



Gangmasters &
Labour Abuse Authority

Executive Report

23 January 2019

Summary

Our new Chief Executive Michael Rich took up his post with the GLAA on 3 January. He is undertaking an extensive induction programme including meetings with external stakeholders.

Suzanne McCarthy took up her position as a GLAA Board member on 15 January, spending a day meeting colleagues at our Nottingham headquarters as part of her induction.

In November the Prime Minister announced the protocol we have developed with several major retailers aimed at preventing labour exploitation in UK textiles manufacturing.

We welcomed the Government's response to recommendations made by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME) in his 2018/19 strategy.

Following confirmation that the Government is now considering the case for a single enforcement body to make it easier for vulnerable workers to enforce their rights, and to ensure employers are better supported to comply, we have met with colleagues from BEIS and elsewhere to discuss further.

And ahead of publication of an inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) we have developed an action plan to address issues likely to emerge from it.

Prevent

Prime Minister Theresa May made an announcement about the *Apparel and General Merchandise Public and Private Protocol* we have developed.

John Lewis, M&S, New Look, NEXT, River Island and Shop Direct have all signed the document which commits signatories to work together to eradicate slavery and exploitation in textile supply chains.

The sector is a high risk industry for labour exploitation and we believe this partnership will enhance efforts to root it out of supply chains and reassure workers and customers of the efforts being made by the UK industry.

The Prime Minister said: "I welcome the action being taken by businesses which are leading the way in being open and transparent about the modern slavery risks they face, and have pledged to raise awareness to prevent slavery, protect vulnerable workers and help bring more criminals to justice."

A parliamentary report into hand car washes recognised the work we are doing to help combat labour exploitation across the sector.

Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee, which has been probing the issue, published a report demanding operators be licensed to prevent the exploitation of workers and water pollution.

It also calls for the Environment Agency to work with the GLAA and other enforcement bodies to ensure that unannounced inspections of hand car washes are comprehensively investigated.

The EAC's report said it noted the work the GLAA is doing to prevent labour exploitation in hand car washes. And it praised its role in the creation of the Responsible Car Wash Scheme (RCWS) in which major supermarkets have already signed up.

The report said: "We are encouraged that the GLAA and Director of Labour Market Enforcement are stepping up their efforts to tackle labour exploitation at hand car washes. Ensuring that hand car washes operating on the car parks of major supermarkets are compliant is the first step."

We attended the Risk panel (as chair) of the (RCWS) in preparation for the implementation phase of its pilot in the East/West Midlands. The advisory panel was also attended along with HSE, supermarkets and franchise operators, providing the position on the implementation of the scheme.

Our construction protocol is progressing well with a further five signatories in December, taking the total now to 70.

In relation to nail bars, work with Nottingham City Council in collaboration with Manchester begins in January. Following the completion of a scoping study on the size of the market in the Manchester area, a bid for £700k has been submitted to the Home Office for additional funding to support the development of a national voluntary nail bar accreditation scheme.

Enforcement

Nine members of a gang who trafficked vulnerable Latvian men and women to Derby have been jailed for more than 33 years.

We supported Derbyshire Police with their biggest ever human trafficking case which began in early 2017 and saw co-operation between agencies both in the UK and in Europe.

A 42-year-old man and 35-year-old woman were arrested and questioned on suspicion of human trafficking offences in Lincolnshire in a multi agency operation with Lincolnshire Police, HMRC and local authorities. Both have been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

GLAA officers also arrested a man on suspicion of modern slavery and human trafficking offences in east London, with six potential victims rescued and safeguarded. The suspect, a 24-year-old Romanian man, has been interviewed and released under investigation pending further enquiries.

The GLAA acted after it received intelligence that the potential victims had been trafficked to the UK for financial exploitation while working in construction.

And we arrested a 55-year-old Romanian man for similar alleged offences in Coventry. He has been questioned and our enquiries continue.

Organisational update

Following confirmation that the Government is now considering the case for a single enforcement body to make it easier for vulnerable workers to enforce their rights, and to ensure employers are better supported to comply, we have met with colleagues from BEIS and elsewhere to discuss further.

A separate paper looking at this and other related issues – such as the Good Work Plan – has been prepared by our Director of Operations.

Ahead of publication of an inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), we have developed an action plan to address some of the issues likely to emerge from it.

These look at areas around governance and oversight, our internal processes and our intelligence, compliance and enforcement strands. The Board will be kept updated on progress around delivery.

One of the outcomes from last year's People Survey is the creation of a new working group, made up of colleagues from across the organisation. They have been invited to look at some of the key themes emerging from the survey – in areas around leadership and management, engagement, internal communications, reward and recognition, learning and development, and change.

The group will represent all GLAA colleagues and work towards finding solutions to issues raised in the survey. Some of this work will also include areas relating to people that are likely to emerge in the HMICFRS inspection report.

Licensing and compliance

A judge backed our decision to refuse a licence application from the daughter of a man who lost his GLAA licence back in 2013.

Lobina Azeem applied for a licence for her company Raja and Sons Ltd but an application inspection raised concerns about her father's influence on the firm.

Mohammed Azeem had his licence revoked in 2013 after his company Foxwell Ltd, based near Stourbridge, breached 11 licensing standards in supplying Romanian workers to a vegetable farm.

Inspectors felt that Miss Azeem had not been "candid and truthful" about the role of her father in the company and considered the application to be an attempt by him to get a new licence when he was deemed not fit and proper by the GLAA.

Miss Azeem also failed to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the licensing standards and did not show that she had sufficient management processes in place.

Her licence application was officially refused in May last year and upheld by a court following appeal.

Strategy

We welcomed the Government's response to recommendations made by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME) in his 2018/19 strategy.

Professor Sir David Metcalf made several recommendations aimed at improving workers' rights, ensuring businesses comply with the law and improving enforcement.

The Government agreed with a number of those, including one around pilot licensing schemes. Sir David recommended licensing for hand car washes and nail bars – two industries deemed high risk for labour exploitation and lack of compliance.

The Government 'partially accepted' the recommendation and pointed to work already being done by ourselves and others that has led to the Responsible Car Wash Scheme (RCWS).

It also supported the approach we already take to investigate non-payment of holiday pay, acknowledging the GLAA has taken measures to strengthen and prioritise this area.

A meeting took place with Derby University regarding a Trainee Investigator Programme, which may support future development of the GLAA operational resources, ensuring skills support tackling 21st century exploitation and emerging methods.

Internationally, the GLAA has supported the FCO in its continuing upstream work particularly in relation to the development of an action plan with Poland and Lithuania, as well as with BEIS in relation to the EU's development of the European Labour Authority.

The GLAA has now had discussions with the Home Office team that are responsible for the operational of the New Seasonal Visa scheme. The pilot has identified two companies that it wishes to work with. The GLAA is working with the Home Office team, to provide them with details of how our intelligence and compliance operations work, to assist them in planning their compliance regime. Meetings for that purpose are being arranged.

Finance

We are in the progress of recruiting a new additional role to the finance team. This post will provide added support and resilience to the team and help mitigate some risks around this area.

Expenses have been passed back for initial manager approval. This was recommended by audit and is part of strengthening our governance lines of defence. This appears to have been successful to date but December is quieter month for expenses and so we continue to review.

Progress has made in resolving some key outstanding issues around cost of IT support due to changes in how services are delivered within Home Office and Defra.

We held a strategic finance meeting in December where the focus was the budget for 2019/20 and included a more detailed review of some variable areas of spend within manager control.

The roll out of risk management continues and there were risk management and strategic finance meetings held in December. The GLAA also had an Audit and Risk Committee meeting which was supported by the business and finance team.

Preparation are being made for the governance audit which will be completed in final quarter of 2018/19 and some work on Business Continuity Planning.

Human Resources

Recruitment activity has continued with one vacancy being filled by an internal candidate on a secondment basis resulting in a promotion for them. We also advertised for four operational posts, one finance post, one HR maternity cover post and one appeals post (internally only) with selection processes being completed during January.

We have been involved in discussions with the Home Office regarding the introduction of Success Profiles, which replace the Civil Service Competency framework for recruitment within the Home Office as well as across the civil service. The aim is to move recruitment away from using a purely competency-based system of assessment to a more flexible framework which assesses candidates against a range of elements using a variety of selection methods.

The GLAA already incorporates several of these methods within our existing recruitment framework.

No changes are envisaged to our existing Recruitment and Selection policy which has been Civil Service accredited. HR will continue to work closely with recruiting managers to appoint the best candidates possible for current and future vacancies.

Communications and engagement

In addition to continuing to promote the work of the GLAA using the media and social media platforms, we have been working to complete delivery of a GLAA intranet. This project has experienced significant delays due to issues with our third-party website provider. However, we now expect the platform to be ready for launch in February.

Work to enhance the GLAA's stakeholder engagement activity by rigorously analysing and mapping the organisation's stakeholders continues. As part of this work the head of communications and engagement met with the Director of MBA Programmes at Nottingham Trent University to discuss additional approaches to this area of work.

The team also assisted internal auditors who have conducted a review of the GLAA's current stakeholder engagement activity – their report will be ready in February.

And the team has worked closely with Strategy colleagues in maintaining the close links established with Boston College, Lincolnshire. A project that will see media and visual arts students produce marketing and awareness materials for the GLAA ends with an event hosted by the University of Nottingham in late January.

Freedom of Information Requests

During the reporting period of this EMT Report (1.11.18 – 31.12.18)

- One FOI received
- Four FOIs responded and closed
- Two FOIs remain open and ongoing
- One FOI is currently on hold.
- Four FOIs have been published on our website
- Two FOI Act exemptions used, details given below

Section 21 of the FOI Act was used on two occasions. This exemption applies if the information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. On the first occasion it was used in relation to a request for salary details of the CEO and Directors. The second exemption was in relation to a request for statistics of individuals safeguarded as a result of GLAA operations. In both cases, the applicant was directed to the appropriate page on our website.

***Our FOI disclosure log shows our responses to requests made to the GLAA under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 that might be of wider public interest.**

<http://www.gla.gov.uk/who-we-are/freedom-of-information-requests-2018/>

Parliamentary Questions

Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington)	194014	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to combat modern day slavery in agriculture.	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4171/abbott-211118-modern-slavery-in-agriculture.pdf
<p>In the UK, the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority (GLAA) licenses businesses which provide workers to the farming, food processing and shellfish gathering sectors to make sure they meet the employment standards required by law; and carries out inspections and enforcement activity.</p> <p>The GLAA has been given police powers to investigate serious cases of labour market exploitation across the entire economy in England and Wales, and in 2016/17 the GLAA directly intervened on behalf of 4,691 workers to prevent them from exploitation. The GLAA also partner with businesses, such as Sainsbury's, to deliver training sessions to their suppliers, so they can better identify and manage risks in their supply chains.</p> <p>Through the Home Office's Modern Slavery Innovation Fund, we are currently funding Stronger Together to deliver 34 workshops to over 560 workers and employers in South Africa's fruit and wine industry, so that they are better equipped to identify and address modern slavery.</p>				
Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	199922	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what dates his Department had meetings with representatives from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority on the Seasonal Workers Pilot in the agricultural sector.	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4178/khan-061218-season-agricultural-workers-scheme.pdf
<p>Officials have been in regular contact with the Gangmasters Licencing and Abuse Authority (GLAA), throughout the design of the pilot. A meeting is scheduled for 12 December 2018, which will enable us to draw on the expertise of the GLAA when visiting agricultural sites.</p>				
Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	201233	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to section 5 of the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004, how the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority plans to license non-EU labour providers engaged in the seasonal workers pilot in the agricultural sector	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4186/khan-111218-agriculture-seasonal-workers-3.pdf

As with all labour providers in the agricultural sector, the scheme operators for the Seasonal Workers Pilot will be required to be fully licensed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. No bespoke licencing arrangements are required.

Full details of how the seasonal workers pilot will operate will be announced in due course. Ensuring the protection and wellbeing of participating migrant workers is of primary importance. We are working with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority to ensure that we get this right.

Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	201234	To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority on the seasonal workers pilot.	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4183/khan-111218-seasonal-workers.pdf
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Defra officials are working closely with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) on the Government's seasonal workers pilot. The oversight and protection of workers was a central element of the selection process for Pilot Operators. The selected Pilot Operators were first publicly announced in the Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules, which was laid on 11 December and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-1779-11-december-2018>.

Officials will continue working closely with the GLAA over the two year operation of the Pilot. A key objective of the pilot is to ensure that migrant workers are adequately protected against modern slavery and other labour abuses. The operators of the scheme will be licensed by the GLAA. They will ensure that all workers are placed with farms who adhere to all relevant legislation, including paying the National Minimum Wage. Farmers will also be vetted to ensure that living and working conditions are of a suitable quality.

Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	201235	To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Seasonal Workers Pilot in the agricultural sector, how much time will be provided to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority to develop a system for worker oversight and protection in the UK and overseas from the point at which Pilot Operators are chosen to the point at which the pilot starts to provide workers to growers and employers in the UK.	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4184/khan-111218-agriculture-seasonal-workers.pdf

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Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	201231	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the level of resources required by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority as a result of the introduction of the new seasonal workers pilot in the agricultural sector	See below	http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4201/khan-111218-glaa-resources.pdf
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