

Annex D

Equality Impact Assessment

Background

There is a legal obligation to equality assess for race, disability and gender impact when public bodies are developing new or existing policies. In accordance with best practice, it is suggested that the following areas should be considered:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Age

The primary purpose of the Action Plan update is to both inform Parliament on the progress made since publication of the last update in July 2008 and to outline areas of future work for the Home Office, Scottish Government, other Government Departments and agencies. The Update details progress on all forms of trafficking and corresponds to the broad areas recommended by bodies such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which are Prevention, Investigation, enforcement and prosecution; and providing protection and assistance to victims. The fourth chapter is on child trafficking. The actions remain designed to enable the Home Office, Scottish Government, other Government departments, law enforcement agencies and other partner organisations to deliver protection to the public and reduce the harm caused both to individuals and the United Kingdom. This EIA has been produced to support the publication and delivery of the Update.

The United Kingdom follows the definition of human trafficking set out in the Protocol to the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) called the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Area of Business

The Plan is comprehensive in scope dealing with all aspects of human trafficking with a focus on the further development of a human rights, victim-centred approach to dealing with human trafficking. The plan includes actions for government, both local and central, criminal justice agencies, health and welfare services and education as well as the voluntary sector.

Objectives of the Update

The purpose of the Update is to:

- Build on the work contained in the previous plans and draw together work that is currently underway across government and other agencies in relation to human trafficking;
- Inform Parliaments, stakeholders and the public about progress made to date;
- Identify actions being taken to deliver the objectives ;
- Identify gaps in existing work which require further consideration; and
- Increase transparency and enable accountability on the delivery of objectives.

Methodology

Data

There remains no definitive data as to the scale of trafficking into and within the United Kingdom. However our knowledge in this area continues to improve following Operations Pentameter 1 and 2, the assessment work being carried by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and dedicated staff within the Regional Police Units and the work of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA). We are on course to produce a revised estimate of the scale of the problem by the end of 2009.

Further data is collected under the National Referral Mechanism by the competent authority staff in UKBA and the UKHTC. The NRM was put in place on 1 April 2009 following implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The data collected so far under the NRM confirms the previous data that trafficking for sexual exploitation disproportionately impacts on young women aged 17-25 years. The NRM data on the victim's country of origin also broadly confirms the data collected by the Poppy Project that the largest number of potential victims referred come from the Far East, Nigeria and East European Countries.

Our knowledge of the extent of trafficking for other purposes remains more limited. However our knowledge of this area continues to improve following the publication of a Child Trafficking Strategic Threat Assessment by the Child Online Exploitation Centre (CEOP) and in relation to labour trafficking as a result of a number of law enforcement operations and an ongoing scoping study into the problem being conducted by the UKHTC which is one of the actions contained within this Plan.

Engagement

This plan was written following consultation workshops with the NGO sector and all involved agencies and departments. The monitoring of progress against the objectives in the Plan continues to be undertaken by the Inter - Ministerial

Departmental Group on Human Trafficking. The involvement of NGOs continues to be central to our approach to tackling this problem with the Ministerial NGO Advisory Group considering current arrangements and how they operate in practice.

In addition to the above arrangements the UKHTC has a number of sub groups on which the NGO sector is represented in order to ensure the development of a victim-centred approach to combating human trafficking. The UKHTC also has members of the NGO sector based within it. The Centre has developed good working relationships with a range of voluntary organisations including Eaves Housing for Women which manages the support and accommodation contract for victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and Migrant Helpline, which provides accommodation and support for victims of trafficking for forced labour.

Assessment

Prevention

As with previous Plans there are a number of elements which have the potential to disproportionately impact on specific groups. Whilst there is no evidence to show trafficking is an issue in relation to gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or religion/belief, the evidence continues to show that victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are predominantly young women, from the EU and outside with growing evidence of a number of UK nationals. Additionally with regards to trafficking for forced labour whilst the evidence is still quite sketchy it indicates this mainly affects non UK national men and children with domestic servitude disproportionately affecting women and children.

Investigation and Enforcement

Both UK nationals and non –UK nationals are involved in human trafficking. All investigations into human trafficking abide by the gender duty on all public authorities with interpretation support through the investigation process where necessary .

Adult Victims

We have introduced the introduced the National Referral Mechanism as part of our implementation of the Council of Europe Convention. This process ensures consistency in the referral of victims to the trained competent authority staff. Additionally we have introduced a number of training resources for front line staff which will ensure a focus on ensuring that they are fully aware of the indicators of trafficking. These training resources have been developed in conjunction with Non-Governmental Organisations. All guidance and training whilst reflecting trends in trafficking take care to avoid the potential stereotyping of nationalities.

All training documents emphasise the importance of the diversity of victims and state the importance of having interpreters available when engaging with victims of trafficking, where required.

Support provision for victims take into account the need to provide gender and culturally appropriate services. This is reflected in the minimum standards of service for supporting victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Child Victims

All practice guidance produced emphasises the need to be aware of the individual needs of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds and to tailor support accordingly.

Response

The government believes that all members of society should be protected from violence and have access to victims' services, regardless of sex, age gender, religion, age or race.

We will continue to ensure that diverse needs of victims of human trafficking are recognised and catered for wherever possible. This Update details the progress we have made to date and will continue to make in taking forward and developing work by ensuring that all practitioners, NGOs and enforcement agencies are made aware of the need to comply with statutory equality duties