



## IASC advisory panel: Minutes (21 April 2020)

Date: 21 April 2020  
Time: 16.00 – 18.00 (Virtual meeting)

### Members

The Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern	Chair, The Clewer Initiative (Advisory Panel Chair)
Lara Bundock	CEO and Founder, The Snowdrop Project
The Rt Hon. the Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE	Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
Michael Clarke	CEO, The Passage
Rt Hon Fiona Mactaggart	Chair, Agenda and Fawcett Society; former Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
Julia Mulligan	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, North Yorkshire
Dr Paul Rigby	Lecturer in Social Work, University of Stirling (Scotland)
Gillian Rivers	Partner, Penningtons Manches Cooper
Sir Bernard Silverman FRS	Professor of Modern Slavery Statistics, Rights Lab, University of Nottingham
Yasmin Waljee OBE	International Pro Bono Director, Hogan Lovells
The Baroness Young of Hornsey OBE	Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sport, Modern Slavery and Human Rights

### Apologies

Mel Wiggins MBE	Former Project Coordinator, Freedom Acts (Northern Ireland)
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### In attendance

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM	Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
Rebecca Baumgartner	Chief of Staff, IASC
Edward Bateman	Secondee from SIA
April McCoig	Victims and Partnership Lead, IASC
Jenna Teasdale	Research and Innovation Lead, IASC
Emma Crates	Private Sector Policy Lead, IASC
DS Helen Lomas	Law Enforcement Lead, IASC
Katherine Lawson	Communications Officer, IASC



**1. Introduction, minutes and actions of the last meeting (Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Chair, IASC advisory panel)**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Advisory Panel members to the virtual meeting. The minutes from the last Advisory Panel on 14 January 2020 were agreed.

**Actions of last meeting:**

The following actions were **completed**:

- Advisory Panel to discuss ways in which they can support IASC on public procurement
- Communications Officer to publish previous meeting minutes on the IASC website
- IASC office to follow up with Baroness Young on business-focused organisations regarding a new Advisory Panel member
- IASC Research and Innovation Lead to put Mel Wiggins in touch with researchers from the University of Manchester who are researching perpetrators of modern slavery
- Communications Officer to follow up with Lara Bundock and other panel members on a policy to manage media requests relating to victims which safeguards victims and survivors of modern slavery
- Communications Officer to follow up with Julia Mulligan regarding sourcing support for creating a new logo
- IASC office to keep Baroness Young updated on plans for Ditchley Park conference

The action for Paul Rigby to keep Dame Sara and Advisory Panel members updated on discussions in Scotland on the non-punishment principle is **ongoing**: Paul Rigby is monitoring this and offered to share a written update with the panel members.

The action on for the IASC Research and Innovation Lead to create a document listing modern slavery research challenges for academics is **ongoing**: The PaCCS researcher attached to the office is identifying research challenges in respect of victims. This action will be reviewed upon completion of this work.

The action regarding panel members to share participant suggestions for a Cumberland Lodge event is **ongoing**: A concept note for the event has been agreed. The date has been postponed due to Covid-19.

**Further comments:** Baroness Young asked for information on the IASC piece of work on Operation Fort. This was covered under item 2. a); although it was noted that a review is complete and the Commissioner is considering launching the review virtually.



## **2. Deep dive on Priority 3: Focusing on prevention**

### **a. Update on private sector and public sector work (Emma Crates, Prevention Lead)**

Emma Crates provided an overview of the Commissioner's ongoing work related to prevention (Priority 3 of the [Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#)).

#### **Working with the private sector:**

The Commissioner's work with the private sector focuses mainly on compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act (transparency in supply chains or TISC reporting). Some companies in scope of the legislation have failed to produce modern slavery statements and other companies have produced modern slavery statements which do not comply with the legislation. The Commissioner has been engaging with a variety of partners to raise standards.

#### **Working with government:**

The Commissioner and her office have held regular meetings with the Home Office on work related to Section 54. The government has committed to:

- **Modern slavery statement audit**

The government announced it would undertake an audit on Section 54 compliance 18 months ago, and wrote to 17,000 companies stating it would publish a list of non-compliant companies.

The Commissioner understands the audit was completed in early 2020 and was due to be published in March 2020. The Commissioner has not seen the results of the audit and has called for this to be made public. It is uncertain whether the government will name non-compliant companies. The Commissioner continues to raise this issue at regular meetings with the Home Office and expressed her disappointment that this has not been published.

- **Modern slavery statement registry**

In response to a recommendation in the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, the government committed to building a registry of modern slavery statements. The Commissioner understood that a basic version of this would be ready by spring 2020. A contractor (Cadence Innova) has been appointed to build the registry and the Commission has been invited to take part in the registry's design. Meetings are yet to take place.

Panel members suggested the Commissioner to obtain a timeline for publication of the audit and continue to press for publication. Although there was recognition of the challenges presented by Covid-19 panel members felt that action should have been taken sooner.



Panel members expressed disappointment that the registry has not been completed following the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act.

It was suggested that the Home Office should work with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It was noted by the Commissioner's office that BEIS and the Home Office have engaged on the Single Enforcement Body (SEB) consultation.

It was further suggested that a registry could be produced and managed by a business-focused organisation or NGO which could compile and publish a list of statements publicly. Other panel members suggested the Commissioner's office be funded to compile and publish a registry.

Dame Sara noted that the Independent Review recommended the government take the lead on this and this had been accepted.

**ACTIONS:** Dame Sara to obtain a timeline for publication of the audit and continue to press for progress on the audit and registry.

Panel members to continue to raise this issue where possible.

### **Engaging with investors and the financial sector**

It was noted that modern slavery is increasingly being framed within environment, social and governance (ESG) issues. Modern slavery is also often intertwined with financial crime, and banks can play a role in spotting illegal cash flows linked to modern slavery and exploitation.

The Commissioner's office is supporting two initiatives:

- **CCLA: *Find it, Fix it, Report it, Prevent it***

The Commissioner is a signatory to the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Group's *Find it, Fix it, Report it, Prevent it* project. The IASC Prevention Lead sits on the project's steering committee.

The focus was initially on the hospitality sector, urging companies to investigate their supply chains and established measures to safeguard workers from exploitation. In response to Covid-19, CCLA is switching its focus to food production companies.

Panel members asked whether CCLA could look at other high-risk industries, such as construction. The Commissioner's office is currently looking at the implications of changes to right to work procedures in light of Covid-19.

Panel members also asked if the Commissioner's office was in contact with the National Farmers' Union (NFU) regarding labour shortages and related risks for workers.



**ACTION:** IASC Prevention Lead to follow up with Julia Mulligan and Alastair Redfern on NFU contacts.

- **Themis and Tribe Foundation: Preventing Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in the Financial Sector**

This project is a collaboration between financial crime consultant Themis, anti-slavery charity the Tribe Freedom Foundation and the Commissioner's office. It focuses on pulling together best practice in the financial sector on fighting modern slavery and human trafficking. Dame Sara sits on the steering committee and the IASC Prevention Lead sits on the working committee.

The project will include an online survey of senior executives to gauge awareness of how their sector intersects with modern slavery issues. This will be aimed at both small and large financial organisations. The results will inform a roundtable and report available in Q2/Q3 of 2020.

The importance of ensuring best practice is filtered down to frontline staff in banks was raised. This would ensure frontline staff are trained to engage with potential victims in an informed way. It was noted that The Passage has developed a training module on how banking staff can support those who are homeless and that this had good take-up with banks.

The IASC Prevention Lead noted that as part of the project there will be a tranche of work focused on engaging with victims.

**ACTION:** IASC Prevention Lead to feed back point about sharing best practice with frontline staff to Themis and Tribe Foundation.

- **Further IASC work on TISC**

There is indication of voluntary uptake of Section 54 reporting from non-scope companies and the public sector. Some smaller companies have published statements when they are part of larger supply chains. The Commissioner is engaging with smaller businesses to investigate the scale and nature of this uptake, and share best practice where found.

#### **Engagement with purposeful business**

The Commissioner's office is working with NGOs and other partners on the notion of purposeful business. This includes the British Academy's Principles of Purposeful Business project which seeks to measure the impact that companies have on the environment and society.

The Commissioner will chair a (virtual) conference hosted by the Ditchley Foundation on economic insecurity in May which will be a means to promote messaging on social responsibility; and could be a springboard to a future event focused on modern slavery.



One panel member highlighted the need to understand the impact of wider business practices on social responsibility and modern slavery, further to Section 54 requirements. For example, fast fashion companies which have cancelled orders during Covid-19 and left tier one suppliers with massive amounts of apparel which will not be sold. Another panel member asked how far TISC considerations have played a part in the upscale in production of PPE during Covid-19.

It was widely noted that the Commissioner is taking forward a number of important initiatives relating to TISC and that these would need to be carefully managed to maintain focus.

Dame Sara acknowledged the need to get shareholders, stakeholders, communities and customers to think about modern slavery as part of a wider issue of exploitation and economic insecurity.

#### **Encouraging the role of the public sector**

The government produced a modern slavery statement in March. The Commissioner's office supported the process of this and provided comments on drafts. The Commissioner liaised with officials and political advisors at Number 10 to secure buy-in. The final statement contained a foreword by the Prime Minister.

Dame Sara noted that the government modern slavery statement identifies clear areas of risk. The statement acknowledges the challenge of worker-paid recruitment fees in the production of rubber gloves procured for the NHS and has identified action to take. The next step will be to deliver on the statement's commitments.

#### **Public Procurement**

The Commissioner has been engaging with the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) on its procurement strategy. The Commissioner has discussed the potential of centralised procurement frameworks for raising standards with the head of CCS and has spoken at a government roundtable with public suppliers.

There is ongoing dialogue with the Home Office to assess business engagement initiatives, including a Modern Slavery Assessment Tool, designed to create dialogue between public procurement teams and suppliers. Around 1,000 companies have participated in the assessment tool online and the Commissioner is engaging with the Home Office about the results and trends.

It was noted by the panel that local government procurement would be another area to consider.

#### **Review on Operation Fort**

The Commissioner's office has been researching the Operation Fort case, Britain's largest slavery prosecution to date with an estimated 400 victims. Victims worked in farms, factories, waste recycling plants and parcel sorting warehouses, entering the supply chains of some of the UK's largest retailers.



Following the convictions of eight members of a Polish organised criminal gang behind Operation Fort last July, the Commissioner wrote to major retailers impacted by the case. She asked them what measures they were taking to ensure that their suppliers were not using slave labour.

This led to meetings with representatives from eight supermarkets and DIY stores, and some major suppliers. Meanwhile the office has been analysing modern slavery statements from the sector.

Research on Operation Fort has revealed:

- A disparity and variety of approaches to producing modern slavery statements including among consumer-facing organisations
- Some businesses continue to rely on standard audits which are not designed to investigate modern slavery
- Some businesses are doing basic training on raising awareness of modern slavery, but few are doing specialist training which can build capacity in supply chains
- Banks can play a larger role in identifying suspicious activity which could indicate exploitation.

The review is complete and the office is considering a virtual launch event. The review includes a maturity framework to help organisations assess where they are on their anti-slavery journey. The Commissioner expects this framework to evolve over time. The Commissioner has also set an agenda for action with challenges for CEOs.

The Commissioner spoke at a conference in January to address the challenges of Operation Fort. The need for greater intelligence sharing between suppliers, retailers and law enforcement was raised, which has sparked an industry-led pilot to address this.

### **Discussion**

Panel members noted the importance of promoting the maturity framework so companies could consider where they would be placed on the scale. It was noted that some companies may have compliant modern slavery statements but still become implicated in cases like Operation Fort. It was noted that the maturity framework includes a “barely compliant” category whereby a company has a compliant statement only.

Panel members asked if companies had changed their modern slavery statements since the case came to light. It was noted that some companies are referencing Operation Fort in their statements now. It was further noted that the review has added importance given that the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority’s future role is changing.

Panel members suggested the Commissioner write to companies referenced in the report. Dame Sara noted that companies are aware of the report and any section which references them. Dame



Sara suggested that as part of the review's launch, she could send a letter to a broad group of CEOs to highlight the agenda for action.

**ACTION:** IASC Prevention Lead and IASC Communications Lead to incorporate letters to CEOs as part of Operation Fort review launch.

The chair closed this item.

### **b) Giving priority to children (for discussion)**

Dame Sara highlighted two issues of prevention related to child trafficking for the panel to consider:

- 2019 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics display an increase of British children involved in exploitation from 1,421 in 2018 to 2,360 in 2019: around one quarter of NRM referrals are for British children and the Commissioner is concerned about the ways in which children are or are not protected.
- IASC call for evidence on use of the Section 45 clause of the Modern slavery Act (statutory defence): the office received over 222 criminal cases most of which involve young people where the case has been dropped. Whilst this may be the most appropriate outcome, the Commissioner is far from confident that children are being protected from further victimisation following identification, e.g. with a Section 47 (Children Act) meeting.

### **Discussion**

One panel member asked where the role of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) comes into this. It was suggested that the office could look into what local authorities are doing to protect children under the Care Act.

The IASC Victims and Partnership Lead noted that there is work being undertaken to investigate how far Section 47 enquiries are being used by local authorities, including looking at work by the Department for Education on this.

It was also noted that ICTGs are yet to be rolled out nationally. Dame Sara has raised this with the Home Office and added that there is evidence suggesting that where guardians are in place, the links between law enforcement and children's social care are stronger.

One panel member asked which sectors children are involved in and to what extent county lines account for the rise in children referred into the NRM.

It was noted that since Q4 2019, NRM figures have been broken down to distinguish between labour exploitation and criminal exploitation (previously criminal exploitation was included within labour exploitation). However, this is not further broken down into type of criminal exploitation (e.g. county lines).



**ACTION:** IASC office to share 2019 NRM statistics with panel members.

One panel member asked how far children exploited in county lines have been in touch with a guardian. Dame Sara noted that whilst this is unclear, the IASC call for evidence on Section 45 has revealed many cases of children exploited within drug trafficking - the concern is that where a child has been trafficked, this is not being raised early enough in the criminal justice process; and where it is, there is a question about the support provided to that child.

An IASC review on Section 45 is due to be launched provisionally in June.

One panel member sought clarification on how far UK children were accessing support under the ICTG scheme, given that they are not due to be allotted a specific ICTG. It appears to be the case that county lines criminal cases are being prioritised in NRM decision-making. Given the rise in these cases this is having an impact on other cases which are taking longer. The panel member asked what more could be done to improve the support provided by child protection agencies and social services.

Dame Sara noted that there are two tiers of ICTGs, and that there is a debate over the different levels of service provided to UK children (who get a regional ICTG) and non-UK children who get an individual ICTG. She added that cases of child trafficking do seem to be being processed first; the fact that they are in the system leaves a question of why they are not being identified much earlier by the police.

Another panel member asked if the NRM records a breakdown by ethnicity and gender for children, which would give context to the issue of county lines exploitation.

Dame Sara noted that this is an important issue.

**ACTION:** IASC Research and Innovation Lead to incorporate this query into an IASC response to a survey on NRM data and share the survey results with the Advisory Panel when available.

The role for PCCs in commissioning services for victims was highlighted. It was noted that if police identify victims earlier, more effective mechanisms could be built locally to ease the burden on the NRM.

**ACTION:** IASC Victims and Partnership Lead to follow up with Julia Mulligan as PCCs Victims Lead on potential work building local support services for child victims of trafficking.

Panel members raised the issue of whether the NRM is an appropriate mechanism for child victims of trafficking. Dame Sara highlighted a piece of work with ECPAT-UK identifying best practice in multi-agency decision. A report on what works in this area will be produced.

The chair closed this item. Due to time constraints it was agreed to hold items 2. c) and 2. d) for a future meeting and to move on to item 3.



### **3. IASC briefing (Dame Sara Thornton, IASC)**

#### **a) Plans for Annual Report 2019/2020**

Dame Sara explained that as Commissioner there are two documents which she is required by law to produce: a strategic plan and an annual report.

The office is working on the Annual Report 2019/2020 which will cover the financial year and will be published in June. This is to ensure data is accurately captured. Dame Sara asked the panel for their thoughts on the report and how this could be launched.

One panel member asked that data used in the report be made available to download separately. It was further suggested that the issues raised on child victims of trafficked could be highlighted in the opening of the report.

#### **b) Impact of Covid-19**

Dame Sara outlined work being undertaken by the office on impacts of Covid-19 on modern slavery and human trafficking:

- The Commissioner and IASC Victims and Prevention Lead have been liaising with victims groups to assess their views and feed back issues to the Home Office. The Commissioner has issued letters and held ministerial meetings since the lockdown on this. There is significant disruption to the provision of victim support.
- The Commissioner expressed concern on the potential for Covid-19 to create opportunities for victimisation, such as in labour exploitation, but also for those already in the system who will become even more vulnerable. The Commissioner's office has linked in with NGOs in this space. There is also a concern about labour exploitation when the lockdown ends.
- On the international situation, the Commissioner and IASC Research and Innovation Lead joined a call with international NGOs and heard similar challenges about how to support those in the system and how to disrupt traffickers exploiting the situation.
- The IASC Research and Innovation Lead is working with researchers at the Rights Lab and at the Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern Slavery and Human Rights who are putting out calls for research on the impact of Covid-19.
- The Commissioner's website is being used to signpost those in the sector to resources, letters, information and advice.

It was noted that it would be useful to link up with other research foundations such as the Leverhulme Trust to identify funding to support research on the intersection of modern slavery and Covid-19.



One panel member thanked the Commissioner for taking on an intermediary role between the victims sector and the government and raised two areas of concern: that modern slavery will be even more hidden during lockdown; and that the rise in a reliance of volunteers has not been matched by appropriate training of volunteers which will safeguard vulnerable people.

Dame Sara noted that a decline in intelligence on modern slavery in the current situation has been reported.

The chair noted that items 3. c) and d) had already been covered. The chair closed item 3.

#### **4. Update on IASC office, structure and staffing (Rebecca Baumgartner, IASC)**

##### **Budget:**

Home Office records show that the Commissioner's office has spent £550,694.27 to the end of March against the budget of £575,000. Finance consider this to be the end of year position. The Office is seeking confirmation that the accruals of £50,993 for salaries, £24,000 for training have gone through correctly.

The budget for this financial year has been confirmed as the same as previous years (since 2015) at £575,000.

##### **Resourcing:**

The office has three policy leads for each of three of the strands of the strategic plan; a communications officer; a chief of staff and a staff officer paid for by the office. The office manager retired at the end of March.

In addition, the office has two police secondees and a secondee from the Security Industry Authority supporting the work of the Commissioner but paid for by their originating organisations and a researcher through the Partnership for Conflict, Crime and Security Research.

The two police secondees have returned to force due to Covid-19 and the Chief of Staff is working part-time supporting the Home Office on Covid-19 whilst keeping oversight of resourcing and finance.

One of the policy leads is due to move to the international lead post within the office once her replacement has been identified and we are part way through the recruitment for that post.

##### **Discussion:**

Panel members expressed concern about the budget for the Commissioner's office.

The chair closed item 4.



## 5. IASC communications strategy (Katherine Lawson, IASC)

The Communications Officer sought feedback on:

- Drafted policy on media requests and victims and survivors
- IASC logo design

The panel agreed on the importance of a policy about media requests and victims and survivors and agreed the wording. It was suggested that the logo design could be changed to incorporate upper and lower case letters for legibility.

**ACTIONS:** IASC Communications Officer to publish policy regarding media requests and draw up new logo designs to share with the panel.

Due to time constraints it was decided to hold this item for a fuller discussion at a future meeting.

## 6. AOB and closing remarks

Dame Sara noted that immigration policy, the international context and upstream prevention could be explored at a future meeting.

Panel members suggested that virtual sub-groups could meet in-between the quarterly sessions to explore specific issues.

One panel member highlighted the fact that the context in Scotland regarding the protection of child victims of trafficking is different to the rest of the UK.

It was suggested that the Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy, Jennifer Townson, could be invited to join a future Advisory Panel meeting to give a briefing on the international picture.

**ACTIONS:** IASC office to follow up with panel members regarding a sub-group meeting for upcoming issues where relevant.

IASC office to follow up with Paul Rigby on a possible write-up of child trafficking issues in Scotland.

IASC office to consider engaging with the Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy for a future meeting. Dame Sara noted that she has regular meetings with the envoy.

The Chair closed the session and thanked members for their input.