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GLA move to the Home Office, “the right decision” says ALP

Yesterday’s decision by the Government’s to transfer the sponsorship of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) from Defra to the Home Office with immediate effect is a sound one and has been recommended by the Association of Labour Providers (ALP) for some time, comments ALP Director David Camp.

“Alignment and joint working with the National Crime Agency will boost the GLA’s capacity to dismantle and disrupt serious and organised crime and will increase its ability to identify and tackle human trafficking”, Camp adds. “The next step for the Government is to extend the remit of the GLA to protect vulnerable workers to the wider labour market. It may be that rather than adopting a sector by sector approach, a means of defining vulnerable workers who would fall within the protection remit of the GLA is sought instead.”

“What the Government must not do is abandon the GLA licensing regime, which, in the eight years it has been in place, has contributed to significant improvements in labour standards within the regulated sectors of food processing, agriculture and horticulture, and shellfish gathering. Statutory licensing of labour providers in these sectors is supported by retailers, food producers and over 80% of labour providers who believe that it facilitates a fairer competitive trading environment. To remove licensing would be a significant backwards step.”

Earlier this week the House of Lords and House of Commons Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill Report stated that the GLA “has been much praised as an internationally-respected model of good practice. The weight of evidence we received suggested that expanding the GLA’s powers and industrial remit would yield positive results.” The Report recommends that the Government conducts a review of the GLA.

The ALP and GLA are currently working in partnership on a pioneering multi-stakeholder initiative called “Stronger Together” to reduce human trafficking, forced labour and other third party worker exploitation in supply chains. Potential victims of human trafficking in the UK have increased by 250% in the last three years according to Home Office Human Trafficking Centre statistics.

Every employer and recruitment business can play their part in tackling forced labour and human trafficking by joining the Stronger Together network and downloading the free guidance, tools and resources from www.stronger2gether.org and implementing the good practice.

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