



Exploitation of people Experiencing Homelessness in Hotels

This document has been compiled to share non-sensitive, non-identifiable & non-confidential intelligence that has been received by STOP THE TRAFFIK in relation to current risks of exploitation for the homeless population as a result of covid-19. The intelligence contains incidents from across the UK.

At the request of the HTF, the incidents are being shared to support efforts to raise the priority of these risks within your respective regions.

Exploiters Targeting Hotels

- Several weeks ago, police officers responded to an incident in a hotel housing homeless people relocated as part of Covid-19 response. A male had been visiting the hotel with three others to collect money from people who allegedly owed him. The male indebts his victims through illegal money lending and then forces them to work with him to pressure others into making repayments. He has been known to take people to cashpoints forcing them to withdraw money and by stealing their bank cards. He has also been targeting several homeless shelters around the city and has been known to homeless support organisations for several months.
- Local links into the homeless community & support organisations have confirmed that drug supply has got into some of the hotels participating in the rehousing programme and that some people rough sleeping would prefer to stay out on the street because they don't think the hotels are safe.

Exploiters Within Hotels

- A partner has confirmed that a loan shark was placed within the same hotel as the person they were exploiting.

Exploitation Risks Related to impacted Drug Supply

- Partners have confirmed significant disruption to methadone scripting and drug supply networks creating vulnerability to exploitation for drug users. Methadone scripting provision has been disrupted in some areas which has been particularly difficult for sex workers struggling to earn money who are then having to find new dealers to meet their substance needs.
- These risks are heightened by the fact that heroin and crack prices have reportedly increased while purity has decreased with many vulnerable people forced to use new, cheaper dealers leading to additional exploitation risks.
- Partners have also confirmed reports of price increases of some street drugs of choice. As a result, there has been an increase in the use of spice (within & outside of hotels) amongst people who didn't previously use. Consequently, there has been an increase in aggression towards staff and service users stealing from each other. We expect with these behaviours present that peer to peer exploitation will also be taking place but, as yet, we have no further confirmed reports from our very limited intel picture beyond what's detailed above.