

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD

- 1 Consider using police powers of protection to either remove a child to a safe place or prevent the child's removal from a safe place, such as a hospital.
- 2 Remember, your perceived attitude towards a victim at the point of initial contact is crucial and can determine whether the victim decides to engage with any conversation, investigation or interview either at the time or later in the investigation.
- 3 If age-appropriate, explain to the child or young person who you are and what your role is. They come into contact with many professionals and can be confused by their different roles.
- 4 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 victim may make between the interpreter and known people in their country of origin.
- 5 It's very important that appropriate interpreters are used. They should be briefed prior to interview with background information and what you hope to achieve. It should be made clear that the tone of the interview is to be in accordance with guidance for the interview of a vulnerable and intimidated person.
- 6 If the child or young person is placed in Local Authority care, they may be under pressure from the trafficker to return. You should plan for the strong possibility that the child will go missing and ensure you have details that will enable the child to be quickly circulated as a vulnerable missing child who is at risk of further abuse.
- 7 Do not make promises that can't be kept, such as guaranteeing protection of family and friends in another country or within the UK.
- 8 Once the child or young person is protected, ensure a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is made. If you require support with this, contact CTAC.
- 9 Consider information that might be held by police in the child's country of origin, or countries they have travelled through. Speak to your international desk for background checks.

- 10 For support, information or advice, call the **Child Trafficking Advice Centre** on **0808 800 5000**, email ctac@nspcc.org.uk or visit nspcc.org.uk/ctac
- 11 For tactical advice regarding trafficking investigations, you can contact the **UK Human Trafficking Centre** by calling **0844 778 2406** or emailing UKHTC@nca.x.gsi.gov.

For further information on child protection legislation and for government guidance visit nspcc.org.uk/childtrafficking



“To reduce trafficking, they should focus on the adults who abuse young people – the traffickers who bring the children to this country.”

Sara[†], trafficked to the UK from Burundi

[†] 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 or go to nspcc.org.uk/ctac

Stop child trafficking and slavery in its tracks

The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre
0808 800 5000

ADVICE FOR POLICE



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

[†] 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 are 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.



“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[†], trafficked to the UK from Nigeria

[†] name changed to protect identity

TRAFFICKED CHILDREN’S CONTACT WITH POLICE

Police may come into contact with a trafficked child or young person in a variety of ways. For example, they may be a victim of sexual exploitation, fraudulent or forced marriage, or criminal exploitation. This could include cannabis cultivation in cannabis factories, entering the country with false documentation, pick pocketing, drug smuggling, drug dealing, producing or selling counterfeit goods.

Slavery or trafficking may be identified during a child protection investigation. Often victims are coerced or forced into crime by the traffickers to pay off debt bondage or through fear.

All children and young people who may have been trafficked should be referred to children’s services. Police should be vigilant – these children may have already been referred for other child protection or safeguarding concerns, possibly in other local authorities.

Many trafficked children and young people are not known to any agency and are kept hidden in places such as houses (for domestic servitude), brothels or restaurants. However this is not always the case. Some attend school and may be registered with a GP. Their traffickers often arrange for them to be registered using false documentation, which in some cases states that they are over 18. This can prevent professionals from recognising they are dealing with a child.

The victims are likely to have been deceived, lied to, beaten, sexually attacked and degraded. It is likely that they have suffered – along with other emotions – loss of dignity or control, disorientation, fear, shame and a lack of self-esteem. It’s a common tactic for the traffickers to threaten a victim’s friends and family in their home country.

When a child or young person who may have been trafficked comes to the attention of the police it is highly likely that the police will not be trusted and the trafficker will have groomed the child or young person to repeat a pre-planned script. Vulnerable and intimidated witness guidance should therefore be followed when conducting any type of interview.

[†] 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.

RISK INDICATORS – QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER[†]

If a child or young person has been brought into the UK or moved around the UK for the purpose of exploitation, they are a victim of child trafficking.

- 1 Does the child have a valid passport, ID card or visa? Has the child been given a false or fraudulently obtained ID?**
- 2 Establish if the accompanying adults are the child’s parents or legal guardians. Do they have authority or consent to care for the child?**
- 3 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?)**
- 4 Has the child been found in a brothel or sauna? Do they have symptoms such as sexually transmitted infections, signs of a sexual or physical assault, or are they pregnant?**
- 5 Has the child previously been reported missing? 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 child’s fingerprints and details on PNC, Hermes and UKVI database.**
- 6 Has an unrelated or new child been discovered at an address and their presence cannot be satisfactorily explained?**
- 7 Is the child involved in criminal activity such as begging, pickpocketing, working in a cannabis factory, catering, nail bars, caring for children, and cleaning. Have offences been committed across the UK without apparent means or reason to travel?**
- 8 Does the child possess money or goods and is unable to explain how they came to have them?**
- 9 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.**