

Press Release 23.03.07
CHASTE

UK Government Signs Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking

UK Government Publishes Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking

CHASTE welcomes the announcement by the Prime Minister on the 23 March 2007 that the Government has signed The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention encourages the provision of time for reflection and recovery for those who have been trafficked. CHASTE also welcomes the publication by the Home Office of its UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking.

We are delighted at this continued commitment from the government to the serious challenges which trafficking for sexual exploitation poses for the UK. CHASTE has worked with dozens of young women who have been trafficked into the margins of the sex industry in the UK, and we welcome this commitment from the government to put the human rights and welfare of the victims of this awful crime at the heart of its legislative response.

CHASTE has been at the centre of developing further provision of safe housing for those who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation through the formation of a network of several UK denominations. With the contributions of the Medaille Trust and the Salvation Army the ability of the United Kingdom to offer safe bed space for those who are the survivors of trafficking has been increased so that the Faith community now provides two fifths of the capacity for safe housing.

This is an amazing contribution from churches which so many believe are on the decline in our society. At present women who are trafficked for sexual exploitation do not have recourse to public funds in order to have the safety they require provided for them. The Salvation Army and the Medaille Trust have provided the equivalent of £1.5 million of support over the next three years, an extraordinary commitment to those who have been trafficked and are seeking a place of sanctuary and recovery.

Notes to Editors

1. CHASTE is the interdenominational forum for the development of engaged response to the misery of human trafficking in the form of sexual exploitation.

Initiated by Revd Dr Carrie Pemberton in 2003, the charity now works to develop cooperation across European churches for the prevention of sex trafficking. CHASTE is a board member of the UKHTC, the Government agency tasked with combating trafficking in all its forms.

CHASTE provides through its networks 2/5 of the safe housing provision for survivors of Sex Trafficking in the UK. CHASTE currently receives no funding from central government but is completely independently funded from individuals, churches and major trusts.

2. CHASTE is working:

- To further develop the network of safe housing provided by faith communities to secure the safety of women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation
- To form supportive networks with churches and faith communities in countries of origin and destination in order to address current repatriation issues
- To provide training for immigration and police personnel, chaplaincy teams and churches
- To research the moral and socio-economic conditions that result in trafficking with a view to promoting cultural and legislative change
- To further Government research - CHASTE CEO Dr Pemberton chairs the UKHTC Virtual University in trafficking research
- To challenge the culture of demand in the UK and explore the options for abolition of sexual enslavement through the adoption of Swedish legislation which prosecutes the clients and never those who are prostituted.