



Date: 27 August 2008

Record number of gangmasters have licences revoked by GLA

The number of gangmasters whose licences have been revoked by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) to protect vulnerable workers has soared.

More than 20 gangmasters (labour providers) have had their licences revoked in just over the first quarter of the 2008 financial year.

The revocations send a resounding message to those who abuse their power and their workers – there is no hiding place, the GLA will find you.

The leap in revocations coincides with GLA's hard-hitting Operation Ajax which was launched by the authority in April to stamp down on worker exploitation and abuse.

From April to mid August 22 gangmasters' licences have been revoked in 2008 compared to 33 April 2007 to 2008 and 15 April 2006 – April 2007.

Chairman of the GLA Paul Whitehouse said:

"These figures show we meant what we said when we launched Operation Ajax to clamp down on those who are abusing the system and their workers. And make no mistake, we will continue this fight. We will not let up on those who think they can make money out of abusing the system and the lives of vulnerable workers."

In the UK today 1186 GLA licences are held by labour providers. Since the authority became operational in 2006, there has been a total of 70 revocations and 42 licence refusals.

Notes to editors

1. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) was set up in 2005 to curb the exploitation of workers in the agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and associated processing and packaging industries.

2. The majority of workers involved in these industries come from countries such as: Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, India, Pakistan and Portugal.

3. So far, the GLA has licensed approximately 1,200 labour providers. Seventy licences have been revoked (7 with immediate effect). One person has been prosecuted for operating without a licence, with more prosecutions forthcoming.

4. The GLA stepped up its fight against those who abuse workers with the launch of Operation Ajax in June. The operation was set up to increase the GLA's activities with an 18-month programme of unannounced raids.

5. Paul Whitehouse, GLA Chairman, is available for interview by contacting 0115 900 8962.

6. Anybody who is aware of exploitation should contact the GLA on 0845 602 5020 or at www.gla.gov.uk/report.

End

Public enquiries: 0845 602 5020

Media enquiries: 0115 900 8962

www.gla.gov.uk