist Service launched in April 2020.

(The above two documents can be found on the OPCC website using the '[Search Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner](#)' facility).

2.3 Thames Valley Police (TVP) continues to have a strong Thames Valley Anti-Slavery Partnership, sharing national best practice regarding Modern Slavery. Coercive control, stalking and harassment have been a focus and, as such, SaVE3 training has been delivered across the Force. This includes improved crime recording for stalking and harassment offences.

2.4 The latest TVP Modern Slavery data that is available relates to Q2 2020/21 (July to Sept 2020):

- 93 referrals made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from TVP in Q2, up slightly from the previous two quarters (which were 90 (Q1) and 79 (Q4)). Of the 93 referrals, 47 were under the age of 18 years. 68 referrals were male.
- 63 of the 93 referrals made to the NRM were for criminal exploitation, 15 for forced labour and 5 for sexual exploitation. Numbers were similar in previous quarter for criminal exploitation but in Q1 only 5 referrals were made for forced labour and 19 referrals for sexual exploitation.
- In Q2, 25 referrals were made to the PCC's specialist service, Victims First Specialist Service (VFSS), which deals with all forms of exploitation. 17 of these were from Berkshire and 7 were from Slough. VFSS has reported a distinct drop in referrals for exploitation since the Covid pandemic began, which is cause for concern but may be due to the drop in operational work by TVP during the lockdown periods (i.e. fewer warrants executed for exploitation/modern slavery which, normally, VFSS would attend and support).
- 136 intelligence reports were submitted on Modern Slavery in the quarter, compared to 93 in the previous quarter.

2.5 In addition, in December 2020 TVP had around 200 active investigations and are setting up a new investigation scrutiny panel. In respect of 'Immigration Crime', TVP is one of eight pilot forces, with Home Office funding available until the end of March, to raise awareness and improve training. Training is set up for first responders and consideration is being given to the creation of a modern slavery victim liaison officer on each LPA. TVP had its first arrest for organised immigration crime in December.

Forced Marriage, Hidden Harm and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

2.6 All victims of these types of crime are supported through OPCC commissioned services and the 'Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee' (BAMER) project was particularly focussed on engaging and raising awareness around such crime types/victims.

BAMER Project

2.7 In 2018, the Thames Valley PCC was awarded funds by the Home Office 'Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG) Transformation Fund to support a two-year project focusing on Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women across the Thames valley region covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. This BAMER Project was developed in response to low take-up of some VAWG specialist services by BAMER women, and aimed to make such services across the Thames Valley more inclusive of the needs of, and considerate of the barriers faced by, the BAMER population. Within the scope of this project is Forced Marriage, Hidden Harm and FGM.

2.8 The **aims** of the BAMER Project were to:

- Assess, improve and better coordinate the multi-agency response to VAWG in BAMER communities across the region.
- Map localised knowledge and networks to facilitate systemic change, and to provide a robust evidence base to inform future commissioning and support third sector grant applications.
- Improve awareness of VAWG issues in Thames Valley's BAMER communities; engaging and empowering these communities to identify and challenge these abuses, and to ensure they know where and how to access timely and appropriate support.
- Ensure the needs of Thames Valley's BAMER communities experiencing VAWG are met through improved and better informed service provision and pathways.

This work was driven by the assumption that early intervention and awareness-raising work will also increase the number of individuals from BAMER communities identified as being affected by VAWG.

2.9 Thames Valley Police (TVP) continues to maintain a focus on coercive control, stalking and harassment. As such, the 'Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Exploitation' (SaVE3) programme training has been delivered across the Force, including improved crime recording for stalking and harassment offences. TVP also commissioned Domestic Abuse Matters training from January to June 2020 which had a specific focus on coercive control.

2.10 TVP has prepared guidance, correct processes and communications for the introduction of Stalking Protection Orders. The implementation of these initiatives and increased awareness around the Force improved the service to victims of stalking and harassment.

2.11 The College of Policing has also provided a number of training tools for delivery at a local level to educate police officers around stalking and harassment and the Stalking Protection Orders.

2.12 At the time of writing, no updated statistical information concerning forced marriage and honour-based crime is readily available. If additional information does become available in the interim, I will report this at the PCP meeting itself. Otherwise, I will provide updates on these items at a future PCP meeting.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

2.13 PCC activity in relation to CSE has largely been around ensuring support for victims. The OPCC has also invested in counselling services (unlike many other PCC areas) and a large number of those individuals entering counselling are historical CSE/Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) victims.

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