

# Combating Human Trafficking

## Case Study One

**Victim:** Karla, a 22-year old female trafficked in Denmark.

**Type of Exploitation:** forced criminality



### Karla's Story:

I thought I was lucky to have been promised the opportunity to work in a smart city centre hotel in another part of the country. I got the job offer through a distant relative who took me to the city and introduced me to a group of 'her' business associates. They were very kind at first and I was excited. I soon realised that things were not actually what was promised. At the beginning, they helped me with some basic training and to apply for a job at the front desk of a hotel. They also made sure I was presentable so that I could go for an interview. With the CV they provided me, complete with references I got the job. The hotel took my address from the CV. It wasn't my real address, but I guess no one from the hotel ever checked. I also provided the hotel with details of a bank account that my wages were paid into. I wasn't able to access that account to get hold of any money, but I guess nobody checked for that either. Who would give their employer a bank account that they can't access? At least the hotel provided meals during my shifts so I didn't go hungry when I was working. I ate as much as I could on every shift.

At work, I followed my orders from the traffickers. I began to change non-commissionable room reservations into ones booked by the traffickers 'fake' travel agency so that the commission could be paid directly into their bank account. However many reservations I changed, the traffickers always wanted more. I started to volunteer to work extra shifts, so I could change more reservations. I knew it was risky so I tried to keep to myself. I didn't go to any staff social functions but volunteered to cover other employees' shifts instead. When colleagues offered me a lift home after work, it was easy to have them drop me off on the street corner where the traffickers always picked me up.

I don't know why I kept doing what I was doing. I felt trapped and had nowhere else to go. I was afraid of what the traffickers might do to me. Their plan was to have me apply for the same job in a bigger and better hotel as soon as one became available so they could make more money on each reservation I changed. It was almost a relief when the hotel discovered what I was doing and called the police. When I was arrested, the police were really only interested in the crime I committed, not my story. They kept me in jail though, as I had no fixed address or any means of support. At least I felt safe from the traffickers there. It was only when the case went to court that my true story came out and with it, the story of several others, like me. It seems that these traffickers had quite a big business going across the city. We were their hidden employees really, working hard for them while employed by the hotels; working hard to cheat the local hotels and feed funds into the traffickers' bank accounts