

Covid-19 APPG
Effects on victims of modern slavery
By the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership



Dear Anthony

Please see my feedback to the APPG

- 1) We know victims are finding themselves homeless and destitute because of the impact on organised crime groups and are now accessing mainstream support due to the current expanded provision and as such are not being identified as victims of modern slavery. This is creating missed opportunities to identify organised crime activity but more importantly means the serious trauma suffered by victims is not being properly addressed.

Action: Local Authority departments must be recording the reasons for all homeless presentations during this period and be held accountable for the steps they have taken to safeguard people. Oversight must be provided for all homeless presentations which includes at least one modern slavery specialist to review cases to identify presentations that are modern slavery related.

- 2) Organised crime gangs are targeting hotels being used to house large amounts of people who have become homeless or are in hotels used for temporary asylum accommodation. This tactic has historically been employed at soup kitchens and homeless shelters but has now diversified.

Action: Hotel staff, support workers and housing managers should ensure steps are taken to inform hotel staff of the possible danger. Local Authorities should routinely provide a presence on site.

- 3) Ongoing police operations targeting organised crime groups, forced labour and illegal HMO's or unplanned victim discoveries are being impacted by the lack of resources in relation to accommodation, support and sustenance.

Action: Police forces must be fully supported at this time by all partners to ensure any potential victims discovered have immediate access to safe accommodation, support and sustenance. There have been occasions whereby local authorities who are already stretched providing additional accommodation have struggled to provide safe accommodation to newly discovered victims.

Example: A recent case in Humberside highlighted the need for still greater awareness within housing departments on their duties and responsibilities towards victims. A number of victims discovered during a multiagency operation needed pre-NRM accommodation and support. Initially the local authority housing team refused responsibility due to Covid-19, after much discussion and many hours of the victims remaining in the place of their trauma, safe accommodation was provided.

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In our national collective post Covid-19 debrief I would strongly recommend we highlight the need for extensive and comprehensive planning for large scale events that may diminish our ability to fully support victims and survivors of modern slavery. With an already tentative grasp on the required resources to safeguard at risk persons and organised crime groups exploiting them, we must ensure work is done to actively train our partners in these scenarios and the potential resources needed.

The information in this feedback to the APPG is extracted from a larger impact statement being developed with local and national evidence looking at the impact of Covid-19 on victims, organised crime groups and other vulnerable cohorts at risk. This APPG feedback is on behalf of all partners of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside.

Kindest regards

Andrew Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Coordinator
Humber Modern Slavery Partnership