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HOTEL STAFF TRAINING TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The London Police Service created the Human Trafficking Unit to focus on this crime that generally targets vulnerable young girls and women, although there are male victims as well.

The Human Trafficking Unit is responsible for the investigation and enforcement of crimes involving the sexual exploitation of human beings and strengthens the capabilities of law enforcement through training programs and investigative assistance.

The modernized training of the police officers and hotels staff involved in the prevention of trafficking in human beings includes lectures, structured interactions and simulations sector, which can help enforce the integrity of the law enforcement and improve cooperation among all parties concerned. The battle against trafficking has moved into the front desks and lobbies of hotels. The front line for preventing human trafficking might not be at airports, international borders or in police raids. It might be at the hotel check-in desk. The police have introduced legislation this year requiring hotels to give their staff “awareness” training about human trafficking.

An international hotel chain has completed a two-year project to train its staff with the aim of spotting potential victims of trafficking.

Now the hotels have a significant number of people trained by the police who are capable of recognising suspicious behaviour and reporting it to law enforcement. Warning signs might include guests with minimal luggage and clothing and individuals who can't speak freely or seem disoriented. Police instruct the staff to notice some warning signs of human trafficking, e.g. when guests insist on little or no housekeeping or multiple people are escorted to a room one at a time. Staff are taught to watch their guests arrive and during their stay, and they have an unusually close-up view of their behaviour. Hotel staffs often notice strange behaviour such as a girl's reticence during the check-in process or her dependence on the person accompanying her. There is no easy fix but combating modern-day slavery starts with awareness.

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