

## **Roles and Responsibilities regarding sex trafficking and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults**

### **Introduction**

An early meeting of the task group suggested it would be good for them to have a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the sex trafficking and protection issues. This summary was produced from some initial research over the web and circulated to relevant officers for comment before being presented to members.

### **LA - children's social care**

LA children's social care has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in need in their area, regardless of their immigration status. They have responsibilities for unaccompanied children, as well as those who arrive in the UK with their parents and for whom there are concerns regarding their safety and welfare.

### **Local authority children missing education teams**

In England, local authorities have a statutory duty to identify children missing from education. The named contact or team responsible for identifying children missing from education should be competent and confident to respond to children who may have been trafficked.

### **Education services**

Children trafficked into the country may be registered at a school for a term or longer, before being moved to another part of the UK or abroad. This pattern of registration and de-registration may be an indicator that a child has been trafficked.

### **Health services – Gloucestershire Primary Trust**

Trafficked children may be seen at the full range of health settings. Professionals should be alert to potential signs of abuse and trafficking including inconsistencies in addresses, any deliberate vagueness with children or carers being unable to give details of next of kin, names, telephone numbers or other personal details.

### **Youth offending teams**

Staff working in Youth Offending Teams may encounter trafficked children who have been charged with criminal offences. A child's reluctance to disclose the real circumstances in which he or she arrived in the country will have implications for a number of youth criminal justice processes. Parenting and carer assessments may be difficult as adults presenting as carers may be implicated in the trafficking process and would not be acting in the best interests of the child.

### **Police**

Under section 46 of the Children Act 1989, when the police are concerned that unless they take action the child is likely to suffer significant harm, they may use their powers to either remove a child to a safe place or prevent the child's removal from a safe place, for example a hospital. There are a number of specialist teams, which are separate from the child abuse investigation teams, in police services across the UK that have expertise in

dealing with trafficking cases. There are also joint intelligence teams in key locations across the country comprising immigration, police and other agencies which help to identify child protection concerns. Police services should take all necessary steps to ensure that children at risk of being trafficked do not fall through the gap between operational teams.

### **Crown Prosecution Service**

The CPS policy guidance *Safeguarding Children: Guidance on children as victims and witnesses* provides detailed practical and legal guidance to prosecutors dealing with cases that involve children and young people as victims and witnesses.

### **UK Borders Agency (UKBA)**

UKBA is an executive agency of the Home Office which has assumed responsibility for managing immigration control in the UK. It may be the first official agency to have contact with child victims of trafficking. Its interventions may be triggered by the particular circumstances of the case or by international intelligence about trafficking. UKBA is likely to be a source of referrals to child welfare agencies.

The immigration officer's role, alongside considering the eligibility of the child for entry into the UK, is to be alert to the need to keep children safe from harm. They should ensure that immigration processes and decisions made in respect of children take into account their individual situation, views and welfare.

### **UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)**

The UKHTC was established in October 2006, following a proposal from ACPO. It comprises staff from various disciplines bringing a multi-agency approach to the Centre's response to trafficking both into and within the UK.

It aims to improve and co-ordinate the law enforcement response to human trafficking, working closely with its partners in delivering a diverse set of programmes. A number of these will be targeted campaigns on preventing and reducing human trafficking and improving knowledge and understanding of the problem through best practice and training. A key element in the UKHTC's approach to preventing and reducing human trafficking is to ensure that victims are adequately safeguarded and protected from harm.

### **Specific to Gloucestershire**

#### **Gloucestershire Public Protection Bureau**

The Gloucestershire Public Protection Bureau (GPPB) was formed on 20th April 2009 to make Gloucestershire a safer place by working in partnership to reduce harm to both individuals and communities. The launch of the Bureau was a significant step towards enhancing partnership working and the essential sharing of information. There are specific portfolio dealing with child protection and Prostitution and Human Trafficking

They work in partnership with the following agencies and their success depends on multi agency cop-operation.

- Gloucestershire Probation Service
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Team
- Gloucestershire Primary Trust
- CPS
- HM Prison Service
- Strategic Coordinator for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- The Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVA)
- Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS)

### **Role of Cheltenham Borough Council**

Cheltenham Borough Council recognises that it has a duty of care towards all children and vulnerable adults who are involved in the services it provides, and that it has a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of such children and adults.

The council has a [safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy](#).

In terms of vulnerable adults, the council works within the [Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures](#).

### **Links with the licensed sex industry and other venues**

The Council has a statutory duty to control the “sex industry” in its district in the interest of public safety, maintaining law and order and to, in so far as it is possible, ensure that issues highlighted in this review do not occur.

As a district council, CBC has no statutory duties or powers in relation to trafficking however it can contribute to dealing with issues relating to the sex industry in partnership with other agencies.

CBC, as Licensing Authority, does have the powers to regulate and control sex shops, sex cinemas and sexual entertainment venues.

It does so by way of policies (for example, the Council considers it inappropriate to licence a sexual entertainment venue in the vicinity of residential areas, schools or near shops used by or directed to families or children) and through strict conditions (for example a normal sex establishment licence is subject to 36 standard conditions).

For other premises not specifically licensed as sex establishments, the Council already consults with, inter alia, the Gloucestershire Children Safeguarding Board on all new and variation applications thereby giving them opportunity to make representations where they consider it necessary in the interest of promoting the licensing objectives (i.e. the prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm).

### **Gloucestershire Domestic Violence Support and Advocacy Project (GDVSAP)**

Amanda Wilson heads up a countywide project to raise awareness of trafficking and grooming and attends a quarterly national forum. She works closely with the Police and the Public Protection Bureau. She recently ran a film event in October and gave a

presentation to the Cheltenham Safeguarding forum. She would be happy to come and talk to the scrutiny task group.

### **Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS)**

#### **Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB)**

GSCB is a key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the partner agencies co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Gloucestershire, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Their website [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board](#) (GSCB). provides a valuable resource of information, advice and guidance on all child protection and safeguarding matters.

#### **Cheltenham Safeguarding Forum**

CBC and CCP set up the forum in partnership in 2011 and as a result of its popularity it meets bi monthly. The purpose of the forum is for front line workers from different sectors to come together to discuss all aspects of safeguarding. The forum invites speakers to update the forum on current issues and help resolve issues identified by the forum. The forum also gives workers the opportunity to share best practice and communicate concerns to relevant groups.

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