

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

#ProtectingVulnerablePeople

Date: Tuesday 14th July

Humberside Police enlists task force to tackle modern-day slavery

In these unprecedented times, protecting the area's most vulnerable people remains Humberside Police's main priority, which is why a new task force specialising in modern day slavery and human trafficking has been established.

The recent restrictions on daily life will make it even harder for victims of modern day slavery to be seen, which is why the force is committed to focusing work in this area with the launch of Operation Wilberforce.

Providing a proactive, investigative response to allegations of modern day slavery and human trafficking, Operation Wilberforce is made up of a dedicated team of specialist officers. The team will also provide training, support and guidance to colleagues, strengthening the force's knowledge in this area.

Detective Chief Inspector Christine Calvert, Modern Day Slavery lead at Humberside Police, said: "Although you may not see it, modern day slavery exists in the Humberside Police area and often goes unnoticed in our local communities. Sadly, it's happening all around us in places we might usually visit, but it goes unnoticed. From the local hand car wash, a nail bar or even your village takeaway – slavery and trafficking is a growing cause for concern across the entire Humber region."

The three most common forms of modern day slavery in our area are forced labour, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. There is no typical victim profile - victims can be men, women and children of all ages, but it is normally more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, including minority groups or those who are socially excluded.

The specialist team is being led by **DCI Calvert**, alongside **Detective Inspector (DI) Jim Clough** and will seek to build relationships with partners in a cross-section of society, including charities, local authorities, education, health, local communities and businesses, to raise awareness, gather intelligence and work together to protect the most vulnerable within our society.

DCI Calvert added: "Our role is to raise awareness of the problem and encourage people to look beyond a seemingly 'normal' situation to see the real person and their potential predicament. As an area with strong roots in the fight for freedom, the aptly named operation clearly demonstrates Humberside Police's continuous commitment to protecting vulnerable people especially those who may be victims of modern day slavery."

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“We’re working hard to keep vulnerable people safe. We put victims and potential victims at the heart of what we do, protecting and serving our communities to make a real difference, but to do this effectively we need our communities to help, and not to turn and look the other way.

“Although we’re currently experiencing a change to life as we know it, it is important that we continue with our proactive work in this important area, raising awareness to help protect these vulnerable people now and in the future and bringing offenders to justice.”

The operation is being supported locally by a comprehensive marketing campaign that includes online activity and outreach communications with local community groups and businesses. The campaign seeks to educate people on what vulnerability looks like and encourages them to sit up and take action.

Police and Crime Commissioner Keith Hunter, said: “Modern day slavery preys on the most vulnerable members of our community and I welcome force mainstreaming funding after my initial investment in the team. They will undoubtedly continue to identify those responsible for this awful exploitation and help ensure offenders are brought to justice. The on-going work of the team shows that in the Humber area police and wider partners including the Modern Day Slavery Partnership are committed to tackling this form of exploitation by collectively raising awareness of modern day slavery, encouraging the community to report concerns, supporting victims and those vulnerable to exploitation, and bringing those responsible to justice.”

For further information about spotting the signs of modern day slavery, visit <https://www.humberside.police.uk/operation-wilberforce>

If you suspect modern day slavery or have concerns about a vulnerable person, please call 101.

Alternatively you can direct your call anonymously via the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 121 700 or Crimestoppers on 0800 111 555.

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