

# Human Trafficking and Its Interface with the Irish Criminal Justice System: Shared Learning

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**Summary:** 'Hidden in plain sight' is a phrase often associated with human trafficking, as victims are often fully visible to us, interacting with the community so that the trauma and fear that prevents them from escaping a life of exploitation and servitude is not recognised. Despite knowledge of the social, economic and individual harm that is caused, there is a lack of research into the prevalence and needs of the victims of this crime. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime identifies it as the second largest form of organised crime across the world. It defies all borders and transcends ages, genders and ethnicities. It is a both a global and a local issue that has gained prominence in wider social and criminal justice debates in Ireland in the past 10 years. The number of trafficking victims identified in Ireland in 2018 was 103, including four child victims, compared with 95 in 2016 and 78 in 2015 (Department of State, 2018: 235). This paper is based on the author's experience and learning as part of a seconded placement in 2018 with the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit. It outlines the context of my placement; provides an overview of human trafficking in all its formations; explores its indicators; describes policy and practice against the backdrop of relevant legislation; and concludes with some reflections on the placement, and the implications of learning for Probation practice.

**Keywords:** Human trafficking, anti-human trafficking, United Nations Convention, indicators, cross-border, exploitation, victims, interagency co-operation.

## Introduction

In 2017 the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee, comprising senior managers from the executive bodies across the criminal justice sector, introduced an Inter-agency Secondment Scheme with a dual purpose: 'to provide new experiential and development opportunities for staff and to enhance communication, understanding and cooperation across the sector' (internal circular). Information was provided on a range of placements across the Department of Justice and Equality and expressions of interest were

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requested from serving staff. My interest in the work of the National Human Trafficking Unit, located within the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB), stemmed from my work on the Homeless Offender Team and as a member of the Probation team based in Mountjoy prison. My social work master's on 'An examination of inter-agency working in responding to the needs of homeless offenders' (2015) reflects my particular interest in inter-agency co-operation.

In the course of my Probation work I had engaged with people from various ethnic minority groups, many of whom had experience of disenfranchisement and containment often compounded by social and economic difficulties. In many instances the offending appeared to have occurred in hostile and toxic environments where the conditions that could potentially enable trafficking were rife. The issue itself was not specified, but human trafficking is a complex and multi-layered crime that is difficult to uncover, not least because of victims' fear. The secondment was an opportunity to increase my understanding of the distinguishing features of this form of criminality with the related trauma for victims and to forge links and share knowledge that could inform and enhance Probation interventions.

Following my successful application, I relocated from the Probation Service to the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit (HTICU) for 12 months. Operating within the GNPSB, the unit provides the lead for the investigation and co-ordination of all human trafficking cases across Ireland. Protection of victims is at the core of that work.

## **What is human trafficking?**

Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (2000), adopted by The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, contains the following definition:

- (a) 'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the

prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) 'Child' shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Ireland ratified this protocol in June 2010.

## Overview and Indicators of human trafficking

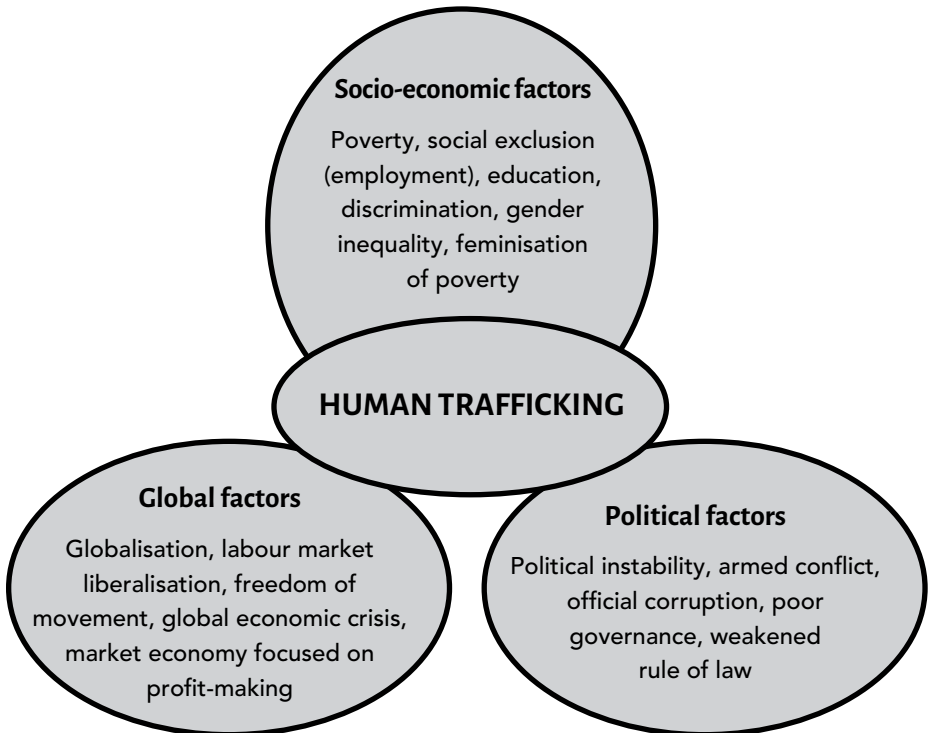
A global report on Trafficking in Persons (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2016) provides an assessment of the scope of human trafficking based on data from 155 countries. According to the report, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation, predominantly of women and girls. The second most common form is forced labour (18%). What was particularly shocking was that worldwide, almost 20% of trafficking victims are children.

Traffickers use a number of strategies in their efforts to control what are termed commodities in their underworld. A common example is debt bondage, where a person enters in to an 'employment agreement' as a security against a loan. Once within the realm of the trafficker's control, physical, sexual and emotional abuse can all form part of their exploitation. Staff of the unit highlighted the increase in women trafficked into organised prostitution, many of whom give consent to work in Ireland and have paid a transaction fee only to find that their journey, begun with hope, is now following an unexpected and terrifying trajectory.

The three key elements that must be present for a situation of trafficking in persons (adults) are outlined by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2014) as: '(i) action (recruitment, ...); (ii) means (threat, ...); and (iii) purpose (exploitation)'. It goes on to state that International law provides a different definition for trafficking in children (i.e. persons under 18 years of age). The 'means' element is *not* required in this

case. It is necessary to show only: (i) an 'action' such as recruitment, buying and selling; and (ii) that this action was for the specific purpose of exploitation. In other words, trafficking of a child will exist if the child was subjected to some act, such as recruitment or transport, the purpose of which is the exploitation of that child (OHCHR, 2014). Factors that influence victim recruitment are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Factors that influence victim recruitment (Stanoyoska and Petrevsk, 2012)



Although there is some commonality between people smuggling and trafficking, as both are profitable industries carried out by criminal networks involving trade in human beings, there are also distinct differences, as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Trafficking versus human smuggling*

<i>Trafficking in human beings</i>	<i>Human smuggling</i>
Trafficking in human beings is a crime against the person and a serious human rights violation.	Smuggling is a crime against the state.
The trafficker exploits the victim as a commodity; the relationship is generally long-term and always non-voluntary.	The smuggler provides a service to the migrant, entered into voluntarily and almost always short-term.
Traffickers obtain a continuity profit which comes from ongoing exploitation of the victim.	Smugglers generally receive a one-off payment for the service they provide to the migrant.
Trafficking can be across national borders or within a national territory.	Smuggling is always across national borders.

Source: Immigrant Council of Ireland (2017).

## **The Irish legislative context**

The primary legislation dealing with trafficking in human beings in Ireland is the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008, which created offences of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and the harvesting of body organs. 'Trafficks' is defined in the 2008 legislation as 'procures, recruits, transports or harbours [a] person'; it includes crimes against children. Convictions for trafficking carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Section 2 of the act deals specifically with the trafficking of children. It creates the offence of trafficking of a child into, through or out of the state for the purposes of the exploitation of the child. In addition, it creates an offence of selling or purchasing a child. It also creates offences of causing the trafficking or attempting to commit or attempting to cause the offences.

Section 4 of the 2008 act refers to human trafficking of all persons other than children. This section creates the offence of trafficking in adults for the purposes of sexual or labour exploitation or the removal of their organs. Under this section, there must be evidence of the use of coercion, deception

or threats against the trafficked person or against any person who has charge, care or control of the trafficked person. There are no recorded incidences of organ removal in Ireland.

The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 has been updated by the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013. The 2013 Act extends the definition of exploitation to include forced begging and forced criminality (forcing another to commit crime for gain or by implication for gain). The 2013 Act was enacted to give effect to certain provisions of Directive 2011/36/EU.<sup>1</sup>

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 strengthens existing law on sexual offences. Part 2 addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation including online predation. It includes new offences relating to child sexual grooming and new and strengthened provisions to tackle child pornography.

Part 4 of this act makes it an offence for somebody to purchase sexual services from another person, in order to tackle 'demand' for these exploitative services. This section of the act introduces new provisions regarding the giving of evidence by victims in sexual offence trials, hence it includes amendments to the Criminal Evidence Act of 1992.

## **The Irish human trafficking landscape**

The collation of statistics on human trafficking is required by Articles 19 and 20 of the European Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting victims. The Office for Migration and European Affairs with the European Commission collects these data across the 27 EU member states. The Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) within the Irish Department of Justice prepares an annual report as part of Ireland's obligations under the EU Directive.

Over the past five years the AHTU has reported on Ireland as a destination and a source country for women, men and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour, including forced criminal activity. Foreign trafficking victims identified in Ireland are from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, with a reported increase in suspected victims from Nigeria, Romania, Indonesia, Brazil and Pakistan (AHTU, 2017).

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/legislation-and-case-law-eu-legislation-criminal-law/directive-201136eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/legislation-and-case-law-eu-legislation-criminal-law/directive-201136eu_en)

The trafficking net extends far more widely than I had previously recognised. Annual reports from the AHTU document trafficked persons in the agricultural, fishing, hospitality and manufacturing industries as well as in domestic care and cleaning positions. Other areas include the facilitation of benefit and identity fraud. Forcing of people into marriage or into selling or giving up children for adoption, while culturally acceptable in some cultures, may contain elements of human trafficking as defined in Irish law.

In 2017, An Garda Síochána initiated 115 new human trafficking-related investigations, of which 95 were still open at year end. As at 31 December 2017, there were 373 open investigations related to trafficking in human beings. A considerable number of investigations cannot be progressed until new information is uncovered (Anti Human Trafficking Unit, Annual Report 2017). 63% of investigations ongoing as at 31 December 2017 were initiated within the previous three years (2015–2017 inclusive). There have been 283 victims detected since 2013, 75 of whom were detected in 2017. Over the five years, almost half of the suspected victims identified (47%) came from the European economic area (excluding Ireland), followed by African victims (31%) and Asian victims (12%). Data gathered indicate an increase in numbers experiencing labour exploitation, and in particular a greater presentation of men.

Doyle *et al.* (2019) offer a comprehensive account of the exploitative elements and precarious living situations for victims of labour trafficking in Ireland. Anti-Slavery International, the oldest human rights organisation in the world, has completed an exploratory study of good practice examples in relation to forced criminality and begging from a number of countries involved in the Race Europe Project (2012–2014). Ireland was represented by the Migrants Rights Council (Anti-Slavery International, 2014).

Suspected incidents of human trafficking are mainly referred from within the Gardaí, with other referral routes through social service providers and members of the general public. The Department of Justice and Equality has a dedicated website for the anonymous reporting of concerns by the public, which is managed by nominated Gardai.<sup>2</sup>

GRETA (the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) evaluates legislative and other measures taken by parties to the Council of Europe Convention to give effect to the provisions. In its 2017 evaluation of Ireland It expressed concern regarding the limited number of convictions secured in relation to trafficking. It has also been critical of the absence of a dedicated rapporteur to provide oversight of activities and

<sup>2</sup> [www.blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie) (email: [blueblindfold@garda.ie](mailto:blueblindfold@garda.ie)).

legislation implementation. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) has been granted leave by the High Court to act as *amicus curiae* in respect of cases that have centred on human trafficking.

### **Challenges within investigations: the violator or the violated?**

Trafficked persons have frequently been victims of one or more serious criminal offences. The state has an obligation to assist these persons, and not treat them as criminals. Article 26 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking refers to the Non-Punishment of Victims. GRETA in its role as European watchdog urged the adoption of a specific legal provision on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking in both its 2013 and 2017 country reports of Ireland. In 2015, the Irish High Court in its adjudication of a case found a need for protocols or legislation that dictate what happens when a victim is suspected of criminal activity ('P' case).<sup>3</sup> The staff from HTICU collaborate closely with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions when the charges relate to a person who has broken the law while that person is simultaneously the victim of human trafficking.

### **Raising the bar: concerted efforts for education, research and learning**

The national human trafficking unit within An Garda Síochána provides advice and assistance to members of An Garda Síochána throughout the country. Twice-yearly national training is provided to members to support the detection and investigation of this growing area of crime.

Action days and surveillance operations are integral components of enhanced efforts to combat human trafficking. A recent *Irish Times* article (Gallagher, 2019) reported on a three-day surveillance operation co-ordinated by the Operation Quest team at the Garda National Protective Services Bureau. The report highlighted the commitment of An Garda Síochána to target the demand for prostitution and to safeguard vulnerable persons, including victims of human trafficking involved in prostitution.

The roll-out of the Blue Blindfold campaign by the Department of Justice was an important initiative in increasing awareness. The campaign emphasised the hidden nature of human trafficking crimes: 'hidden in plain sight' and 'open your eyes to human trafficking'. In addition, the Reach Project, a Ruhama-based initiative funded by the EU, developed a training app for

<sup>3</sup> High Court [2015] IHREC 222.



professionals in a range of agencies who could likely identify victims of trafficking and could offer support.<sup>4</sup> The Second National Action Plan (2016) to combat and tackle human trafficking makes a commitment to undertake training in awareness raising and needs analysis across agencies. At an earlier point in Ireland's response, Ruhama along with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed a 'train the trainer' programme that is available on the Department of Justice Blue Blindfold website. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime endorses this training. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the US State Department released an Adult Human Trafficking Screening Guide and Toolkit in January 2018. It is designed for use across various healthcare, behavioural health, social services and public health settings in order to assess adult patients or clients for human trafficking, victimisation or risk for potential victimisation. It is a survivor-centred, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate intervention.

## **Engagement and learning**

During my time with HTICU it became clear to me that the work involved partnership with the Anti Human Trafficking Unit and close collaboration with the Irish immigration authorities. This work was also supported by liaison with key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing services to presumed or potential victims and survivors of human trafficking.

The Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland (Department of Justice and Equality, 2016) provides a road map to prevent, combat and respond to this growing crime. It renews the commitment to working in partnership with all the key stakeholders. This was of particular interest to me from a Probation perspective, as inter-agency working has been a key deliverable within recent strategic plans (Probation Service, n.d.). The National Action Plan recognises the need for a co-ordinated approach across government departments/agencies in tackling human trafficking, while acknowledging the important role of the NGOs and other international organisations. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the framework through which State bodies fulfil their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficking victims, working in partnership with civil society. The purpose of the NRM is to facilitate the delivery of a co-ordinated and 'best practice' service to victims of human trafficking (Department of Justice and Equality, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.reachproject.eu/Website/Reach/Reachweb.nsf/page/Whatis-en>

The support services include accommodation provision through the Reception and Integration Service (RIA), health care provided by the Anti Human Trafficking Team within the Health Service Executive, access to the Legal Aid Board and, as necessary, referral to the IOM, which offers voluntary assistance for return and reintegration back home. The NRM also ensures access to a crime prevention officer as well as translation and interpretation services. Organisations such as Ruhama, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), Doras Luimní and the Mendicity Institution work to support victims. MRCI and Ruhama account for most referrals to An Garda Síochána (AHTU, 2018). Persons identified as presumed victims of human trafficking from outside the EU/EEA are provided with support while their human trafficking claims are under investigation. These provisions are available under the Administrative Immigration Arrangements. This includes a period of up to 60 days' recovery and reflection that can be extended at the recommendation of the investigating Garda. An Garda Síochána acts as the competent authority and makes the decision based on reasonable grounds to initiate entry into the NRM and offer a range of services to presumed or potential victims of human trafficking.

In the same way as there are arrangements/protocols in place between the Probation Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) for the supervision of offenders in the community, there are processes and cross-border arrangements and relationships with the Police Board of Northern Ireland and with international and European bodies such as Interpol and Europol. The co-location elements of my secondment helped with developing a working knowledge of the various multi-agency and cross-functionalities involved in preventing and combatting human trafficking.

There is a specific Joint Agency Taskforce between An Garda Síochána and the Police Board of Northern Ireland to facilitate North-South co-operation. A number of co-ordinated joint action days to tackle human trafficking are also in place. In 2018, An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) formed part of a broader European operation known as Operation Aidan to intensify efforts to intercept traffickers. Public awareness is likely to have increased with the airing in 2018 of a BBC drama, *Doing Money*. Filmed mainly in Belfast, it is based on a real-life story of a survivor of sex trafficking and conveys the processes used to bring a successful conviction against the trafficker.

The all-island Human Trafficking and Exploitation Project in Ireland (HTEPII), led by Mary Immaculate College Limerick, provides a real opportunity

to further develop knowledge and capacity in this area of crime. The team consists of researchers and personnel at the college along with An Garda Síochána, the Department of Justice and Equality, the PSNI and the Department of Justice Northern Ireland. The primary purpose of the project is to identify, collate, create and analyse databases relating to information on the scale and scope of human trafficking into and within Ireland. It is to include an appraisal of high-quality Irish and European data relating to this topic. This project is part of a broader project called the Santa Marta North Atlantic Maritime Project: a partnership that includes representatives of the police, clergy, state and civil society from Ireland and Northern Ireland focused on combatting human trafficking within the fishing industry.

I developed a working knowledge of the PULSE system in relation to the categorising and recording of human trafficking cases. I was involved in the gathering and compiling of data for the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*. The collation of accurate and accessible data is a priority across all justice agencies. I was aware of challenges in categorising, including some anomalies around the inclusion of child sexual exploitation offences within the wider statistics on trafficking. I collaborated closely and developed key alliances with staff at the AHTU. During the course of my secondment I interacted with other units of the Protective Services Bureau, particularly that of Victims Services. I contributed to the preparation of position papers and procedural documents on human trafficking. Participation in round-table discussions and awareness-raising training broadened my knowledge base and enabled me to share learning from my experience of working with perpetrators and addressing the victim perspective in the context of that work. I sought out opportunities to attend conferences and networking events that afforded opportunities to raise awareness of the work of HTICU.

In 2018 I attended the AHTU event to mark EU Anti Human Trafficking Day: a public screening of the award-winning documentary *The Price of Sex*. It documented the stories of survivors through their own voices and own words. I met with the keynote speaker, Fiona Broadfoot, a survivor of human trafficking and a campaigner for protection of young girls at risk of prostitution. I had the opportunity to attend the launch of her 'Build a Girl' project at Bradford City Hall during November 2018 and was pleased to complete an account of this event for AHTU resources. Ms Broadfoot has made a commitment to bringing her 'Build a Girl' campaign to Ireland, to support agencies working with subgroups of female adolescents and young women.

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## Joining the dots: the influence of the frontline practitioner

Frontline services/practitioners including Probation Officers are well placed to intervene appropriately with those convicted of trafficking and to respond to/engage with victims or potential victims of human trafficking. As Probation Officers we need to be aware of how human trafficking may be 'hidden in plain sight' as it may not be identified in the index offence. Trafficking can be a feature in illegal detentions, drug offences, kidnapping, prostitution, murder, bodily injury, sexual assault, rape, cruelty, degrading or inhuman treatment, torture, slavery, forced abortion, forced marriage, debt bondage, forced labour, begging, tax evasion, corruption, money laundering and forgery of documents.

Faulkner (2018), Okech *et al.* (2017), Mostajabian *et al.* (2019) and Williamson (2017) focus our attention on the broader construction and conceptualisation of human trafficking, which, they argue, goes beyond the 'victim and villain dichotomy' narrative and even beyond the 'service provider as rescuer' narrative. These authors contend that an over-emphasis on the identification of the 'victim' and the frameworks for service delivery deflects from the structural issues that perpetuate migration. These include poverty, inequality, access to education and lack of developmental opportunities, all of which disproportionately affect women and contribute to the assessment and management of criminogenic needs within probation work.

The literature suggests that much of the human trafficking discourse and critique has glossed over or ignored the broader social, cultural and economic contexts in which migration in general and trafficking in human beings take place. Political, structural and cultural contexts can work to perpetuate trafficking. There is an obligation to find ways of identifying and reducing vulnerability to this international human rights violation. Faulkner (2018) raises particular questions regarding unregulated migration, profitable underground criminal activities and related issues. In particular he references the refugee crisis in Europe with the trafficking, sexual slavery, extremism and radicalisation that are perceived to threaten national security and have encouraged the proliferation of laws leading to stricter border controls and the creation of a climate that enables illicit activity to flourish.

Okech *et al.* (2017) published a review of human trafficking research for informing social work, based on an analysis of peer-reviewed journals spanning the 17 years since the initiation of the US TVPA (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000) The review considered the

benefits of a better understanding of this area for social work practice. It highlighted that much of the research relies largely on qualitative studies. The reviewers noted the limited discussion afforded to the subject in social work education and the importance of critical appraisal of the challenges associated with locating those trafficked and in identifying perpetrators.

The HTEPII will produce a database as a foundation for an information notebook and training app for use by stakeholders in Ireland and across Europe. The expert evaluations on the Irish response to human trafficking have highlighted concerns over the limited attention being given to the education and upskilling of frontline social care providers to increase awareness and provide them with screening tools to identify where human trafficking is happening (GRETA, 2017). GRETA urged that training be provided to social workers, healthcare staff, staff of direct provision centres for asylum seekers and teachers, with a view to increasing the number of prosecutions and convictions in cases of human trafficking.

## **Reflections and opportunities**

As a qualified social worker with an extensive career in the criminal justice sector, this secondment provided an excellent opportunity to use my skills and develop my knowledge and understanding of human trafficking. I now have an increased and more nuanced appreciation of the interactions and interdependencies between An Garda Síochána, other criminal justice agencies, NGOs and the wider community in working to reduce the harms of this insidious crime. The experience has strengthened my commitment to continuing to implement a trauma-informed approach to my work with service users and their families.

Since my return to the Probation Service I have been working as part of the court assessment team, providing assessment reports to the court. I am aware that I have added another lens to my assessment toolkit that enables me to hear and interpret verbal and non-verbal signals and patterns that could indicate trafficking or a vulnerability to this form of exploitation. In my recent work with a young woman, I was able to create a safe space that allowed her to name and separate out different strands of activity that left her seriously at risk of trafficking, with some indications that she had already been victimised. The offence for which she was before the court was not directly linked to those experiences. She was concerned, as many victims are, that 'nobody would believe this'. Her story was, regrettably, very credible,

meeting many of the indicators and criteria for the determination of human trafficking. These disclosures will be revisited, as part of the supervision order made by the court, in order to support her re engagement with a safe and pro-social lifestyle.

Mostajabian *et al.* (2019) identify sexual and labour exploitation among sheltered youth experiencing homelessness and have completed a comparative analysis of screening methods. The Children's Commissioner in the UK recently focused attention on the precarious existence of vulnerable young people and their greater need for specialist support. She signalled that those young people are 'pinballing' around the state systems, rendering them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, running away from home, gangs, trafficking and drug use. This is an area that requires more dedicated focus in the assessment and supervision of young people referred to the Probation Service, access to evidence-based screening tools and a commitment to a trauma-led approach in responding to troubled youth.

As an organisation we have become much more aware of our responsibility to respond to disclosures, particularly in the context of child protection or domestic violence situations. There is a need to develop protocols and procedures across criminal justice agencies to guide practitioner responses in situations where there is an awareness and/or evidence of involvement in trafficking, whether as a perpetrator or as a victim.

I really valued the opportunity to work outside my 'comfort zone' within another criminal justice agency with a distinct and different set of challenges. Opportunities for continuous learning and awareness-raising are a key component of meeting shared challenges. Shared learning, pooling resources and expertise that build on existing cross-sectoral synergies enhances our capacity to effectively address human trafficking in order to safeguard victims and protect communities. I would encourage colleagues to take a risk, a leap of faith, and grasp any similar inter-agency opportunities to extend professional development.

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