

MODERN SLAVERY

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Risk Factors and Vulnerable Circumstances
3. Indicators
4. Protection and Action to be Taken
5. Issues and Challenges
6. Further Information

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern slavery is a form of organised crime in which individuals including children and young people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. Traffickers and slave drivers' trick, force and/or persuade children and parents to let them leave their homes. Grooming methods are used to gain the trust of a child and their parents, e.g. the promise of a better life or education, which results in a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Child trafficking or child modern slavery is identified as child abuse which requires a child protection response (**see Section 4, Protection and Action to be taken**). It is an abuse of human rights, and all children, irrespective of their immigration status, are entitled to protection under the law.

Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. See also [Link - SCP Trafficked Children](#). The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (applicable mostly in England and Wales [1] includes two substantive offences i) human trafficking, and ii) slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Children are not considered able to give 'informed consent' to their own exploitation (including criminal exploitation), so it is not necessary to consider the means used for the exploitation - whether they were forced, coerced or deceived, i.e. a child's consent to being trafficked is irrelevant and it is not necessary to prove coercion or any other inducement.

Boys and girls of all ages are affected and can be trafficked into, within ('internal trafficking'), and out of the UK for many reasons and all forms of exploitation - e.g. sex trafficking - children can be groomed and sexually abused before being taken to other towns and cities where the sexual exploitation continues. Victims are forced into sexual acts for money, food or a place to stay. Criminal exploitation can involve young people as drug carriers, begging and pickpocketing. Debt bondage (forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to), organ harvesting, and benefit fraud are other types of modern slavery. Other forms of slavery involve children who are forced to work, criminally exploited and forced into domestic servitude. Victims have been found in brothels or saunas, farms, in factories, nail bars, car washes, hotels and restaurants and commonly are exploited in cannabis cultivation.

Children and young people may be exploited by parents, carers or family members. Often the child or young person will not realise that family members are involved in the exploitation.

Victims often face more than one type of abuse and slavery, for example they may be sold to another trafficker and then forced into another form of exploitation.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (applicable mostly in England and Wales [1]) provides two civil prevention orders - the Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders (STPO) and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order (STRO) and provision for child trafficking advocates.

Some young people may not be victims of human trafficking but are still victims of modern slavery. Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour may also be present in trafficking cases; however, not every young

person who is exploited through forced labour has been trafficked. In **all** cases, protection and support is available through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process (in England and Wales [2]). The NRM is a 'victim identification and support process' for all the different agencies that may be involved (e.g. the police, Home Office, including Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, local authorities and voluntary organisations). **See Section 4 Referring a Potential Victim of Modern Slavery to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).**

2. RISK FACTORS AND VULNERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

Victims may not always be recognised by those who come into contact with them. They may be unwilling to come forward to agencies not seeing themselves as victims or fearing further reprisals from their abusers. Many victims are 'held in plain sight' – having the appearance of living in society but in fact having little or no freedom. It is also important to be aware that 'Human beings who are treated as a commodity are rarely 'used' for a single purpose. The offending associated with them can include sham marriages; identity fraud; false benefits claims; rape; false imprisonment; violence; and a range of other crimes.

Vulnerable circumstances include:

- Poverty, limited opportunities at home, low levels of education, and the effects of war are some of the key drivers that contribute to trafficking of victims.
- Poor and displaced families may hand over care of their children to traffickers who promise to provide them with a source of income, education or skills training, but ultimately exploit them.
- Wanting to help their families back at home or seeking better futures.
- Escaping familial situations of harm and abuse, homelessness or being orphaned.
- A lack of equal opportunities, discrimination or marginalisation and social customs such as children being expected to respect and follow the adult in charge. Faith abuse and other specific practices may be used to control the child. A demand for cheap or free labour or a workforce who can be easily controlled and forced into criminal activity.
- At risk of child criminal exploitation.
- Unaccompanied, internally displaced children.
- Some children may say they are unaccompanied when claiming asylum - the trafficker may have told the child that in doing so they will be granted permission to stay in the UK and be entitled to claim welfare benefits.
- Former victims of modern slavery or trafficking.
- Trafficked children have an increased risk of going missing from care in the UK, with some re-joining those who exploited them in the first place.

[See Link - Child Criminal Exploitation Guidance](#)

3. INDICATORS

Signs that a child/young person has been trafficked may not be obvious, or children may show signs of multiple forms of abuse and neglect. Spotting the potential signs of child slavery/trafficking in referrals and children you work with can include:

- The child seeming like a willing participant in their exploitation, e.g. involvement in lucrative criminal activity - however this does not mean they have benefitted from the proceeds.
- A reluctance to seek help - victims may be wary of the authorities for many reasons such as not knowing who to trust or a fear of deportation or concern regarding their immigration status and may avoid giving details of accommodation or personal details.
- An unwillingness to disclose details of their experience due to being in a situation of dependency.
- Brought or moved from another country.
- An unrelated or new child discovered at an address.
- Discrepancies in the information victims have provided due to traffickers forcing them to provide incorrect stories.

- Unsatisfactory living conditions - may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Missing - from care, home or school - including a pattern of registration and de-registration from different schools.
- Children may be found in brothels and saunas
- Spending a lot of time doing household chores.
- May be working in catering, nail bars, caring for children and cleaning.
- Limited English or knowledge of their local area in which they live.
- Rarely leaving their home, with no freedom of movement and no time for playing.
- Orphaned or living apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care.
- False documentation, no passport or identification documents.
- Few or no personal effects - few personal possessions and tend to wear the same clothing.
- No evidence of parental permission for the child to travel to the UK or stay with the adult.
- Little or no evidence of any pre-existing relationship with the adult or even an absence of any knowledge of the accompanying adult.
- Significantly older partner.
- Underage marriage.

Psychological indicators - suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder which may include symptoms of hostility, aggression and difficulty with recalling episodes and concentrating. Depression/self-harm and/or suicidal feelings; an attitude of self-blame, shame and extensive loss of control; drug and or/alcohol use.

Physical Appearance - Victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn.

Sexual health indicators - sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy; injuries of a sexual nature and /or gynaecological symptoms.

Physical illnesses - including work-related injuries through poor health and safety measures, or injuries apparently as a result of assault or controlling measures. There may be physical indications of working (e.g. overly tired in school or indications of manual labour).

4. PROTECTION AND ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Modern slavery is child abuse, and any potential victim of child trafficking or slavery, servitude, or forced or compulsory labour should immediately be referred to Children's Services in the area, as they may be suffering significant harm - see [Link - SCP Referrals Procedure](#).

Once a potential victim has been identified, practitioners should inform them of their right to protection, support, and assistance in any criminal proceedings against offenders.

Practitioners should meet any urgent health needs and arrange emergency medical treatment if appropriate.

Referring a Potential Victim of Modern Slavery to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

Referrals to the NRM for consideration by the competent authority should be made by the local authority for all potential child victims of trafficking and modern slavery, as they may be entitled to further support - victims can be of any nationality, and may include British national children, such as those trafficked for child sexual exploitation or those trafficked as drug carriers internally in the UK. The NRM does not supersede child protection procedures, so existing safeguarding processes should still be followed in tandem with the notifications to the NRM. See also: [Link - How to Report a Victim of Modern Slavery factsheet](#).

There is no minimum requirement for justifying a referral into the NRM and consent is not required for children. Communicate honestly with the child about your concerns and reasons for referring them into the NRM.

To complete and see where to send the forms, and the associated guidance, visit [Link - Modern Slavery Victims: Referral and Assessment Forms.](#)

The Duty to Notify - Local authorities have a duty to notify the Home Office about any potential victims of Modern Slavery. For children, completing the NRM form is sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

If the child or anyone connected to them is in immediate danger the police should be contacted as normal.

Practitioners must arrange safe accommodation for the potential victim.

Where there is reason to believe a victim could be a child, the individual must be given the benefit of the doubt and treated as a child until an assessment is carried out. An age assessment should only be carried out if appropriate to do so and should not cause a delay in referring into the NRM.

Practitioners must always ensure that a victim-centred approach to tackling all types of trafficking and modern slavery is taken. This can be achieved by the following:

- Dealing with the child sensitively to avoid them being alarmed or shamed - building trust, as victims commonly feel fear towards the authorities.
- Keeping in mind the child's:
 - Added vulnerability.
 - Developmental stage.
 - Possible grooming by the perpetrator.

It is important that practitioners make careful notes about what is disclosed, as a child's credibility can be challenged if the child is subject to immigration control on the basis of their disclosure being made in instalments. This will support the child and help others understand the process of disclosure.

When questioning a potential victim, initially observe non-verbal communication and body language between the victim and their perpetrator.

It is important to consider the potential victim's safety and that of their loved ones. Confidentiality and careful handling of personal information is imperative to ensure the child's safety. Practitioners must not disclose to anyone not directly involved in the case, any details that may compromise their safety.

The lead agency for any Modern Slavery Human Trafficking investigation will be the police.

For further advice and support follow the [link - Child Trafficking Advice Centre \(CTAC\)](#) provides free guidance to professionals concerned that a child or young person is a victim of modern slavery.

5. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Children who are trafficked outside of the UK may intrinsically be linked to the immigration system. Practitioners should be aware of the risk of harm to the child if the adult is not able to confirm their immigration status, to avoid a potential child trafficking situation being misconstrued as an 'immigration matter' and thus preventing victims from being recognised. It is important that plans for the child's long term safety are linked to their immigration status, in order to fully understand the child's real identity and the reasons for not having identification documents or false documentation.

Modern slavery is often hidden in nature, and goes unnoticed in our communities, with under-reporting a major concern. Practitioners have the challenge of reaching out to a vulnerable and an 'invisible' set of children. As well as assessing the significant harm to the child, there will need to be consideration for other key areas such as organised crime, working with UK Visas and Immigration, foreign authorities and the National Crime Agency.

An e-learning course on Modern Slavery is available via [The SCP website: Trafficking, Exploitation and Modern Slavery Course.](#)

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) - helpline for professionals dealing with potential victims of modern slavery

Modern Slavery Helpline

How to Report Modern Slavery (Home Office, December 2016)

National Referral Mechanism: Guidance for Child First Responders

Victims of Modern Slavery - Frontline Staff Guidance Version 3 (Home Office UK Visas and Immigration, March 2016)

Home Office Circular - Modern Slavery Act 2015

College of Policing - Modern Slavery

National Crime Agency: Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern Slavery: Duty to Notify Factsheets (GOV.UK, October 2016)

Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2017)

NSPCC - Are You a Child Who Has Come to the UK from Another Country?

Unseen

Modern Slavery Act 2017: Recent developments - Briefing Paper, October 2017

Modern slavery training (GOV.UK)

Stolen Freedom: the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking

YJLC Guide to Modern Slavery and County Lines