

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mark Isherwood AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

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6th October 2019

Dear Mark,

I am writing in relation to the question you raised at the recent Business Statement/ Question session on 24 September regarding the Modern Slavery Helpline.

Slavery is not devolved to the Welsh Government, with the Home Office being the lead for Wales and England.

The Modern Slavery Helpline is operated by the charity Unseen. It is self-funded in order to retain its independence and confidentiality. The Helpline does not receive any funding from the Welsh Government, Home Office or any of the other UK Devolved Administrations.

I am aware of the Helpline's current financial difficulty and that they have launched a public appeal for donations.

In the UK, the Helpline provides a service where suspected incidents may be reported and offers information about slavery. In 2018, from across the UK they received 6,012 calls, which resulted in the identification of 7,121 potential victims, and this included 256 in Wales.

Until recently, Slavery was very much a hidden crime and is still under reported, which is the reason the Helpline is promoted by organisations, including the National Crime Agency, Police, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, Welsh Government, Home Office and the other Devolved Administrations. The aim is to increase reporting, hopefully raise awareness where more victims can be identified, rescued and where possible their perpetrators be brought to justice.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Reports to the Helpline have contributed to the increase in more potential victims of Slavery in Wales and being referred into to National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process, which is operated and funded by the Home Office.

The NRM process includes the free provision of accommodation support, access to legal, language services, and support for witness protection in cases being brought to justice.

Investigations into Slavery are the responsibility of Law Enforcement Agencies, which include the National Crime Agency, Police, UK Border Force, UK Immigration and Visas and the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority. In Wales and England, the decision to prosecute cases is the responsibility of the Crown Prosecution Service and where applicable seek compensation.

Because Slavery is complex to investigate and prosecute, our Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group worked with Law Enforcement partners and the Crown Prosecution Service to develop the Organised Crime and Modern Slavery Course. This is a three-day course to train Senior Investigating Officers and Crown Prosecutors/Crown Advocates and we are sharing this learning across the UK.

Beethisher,
Jane

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