

# **Gloucestershire Anti-Slavery Partnership**

## **Annual Review 2022-2023**

### **Introduction**

The Gloucestershire Anti-Slavery Partnership (GASP) aims to bring together public sector organisations, the voluntary sector and local enterprise to support and enable the discovery of and response to incidents of human trafficking and modern slavery in Gloucestershire. This is achieved through a victim-centred, multi-disciplinary and collaborative community effort.

The partnership also feeds into the South West regional Anti-Slavery Partnership, coordinated by the Bristol-based Anti-Slavery charity Unseen. Gloucestershire joins the other local partnerships in the South West as well as other public agencies to assess threats, share best practice and implement a regional strategy to prevent and respond to modern slavery.

For more information about the GASP and its members, visit the webpage:

<https://www.aspartnership.org.uk/gloucestershire>

### **2022 - 2023 Achievements**

The partnership and constituent partners have had several successes in 2022/23, some of which can be attributed to partnership working to raise awareness of modern slavery in Gloucestershire and to empower local people to tackle the issue.

Partners were very pleased that the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) accepted an invite to the partnership meeting in June. At the meeting, the PCC outlined the priorities in his Police and Crime Plan and assured GASP members of his commitment to address modern slavery and work with neighbouring Police Forces to tackle cross-border issues including 'County Lines'. He believed that the increase of 600 in Police staffing would help in this regard as it would provide a greater neighbourhood presence. The PCC undertook to attend at least one Partnership meeting each year to provide an update on activities (Attendance planned for 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 meeting).

In June 2022, Natasha Mitra, Head of Helpline Services from Unseen, provided a high level overview of the national statistics around modern slavery. Data was gathered on the type of exploitation, sector, geographical location, type of location, methods of control, recruitment methods, relationships, victims, exploiters and callers/contacts. There were around 200 local cases through the National Referral Mechanism each year (around four every week). It was a complex picture and the real number in the county was likely to be significantly higher. Although the reporting process was improving, victims were often unheard of until an incident was reported.

### ***Key Police Operations – Gloucestershire Constabulary***

In 2022-23, we have developed a large intelligence led job in respect of human trafficking and the exploitation of a number of adult females. We have also been developing another investigation into human trafficking and labour exploitation for several hand car washes in Gloucestershire.

### ***Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue (GFRS)***

GFRS marked Anti-Slavery Day on 18th October with internal communications about slavery and to support Gloucestershire County Council communications. Prevention and protection managers joined the Escape Line training and as a result GFRS asked for the same training to be given to the whole team and the SkillZONE volunteers. That took place in January and was attended by 15 volunteers and around 9 staff. GFRS have used their internal communication channels to encourage all GFRS staff to take part in the modern slavery training on Learn Pro Fire and have encouraged volunteers and staff to download the Unseen app. During Business fire safety visits, staff from the GFRS protection team have improved their identification of businesses where people may have been at risk of slavery or exploitation. The increased awareness has also contributed to extensive engagement in Cinderford, where the prevention team were concerned that some staff of a local employer could have been trafficked. This was found not to be the case, but it enabled better support to be offered to a large Romanian workforce and started the conversations across multiple agencies about how they could identify slavery in local businesses or communities. GFRS would like to acknowledge GASP's support, which enabled the Escapeline training delivered to the prevention Team. This has improved the workforce's understanding of county lines activity and criminal exploitation. The prevention management team also took part in an online webinar from Unseen about criminal and labour exploitation. GFRS have made slavery and exploitation a focus of prevention activity and have shared information across the organisation to increase awareness for the many staff who are working in our community.

### ***Training***

In October 2022, Gloucestershire County Council organised a series of modern slavery training sessions with Escapeline. Escapeline is a charity help young people to stay safe, by educating children, parents, schools, social workers, DSL's, police and other agencies/partners about how child exploitation and grooming works in rural and provincial areas, and what to look out for and by teaching protective strategies. They run awareness-raising campaigns and work closely with services, they help the families and carers of exploited young people and those at risk of exploitation through non-judgemental support and mentoring. These training sessions were made available to GCC colleagues and all GASP partners across four separate half day sessions and 185 colleagues and partners attended. Following the success of these training sessions, GCC funded further training sessions with Escapeline for specific organisations including Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service and Gloucestershire Jobs Centres.

The Council's eLearning module continues to be available on a county-wide platform for professionals and members of the public to find out more about modern slavery. The eLearning introduces modern slavery, the common indicators and explains what to do if you have any suspicions. From the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 5th March 2023, 786 people completed this modern slavery eLearning.

Find out how to register for a free LearnPro account to access the training [here](#).

### ***Ongoing Challenges***

Modern slavery and human trafficking is often a hidden and multifaceted issue. The partnership must face the challenges of tackling modern slavery whilst thinking creatively

and collaboratively to affect positive change in this area. Some of the key challenges in Gloucestershire include:

- There is limited, but growing, public awareness of the issue;
- Modern slavery is one of competing priorities in a context of limited resources;
- There is a lack of accurate understanding of the prevalence of modern slavery locally;
- Low rates of referrals – impacted even more by the ongoing pandemic;
- The complexity and wide variety of crimes which come under the umbrella of modern slavery and human trafficking, making cases hard to identify;
- Difficulties in finding and engaging with adult victims who are not otherwise known to public agencies;
- Challenges of raising awareness and identifying cases in a largely rural setting;
- Incorporating and amplifying the voices of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking in our strategies and collective services.

If you see someone who may be a victim of modern slavery, you can call the police on 101, Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700 or anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.