

**COSLA/HTF Human Trafficking  
Conference  
15 August 2012**

**Tom McCrosson GLA  
Enforcement Team (North)**

# Conference Themes

Identifying Victims and Tackling the  
Crime


Promoting Frontline Awareness

Enhancing Operational Response


## Tom McCrosson - Background

- Enforcement background
  - Joined GLA in March 2006
  - North 'team' of GLA covers everything north of a line across England between Liverpool and Hull and Northern Ireland
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# Role of the GLA

- Detect and prevent exploitation of workers by labour providers and to ensure that labour providers operate within the law.
  - The requirement for labour providers to be compliant with licensing standards provide a method to assess compliance and reduce the risk of exploitation of workers.
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# Legislation

- The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 introduced the offence of operating without a licence, and the offence of using workers supplied by an unlicensed labour provider.
  - Our primary focus is to ensure that workers are not being exploited in terms of having being trafficked or if genuinely entitled to work in the UK are not subject to unnecessary restrictions by their employer.
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## Critical GLA Standards

- Fit & Proper
- Competency
- PAYE, NI & VAT
- Minimum Wage
- Physical and Mental Mistreatment
- Debt Bondage
- Quality of Accommodation and Transport
- Fees & Additional Services
- Sub-Contracting
- Examination and inspection of the above with labour providers and workers can identify human trafficking issues, if present.

# Trafficking for Labour Exploitation

- Migrant workers are vulnerable to trafficking for labour exploitation, suffering from practices that contravene the legal requirements which govern employment rights, health and safety and equality.

## **People who have been trafficked for labour exploitation may:**

- Live in groups in the same place where they work and leave those premises infrequently, if at all
- Live in degrading, unsuitable places, such as agricultural or industrial buildings
- Not be dressed adequately for the work they do: for example, they may lack protective equipment or warm clothing
- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Have no access to their earnings
- Lack basic training and professional licences
- Be subjected to insults, abuse, threats or violence
- Have no labour contract



## **People who have been trafficked for labour exploitation may:**

- Work excessively long hours
- Depend on their employer for a number of services, including work, transportation and accommodation
- Have no choice of accommodation
- Never leave the work premises without their employer
- Be unable to move freely
- Be subject to security measures designed to keep them on the work premises
- Be disciplined through fines

## **Additional indicators for consideration**

- Notices have been posted in languages other than the local language
- There are no health or safety notices
- The employer or manager is unable to show the documents required for employing workers from other countries
- The employer or manager is unable to show records of wages paid to workers
- The health and safety equipment is of poor quality or is missing
- Equipment is designed or has been modified so that it can be operated by children
- There is evidence that labour laws are being breached
- There is evidence that workers must pay for tools, food or accommodation or that those costs are being deducted from their wages

# WAKE UP TO EXPLOITATION

Petar came to the UK with the promise of work and the chance to start a new life for his family. Within days he was sent to work planting, picking and packing vegetables in an unsafe minibus and forced to live in dirty overcrowded caravans in dreadful conditions. When he complained to his employers he was threatened with homelessness and had money taken from his wage packet. These practices are illegal, regardless of your status in this country and must be stamped out.

**If you are being mistreated by illegal employers tell the GLA and we will stop this abuse**

**We will:**

- Give you clear advice in your own language
- Advise you of your rights
- Stop worker exploitation

**0845 602 5020**

**THE GLA CAN HELP YOU**

[www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk) [enquiries@gla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@gla.gsi.gov.uk)



Gangmasters  
Licensing Authority

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# Ruthless gangmasters and £14 a day – how an army of immigrant workers puts food on your plate



PHOTO: MICHAEL THORP

**T**wo miles outside Evesham, above a hand-painted sign touting cider and homemade jam, a cat sleeps on a stone gatepost. It doesn't even open an eye as a wren flits just inches past its head. The countryside buzzes. It's England in summer.

Suddenly, from behind a high hawthorn hedge, the guttural bark of Iraqi Kurds tears the tranquility of the Worcestershire day.

Around the corner of the quiet road lies a sun-baked field packed with Sikhs, Kurds and Poles. Robes and turbans and bared eastern European torsos move along the rows.

Thirty or so pickers are stripping a 25-acre field of broad beans, loading them into crates and on to a waiting truck. At

the edge of the field, two battered white minibuses stand empty. It looks like a tea plantation on the other side of the world.

The man in charge is leaning on the side of the truck. Cool in the shade, he's smoking and appears to be the only idle person in a field of industry. He beckons us to come over. Immaculate in a pressed cream silk shirt, his dark curls slicked back, he's more nightclub owner than migrant vegetable picker. 'Are you the boss?' He nods and smiles. But before he

## SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

by Olivia Stewart-Liberty  
and Sarah Oliver

can speak, a harassed-looking young white man has arrived from the middle of the field. He's holding a clipboard, frowning and sweating. He is Alex and describes himself as 'Bomford's' assistant legume manager.

Bomford's is the biggest producer in these parts. Big on peas, broad beans – in fact, they grow everything.

And how can he help? He is, he says,

*Continued on Page 50*

# Three men from the hidden world of migrant labourers lay dead yesterday after their van hit by a train, part of the real price of cheap

By Simon de Bruxelles and Helen Rumbelow

THREE men lay dead in a Worcestershire onion field yesterday, victims of an accident which highlights the stranglehold that so-called "gangmasters" have on the British harvest.

At just after 8.20am a white Ford Transit minibus carrying nine Arab immigrants collided with a train at an unmanned level crossing. The men, including a number of Iraqi Kurds, had already travelled for an hour to the spring onion field on the banks of the Avon, bused in from Birmingham under instructions from their gangmaster.

It is a human traffic that is endemic in Britain, according to a Rural Affairs Select Committee report on the problem last May. They accused the supermarkets of indirectly encouraging malpractice by paying too little for legitimate suppliers to afford a legal workforce.

The minibus was carrying workers employed by Simms & Woods to pick onions at Whitehouse Farm in the Vale of Evesham. The onions were destined for supermarkets. They have employed gangmasters to supply migrant labour for years as British

DARREN STAPLES / REUTERS



7.03: Train leaves Mansfield for London

Dead on the line: three workers were killed at the



# The National Referral Mechanism

- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim identification and support process.
- The GLA are a first responder under the above process.
- GLA Officers who find themselves with grounds for concern that a person may be in a human trafficking situation have the responsibility for identifying the person as a possible victim and putting him or her in touch with the responsible authorities and support providers.

# WAKE UP TO EXPLOITATION



Every morning Peter is forced to confront the shocking reality of exploitation. His journey from Bulgaria to Britain has already cost him £600 for cheap bus tickets and work permits that never arrived. Working for below the minimum wage in appalling conditions, he is made to pick vegetables in the snow if he will eat anything. Weeks have turned into months. At times he even has to scavenge for food. The dream of a new life in the UK has slowly turned into a nightmare.

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# THE DAYLIGHT ROBBERY


The GLA has found that workers employed by illegal employers often receive no work for weeks so workers can be paid as little as £100 per month. They are often forced to sign away their rights and pay for the costs for sub-standard accommodation. Unable to leave their jobs they are threatened with demands to give rent and have travel expenses deducted from their wages. They live like prisoners while their bosses live off their hard work. This must be stopped.

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## GLA / Examples of Potential Trafficking Indicators

- *"The rate of pay was £3 per hour"*
  - *"They were staying in caravans which in one case involved seven people, including two girls in a single caravan".*
  - *"They had their passports taken away from them on arrival"*
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# Flower pickers earned £24 for 9-hour

► Gangmaster's licence revoked over poor pay

► Workers shared room and were intimidated

Charlene Sweeney

A British recruitment company that supplied more than 200 immigrant workers to pick flowers in Scotland has lost its licence after an investigation found that it was involved in forced labour and intimidation.

The workers — mostly Poles — were paid as little as 4p per bunch of daffodils, amounting to £24 for a nine-hour day, by Timberland Recruitment Ltd, based in Suffolk.

They were told that if they tried to leave before the end of the contract they would have to give the company £700. If they were unable to provide the money their families in their home countries would have to pay instead, according to the investigation carried out by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA).

Timberland supplied workers to Grampian Growers, a co-operative based at Montrose, in Angus, and Winchester Growers in Cornwall.

John Beckson, the company's director, has now had his licence revoked by the GLA. Timberland has also been reported to the human trafficking centre, a dedicated police unit based in Sheffield. The GLA emphasised that Grampian Growers and Winchester Growers were not under investigation



Workers put up with appalling kitchen and bathroom facilities and up to eight were packed into each bedroom



and had provided full cooperation. Paul Whitehouse, the GLA's chairman, said: "Forced labour, intimidation and abuse at work is something nobody should experience but we are uncovering it too frequently."

The investigation by the GLA began

when seven workers in Angus complained about their poor accommodation. They were housed in converted farm buildings at Carmyllie, where as many as eight people slept in one room with only three bunk beds.

Others, up to five at a time, shared

caravans and chalets in Blairgowrie. The GLA's investigators also discovered that Timberland used uncertified minibuses to move workers between Cornwall and Scotland, and took unauthorised deductions from their wages to pay for protective clothing,

accommodation and food. Mr Clark, managing director of Grampian Growers, said yesterday he had not been aware of the investigation. He said: "We pay £5.52 per hour for overtime. We supplied and worked to Timberland's specifications. Following the revocation of the GLA, we did our own investigation. 100 per cent of our workers were being paid a fair wage in a decent standard of accommodation in caravans and chalets that you would stay in on a holiday."


The GLA was established in 2004 following the deaths of 23 Chinese workers in Morecambe Bay in 2004. It has worked to regulate the labour market by awarding licences to firms employing foreign workers. The dark side of the industry was underlined last year when a severed head of Jolita, a Lithuanian woman, was found on a beach in Arbroath. The woman, who had worked in Scotland to find a better life, was found in Scotland to find a better life.

One worker, Krzysztof, from Poland, who worked for Grampian Growers in Cornwall before working for Grampian Growers in Scotland, said: "We had two cars for us for the amount we were picked, and the other workers were paid a rate of £5.52, but we were that. I made £800 for 10 hours of work, but I thought I should earn double that."


Mr Beckson said he was taking legal action against the GLA's decision to revoke the licence.

- *"The first week they arrive they are immediately committed to pay a deposit of £125 towards breakages etc. They are charged £35 per week for their accommodation and £5 a week facility charge - for water, gas etc".*
- *"He also pays no regard to National or Agricultural minimum wage and pays them piece work rates. If they complain he gets rid of them".*
- *Workers who have not been paid are still being forced to pay for accommodation.*

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- *3 brothers manage the workers, ruling with an 'iron hand'. The brothers threaten the workers and have hit some people. Workers are scared and dare not leave.*
  - *Employees often pay a lot of money to come to the UK to work and then have to pay for the accommodation and are further into debt.*
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# **Memorandum of Understanding ACPOS & GLA Renewed July 2012**


- The sharing of information between the MOU parties,
  - Support for the respective operational activities of the MOU Parties, including, where appropriate to conduct joint or multi-agency investigations.
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## Joint Agency Work

- July 2008, the GLA, UKBA, Tayside Police, HMRC, UKHTC, Tayside Fire & Rescue, Perth and Kinross Council, HSE and the Procurator-Fiscal engaged in a community impact assessment following the discovery that a Perthshire farmer had employed 350 Bulgarian nationals without the appropriate authority to do so.
- The workers had no legal permission to work in the UK and were allegedly 'posted' from their country to the UK.
- Further enquiries revealed that applications had been made to use the posted workers scheme but the process had not been conducted legally.

# Joint Agency Work

## Work in Progress:

- Construction of MOU with COSLA.
  - Construction of MOU with Fire and Rescue Service.
  - Public Bodies meeting and other interested parties on Solway cockles – Dumfries 10 August 2012.
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# What to take away from today

- Information is the key, **sharing that information** is vital to future progress.
- Everyone in this room - **can make a difference.**
- Think out of the box – not just what you can do – **who else can help.**
- Organised crime is here, trafficking does take place and to tackle it effectively, we should work collectively.

# COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS



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