



# Gangmasters Licensing Authority

## PRESS RELEASE

**Date: 9 April 2014**

### **GLA moves to Home Office**

Prime Minister David Cameron announced today that the Home Office will assume responsibility for the GLA with immediate effect.

The change has been welcomed by Chief Executive Paul Broadbent who described it as 'a natural step'.

He said: "The GLA is pleased to move under the umbrella of the Home Office. We view it as a positive development and it is welcomed."

Two years ago the GLA was instructed by the Government – through its Red Tape Challenge review – to reduce the bureaucratic burden on business and concentrate more on the most severe extremes of worker exploitation.

Added Mr Broadbent: "In refocussing our efforts we are uncovering more and more cases of vulnerable people being trafficked into the UK by organised criminals with the intention of making handsome but entirely unlawful and immoral profits. However, I stress this is not to the detriment of the civil regulatory powers we exercise, which we continue to carry out in equal measure.

To tackle the problems associated with modern slavery, the GLA works regularly with the National Crime Agency and its UK Human Trafficking Centre, as well as local police forces – all are organisations within the remit of the Home Office.

"This is a logical move that can only lead to a more effective, joined up approach in the fight against those driven by greed who seek to exploit workers," said Mr Broadbent.

The GLA was formed following the Morecambe Bay cockling disaster of 2004, when 23 Chinese workers drowned after being cut off by the fast-rising tides. The Government responded swiftly by introducing the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act, which introduced the GLA with a remit to licence businesses that supply temporary workers and prevent their exploitation.

The authority regulates companies that provide workers for agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and all associated processing and packaging. Previously, Defra was the host government department.

Added the chief executive: “The labour supply business has evolved dramatically in the decade since the tragic events of Morecambe Bay, and the GLA has changed with it.

“Now there are sophisticated criminals running large-scale operations, trafficking in and controlling dozens of workers, and making substantial profits, while those doing the work live in poverty and squalor.

“That said, an equal core function of the GLA is that of a regulatory body ensuring that legitimate businesses are able to flourish whilst unscrupulous gangmasters are held to account for their actions. The industry, workers and the public can be assured that the change of host government department will not dilute this activity.”

ENDS

## **GLA Major Achievements 2013-14**

- Worked in partnership to prevent more than £30 million flowing into the informal economy
- Recognised as the UK’s leading investigative agency into labour exploitation
- Seized criminal assets worth £100,000s - vehicles (including a Bentley), properties, businesses and boats
- Recorded first prison sentence for GLA offence: seven years for being an unlicensed gangmaster
- Assisted more than 100 potential trafficked victims through the National Referral Mechanism
- Recorded a 100 per cent appeal success rate
- Agreed innovative working with partner organisations, including agreeing a Service Level Agreement with London Fire and Rescue to tackle rogue landlords, as well as working with Boston Council through the Rogue Landlords fund
- Delivered in partnership the ‘Stronger Together’ initiative to major UK retailers – a scheme to combat trafficking, forced labour and exploitation
- Unveiled a revised three year strategic plan 2014-17 – ‘Working in partnership to protect vulnerable and exploited workers’
- Granted 96 licences, carried out 100 compliance inspections, revoked 20 licences, identified 1,058 workers as exploited, exposed financial exploitation worth nearly £1.75 million in excessive transport charges plus unpaid wages & holiday pay

*Press release issued by GLA Communications and Information Officer Paul Fearn. For more information contact 0115 959 7069 or email [communications@gla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communications@gla.gsi.gov.uk).*

## **Notes to editors**

1. The GLA operates throughout the UK and is a Non Departmental Public Body.
2. The authority was formed in 2005 in the wake of the Morecambe Bay cockle picking disaster when 23 Chinese workers drowned on the sands.
3. The GLA licences companies that supply labour (gangmasters) to agriculture, horticulture, food processing and packaging and shellfish gathering.
4. Its main strategic priorities are to prevent worker exploitation, protect vulnerable people and tackle unlicensed and criminal activity.
5. Under the Gangmasters Licensing Act (2004) it is illegal both to operate as, or employ the services of, an unlicensed gangmaster.

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