Research Report 7 Key implications

Trafficking for sexual exploitation: a process review of Operation Pentameter

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Operation Pentameter 1 (P1) was a police-led, multi-agency campaign against trafficking for sexual exploitation. It was the first operation of its kind and involved police and partners across the United Kingdom. Its primary aim was to rescue victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (TfSE). Preparation began in 2005 and the live operational phase ran between February and May 2006. In total, 88 women were rescued as a result. The operation was intended to shift the policing focus from victim escapees (reactive) to active identification/rescue (proactive).

The Home Office's Organised Crime Research team conducted a process study to identify lessons learned to inform future operations.

- The research identified the importance of raising awareness of TfSE among police and partners, and the value of specialist training. In particular, a need for specialist training on how to identify a trafficked victim emerged. Consideration should be given to including TfSE as part of police training.
- P1's active media campaign did much to raise awareness of the horrific nature of TfSE. Additional media support might be used to reduce the demand for prostitution in general, by highlighting the grim realities and human misery created by human trafficking.
- Defining partner roles and responsibilities at the outset is essential to effective partnership working. Greater use might also be made of immigration intelligence teams in UK ports.
- Data-sharing protocols between agencies need to be developed; the lack of these in P1 created some blockages in sharing information.
- Victim support services are increasing in scale. Standardised victim referral mechanisms and minimum standards of victim provision will be beneficial and are being developed. Central coordination of victim support facilities was also requested and is being undertaken.
- Establishing dedicated resources/expertise for TfSE within police services should be considered (every force with a dedicated team in P1 did recover victims).

Many implications cited here have actively been taken on board in the design and delivery of Pentameter 2, and fed into the work of the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre.

Home Office Research Reports

Generally consist of three sections:

- Key implications, which highlight the main messages for decision makers from the research;
- a Summary, giving a brief but comprehensive description of the research findings; and
- the main report.

More detailed background and technical information may be included in appendices at the end of the report. Please note that some reports may only contain the Key implications and a Summary.

Keywords

Pentameter
Organised crime
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UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)
UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking
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