



CEO's Quarterly Report

April - June 2014

News

GLA moves to Home Office

Only a few days into the quarter covered by this report, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the Home Office would assume responsibility for the GLA with immediate effect. The change was welcomed by Chief Executive Paul Broadbent who described it as 'a natural step'. In explaining the move, Mr Cameron said: "A key part of our long-term plan is making sure our economy delivers for people who do the right thing, so everyone who wants to work hard can get on in life. The changes we are making today will help stop practices which exploit vulnerable workers and undercut local businesses that play by the rules. They will give workers in Britain a fair crack of the whip when it comes to getting a job themselves. That means more economic security for people across our country."

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. It is therefore anticipated the move will lead to a more effective, joined up approach in the battle against those who seek to exploit workers, while allowing the authority to continue to operate a robust and effective licensing system.

Modern Slavery Bill published

Home Secretary Theresa May has published an historic bill in an attempt to stamp out worker exploitation in the UK. The Modern Slavery Bill is the first of its kind in Europe, and one of the first in the world, to address slavery and trafficking specifically. It aims to give law enforcement bodies the tools they need to target today's slave drivers, ensure perpetrators are severely punished and improve support and protection for victims. In introducing the proposed legislation, the minister said: "Modern slavery is an appalling crime that has no place in today's society. It is an affront not just to the dignity and humanity of the people crushed by it but to every one of us. This Bill presents an historic opportunity to get legislation on the statute books specifically targeting the scourge of modern slavery."

Triennial Review backs GLA

The work of the GLA was given an official stamp of approval in the findings of the latest Triennial Review. Such reviews are carried out on all Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) to ensure the respective roles they perform are necessary, and that they are complying with principles of good corporate governance. The GLA received a positive

report that stated the functions it performs are necessary, and that it remains the right body for delivering them. The review also concluded the GLA should remain an NDPB but should seek to reduce the size of its governance board – an issue which is in the process of being addressed. The written ministerial statement about the review was laid in the House of Commons by Karen Bradley MP and can be viewed at www.gov.uk.

IRIS provides vision for future

The GLA was invited to Switzerland recently to provide expert guidance in developing a global system of best practice when it comes to recruiting and placing workers overseas. The project is being run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and has been dubbed the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS). It builds upon ongoing work with organisations across the world and the GLA has been involved in early discussions.

The first meeting of experts from across the world was held in Geneva and included representation from the GLA, IOM, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Trades Union Congress, regulators from Canada and the Philippines, academics, lawyers and policy shapers from the US, UK and Europe, consular staff from the US, Sweden and Holland, along with industry representation from the international trade association Ciett.

Discussions centred upon what the guiding principles should contain, how an application and accreditation process may look, how compliance could be monitored, how non-compliance would be reported and a complaints procedure would work, and how this would tie into regulatory frameworks that may be in place across different continents/countries.

Events

Unchosen ones

GLA staff backed a touring roadshow of films based on the stories of real-life trafficking victims that was organised by charity Unchosen. Staff attended one of the touring events at the Nottingham Contemporary Gallery and saw three shortlisted competition entries. This was followed by a Q&A session on trafficking issues with a panel of experts including GLA Director of Strategy Darryl Dixon. More than 60 film-makers entered the first Unchosen Human Trafficking Film Competition, which was held last year. It was introduced to 'shine a light on this dark trade'. Other shortlisted entries were shown at events throughout the UK.

Chair catches the CAB

The GLA's Margaret Beels took to the road recently to raise awareness among staff from the Citizens' Advice Bureau about the work of the GLA. The chair delivered a presentation to the CAB's Rural Issue Group to explain how the authority works and what help it can provide when labour exploitation or abuse is discovered among workers in the GLA sector.

Supply chain transparency

The GLA Chair was also invited to contribute to a top level round table meeting convened to discuss transparency in the supply chain. Also in attendance were Home Secretary Theresa May and Minister for Modern Slavery and Organised Crime Karen Bradley. A constructive session was held with a frank exchange of ideas from the public and private sector representatives present.

GLA's Italian Job

Turin was the destination for GLA officer Lys Ford recently to assist in delivering a course on 'Identifying and investigating cases of forced labour and human trafficking'. The event was organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at its training centre in Northern Italy. The GLA was asked to share some of its expertise in a presentation on the course's core subject for delegates.

The ILO aims to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. Participants in the latest conference came from Brazil, Italy, Nigeria, Finland, Brunei, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Germany, India, Thailand, France and the USA. They came from a variety of backgrounds including chief prosecutors, embassy officials, charity workers and labour inspectors. The ILO referred to the methods and practices used by the GLA as an example of 'best practice' and added that it would like to see its model used in other countries.

Counter-Trafficking Course

Legal representatives, police officers and other associated and interested parties from across continental Europe attended a training course in Germany which included input from the GLA. Director of Strategy Darryl Dixon delivered a presentation on 'The Role and Regulation of Recruitment Agencies' to the delegates at the event, which was held at the Academy of European Law, in Trier. The GLA director later chaired a discussion on the Investigation and Prosecution of Labour Trafficking and Places of Employment of Victims.

Q&A in Cambridge

GLA Head of Licensing David Nix was one of the experts open to question at a 'panel talk' event at Cambridge University. It was organised by the university's branch of the human rights charity, Amnesty International, and hosted at Clare College. The audience listened to presentations and were invited to put forward questions on the subject 'Human Trafficking and Modern-day Slavery'.

Operations

Op Novalis - GLA checks on SAWS farms

The GLA contacted or visited more than 500 farms in April that had previously employed migrant workers from Romania and Bulgaria through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS). A total of 21,250 nationals from these two countries were permitted to work for UK fruit and vegetable growers on a temporary basis each year. However, SAWS ended on 31 December last year when the relaxation of the immigration laws permitted Romanian and Bulgarians to work legally in the UK.

The GLA instigated Op Novalis to seek the views of the end users in relation to the supply of labour following the cessation of SAWS; ensure the supply of labour is legal and check on any compliance related issues and to deal with any intelligence related issues. In summary, it was deemed too early to establish any meaningful trend changes resulting from the standing down of SAWS.

Op Trivium 2 - Tackling overseas crime

The GLA assisted in a major partnership operation to combat foreign nationals using the UK's roads with the intention of travelling to commit crime. Operation Trivium 2 took place at the start of April and resulted in 2,689 vehicle stoppages, 367 vehicles seizures, 197

arrests and 1,624 enforcement activities. As well as GLA staff, the initiative involved all UK police forces, as well as officers from Poland, Romania and Lithuania, HMRC and the National Crime Agency. Contraband tobacco products to the value of around £200,000 were recovered as well as a stolen CAT excavator worth more than £160,000. The operation also identified and led to the arrest of an organised crime group who were travelling around fitting card-skimming devices onto cash machines.

Op Badsworth – Trafficking arrests in East Anglia

Six people were arrested as part of a joint operation involving the GLA working with officers from both Norfolk Police and Suffolk Police. The arrests followed an investigation into alleged people trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation in the vegetable processing industry.

Police apprehended three men in Great Yarmouth on suspicion of trafficking and unlicensed supply of workers as well as a woman suspected of money laundering offences. In Suffolk, police arrested a man from Bury St Edmunds and a woman from Ipswich also on suspicion of trafficking and supplying workers without the necessary licence. All six are remanded on bail to report back to the police for further questioning.

Op Endeavour – Latest

Two brothers have been arrested on suspicion of human trafficking and unlicensed gangmaster activity in Cambridgeshire as part of ongoing investigations. Officers from the GLA assisted police as they attended two addresses in the Wisbech area and arrested a man at each. Both were questioned in connection with the inquiry into exploiting workers involved in harvesting agricultural crops, as well as flower and food processing in the Fenland area. Both men were released on bail to report back to the police for further questioning.

Performance

Quarter one 2014/15 – 1 April to 30 June

Operational

- Application Inspections: 31
- Compliance Inspections: 17
- Licence Revocations: 8
- Workers identified as exploited: 333
- Ongoing Criminal Investigations: 50

Licence Totals - (taken at 21 March 2014)

Full: 955

With ALCs: 4

Financial

Income streams investigated

The GLA continues to make progress in its search for alternative commercial income generation opportunities. The authority is currently working with the Home Office and the Treasury to discuss opportunities that have been identified.

Human Resources

Head of Licensing departs

This quarter has seen the GLA bid a reluctant farewell to its Head of Licensing, David Nix. David has departed to take up a senior role with the Solicitors Regulatory Authority. He has been with the GLA since its inception and is a very highly regarded manager and expert in his field. He will be sorely missed and the GLA's best wishes go with him for the future. His deputy, Appeals Manager Charlotte Wilson, has been promoted to fill his role and provides continuity of experience and expertise as well as the added benefit of being a qualified solicitor.

New starters

Three vacancies were recently filled to bolster the GLA's front-line team. The authority has been joined by a new Senior Investigating Officer and two compliance/enforcement officers. All will focus their efforts on the immediate issues in the eastern region of England.

Parliamentary Questions

2014-15	PQ Totals	Subjects				
Quarter		Finance	Operational	Powers	Staffing	Board
Apr - Jun	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total (financial year to date)	1	0	0	1	0	0

Licensing and Legal

Cross border cooperation leads to licence loss

Complaints from disgruntled employees to a Hungarian online magazine resulted in a Manchester-based gangmaster being shut down by the GLA. An article appeared on the site Index.hu last summer featuring Hungarian migrant workers who claimed they had been mistreated and subjected to poor working conditions by Incity Ltd. The article also mentioned issues being experienced with a Debrecen-based outfit called Magnum One, which had applied for a licence. Both companies were run by Bury-based businessman Jan Francek.

As part of the normal checking procedure, the GLA contacted the police and labour inspectorate in Budapest about the two companies. A response was subsequently received from the Hungarian police, who established that the business had been named in a complaint from workers in the online article for providing 'sub-standard accommodation' and for 'promising work that never materialised'. The Head of Crime Prevention of the Hungarian National Police reported this to the GLA. Inspectors were dispatched to visit the Manchester company and spoke to workers to establish if the business was operating compliantly. Soon after the visit, a decision was taken to revoke the licence of Incity Ltd, while the application for Magnum One was refused.

Community Payback Order for Scottish gangmaster

An Angus man who illegally supplied workers to a number of Scottish vegetable farms and paid them wages below the legal minimum has been ordered to perform 180 hours of unpaid community work. Rimantas Sulcas, of Brechin, had pled guilty to the offence of acting as a gangmaster without a licence at an earlier hearing at Stonehaven Sheriff Court. He was handed a Community Payback Order for 180 hours to be completed within a nine months period, or face being brought back to court and re-sentenced.

'Incompetent' businessman loses licence

A West Midlands gangmaster was stripped of his licence after he was 'untruthful' in interviews and was found to lack both the competency and knowledge to run a business in line with GLA licensing standards. Sanjeev Sahota originally claimed to have left his job as a full-time telephone operator to look after the day-to-day control of Premier Resources in Rowley Regis. But the company director later changed his story, admitting he was still working full-time on the phones and running the recruitment business in his spare time.

When questioned, however, he appeared to know very little about the workings of the company - which provided temporary workers for harvesting vegetable and fruit crops for farms in the Midlands. Premier's licence was revoked in December 2012 but the company appealed, allowing them to continue trading until the legal process was concluded.

Other News

Nottingham teens given job help

GLA staff volunteered to provide pupils from a Nottingham school with some valuable careers advice, as well as tips that might help them find work in the future. Six teenagers from Ellis Guilford School and Sports College, in Basford, were mentored by staff through a specially-devised vocational programme. They were each given guidance on how to search for jobs, apply for vacancies and prepare for interviews. Finally, they were given a mock interview to get an idea of what to expect when the time comes to enter the employment market. The visits were supported by the East Midlands' branch of Civil Service Local as part of the Engaging Our Secondary Schools scheme. This is part of a national commitment to deliver 30,000 paid volunteering days by guiding activities in key policy areas.

Latest forced labour report backs GLA

UK social research and policy development charity the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has praised the work of the GLA in its latest report entitled Forced Labour in the UK. The document states that this form of 'modern slavery' is estimated to affect between 3,000 to 5,000 people across the whole of the UK and that the collaborative working methods of the GLA stands out as 'a model of good practice'. However, the research also found that 55 per cent of GLA licensed businesses also operate in other sectors, so there is clear 'potential for displacement' of the problem. The author concludes this is an inherent weakness of a sectoral approach to licensing and regulation.

The report states that many people have called for extending the authority and the resources of the GLA to cover all industries where there is known risk of exploitation and forced labour associated with labour providers. It adds that the evidence from JRF's programme points to the same recommendation.