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News

Constabulary hosts first modern slavery conference

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

This week saw our first modern slavery conference taking place as part of our week of action.

The conference was aimed at frontline workers from different organisations across the county, to help them understand the topic, to recognise the signs and better understand the role they can play in tackling modern slavery.

The one day conference was held at the Mercure Dunkenhalgh Hotel in Blackburn, to coincide with national Anti-Slavery Day on Tuesday 18 October.

The conference was opened by the Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw. Those attending heard from DI Mark Vaughton and DS Tony Atkins from the constabulary about the issues facing Lancashire and some recent case studies.

During the afternoon guest speaker, DS Helen Gordos, from the National Crime Agency's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit addressed the attendees and spoke about the national approach and action being taken.

Adina Schwartz, who studied a PhD in 'Drug use among the sexually exploited victims of human trafficking' at the University of the West, Timisoara, Romania and also works with Romanian charity Pro Prietenia Arad (working against human trafficking), was the final speaker of the day.

The conference, attended by more than 130 people, was funded by the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Lancashire Serious and Organised Crime Project that sees agencies from across the county working together to reduce the threat and harm from serious and organised crime like modern slavery.

Detective Chief Inspector Sion Hall, one of the force leads for modern slavery, said: "I'm really pleased that we were able to host the first event of its kind here in Lancashire with a full agenda about tackling modern day slavery.

"It has been a great opportunity for us to share with those who may come into contact with victims of slavery, how to look out for the signs and how their role could be pivotal in uncovering cases of this abhorrent crime.

"We're committed to rooting out those individuals who choose to exploit others and we have dedicated officers working hard to remove this type of threat from our communities. Working in partnership with organisations across the county can only help us to further disrupt this sort of activity and ultimately help those victims to rebuild better lives."

Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner, Clive Grunshaw, said: "Modern slavery and human trafficking are a growing problem and these crimes can have devastating impacts on the lives of victims.

"Since I funded specialist roles to lead a team dedicated to investigating these cases, we have helped move vulnerable people to places of safety and bring offenders to justice – but this is only the beginning. Because of this work we are now getting a truer picture of the scale of the problem faced not only here in Lancashire but right across the country.

"We know slavery is happening in Lancashire and, working closely with partner organisations, we are determined to put a stop to it."



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