



Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM  
Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner  
5th Floor, Globe House  
89 Eccleston Square  
London, SW1V 1PN

Tel: +44 (0) 20 3513 0477  
Email: [shelley.perera@iasc.independent.gov.uk](mailto:shelley.perera@iasc.independent.gov.uk)

15 October 2019

Dear ,

In my new role as the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner I have a statutory responsibility to encourage good practice in the investigation and prosecution of modern slavery. Over the last few years there have been significant increases in the number of crimes being recorded by forces - in 2018 there were 4,577 across the UK which is an increase of 45% on the previous year. I have met many officers involved in slavery and trafficking cases and have been impressed by their commitment, enthusiasm and expertise. The number of offenders prosecuted also increased in 2018 but the rate of increase was not as great as the increase in crimes recorded. This matters because all too often the traffickers, whether they are running county lines or running brothels, regard the risk as low and the rewards high. That must be reversed so that the risk is high and the reward low.

I am writing to you because I am concerned that the number of offenders referred to the CPS for charging advice or decision is now beginning to fall and my fear is that this will lead to fewer prosecutions and convictions over the next few years. I want to draw this to your attention and ask that you take steps to reassure yourself that your officers and staff are doing all they can to bring traffickers to justice.

I have the following data in respect of your force and would be interested to hear any observations that you might have.

	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1 2019/2020
Crime recorded:	1,000	1,000	not available
Offenders referred to the CPS:	1,000	1,000	not available

I am keenly aware of the pressure that forces have been under and the difficulties in investigating serious organised crime, but it is vital that the police service plays its part in bringing to justice those who enslave and traffic our fellow human beings. Most slavery and human trafficking is perpetrated by organised crime groups and these people regard their illicit trade in human beings as low risk and high reward. We must reverse that assumption. By dismantling their networks, putting the offenders behind bars and seizing their assets we can show them that it is high risk and low reward.

Having looked at the data, considered the issues and listened to operational officers I think that there are three questions for chief constables.

Are you confident that modern slavery and human trafficking is treated as serious organised crime in your force?

Are you using the full range of powers in the Modern Slavery Act to tackle the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults as they are trafficked along county lines? (Slavery and Trafficking Risk and Prevention Orders are great ways to restrict the activities of traffickers).

Do your officers have the right expert advice and support to help them to investigate modern slavery and human trafficking and present strong cases to the CPS?

Thank you for giving this your attention and I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "San Yuen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**