

News story: Vital action taken in fight against modern slavery

The UK and Vietnam have announced a new partnership to tackle modern slavery.

The 2 countries today (Monday 21 November) signed a memorandum of understanding on human trafficking that will allow for greater collaboration around intelligence sharing, supporting victims and prevention work.

Many victims of modern slavery in the UK originally come from Vietnam.

In 2017 alone, UK authorities identified 738 potential slavery victims from the South East Asian country.

Speaking after signing the agreement with his counterpart Senior Lieutenant General To Lam, the Vietnamese Minister for Public Security, Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Modern slavery is an appalling crime which destroys the lives of its victims. This government is committed to doing everything we can to protect people from being exploited in the UK and overseas.

Working in partnership with other nations, such as Vietnam where many victims are trafficked from, is absolutely vital in preventing modern slavery from taking place and being able to relentlessly pursue the perpetrators.

This close collaboration will be a powerful weapon in the fight against modern slavery.

The agreement is part of the UK's world-leading action to tackle modern slavery, which includes requiring employers to set out how they are tackling exploitation in their supply chains, action taken against offenders and increased support for potential victims of modern slavery.

In total, £200 million of UK aid funding has been committed by the government to tackle modern slavery across the globe.

This includes the Home Office's £33.5 million modern slavery fund, which is focused on countries from where a high number of victims are trafficked to the UK, such as Vietnam and Nigeria.

[News story: Draft Withdrawal Agreement and Outline Political Declaration](#)

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[News story: Grappling with digital disclosures](#)

The Head of the National Police Chiefs' Council has been meeting with senior stakeholders from across Government including the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Home Office to understand the current and future challenges posed by digital disclosures within the criminal justice system in order to understand how technology might help to solve them.

The workshop chaired by Chief Constable Sara Thornton was a partnership event between the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) and the Ditchley Foundation, which brings together influential and expert people to help redefine and renew our society, democracy and alliances.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the world have been wrestling with the problem of how to manage the vast quantities and types of digital data now associated with most criminal investigations, in accordance with proper application of disclosure principles.

While more data brings new opportunities to leverage information for successful prosecutions, there is the challenge of collecting, processing and using this data in a proportionate and targeted way. In addition, the use of connected and internet enabled digital devices is likely to increase meaning that the already overwhelming quantity of data involved is likely to continue reaching new orders of magnitude.

DASA will use the outcomes of the workshop to identify and accelerate innovative technologies to help address the priority challenges, utilising

its wide access to the supply base.

[Press release: Parole Board Chief Executive's Blog – 4th Edition – November 2018](#)

In his 4th monthly blog, Martin Jones, CEO of the Parole Board, talks about the work the Parole Board is doing to improve victims' experience of parole, including a project to inform members about restorative justice.

[Press release: Parole Board Chief Executive's Blog – 4th Edition – November 2018](#)

Working to improve victims' experience of parole

The Parole Board makes thousands of decisions each year. The majority of those decisions have the potential to cause anxiety and sometimes upset to victims. Even though the Parole Board's job is focused not on punishment, but on the potential risk if the prisoner is released, we always take careful account of any victim personal statements and should ensure that we treat victims with humanity and sensitivity.

While we can sometimes make unpopular decisions, we should always be prepared to listen and learn. Therefore, I regularly meet with the Victim's Commissioner and with individual victims who have experienced the parole process to consider how we might improve.

Restorative Justice Guides

I am delighted that we have now published some really helpful guides about Restorative Justice (RJ), produced in collaboration with [Why me? Victims for Restorative Justice](#). My thanks go to Lucy Jaffé and her team at Why me? for leading this work.

The initiative for this work came from two very brave women, who were the victims of serious offences. Through RJ, they had both met the men who had

been convicted of the offences, and had found the process helpful. They wanted to meet me because they were keen to discuss whether Parole Board members understood RJ and how it works, so that members could make well-informed decisions about the potential relevance RJ may have on parole decisions.

I listened very carefully to these two very courageous ladies and made a commitment to them and the Victims' Commissioner that we would carry out this work. The publication of these leaflets is a great step forward in this work and I am glad that we have delivered on this promise. This was a great piece of work that will undoubtedly help Parole Board members understand more about RJ, and will also help people working in RJ learn about the Parole Board.

For more detailed information about restorative justice and parole, please take a look at the leaflets or go to the [Why me? website](#).

PDF, 181KB, 4 pages

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#RJ Week 18-25 November

The publication of these leaflets ties in nicely with [Restorative Justice Week](#), which is taking place all over Europe, and beyond, this week.

Presumption that a victim can attend an oral hearing

We have already delivered on a recommendation made in [the Government's recent](#)

[victim strategy](#) that we move to a presumption that a victim can attend an oral hearing to read out their personal statement. This removes the anxious period victims had whilst waiting for a decision from the Parole Board. It is only in very rare occasions that it will be considered inappropriate for a victim to attend, and this will be based on safety or security matters. Even in such cases, victims can still deliver their statement via video-link or other means.

Continuing to reimburse victims for expenses

We continue to reimburse victims for expenses incurred when attending a prison and I hope that this removes some of the barriers and allows victims to contribute as much as possible.

Victim Liaison Events

During October and November, members and staff of the Board have been participating in Victim Liaison Officer briefing events around the country, listening to their concerns and providing advice and guidance. I will be attending the last one of these events in London next week and look forward to meeting VLOs, who are crucial links when victims are engaged in the parole process.

Next steps

I am carefully reviewing the progress made with providing summary decision letters to victims and am grateful for all those who have provided feedback. We are continually developing our thinking in this area and looking to improve the process as much as possible.

I am also keen to see how the plans for a mechanism to reconsider Parole Board decisions develops, and am working with officials within the Ministry of Justice to see how this could be best implemented.

We welcome the plans to improve the [Victim Contact Scheme](#) to ensure that victims are kept fully informed of their roles and are able to effectively participate in these evolving processes, which the Victim Commissioner has rightly highlighted as a key part of improving victim experience of the parole process overall.

And finally, we look forward to working with colleagues across the Ministry of Justice to review [the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) to make it more accessible to victims whilst providing a clear mandate to those agencies delivering services to victims of crime.