

Lines to take

- Tackling human trafficking and exploitation is a complex task but I am pleased to note that good progress is being made.
- A robust legal framework is in place which has been bolstered by recent legislative developments such as the commencement of the regime for Slavery and Trafficking. This is complemented by a raft of non-legislative action such as awareness raising amongst the general public and training of frontline staff.
- The ethos of partnership is evident through all strands of work on this issue and this has led to victims being rescued, perpetrators being pursued and at-risk communities being equipped to protect themselves.
- I am confident that this good work will continue through the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy for 2016/17, which I intend to publish in the coming weeks.

Background

- During the 2015/16 financial year the PSNI Human Trafficking Unit (HTU) conducted 252 screening assessments, from these 59 potential victims of human trafficking were recovered in Northern Ireland and referred to the NRM. The majority of these were rescued from forced and compulsory labour exploitation (34 victims).
- During 2015/16 financial year the HTU made 20 arrests. A total of 41 searches were conducted during the 2015/16 financial year by the HTU. Six persons have been charged with a variety of offences, two of which were Human Trafficking and eight persons were reported to the PPS for Human Trafficking related offences.
- The regime for slavery and trafficking prevention orders commenced on 1 April 2016.
- A consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Strategy closed on 9 September 2016 and a summary of responses and the revised strategy will be considered by the Justice Committee at its meeting on 29 September 2016.