

3rd July 2013

Agencies unite to tackle modern slavery in Bristol

A joint approach by agencies and organisations in Bristol to tackle the growing problem of human trafficking will be shared at a senior frontline professional conference, to be held on 4 July at City Hall.

The event has been organised by the Bristol Anti-Trafficking Partnership (ATP), jointly chaired by Bristol City Council, Avon & Somerset Police and Unseen (a Bristol based charity working with survivors of modern slavery).

Cllr Simon Cook, Assistant Mayor with responsibility for community safety will open the conference which will then be addressed by Police and Crime Commissioner, Sue Mountstevens. The conference will bring together professionals from agencies and organisations that are likely to come into contact with potential victims of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is the recruitment and movement of people by means such as violent force, fraud, coercion or deception with the aim of exploiting them. It is modern slavery

Cllr Cook said “Bristol City Council working with our partners is determined to track down human trafficking that is taking place in the city. Until now the victims have often been hidden but that makes it all the more important to work together to find ways of identifying and to help them out of slavery and exploitation”.

The day will be chaired by Unseen’s Project Director, Kate Garbers.

Kate said “Unseen was set up to give survivors of slavery the safety, hope and choice they deserve. Our safe accommodation project has supported 49 women so far, but there is so much more we can do by working together”

During the day, attendees will:

- define all types of modern slavery;
- learn the key indicators to help frontline professionals identify potential victims of human trafficking
- work through case studies to decide on what immediate action they can take to best support the victims working with other agencies.
- discuss the newly devised adult and child referral pathways that have been developed across all the agencies involved which they can use to take joint action and ensure people do not slip through the net.

In 2011 Bristol City Council, with other partners of the Anti-Trafficking Partnership, signed the Joint Declaration on Action Against Human Trafficking, a local agreement

to work together to tackle what had been a hidden problem.

Unseen's current support for survivors of human trafficking includes;

- A safe accommodation project for survivors of human trafficking
- A re-settlement project providing on-going services and support to survivors, helping them continue on their journey to rebuild their lives

"Interest in the day has been extremely high and with the range of agencies who will be attending the day it should prove key in raising awareness of processes in place to help victims of human trafficking in Bristol and the surrounding areas," said Gillian Douglas, Interim Service Director for Safer Bristol.

Note for editors

Unseen

1. Unseen began in 2008.
2. Figures released for 2012 by Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) states there were 1,186 reported human trafficking victims in the UK – a 25% increase on 2011's figures. However, this is only the number of victims that chose to report the crime – and, importantly, who have been found – and there is widespread acknowledgement that true figures are hard to come by and could be a lot higher.
3. Unseen's WATER (Women's Anti-Trafficking Emergency Refuge) project is the only safe-house in the South West and is one of only three services in the country offering 24/7 support to victims of human trafficking.
4. For women who have left the safety of our WATER project, we also offer a resettlement service to help them continue on their journey of recovery within their chosen community.
5. The charity is a contractor for The Salvation Army, which funds around half the project's costs. It relies on funding from individuals, companies and charitable trusts for the remainder of its costs.
6. Unseen runs a Room Sponsorship Scheme for people to directly support women survivors at our WATER project. For details, go visit www.unseenuk.org/donate/sponsor-a-room
7. The charity was instrumental in setting up an Anti-Trafficking Partnership with Avon & Somerset Police and Bristol City Council, which brings together 22 agencies in fighting human trafficking in the South West, including other NGOS and local government.
8. Unseen's chief executive chairs the Home Office's Joint Strategy Group on Human Trafficking and recently chaired the Centre for Social Justice's report: [*It Happens Here: Equipping the United Kingdom to fight modern slavery.*](#)