



Gangmasters Licensing Authority

CEO's Quarterly Report

GLA News

New Strategy unveiled

The GLA's new three-year strategy - Working in Partnership to Protect Vulnerable and Exploited Workers – was unveiled at the beginning of June. The three-year blueprint was shaped by a number of contributing factors, including several key Governmental reports and reviews, ministerial statements plus strategic and operational assessments both nationally and internationally. It outlines the GLA's added focus on tackling serious and organised crime within the regulated sector, which covers between 400,000 and 700,000 workers in the UK. Specific emphasis will be placed on forced labour, which can, in the extreme, also involve human trafficking.

As well as creating a hostile environment for those who breach GLA regulations and/or legislation, under the new approach, the GLA also aims to lessen the bureaucratic burden on compliant businesses, allowing them to flourish and seeks to engage with businesses much more readily prior to formal intervention. The document can be viewed in full by clicking [here](#). It has been welcomed by a number of key partners whose comments can be seen by clicking [here](#).

Facebook

The Gangmasters Licensing Authority is now on Facebook. Initial testing has been carried out on the page and it will take time to establish the best way to utilise this resource. If you 'like' the page, you will receive the latest news releases, views and relevant partner agency developments. The GLA on facebook will also give Labour Users, Labour Providers, members of the public and workers an additional opportunity to engage directly in dialogue with the GLA. The page can be found at www.facebook.com/GangmastersLicensingAuthority

Ministerial Meeting

Defra Secretary of State David Heath met recently with representatives of the GLA in Grantham to discuss recent operations and work to tackle ongoing issues in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Other subjects covered included the new strategy and the possibility of introducing civil sanctions to the GLA arsenal. The minister was also receptive to the challenges faced in identifying and investigating forced labour and was encouraged by the strong partnerships being forged with the National Farmers Union, retailers and labour users.

Beds in sheds initiative

The GLA has held meetings with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to discuss how to tackle the issue of criminal landlords who provide 'beds in sheds' for workers. Reports of poor quality 'work-site style' accommodation appear to be on the increase nationally as well as in the capital. The problem concerns the GLA because of the worker exploitation aspect and the LFB from a fire safety point of view.

As a result of the work, a formal intelligence-sharing Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up between the GLA and the LFB and is expected to be agreed and in place soon. This move could lead to a 'beds in sheds' initiative being rolled out across the UK with other fire services. This issue has attracted recent national media interest and the GLA is engaging with the Local Government Authority to help coordinate activity nationwide, as well as being a member of the cross-party ministerial task force led by MPs Mark Harper and Mark Prisk.

GLA chief GAINs chair

GLA Chief Executive Paul Broadbent has been appointed chair of the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) national executive. GAIN is a network of Government departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (like the GLA) that have service level agreements and information sharing protocols. Its aim is to ensure that criminal conduct and organised crime is identified quickly and effectively and that the partnership approach is implemented to disrupt and dismantle such criminality. It is expected that the flow of intelligence between agencies will increase and enrich decision-making and risk assessment.

Freephone line

An additional service to assist exploited workers has been introduced at the GLA in the form of a new, free, Confidential Reporting Line. Those who dial the Freephone number 0800 432 0804 get straight through to the GLA intelligence team during office hours. A messaging service is available on the line for 'out-of-hours' calls. Polish and Russian-speaking staff are available to answer the calls but interpreters for other languages can also be accessed. The 0800 number is free from a UK land line. Concerns can be reported in complete confidence about unlicensed gangmaster activity and/or breaches of licensing standards by licence holders - including suspected worker abuse.

Events attended

Not just a conference! – Paul Broadbent recently addressed a conference organised by high street giant Marks & Spencer. The chief executive spoke about keeping ethical supply chains free from worker exploitation. Also on the bill delivering eloquent addresses about sustainability and climate change were former US Vice President and environmental champion Al Gore and actress turned campaigner for Compassion in World Farming Joanna Lumley. Paul was struck by the commitment of M&S to ensure their supply chains were ethical and their desire to demonstrate integrity at each and every point.

Eastern Europe – the CEO spoke to a gathering of Eastern European ambassadors recently at the Slovakian Embassy. He joined the Crown Prosecution Service's Head of Trafficking, Pam Bowen, to talk about the challenges and opportunities that exist in working collaboratively to tackle this issue. What became apparent was that exploited and vulnerable workers from EU and non EU states across a number of industry sectors were presenting themselves to embassies regularly and sometimes in very distressed states. Joint working, information sharing and victim support is key to ongoing success.

Organised crime – the GLA chief was also a guest at a 'refresh' event for the Home Office's National Organised Crime Strategy. This included extensive discussions about forced labour - a deeply concerning and increasing crime trend among organised crime networks. The delegates were told that, more and more, the 'commodity' of choice for organised criminals is people, for the purposes of forced labour and slavery.

Operations

Op Expect - More than 50 officers searched homes and businesses in Scunthorpe, Gainsborough and London in one of the biggest joint operations led by the GLA. Warrants were executed at the end of April as part of a multi-agency investigation into alleged breaches of the Gangmasters Licensing Act, suspected fraud and money laundering offences. Other agencies involved were East Midlands Special Operations Unit, uniformed police officers from Humberside, Lincolnshire and the Metropolitan Police, HMRC and SOCA. Four men and three women were arrested and have been released on police bail until September.

Op Pheasant – Three people were arrested on suspicion of human trafficking offences as part of ongoing activity relating to worker issues in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. With particular emphasis on migrant workers living in Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), the multi-agency Operation Pheasant task force was assembled earlier this year. The GLA has teamed up with HMRC, the Home Office, Trading Standards, Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue and the Serious Organised Crime Agency, as well as the local police and others to tackle the issue. Two men and one woman were arrested last month and have been released on conditional bail until July 12.

Joint action with Boston Council - Workers' beds were discovered in sheds and outbuildings, with extra mattresses stuffed into wardrobes and cupboards, when officers from the GLA and other partner agencies inspected nine addresses in Boston, Lincolnshire. The properties in the town centre were checked by officers from the GLA, Boston Borough Council, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and Lincolnshire Police as part of a multi-agency crackdown on unsuitable HMOs.

The houses were all owned by a Latvian landlord understood to have a direct link to a firm of gangmasters operating out of Lithuania. As a result, eight of the properties were made subject to prohibition orders, restricting their use to a single family. The remaining property was already subject to a planning application for improvements.

Performance – First Quarter 2013

April 1 to June 30

Operational

- Application Inspections: **36**
- Compliance Inspections: **41**
- Licence Revocations: **4**
- Workers identified as exploited: **287**
- Ongoing Criminal Investigations: **51**

Licence Totals - (taken at 30 June)

Full: **1,153**
With ALCs: **17**

Parliamentary Questions

2013-14	PQ Totals	Subjects				
Quarter		Finance	Operational	Powers	Staffing	Board
Apr - Jun	10	2	1	0	7	0
Jan – Mar (for comparison)	12	3	1	0	7	1
Total (financial year to date)	10	2	1	0	7	0

Financial

The Annual Report and accounts for 2012-13 were finalised and laid before Parliament on 12 June. The position confirmed was that the GLA had operated within its agreed funding limits for the year. The full document can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Funding limits have been agreed for the current financial year, and a presentation updating performance year to date was made to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 13 June. This illustrated that for the first two months of current financial year, small savings are being made against the agreed budget.

Human Resources

Staffing Restructure – A major restructure of the roles and responsibilities of the GLA's home-based staff has taken place with some changes already implemented. The geographical approach to compliance and enforcement is to be replaced with role specific specialisms in particular aspects of work, while a new business change and development team has been formed.

One of the four Operations Heads will now be responsible for a newly formed team of officers concentrating primarily on compliance, while two Operations Heads will manage a team of officers tasked with investigations and enforcement. The remaining one of the four

will focus on business change and development, assisted by a team of two officers. The business change and development team began operating at the start of this month, with the enforcement/compliance changes to follow in September.

Staff absences – have dropped to well below the national average for civil and public servants.

Learning and Development Plan - the GLA's new Learning and Development (L&D) Plan is progressing well with an updated full staff skills audit being acted upon. The aim is to help identify and address the L&D needs across the authority. The GLA is collaborating with the University of Derby to provide training for staff for investigation, interviewing, evidence gathering and presentation and file preparation. This is designed to improve case quality and timeliness and the production of best evidence, thus identifying at an earlier stage the scale and complexity of worker exploitation.

Performance Management – the appraisal system for staff has been updated and a new competency framework introduced. The essence is a quarterly 1-2-1 with all direct reports; more emphasis on personal and professional development and ensuring the right person is in the right role with the right skills. Performance management, succession planning and talent management are at the heart of the new procedure.

Bonus payments – following a survey to gather staff opinions on bonus payments, a review of this system has been undertaken and in-year bonuses have ceased with immediate effect. End-of-year bonuses will remain in place. Finance reserved in the budget for in-year payments will be redirected into learning and development. This will be used to pay for appropriate training for staff and so benefit all employees, as well as the organisation as a whole.

Secondment to UKHTC – an opportunity will soon be available for a GLA officer to spend a period of secondment working at the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). This is one of the GLA's key partner organisations and falls under the auspices of the Serious Organised Crime Agency. The aim is for the selected officer to start in September with the arrangement running for a minimum of three months up to a maximum of six months, during which time cross appreciation, skills, networks and development will grow. It is hoped that a period of 'shadowing' can occur with CPS, Defra and the Home Office and the CEO is shortly to spend a full day with Tesco.

Staff changes – two popular members of staff have announced they will be leaving the GLA. Chief Operating Officer Ray Dawson has decided to leave after eight-and-a-half years. Ray has been with the GLA from day one and was instrumental in developing the GLA from a blank piece of paper into a highly respected, efficient and productive regulatory body. The GLA will also say goodbye to finance assistant Janet Ainge, who has decided to retire after nearly six years with GLA. We wish them both a healthy and prosperous retirement.

Licensing and Legal News

Revocations

INTERrecruit Ltd – this Peterborough-based company failed to lodge an appeal by the specified deadline date after having its licence revoked. An inspection had discovered it was being run by a disqualified director, paid salaries below the National Minimum Wage and failed to pass on holiday pay to workers.

Superior Service Co Ltd – based in Plumstead, London, this became a landmark case for the GLA when it was the first gangmaster to be subject to the recently introduced power to suspend a licence. An inspection found seven adults and a small child sleeping on mattresses on the floor in one three-bedroomed house the company supplied to workers, while 10 adults and two children were doing the same in another three-bedroomed property. Several other breaches of licensing standards were also uncovered, including around £250,000 of holiday pay that had been withheld. Again the company has declined to appeal the decision.

Appeals

DJ Houghton Catching Services – an appeal was lodged at the eleventh hour against this much-publicised revocation decision, which came into effect in October last year. Some of the worst worker exploitation ever seen by the GLA was uncovered at the Maidstone based firm who provided workers to catch chickens across the UK. No date has yet been set for the hearing, which is likely to take place later this year.

Court Decisions

Andrew Newsam – this Dorset farmer was mentioned in the last CEO Quarterly Report after he landed a 12 month Community Service Order for 200 hours of unpaid work along with a costs order for £2,500 for acting as a gangmaster without a licence. As a direct result of intelligence passed by the GLA to Dorset County Council, Newsam has been given an additional 20-week custodial sentence suspended for two years plus £1,000 costs for animal welfare offences.

Guidance - Two licensing guidance documents have been issued in the past quarter. [GLA Brief 27](#) provides information on the Active Check service and notifications issued through it, while [GLA Brief 26](#) covers the application and compliance inspection processes.

Other News

Gangmasters debate

Stephen Barclay MP led a parliamentary debate on the GLA last month and called for the authority to be granted powers to issue fines to those who flout regulations. The member for North East Cambridgeshire said criminal convictions under the Gangmasters Licensing Act were too costly and tricky to bring and for that reason they rarely progressed to conclusion. He added: "The key way we should be tackling [bad] gangmasters is by hitting them in the area they are most concerned about - that's in their pocket, that's fines! Fines will change the behaviour of gangmasters."

Defra Consultation

Defra's consultation on the scope and governance of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority closed on Friday 21 June. It attracted approximately 100 responses from individuals, businesses, trade associations and trade unions. Defra is considering the responses to the exercise and will publish the results in due course, however, initial analysis indicates support for proposals to remove low risk activities from the scope of licensing and to modernise the GLA's governance arrangements.

Croatia

Croatia will accede to the European Union from 1 July but previous employment restrictions continue to apply to its migrant workers. What this means is Croatian nationals will be able to obtain permission to work in the UK in skilled occupations but will not be given permission to take low-skilled work. Those who are self-employed will be exempt from this authorisation requirement. Unlike Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, Croatians will not be given access to the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS). The Government has indicated that it will keep its position with regard to Croatia under review.

CPS keen to strengthen links

Solicitor General for England and Wales Oliver Heald says the Crown Prosecution Service is keen to extend its working relationship with the GLA to improve multi-agency working to respond to forced labour.

In a recent speech he said: "The GLA is in a unique position to identify vulnerable victims who may have been trafficked and are often subject of forced or compulsory labour. "However, the GLA currently does not have powers to investigate serious criminal offences they encounter. The CPS has entered into an agreement with the GLA to advise them, via the police, on charges which reflect the criminal conduct they have encountered. But we are keen to explore other ways of working with the GLA to improve multi-agency working to respond to this crime."

AWB is no more

The Agricultural Wages Board was abolished towards the end of last month but the Agricultural Wages Order (2012) remains in force until the end of September. This means all agricultural workers in England and Wales continue to be entitled to receive at least the minimum terms and conditions set out in the 2012 AWO until that date.

If between now and 30 September, an employer fails to pay a worker in accordance with the AWO, the employer may risk enforcement action by Defra. It will remain the responsibility of an employer to prove that workers have been paid correctly in the event of a dispute. From October, there will no longer be a separate Agricultural Minimum Wage and agricultural workers will be protected by National Minimum Wage legislation.

MP bids to extend GLA powers

Corby MP Andy Sawford presented a Private Member's Bill to parliament last month calling for the Government to extend the powers of the GLA. Under his proposals the authority would be 'allowed to regulate employment agencies in all sectors of the economy; and for connected purposes'. No debate was held after the first reading and the bill is expected to have its second reading on 24 January 2014.

Charity think tank also calls for extension of powers

Another call for the GLA remit to be extended to cover other sectors has been made in a recent research document released at the end of June by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The British social policy, research and development charity has published a substantial document on Forced Labour in the UK and concludes that the Government must do more to tackle this growing problem. Among its policy recommendations are an extension to the scope of the GLA 'to cover other sectors where exploitation and forced labour have been identified and workers remain most vulnerable'. The report is available online in full or in summary by clicking [here](#).