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Office of the  
**Police & Crime  
Commissioner**  
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My Reference: OPCC/MBW/NF

Your Reference:

24 November 2017

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DP

Dear Home Secretary

**Response to HMICFRS inspection 'Stolen Freedom: the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking'**

I am writing to you in response to October's HMICFRS report 'Stolen Freedom', which examined the national response to modern slavery and human trafficking.

As you will know, this is an issue which is of great personal interest to me in my role as the APCC's Chair of the National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network. Here in West Yorkshire, our own network has been in operation since 2014, supported by investments I have made in a dedicated Human Trafficking Team within West Yorkshire Police, and a specialist advisor post within my own office – the latter tasked with co-ordinating the response to trafficking and modern slavery by the police and important local partner agencies.

I am grateful to the authors of the report that our work with the national network is highlighted, alongside the work carried out in West Yorkshire to raise awareness within the banking sector of slavery and trafficking crimes.

The report highlights a number of areas where the national response is not as strong as it needs to be. Three topics come to the fore; the inconsistent identification of victims; the quality of investigation into slavery and trafficking crimes; and the strength of information sharing alliances between partners.

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West Yorkshire Police have looked to tackle the first of these gaps by employing a Training and Partnerships Officer who is attached to the force's Human Trafficking Team. This role aims to bring consistency in training delivery to provide all officers with the information and skills they need to identify victims of modern slavery. Through the Modern Slavery Police Transformation Programme, West Yorkshire Police will soon receive a licence from the College of Policing to deliver accredited training independently.

The skills of our Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) bring the strongest response to the investigation of human trafficking and the abuse of vulnerable people. They are supported by West Yorkshire Police who have achieved some notable successes in the past twelve months in pursuing offenders<sup>1</sup>. One aspect of building our investigative capacity is our work to establish local serious and organised crime partnerships across West Yorkshire's local authority districts. These public and private sector partnerships will improve the collection of intelligence and promote joint-work in the disruption of organised crime groups, some of whom are engaged in human trafficking and modern slavery.

To help build awareness of these crimes within the body of partner agencies, the West Yorkshire Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network and West Yorkshire Police held a Modern Slavery Summit in September 2016 for representatives from the public and recruitment sectors. 140 delegates attended the event, which included presentations from Kevin Hyland (the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner), Paul Broadbent (Chief Executive of the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority), and Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer of Devon and Cornwall Police. This example illustrates our commitment to bring the prevention of slavery and trafficking to the forefront of everyone's day-to-day business. Finally, West Yorkshire Police work in partnership with specialist human trafficking and modern slavery agencies such as the Palm Cove Society, Hope for Justice, Basis, and Invisible Traffick, to support the victims of trafficking identified through police operations. These West Yorkshire based agencies provide expertise around victim care and the safeguarding of vulnerable people, helping to provide a continuity of care through police investigations and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Some of these organisations have benefited from additional financial support from my Safer Communities Fund, which has awarded £50,000 of grants made up from Proceeds of Crime funding to local organisations working to defeat human trafficking and modern slavery.

Here in West Yorkshire we have worked hard to grow the breadth of our partnership approach to trafficking and slavery abuses. I was pleased to see in this report that as a result of our pro-active approach, West Yorkshire Police are second amongst England & Wales forces for the volume of modern slavery and human trafficking offences recorded within the NRM. Nationally, we understand that more can be done to build a consistent approach amongst forces and partners to tackle trafficking and slavery crimes. The National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network exists to drive this change, through sharing best practice, identifying perpetrators, and ensuring Chief Constables are held to account.

To help extend our influence, a Police Transformation Programme funded post has been established within my office to help fellow PCCs nationally to identify areas for improvement within their police services. Through our national and local networks, we will continue to

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<sup>1</sup> Dawid Zielinski case: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/nationwide-modern-slavery-investigation-began-after-three-victims-came-forward-in-bradford-1-8418770>

work to achieve the most effective response to human trafficking and modern slavery to meet the recommendations outlined in this report.

Yours sincerely



Mark Burns-Williamson  
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire

Copied to:

Chief Constable Dee Collins – West Yorkshire Police