

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill 2013.

A Response on Behalf of Banbridge Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

Summary Response to the Key Principles

- Banbridge Policing and Community Safety Partnership supports the overall principles contained within the new Bill.
- Clause 4, we would agree with the concerns raised by the Department of Justice in relation to the compulsory minimal sentence that it would “apply equally to children and adults and also that judicial discretion would be compromised.” Whilst there is a need for a clear sanction, we would also support a greater level of judicial discretion.
- We welcome the inclusion of “any financial advantage” in Clause 6 to include non-monetary payment, such as food, shelter, alcohol, drugs and clothing.
- Essentially from a Policing and Community Safety perspective, we anticipate that PCSPs could positively assist as a delivery mechanism in raising awareness of the issue of human trafficking and to highlight some of the prevention measures and local strategy measures that are being employed to tackle this issue. To date Banbridge PCSP has supported “Freedom Acts”, a local organisation set up to raise awareness of human trafficking.
- Within the NI Community Safety Strategy, there is a focused target on encouraging reporting of crime and criminal activity. From a Policing and Community Safety perspective, PCSPs are well placed to support enhanced reporting on human trafficking incidents. For example Banbridge PCSP has worked collaboratively with Crimestoppers, Freedom Acts and the PSNI to raise awareness of the issue locally and encourage reporting mechanisms.
- We also welcome Lord Morrow’s response in relation to working co-operatively with “non-governmental and other relevant organisations” as we believe agencies working together in collaboration can help to support the overall awareness raising approach. These agencies can assist with heightened public awareness of the legislative changes, the impact, encouraging reporting of potential trafficking and also developing preventative approaches and support programs for those who have been victims of crime.

- In relation to Criminal Assets Funds, we support the fund being used both for law enforcement and community funds, however there remains a continued need to develop supportive programmes for those who are victims of trafficking. Therefore we are supportive of the move to ensure that adequate resources are made available to victims, and those who are most vulnerable within society as a result of being trafficked.
- Information sharing, data protection and collaborative working across agencies continue to present challenges at strategic and operational levels as demonstrated through recent child protection inquiries throughout the UK and beyond. We would encourage guidance measures at policy level to support discussion and exploration on best practice on how best to safeguard sensitive information and yet ensure effective communication amongst agencies and professionals in order to best safeguard rights and also support criminal investigations.

This response was created on behalf of Banbridge PCSP by:

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