



Parliamentary Question – Forced labour in the construction sector

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Asked by:

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Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to tackle forced labour in the construction industry.

Response:

The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery in all sectors, including construction, which is why we reformed the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), giving it a wider remit and police powers to investigate labour market offences across all sectors of the economy.

The construction sector has been the focus of increased enforcement activity by the GLAA and other agencies over the last 12 months, with over 20 investigations resulting in several arrests. The GLAA has also established a Construction Protocol in partnership with the industry to protect vulnerable workers and raise awareness of modern slavery.

The Government is also using other levers to tackle modern slavery in the sector. Businesses operating in the UK with a turnover above £36m are required to publish annual transparency statements detailing the steps they are taking to address modern slavery in their supply chains.

The Home Office is hosting a conference on 27 March to share good practice on tackling modern slavery in public procurement, focussing on high-risk sectors for public sector buyers, including construction.

The protection of all persons from forced labour and modern slavery offences remains a key priority for the Government and will of course be taken into account

in the development of future immigration policy through engagement with key representative and law enforcement bodies, the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, consultations and impact assessments.

Those with lawful immigration status permitting them to work in the UK enjoy full protection under labour market legislation when they engage in employment. Immigration Enforcement will take action against rogue businesses who exploit illegal workers under powers provided in the Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and Immigration Act 2016.