



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	Modern Slavery Inquiry (Fact Finding)
Committee date:	Tuesday 12 September 2017
Author:	Jane O'Grady
Contact officer:	Faye Blunstone 01296 382179 fblunstone@buckscc.gov.uk
Cabinet Member sign-off:	Noel Brown

Purpose of Agenda Item:

Information-Provided to enable the select committee to scrutinise a specific issue or inform the development of the work programme.

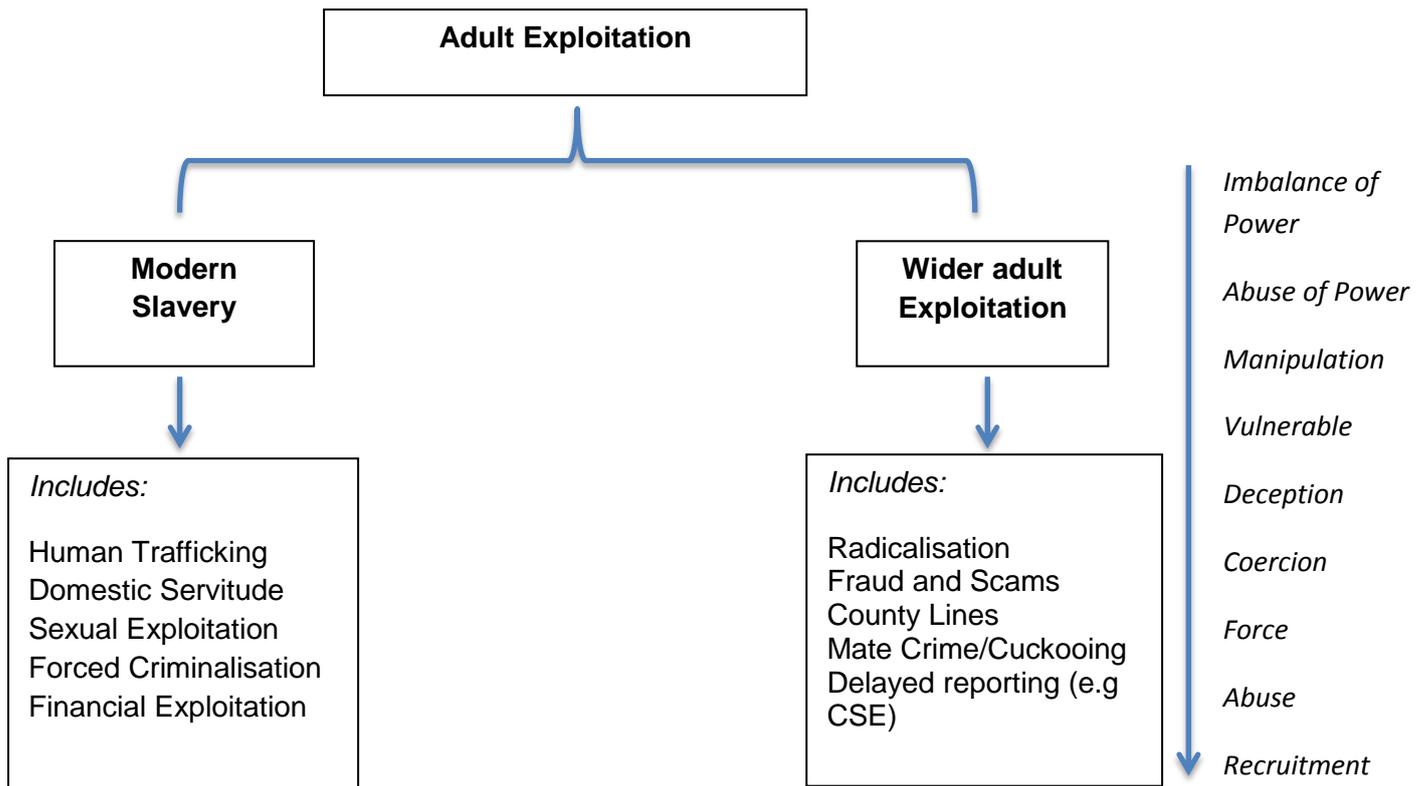
Background:

The definition for Modern Slavery is broad and comprehensive: '*modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.*' (Modern Slavery Strategy, 2014)

The Home Office estimate that there are between 10,000-13,000 victims of modern slavery nationally, however this figure is still likely to be hugely under-reported. It is therefore an issue of greater importance than the local raw data may initially indicate.

Since the last update to the committee on modern slavery in May 2016, it has been agreed that it should be tackled under an overarching "exploitation" agenda. The diagram below shows what fits under the umbrella term exploitation. This approach has been undertaken because they share many commonalities, for example vulnerability and deception.





Statutory/Legislative Duties:

In terms of statutory/legislative responsibilities the Council already has a statutory duty to consider all that it does in light of the impact on crime and disorder (Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act).

In addition to this, local Authorities are one of a number of agencies identified within Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) as “First Responders”, along with the Police, the Salvation Army, UK Visas and Immigration etc. First Responders are specified statutory authorities and non-governmental organisations who have a responsibility to identify potential victims and refer cases to the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)¹.

The Modern Slavery Act states that first Responders must submit referrals into the National Referral Mechanism (set up in 2009) or for any victims who do not wish to be referred into the NRM, First Responders must submit a Duty to Notify form (MS1) to the Home Office. However if the victim does not consent to go through the NRM then responsibilities may exist through other legislation that may impact local authorities e.g the Care Act (2014) and the Housing Act (1996).

According to the National Crime Agency the NRM “is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. The

¹ http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1058/nrm_-_guidance_for_child_first_responders_v20_ext.pdf

NRM is also the mechanism through which the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit collects data about victims². This information contributes to building a clearer picture about the scope of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK.

Work to identify any training needs in regard to exploitation within council departments such as social care is underway (for example are local authority staff able to comply with its duty as a first responder?).

Modern slavery in Buckinghamshire:

The Jill Dando Institute (University College London) was commissioned by the SSBPB to undertake research on modern slavery in Buckinghamshire in May 2016. Its purpose was to provide clarity to partners on where to focus resources and priorities when action planning. The following are some example highlights extracted from the report:

- Buckinghamshire is a semi-rural county. Therefore there may be many different agricultural activities where labour exploitation could occur, but that is invisible because it is done in isolated areas.
- Buckinghamshire also has an aging population, which has resulted in a service need for care homes, where workers may likewise be exploited to fill this growing demand.
- Modern slavery often takes place over different locations and times. It is highly unlikely that any one agency or person would be able to anticipate the whole process, and therefore identify the crime. This reiterates how vital it is that agencies work together to pool their resources, raise awareness and generate intelligence to identify potential victims.
- Target hardening shelters and hostels have reduced recruitment into modern slavery in other geographical locations of the UK and this should be carried out in Buckinghamshire.
- Buckinghamshire has no ports or airports, the primary way in which slavery victims will be transported into the county is via vehicles. On the way to their destination it is highly likely that they would need to stop to refuel and use facilities. These locations therefore offer opportunities for intelligence to be gathered and used to aid investigation.
- It has been suggested that modern slavery victims are most likely to use public transport to flee their slave masters. It is therefore worth liaising with bus, coach and railway staff and alerting them to the markers of victimisation and the appropriate channels for reporting suspicious activity.
- For remote locations such as farms and factories where labour exploitation may occur, it is important to consider which services and agencies (e.g delivery drivers, postal workers, trading standards, fire services, health and safety etc) are likely to visit the premises and can therefore provide any intelligence regarding potential

² <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism>

modern slavery offences³.

Prevalence in Buckinghamshire:

Thames Valley Police recorded 150 unique victims between February 2016 and March 2017. This highlighted that females are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, whereas males are targeted for labour and forced criminalisation.

Data from Thames Valley Police reflects across the Thames Valley the triggers for victims were as follows:

Type	Percentage
Unemployed	26%
Poverty	20%
Drug Addiction	14%
Family Support	15%
Debt Bondage	5%
Homelessness	8%
Other	8%
Uneducated	5%

Across Bucks there were 7 NRMs submitted over the period 2015-2016. The table below shows the Thames Valley LPA incident and crime breakdown. See below the exploitation type for each LPA: Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe.

LPA	Incidents	Proportion %	Crimes	Proportion %	Most Prominent Exploitation Type
Aylesbury Vale	1	1	8	5	Domestic Servitude
Chiltern & South Bucks	2	3	8	5	Labour Exploitation
Wycombe	3	4	8	5	Forced Criminalisation
Thames Valley	72	100	160	100	Labour Exploitation

Issues/challenges with data:

Of the victims that do come forward very few consent to going through the NRM process. This is due to many factors but mainly being that they do not want to be taken to an unfamiliar area (for their safety), by people who are unfamiliar to them. This is very similar

³ Sidebottom and Tompson (2016) Modern Slavery: A Partnership Guide, University College London.

to the experience they have just been through and many would rather remain in the geographical area in which they are most familiar.

Adult Exploitation Strategy 2017-2020:

After discussion at CHASC SMT and CMT the adult exploitation strategy will go to the Safer Stronger Bucks Partnership Board (SSBPB) on 31/10/17. There are 4 priorities that have been identified and these are as follows:

- 1) **Tackling Perpetrators-** Prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for adult exploitation
- 2) **Intelligence Sharing & Gathering-** Preventing people from engaging in adult exploitation
- 3) **Developing Victim Service Provision-** Strengthening safeguards against adult exploitation by protecting victims from further victimisation
- 4) **Training and Awareness Raising-** Reducing the harm caused by modern slavery and adult exploitation through improved victim identification.

The draft Adult Exploitation Strategy has had contributions/comments provided by Executive Directors: Sheila Norris (CHASC), Neil Gibson (TEE) and Gill Quinton (Resources). Gladys Rhodes-White (Children's Services) is also being met with in September so she can give her contributions and comments.

Contributions and comments have also been provided by Julie Puddephatt (Head of Safeguarding), Nicky Barry (Safeguarding Adult's Board Manager) Matilda Moss (Safeguarding Children's Board Business Manager), Clinical Commissioning Groups, Non-Government Organisations and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The wider Community Safety Partnership has also contributed and supported its priorities.

Whilst the Adult Exploitation strategy holds responsibilities for a number of partners the key areas of focus for BCC are:

Awareness raising opportunities for our staff and residents-

BCC are driving the delivery of existing training for Bucks CC and partnership staff through not-for-profit organisations. 13 hours/130 people have already completed the training with further 10 hours/160 people completing it by end of August 2017.

Ensure shared ownership across the partnership-

BCC play a key role in the following meeting groups: Buckinghamshire Anti-Slavery and Exploitation Network, Adult Exploitation Subgroup and Child Exploitation Subgroup. We work alongside partners on these groups to progress the exploitation work in a joined up and coordinated way. At the same time we encourage ownership across the partnership on

a range of issues. For example, Thames Valley Police are the primary action holder for priority 1- *Tackling Perpetrators* and we assist where possible in delivery of that.

Developing a service for identified victims-

Currently there isn't a victim service in Buckinghamshire and our aim is to work alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to have an Independent Trauma Advisory Service to support victims of exploitation. We are currently awaiting the result of a bid with the Police Transformation Fund to see if we have been successful in securing funding to commission RAHAB which operates currently in Reading.

Understanding the potential demand on our services-

We are liaising with departments and teams within BCC to identify their training needs. Once trained this may present demand on services as through their day jobs staff may see indicators of exploitation and have to submit intelligence to the police. Also, as BCC as a local authority is a first responder then it will entail either the completion of the NRM or MS1 forms. Departments will also need to be flexible to continually review any situation as they engage in the process and learn from our county neighbours.

Resource Implications:

- BCC community safety team have set aside £10,000 from the Community Safety budget.
- Buckinghamshire were successful in a bid to carry forward £20,000 of underspend from the PCC community safety fund from 2016/17.
- Thames Valley Police submitted a bid to the *Police Transformation Fund* for nearly £1m over 2 years. £150,000 of this would cover Buckinghamshire (using existing service in Reading called *Rahab*).
- If successful then additional funding will not be required (as at August the result of the bid is unknown).
- If the bid is unsuccessful the cost of a minimal service (x2 *Rahab* staff) is £46,000 per year in Bucks. This would be sought through partnership contributions in addition to a PCC underspend bid.

Challenges and opportunities:

- How does the council wish to respond to the duty for businesses with a turnover of more than £36m to issue a slavery and human trafficking annual statement?
- The speed and reach of improving awareness amongst professionals across the council and the county of both professionals and residents. Dispelling the myth that slavery isn't a current issue and enabling people to spot the signs and report.
- Finding out the true prevalence of the issue in Buckinghamshire.
- If there are victims who do not meet statutory safeguarding criteria, what is the best support and legislation to use? The issue with this is that victims will go back into the cycle by choice as they don't see themselves as victims.

- If any Buckinghamshire victims agree to the NRM then they are supported by the Salvation Army who hold the national contract. However, if there isn't consent then we are reliant on other out of county services that don't have a contract in Buckinghamshire offering their assistance. This poses an issue also as it depends wholly on their capacity to respond.