

Greater powers to protect public from human trafficking and exploitation available from today



The police and courts will have greater powers to protect the public from perpetrators of human trafficking and exploitation from today.

Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Orders (TEPOs) can now be used by the courts to impose restrictions on people who have been convicted of trafficking and exploitation offences.

TEPOs can introduce a range of restrictions like stopping someone employing staff, working with children/vulnerable people or travelling to certain countries for a minimum of five years. Breaching a TEPO will be a criminal offence.

Trafficking and Exploitation Risk Orders (TEROs) – which can be granted where a person has demonstrated a risk of committing a relevant offence – will come into force in October.

Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said: “We will continue to make Scotland an increasingly hostile place for those who treat other human beings as commodities. These new powers for the police and courts will help to further protect the public from harm.

“We have already strengthened the law, creating a specific offence of human trafficking for the first time. Now we are making sure that action can be taken when a person poses a continuing risk.

“We are working hard to eradicate trafficking and exploitation in Scotland and providing high quality support for victims who have suffered physical and psychological harm.”

Lord Advocate, James Wolffe QC said: “We welcome the introduction of Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Orders. They will give courts across Scotland an additional tool to combat the global trade in human beings. Prosecutors will apply to the court for prevention orders in appropriate cases and will prosecute those who breach such orders.”

Detective Superintendent Stuart Houston, Police Scotland Human Trafficking Unit, said: “We welcome all additional opportunities and tactics to disrupt human trafficking activities.

“Human trafficking is a priority for Police Scotland and we continue to target those who control, abuse and exploit others. By working collaboratively with partners, such as the Scottish Government, to ensure Scotland is a hostile environment for this sickening trade.”