

SIREN report

STRATEGIC INFORMATION RESPONSE NETWORK

United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP): Phase III

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RAIDS, RESCUES, RESOLUTION

PENTAMETER 2: ATTACKING EXPLOITATION IN THE UK

KEYWORD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Location: UK, country-wide▪ Topic: Recruitment; sex exploitation▪ Information type: Case analysis
Synopsis	<i>Operation Pentameter 2 was the largest police operation in the UK targeting human trafficking</i>
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Code-named Operation Pentameter 2 (UKP2), the UK law enforcement operation against sex trafficking was initiated in June 2007. UKP2 recovered 167 sex trafficking victims of trafficking from 822 premises across the UK: 157 were massage parlors or saunas, and 582 residential premises. 528 suspects were arrested, 296 more than in Pentameter 1. Within a month of the end of the operational phase, more than 80 individuals had already been charged with a variety of offences. A number of others remained on bail while investigations continue.

The majority of victims who were recovered originated from East and Southeast Asia, with others from Eastern Europe. Thirteen were children, with the youngest aged 15. This

reflected the general intelligence picture that a bulk of the criminal activity of trafficking for sexual exploitation into the UK is related to Southeast Asia.

This SIREN report will outline the step-wise planning and implementation of UKP2 as a model case study.

Operation Pentameter 2: Facts

The UK's largest anti-human trafficking law enforcement operation

822 establishments raided over six months; 167 victims recovered; 528 suspects arrested

Established a baseline of human trafficking in the UK

Developed new level of intelligence networking to counter and suppress human trafficking

Majority of victims from East and Southeast Asia

Asian victims were more likely to be controlled by debt bondage

Eastern European victims were more likely controlled by violence

UKP2's two key objectives established a baseline of human trafficking in the UK while using financial attack to take down organized crime syndicates

UKP2 had a range of operational objectives, and from a law enforcement perspective the key objectives were two-fold:

Objective 1: To establish the nature and extent of trafficking in human beings (THB) for sexual exploitation

- ▶ Rationale: Human trafficking receives a growing amount of concern and media attention in the UK, yet no one knows the extent of the problem. Further, Without knowing the extent of the problem it will be impossible to know whether an intervention is having an impact in tackling the problem.

Objective 2: To use financial attack against this serious form of organised crime

- ▶ Rationale: Human trafficking can be a difficult crime to identify and prove, particularly if the victims are too scared to give information. However, if there is sufficient evidence of a crime having been committed, and the proceeds of the crime indicating it to be of a large-scale and organized nature, UK law enforcement can target the finances of the operation, thereby attacking the heart of the criminal gains.

UK Operation Pentameter 2 (UKP2) used a four phase project-based approach:



Phase I: Operational set-up

Phase I had the following key deliverables:

1. Formation of the multi-agency Gold Group
2. Engagement with local forces to gain buy-in
3. Development of draft UKP2 Operational Strategies
4. Confirmation of UKP2 Operational Objectives
5. Formulation of UKP2 Operational Policies and Protocols with other agencies, for example, media strategy, victim strategy, and intelligence strategy

In June 2007, as part of Operation Pentameter 2 Phase I, a start-up national briefing was delivered at Gloucestershire Police HQ to more than one hundred law enforcement officers. A key aspect of UKP2 was a strategic-level focus of efforts on tackling human trafficking as organized crime through intelligence.

UKP2 enabled all forces to demonstrate compliance with the United Kingdom National Intelligence Model and deliver activity against the following:

1. Regional Control Strategies¹ (most of which have trafficking of human beings for sexual exploitation as an explicit priority)
2. Force-level Control Strategies

The national multi-agency Gold Group incorporated the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the Borders Agency (UKBA), the Home Office, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), ACPO, NPIA, Scottish Government, Northern Ireland Office, Garda Siochana (Police from Republic of Ireland) and key NGO partners such as the Poppy Project².

Operational Structure

UKP2's three level hierarchical structure, reflecting the UK police structure: local, regional and national.

Gold: Strategic, national level, multi-agency coordination group

Silver: Regional groups, such as Tactical Tasking and Coordination Groups (RTTCG) managed by the police regional intelligence units (RIU)

Bronze: Local level forces

Phase II: Briefing and intelligence development

During Phase II, six regional briefings lasting about eight hours were held across the UK, including an all-Ireland briefing during the late summer 2007. Over 500 law enforcement personnel were briefed during this process. Each delegate was provided with a briefing folder containing comprehensive documentation relating to the operation, legislation and points of contact for advice.

UKP2 utilised the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System 2 (HOLMES2) for intelligence management. This is a computerized administration system, designed to accommodate the large volume of information which often results from a

Phase 2 briefing sessions:

1. Government responses to trafficking
2. The context and concept of UKP2
3. Overview of the SIO Toolkit
4. Case Study - THB investigation
5. Case Study - Financial Investigation & Proceeds of Crime
6. Victim Care and CPS Legal Issues (UKHTC)
7. The National Intelligence Strategy - SOCA
8. Tackling Human Trafficking: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC's) Contribution
9. Border & Immigration Agency
10. Questions and Answer Session

¹ A Control strategy is set for a policing priority and has three components: enforcement, preventative measures and intelligence requirements.

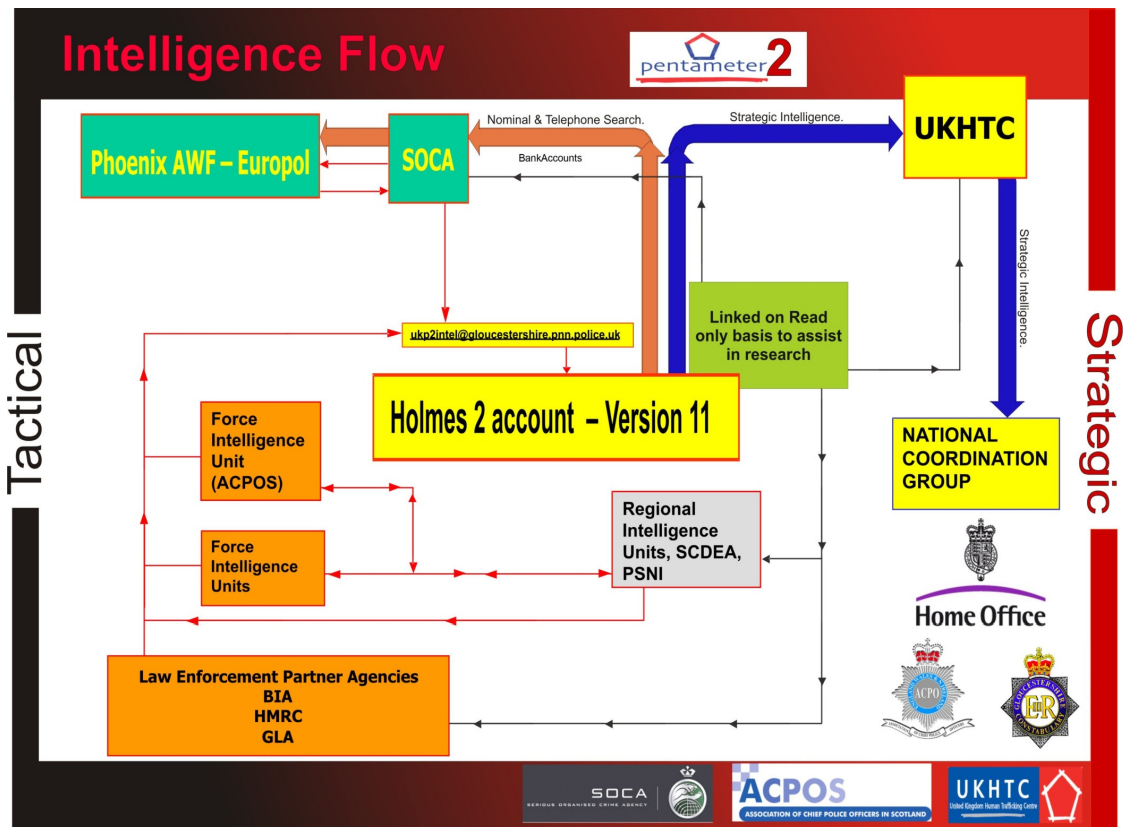
² Charity which has governmental funding to provide accommodation and aftercare for victims of trafficking.

major investigation, such as undetected homicide, serial rapes, or acts of terrorism. In order to facilitate the national intelligence-based approach, bespoke data structure, intelligence repository, and business processes were developed.

The HOLMES2 intelligence system allowed UKP2 to link information from 19 different areas to compare and match data and intelligence.

A unique feature of HOLMES2 is the ability to directly link between servers, proving very important to P2. The operation linked servers across nineteen different force areas, which provided multi-site access to forces, Regional Investigative Units (RIUs), the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), and the Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA). This had never been done on such a large scale in British policing. The links provided access to the intelligence account on a read-only basis. This ensured that data quality could be centrally managed, and UKP2 could adopt the principled business model of a central research incident (CRI), as illustrated below.

CENTRAL RESEARCH INCIDENT (CRI)



HMRC and SOCA placed intelligence development officers within the national coordination cell to use the dataset in order to develop various operational responses against organized trafficking networks. For example, HMRC would enforce income tax associated with these networks.

There were three UKP2 intelligence requirements set for forces, regional intelligence units and ports/border policing points. The operation collated nearly 6,500 intelligence logs onto the HOLMES2 system from police, HMRC, Borders Agency, and SOCA. For just over every 19 intelligence logs submitted there was an entity match against either nominals, telephones, addresses, or vehicles. These often involved multiple matches, for example, several forces and several entities showing significant links between crime networks. A match generated a report, which was communicated to the originating force/organization. This was followed up after a period of three weeks by using a delayed referral mechanism which is part of the 'action management' facility within HOLMES2. UKP2 also extracted entity data from HOLMES2 and sent it to Europol in order to facilitate the development of a wider understanding of the trafficking networks throughout Europe.

Phase III: Primary operations

Primary operations were initiated by Bronze Commanders who coordinated the activity within their respective force area. All 55 local forces reported operational activity on a fortnightly basis. Data collection was managed by secure e-mail, with four key operational objectives. The key objectives and outcomes of this phase are detailed in the table on the next page.

Monitoring and risk management

The Gold Group met on a monthly basis to provide oversight and strategic direction, in which the coordination team delivered a Highlight Report, outlining the operational plan, achievements during the month, risks to progress and operational priorities. Project risks were managed through an auditable risk register and all source documents throughout the operation were filed and maintained by the coordination staff.

Debt bondage was the most prevalent form of control and abuse found through UKP2, however, those in debt bondage were also least likely to cooperate with law enforcement.

Phase IV: Debriefing and review

A debrief template was circulated to all Bronze Commanders covering:

1. Preparations for UKP2;
2. Intelligence;
3. Operations and Investigations Management;
4. Criminal Justice and Evidential Issues;
5. Miscellaneous Issues.

These included identification of difficult issues and challenges that arose, as well as opportunities missed.

A National Feedback Conference on 7 July 2008 was held in Gloucestershire, attended by over 100 delegates from across the law enforcement community and Government departments. The day consisted of feedback for law enforcement upon the key lessons

learned from the debrief process, with a keynote from Vernon Coaker MP, Under Secretary of State for policing, security and community safety, demonstrating the high level political commitment to the operations. Ultimately a revised UK Action Plan on Tackling the Trafficking of Human Beings will be developed as a result of UKP2.

UKP2 PHASE III: OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

KEY OBJECTIVE 1: To rescue victims of human trafficking and identify, disrupt, arrest, and bring to justice those involved in criminal activity.

As already stated, many victims of sex trafficking were rescued and suspects arrested. UKP2 also investigated activity around forced labour and rescued five victims of trafficking for forced labour, three of whom were children.

KEY OBJECTIVE 2: To reduce harm caused to the individual by improving victim protection and assistance, by taking forward an enhanced human rights and victim-centered approach at the operational level.

A national victim strategy was designed, providing victim accommodation and specialist assets, and addressed in the national briefing process and the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) toolkit. The toolkit is now being developed by the UKHTC as the 'trafficking investigation manual' .

Predictably, there were many practical challenges experienced by local investigators, such as in determining victim status. Those subjected to debt bondage, the highest volume (but lowest risk) group, were more likely to be uncooperative and experiences showed that they often provided incomplete or misleading accounts. In some cases, language barriers and the provision of urgent accommodation were investigative challenges. Therefore, in order to help 'measure' some of these victim interactions, a 'Victim Attrition Model' was developed by the UKP2 Gold staff. This is presently being analyzed for investigative learning.

KEY OBJECTIVE 3: To fully utilise the powers afforded by the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 by ensuring maximum disruption to criminal activities and that those responsible are stripped of their assets.

Through UKP2 investigations to date, over £500,000 cash has been seized and over £3 million in further assets were initially restrained pending further investigation. This figure may increase through subsequent investigations. Financial attack was further adopted through the Criminal Taxes Unit of HM Revenue and Customs. Intelligence concerning possible further targets has been passed to HMRC for further investigation and follow-up.

KEY OBJECTIVE 4: To improve the knowledge and understanding of the scale and nature of the Trafficking of Human Beings (THB) problem presented within the UK and other EU countries through a focused and coordinated collection of intelligence. This included improved intelligence collection on labour exploitation and child trafficking.

Using the UKP2 dataset and other available sources, the South West Regional Intelligence Unit (SWRIU) has completed a regional assessment that may be used as a model for national adaptation. The SWRIU model was based upon mapping different sectors of the sex industry and trafficking intelligence against the risks of harm through a continuum of coercion levels. The higher the levels of coercion, the greater the risk of harm and duty of care for law enforcement to consider.

INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF OPERATION PENTAMETER 2

UKP2 has been the largest ever national operation of its kind, and has set down significant strategic markers for UK policing. A unique feature of the operation was the national system of an inclusive intelligence management structure, demonstrating the benefits of a national level multi-agency cooperation. This provided the following benefits:

1. Facilitated proactive tactical level delivery, for example, raids and rescues.
2. Facilitated the mapping and understanding of organised crime groups through data entity matching and supported more in-depth investigations aiming at unpacking organised crime.
3. Facilitated the development of sophisticated strategic intelligence products, which helped demonstrate the nature and extent of sex-trafficking, the levels of coercion and risk across the prominent organised crime models encountered within the UK.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: ANTECEDENTS OF OPERATION PENTAMETER 2

The British Government and law enforcement agencies have been keen to tackle human trafficking for many years. It was made one of the main priorities during the UK's presidencies of the EU and G8, and led to the EU Human Trafficking Action Plan being implemented late in 2005. The UK Action Plan on Tackling the Trafficking of Human Beings followed, bringing together all the work underway across government and with partners, and setting out 62 practical measures in four key areas: 1) Prevention; 2) Enforcement/ Investigation and Prosecution; 3) Protection and Assistance to Adult Victims; and 4) Child Trafficking.

Operation Pentameter 1, over 2005-06, aimed to: raise national awareness of the issue of human trafficking, identify the scale of the problem; support recovery of victims and reduction of harm; and make the UK a hostile environment for those involved in trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Over this period, more than 500 premises were visited, 84 women confirmed as trafficked victims, 232 people were arrested and 134 charged with a variety of offences. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) was subsequently established on 3rd October 2006.



DCS Richard Berry trains Southeast Asia-based counter-trafficking responders on the Central Research Incident model (CRI) developed and employed by UK Pentameter 2.

INITIAL LESSONS LEARNED

UKP2 demonstrated that integrated law enforcement operations on a national level can work, and that the UKP2 model can begin to address challenging criminality such as that presented by trafficking for sexual exploitation. UKP2 is a comprehensive baseline rather than a highly refined framework; further development work is therefore essential.

In order to address the emerging organised and widespread business models adopted by many of the syndicates involved in human trafficking, a national-level tasking and coordination process is required which underpins local operational responses. Some of the larger UKP2 operations extended well beyond force and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO/ACPOS) regional boundaries into upstream 'donor' countries.

An early strategic decision to implement a robust reporting, monitoring and data collection system ensured that all statistical data released from the operation has been able to withstand scrutiny. Further analysis is being conducted on UKP2 and the coordination team – Detective Chief Superintendent Richard Berry, Detective Inspector Sue Bradshaw, and Detective Sergeant Craig Guthrie – are currently completing a comprehensive operational report.

As commander of UKP2, Chief Constable Dr Timothy Brain assigned Detective Chief Superintendent Richard Berry as National Coordinator. DCS Berry designed and ran the operation with Detective Inspector Sue Bradshaw and Detective Sergeant Craig Guthrie, acting as the coordination cell based at Gloucestershire Constabulary Headquarters. UKP2 has also contributed to wider anti-human trafficking enforcement initiatives within some G6 countries, managed through Europol, and is in the early stages of applying their learning to the replication of UKP2-like structures in Asia and supporting anti-human trafficking enforcement initiatives in Southeast Asia, from which so many victims in the UK originate.

For information about UNIAP's SIREN project, contact SIREN@undp.org.

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