

DEPUTATION ONE  
LEEDS ACT GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes and please would you begin by introducing yourself and the person in your Deputation.

MS D HAWLEY: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am Dalia Hawley and I co-lead the active communities against trafficking group, along with Fran Mcfarlane. I am here today to talk with you about human trafficking.

Firstly some case studies I'd like to share with you.

Many staff of a restaurant in Harrogate previously working in prestigious restaurants in the Middle East, India and Pakistan had accepted offers to come and work legitimately at the Rajput. They signed formal work contracts and obtained work visas. However, on arrival to the UK legally, they promptly had their passports taken from them by one of the restaurant owners and then put them to work at the Rajput for up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week. They received constant verbal and physical threats and were subjected to conditions of neglect, abuse, deprivation and economic exploitation.

From the book 'Trafficked' by Sophie Hayes, a young woman trafficked for sexual exploitation from the North of England to Italy:

"Just a few years ago everything changed. I was trafficked. I was fooled. I was deceived by a man who said that he loved me. The tragedy is that I believed him. Now I know that love is not shown by forcing me to work on the streets, beating me up, force-feeding me and turning me into someone with no mind of my own. For people like him my life meant nothing. I was a product and vehicle to make money."

So let us get specific about what trafficking actually is. It is to be deceived or taken against your will, bought, sold and transported into slavery for sexual exploitation, sweatshops, child brides, circuses, sacrificial worship, forced begging, sale of human organs, farm labour and domestic servitude.

Trafficking is also growing. Two to four million men, women and children are trafficked across borders and within their own country every year. More than one person is trafficked across borders every minute, which is equivalent to ten jumbo jets every day, a trade that earns twice as much worldwide revenue as Coca Cola.

Stop the Traffik is a growing global movement of individuals, communities and organisations fighting to prevent the sale of people, protect the trafficked and prosecute the traffickers.

From Stop the Traffik comes ACT – Active Communities against Trafficking. That is us. It is a global campaign working through individuals, organisations and communities to stop and help prevent people trafficking. We believe that trafficking can be stopped through community awareness and action and we exist to provide people with resources and tools so anyone and everyone can get involved. In the space of just a few months we have set up community, student and faith wings of our group.

We held a successful roadshow in Leeds with Stop the Traffik in January. We had a fantastic turnout and featured panel speakers from Leeds Anti Sex trafficking Network, UK Border Agency, Leeds Women's Aid, local MP Fabian Hamilton and the Lord Mayor. We want to carry on having successful awareness raising sessions like this across the city.

What do we want to see in Leeds? There are lots of ways in which you at the Council can help us to help others. We ask you for your help – you are our secret weapon. We ask for your support in instigating awareness-raising sessions for transport and leisure. We know that local Leeds hotels, Leeds Bradford airport and the train and bus stations are used as channels for trafficking, so we are keen to educate staff on what to be on the look for.

We are working on a poster campaign at airports and train stations and we are going to start looking into a sticker campaign for taxi cabs driving on our streets. We are really excited about potentially bringing Anya71, a powerful opera supported by the UN, to Leeds. It has had rave reviews in The Guardian and other media sources. We are working on a big film awareness project with a group called Unchosen, an anti-trafficking charity promoting human trafficking film campaigns nationwide through film, documentaries, interviews and Q & As around October 2012 or tying it in with Leeds Film Festival. We would like to have an event in our city to show a variety of films and have a panel of high profile speakers address an audience of lay people and professionals. We want to get a real dialogue going amongst the people of Leeds and generate some really good energy. We would like you to consider granting us permission to use the Town Hall or another high profile venue to host this event and we would like you all to be there with us.

Please support us in the following. Permission to launch poster and flyer campaigns in train stations; help fund us, raise funds, or point us to people who can. Do you know of anyone who would be an asset to our campaigns or be keen to have us do an awareness raising session? If so, please help us network. Support our quest to raise awareness of trafficking through different mediums in order to raise awareness over broad demographics. Helping us with the Unchosen even through venues and publicity.

Trafficking is the third biggest black market activity in the world today. Please understand that slavery is happening right now, in our city, and we as active citizens are voluntarily doing something about it. Our group was set up just this January, but already we are swelling in numbers and being contacted by interested parties from all over the county; we have passion, we have energy and we have a clear vision but we need you on board to really take this to the next level.

When people act, things change. Please help us. Thank you for your time.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

Dalia, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Thank you again.  
*(Applause)*