

A child has been trafficked if he or she has been moved within a country, town or city, or across borders whether by force or not, with the purpose of exploiting the child. This includes for: sexual exploitation, forced marriage, benefit fraud, forced labour, domestic servitude (e.g. cleaning, childcare, cooking) and criminal activity (e.g. begging, transporting drugs or growing cannabis).

Children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, as well as from one part of the UK to another and have been coerced, deceived or forced into the control of others who seek to profit from their exploitation and suffering.

Why is it Important?

In 2000, trafficking became enshrined in international law for the first time through the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000).

Supporting this there is a wide range of UK legislation including:

- Children Act 1989 - Sections 47, 67 (Private Fostering) and Children Act 2004
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 - covers trafficking into, out of, or within the UK for any form of sexual offence. It also introduced new offences of abuse of children through prostitution and pornography

Identifying Trafficked children

Identification of trafficked children may be difficult, as they might not show obvious signs of distress or abuse. Some children are unaware that they have been trafficked, while others may actively participate in hiding that they have been trafficked. Possible indicators include:

- At port of entry, the child has: entered the country illegally; has no passport or means of identification or has false documentation; is accompanied by an adult who is not the parent; has a prepared story; has a mobile phone, but no money; is unable to confirm the name and address of the person meeting them on arrival; is unable or is reluctant to give details of accommodation or other personal details.
- Whilst resident in the UK, the child: does not appear to have money, but does have a mobile phone; has a history with gaps and frequent/ unexplained moves or often goes missing; is being cared for by adult(s) who are not their parents; is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address; has not been registered with or attended a GP practice; has not been enrolled in school; appears to be undertaking excessive housework chores, has limited movement.
- For children internally trafficked in the UK, indicators may include: physical symptoms indicating physical or sexual assault; the child persistently going missing; missing for long periods; returning looking well cared for, despite having no known base; the child possessing large amounts of money; acquiring expensive clothes/ mobile phones without plausible explanation; low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour; truancy and disengagement with education.

How do we do it?

Modern slavery and trafficking are child abuse, and any potential victim of child trafficking or slavery, servitude, or forced or compulsory labour should immediately be referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). In principle, all agencies and organisations who find themselves with grounds for concern that a person may be a victim of modern slavery have a responsibility for identifying the person as a possible victim and putting them in touch with the MASH.



One Minute Guide Child Trafficking



Only organisations classed as first responders can refer a potential victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in non-pilot cases. Anyone outside the NRM who wishes to raise modern slavery concerns can do so through a first responder. For children, a formal referral to the NRM is made by a first responder. First responders are:

Any "first responder" identifying a potential victim of modern slavery must refer them to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for consideration by the competent authority. The NRM does not supersede Child Protection procedures, so existing safeguarding processes should still be followed in tandem with the notifications to the NRM. A 'first responder organisation' is an authority that is authorised to refer a potential victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism; currently in Portsmouth these include:

- Children Social Care
- Health and Social Care Trusts (HSC Trusts)
- Police
- Barnardo's
- Salvation Army

Practitioners should also be aware that children who are at risk of serious harm through child sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation are often 'hidden' and may be also missing from education, and/ or care or home.

For more information:

Please refer to the One Minute Guide on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for children

National referral mechanism guidance can be accessed [here](#)

You can access the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons via [this link](#)

[Private Fostering](#)

Visit the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership regarding Child Trafficking <https://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk/professionals/trafficking/>

[Working Together 2018](#)

[Modern slavery awareness and victim identification guidance \(2017\)](#)

Statutory guidance for the care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery (November 2017) can be accessed [here](#)