



**The Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg M.P.
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Thank you and your co-signatories so much for your letter of 20 January regarding the APPG on the Trafficking of Women and Children's work to highlight the scourge of slavery in Britain.

I'm more than happy to be able to support this work, raising awareness and writing to MPs and PPCs about the issue of slavery and trafficking in Britain. The trafficking of human beings is one of the most despicable crimes in existence and a terrible violation of basic human rights. We need to do everything possible to stamp it out and to protect victims, both here and in the rest of Europe.

This has to include a network of safe havens across Britain and the rest of Europe, which will treat trafficked people as victims, providing medical care, counselling and legal aid, in particular the possibility of helping to prosecute traffickers. We need to do more, both at UK and EU levels, to try and get the message out to possible victims and let them know where to get help – setting up a freephone anti-trafficking hotline, for instance, which has already helped thousands of women in Italy.

I'm particularly pleased to see that the APPG is focussing on awareness, because it's crucial to get people to report suspected cases of victims of slavery – and to make it clear that people involved in trafficking in any way will be prosecuted. Police forces, specialist units, employers and others all have a role to play; the Liberal Democrats are absolutely committed to supporting this and to doing what they can to help end this terrible trade.

Thank you once again for your letter – and again, many congratulations to the APPG for all its efforts.

Nick Clegg MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats