

## PRIVATE FOSTERING

A private fostering arrangement is a private agreement, lasting 28 days or more, for a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) to be cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative. The Local Authority has to be informed so that they can undertake a private fostering assessment to ensure the living arrangement is safe and appropriate for the child.

Failure by a private foster carer or parent to notify a Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement is an offence.

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

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. Many adults are not aware of their duty to notify the Local Authority, and traffickers will often seek to prevent the child coming to the attention of the authorities. It is therefore important that any professional who is aware of a private fostering arrangement notifies the Local Authority, so it can be assessed.

## MISSING

CTAC have dealt with many cases of children being brought to the UK on education trips, sports visas and cultural exchanges who do not arrive at their stated destination. The safety and welfare of children travelling for these purposes should always be considered. Similarly, unaccompanied children, family groups, and children travelling with unrelated adults sometimes do not arrive at the address stated on entry to the UK.

Children whose whereabouts cannot be established by professionals are extremely vulnerable. If the child cannot be located, it may be possible to trace them via the adult who applied for their visa, accompanied them to the UK or met them on arrival.

If you receive feedback that a child has not arrived at their stated destination, you should follow your internal procedures for missing children. This may require you to report the child missing to the police, so their whereabouts can be established and their safety and wellbeing verified.

## HOW CTAC CAN HELP

Multi-agency working and communication is very important in cases of child trafficking.

- 1 Delivering training and awareness-raising presentations nationally and internationally.**
- 2 Providing advice by telephone and email to professionals concerned that a child has been or is about to be trafficked to the UK.**
- 3 Coordinating multi-agency responses with a child protection focus where there are trafficking concerns for a child.**
- 4 Attending child protection meetings and producing child trafficking reports for courts.**
- 5 Providing support with referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care.**



**“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](https://nspcc.org.uk/ctac)**



**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

# Stop child trafficking and slavery in its tracks

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

ADVICE FOR IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS AND BORDER FORCE

**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.

Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the UK Border Agency to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in discharging its immigration, nationality and general customs functions.

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. They use different means to bring children and young people into the UK, such as obtaining valid travel documents stating that a child is visiting on a cultural exchange or by giving them documents stating they are over 18.

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.

## RISK INDICATORS – QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER<sup>†</sup>

- 1 Does the child have a valid passport, ID card or visa? Has the child been given a false or fraudulently obtained ID?**
- 2 Are there safeguarding concerns for a child being moved across borders?**
- 3 Is the child orphaned or separated from their parents/main carers? Establish if the accompanying adults are the child's parents or legal guardians.**
- 4 Does the accompanying adult have authority or parental consent to care for the child?**
- 5 Do you have concerns about the relationship between the adult and the child (eg can the adult prove that they are related? Does the adult insist on interpreting for the child or refuse to allow professionals to see the child alone?)**
- 6 Has the child arrived with an adult who is known to UKVI or police for multiple visa applications or for facilitation offences?**
- 7 Is the child known to children's services, education or health? Have the accompanying adults kept the child away from all services until they came to your attention?**
- 8 Are you concerned the child may be at risk of/ or being exploited, sexually, for labour, for criminal activity, in domestic servitude or forced marriage?**
- 9 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. Cross check the child's fingerprint and details on PNC, Hermes and UKVI database.**
- 10 Is the child known to youth offending services and are they a prolific offender? Have they committed offences in multiple locations across the UK?**
- 11 If the child is going to be living in the UK with unrelated adults or extended family, has the Local Authority been informed so a private fostering assessment can be completed?**

<sup>†</sup>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*.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD

Multi-agency working and communication is very important in cases of child trafficking.

- 1 Child trafficking is a form of child abuse. Discuss the case with the designated safeguarding/child protection lead in your agency.**
- 2 Do not raise your trafficking concerns directly with an accompanying adult.**
- 3 Speak with the child on their own and verify details of the responsible adult.**
- 4 Be mindful of issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and of spiritual beliefs being used negatively to control children (eg JuJu, witchcraft). Be sensitive when speaking to the child about these issues and ensure that these concerns are recorded and passed onto other agencies. They will be crucial factors to take into account when determining the appropriate safeguarding response for the child.**
- 5 Refer to local children's services clearly highlighting trafficking concerns and risks you have identified. Make the referral in writing and ask for acknowledgement and the named worker.**
- 6 If you receive feedback from the Local Authority or the police that the child cannot be located at the address provided on entry to the UK, follow your procedures for missing children.**
- 7 For an ongoing case, request details of assessments made by children's services and the police**
- 8 Ensure a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is made. If you require support or advice regarding this, contact CTAC.**
- 9 In cases of sexual exploitation and frequent missing episodes, give consideration to government guidance for child trafficking, sexual exploitation and children missing from local authority care.**
- 10 If you experience difficulties making a referral to the Local Authority or police, or you are unhappy with the response, contact CTAC to discuss the case further.**
- 11 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)**

## GUIDANCE FOR IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS BASED OVERSEAS AND BORDER FORCE

- 1 If a child is travelling on their own or with an adult with an unclear relationship and unclear reception arrangements in the UK, they should be brought to the attention of relevant children's services so that their safety and welfare can be assessed.**
- 2 The Local Authority should advise you of the outcome of your referral. If you do not receive feedback, and the child is permitted to travel, it is good practice to follow up to check that your referral has been received, and that the child has been located at their stated destination.**
- 3 For EU children, ascertain if the accompanying adults have a declaration letter clarifying where and with whom the child is due to stay, and the purpose and duration of their visit.**
- 4 If the child is due to live with unrelated adults or extended family, inform the adults that they have a duty to tell the Local Authority so a private fostering assessment can be undertaken. Ensure that you notify the relevant Local Authority of a child coming to live in their area in a private fostering arrangement.**
- 5 Check whether the child has been moved in and out of the UK, or around the UK without reasonable explanation.**
- 6 Refer to your internal child safeguarding procedures and contact your designated safeguarding lead to deal with any safeguarding concerns you have.**
- 7 Share your concerns and intelligence with the relevant authorities.**
- 8 If you have safeguarding concerns for a child being moved across a border and require further advice or support, contact CTAC. We can support you to liaise with relevant authorities in the UK.**