

UK-Poland co-operation to combat human trafficking

1.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Leeds Crown Court's January 2026 sentences close a trafficking case that proves what long-term UK-Poland police co-operation, supported by Europol, can deliver.

In January 2026, Leeds Crown Court sentenced 3 individuals to long prison terms for offences related to human trafficking and modern slavery. The case is a strong example of effective and long-term co-operation between law enforcement authorities in the United Kingdom and Poland.

The investigation was led by the specialist Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking team of West Yorkshire Police and formed part of programme Precision. Precision is an initiative focused on tackling serious and organised crime. The investigation was launched in 2016 following receipt of an anonymous report, which was later established to have been submitted by one of the victims.

The proceedings concerned offences committed between 2015 and 2016. Victims were offered apparently legitimate employment in the United Kingdom. Upon arrival, they were subjected to control and exploitation by the perpetrators, who derived significant financial benefit from the criminal activity.

Over the course of the multi-year investigation, a substantial body of evidence was secured, including travel documentation, electronic communications, financial records and CCTV footage. The investigation established that the perpetrators operated in an organised manner and that the offences were systematic and prolonged in nature.

As both the victims and the perpetrators were Polish nationals, the investigation required intensive cross-border co-operation from the outset. UK authorities worked closely with their Polish counterparts through a joint investigation team, with the support of Europol. This co-operation enabled not only the gathering of evidence, but also the safeguarding and support of victims. This included those who returned to Poland following the arrest of the suspects.

After charges were brought, some of the defendants left the United Kingdom. However, thanks to co-operation with Polish partners, they were traced, arrested and extradited to the UK, where they stood trial. The proceedings concluded with guilty verdicts delivered in December 2025, followed by sentencing decisions in January 2026.

In addition to custodial sentences for the principal offenders, UK law enforcement authorities are also pursuing proceedings to secure assets derived from criminal activity and to apply measures aimed at preventing similar offences in the future.

This case underlines the importance of international co-operation in combating human trafficking - a crime that is often transnational in nature and requires co-ordinated action by multiple institutions. The United Kingdom and Poland have long worked closely in this field, and the successful conclusion of this case provides further evidence of the effectiveness of that co-operation.

Read more about the case.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-poland-co-operation-to-combat-human-trafficking>