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Hertfordshire partnership marks World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

New leaflets aimed at raising awareness among taxi drivers and the general public are to be distributed by the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership.

The leaflets – launched today (Monday July 30) on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons – will be given to drivers when they renew their licence. They follow on from the Partnership’s “Slavery can happen anywhere” campaign last year and are part of an on-going drive to raise public awareness of exploitation and trafficking.

The second leaflet for the general public will be handed out at enforcement operations or other awareness events run by partners. Both leaflets are packed with information about spotting the signs that someone might be being exploited and where to report any concerns.

Sue Darker, Chair of the Partnership’s Steering Group, said: “Criminals can use taxis to move exploited people from location to location. It is vital taxi drivers know what to look out for and where they can report any concerns they have.

“Through the partnership more than 500 local authority, NHS and law enforcement workers in Hertfordshire have been trained on how to spot the signs of human trafficking and modern slavery.

“The work we have done so far has undoubtedly increased the number of potential victims identified and made Hertfordshire a harder place for criminals to exploit people.”*

The Partnership was set up in May last year and has been working to coordinate efforts to tackle these crimes in Hertfordshire. Recent developments from the Partnership include a new victim pathway for public sector professionals in Hertfordshire to ensure that they refer potential victims they come into contact with to the correct channels for support.

A support worker in Beacon – the Hertfordshire Victim Care Centre – will now be working with victims of trafficking and slavery, offering further support. Other notable achievements include successful multi-agency involvement in enforcement operations and welfare visits. Reception centre facilities for victims available 24/7 throughout the county has also been established for operations where there are five victims or more involved.

Anyone with concerns about human trafficking or modern slavery should call police via 101 or the national Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. In an emergency call 999. The Beacon hotline

Issued by Corporate Communication
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03000 11 55 55 is open from Monday to Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 9am-5pm or visit the website www.hertfordshirebeacon.org for information and advice to access support.

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Notes to editors:

*From March 2017 to August 2017, police received eight modern slavery reports from partnership organisations; from September 2017 to February 2018 police received 24 and from March 2018 to the end of July, 29 reports from partnership organisations. The Modern Slavery Helpline received 14 reports from Hertfordshire in August 2017, up from two in the previous month. This followed a public awareness campaign by the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership.

The Partnership is made up of more than 40 organisations including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, the anti-trafficking and slavery charity Shiva Foundation, Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and the 10 district and borough councils in the county. It also features a wealth of other charities and law enforcement organisations. The Partnership reports to the PCC's Community Safety Board.

The Partnership's key areas of work include awareness raising, improving support for victims, creating better partnerships and training, and optimising the law enforcement response. The structure was recognised as an example of best practice at a Local Government Association event earlier this year. The Partnership is developing its 2018-2020 strategy for tackling modern slavery in Hertfordshire, so that a coordinated, more consistent approach is adopted across the county.

Modern Slavery is where someone's freedom is taken away in order to exploit or take advantage of them. Modern slavery affects men, women, girls and boys of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. Criminals can use threats, violence, deception or debts to trap victims into slavery. Even if someone is being paid, it can still be exploitation.

Victims of trafficking are often forced or moved under false pretences by criminals so they can be further exploited when they arrive.

Examples of modern slavery include:

- **Sexual exploitation**, such as being forced to have sex with people, maybe in return for gifts or money.





- **Forced labour**, where someone is made to work, often for little or no pay. Jobs or places of work could include construction, nail bars or car washes – but not only these.
- **Domestic servitude**, where someone is forced to perform household or childcare duties for little or no pay.
- **Criminal exploitation**, where someone is forced into criminal activity such as working in cannabis factories.

For further information please contact Senior Press and PR officer Dan Phillips on 01707 354588, or the on call press officer out of hours via the Force Control Room on 101.

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