

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD

- 1 Follow your child protection procedures if you are concerned about a child who may have been trafficked. For further information on this and for government guidance visit nspcc.org.uk/childtrafficking
- 2 Do not raise your trafficking concerns directly with an accompanying adult.
- 3 Try to find out more about the child and speak with them on their own, with an interpreter if required.
- 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 child may make between the interpreter and known people in their country of origin.
- 5 If age-appropriate, explain to the child or young person who you are and what your role is. Children come into contact with many professionals and can be confused by the different roles.
- 6 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.
- 7 Liaise with relevant agencies to establish who the adults are in the child's life, such as making checks with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to see who is claiming benefits for the child.
- 8 As trafficking involves movement, make sure you link with agencies across borders and in other countries. This should include the child's country of origin and any others that you know they have passed through before coming to the UK.
- 9 Consider that the child may be known to services in other areas of the country. Do not assume that a child found on a motorway or in a lorry is necessarily new to the UK. Consider that they may have been trafficked around the UK, or out and back in to the UK. The child may have been reported missing from another Local Authority, or even another country.
- 10 Put safeguards in place to address the risk of the child going missing or being trafficked again. If the child goes missing, ensure they are initially circulated by police as either high or medium risk missing. Guidance is clear that no child under the age of 18 should be circulated as low risk. Avoid using terminology like "absconder" as it's possible that the child may have been coerced into leaving, or may even have been abducted.
- 11 Make a thorough assessment of risk and safety if considering returning the child to any adult claiming to be their parent/carer/family member. If considering repatriation, ensure assessments are completed both in the UK and in the child's country of origin (by liaising with social services/police in the relevant country). Consider the likelihood of the child being moved back to the UK (or elsewhere) if repatriated, and the safeguards and plans that can be put in place to prevent this.
- 12 Ensure that the child's immigration status is regularised (if the child is not a European Union national). You may need to support them to seek advice from an immigration solicitor.
- 13 Make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – this is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. A referral into the NRM and the subsequent decisions do not replace or supersede established child protection processes, which should continue in tandem.
- 14 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

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
SOCIAL WORKERS



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'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 young people 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

IDENTIFYING TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Adults who traffic children may abuse and neglect a child in a number of ways. Some children are used as domestic servants, forced to do excessive levels of household chores and/or childcare. Others may be given multiple identities and passed between different households to enable adults to claim benefits. Some children may be groomed to beg or commit petty street crimes such as pickpocketing and theft.

In such situations, children and young people are also vulnerable to sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

Identification can often be hard given the variety of circumstances that trafficked children may be living in. Some trafficked children are not known to any professional agency and are kept hidden by their traffickers in places such as houses, brothels, restaurants, or properties used to cultivate cannabis.

Others may be registered with a GP and a school or college, with the exploitation occurring out of school hours.

Some trafficked children may appear happy and to have a good relationship with their carers.

Social workers may come into contact with a trafficked child or young person in a variety of ways. They may be referred as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child; they may be referred as a result of concerns that appear unrelated to trafficking; or a social worker may become aware of other children living in a home during visits to families.

RISK INDICATORS – QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER[†]

- 1 Are there safeguarding concerns for a child being moved across borders?**
- 2 Is the child orphaned or separated from their parents/main carers? Establish if the accompanying adults are the child's parents or legal guardians.**
- 3 Does the accompanying adult have authority or parental consent to care for the child?**
- 4 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?) Contact CTAC for advice on how to verify relationships or confirm documentation is genuine if you have concerns.

- 5 Does the child have a valid passport, ID card or visa? Has the child been given a false or fraudulently obtained ID?**
- 6 If the child is living with unrelated adults or extended family, was the Local Authority informed at the earliest opportunity so a private fostering assessment could 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.**
- 7 Have the accompanying adults kept the child away from universal services (eg. education, health) until they came to your attention?**
- 8 Has the child been referred to the local authority following an arrest for illegal entry, use of false documents or cannabis cultivation? Or is the child a prolific offender?**
- 9 Does the child possess money or goods and can't explain how they came to have them?**
- 10 Does the child have physical symptoms, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), signs of a sexual or physical assault, or is pregnant?**
- 11 Is the child homeless?**
- 12 Is the child an unrelated or new child discovered at an address and their presence cannot be satisfactorily explained?**
- 13 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.**
- 14 Has the child arrived with an adult who is known to immigration for multiple visa applications or for the illegal facilitation of a child?**

[†] 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.