

Sir Thomas P Winsor
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
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The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP - Home Secretary
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Our ref: SP4793

8 November 2017

Dear Home Secretary and Sir Thomas

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report – Stolen freedom: the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking

I am writing to you with my comments on the recent HMICFRS thematic report entitled 'Stolen freedom: the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking', as required by Section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. I would like to start by saying that as Police and Crime Commissioner for the Humberside Police area I welcome this latest thematic inspection report.

Modern slavery is a real and present threat to the values our country holds dear. We must never assume it is absent from any community across the Humber area. As I state in my Police and Crime Plan, there is no typical victim and this applies to modern slavery, which tends to be more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, minority or socially excluded groups. As the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Humberside area, I am focusing locally on how we work together to provide services to victims and the vulnerable that meet their needs.

We have an established and joined-up partnership approach called the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership. This is a strategic partnership of over sixty front-line organisations and other agencies across the Humber area, dedicated to tackling all forms of modern slavery. The partnership has recently carried out extensive training, including with front-line officers and staff. This training was developed and presented in conjunction with the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE). It covered identification, victim focus, reporting of community intelligence, and awareness of responsibilities. My own community engagement staff were also involved in this training.

I share concerns raised in the report, that while legislation has been strengthened, it has not yet resulted in a concerted overall response nationally. There is a high-level of inconsistency in the police response and that of others. This leads to poor outcomes for many vulnerable victims.

When developing my Police and Crime Plan, I identified that many victims were reluctant to report issues to the police or other agencies. To increase the reach of victim provision it is essential, in my view, to properly identify as



many victims as possible. This requires analysis of vulnerability and victim needs, understanding how and when to intervene to prevent the transition from vulnerability to victimhood.

I am disappointed that the report indicates a general reluctance nationally to 'turn over the stone' by some senior officers and that neighbourhood officers don't always believe the public are either interested in or sympathetic to victims. These attitudes must be countered. There is still sadly a perception that modern slavery and human trafficking doesn't happen 'on our doorstep', but this is not correct. It can occur in any community, although undoubtedly to varying extents, and I hope that working with the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership we can continue to raise awareness and encourage people to report their concerns.

In respect of crime recording, the report raises concerns about the under recording of modern slavery and human trafficking and the consequential non-investigation of such crimes. I am concerned that the report identifies Humberside Police as having one of the lowest levels of recorded offences of modern slavery and human trafficking. This suggests that locally there is still much work to do to properly understand the extent of the problem and, potentially, identify victims. It strengthens the case for the continued drive to work in partnership, so that we can bring together the knowledge and skills to identify, record and tackle these crimes that affect the most vulnerable in our society.

I will ensure that the Chief Constable properly considers the implications of this report so that processes to prioritise the use of his resources take full and proper account of the requirement to identify and provide a service to the most vulnerable in our society. I acknowledge there is much more to be done, but believe the investment in a true partnership approach to this threat offers the best hope of building towards sustainable outcomes for the people affected.

Yours sincerely



Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner

cc:

Nick Hurd MP

David Lloyd, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners

Lee Freeman, Chief Constable, Humberside Police

Michael Cunningham QPM, HM Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Northern Region

Councillor Evison, Chair of the Humberside Police and Crime Panel

