



Gangmasters &  
Labour Abuse Authority

# Chief Executive's Report

**1 May 2019**

## Introduction

1 May 2019 marks the second anniversary of the GLAA's existence and in the run up to that date, the agency received ministerial praise following a very positive report from Government inspectors.

In a report Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) said the agency had done remarkably well in assembling and deploying its Labour Abuse Prevention Officers (LAPOs) effectively in a relatively short space of time.

Inspectors went on to say: "This is of notable credit to the late chief executive, the interim chief executive and all those who worked hard to create the conditions which have enabled this success."

Their report said the GLAA has "exceeded the Home Office's expectation."

Victoria Atkins, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, said: "The GLAA has risen to the challenge and transformed its organisation very impressively to take on its new mission to investigate serious labour exploitation across the entire economy."

In February HRH Princess Eugenie visited the GLAA's Nottingham headquarters.

The Princess had an hour-long meeting with colleagues to hear more about the agency's work along with some of the challenges it faces in trying to prevent workers from being exploited for their labour.

A fierce advocate for victims of exploitation and slavery, the Princess said she was 'enormously grateful' for the opportunity to learn about the GLAA.

In January Suzanne McCarthy was welcomed as the newest Board member of the GLAA with a meeting of senior colleagues.

And the GLAA marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Morecambe Bay cockling disaster by reaffirming its commitment to protecting vulnerable and exploited workers.

## Enforcement

The first quarter of 2019 has seen the GLAA continue to use its enforcement powers to protect vulnerable workers.

We were asked by the National Crime Agency to lead a week of action on behalf of UK law enforcement tackling labour exploitation and co-ordinate activity across the European Union.

It resulted in a multi-agency operation with a mixture of prevention, enforcement and awareness raising activity taking place across the EU. The results are currently being collated and will be made available in the coming weeks.

GLAA officers made more arrests in connection with allegations that a vulnerable worker lived in a shed and was exploited over a 40-year-period. The 53-year-old man questioned as part of a complex inquiry which remains ongoing in Cumbria.

A number of Labour Market Enforcement Undertakings (LMEUs) have been served by GLAA investigators since the start of the year.

They include a 51-year-old Bulgarian woman living in Telford and 21-year-old Romanian man in Evesham, both related to the food processing sector.

A 51-year-old Romanian national who attempted to supply workers in the food processing sector in Nottinghamshire without having a GLAA licence has also been made subject of a LMEU. Along with a 32-year-old Bulgarian man and 31-year-old Bulgarian woman living in Telford who supplied workers to the food processing sector.

A 39-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of acting as an unlicensed gangmaster after allegations overseas workers were charged 'fees' to find them jobs. The GLAA acted following allegations other Bulgarian nationals were charged £100 each to find them jobs in the food processing industry.

A Polish man believed to have been trafficked to the UK and exploited was rescued and safeguarded by the GLAA in Bradford. The 27-year-old was accepted into the National Referral Mechanism following intelligence that he had been brought to the UK with the promise of lucrative work but instead had his wages taken from him.

Five people were arrested on suspicion of modern slavery and human trafficking offences following dawn raids in south-east London. The suspects were held by the GLAA as part of an operation with the Metropolitan Police tackling alleged organised criminal behaviour.

Two Albanian men aged 29 and 34, along with two Romanian men and one woman aged 28, 30, and 23, were all questioned by GLAA officers and released under investigation pending further enquiries.

And another seven people were arrested in Ipswich in connection with modern slavery offences. GLAA officers supported Suffolk Police and other partners following a pre-planned operation.

All of these investigations currently remain active.

## Organisational update

A key work stream in the first quarter of 2019 has been to produce the GLAA's Business Plan for 2019-20 along with an updated Strategic Plan. Following on from this, all teams and departments will be producing their own localised plans that will set out how they intend to deliver on the GLAA's corporate objectives.

The Intelligence team is finalising work for this year's Strategic Assessment and the 2019 Nature and Scale of Labour Exploitation Report – these are key documents which drive our activity and are also shared with our operational partners who value the insight into labour exploitation.

The newly established People Survey Working Group (PSWG) is continuing its work to review last year's survey results. The group – which now has a regular dialogue with the GLAA's chief executive - is exploring a range of ideas and solutions to improve the working environment, morale and the organisation's efficiency.

The GLAA is playing a full role in discussions around the creation of a single enforcement body and believes it is in a strong position to help shape and influence future direction. The agency believes there could be significant opportunities for the GLAA to improve and expand the ways in which we are able to deliver on our mission.

And work is already under way planning this year's GLAA People Seminar. The event will be held on 16 and 17 September and is being kindly hosted by our partners at the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab.

## Licensing and compliance

Measures to protect vulnerable workers through the use of licensing and compliance mechanisms saw a judge uphold our decision to deny a licence to a woman who had repeated financial dealings with a criminal gangmaster.

Natalija Vincukova was deemed to be not fit and proper when she applied for a licence in March 2018 for her newly established labour supply business because of proven links to a criminal later jailed for 18 months for operating as a gangmaster without a licence.

The GLAA was concerned that there was still no credible explanation for her dealings with the man and, when she appealed the decision, an employment tribunal judge agreed and dismissed the appeal.

A recruitment agency which had its GLAA licence revoked also lost an appeal against the decision, when the judge agreed workers at the business were at risk of exploitation. Go Solutions Ltd, of Main Ridge, Boston, had its licence revoked in December 2017 following compliance inspections by the GLAA earlier that year.

Inspectors discovered a multitude of failings, including 12 breaches of the GLAA's licensing standards, five of which were serious enough on their own to cause the business to fail the inspection.

And thirty hand car washes on supermarket sites in the Midlands were inspected and audited in February to check that they are complying with regulations and looking after their workers.

The spot checks were a key part of the Responsible Car Wash Scheme (RCWS), an industry-led pilot project tackling modern slavery and lack of compliance within the hand car wash industry.

A report into the project's findings and progress so far is due later this month (May).

## Strategy

More than 90 of the biggest names in the construction industry have now signed a landmark joint agreement aimed at eradicating modern slavery and labour exploitation from the sector's supply chains.

The protocol is a key part of the GLAA's strategy to engage with high risk sectors. It has also led to greater engagement with the building industry, including training and awareness raising.

A similar agreement also exists with the UK Apparel and General Merchandising Protocol in which major retailers have pledged their support.

Visual arts students from Boston College taking part in a pioneering course with the GLAA showcased their work to some of the world's leading experts on modern slavery and labour exploitation.

Students presented their visual concepts for raising awareness of labour abuse at an event hosted by the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab. The concepts included everything from videos to photography, graphic design, and even clothing, all of which featured in a four-minute show reel played at the event. The products will be used by the GLAA and partners to enhance awareness messaging.

Boston College is the first in the UK to work with the GLAA on embedding the subject of labour abuse across its range of academic and vocational courses. As part of the project, the college's 1,500 full-time students will all have a tutorial on workers' rights and spotting the signs of modern slavery during this academic year.

## Finance

Much of the first quarter of 2019 has been taken up with preparing for the financial year end and the team has successfully delivered against the deadline for our and the Home Office's year end schedules.

Meetings have also been held with directors to set budgets for 2019-20 along with putting together a bid for Home Office funding for a new GLAA licensing system.

Ongoing work continues to finalise the 2017/18 ARA and the team has benefited from the addition of an Assistant Management Accountant to help provide added support and resilience.

## Human Resources

The team has been working to support colleagues ahead of preparations for end of year appraisals.

Following selections processes we have successfully recruited for the roles of Senior Appeals Officer, Employee Relations Advisor, Assistant Management Accountant. Offers

have also been made for three external candidates in intelligence roles with planned start dates for May 2019.

Throughout 2018-19 L&D delivered training across all teams within the GLAA with 80% being delivered to Operational Investigators and RFIO's and 20% being delivered to office-based employees (not including Induction programmes).

More details are available in the HR update paper.

## Communications and engagement

The GLAA's new intranet platform was launched in February. Named Morecambe, the channel is providing a platform for colleagues to keep up to date on organisational developments as well as enhance internal engagement across the agency.

Ongoing work to enhance the GLAA's stakeholder engagement activity led to a workshop hosted by the Director of MBA Programmes at Nottingham Trent University, at which senior GLAA colleagues were joined by other voices to discuss its approaches to this area of work.

The communications and engagement team continues to enhance the GLAA's reach across social and digital channels, increasing the number of followers on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

## Freedom of Information Requests

During the reporting period of this EMT Report (1.1.19 – 31.04.19)

- Nine FOIs received
- Ten FOIs responded and closed
- One FOI remains open and ongoing
- Six FOIs have been published on our website
- Three FOI Act exemptions used, details given below
- Two were considered as commercial approaches, misusing the FOI, and re-directed to make formal approaches should they seek commercial contracts

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 inspection details which could be found on the inspection list on the GLAA website inspection list page. The second exemption was in relation to the nature and scale of labour exploitation in the UK where the applicant was redirected to the current version on the GLAA website, and to be advised when the next version became available.

A further FOI, which was responded to, relied upon a s40(2) exemption in answer to certain questions which requested the names of employees in relation to a HR focused FOI.

Two FOIs were responded to outside the statutory timescales due to certain HR information being collated. In such cases the applicant was notified of the delay with an indication of when a response would be provided.

In April, to date, a further 3 FOIs have been received. One has been responded to, and two are ongoing.

\*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

<https://www.gla.gov.uk/who-we-are/freedom-of-information-requests-201920/>

## Parliamentary Questions

Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Alex Norris (Nottingham North)	206887	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what grounds ProForce Limited was investigated by the then Gangmasters Licensing Authority in 2015; and what the outcome was of that investigation.	See below	<a href="https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4216/norris-090119-pro-force.pdf">https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4216/norris-090119-pro-force.pdf</a>
The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) only discloses information about its investigations, or those of the former Gangmasters Licencing Authority (GLA), where these result in prosecution or another notifiable outcome. A list of compliance inspections carried out by the GLA is available on the GLAA website <a href="http://www.gla.gov.uk">www.gla.gov.uk</a>				
Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Alex Norris (Nottingham North)	206888	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority has ever taken action against Pro-Force Limited.	See below	<a href="https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4216/norris-090119-pro-force.pdf">https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4216/norris-090119-pro-force.pdf</a>
The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority has not taken action against ProForce Ltd				
Asked by	Ref	Question asked	Published response	Link
Stephen Crabbe	230062	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps	See below	<a href="https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4559/crabb-080319-forced-labour-in-the-construction-industry.pdf">https://www.gla.gov.uk/media/4559/crabb-080319-forced-labour-in-the-construction-industry.pdf</a>

(Preseli Pembrokeshire)		he is taking to tackle forced labour in the construction industry.		
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>				