EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING

WRITTEN SUBMISSION RECEIVED FROM GLASGOW COMMUNITY AND SAFETY SERVICES WHICH MANAGES TARA (TRAFFICKING AWARENESS RAISING ALLIANCE)

INTRODUCTION

1. Glasgow Community and Safety Services (GCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry into Migration and Trafficking. GCSS manages TARA which has 6 years experience of providing support provision to trafficked women in Scotland and has therefore built a wealth of specialised experience and knowledge on this complex issue and the response is therefore in relation to questions h, i, j, k and l. However, there may be a crossover with some of the issues related to migration raised in the other questions.

2. GCSS is a charitable organisation formed by Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Police to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and promote community safety in the city. GCSS has specific responsibility for taking forward work on violence against women on behalf of the Council. Managing support provision for women involved in prostitution and women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation provides a wealth of specialised knowledge on the issue of prostitution and trafficking and in particular the experience and needs of women. There have been robust, strategic and well developed partnership arrangements in Glasgow to address the various issues of violence against women and children since 1998. It is also worth noting that Commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking are priorities within the City’s Annual Strategic Safety Assessment.

3. The role of the TARA service is to identify and support women over 18 who have been trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. TARA provides a comprehensive assessment of needs including risk and offers a range of support services, including crisis accommodation dependant on individual need. Since TARA’s inception in 2004, the main aims have been to raise awareness of the issue of trafficking in women for commercial sexual exploitation, to better understand their needs, to continue to develop our specialised support service and to provide existing Glasgow based organisations with the necessary skills to support women to socially and vocationally integrate or reintegrate into their chosen communities. There have been effective and close working relationships with colleagues in Strathclyde Police, UK Border Agency, health, Social Work Services and other voluntary organisations to achieve these aims.
RESPONSE

What is the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns? and
What is the degree of awareness of the rights of migrants?

4. Comments on the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns and the awareness of rights are confined to human trafficking of adults. There is mixed awareness amongst key frontline staff of the rights of trafficked persons, in particular the Council of Europe Convention and the resultant National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which has been in operation since 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2009. Colleagues from the public sector, NGO and solicitors providing immigration advice are often either unaware of the NRM and the rights it may afford a possible VoT (Victim of Trafficking) or unclear about who may be eligible to enter the NRM process.

5. There can often be confusion around people for whom there is ‘no recourse to public funds’ and whether assistance can be made available. Local authorities have different policies on concerning duties and powers in dealing with this group of migrants. This may be a barrier to trafficking victims seeking assistance and requiring access to mainstream services such as emergency housing.

6. The lack of clear guidance for organisations supporting potential victims of trafficking can make it difficult for information advising people of their rights to be accessed. There are some materials available but not widely disseminated or available in languages other than English.

What is the sale of the trafficking issue, in terms of the number of people involved and the geographical areas which people trafficked tend to be sourced from?

7. It is important to stress that Human Trafficking is not just about crossing borders and that UK nationals can be trafficked. Women may be moved around the UK for the purposes of prostitution and internal trafficking is an area of growing concern. It is important to focus on the deception and coercion involved and that this should be of primary concern and less focus given to how women entered the UK as this may hinder the effective identification of all VoTs.

8. One of the most common questions asked of those working with VoTs is the prevalence of Human Trafficking in Scotland. In order to assist in answering the question the most recent statistical information from TARA follows:

During the period 1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2009 to 31\textsuperscript{st} of March 2010
- 47 women were referred
- Ages ranged from 18 years to 45 years
- The 3 most common nationalities were, Nigerian, Brazilian and Chinese (see below for full information)
5 of the above referrals were for women who had been trafficked for Domestic Servitude – details for the Migrant Helpline were provided to the referring agencies
14 had not been trafficked but had survived rape, sexual assault, prostitution, domestic abuse and forced marriage
5 women either did not engage or did not contact the project
1 woman is waiting to be assessed.
22 women have received support from TARA
16 have engaged with the project and are being provided with long term support (Over 4 weeks)
5 have received short term support (less than 4 weeks)
16 of these 22 women have had some form of direct contact with Scottish Police Forces – 73%
11 of the 22 women were trafficked into and exploited in Scotland, from Aberdeen to Stranraer.
The Scottish Police Forces who have been in contact with these women are Lothian and Borders, Strathclyde, Fife and Dumfries and Galloway.

9. The most common source countries are West African (Nigeria in particular), SE Asian and, over the course of the last year a significant increase of, Brazilian women referred to the project. Information from the UKHTC suggests that Chinese and Nigerian are the most common nationalities of people referred in to the NRM process. A weekly drop in service for women involved in indoor prostitution has currently 180 women registered with approximately 50% being foreign. Whilst it is not suggested that all of these women are trafficked, staff are aware of the organised nature of arrangements and that women are moved around to provide fresh faces in different parts of the country.
10. There is concern that the Olympic Games in London and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow may increase the threat of human trafficking into the UK and preventative measures need to be put in place now. There is evidence to suggest that trafficking and prostitution increases in places where large sporting events are being held e.g. 2004 Athens Olympics and the 2006 World Cup in Germany. Glasgow’s view is that creating a hostile environment is the most effective barrier to those seeking to exploit such opportunities. The more complacency and tolerance there is with regard to the sex industry in host cities the more attractive it will be to organised gangs and exploiters.

What is the nature of the problem? Are people trafficked primarily for reasons related to sexual exploitation or with regard to false labour?

11. TARA supports women trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation however there have been referrals for women who were trafficked for labour exploitation or domestic servitude and who had experienced sexual violence as a direct result. However it is widely accepted internationally that the majority of trafficking is of women and children and the majority of them are trafficked to meet the demand of the sex industry. Given that Scotland has an active sex industry we would assume that is the case here. Indeed, Amnesty Scotland’s report “Scotland’s Slaves, An Amnesty International Briefing on Trafficking in Scotland, 2008” highlights that “Glasgow has the highest number of people involved in the sex industry outside of London and that approximately 50% of those involved are from overseas”. This report also notes that although Scotland should have less than a 10% share of the UK crime figures in proportion to the population, ACPOS estimates that it has 13.5% of the human trafficking trade.

12. UKHTC data from April to December 2009 breaking down NRM referrals and their exploitation type demonstrates that trafficking for sexual exploitation was the most common referral e.g. 193 adult females during that period compared to 73 for the purpose of domestic servitude and 27 for forced labour.

13. Whilst individual woman have different stories there are common threads in their experiences which could be considered:

- Previous experience of violence, abuse or trauma
- Someone else arranged their travel and documentation
- A loan was agreed and to be paid off in their first few wages, often the debt lies with family members in their home countries
- Assistance from a good Samaritan, offered work abroad, came with a ‘boyfriend’, family member or ‘agent’
- Women may have thought they were coming to be hairdressers or domestic maids or may have known they’d be involved in prostitution but unaware of the reality of their situation in the UK
- Exploited in off street prostitution
- Moved throughout the UK
14. It is the demand from the ‘sex industry’ and men seeking to buy sex which leads to the supply of women. Advertising for sexual services is now at an overwhelming level on the internet, in newspapers and in magazines. Women are marketed according to racial stereotypes and often have little control over the sexual services they are expected to provide and even less access to sexual health services. Websites for the male purchasers of sex such as Punternet clearly show the nature of demand and the general lack of respect shown to women involved in prostitution.

15. It is increasingly concerning that women may be trafficked for multiple purposes, for example TARA is currently supporting a young woman who was commercially sexually exploited and also exploited for cannabis cultivation labour exploitation.

**Given the degree of criminality that tends to be involved in human trafficking what problems does this present for public sector agencies seeking to assist the victims of this activity?**

16. The complexity of providing support to VoTs and responding to safety needs and encouraging them to talk to law enforcement colleagues can be a difficult issue. It is important to abide by a clear confidentiality policy and explain this to women who wish to access support, enabling them to make an informed decision about who has access to their information. Women are advised that a completely confidential service will be respected unless information is disclosed which gives concerns for either their safety or the safety of others. A risk assessment is used to identify if a woman is at risk from her trafficker and appropriate measures would be negotiated.

17. Many women have had poor experiences with police (either in their own country or here in the UK) and will be reluctant to disclose to them. This can sometimes lead to tensions in partnership working as there can be a perception from law enforcement colleagues that every woman should be referred to the police as a matter of course due to the serious nature of the crime. The complex and shaming nature of the crimes however mean that not all women wish to report, a situation similar to the crime of rape.

18. 74% of the woman in TARA’s current caseload have either been referred by the police or have provided statements. In some other cases elements of women’s stories have been shared anonymously with police colleagues, using an agreed 3rd party reporting system. Women need a lot of reassurance that they will be taken seriously by the police and that their safety is of paramount importance. Police ability to develop rapport and show concern and respect for women is critical in terms of accessing full information and cooperation, again similar to the issues of rape and sexual assault.

19. Traffickers also convince women that as they are here illegally they will be deported if they go to police, they may have been told that they will be prosecuted for prostitution offences or women may fear they will not be believed. Women are routinely terrified of their traffickers and genuinely fearful of the consequences of being seen to ‘co-operate’ with the police no
matter if they have been identified immediately after escaping a situation or if it is historical.

20. West African women in particular are often reluctant to disclose if they have undergone a ritual or ‘ju-ju’ oath as they believe that this will result in their death or the death of others.

21. Often SE Asian women will have borrowed money, the loan secured with their family at home, and are reluctant to accept any offer of assistance as money must be remitted home to their families to make the repayments. Their families may be subjected to threats and violence if these repayments are missed which places pressure on women to continue their involvement in prostitution and not to engage with organizations such as ourselves.

22. The experience to date is that once women engage with TARA and trust the service they will often agree to meet with the police to provide a statement. Statements can either be for the purposes of making a formal complaint or for intelligence purposes only.

23. Good practice has been developed between Strathclyde Police and TARA and Police Family Protection officers will meet with women in the TARA office with TARA staff present for reassurance and emotional support. A number of historical statements have been taken. Strathclyde Police officers have taken statements on behalf of other UK Police forces which have resulted in follow up action and interviews.

24. Time is required to establish trust and encourage women to talk to the police and have found that most women will eventually agree to provide a statement. We are very aware that police colleagues require information timeously in order to inform intelligence or identify traffickers. This can cause some tensions but careful consideration needs to be given to TARA’s ‘duty of care’, women’s right to confidentiality as well as obligations to share information about serious and organized crime. Given that VoTs’ human rights are routinely ignored by traffickers and that they are often very disempowered upon recovery it is important that victims are given as much information as possible about what will happen with the information they share and time to consider their options in order to ensure they make an informed decision to ‘co-operate’ with the authorities or not. (This should be routinely offered as part of the recovery period of 45 days as per the NRM.) This is identified as an issue for further consideration.

25. In conclusion the committee’s inquiry is welcome and it is hoped that this submission has highlighted some of the existing good practice as well as some of the complexities with reference to migration and trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.

Glasgow Community and Safety Services which manages TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance)
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