



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further
Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill:
Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Institute
for Conflict Research

16 January 2014

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)
Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr Tom Elliott
Mr William Humphrey
Mr Alban Maginness
Ms Rosaleen McCorley
Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Jim Wells

Witnesses:

Dr Neil Jarman	Institute for Conflict Research
Mr Frank Soodeen	Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Chairperson: I formally welcome Frank Soodeen, senior public affairs manager from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and Neil Jarman, director of the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR). I hope that I have got your names correct. You are very welcome to the Committee meeting. It will be reported by Hansard and published in due course. I will hand over to you to initially give us a brief outline of your submission and then members will, I am sure, have some questions.

Mr Frank Soodeen (Joseph Rowntree Foundation): Thank you, Chairman, we are delighted to be here and thank you for the invitation. For those who are not aware of the JRF, it is a social policy charity with a mission to address the root causes of poverty and injustice across the United Kingdom. We do that through a programme of research and development, and one of the things that we have focused on for several years is forced labour. We have been slowly amassing, through a process of commissioning, what I think is today the largest continuous programme of study into the issue in the United Kingdom.

Our interest in Lord Morrow's Bill arises from the fact that one of the central themes of our research has been what we call a justice gap in relation to forced labour, labour exploitation and trafficking for labour exploitation. We will talk in due course about a number of issues that feed that into that.

Lord Morrow's Bill obviously sits alongside a trafficking Bill that is working its way through the Scottish Parliament, and I heard mention earlier of the draft modern slavery Bill that is being considered at Westminster. Our initial perceptions of Lord Morrow's Bill are that it does a number of things that we like. First, it recognises that there is a resources issue concerning the effective prosecution of existing law; secondly, it sets out the law around trafficking for labour exploitation more clearly for agencies;

and, thirdly, it extends protections to victims of trafficking for labour exploitation to afford them the kinds of support that are available to other victims of exploitation.

Partly arising, I think, as a symptom of the confusion around definitions and so on, the Bill does not necessarily address the need for support and compensation for victims of forced labour who may not have been trafficked. That absence is a common theme in all the legislation currently being considered across the jurisdictions, a point that we are making to all the relevant Parliaments.

So, that is kind of a top-line view. Neil is one of the people whom we have commissioned to look at the issue in Northern Ireland in depth, and he will make more detailed comments.

Dr Neil Jarman (Institute for Conflict Research): Thanks, Frank. As part of the Joseph Rowntree programme, ICR led a consortium that did a piece of research that looked at forced labour in Northern Ireland. That work was completed in 2010. We are currently doing a small review update on the issue for the JRF, which just happens to coincide nicely with discussions on the draft legislation. As Frank mentioned, we have nothing to say at this stage about clause 6 of the legislation. We are focusing purely on issues relating to forced labour.

One of the benefits of the legislation that we see is that it starts to make links between forced labour and human trafficking. However, it also keeps them separate. A lot of the time, we find that forced labour tends to get a bit obscured by trafficking. Also, at times, there is considerable overlap between the two issues. They are distinct. There are elements of forced labour that do not involve trafficking, and there are elements of trafficking that do not necessarily involve forced labour in the way in which we are talking about it. So, it is important to keep the two issues separate.

As regards the research that we have been doing fairly recently, there seems to be increasing recognition among statutory agencies and organisations that work on forced labour in Northern Ireland that there is a problem here. It is more of a problem than was recognised, perhaps, a few years ago. It is moving more towards being on par with trafficking for sexual exploitation, for example. So, there is an issue about recognition. It is very difficult to identify it in case studies, for a variety of reasons. In the 2010-11 report, we saw that some of the main areas involved were the fishing and mushroom-picking industries, particularly among some of the Roma community in Northern Ireland. At present, we are seeing some other areas emerging. Fruit picking, in the agriculture industry, has been identified in some locations. Roma people are being employed as casual labour for things such as recycling. There are also issues with shellfish collecting in some parts of Northern Ireland, and there are still ongoing issues in the fishing industry. So, we are seeing some areas in which there have been recurrent patterns over a number of years and some where people are identifying patterns that they had not identified before, which does not mean that they were not there previously: we had just not noticed them.

There also seems to be a cross-border issue, particularly where gangmasters are based in one jurisdiction and the work that they are bringing people to do is in the other. This creates problems for enforcement and identification. It is one of the things that have always been identified as being specific to Northern Ireland in the UK context. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK that has a land border with another jurisdiction. This means that when it comes to looking at forced labour, Northern Ireland, perhaps, has distinctive elements that do not apply in Scotland, England and Wales.

With regard to responding, we are pleased to see that clause 7 looks at effective responding and highlights issues such as training. One issue that we have noted is the lack of awareness of forced labour. Perhaps people are picking up on some aspects of employment, such as mistreatment or abuse, but not necessarily in a way that looks at it as forced labour; or they are looking at approaches for trafficking, but because there is not a clear indication of it, they are not recognising the forced labour aspect. We are also aware that there is an intelligence gap with regard to agencies being able or willing to share information that would enable the right agency to make the most effective response to the situation. We have also identified the need for better responses to be enabled for cross-border co-operation. Perhaps, that is not within the remit of the legislation. However, in operating any legislation — in particular, with regard to clause 7 — we would need to think about the cross-border dimension. Also, with regard to clause 16, on the special rapporteur, there is, perhaps, a need for any rapporteur to be able to think about the cross-border dimension in particular.

Finally, with regard to victims, there appears to be a particular difficulty for victims of forced labour to be able to secure an effective response. The current employment regulations and the work in appealing through tribunals are particularly challenging and difficult in the time frame involved due to the lack of legal aid for victims of forced labour. We are aware that the Department of Justice has

identified that item within its trafficking action plan, but we think that the issues in the Bill relating to the need to support the victims of trafficking should be extended to include victims of trafficking and forced labour.

We will leave it at that.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Neil, for your presentation.

You highlighted and identified the increasing problem of forced labour in Northern Ireland. In your submission you recommend that the assistance support measures in clause 10 of Lord Morrow's Bill should be made available to all victims of forced labour, not only those who have been trafficked. From your research, can you tell us what proportion of people in forced labour in Northern Ireland have not been trafficked? Do you have any such data?

Dr Jarman: It is difficult to say. Some people fall within the definition of trafficking in so far as there may have been some element of coercion or deception in them coming here. Some people have perhaps moved into that area as a result of being here legally but then, through being put out of work, visa problems or losing their visa, they have chosen to stay here and have moved into that area. So, there are some who would not fall within the classical definition of trafficking.

Numbers are small. One issue is that, at the moment, there is a lack of effective data to unpack the numbers. I understand that the Organised Crime Task Force is looking at UK-wide data to open up the Northern Ireland data to try to give us some details. At the moment, the detail is just not given. The number of people is given, but the data do not even give which industry they have been working in, so it is limited. We do not have some information. It is not there yet.

Mr Anderson: You talked about assistance and support measures. How many people do you estimate would be eligible for assistance each year?

Dr Jarman: When we did the piece of work in 2010, we found that people were identifying themselves as victims of forced labour only when they were seeking to leave the jurisdiction. They stayed in a working environment for as long as they felt that it was reasonably possible to do so. At some stage, that became impractical. Often, it was then a matter of departing, saying that: "We have done as much as we can. We are not going to seek legal redress, as we do not feel able to, and the few people who did, did not get very far with it." The tribunal process was taking too long for people to hang around. So, I am not sure that there would necessarily be very large numbers of victims, but it might enable those victims who want to stay in Northern Ireland and feel there is a possibility for effective recompense and response to their plight. That in turn might highlight the issues and encourage other people to go public on the problem. I do not suspect that it is going to be huge numbers though.

Mr Anderson: Also, on support and assistance, you are probably aware that immigration is a reserved matter and that the Assembly could not create any right to remain. What proportion — sorry; I keep asking about figures — of victims of forced labour who have not been trafficked fall into the category of not having a valid visa or resident permit?

Dr Jarman: Again, we are talking about small numbers. In that situation —

Mr Anderson: You say "small numbers". What do you mean by small?

Dr Jarman: So far, the numbers identified by the Organised Crime Task Force in forced labour have been fewer than 10 on an annual basis. We are not sure how far that is a clear assessment of the total number of people. However, the number coming through to the Criminal Justice Agency is small.

Mr Anderson: Do you have any ideas about how we could assist those victims?

Dr Jarman: Rather than trying to work out whether they were victims of trafficking before that assistance could kick in, if you accept them as being a victim of forced labour, that opens up the option for them to be treated in the same way as victims of trafficking with the right levels of support, the ability to stay, levels of assistance to return to their home country if they want to and an ability to

support the criminal justice system in pursuing the employers or gangmasters. That is what we are looking for, which is why we are saying that the remit should be expanded to include victims of trafficking and victims of forced labour, without assuming that they have to be victims of forced labour through trafficking.

Mr Soodeen: On the point about support for the victims of forced labour, one of the other messages to come out of a programme of research is that forced labour is at one end of a spectrum. You also have decent work at the other end, and there are gradations of labour exploitation that sit across the entire span. We mentioned the justice gap earlier, and one of the causal factors is that we have a regulatory system that is very low in interventions in the employment market. It is fairly light-touch, so when we think about how one can provide support for people who are suffering from extreme labour exploitation or forced labour, it is not necessarily just a case of thinking about the numbers that might come through the specific enforcement system. It is also about how we are able to strengthen the kinds of measures and support that already exist to identify people who are in difficult circumstances and encourage them to come forward. Furthermore, we need to encourage those people who might be dealing with them, whether they are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, or whatever, to share data and information with enforcement agencies in particularly egregious cases.

On Neil's point about the numbers being small from a criminal enforcement perspective, yes they are, but there is also the question of how you squeeze down on the level of labour exploitation. There are a number of ancillary things that you can do around that that would not necessarily lead to a huge deluge in the criminal justice system but would lead to better outcomes for the people who are suffering.

Mr Anderson: What role do you see for employers in the business and commercial sector in addressing the problem of forced labour?

Mr Soodeen: I think that it is really important to understand that there is a legal response, but it goes far beyond that. It is also for businesses, trade bodies and individual consumers to address. One of the things that we are trying to encourage off the back of our research is that businesses look very closely at their supply chains. We know that criminal cases of forced labour interact with "legitimate" areas of the economy and different parts of the supply chain. It requires UK businesses to understand where those interactions lie, and where we take the message next is to be a big focus for JRF in 2014. We are doing a lot of work with the Parliaments, but this absolutely has to be about working with businesses and trade bodies, getting them to use their corporate social responsibility (CSR) agendas where possible and getting them to try to mobilise the public to get interested in this in a similar way as it did the Fair Trade movement, and so on.

Dr Jarman: One thing that I have found out from the research is that people are saying that in some of the areas in which if not forced labour but problematic exploitation was taking place, the situation has improved, and not purely through enforcement but through a number of factors. For example, in some ways, in the meat processing industry, where some complaints were raised previously, people are saying that the direct employment of workers rather than employment through an agency chain has led to some improvements. Some of the light that was shone on the mushroom industry has led the supermarkets and some of the larger providers to tidy up their act and improve workers' situation. As the issue starts to be raised across the production line, including in purchasing areas for supermarkets and the trade union movement, and as some of the migrant workers themselves become more established here, we hear about the capacity to engage increasing. People are raising issues in a way that they were not a few years ago. In some areas, the situation is improving. The problem is that there is a vulnerable core group of people who perhaps are very much on the margins socially, legally and economically, and they are the ones who are really being squeezed.

Mr Anderson: Do you think that the issues that we are talking about here with employers and businesses could be reflected in the Bill in some way to strengthen it?

Dr Jarman: In clause 7, as to how we respond to the issue, it needs to be made clear that it is not just a criminal justice response but a wider social one that is required. There is a need to ensure that you bring in a wider range of agencies. There are issues around some of the bodies with responsibility for employment regulation. I have heard that it is all quite fragmentary and not very well connected. People will go in because they have responsibility for x but do not look at issues around y and do not pass information on to other agencies. We need to look at how the different agencies link up, whether they be criminal justice and/or employment regulation bodies or whatever. Again, that would bring in employers. For example, Business in the Community (BITC) was very proactive on the integration of

migrant workers from around 2003 until 2007. There is a willingness among some sections of the business community to engage on the issues.

Mr Anderson: I have heard that a consistent problem on the subject of forced labour is the existence of a continuum between employment conditions that are in some way exploitative and what might be called slavery. Will you outline, from your clearly extensive experience in the area, what you see as the difference between the two?

Dr Jarman: There are levels of exploitation across the employment spectrum. There may be relatively minor things such as not paying correct overtime rates or not making holiday payments. That can increase until you reach a point of a legal definition of the term "forced labour", which may include holding documents, not paying money, overcharging people for additional services such as housing, threats, coercion, and so on. Everybody acknowledges that, between those two poles, there is a grey area where you cross over into a form of what is considered to be forced labour. However, the exact point on the spectrum at which you cross over from serious exploitation into forced labour and modern slavery is not clearly defined, and I do not think that it can ever be clearly defined. It depends on a variety of factors kicking in in the specific context.

Mr Anderson: Have you an idea how we as legislators should try to tackle the two issues?

Dr Jarman: The International Labour Organization (ILO) gives indicators around what forced labour is. Going back to clause 7, I believe that there is a need for information out there, particularly for the police, in order to ensure that all officers are more aware of the various factors that can be seen to constitute forced labour. Similarly, various agencies with employment responsibilities need to be aware of the issues and be looking for them. Clause 2 contains something of a definition of slavery offences. Linking those and making some reference to the ILO position might be another point that you can make. However, a lot of this is down to the capacity of those on the ground who are going to investigate and about making sure that they know what they are looking at and recognise that it is a serious offence.

Mr Soodeen: On your specific point about legislation — it is important to do justice to Lord Morrow's work — one of the biggest problems for enforcement agencies has been that a lot of the existing legislation is scattered across, for instance, immigration law and the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. We need a clear Bill with a clear definition. The relationship between legislation and action, and how that is mediated through money and resources, is always interesting. However, even having a clearly defined Bill would represent an advance, albeit a small one.

Mr Anderson: May I ask an overall question? What additional measures would you like to see added to the Bill to strengthen the approach that we take to forced labour in Northern Ireland?

Dr Jarman: We made the point that, for references to victims of trafficking, as in the first couple of clauses, which talk about human trafficking and slavery offences, we would like to see human trafficking and slavery offences run through the headlines of all the offences there so that there is not a difference between human trafficking offences here and forced labour or slavery offences. That would mean that the latter are not seen as lesser offences for which the victims do not merit the same level of support.

Clause 7, which is around resourcing an investigation, could flag issues such as intelligence-sharing on a specific issue. Highlighting the need to address cross-border dimensions could be another element that is revised or included in the clause. The cross-border element is an important dimension because of its uniqueness in the Northern Ireland situation.

The only other point that I will flag up — this was not included in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation submission — relates to the UK Government's draft Modern Slavery Bill, which you heard about in a previous discussion on sentencing levels. Under the draft Bill, the Government have highlighted the importance of treating modern-day slavery as a very serious offence and raised the sentences for trafficking and exploitation for forced labour to life sentences. To my mind, if Northern Ireland has a minimum tariff of two years, there is something of a discrepancy between the two jurisdictions, and I think that you might need to reflect on that. If the British Government are pushing through a higher level of tariff and seriousness for England and Wales, that perhaps needs to be considered for here, too.

Mr Anderson: Is that something that you would like to see?

Dr Jarman: It needs to be recognised that modern slavery is a serious offence. I think that it would be an anomaly to have in the UK two very different sentence levels for the same sorts of offences.

Mr Soodeen: To add to that, again going back to the Bill, JRF has an equivocal attitude to the provisions on, for instance, the rapporteur, because we think that, although it is useful to inject political accountability at one level, you also need operational coordination. On the point about there being existing legislation and regulation, it is about using that properly.

The term "joined-up government" is overused, but, to give an example, Westminster's announcement last week about a renewed campaign on the enforcement of the national minimum wage very much directly intersects with what we are discussing. On Neil's point about things such as indicators, it is really only by pursuing those lines as much as possible and understanding how they fit together that you get a better sense of the true scale of the problem and are then able to make a difference.

Dr Jarman: We have the beginnings of structures to respond to some of the issues, through by bringing people together. For example, we have the Organised Crime Task Force and the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP). Therefore, I think that we can build on what we have.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, gentlemen.

The Chairperson: Ms McCorley is next.

Ms McCorley: My question has already been asked.

The Chairperson: Great.

Mr Humphrey: Thank you both very much for your presentation. Neil, I think that you said that you were steering clear of saying anything, or were not willing to say anything, about clause 6. Why?

Dr Jarman: Because the presentation is based on the research that we have done, and that research has been into forced labour. JRF is coming from the basis of an evidence-based presentation, and our assessment is based on that.

Mr Humphrey: It is nothing to do with the —

Dr Jarman: No.

Mr Soodeen: We just do not have anything on it.

Mr Humphrey: I just wanted clarification.

Dr Jarman: I have read the debates from the Chamber — there have been plenty — and I felt that more light needed to be shone on the issue of forced labour.

Mr Humphrey: You mention the cross-border element and, obviously, the weakness of the UK's position because of the land border with the Republic. Frank, on the movement of people and their being trafficked against their will, will you make your report known and give a copy to the Irish authorities?

Mr Soodeen: That is a really interesting question. We have always operated within the boundaries of the United Kingdom, so that has not come up, I am afraid. Going back to Neil's point on the specific relationship that exists here, I can say that the research is there, and it is there to be used by policymakers and officials. We hope that you will show it —

Mr Humphrey: Will you make it available only if the Irish authorities ask you? You will not proactively send a copy to them.

Mr Soodeen: We could easily do so. Everything is available publicly on our website, and that could be promoted globally.

Mr Humphrey: That would be useful, because it is an issue that faces both jurisdictions, and the border means nothing to those who are being abused and trafficked.

Dr Jarman: When we did the report in 2010-11, we looked at that issue. People thought that there was an issue there but could not identify it. They now seem to be able to identify something. I have been talking to people working in the NGO sector in Dublin, and I know that they have been pushing for a better legislative response from the Government, so it may be something that we will have to have a —

Mr Humphrey: That would be useful.

You talked about the small number, Neil, and the belief is that, for forced labour, there are fewer than 10 cases annually.

Dr Jarman: That is the official figure at the moment.

Mr Humphrey: That is the point. Those are official figures, but it is such a clandestine industry that no one really knows. Those of us who were in Stockholm in December are aware that, for example, young women who were being abused and forced into prostitution who came from Romania were being managed from Bucharest. It is very difficult for the Swedish police to trace and track people when the root of the evil is in Romania. Given the nature of this illicit industry, do you agree with me that perhaps the low figures are much higher because of a lack of bona fide, robust information and statistics?

Mr Soodeen: I cannot make a supposition about the Northern Ireland figures specifically, but we commissioned Alistair Geddes, who is a human geographer at the University of Dundee, to attempt to come to a reasoned conclusion about roughly the scale of the problem of trafficking for labour exploitation by looking at the official figures and thinking about all the other proxy data sources that we had. Other people have done that before — for example, the Work and Pensions Committee in the UK Parliament — and came roughly to a safe level. The official figures were probably around 10% to 15% of the real figure, so, for the UK, Alistair Geddes arrived at a figure of around 3,500 people. That comes with a lot of different caveats applied, but we stand by the conclusion that the problem across the UK as a whole runs into the thousands.

Mr Humphrey: Neil, we are going to hear from the Department of Justice later, but its draft consultation states that, from the evidence available, it appears that the level of human trafficking and slavery in Northern Ireland is lower than in neighbouring jurisdictions. In your experience, and given the work that you have just finished, is that your view?

Dr Jarman: I have not looked at levels in comparative terms. What I will say is that I do think that there is probably more of it than is currently acknowledged, and in diversity of forms. We have started to see small numbers of children being trafficked into Northern Ireland, including for forced labour, and that did not really register as an issue two or three years ago. The more that we dig, the more that we acknowledge it and the more that we direct people to look at it, the more that we will recognise that it exists. Another reason that there is probably more of it than we think is that, as you open up the cross-border dimension, people coming into Dublin can see it as a route into the UK, and vice versa. When people first started talking about trafficking for sexual exploitation, the response was almost that none of that was happening here. However, as soon as we started looking at it, we recognised that it was happening and that it was a growing problem. I suspect that it is the same with forced labour.

Mr Wells: I think that you are the only group that does not mention clause 6, in all the scores of groups that have contacted us. I think that we are well covered on that aspect of the legislation. However, I want to ask you this one question: do you not consider a woman who is trafficked into Northern Ireland for the purposes of prostitution to be someone who is being forced to work, and, therefore, does that person not fall into the category that you are concerned with?

Dr Jarman: The Joseph Rowntree programme explicitly excluded exploitation for sexual purposes from its remit partly because there was a lot of work being done on that, and it was seen to be the main focus of the work, and partly because there was a need to look at exploitation for labour purposes other than sexual. Therefore, yes, it is a form of labour exploitation, but it is a distinctive form, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation does not, as far as I am concerned, have an evidence

base to engage with that issue. As you say, there are plenty of other people who are prepared to talk about it.

Mr Wells: For obvious reasons, I read your report with particular reference to the fishing industry. It is an issue of concern for me. You cited the 2008 issue, in which I was involved, about the Filipino workers who left Northern Ireland. They were treated dreadfully. They were getting \$525 a month to work in incredibly difficult conditions. They were sleeping on the boat between Christmas and New Year's Day in dreadful conditions and with no heat. I telephoned some of those gentlemen in the Philippines, and four of them were making every effort that they could to get back to Kilkeel to do exactly the same. I asked them why, and they said that they accepted that, by UK standards, they were being treated very poorly but that, by Filipino standards, \$525 a month was an absolute fortune. They felt that it was the only way in which they could earn money to sustain their families in Manila. How does it constitute trafficking or forced labour, if the men want to come back?

Mr Soodeen: This goes back to definitions, and one of the important things about the definition of the term "forced labour" is that it is maintaining someone in a situation at work in which they are under threat or penalty that they did not agree to voluntarily. Therefore, it is the difference between a group of workers who are being underpaid and exploited — you might argue that that is just a "force of globalisation" issue. However, it applies particularly in cases in which you brought them in on a different deal and are using their vulnerability and the threat of force, or are withholding documents, and so on, to impose something on them that they have not signed up to. That is an instance of forced labour.

Mr Wells: You do not see someone who wishes to come back, albeit to be treated to a standard that is unacceptable in a Northern Ireland or UK context, as trafficking or forced labour?

Mr Soodeen: It is interesting, because it could be trafficking for labour exploitation, as opposed to trafficking for forced labour. That goes back to Neil's point, which is that, on the spectrum, there is an enormous grey area, and that is one of the reasons that enforcement is so difficult.

Dr Jarman: Often it is difficult to identify people and get them to come forward, and the problem is the argument that you make, which is that the money is better or the conditions are no worse than they would be working in another area. A person working in one of the enforcement agencies said to me that the point is that this is the UK, in which there are other terms and conditions, employment laws and regulations that people have to abide by. Therefore, it does not really matter. The fact is that laws or employment regulations are not being adhered to and people are being exploited, even if they are apparently willing to be exploited.

Mr Wells: I raised this point last week, and it is worth asking again. It is a question that troubles me. Some of the people who are being trafficked come from dreadfully poor countries, such as Vietnam and Moldova, where conditions are absolutely awful. The choice for many of those people is between absolutely appalling conditions or wretched conditions. In other words, even though they are being badly treated and trafficked in the UK, they are better off materially than they would be back at home. Those are the sorts of choices that such people are making, and we are trying to impose a Western white man's view of things — an Anglo-Saxon view of things — on people who, by our standards, are wretchedly poor. No matter how badly treated they are in the UK, they are still better off. How do you deal with that?

Dr Jarman: Were you to ask them a slightly different question about whether they would prefer to be paid a national minimum wage, offered housing that met certain standards for heat and have sufficient food to live on — as Frank said, decent employment conditions — or working in the conditions that you have described, they would probably say that they would prefer the former. It comes down to something like that continuum, where the conditions in their home jurisdiction may be poor, and, as such, they are prepared to accept something better. We should at the very least aspire to the same sorts of conditions that we would expect for everybody from a UK background.

Mr Soodeen: There is a further dimension to that. One of the reasons that JRF got into this issue in the first place, which goes back to our core mission of addressing poverty and injustice, was a recognition that forced labour can, at the more vulnerable end of the labour market, act as a further downward drag. You asked why we should be concerned. Yes, there is an issue about people's choice and autonomy, but when it comes to the way in which we run our own society, what we think the standards are and

what the opportunities are that we want to make available, we have to recognise that there is an interplay between a permissive attitude — what we call the pro-employer attitude — and the pro-worker attitude that would not just affect those individuals but inevitably have a knock-on effect on what people who were born and raised here can access.

Mr Wells: That is a very good answer, which will probably be quoted in the Chamber at some stage. That is very helpful.

Finally, are you saying that you support the entire Bill with the tweaks that you have suggested? Are you happy with the concept and willing to support it?

Mr Soodeen: Yes. We think that it takes us further than where we are. Obviously, it does not do everything that we want it to do. No piece of legislation can.

Mr Wells: Since you made your submission, the Government on the mainland have published the draft Modern Slavery Bill. Would you have changed any of your submission to us had you been aware at the time of that legislation?

Mr Soodeen: No. The omissions that we refer to in this Bill are largely omissions that continue to exist in the draft Modern Slavery Bill. In fact, when that Bill is presented to the Joint Select Committee, we will make exactly the same points to it around how to extend protection to victims of forced labour who are not necessarily victims of trafficking.

Mr Wells: You may not be aware — we got this only this morning — that agreements have been reached between Lord Morrow and the Minister of Justice on certain technical issues, and that has moved things forward. That is hot off the press.

The Chairperson: Finally, when we were in Sweden, there was an indication from the Stockholm authorities that people who had been trafficked into forced labour were being forced to engage in fruit picking and that type of activity but increasingly were also being used for sexual exploitation. In your work, have you identified that that mix of forced labour is taking place across a range of different activities that falls into the category of sexual exploitation?

Dr Jarman: I have not come across that, nor has anyone raised it with me at this stage.

Mr Soodeen: We have not come across the sexual exploitation side of that. It goes back to the point that we made in our submission about whether you can use your own good offices to push for the extension of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) remit. We have evidence that as you press down on one area it pops up somewhere else, so we need to have something about how we make sure that our agency is responsive to what is a very changing landscape.

The Chairperson: Do you think that it would be practical and beneficial to have separate arrangements in Northern Ireland in the form of additional powers?

Mr Soodeen: Our understanding of the law is not necessarily that that is possible. We are asking that Lord Morrow and you all, with your own lobbying power and relationships with the UK Government, make the point that there are a whole number of instances in industries in which modern slavery is being identified, whether it is in construction or in hospitality care and catering, which the GLA currently does not cover. Again, that might be a way to make headway.

The Chairperson: Do you want to follow up on that point, Mr Humphrey?

Mr Humphrey: You made the point about pressure being applied and the problem reappearing elsewhere. That is exactly why it would be useful for your piece of work to be given to the Irish authorities. You are talking about an intra-UK context, but, if pressure is applied in Newry, it can manifest itself in Dublin and vice versa. We are two member states in the European Union. The protection of workers is crucial. We do not want to be the soft underbelly for this issue if the Republic, for example, brings in legislation that is more stringent and tougher than ours or vice versa. We need to tighten up on that issue.

The Chairperson: Thank you both very much for coming to the Committee. It has been very helpful for us.