

EVALUATION OF A NEW MODEL FOR IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY AND EXPLOITATION

The UK has witnessed year on year increases in the number of identified victims of modern day slavery. This does not necessarily mean this crime is increasing, but it is more likely to reflect advances in our response to this crime through identifying victims and recognizing exploitation more readily. One contributing factor in the most recent rise could be attributed to the development and introduction of the Modern Slavery Bill (2015) which recognises human slavery as a crime in itself.

It is widely acknowledged that the increased ability to identify victims has necessitated the careful consideration of the support and service needs of these victims. In response to this Thames Valley have piloted the role of 'Independent Trauma Advisors' (ITAs) to work with this group of victims to facilitate their access to services with a view to both ensuring their safety and enhancing their long-term well-being. The HMICFRS report released in October 2017, *Stolen Freedom: The police response to modern slavery and human trafficking*, encouraged police forces to give greater consideration to the vulnerability of victims, to recognise their victim-status and to adopt a more proactive approach towards these crimes.

The Thames Valley ITA pilot project was initially seed-funded by Thames Valley's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Based on encouraging findings and a positive response to the trial from partner agencies, the Thames Valley PCC placed a successful bid to the Police Innovation Fund which provided Home Office funding for further development and evaluation of the model from early April 2015 to end March 2017. The evaluation was undertaken by Dr Nadia Wager and Angel Wager from the University of Bedfordshire (now at University of Huddersfield). This summary provides an overview of five reports produced by the researchers.

The first report provided an overview of existing literature on forms of Modern Slavery, which was a relatively new offence when this project began. The next two empirical reports were undertaken to develop estimates of the extent of the problem of Modern Slavery in Thames Valley and to determine a methodology and estimate of the cost-benefits of the emerging Thames Valley model using case studies from the early phase of the ITA pilots. Finally key learning and recommendations from the interim and final reports, which have been redacted due to the sensitive material they contain, are presented. To conclude, the summary outlines next steps for the Thames Valley PCC are outlined. The first three reports are published in full on the website of the PCC for Thames Valley at xxxx.

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1. Investigating Modern Slavery: A Literature review

This document provides a summary of recent literature on Modern Slavery, covering topics such as policing in relation to trafficking, including child sex trafficking, forced labour, and some of the difficulties in engaging victims in the criminal justice process.

Key points identified from the literature include:-

- Law enforcers can find it difficult to identify victims of human trafficking as a result of some laws being relatively new and untested, and uncertainty about the evidential standards required to support the decision to prosecute or obtain a successful prosecution.
- Victims often do not recognise their own victim status, can sometimes be involved in illegal behaviour themselves, or fear reprisal from perpetrators, all of which may contribute to a lack of willingness to report concerns.
- The majority of victims who come to police attention do so as a result of tip-offs from community members, service providers or other professionals.
- Child sex trafficking can be described through an exploitative cycle involving a number of stages of grooming. Understanding this cycle can help generate several possible intervention points prior to the commission of the abuse.
- Initial police contact and treatment of victims is a significant factor in determining the success of the investigation; balancing victims immediate needs and concerns with the needs of the investigation.
- When contact with the police is mediated by other organisations or services, or a victims are not pressured into providing too much information too quickly, victim engagement in the criminal justice process is more likely.

2. Estimating the Extent of Modern Slavery in Thames Valley

Existing estimates of the extent of modern slavery have not been based on primary research in the UK. Rather the figures that are currently used are extrapolated from a survey of outward international trafficking conducted in five Eastern European countries to provide a figure for the UK. The consequence of this is that the figures currently in use may not be representative of the true extent of the problem.

A new model and formula is presented in this report that will allow for the annual assessment of the extent of, and official response to, modern slavery. The model is a development of one proposed by Aronowitz (2010). The first estimate is based on data drawn from criminal justice figures and the second estimate is based on the number of victims seeking/ being referred to/ or identified by, specialist services.

The most conservative estimate based on criminal justice figures suggests that in the year 2016 there were likely to be 533 victims of modern slavery in the Thames Valley region. Using data from service providers the estimated number of victims in Thames

Valley in 2016 was 2,462 victims. Overall, using 2016 NRM referral figures, it appears that 3 per 10,000 population, or xxx people, are recognised as being victims of modern slavery in the Thames Valley region.

Recommendations of this report are that data that was not available at the time this research was undertaken (e.g. Duty to Notify figures) may be useful for refining future calculations. It is also recommended that a regional randomised community survey is conducted in order to establish an empirical basis for the calculation of the hidden figure of victimisation. A suggested methodology and questions are provided.

3. Cost benefit analysis of the ITA pilots in Thames Valley

The estimated proximate costs to society arising from the 26 clients supported by the ITA service between March 2015 and January 2016 (10 months of operation) totalled £3,047,283.76. The conservative, total estimated projected savings for these clients as a result of intervention by the ITA service was £443,201.95. In comparison, the total cost of running the ITA services for this 10-month period was £132,274.01.

Overall and taking a very conservative estimate, if all the other activities of the ITA service (e.g. promotion, tracking the movement of those who are being sexually exploited, awareness raising, training of partner organisations, assisting on brothel raids etc.) are left out of the calculations and the whole cost of the ITA service is divided by the 26 clients who received a substantive service it is estimated that for every pound spent on the service £3.35 could be saved from the public purse.

4. Interim Evaluation Report on the Thames Valley ITA Project

This report provided an initial process evaluation of the two pilot ITA pilots in Oxford and Reading based on a review 26 victims' cases. The findings were used to inform further development of the project.

Early key findings were:-

1. Early on in the ITA pilots, there were three distinct service pathways identified for victims (self-referrals, referrals via the Probation Service and referrals from other projects within the two provider organisations) which have implications for service provision and the outcomes that might be expected.
2. The group of people recognised as potential victims through police raids are those who are least likely to engage in services or are able to extricate themselves from the exploitative situation. Indeed, some go on to become exploiters themselves.

3. Referral patterns in the two pilot areas reflected their patterns of training delivery to other organisations. Referrals were notably made for organisations who had often just recently undertaken training.

5. Final Evaluation Report on the Thames Valley ITA Project

Across the two years of the project, 145 identified or potential victims were referred to and/or assessed by the ITA services, some of whom also received crisis support during police raids. This figure is in close proximity to the key deliverable pledged in the Police Innovation Fund bid, which was that 150 victims should receive support. A total of 59 victims of modern slavery engaged with and received significantly longer-term support from the ITA workers.

Overall, across the two years there has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified and referred to the services.

In the second year of operation, the ITA services had a greater number of referrals for men, which is partly related to the growth in the number of victims of forced labour who had been identified. This has led to increasing gender equivalence in relation to the clients supported by the ITAs.

The greatest proportion of referrals were in relation to UK citizens. The second largest country of origin is Romania and this relates both to victims of sexual exploitation (females) and forced commercial labour (men).

Overall there were fewer cases of sexual exploitation in the second year, even though this remains the leading form of exploitation.

There was a significant increase in the number of cases of forced labour in year 2 compared to the first year of the pilots, which included both commercial labour and forced criminality. This might be related to the rise in the number of identified cases of cuckooing, particularly in the context of forced criminality.

Less than 50% of the engaged clients had experienced any form of trafficking. This fact is important as it highlights how erroneous it is to conflate modern day slavery with trafficking. Trafficking is one process that might be used by the perpetrators of modern day slavery, rather than defining the experience of all victims.

Most victims experience more than one form of exploitation and this does not include other crimes that might be committed against them during their period of enslavement.

The duration of support provided to individual clients across the two services ranged from 1 day to 18 months, with averages of 3.5 months for Project B's clients and 9 months for Project A's clients.

Many of the perpetrators were lone individuals or couples (e.g. 'friends', private landlords and family members). Although there have also been cases where the perpetrators are gangs involved in drug-dealing and violence.

The number and range of referral pathways into the ITA service also significantly increased in the second year in comparison to the first year. The police remain the overall most common source of referrals.

There was an incremental increase in the number of referrals from Thames Valley to the National Referral Mechanism over the three years in which this project was first initiated through PCC seed-funding. In 2013 there were 12 NRM referrals, which increased to 23 in 2014, 36 in 2015 and 80 in 2016.

The mean percentage change in the number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism across all UK police force areas in 2016 compared with 2015 was a 63.53% increase (95% CI [24.46 – 102.60], SD =123.79). The range of scores spanned from a 61.5% decline in referrals from Wiltshire to a 633% increase in referrals from Dorset.

The rate of referrals in the Thames Valley region rose by 122.2% in 2016 in comparison to the previous year. Since this is higher than the upper limit of the 95% Confidence Interval for the mean score for the rest of England and Wales this suggests that the increase in the rate of referral for Thames Valley is considerably higher.

A 'Barriers Meeting', which was attended by a range of partner agencies was held after the first year of operation once a variety of persistent barriers to meeting the clients' needs had been identified. This meeting helped to clarify expectations regarding the nature and the time scales in which service providers could realistically operate. This was helpful for the ITAs in being able to relay a greater level of certainty to the clients about processes and what they can expect to happen to them, particularly for those who enter in to the NRM.

Next Steps

This summary of the ITA projects and their evaluation highlights a number of issues for consideration by the OPCC and other partner agencies:-

1. Better estimates of the extent of Modern Slavery within the Thames Valley are required in order to build a proportionate response. A regular community

survey in Thames Valley could improve the intelligence picture as well as estimates of the rate of Modern Slavery in the region.

2. In-depth police knowledge and understanding of Modern Slavery is required to increase the rate of successful prosecution for this crime.
3. Third party reporting is an important route for bringing potential Modern Slavery victims to police attention. Public awareness and understanding of the signs of Modern Slavery, as well as opportunities to make 3rd party reports, should be enhanced.
4. Improved training and awareness across public, third and private sector will also improve opportunities for 3rd Party Reporting and early intervention.
5. Early involvement of appropriate support agencies, preferably alongside police during the initial contact with victims, is likely to increase victim engagement.
6. Improved understanding across all statutory agencies of the potential savings from early intervention in cases of suspected Modern Slavery may improve partnership working and investment in support and prevention services.
7. Targeted communications campaigns should be used to encourage reporting among key groups known to disproportionately fall victim to trafficking (e.g. the Romanian community).
8. Young people, their carers and teachers should receive targeted messages to assist with earlier recognition of potential child grooming for sex trafficking and strategies for intervention.
9. Communications campaigns should address the erroneous perception that victims of Modern Slavery are usually trafficked from outside the UK and are of non-British origin.
10. As well as to continue to make best use of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of trafficking, a corresponding local response should be developed for those not meeting the criteria or not wishing to undergo NRM referral.