

Breaking the wall of silence

Practitioners' responses to trafficked children and young people

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Executive summary

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Introduction

As set out in international law, all children have the right to be safe regardless of their immigration status. The trafficking of children and young people into the UK has become increasingly evident over the past decade. Trafficking of children and young people is child abuse and the responsibility for protecting children in the UK rests with local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs). The definition of trafficking of children used in this report follows the UN's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000), which came into force on 25 December 2003 and states:

- (a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purposes of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

The definition notes that children under the age of 18 cannot consent to being trafficked. This report illustrates some practitioners' understanding of and responses to the trafficking of children. The overall purpose is to highlight good practice that can be shared between agencies involved.

The research was conducted by researchers at the University of Bedfordshire and the NSPCC, jointly managed by the University of Bedfordshire and the NSPCC, and principally funded through The Children's Charity. The proposal for the research met relevant ethical requirements and approval. A team of four researchers worked over a two-year period in three sites in the UK to:

- review international and UK literature on trafficking;
- conduct focus groups and interviews with a total of 72 practitioners from a range of children's services selected as the most experienced in working with cases of trafficked children and young people; and
- analyse 37 cases of children and young people: 27 who had been trafficked into the UK from abroad for various forms of exploitation; and 10 UK citizens who were trafficked within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The research project was supported by a multidisciplinary advisory group and an independent academic consultant. The research is a qualitative project. It is not an overview of how many or why children are trafficked. It is an assessment of the complexities and problems faced by practitioners who are working with the cases.

1 Trafficking is a process, not an event

Practitioners noted that the trafficking of a child or young person can begin in one country, continue through and into a variety of others, and extend throughout the child's or young person's life. Similarly, they noted that identification and disclosure are rarely single events, but are staggered over time and usually only occur once trusted and secure relationships have been established between the practitioners and the children or young people. Within the process of the young person being trafficked, a range of complexities arose.

1.1 Practitioners noted the need for child protection concerns to override concerns about the age or immigration status of children and young people who are trafficked into the UK from abroad. That is, safeguarding the child is of paramount importance (see all recommendations at the end of this summary). They voiced concern that children trafficked from abroad might not receive the same rights and treatment as children born in the UK, even

though they are entitled to do so by law. Multi-agency work between the UK Border Agency, police and children's services at the point of arrival, and focused on securing the safety of the child, was seen as essential in efforts to engage with the child and to prevent them from being abducted or going missing. Good practice was to provide the child with a child protection keyworker (themselves supported through multi-agency work with police involvement) and accommodation in a place of safety, preferably in supported and supervised foster care. In addition, trafficked children and young people felt safer if they were provided with child-friendly instructions in different languages (written and verbal), including names, contact numbers and addresses of carers and professionals, and a basic overview of children's rights in the UK. There was evidence from interviews and case files of children and young people using these instructions if they were abducted or went missing.

1.2 Practitioners warned against the uncritical assumption that an interpreter from the same community as the child would necessarily be the best interpreter for that child (see recommendations 5 and 11). Rather than being welcomed by the child as familiar, they noted that an interpreter from the same or similar community may conjure fear, as they represent the very community responsible for exploiting the child. This should not necessarily deter the use of a good interpreter, but practitioners noted the need for the selection of the interpreter to be based on training, skills and experience rather than on cultural similarity.

1.3 Continuity with the same interpreter, keyworker or legal guardian was important. The child or young person is more likely to disclose information about their experiences of exploitation within a trusting, secure and supported relationship (see recommendation 5). Practitioners felt that, wherever possible, the trafficked child or young person should be protected from having repeatedly to reproduce their account of how and why they were trafficked. Indeed, in some cases this was seen as a continuation of the abuse, as the re-telling of traumatic and painful accounts added to the damage incurred by the child.

1.4 Practitioners advocated the use of an independent guardian, although they warned against using the existence of the legal guardian as a rationale for abdicating responsibility for the case (see recommendations 6, 7 and 12). They noted the benefit of LSCBs and other services allocating a trained and supported keyworker to form a secure and trusting relationship with the child or young person. This keyworker would help the child or young person to settle into using specialist and mainstream services.

1.5 Childhood and home were contested concepts (see recommendations 11, 22 and 23).

The evidence from interviews showed that many children and young people might have been pushed into early adulthood. They might not have experienced “childhood” in the way that it is understood in the UK. Their “home” might have been destroyed by war or famine, or might be dysfunctional and abusive. The child or young person may feel that they are making decisions for themselves about their future. As such, they would not understand that they were victims of abuse. Traffickers are skilled in using the child’s or young person’s desire for independence and autonomy to further manipulate and exploit them. Practitioners noted the need for sensitivity to the various histories and understandings of age, childhood and home as presented by trafficked children or young people.

1.6 Different forms of trafficking can be hidden under the dominant image of a girl or young woman trafficked for sexual exploitation (see recommendations 11–14 and 24).

Practitioners expressed concerns that this may overshadow awareness of trafficking for other forms of exploitation, including benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic servitude, work in cannabis factories or nail parlours, as well as masking trafficking of boys and young men. Experience of working with cases improved both knowledge of and response to the issues concerned. There are still improvements to be made in work with sexually exploited boys and girls. However, knowledge and experience of this work is more advanced than with other forms of exploitation. Work with sexually exploited boys and girls should not be allowed to overshadow awareness of the needs of children and young people trafficked for a range of forms of exploitation.

1.7 There are different and additional pressures facing children trafficked into the UK from abroad than for UK nationals who are trafficked within the UK (see

recommendations 11–13 and 24). Without diminishing the need for improved services to prevent the trafficking of UK citizens for sexual exploitation and for improving services in this area of work, practitioners noted that those trafficked from abroad faced specific problems. These can include: displacement from their home and country of origin; language and communication barriers; their previous experiences of war, famine or poverty; the insecurity of their legal status in the UK; and their unfamiliarity with UK cultures, children’s services and their rights and entitlements.

1.8 Trafficked children and young people frequently go missing at the point of arrival into the country and then again after being placed in local authority care. This interrupts the process of disclosure (see recommendations 6–15, 17 and 22–24). Going missing is a problem with children and young people trafficked into the country from abroad, as well as with UK citizens trafficked within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The problems faced can be compounded for children and young people from abroad. Practitioners noted that the case of a missing child needed to be kept alive by trying to locate their whereabouts through active multi-agency work and record keeping. Practice improved where designated keyworkers from different welfare and law enforcement agencies worked together. This ultimately supported both the child and the keyworkers concerned.

2 Trafficking can be hidden behind a wall of silence

On the one hand, practitioners noted that children and young people can find it hard to disclose information about their experiences or may be silenced by traffickers. On the other, practitioners may not identify cases, may not believe what they hear or be able to respond to the needs presented.

2.1 Practitioners noted that traffickers will use a range of methods to manipulate, coerce and force children and young people into being trafficked (see recommendations 3–7, 9–11 and 22–24). Both interviews and case files showed that traffickers use subtle manipulation and overt physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect as methods of control. Traffickers may make children believe that they owe them money or payment through other means. As a result, the child or young person may be injured, confused or traumatised. Invariably they are silenced by this abuse: through fear of repercussions for themselves, friends or family; through manipulation; or because the information is too painful to disclose. The child may have blocked out details as a means of coping. Breaking this silence can often only happen with time: through building a relationship of trust, engaging with the child and using language that they can understand and to which they can relate.

2.2 Disclosure is usually elicited (see recommendations 4, 6–8, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 21 and 22). Disclosure can be categorised as accidental (where the exploitation of the child or young person is found by default), purposeful (where the child or young person actively seeks help and support) or elicited (through prompting by professionals or support agencies).

Practitioners noted that most disclosures are elicited over time within a trusting and supportive relationship with a keyworker.

2.3 Disclosures may not always be listened to or believed (see recommendations 5–7, 10–14, 18, 19 and 22). Practitioners noted concern that children and young people’s accounts may be hard to understand, full of discrepancies and accompanied by challenging and difficult behaviour. If the services are not available to support the child, young person or, indeed, the worker, it may be easier to ignore or disbelieve the situation than to try to respond without adequate resources. While this is hard to acknowledge and discuss, some practitioners wanted more opportunity to talk further about the difficulties involved with identifying and responding to these challenging cases.

2.4 Experience brings improved practice (see recommendations 10–13 and 20).

Practitioners’ awareness of the indicators of trafficking is improved through their experience of working with the cases. As practitioners deal with the cases and face the problems presented, they begin to recognise indicators and emerging patterns that help to improve identification. Lessons can be learnt by referring to the practitioners engaged in the work and building these lessons into local training initiatives.

2.5 Experience can be used to ascertain patterns of those who traffic children and young people, from where and for what purpose. However, practitioners levelled caution against categorising or profiling these communities for fear of labelling them and overshadowing evidence of variation (see recommendations 11–15 and 18). While patterns emerge of children being trafficked from specific countries for specific reasons, practitioners warned against profiling, as it can assume characteristics that might not be true in all cases and can limit practitioners’ understanding of the complexities and diversities attached to individual cases. Practitioners need training to help them understand the distinction between trafficking and smuggling, and to work with the complexities that these differences involve.

3 Every Child Matters: the role of mainstream services

3.1 Practitioners from a range of different mainstream welfare and law enforcement services noted that they each have a role to play in supporting trafficked children and young people to work towards achieving each of the five outcomes specified in Every Child Matters (see recommendations 5–8, 10–14 and 17–22). Interventions should be centred on the child or young person. Practitioners noted that most of the children and young people concerned wanted to be seen just as any other child – as “normal” rather than solely as a victim. Sometimes practitioners have to make decisions with which the child or young person may not agree. They noted the complexities of working with children and young people who may be influenced by traffickers and/or who may, as developing adolescents, want to assert their own judgement. Mainstream services involved with decision making about the welfare and best interests of the child must be framed within child and young person centred approaches, while also being mindful of the impact of coercion, manipulation and violence for those in exploitative relationships. The primary focus must be on protecting the child from further abuse and exploitation.

3.2 Staying safe: practitioners noted that multi-agency work was necessary to identify trafficked children and young people and to keep them safe (see all recommendations, but particularly 12 and 13). The LSCB has a central role to play in facilitating multi-agency work to safeguard trafficked children and young people. Practitioners noted improved safety for the child when this was formalised through: (a) a local protocol; (b) a subcommittee or specialist group focusing on trafficking issues within the borough; and (c) a designated safeguarding trafficked children and young people worker who could offer advice and consultancy on casework undertaken by keyworkers.

3.3 Staying safe meant co-ordinated information sharing and joint work between police and child protection workers (see recommendations 12–18). Practitioners from both law enforcement and children’s service providers recognised some of the difficulties in maintaining joint work, but noted that, where possible, this had enhanced the opportunity to gather intelligence for the prosecution of abusers, better protecting children and young people involved. Solicitors, youth workers, youth offending team workers, police and child protection workers and teachers were each involved in keeping the young person safe. Such joint work was best facilitated through an active LSCB subcommittee focused on trafficked

children and young people, through shared training and data recording, and through experience of running police operations in the local area.

3.4 Practitioners noted concern that some young people might commit offences as a result of coercion, manipulation or force on the part of traffickers (see recommendations 11–13, 17 and 18). There was concern that some practitioners may not be trained to recognise the indicators of trafficking and that as a result the child or young person may be penalised for behaviours resulting from coercion and abuse. Certain police or youth offending teams identified a history of trafficking within a young offender's trajectory. Such identification improved the opportunity for child-centred safeguarding interventions to support the child and to improve intelligence gathering about abusers.

3.5 Good practice to support trafficked children and young people to be healthy meant improving knowledge of and access to mainstream health service provision (see recommendations 11, 14, 19 and 20). Practitioners noted that the young people presented a range of different, and often extreme, mental, physical and sexual problems. Accident and emergency services played an important role in identifying trafficked children, including those referred from the point of arrival in the UK. Addressing mental health problems took time, and needed a sustained and supported relationship with a trained child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) worker. Walk-in centres were particularly important resources for those who were not registered with a GP. Mainstream health services also had a key role in helping young people nearing adulthood to make the transition to adult mental health services.

3.6 Practitioners noted that many trafficked children and young people were not on a school roll, despite wanting to enjoy and achieve (see recommendations 11–13 and 19–21). Practitioners noted the importance of the trafficked child or young person being on a school roll, so that they could be kept occupied, build positive peer group relationships and work towards achieving ambitions. Alongside training existing services in schools to be aware of the needs of trafficked children and young people, it was suggested that a worker should be designated within the school to support trafficked children and young people. This worker would help to ensure that the child was settling into the school routines. If extra English language classes were needed, it was in the child's interest for these to be run inside rather than outside the school. Practitioners felt that the more the child or young person was outside the school, the more vulnerable they were to further exploitation.

3.7 Making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing (see recommendations 20–22). Practitioners noted concern that the focus of children’s services was directed towards the welfare of younger children and that the 16 to 18 age group could slip through the net and out of view. Cases where trafficked young people were becoming independent, achieving well at school and having high ambitions were noted alongside those who continued to feel vulnerable and insecure. Practitioners noted concern that, at the age when the young person could make a positive contribution to the economy, they faced additional insecurity about their legal status in the UK. This could have an impact on their mental health and on their continued ability to achieve. Additional support, delivered through the keyworker approach, is needed: to enable this age group to engage with the natural transitions taking place through adolescence; to maintain a focus on their own development, future training and career development; and to manage the changes that they face with their legal status.

4 Some specialist services are needed for trafficked children and young people

4.1 Practitioners advocated three types of specialist services to meet the specific needs of trafficked children and young people (see recommendations 5, 8, 10, 12, and 13). These are: trained and specialist interpreters for those trafficked from abroad; safe and supported accommodation with trained and supported foster carers; and a dedicated keyworker approach to service delivery underpinned by reflective practice.

4.2 The process of identification of children and young people who may have been trafficked could be improved or hampered depending upon the skill and training of the interpreters provided (see recommendations 5 and 11). Practitioners, including interpreters themselves, noted the additional strain placed on the child or young person and on the interpreter in cases where there were problems with the child’s mental, physical or sexual health. This was particularly the case where the effect of traffickers’ threats, manipulation or violence was ongoing. Interpreters who had been trained to understand and manage this were better able to support the child.

4.3 A conceptual shift was needed in the provisions of accommodation (see recommendations 8 and 9). The belief that the existing local authority accommodation for looked-after children or young people sufficed for trafficked children and young people should change to one that recognised the need for trained carers, supported by a multidisciplinary team, including children's safeguarding services, health and police.

4.4 Practitioners noted the need for arrangements for emergency placements for those who have arrived in the country or who have re-appeared following a period of going missing (see recommendations 8 and 9). These placements need to be covered 24 hours a day by staff trained to understand the dynamics facing a trafficked child or young person.

4.5 Practitioners advocated the need for a keyworker approach (see recommendations 10, 11, 14, 18 and 19). While allocating an independent guardian was to be encouraged, it was highlighted that mainstream services with a keyworker approach best supported the child through relationship-based thinking. It was argued that the child or young person was more able to disclose information and access and use mainstream services if they experienced a trusting and secure relationship with an adult who was not going to abuse them. Indeed, it was argued that modelling a good relationship was, in itself, a means of breaking patterns of abuse and exploitation.

Recommendations drawn from the findings of the research

1. Interventions with trafficked children and young people should be based around the best interests of the child or young person, and should not be framed within concerns about immigration or asylum status.
2. Age assessments should be carried out independently in regional assessment centres supported by an independent age-assessment panel in each region. This independent panel of professionals should have experience and qualifications in child development and safeguarding children, as well as a thorough knowledge of contexts in countries of origin, global forms of child abuse and UK safeguarding procedures. The panel also needs to comprise professionals who do not ultimately assume financial responsibility for the young person or have other conflicts of interest. The best interests of the child or young

person should be the core value of these panels. Age assessments should follow recommendations for independent, regional, multi-agency, age-assessment centres as outlined in key reform 4 of the UK Border Agency's paper *Better outcomes: the way forward. Improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children* (UK Border and Immigration Agency, 2008) and by the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association's research report *When is a child not a child? Asylum, age disputes and the process of age assessment* (ILPA, 2007).

3. Young people should be given the benefit of the doubt during the age-assessment process in accordance with Article 10 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ratified by the UK in 2007 and enforced in 2008). The default position should be that applicants for asylum whose age is uncertain are potentially children and procedures should be in place to reflect this.
4. Immediately on arrival, all children and young people should be provided with language-appropriate information on what trafficking is and where they can seek help in emergencies, including being abducted or going missing.
5. Interpreters should be trained so that they are aware of safeguarding considerations, the forms of manipulation, coercion and violence that can be used by traffickers, and the potential health needs of trafficked children and young people. Rather than assuming that someone from the same or similar culture will best understand the child or young person, interpreters should be selected on their suitability to the particular case. Wherever possible, the same interpreter should be used throughout the duration of a case.
6. Independent legal guardians should be appointed to support children through the process of safeguarding and access to services.
7. At the point of entry into the UK, a social work keyworker, trained in safeguarding children and young people, should be allocated to each child or young person. An independent guardian should also be employed (see recommendation 6), but this should not negate the need for the LSCB to allocate a social work keyworker to oversee the management of the child's case from the outset.
8. LSCBs should support and train foster carers to accept emergency and ongoing placements of children and young people at their point of arrival in the UK or on their return from going missing. Some LSCBs may also need to support residential care

providers for this purpose. These residential care providers would need to provide staff cover 24 hours a day with specially trained and supervised carers adopting a keyworker approach. The foster carers or residential workers should be given a direct point of contact with the local police, and should have regular and ongoing support from the allocated social work keyworker accountable to the LSCB.

9. Trafficked children and young people should not be accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation. They should be placed in settings where 24-hour supervision is available from trained, supported and supervised carers (see recommendation 8).
10. A keyworker approach should be adopted for safeguarding trafficked children and young people. This should be developed in consideration of the recommendations of Lord Laming's report *The protection of children in England: a progress report* (TSO, 2009) for reflective practice and for practice with complex cases to be undertaken (or closely supervised) by a social work consultant within safeguarding teams. The keyworker approach notes that disclosure is more likely to take place once the child or young person has developed a trusting and supportive relationship with a keyworker.
11. Practitioners in all children's welfare and justice agencies should be trained to identify indicators of trafficking and know how their agency can respond. Interpreters who are employed to work with trafficked children and young people should also receive this training, which should cover:
 - the principles within the Palermo protocol on trafficking persons
 - children's rights
 - indicators of trafficking
 - discrepancies in casework between smuggling and trafficking cases
 - an understanding of the wide range of different forms of abuse a trafficked child may experience, in their country of origin and/or with their traffickers
 - awareness of the different control mechanisms used by traffickers to facilitate the exploitation of the child or young person
 - knowledge of the need for and whereabouts of information on the civil, political, social and economic contexts within countries of origin
 - awareness of the different understandings within and between cultures about family structures and the roles that different family members may play in childcare
 - awareness of the barriers faced by children and young people trafficked from abroad and the issues facing UK nationals trafficked within the UK

- an understanding of the mechanisms traffickers may use to abuse and exploit children
- methods of gathering and sharing intelligence
- principles behind child-centred, child protection interventions
- potential health and educational needs of trafficked children and young people
- cultural sensitivity and awareness of diversity
- use of national guidance documents and local protocols
- the importance of multi-agency work through LSCBs
- keyworker or relationship-based approaches to casework with trafficked children and young people.

12. Each LSCB needs to undertake a scoping exercise in their locality to establish the scale of trafficking (both of children and young people from abroad and of children and young people who are UK citizens). Each LSCB should assess its provision to meet the needs identified in the scoping exercise and to comply with the DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked* (2008). Each LSCB should establish a subcommittee or subgroup to focus on safeguarding trafficked children and young people.

This subcommittee or subgroup should be responsible for ensuring that the LSCB is acting in compliance with the DCSF guidance and that local agencies (including police, health, education and youth offending teams) have designated keyworkers available to oversee work with trafficked children and young people within their work setting.

The LSCB is essential when maintaining a focus on keeping the child or young person safe. One practice model advocated for keeping the young person in mind was that established by many local authorities for safeguarding sexually exploited children and young people, which requires three components:

- a) A multi-agency subgroup of the LSCB adheres to a protocol that informs staff in the borough of procedures they should follow and agencies to which they should refer in potential and confirmed cases of trafficking.
- b) Each service – child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), crown prosecution service (CPS), youth offending team (YOT) or education, drug and alcohol, police, sexual health or youth work service – designates a practitioner to attend the LSCB subgroup meetings. Depending upon the size and role of each of these separate services, they may need to develop their own protocol (in line with the LSCB’s protocol) to guide their practitioners’ responses.

- c) A dedicated, specialist and trained youth work service acts as a resource for ongoing contact work with the children and young people. Ideally, this should include staff employed to provide outreach and therapeutic services for trafficked children and young people.

13. Following from recommendation 12, if local agencies are developing their own protocol as specified in (b) above, this should specify:

- how and where training for all employees can be found and funded to inform their work with trafficked children and young people;
- the procedures the agency has in place to help employees identify trafficked children and young people and to guide good practice once identified;
- the designated worker(s) employed within the agency, who will offer ongoing advice to practitioners and be available to develop a keyworker relationship with the young person; and
- how and when information that they may gather about cases of potential or actual trafficking of children and young people is shared with other agencies in the local area and with the LSCB – this needs to meet requirements of the DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked* (2008) and the new National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

14. Health service providers within each local authority should take part in the local scoping exercise as outlined in recommendation 12. They should assess through this exercise whether their sexual and mental health services are available and accessible to children and young people who may have been trafficked. Each local child and mental health service should ensure that they are aware of the therapeutic needs of trafficked children and young people and consider the development of an outreach service that is targeted to the most damaged and socially excluded children and young people in their area. Reference to the body of work on therapeutic outreach services by Pearce (2009)¹ and the forthcoming DCSF guidance on safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation² would be helpful when developing this area of work.

¹ Pearce, J. (2009) *Young people and sexual exploitation: it isn't hidden, you just aren't looking*. (London: Routledge)

² DCSF *Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation* (forthcoming)

- 15.** A safe and effective mechanism for storing and sharing of information on cases of trafficked children and young people within a local authority is essential. This is necessary because:
- data is needed to track the reasons for children and young people being trafficked and of the country of origin and the outcomes for the child;
 - the LSCB has the responsibility for referring cases of trafficked young people through the new NRM to the designated authorities (the UK Border Agency and the UK Human Trafficking Centre);
 - evidence of good practice needs to be available for new staff who might be involved in casework with a child or young person; and
 - information on children and young people who have gone missing needs to be cross-referenced with information on children and young people who may have been trafficked.
- 16.** Use of the NRM should be reviewed to ensure that different forms of trafficking are being taken into account and that practitioners are identifying cases of trafficking at the different stages during the trafficking process.
- 17.** Government offices should have regional-based subgroups focusing on the trafficking of children and young people. This would encourage sharing of good practice and help to address issues across different boroughs or countries.
- 18.** Youth offending team (YOT) workers need to establish an active way of identifying and assessing trafficking. This should be used to enhance the understanding of the relationship between the informal economy and the trafficking of children and young people. A review of cases held by YOT workers where there might be suspicion that the child or young person had been trafficked should be undertaken by each YOT team. A national conference should be designed by the Youth Justice Board to highlight the relationship between youth crime and experiences of being trafficked.
- 19.** In line with recommendations made in the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, each school or college should designate a worker for all looked-after children. This worker should also be given responsibility for supporting trafficked children and young people, including overseeing the process of settling them into their peer group, and helping them

to engage with their coursework and manage their extracurricular activities, such as learning English. The worker should also ensure that school staff are aware of the indicators of trafficking and the procedures to follow if a case is identified.

- 20.** Wherever possible, English classes for trafficked children and young people, and for separated children, need to be run within the school premises, with the young person integrating with their year and peer groups as much as possible. This research, supported by other studies, shows that the more isolated the trafficked child or young person is from mainstream services, the more vulnerable they are to being re-trafficked.
- 21.** The local education authority should ensure that it has representation on the LSCB. It needs to ensure that all education staff – including teaching staff, teaching support staff and education welfare officers or education social workers – are trained to identify indicators of trafficking and to follow procedures if a case is identified.
- 22.** Each LSCB should undertake a review of the range and scope of their child protection procedures, assessing whether they reach and meet the needs of young people aged 16 to 18 who may have been trafficked. This should also include an assessment of the education and training facilities of young people in this age group, who may not have received a traditional education through usual formal routes and who may have emotional and mental health needs.
- 23.** If a young person is approaching 18 years of age and there is some concern that they may have been trafficked, they should be taken out of the asylum procedure to allow adequate time for disclosure of their circumstances.
- 24.** This and other research has noted the need for practice centred on the child or young person. It has revealed a gap in knowledge of children and young people's own accounts of their experiences of being trafficked and of their resulting needs. Future research should be carried out with trafficked children and young people themselves to explore these questions. It should follow strict ethical guidelines in partnership with a service provider who can facilitate the protection and wellbeing of the child or young person.

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