



Sussex Crimestoppers Launches Blue Blindfold

Crimestoppers launched the Blue Blindfold campaign in Sussex on 4 July. The launch coincided with the 20th birthday of the organisation.

The Blue Blindfold material was launched by the UK Human Trafficking Centre in 2007 and it has supported the nation-wide operation Pentameter 2. The thought provoking slogan "*Don't close your eyes to human trafficking*" accompanied by an eye-catching photo of someone wearing a blue blindfold, encourages members of the public to report any possible signs of trafficking in their local area.

The material includes posters and postcards, which can be distributed in neighbourhoods. Each item has the contact number for Crimestoppers clearly displayed so people can report what they see or know anonymously.

Dame Vera Lynn and best selling crime novelist Peter James attended the launch, which was held in Buxted Park Hotel.

Don Edwardson, Chair Sussex Crimestoppers, said:

"Sussex Crimestoppers are pleased to be the first in the country to launch the Blue Blindfold Campaign. Human trafficking takes many forms, but ultimately it usually ends up with someone working against their will - whether it be prostitution, child exploitation or enforced labour. Through fear or intimidation, those who are victims of this wicked trade, or who may be aware of what is going on, are often reluctant to go to the police.

"Crimestoppers provides a safe alternative, with the guarantee of absolute anonymity and with the certain knowledge that the information will be passed on. Crimestoppers is interested in what people know, not who they are. They will never be asked their name, their calls will never be traced and they will never be called as witnesses –guaranteed. "

Nick Kinsella, Head of the UKHTC, said:

"It's important for people to realise that this type of crime is hidden and often not visible. The victims do not ask for help because they are scared and their traffickers exert their control over them, both physically and mentally.

"The Blue Blindfold campaign seeks to raise awareness of human trafficking amongst the general public. However, to make a difference the public need to take notice and not, as the campaign says, close their eyes."

Sussex Police is playing an active part in tackling human trafficking and sexual exploitation. As well as supporting the Blue Blindfold campaign, the wide range of ongoing activity undertaken by the force includes working with immigration officers at Gatwick and identifying brothels where potential victims of human

trafficking may be found. This widespread intelligence scoping has enabled Sussex Police to submit a significant number of intelligence logs to the UKHTC.

In addition to the material, there is a website that gives further information about the campaign. It also provides detailed information of the signs of human trafficking, to help the public with what to look out for. For more information log onto www.blueblindfold.co.uk.

Note to editors:

- For more information about the UKHTC please contact Lou Bloomfield, UKHTC Media Consultant on 07792 285009 or email Louise.Bloomfield@southyorks.pnn.police.uk
- For more information about Sussex Crimestoppers, log onto <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/in-your-area/south-east/sussex>
- Download a press pack about the 20th anniversary by logging onto <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/media-centre/news-releases/2008/crimestoppers-20th-anniversary-press-pack>