



MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

AN INSPECTION OF HOW THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM DEALS WITH MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

OCTOBER 2020

WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING (MSHT)?

- ▶ Modern slavery exploits already vulnerable children and adults, many with poverty, mental illness or addiction issues who are forced or coerced to do work like picking crops, cleaning houses and making clothes and are often subjected to sexual exploitation. They can be 'hidden in plain sight' - working and living openly in our communities.
- ▶ Human trafficking is the forced movement of people for work or other activities for the financial benefit of others. It can be cross-border or in-country.
- ▶ Victims of MSHT crimes are extremely vulnerable and can be terrified to speak out and get help.

WHAT DID WE LOOK AT?

- ▶ We looked at how the DoJ supported the effective implementation of legislation and worked with other government Departments and organisations to effectively tackle MSHT.
- ▶ Inspectors examined how prosecutors prosecuted cases and how both engaged with victims to meet their specific needs.

WHO DID WE INSPECT?

- ▶ This inspection focussed on the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) and the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). We also looked at the Department of Justice (DoJ) policies and strategies linked to MSHT.

WHAT DID INSPECTORS FIND?

- ▶ We don't know enough about the true scale and extent of MSHT in Northern Ireland. The police know it is a growing issue and have a dedicated MSHT Unit.
- ▶ There were good connections between PSNI officers, other police forces and other relevant organisations like the National Crime Agency.
- ▶ Police officers from the PSNI's MSHT Unit and prosecutors worked really well together on MSHT cases.
- ▶ PPS MSHT policies needed attention.
- ▶ There were front line police officers who were committed to supporting and helping victims of MSHT.

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WHAT CAN BE DONE BETTER?

Inspectors made three strategic and eight operational recommendations for improvement.

They include:

At a leadership level (strategic level)

- ▶ The PSNI need an up to date strategic analysis of MSHT in Northern Ireland to better understand the problem, meet future demands on police and support victim needs.
- ▶ There needs to be greater focus on pursuing perpetrators of trafficking offences against children.
- ▶ The DoJ should review the Northern Ireland Modern Slavery Strategy and develop a better approach to raise awareness, support victims and tackle MSHT more effectively in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ The DoJ should consult on legislation to enable jury directions in MSHT cases.

On the ground (operational level)

- ▶ The DoJ should, in consultation with the PSNI and PPS, consider the use of Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ The PSNI should review interpreting and translation services to ensure they take account of ethnic, cultural and religious sensitivities.
- ▶ The PPS should improve how it uses Counsel in MSHT cases.
- ▶ The DoJ should improve access to the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme for MSHT victims.

WHAT NEXT?

Inspectors want to see:

- ▶ better public awareness of MSHT, what it looks like and the harm it causes;
- ▶ momentum in implementing the inspection recommendations;
- ▶ maintaining and growing the already good working relationships across the criminal justice system; and
- ▶ better support for victims during the prosecution process.

If you suspect someone is a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking contact the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency or call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700.

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