

Operation Doubrava was a significant investigation into Modern Slavery seeing an organised crime group recruiting some of the most vulnerable people in Latvia, who were promised a better life within the UK, promised employment and wealth that would see their life change for the better. This was truly not the case. The ROMA group abused the victims through both their working and everyday life, giving them little money, food or freedom.

The Derbyshire investigation saw officers from the UK and Latvia working closely across both countries rescuing victims in both countries, giving them support and assistance to actually have that better life. The investigation lasted 18 months which saw the crime group being sentenced to 33 years imprisonment for the actions that they had taken in exploiting some of the most vulnerable in society.

The investigation was ground breaking for Derbyshire securing its first Joint Investigation Team, working closely with teams across Europe and has enabled several members of the investigation team to direct and influence investigation teams in supporting and obtaining victim evidence, meeting some of the toughest challenges the organisation has ever come across dealing with this type of criminality.

The legacy of the operation whilst in its infancy has allowed officers to present the learning from the case to Anti trafficking Seminar in Latvia and the Presidency of the Baltic states, which brought key stakeholders and experience from across the globe, showing how strong leadership can bring investigative teams together. Investigations within Europe can take several years due to the countries procedures, we have used our experience to show that with a victim at the centre of investigations the time spent bringing these types of investigations to conclusion can be significantly reduced.

Investigators within Derbyshire continue to support our national colleagues within the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority, recently presenting Derbyshire's response to modern slavery, how we resource investigations and learning from Operation Doubrava.

Being innovative in our approach enabled the team to gather a wealth of expertise, which has been used to support the home office in Vietnam, allowing for greater collaboration intelligence sharing, supporting victims and prevention work. Vietnamese people remain the third largest nationality of people identified as victims of modern slavery predominantly across Asia and have recognised it as an issue that requires greater intervention. In partnership with Government departments Derbyshire officers have been able to support Vietnamese Police and prosecutors in training for staff influencing their response to Modern slavery.

Since Operation Doubrava Derbyshire police have deployed officers to several investigations that have emerged across Europe seeing investigations involving Hungarian and Slovakian nationals.

The team have identified gaps in national risk assessments to manage investigations and have developed assessments that are being assessed to assist in risk management. We have used the experience to enhance our partnership response across the organisation and beyond, looking for vulnerability within employment and supply chains, enhancing our intelligence gathering within the sex industry to be more alive to the impacts of Modern Slavery, enabling a more preventative approach and early intervention to support victims of the criminality.