

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

- 1 Child trafficking is child abuse and requires a child protection response and multi-agency working in line with child protection legislation. For further information on this and for government guidance, visit [nspcc.org.uk/childtrafficking](http://nspcc.org.uk/childtrafficking)**
- 2 Follow your safeguarding and child protection procedures and make a referral to your local children's services or police department. When making the referral, highlight your concern about child trafficking, how you believe the child is being exploited, what the risk of harm is and details of your safeguarding concerns. Discuss your concerns with your police school liaison officer if you have one.**
- 3 Do not raise your trafficking concerns directly with the parent or carer as this could put the child at further risk.**
- 4 Don't let any concerns you have about challenging cultural beliefs stand in the way of making informed assessments about the safety of a child. Any practice that places a child at risk of harm needs to be reported to children's services. Trust your professional judgment and if you are still unsure, speak to colleagues, or contact CTAC on 0808 800 5000.**
- 5 Try to find out more about the child and speak with them on their own, with an interpreter if required.**
- 6 It's likely that trafficked children and young people will find it hard to trust interpreters. It's good practice to avoid the interpreter being from the same area in the country of origin as the victim. This reduces any perceived link the child may make between the interpreter and known people in their country of origin.**
- 7 Record all details for the child and accompanying adults as well as information including names and addresses of relatives overseas in order to make necessary checks.**
- 8 Check that a referral will be made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. Contact CTAC for advice on how this can be done.**
- 9 When speaking to a child offer reassurance, explain that you can help them and that it's safe for them to talk to you.**
- 10 For support, information or advice, call the Child Trafficking Advice Centre on 0808 800 5000, email [ctac@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:ctac@nspcc.org.uk) or visit [nspcc.org.uk/ctac](http://nspcc.org.uk/ctac)**



“There's no family here or back home. I feel lonely when I don't have anyone to check up on me or show that they care.”

**Juma<sup>†</sup>, trafficked to the UK from Nigeria**

<sup>†</sup> name changed to protect identity

# NSPCC

## GET IN TOUCH

Trafficking and slavery need a child protection response, and it's vital to consult with all relevant agencies to assess the situation.

The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre is here for you to talk through any concerns you may have for a child. We can also deliver free awareness-raising presentations to professionals.

For more information, call **0808 800 5000** and ask for the Child Trafficking Advice Centre, email [ctac@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:ctac@nspcc.org.uk) or go to [nspcc.org.uk/ctac](http://nspcc.org.uk/ctac)

# Stop child trafficking and slavery in its tracks

**The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre**  
**0808 800 5000**

ADVICE FOR  
EDUCATION WORKERS



Since September 2007, the Child Trafficking Advice Centre has worked on **more than 1,300 cases<sup>†</sup>**, which had either clear trafficking or safeguarding concerns.

<sup>†</sup> Figure correct to September 2015

**The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) is a specialist service. It provides free guidance and support to professionals with safeguarding concerns for children being moved across international borders, either to or from the UK.**

**The service is staffed by experienced social workers and a National Crime Agency police liaison officer. It provides free training and awareness-raising presentations, attends network and child protection meetings and produces child trafficking reports for courts.**

## WHAT IS CHILD TRAFFICKING?

Child trafficking is the movement of a child or children for the purpose of exploitation. It is a criminal offence under Modern Slavery legislation. A child is any person under the age of 18, and children cannot consent to being exploited.

Children can be trafficked into and out of the UK, and within the UK itself. They can be trafficked by parents, extended family members, known adults from a child's community or by strangers. Trafficking often involves organised international networks of criminal gangs.

**Child trafficking is child abuse.** It requires a child protection response and multi-agency working, irrespective of the child's immigration status or whether they have engaged in criminal activity.

Children can be exploited through:

- \* **sexual exploitation**
- \* **criminal activity (eg cannabis cultivation, street crime, moving drugs, benefit fraud, immigration fraud)**
- \* **domestic servitude**
- \* **labour exploitation (eg restaurants, nail bars, agricultural work, factories)**
- \* **illegal adoption**
- \* **forced marriage**
- \* **unreported private fostering arrangements (for any of the above exploitative purposes).**

This is not an exhaustive list and children are often exploited in more than one way.

## WORKING WITH TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Child trafficking and modern slavery are not terms that most children will understand. All trafficked children have different experiences and responses to what they have been through. Some children know they are being abused but others may not realise until they are out of the exploitative situation.

Building trust is crucial. Children and young people are more likely to engage with you when they feel safe and feel that they can trust you. Explain to the child that you have to share information with professionals to make sure they're safe.

Children can be prevented from disclosing abuse in a number of ways. Children may be afraid of their traffickers, which could prevent them from opening up. Some children and young people may be influenced by religious, spiritual and cultural beliefs used negatively by the trafficker(s), or they may be afraid of UK authorities.

Some children may view the police and social workers with suspicion, rather than as professionals who can help. Even if children are in a situation where they feel safe they still may not be able to give clear details of their experiences.

Some children and young people may run away from safe situations back to their traffickers. This can be confusing, as the child appears to be deliberately returning to an abusive environment. This behaviour should be seen in the context of grooming and professionals should work with the child to help them feel safe.

## IDENTIFYING TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Many people think that trafficked children do not attend school but this isn't always the case. In some instances traffickers register the child at school to give the impression that the child's welfare and care arrangements are legitimate and safe. Some children who are trafficked into the UK arrive on education visas but are later exploited.

Those working in education are in a good position to identify children and young people who may have been trafficked – particularly those trafficked for benefit fraud, domestic servitude and petty crime. For example, you may become aware of a foreign national child who is being registered at school by an adult they are not related to. The nature of their relationship may be unclear and give you cause for concern, particularly if the adult insists on speaking for the child or the child seems nervous around them.

Adults who traffic children may abuse and neglect them in a number of ways. Some children are used as domestic servants, forced to do excessive levels of household chores and/or care for young children in the home. Others may be forced to work in a family business or through an agency, with all of the money being kept by the traffickers. Children may also be given multiple identities and passed between different households to enable adults to claim child benefits.

Some children may be groomed to beg or commit petty street crimes, such as pickpocketing and theft. In some situations, children and young people are also vulnerable to sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

While education staff are in a good position to identify trafficked children, it can still be hard due to the variety of circumstances that children live in. Some children may be in situations that seem legitimate and safe at first but are later exploited. Children who have been trafficked may not disclose or display obvious signs of distress or abuse while at school or college because they feel safe and more relaxed there. Some children will have been told what to say by the traffickers and they may become anxious if questioned about their situation.

## RISK INDICATORS – QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER†

- 1 Has the child been brought into the UK from abroad? Do you know who they came with and why?**
- 2 Do the adults who have registered the child at school have legal responsibility for the child and documentation to support this?**
- 3 If the child is living with unrelated adults or extended family, has the Local Authority been informed so a private fostering assessment can be completed? Any adults caring for a child under 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) who is not a close relative for more than 28 days have to inform the Local Authority. A private fostering assessment can then be undertaken to ensure the living arrangement is safe and appropriate for the child. This applies to all children irrespective of their immigration status. Many children who are trafficked to the UK live in unsafe situations because the living arrangement is not reported to the Local Authority.**
- 4 Does the child have a valid passport, ID card or visa? Has the child been given a false or fraudulently obtained ID? Contact CTAC for advice on how to verify relationships or confirm documentation is genuine if you have concerns.**
- 5 Do you think the child could be withholding information or telling a rehearsed story?**
- 6 Is the child expected to do an inappropriate amount of housework/child care/other forms of labour which makes them tired at school/college or are there other signs of neglect?**
- 7 Is the child frequently absent from school without sufficient justification?**
- 8 Has the child gone missing or is there a history of the child going missing? This could be an indicator of re-trafficking. Children can go missing from care – often within 24-48 hours of being placed – for fear of retribution against their family, or concerns about debt bondage or having been coerced into leaving by adults and subsequently re-trafficked or abducted.**
- 9 Does the child possess money or goods and can't explain how they came to have them?**
- 10 Is the child talking about being taken somewhere and they don't know where or why?**

† These indicators are based both on CTAC's experience in working on over 1,300 cases, as well as the UK government's guidance, *Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked, 2011*.