



# Home Office

**Alan Campbell MP**  
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Mr A Steen MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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**21 DEC 2009**

*Dear Anthony,*

You raised a question during the Queen's Speech debate on 25 November 2009 about the future of the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) in reply to which Yvette Cooper said she would raise the matter with the Home Secretary. I am replying as the Minister with policy responsibility for human trafficking issues.

The UKHTC currently has no legal status of its own. It is hosted by South Yorkshire Police, which is the relevant legal entity. Since its establishment the UKHTC has significantly increased its profile and acquired new responsibilities for victims of trafficking. As a result it was felt by the UKHTC and South Yorkshire Police that the Government should seek a more suitable long-term legal status for the Centre reflecting its national functions.

Having considered a number of options for the future legal status of the Centre I have concluded that integration with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) represents the best solution, both for UKHTC specifically and our overall anti-trafficking efforts more generally. Organised Immigration Crime, of which human trafficking is a part, is already SOCA's second highest priority. Both the UKHTC and SOCA work closely together and this move will further enhance our enforcement and intelligence efforts. SOCA is appreciative of the UKHTC's unique role and purpose and is keen to support and develop it.

You have previously raised concerns that the UKHTC may be merged with another organisation resulting in a loss of its role and remit. The UKHTC is a key body in our overall efforts in combating trafficking and the Government is committed to ensuring its continued success. Our intention has therefore always been to preserve the UKHTC's identity whilst ensuring it has a suitable legal status. This change will achieve these objectives. We will preserve the UKHTC's character and functions – this includes its strategic objectives

(which are agreed with the Home Office), its brand identity, its multi-agency composition, close working and connections with stakeholders, and its own management board (chaired by SOCA).

I intend for the new arrangement to take effect from the next financial year. I believe the functions of the Centre and SOCA will complement each other and provide a strong basis for the continuation and future development of the UK's fight against human trafficking.

As you raised this issue during the Queen's Speech debate, a copy of this letter will be made available in the House Library.

*Yours,*

*Alan Campbell*

**ALAN CAMPBELL**