

IASC advisory panel: Minutes (20 April 2021)

Date: 20 April 2021

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

In attendance

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM	Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
April McCoig	Victims and Partnership Policy Lead, IASC
Jenna Teasdale	International Policy Lead, IASC
Emma Crates	Private Sector Policy Lead, IASC

Kieran Backhouse	Law Enforcement and Prosecutions Policy Lead, IASC
Katie Lawson	Research and Innovation Policy Lead, IASC
Ed Bateman	Chief of Staff IASC

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

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Advisory Panel members, the Commissioner and her team. The minutes from the last Advisory Panel on 27 January 2021 were agreed.

Actions of last meeting:

1.2 The following actions outstanding from the previous meeting were completed:

Reference	Action	Update	Status
27/01/2021 Para 1	In relation to the Home Office online register of modern slavery statements, Dame Sara to raise with the Home Office making both sections of the modern slavery statements' register mandatory.	Responding to Dame Sara, Phoebe Blagg (Home Office) noted that ...'the consultation did not ask what questions should be mandated. That said, we will definitely look at the scope for making these questions compulsory alongside our broader commitment to introduce compulsory reporting topics'.	Complete
27/01/2021 Para 2.1	Panel members to provide details of community led repatriation initiatives for the attention of April McCoig.	Fiona Mactaggart contacted the office following the meeting. No further community led repatriation initiatives identified.	Complete
27/01/2021	A link to the report 'Developing Freedom – the sustainable development case for ending modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking' to be circulated to the Advisory Panel	Link circulated to Panel members on 1 February 2021.	Complete

1.3 Reflecting on Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy Jennifer Townson's contribution to the meeting of 28 January, the Panel agreed to consider inviting her again when 'International' was repeated as the subject of the deep dive.

- 1.4 Members mentioned the lack of ethnic or gender breakdown in NRM data and asked the Commissioner whether this had been raised with the Home Office. The Commissioner replied that she had raised it in her feedback to the NRM consultation.

2. Deep dive - Improving victim care and support

Dame Sara and April McCoig (Improving victim care and support policy lead, IASC) presented a paper and overview of the Commissioner's ongoing activity in relation to victim care and support.

- 2.1. Following the work strand headings from the Commissioner's strategic plan, and in relation to **improving victim care and support**, April McCoig provided the Panel with an update on the NRM Transformation Programme, the new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract, the New Plan for Immigration and the recently published Adults at Risk Statutory Guidance.

Discussion

In relation to the Adults at Risk Statutory Guidance, the Commissioner advised the Panel that she and had not been invited to comment on the guidance and had received no prior warning of publication. Dame Sara's [letter](#) to Immigration Minister Chris Philp in relation to the guidelines was available on the website.

Members brought up the data sharing embargo placed on individuals and agencies engaged in the Victim Care Contract. The Panel were unanimous that the embargo raised grave concerns and could undermine good practice and prevention activity. The Panel and Commissioner discussed how to communicate their concerns to the Home Office.

- 2.2. April McCoig then briefed the Panel on the victim's care work supporting **taking the longer term view** that included access to work for survivors of modern slavery, housing and homelessness and voluntary return and re-integration.

Discussion

The Panel were pleased that the Commissioner had engaged the Nottingham Rights Lab to take forward the work to build an evidence base on the benefits of work and the harms of not working. The Panel discussed the negative impact of the current restriction of post NRM/reach-in financial support i.e. it is only awarded if directly related to trafficking. This ignored the additional needs of trafficked survivors and raised the risk of re-trafficking with further trauma for victims and ongoing costs as a result.

- 2.3. April updated the Panel about an exchange of letters with Violence Reduction Units concerning their focus on modern slavery and concluded her presentation by focussing on **supporting partnership activity** and work in support of equality, diversity and inclusion in the anti-slavery sector and refining a public health approach to modern slavery.

Discussion

In relation to an initiative raised by April of IASC working with the Black Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET), a panel member emphasised how important, on several levels, this work was. They considered that BME groups were underfunded and did not get invited to the table. It was important to help people understand the ethnic differences. The chair added that any learning from the work should be shared across the sector. Dame Sara responded by saying that she was committed to the initiative but that it needed more resources. She believed that the Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) should be able to assist.

3. IASC briefing

The Commissioner introduced City of London Police officer Kieran Backhouse to the Panel. Kieran is the recently arrived six month police secondment.

- (a) The Commissioner reported that she had met Alice Matthews of the MSU to discuss the [New Plan for Immigration](#) and that she would respond to the Home Secretary outside of the ongoing consultation process that closes on 5 May 2021.
- (b) April McCoig, IASC lead Improving victim care and support, advised the Panel that the recruitment campaign for a survivor intern project officer had attracted 14 applicants. A panel of three, chaired by the Commissioner, had interviewed three candidates that morning (20th April) and they were hoping to appoint before the end of the week. All three were appointable.
- (c) Jenna Teasdale, IASC lead International reported that the office was collaboration with the Finance and Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) initiative and that the Commissioner was co-hosting an event on Thursday 29th April attended by the Lord Mayor and key City companies and leaders. **Action: Alistair asked that he be invited to the event on 29th April.** A member asked whether the insurance industry will be present as in recent discussions Richard Brindle (Fidelis) has been very positive about the clauses that could be put into contracts to encourage companies to exercise due diligence in relation to supply chains. **Action: Dame Sara to consider contacting Richard Brindle.**
- (d) The Commissioner outlined her ongoing engagement with Financial sector CEOs that included a round table meeting attended by key businesses and 51 follow up letters in respect of the Themis/Tribe Foundation report [Preventing modern slavery and human trafficking - an agenda for action across the financial services sector](#)
- (e) The Commissioner reported that the previous police secondee Richard Marsh had done a good piece of work resulting in the publication of the IASC report [‘Financial investigation of modern slavery’](#). The report, that has 10 recommendations, is on the website and, additionally, has been shared with chief constables, the DG at the NCA and the police national lead for modern slavery.
- (f) Jenna Teasdale, IASC lead International advised the Panel of the recent publication of an IASC briefing paper [‘Protecting individuals from exploitation by criminal traffickers and unscrupulous employers: Identifying and mitigating risks in the EU Settlement Scheme and the UK’s new points-based immigration system’](#).

5. IASC Budget and resourcing

Ed Bateman, IASC Chief of staff, presented a short paper to the Panel with an overview of the end of year spend and a resourcing update. Against an annual total budget of £605,000 (made up of £545,000 from the Home Office and a contribution of £30,000 from both the Scotland and Northern Ireland Devolved Administrations), IASC spent £608,900 of which £576,053 was pay and £32,847 was non pay.

The Commissioner selected a new communications officer in February from over 400 candidates. The successful candidate is due to join the office in June following pre-employment checks and security vetting. The paper, additionally, provided detail of the recruitment process covered at 3(b) and recognised the support of the Sophie Hayes Trust and Survivor Alliance whose experience helped develop the advert and pre interview online information sessions.

6. AOB and closing remarks

Dame Sara advised the Panel that the lease of Globe House will not be renewed in June 2022 but it is likely that IASC will be relocated in Central London. The Cabinet Office have told all ALBs (or ALEs as we have recently been re-termed – Arm’s Length Entities) that the intention is to relocate us outside London by 2025.

The chair, and members, thanked April McCoig for her excellent paper and Dame Sara and her team for their ongoing good work. The meeting closed at 1745