



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a **Llywodraeth Leol** **The Communities, Equality and Local Government** **Committee**

Dydd Iau, 28 Tachwedd 2013
Thursday, 28 November 2013

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir
trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In
addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Leighton Andrews	Llafur Labour
Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Jeff Farrar	Prif Gwnstabl, Heddlu Gwent a Chynrychiolydd o'r Grŵp Arwain Atal Masnachu mewn Pobl Chief Constable, Gwent Police and Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Leadership Group
Mark Heath	Awdurdod Trwyddedu Gangfeistri a Chynrychiolydd o'r Grŵp Arwain Atal Masnachu mewn Pobl Gangmasters Licensing Authority and Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Leadership Group
Stephen Jones	Cydgysylltydd Rhanbarthol Gogledd Cymru, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol WLGA a Chynrychiolydd o'r Grŵp Arwain Atal Masnachu mewn Pobl Regional Co-ordinator, North Wales and Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Leadership Group

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Leanne Hatcher	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Hannah Johnson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:14.
The meeting began at 09:14.

**Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Bore da, and welcome to the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I remind Members and witnesses that, if they have any mobile phones, they should ensure that they are switched off, as they affect the transmission. We have received two apologies for absence this morning, from Jenny Rathbone and Rhodri Glyn Thomas. I warmly welcome Jocelyn Davies, who will now be with us on the committee. I am sure that the committee would also like to thank Lindsay Whittle, who has left the committee. Welcome, Jocelyn.

09:15

**Sesiwn Graffu ar Fasnachu Mewn Pobl: Cynrychiolwyr o'r Grŵp Arwain Atal
Masnachu Mewn Pobl
Scrutiny Session on Human Trafficking: Representatives from the Wales Anti-
Human Trafficking Leadership Group**

[2] **Christine Chapman:** On the agenda today is the committee's inquiry into human trafficking. I welcome representatives from the Wales anti-human trafficking leadership group. Welcome to our panel. I welcome Jeff Farrar, chief constable of Gwent Police; Mark Heath, from the Gangmasters Licensing Authority; and Stephen Jones, who is the Welsh Local Government Association regional co-ordinator for north Wales. Thank you for joining us. You have sent the committee members a paper, and we have read the evidence in advance. Therefore, if you are happy, we will go straight into questions.

[3] I will start by asking about your current priorities for tackling human trafficking in Wales.

[4] **Mr Farrar:** I will gladly start. Across the four forces in Wales—I think that most people know me fairly well in the room—one of my roles for the Association of Chief Police Officers Cymru is to be the lead for protecting vulnerable people across all areas; so, this is something that I will discuss frequently at chief officer level with the four chiefs and across the four Welsh forces. Human trafficking is linked into other areas of vulnerability. What we are talking about here is organised crime groups, as well as protecting our most vulnerable people. Across all areas of policing, if we go back as far as 2011, when the co-ordinator's post was established, it was established through funding from Welsh Government but employed by Gwent Police. So, the trafficking post for the first two years of its existence was employed, directed and run by Gwent Police—or by me—with funding from Welsh Government. Now, the employment of Steve Chapman has now been passed to Welsh Government. So, the priorities there are absolutely linked in to the priorities of the four forces. Each one of us has the reduction of crime and protecting our most vulnerable people in our policing plans, so it is right up there as a top priority, as you would expect it to be.

[5] **Mr Heath:** The GLA regulates the supply of labour into the agricultural sector. With the flow of labour in to and out of the UK, there is a requirement to be licensed if you are supplying workers in to the UK. With the flow of workers in to the country and the way that workers are treated, we are seeing an increase in the incidence of forced labour linked to that trafficking for the purpose of forced labour. In short, our priority is to protect vulnerable workers. We are seeing an increase in the exploitation and use of workers to a gross extent. We had a written ministerial statement from the UK Government in 2012, which directed us to work more closely with partner agencies to tackle the criminality that is within the sector and, accordingly, to work with partner agencies across the board throughout the UK to do so.

[6] **Mr Jones:** For local government, preventing human trafficking is a priority. There is a key role for local government in identifying human trafficking through front-line staff, and there is a key role in supporting victims of trafficking and slavery. I also think that there is a very important role, as community leaders, in bringing together partnerships to focus on planning to prevent and contain modern slavery and human trafficking through our partnership bodies, like local service boards, community safety partnerships and various other regional mechanisms. It has also been given priority at a national level. There have been a number of reports to our co-ordinating committee, which consists of the leaders of all councils. A lot has been happening in the regions, where fora have been set up—Steve Chapman, the co-ordinator, has helped to convene those—to discuss the sorts of things that we should be doing. So, in terms of our priorities, we are currently looking at things like raising awareness, training front-line staff, embedding processes, what to do when we find people who have been trafficked, understanding the national processes—things like the national referral mechanism, making sure that our people know what to do, and have discussions at partnership level. To do that, we have a pathfinder project in north Wales, which has been funded by the Welsh Government regional collaboration fund, and that, basically, will be following this agenda. We have also done some national work with our leaders, so we are taking it very seriously, and the real issue for us, and our priority, is to follow through. We have a policy framework; we now have to make things happen on the ground, identify more cases and become more experienced at dealing with the issue.

[7] **Christine Chapman:** I know that Members will have some specific questions on those areas that you have initially outlined, but I want to move on to another question. We had Mr Steve Chapman here a week ago and he was able to tell us a lot about his role, but I wonder what your views are on the effectiveness of the co-ordinator's role in tackling human trafficking.

[8] **Mr Farrar:** He is one person, and this is key to front-line delivery for all of us in public services. Steve has done a really good job, as did Bob Tooby before him. I set out three clear objectives for Bob and Steve, and we have made some really good progress on that, around, first of all, asking—and this is a question for all public agencies—'Would you recognise human trafficking if you saw it?' Let me give you an example: we walk to Queen Street in Cardiff today and see a lady with a baby, begging. Would you identify that as human trafficking? It might be a case of a vulnerable person who is begging with a child or it might be an organised crime group. Do we automatically recognise it when we see it? The answer to that is, 'No, we don't'. We do not do it across agencies, but we have done an awful lot more work to try to get that awareness in there, so the work that has been done in presentations and training across Wales that has been led by the co-ordinator has been quite impactful in raising people's awareness of what trafficking might look like.

[9] The second question is: if you see it and recognise it, what would you do? Would you know how to deal with it? What we are seeing with human trafficking is that victims are not like normal victims—they do not walk into a police station, local authority or casualty and say, 'I'm being trafficked.' They come in presenting a number of signs. Generally, or very often, there is a language barrier, or they are a very vulnerable person who has been groomed over a period of time, or, if they disclose that they are being trafficked, the risk to them is absolutely huge. So, do people know what to do across agencies?

[10] The third priority that we gave them was around sharing information. So, if BAWSO has information, does it share it with the police? If a local authority has information, does it share it with health? One of the things that we started, back in 2010-11, was the regional groups, and the communication between those has been really useful. It is not the same across the whole of Wales; it really is not. There is a lot more drive in some areas than others, and Steve is looking into that and into how we can get that consistency across Wales. However, where those operate, the flow of information and conversation, not just paper information

sharing, but conversation between key partners, has been really valuable. So, we have been able to respond more quickly and more effectively to some of the examples that manifested in Wales, but these things are popping up all the time—

[11] **Christine Chapman:** Are you saying, going back to the co-ordinator's role, that there is a role there, but that he is just one person, so we need—

[12] **Mr Farrar:** He is just one. I would commend the response by the Welsh Government in funding that post. It would have been very easy to say, 'Where's the evidence base for human trafficking? We can't see it, so there's no point funding that post.' I think that the Welsh Government has been very proactive in its response, identifying that creating the co-ordinator's post means that you are lifting the stone. I have often described human trafficking as where we were with child protection in the 1950s and domestic abuse in the 1980s. So, I think that it has been really positive in that respect, but, yes, he is one person, but he is the gel.

[13] **Christine Chapman:** I have a couple more questions, but I think that Leighton Andrews wants to come in first.

[14] **Leighton Andrews:** I just wanted to pick you up on that point, Jeff, because I think that you make an interesting comparison with different forms of abuse in previous generations. To what extent do you feel that human trafficking is perceived in the Welsh media and other places as a problem that exists outside Wales?

[15] **Mr Farrar:** The key priority that we gave the human trafficking co-ordinator—and for all of us—was to make Wales a hostile place for people to traffic. I think it has to start with: what do we do here in Wales, then the UK, then the world? We should not take our eye off that. We should drive it out of our borders, but that does not mean that we just displace it. We have to work together with other licensing agencies such as the UK Border Agency and the UK Human Trafficking Centre. I think that there is an element of denial. I think we would all say, 'Surely there cannot be human trafficking in Wales in 2013', but think of the examples in the last couple of years of forced labour. To take my force for example, Operation Imperial is about people being trafficked to work on the roads. These are people who are being kept in captivity, in effect, and some of them for 20 or 30 years. Operation Artemis in my area involved young females who are groomed and then trafficked around Wales for sexual exploitation. It is evident; it is there.

[16] **Cannabis factories:** when you break into a huge, industrial cannabis factory and find six Vietnamese people in there, are they perpetrators—because there is a huge industry in there—or are they victims? Well, they are both, but primarily they are victims, because they have been brought into the country possibly with a threat to life outside our borders. I can go on: nail bars, begging on the streets—these are things that are across everything. Until we look a bit more closely and get all of our agencies—social services, health, police—to be recognising it when they see it, the answer to the question is that the amount that actually gets fed into the national referral mechanism at the moment is tiny. Does that reflect what is happening in Wales? I do not think it does.

[17] **Jocelyn Davies:** In preparing for today I thought I would have a little look on the internet at what the scale of this is in Wales, and I was more confused after I finished than when I started. I see that the Metropolitan Police says that, in 2011, at least 10,000 people were being forced to live as slaves in the UK, but the global slavery index says it is about 4,200 across the UK. I do not know how many of those would be in Wales, for example. Do you have any idea of what the figures could possibly be?

[18] **Mr Farrar:** Mark might be able to give answers, but I would say that this is a case of

putting your finger in the air. It is a bit like asking about the scale of domestic abuse in Wales. We do not know, really, do we? We only know what presents itself, and we only know what we are proactive and reactive in dealing with. So, at the moment, that figure of 10,000—what is that based on? It could be a lot less or it could be a lot more. What we do know is that there is human trafficking in Wales.

[19] **Mr Heath:** Just to pick up on that point from Jeff, I do not think that anybody really does know. That is not meant to be a glib answer. It is an issue that we do not know about generally. The public awareness is not there, the awareness of front-line services is not there to be able to capture that information. For example, the national referral mechanism counts the people who go through that mechanism but it does not count the cases of people where there has been an intervention and they do not get into that mechanism. For example, we might run an operation where we have intelligence to suggest that there are 40 potential victims of trafficking, but if none of those enters the national referral mechanism, those 40 do not get counted.

[20] **Jocelyn Davies:** So, entering that mechanism is a voluntary thing by the victims themselves, is it?

[21] **Mr Heath:** The victim has to declare himself or herself to be a potential victim in order to receive the support through the mechanism.

[22] **Mr Jones:** Picking up on Leighton Andrews's point about perception and this not necessarily being a Wales problem, the number of cases in Wales that have been reported in terms of victims, in 2012, was, I think, about 34. I spoke to Steve Chapman yesterday, who told me that, for this year, to the end of quarter 3, we were looking at 37, so you would be looking at about 37 to 50 cases in Wales. If you look at the UK, you have estimates of what is there and then you have what is declared to the national referral mechanism. The Home Office has published figures quite recently—I cannot remember the exact number—but it is just under 2,000, I think, or 1,200.

09:30

[23] If you look at them, in terms of population proportions, you will probably see that, as a per 1,000 figure, it will be lower in Wales than it is in the UK. So, I think that there are issues about awareness in Wales. There is a UK underreporting issue, and I think that that is likely to be slightly worse in Wales because of the way we see ourselves as being not necessarily an urban society. We have cities, but I think that people perceive it to be more of an urban problem where there are large immigrant communities. Again, one of the things that we are beginning to find out is that there is a lot more internal trafficking, in which British people are being pressed into slavery and are trafficked, than perhaps we would have realised or thought of in the past. So, I think that it comes back to Jeff's evidence that there is a significant amount of underreporting, and it is a problem that we have not been looking for because we have not believed it.

[24] **Christine Chapman:** Before I move on to Peter Black, I just want to ask one quick question. How will the UK Government's forthcoming modern slavery Bill impact on Wales, particularly in relation to the police?

[25] **Mr Farrar:** I would say that the work that we have done with the co-ordinator's role puts us ahead of the game anyway. There is stuff that we have done, and, yes, we could do with more scrutiny and structure in how we ask the questions. There was a question that Carl Sargeant asked me three years ago, which was: 'What can I do to help with this, Jeff?' I said, 'Just go and ask the questions. When you are talking to service providers, ask them what they are doing to ensure that their staff might recognise human trafficking, and, if they do, how

they will respond to it.' If you ask those questions, most people will find it very difficult to answer them. I think that the work that we have done over the last three years, not just within Wales, but through our links into the gangmasters agency, UKBA, the UK Human Trafficking Centre, et cetera, has been quite strong. So, I am confident that the structures that we have put in place in Wales will work. Do we need to do more? Yes, we do. It needs to be more widespread across our 22 local authorities.

[26] **Christine Chapman:** Okay; thanks. Peter has the next question.

[27] **Peter Black:** Going back to this national referral mechanism, what is confusing me, both in what you have told us and in the evidence last week, is why this mechanism, which purportedly is there to measure the scale of human trafficking, is underreporting incidents because it is voluntary, and what it is that we need to do to make it an instrument that more effectively tells us what the problem is.

[28] **Mr Farrar:** If I can start and then Mark can come in. First of all, I spoke to the human trafficking conference in Cardiff last year. Bear in mind that, at that conference, they were people who care about human trafficking and were generally practitioners in this area, and when I gave them a quick quiz on how they would put somebody into the national referral mechanism, about a third of the room knew how to do it. So, there is definitely an awareness issue about how you would trigger people into the national referral mechanism. I think the point that Mark made is an important one: what benefit is there for a person in disclosing that he or she is being trafficked? That fear of the borders agency and deportation is a very real one. So, that figure of 34 in Wales in the last year is not even the tip of the iceberg of the cases that we are dealing with that do not get put into the national referral mechanism. So, the first thing is awareness of how to trigger it from agencies, and the second is the reluctance of the people who are trafficked to want to identify themselves as trafficked people.

[29] **Peter Black:** I know that this is not a direct comparison, but, for example, you have a sex offenders register. Everybody knows how to put somebody on the sex offenders register, how to refer to it and how to identify a sex offender from that. You have here what is in effect organised crime, and yet, that does not appear to have same priority or the same level of knowledge. Why is that?

[30] **Mr Farrer:** It absolutely has. The difference is that, once you have been convicted, you get put on the sex offenders register. That is how people get put on there; it is automatic. If I am convicted at court for an offence that would be categorised for the register, then I will be placed on it. This is something very different. The national referral mechanism can come in through a number of different sources to the UKBA and the UK Human Trafficking Centre, and it is not captured in the same way. So, the parallels with the sex offenders register do not hold; they are not the same.

[31] **Peter Black:** Okay, then; does the national referral mechanism need to be put on a similar statutory footing? That is what I am trying to suggest.

[32] **Mr Jones:** It is already on a statutory footing with regard to the referral mechanism. I think what you are talking about is the self-reporting issue. The Home Office has done some work on this and there is a marked difference in success with victims who are from the European economic area as opposed to those from the rest of the world. I think that goes back to Jeff's point about the fact that you are more likely to get good support from the system if you are in the EU or the European economic area, because you do not have the deportation issue or the immigration issues that you have if you come from somewhere in the rest of the world, such as China, Thailand, and so on. That is obviously quite a barrier.

[33] The other issue is that you have to complete a form, and it is almost a joint effort

between the person who is doing the referral and the victim. As well as having issues with regard to the victim and whether they want to report or not, you also have a person who is sitting there with a form making judgments about whether that person is a victim or not. There was a case in north Wales where we had some Vietnamese adults who were cultivating cannabis. They are in jail now. It was picked up in the interviews that they were blindfolded and taken from Birmingham, but they were not treated as victims, they were treated as criminals and they were not referred. So, there are some pretty big issues in the system about the experts, and a lot depends on which organisation picks you up and talks to you about the referral mechanism. That is where some of the training and awareness-raising work needs to go on, because, to be frank, when we were setting up the north Wales project against human trafficking, there was a senior police officer, who is now retired, who said that we did not have a problem and so asked why we were spending the money in that way. That also had an impact on a number of our chief executives when we were discussing it. That was a private discussion, so obviously I feel a bit nervous saying that here today, but there are some big issues to overcome with the professionals. If the professionals are more sympathetic, then you are more likely to get self-reporting. So, that needs to be logged. I mentioned some figures earlier, and it is nearer 1,200 who were referred in the UK in 2012. That compares to our 34. So, that backs up that, in terms of proportion of population, our reporting is lower than the rest of the UK.

[34] I did not say anything about Steve Chapman's role, but it is absolutely essential. It is not a commissioner role, but it is akin to it, because it carries the authority of Ministers, and I think Steve has been able to do a really good job because he has had the support of Carl Sargeant, initially, and subsequently Lesley Griffiths. The Welsh Government has done a great job in creating the political space, and we have had people on the public sector leadership group—one of my north Wales chief executives, Dr Mohammed Mehmet, is the public sector lead. Steve has also had an impact on framing our project. He was absolutely instrumental in helping us with interviews and giving advice, he supported the conference that we held in north Wales, and we would not have our regional fora if we did not have the co-ordinator role. It is a small country, and everyone can go to Steve for advice, almost, if they have a case. If you are talking about 34 cases, then you can have quite a detailed discussion, and he is more immediate than the UK Human Trafficking Centre, and he does not have interests like the UK Border Agency. So, in that sense, it really has done us a great deal of good and he is promoting the Welsh approach in the UK generally.

[35] **Peter Black:** All that engagement and all that work is really valuable and much appreciated, but it is still less than satisfactory that the national referral mechanism is not an effective tool. Is there any way in which we can make it more effective?

[36] **Mr Heath:** I think it is effective in what it seeks to achieve as the framework for victims to be supported. As for the question of whether victims enter that, to pick up on one of the points, I think front-line training is important for that, because, as a decision maker in that mechanism, you can work only with the information that is provided to you. So, if that is sketchy or scant and not detailed enough, potential victims may be lost to the system as a result. However, I think it has been recognised that there is a gap in data capture throughout the UK in relation to the victims who fall short of that, and I understand that the Home Office is trying to address that in some of the work it is doing to see what the size of the problem is. So, the national referral mechanism does what it does, but I am not entirely sure that it was meant to be the statistical capture for information.

[37] **Mr Jones:** I think that there are some issues in that, in quite a lot of trafficking cases, I get the impression that, for ease of prosecution—. One of the other trends that appears to be in train is that, in order to catch the traffickers, you prosecute them for something else, because you are on safer ground in doing so. I think that the Crown Prosecution Service has taken that strategy, so the numbers of prosecutions are actually declining. The key point is

that that referral mechanism and the people operating it need to be friendlier to victims. If our professionals receive a lot more training and encouragement to see victims, instead of criminals, then the referral mechanism will work better.

[38] **Christine Chapman:** I want to move on now, but I know that Jocelyn has a question.

[39] **Jocelyn Davies:** I just wondered, with regard to the 34 referrals, whether someone could send us a note on where the referrals came from, because I am guessing that the vast majority would have come through the Home Office, rather than from other agencies. You do not have to tell me now, but perhaps you could send us a note on the 34 referrals through the mechanism for Wales.

[40] **Mr Jones:** Twenty of the 34 referrals in 2012 were from the UK Border Agency.

[41] **Mr Ford:** Steve Chapman will have all those data.

[42] **Jocelyn Davies:** I just wondered, really, what agencies operated in Wales. It will be interesting to look at those figures.

[43] **Christine Chapman:** Peter, you wanted to ask a question on another area.

[44] **Peter Black:** It is on a slightly different issue, and this is more of a question for Stephen Jones, really. Witnesses last week noted that there were issues with housing, particularly the provision of safe accommodation for victims, and the link between housing providers and the national referral mechanism. I am just wondering what has been done within local government and within your partnership to try to overcome those issues.

[45] **Mr Jones:** I probably need to go away and have a look at this. My first reaction is that the provision of safe accommodation is a contract issue. I think that the UK Government has a contract with the Salvation Army, and, in Wales, it is subcontracted to BAWSO. I would need to look into whether that accommodation is in north Wales or south Wales. I would not have thought, as local government, that we have caught up with that accommodation issue.

[46] The other area where we would need to ensure that there is safe accommodation is for children. When you read about the issues that have emerged through the work of the voluntary sector with victims, it is apparent that a lot of young people are running away. So, again, in terms of local government and closing loopholes and system faults, we would need to ensure that we have children's accommodation from which they do not want to run away or cannot run away, and, where it is adults, that there is safe accommodation. On that issue, it is apparent that support provision for adults is far weaker than that for children, because there are statutory duties on a local authority with regard to children, but there are none for adults, and I think that is an area where we need to do a lot of work.

[47] **Peter Black:** Is there enough awareness among social services departments about some of these issues?

[48] **Mr Jones:** That is something that we have to tackle through our training and awareness-raising in the north Wales project. I acknowledge that there are nationally reported issues about housing, and we need to do a lot of work to address those two gaps.

[49] **Christine Chapman:** Is there anything else, Peter? If not, we will move on to another theme. I will bring Gwyn Price in now.

[50] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning, gentlemen. I want to ask about the effectiveness of

multi-agency working. You say that you work with a lot of agencies across the fields. We had witnesses who suggested that there were gaps in the system somewhere that people were falling through, especially with regard to health and education and awareness in those areas. Would you agree with that?

[51] **Mr Farrar:** I would agree with that. I think it is very piecemeal across Wales. Within my force area, I had a detective inspector for whom dealing with this was in his heart. So, back in 2010, when we established the multi-agency group in Gwent, we had strong representation from all agencies on that group. That has been replicated elsewhere, and that is the work that Bob Tooby and Steve Chapman did. It has not been replicated everywhere.

09:45

[52] Part of it is denial, so, you have someone saying, 'I am up to my eyes in demand, and I have 1,001 things to do: tell me why I need to look at human trafficking, because I don't think it's there'. Well, actually, if you do not look, you will not find it. There is that issue about creating more work. So, the health services have stuff presented to them, but do they recognise it as human trafficking, and what is the incentive to recognise it as human trafficking? It is the same for others. I do not think that there is a huge reluctance, but there is an element of—

[53] **Gwyn R. Price:** Awareness.

[54] **Mr Farrar:** Yes, and there is inconsistency. If you look at what provision was in place around information sharing, intelligence sharing and structures across the whole of Wales, you will find that it is different in different local authority areas. So, I think that there is a lot more to be done. Both Bob and Steve have done a lot of hard work on that, but it needs more and it needs more of a push, really.

[55] **Mr Health:** It is also about knowing where to go if you have information. If a potential victim presents to somebody who has little knowledge, there is a lack of awareness of where they might go to get that support. Working with partner agencies, you can bring that expertise and resource together to tackle the problem. Tackling it on your own is always going to be difficult and you need to know what everybody else's part of the jigsaw is to be able to draw it together, and I think there is a fragmentation with that.

[56] **Mr Farrar:** That was my point about the route-map, really. We have created quite a straightforward guide for people saying, 'If this presents itself, whom do I speak to?' So, if somebody comes to BAWSO and says, 'I'm being trafficked', whom do they go to? That route-map, I think, has taken us a long way forward in Wales. It is still not out there with enough people. So, if you walked into Cardiff bay police station and up to the front desk today, I would hope that you would get the right response. However, would that person sat behind the desk know what the route-map for human trafficking was and recognise it when it was presented, and how would they then share that with other agencies? We have put those mechanisms in place, but how well known is it? I would say that it is piecemeal.

[57] **Christine Chapman:** Mr Jones, did you want to come in?

[58] **Mr Jones:** This is something that we hope to improve with the north Wales project. We have set up the regional fora, which are multi-agency fora, and there will be a multi-agency board managing the north Wales anti-human trafficking project. As Jeff and Mark have said, there is quite a long way to go. The other issue is that we have some good partnership platforms in local government with community safety partnerships and local service boards where I think we should be discussing anti-human trafficking work locally. I think that the other thing that would stimulate better, effective multi-agency working is if we

had commitments in local plans. That includes the community plan prepared by local government, and the policing plan from the police and crime commissioners and police forces. I think that there is a national view from pressure groups working with victims that we would probably have better multi-agency outcomes if there were anti-human trafficking objectives in policing plans and local authority corporate plans.

[59] **Christine Chapman:** Gwyn, do you have a few more questions? Then Mark wants to come in.

[60] **Gwyn R. Price:** Is work to tackle trafficking in Wales affected by the limitations of devolution, for example, in criminal justice and employment law? Do you think that it is affected by that?

[61] **Mr Farrar:** I would say that it is not. Police, the CPS and probation services are not devolved. However, if you look at other regions around the country, they are not as joined up as we are here. So, we work well. If you look at the training that we have done with the CPS, and the guide that we have given to senior investigating officers on the investigation of human trafficking and the links that we have locally, they work very well. We could put this across any area of service delivery. For us to work as one public service, which I think we have to do, otherwise we are always working in silos, is always difficult in a non-devolved structure, because we get a direction from the Home Office and we might have a different discussion in here. My job is to make sense of that, really. My priority has to be protecting our most vulnerable people. We do not particularly get a problem with it not being devolved. Steve's role is engaging with the UK Human Trafficking Centre, the UK Border Agency and Gangmasters Licensing Authority, he does all of those very well—and further afield than that. As long as we are co-ordinating that properly in Wales, I do not think that that is particularly a problem.

[62] **Gwyn R. Price:** By your views, you seem to be saying that we are slightly ahead of the curve with our own co-ordinator.

[63] **Mr Farrar:** I think that we are. There are very few places around the country that would have a co-ordinator for human trafficking, particularly one that was centred in the Government and driven by Ministers around trying to make Wales a hostile place for human trafficking. I am not sure that that is evident anywhere else in the UK. There is some work in Scotland. Mark might know better than I do, but I think that we are definitely ahead of the curve and remain so.

[64] **Mr Heath:** I think so. To pick up on that, the advantage that you have in Wales is having someone at the top of the pyramid, and the regional and local groups beneath that to feed into a central point. Now, there is work in progress to build the picture and find a way forward, but to have that post in place now makes it much easier to identify from the partner agencies where to go in Wales and the route through to the decision makers at the top. So, I think that you are advanced here.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Did you wish to come in on this, Mark Isherwood?

[66] **Mark Isherwood:** I have a short question on the international aspect. What dialogue, if any, do you have with agencies in countries of origin and countries of transit, and what are the barriers that you face when pursuing that?

[67] **Mr Farrar:** I would say that it is not as good as it could be. We do it. We have the National Crime Agency, which will have the international links. It tends to be case-based; so, if we get a case whose origins are in Nigeria, we would have those links into the relevant police forces, agencies and areas. As to whether it is a holistic approach to eliminate human

trafficking, no, it is not. We do it on a case-by-case basis. Our links there are pretty strong in how we do that.

[68] The approach taken in countries abroad is often very different to ours. The way that they see protecting vulnerable people or reducing crime is often very different to the way that we see those things. The one thing that I would say about our co-ordination on this is that human trafficking is linked into so many other things. For example, at lunch time today in the Senedd we will launch the 'Uncharted Territory' report, which discusses domestic abuse, generally in respect of people from overseas, where there is a language barrier, or where people are from different cultures. That is linked to human trafficking in the same way that it is linked to domestic abuse. So, a lot of the things that we do around protecting our most vulnerable people, be it domestic abuse, human trafficking, or child protection, all come under the same umbrella. There is often a danger here that we set up a human trafficking silo and a protecting vulnerable adults silo, but we do not join that together. That is why I talked about one public service. For me, this is the way that we need to do it, which is to have a hub concept that looks at vulnerability—we can do this; we have already started it with some of the trials that we have done—rather than creating a whole new structure for human trafficking. I could come here today and say, 'Steve is one person on his own; he needs a whole team around him in a similar way to the work that we have done on domestic abuse'. I think that the answer is to look at vulnerability at a much more strategic level, and then look at how we deal with it locally. Otherwise, we are in danger of just creating more structures for it. However, our links are case-by-case dependent, I think.

[69] **Mark Isherwood:** What about transit countries? In north Wales, for example, it is a west-east axis, so, you particularly have the relationships with Ireland. Are transit countries' relationships somewhat easier, particularly when you are dealing within the EU or the EEA?

[70] **Mr Jones:** As part of the north Wales project, there have been discussions with the port of Holyhead. If I am honest, I do not think that there have been discussions with Ireland. As the north Wales project picks up momentum and begins to look at processes and what we need to do, it will be following a menu set by the SOLACE report in 2009. That highlights issues around repatriation and the need to work with foreign embassies. So, I think that there is a piece of work that we would need to do as part of our project where we do actually have some discussions with some key embassies about how that might work and whether there are consulates in Wales. I think that that is an area where we need to develop further. We probably have not made as much, or we have not been aware of it in the past, and it has arisen on a case-by-case basis, rather than a structured, forward-looking basis.

[71] **Mr Farrar:** I would add to that point on Ireland that we have had conversations with the Garda Síochána, but it is about this issue of priorities. So, on ports and the focus of ports, if you come through a port carrying a gun, you are going to get caught more often than not. So, if it is counter-terrorism related, port staff will have a clear focus and it is the same with drugs. If you come through that port with a child or an adult woman, the chances that you are going to have the same scrutiny are probably a bit less. So, we see an influx of people coming in from Ireland who may well have been in Spain or Italy and have come through those ports, got on a ferry, come across to north Wales and are then in the UK. On scrutiny, we have made huge leaps and bounds, particularly in north Wales, around this and in raising awareness, but, as Steve has said, there is an element of denial, which is, 'Hang on a second, I've got to focus on counter-terrorism and drugs; I can't be focusing on every person who comes through this port'. Perhaps they need to be looking for the signs in a different way. So, we have had the conversations, but there is an issue of prioritisation that will always come up.

[72] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Janet, did you want to come in?

[73] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes. Stephen, on the SOLACE report recommendation that

there should be a lead person or trafficking officer within each local authority, how is that being taken forward? You are probably aware that I was an elected member of Conwy County Borough Council until May last year. I can honestly say that human trafficking never featured anywhere, and I think that all elected members, and there are a lot of us in Wales, at different levels, have a part to play too, because we are out and about in our local communities, so we are the eyes and ears. What is being taken forward as regards cascading what we are discussing here down within local authorities? How are local authorities taking forward that recommendation that there should be a single officer within each local authority?

[74] **Mr Jones:** We will certainly have one in north Wales. As a result of the anti-human trafficking project, one of the priorities will be to have each local authority nominate a lead officer as a single point of contact. Arising from today, I think that the WLGA could write out to local authorities and ask whether there is an officer in each local authority—

[75] **Christine Chapman:** This was actually in the SOLACE recommendations—

[76] **Mr Jones:** It was, yes.

[77] **Christine Chapman:** I would have thought that it would have been looked at sooner than this.

[78] **Mr Jones:** I suspect that the implementation of it is patchy in Wales. I think that what we will be doing in north Wales with our project is making it uniform and ensuring that each local authority in north Wales has a single point of contact. It is something that the association can do nationally. The idea of the north Wales project is that once we have uniform processes and we have established ways of working together, that will be rolled out across Wales. That is one of the commitments within the project. As things stand now, it is patchy, but we will make it more uniform over the next year or two.

[79] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** May I pick you up on that? You say that it is patchy. Apart from Mohammed Mehmet helping with your north Wales project overall, out of the other local authorities in north Wales, how many have a lead officer?

[80] **Mr Jones:** I do not think that any of them do, with the possible exceptions of Denbighshire and Anglesey.

[81] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Okay. My next question—

[82] **Mike Hedges:** May I follow on from that? You talk about a lead officer, but should there not be a lead cabinet member as well, because if you had a lead cabinet member, you would get a lead officer very quickly?

[83] **Mr Jones:** That is very true; that is a fair comment.

[84] **Christine Chapman:** So, do you think that that is a good idea, to have a cabinet member?

[85] **Mr Farrar:** As you probably sense, I am passionate about what we do on human trafficking. There is no harm in asking the questions to local authorities, but they will say, 'We've got these new priorities and is it really an issue in our area?' This is exactly the same conversation that I have had with local authorities on counter-terrorism. They say, 'Don't just come and tell us that counter-terrorism cells may establish themselves in Wales and there could be a bigger global risk; tell us what the problem is'. So, they will say, 'Tell me what the problem is in my locality'. I think that that is twofold. Steve Chapman has to be going in to those local authorities and saying, 'There are issues here'. I think that that will prompt leaders

and chief executives to say, 'Perhaps this is something that we need to look at'. I think that if it comes out as a direction in a report, it may fall on fallow ground because you may get a response that is, 'Well, we've got lots of things to do; we don't think it's a problem in our area'. So, it does go back to whether they recognise what is actually happening.

10:00

[86] There can never be harm in having a lead person; that has to be a good thing, because they will focus on it. However, I think that it has to be a two-way process that involves convincing local authorities that they should be looking, because there is an issue in their area, rather than there being a direction.

[87] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Okay. The next question—

[88] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, before we move on, I would just remind Members that we have only a quarter of an hour left and we have a few other themes.

[89] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** This is really to you, Jeff, in terms of working proactively, investigating cases by working with at-risk groups and nationalities. How do you evidence that that is what you are doing now?

[90] **Mr Farrar:** Well, as I said earlier, speaking at the human trafficking conference that we had in the All Nations Centre here in Cardiff, that was littered with all the relevant groups that would be here, and I will be with BAWSO at lunch time. I think that the strategic group that we sit on encompasses all of those people and all of those key groups that should be there to have those conversations. It comes back to my point about looking at things in isolation. BAWSO, particularly with our most vulnerable women—and they generally are—will not refer something to the police if it thinks that it is going to compromise that individual. So, there is a trust issue in this as well, as many people who are trafficked might not trust the police because of the experience they have had in another country. So, this is about developing the relationship, having a shared vision on what we want to do and developing the trust, and we are making inroads into that, although more can be done.

[91] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Finally, we talked about the devolved organisations in Wales and what is not devolved, but, of the 34 cases that have already presented and you have dealt with, did you have any particular issues regarding asylum and deportation, as regards what was devolved and what was not?

[92] **Mr Farrar:** Yes, and I think that there is a real fear factor. It is becoming less, but I think that there is a real fear factor to do with UKBA and the mindset of UKBA. Now, at senior level, I have had conversations with UKBA, as will others here, and that is starting to shift, but its priorities around repatriation, as opposed to supporting a victim, can sometimes be tricky. So, yes; there has been, and I think that that comes back to the point that, if I am a victim, all I want is a service that works. Do I want to go into a system that might mean that I get deported? No, of course I do not. So, again, we are making big strides in this all the time, but it is a risk. Stephen helpfully has the statistics here that Jocelyn asked for earlier, and if you look at this list, there is a lot here about overseas issues and the response there. So, absolutely.

[93] **Christine Chapman:** Leighton, did you want to come in?

[94] **Leighton Andrews:** I think that some of what I wanted to ask has been dealt with. However, I just wanted to be clear about consistency of approach across Wales. Is there a more effective response in, say, urban areas? Is it patchier elsewhere? What is your take on it?

[95] **Mr Farrar:** I will start and perhaps ask Stephen and Mark to come in. I would say that it is not dependent on a manifestation of human trafficking in a particular locality; I think that it is driven by somebody who has picked this up, who cares about it and has been proactive in looking at the issues. I think that the biggest success that Steve has had, and the same with Bob Tooby, going around the country, has been when they have been dealing with senior people, or they get access to those senior people in the first place, who say, 'I want to work with you on this'. What happens in some areas is that he does not get to speak to those people; he ends up speaking to somebody lower down the chain who says, 'I've got enough to do without worrying about this until I get some direction'. Then, there is my other, different view: I think that it is much more about the drive from individuals, as opposed to particular problems in their areas.

[96] **Leighton Andrews:** That follows through in terms of victim support.

[97] **Mr Farrar:** I think that it does. Again, there will be cases of human trafficking that we are dealing with as we speak that are not identified as human trafficking. So, they might well be prostitution, or nail bars—we might be assisting somebody by rehousing them or doing some intervention with them with the police, but does that get identified as a more holistic issue of human trafficking? It does not in the way that we should be doing it across Wales. So, it is inconsistent.

[98] **Christine Chapman:** Jocelyn, did you want to ask something?

[99] **Jocelyn Davies:** A lot of the points had been covered, but the national referral mechanism, according to our briefing, is the UK's response to its legal obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. So, if somebody agrees to go through that referral system, what is the advantage to them? What do they get? You mentioned that some people, especially youngsters, are running away after they have been put through that referral system. So, they get some sort of housing, I suppose, and are kept safe, but they abscond.

[100] **Mr Jones:** The national referral mechanism is the official gateway to support, and you get a period of grace—I believe that it is 45 days—in which to receive a report and work through the issues that have affected you, for example through psychological counselling. There is also the opportunity to give evidence on criminal cases. There is quite a lot of debate as to whether that 45-day period is too short, which, once again, makes it unattractive to people. So, there are issues around that mechanism and the way in which it works. We could make it more friendly to victims.

[101] **Mr Heath:** With the support that you can offer—Stephen has picked up on the 45-day period—if you take somebody in an incidence of forced labour, for example, whatever the circumstances they are in, they are working and have accommodation provided and some sort of uniform way of conducting their lives, no matter how badly they have been treated. If they are taken out of that environment and put somewhere safe, it may be difficult for them to pick up work and accommodation elsewhere, after that 45-day period. So, we clearly would say to them that they are in a better position because they are not being exploited, but they might think, 'Well, I had a regular job and accommodation, and now I have to look after my own interests following that 45-day reflection period'. So, the management through the process and then the onward care of the victim are things that we all need to pick up on.

[102] **Christine Chapman:** Do you want to come back on that point, Mr Jones?

[103] **Mr Jones:** No.

[104] **Mike Hedges:** The strategic round table report on human trafficking in Wales in

2012 highlighted a need to move beyond awareness raising and training. Last week, we were told that that had happened; do you recognise that?

[105] **Mr Farrar:** We are making progress. It is perhaps not lightning-fast progress, but it then comes back to my point about identifying the scale of the problem and making people aware of that, and I think that they will respond differently. We have put some structures in place strategically. As I have said, the ministerial support should be applauded because that is not happening elsewhere and that is a proactive response to what we are doing. It has started to drive a lot more consistency in some areas, albeit, as I have just said, that it is inconsistent. So, there is a lot more to be done. The early shoots are looking positive for Wales.

[106] **Mr Heath:** With that success, I would suggest that you promote the success of those areas to educate other areas of Wales that might be seen to be a little bit behind.

[107] **Christine Chapman:** Mark, do you want to come in on this point?

[108] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes. Last week we heard evidence that a public awareness campaign might be helpful. What methods do you feel could now be followed to help you, and all of us, to tackle the problem of trafficking? Should there be legislation or public awareness campaigns, or do you have any other suggestions that you have not already covered this morning?

[109] **Mr Farrar:** This is a little bit of a double-edged sword. If you do a public awareness campaign, then we need to be ready to respond to what the public tells us, what victims tell us and what our agencies tell us in order to ensure that, in any locality, we have the right response in place to be able to deal with it. The worse thing that we could possibly do is to do a national campaign that publicises human trafficking and someone walks in to their local authority and is told, 'I don't know what you're talking about' and that there is no structure behind it to deal with it. We are probably in a place to do that now, because it has been some time since we rolled out the route map, the training, and the stuff that we have done, and there is a lot of stuff online that people can access. We need to recognise examples, such as some of the cases that I have talked about of forced labour, sexual exploitation and other forms of human trafficking that are evident in Wales, and identify those in an anonymised way. That might not be a bad thing and people might start to look at what is around them in a very different way. However, Steve needs to make sure that we are in a position to respond before we do a high-profile campaign, because I am nervous that, while in some places they will respond effectively, they may not in others. That could be counter-productive.

[110] **Mr Jones:** There is a big role to work through policing plans and local plans, and through community groups. Rather than doing a big tv advertising campaign, doing it through our professional organisations and the interfaces that we have with the voluntary sector and communities through our planning processes would probably be quite a good way of building awareness.

[111] **Christine Chapman:** I do not think that Members want to ask any more questions. I thank the panel for attending today. It has been a very interesting session that will contribute to our inquiry on this particular issue. We will send you a transcript of the proceedings to check for factual accuracy.

10:11

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill
y Cyfarfod**
**Motion Under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Remainder of the Meeting**

[112] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).

[113] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

[114] **Christine Chapman:** The next meeting is on 4 December, when the committee will take evidence from the First Minister, Carwyn Jones AM, on the Welsh language.

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.11.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.11.*