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Two people arrested during modern slavery warrants executed across London

Two people have been arrested after specialist officers executed a number of warrants in west London in a bid to target criminals trafficking women into the UK from South America for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

On Tuesday, 23 February at approximately 05:00hrs detectives from the Met's Central Specialist Crime Command, supported by Territorial Support Group officers, executed search warrants at six addresses across London in Hounslow, Croydon, Newham and Barnet.

The pre-planned operation was carried out to target the human trafficking of women from South America into the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation within brothels in the London area.

A 25-year-old man [A] and a 24-year-old woman [B] were arrested as part of this morning's warrants on suspicion of controlling prostitution for gain and to conceal/disguise/convert/transfer/remove criminal property. [A] was also arrested on suspicion of arranging or facilitating travel of another person with a view to exploitation.

Those arrested are alleged to be part of an organised crime group, which is active in running brothels.

They have both been taken to a west London police station where they remain in custody.

Officers also identified seven potential victims of trafficking and they have been safeguarded.

Detective Inspector Nick Bland, from the Central Crime Command, said: “I am delighted that the team’s hard work has paid off with the arrest of two people, who we believe are responsible for trafficking vulnerable women into the UK to exploit them. More importantly, I am pleased we have been able to identify seven potential victims of trafficking and safeguard them.

“Unfortunately, modern slavery exploitation still takes place across London, and I hope this investigation continues to raise the public’s awareness of this shocking crime and sends a clear message to those involved that we will take action.

“The Met’s modern slavery team work incredibly hard to put a stop to these types of crimes to safeguard any potential victims of trafficking and bring the perpetrators to justice. However, we also need your help.

“If you suspect that you, or someone you have come into contact with, may be a victim of modern slavery or trafficking and require support, please call The Salvation Army’s 24 hour confidential referral helpline on 0800 808 3733. This is the best way to get support to anyone you suspect might be a victim

“You can also report a suspicion or seek advice through the Modern Slavery Helpline confidentially on 08000 121 700. This is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

“You can also report to the police online at www.met.police.uk or by calling 101, in case of an emergency dial 999. Alternatively, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org.”