

Two Page Guide

Child trafficking

What does child trafficking mean?

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 sexual exploitation, forced labour such as domestic servitude and forced criminality such as begging, drug supply or cannabis cultivation. Any form of trafficking children is abuse. Children are coerced, deceived or forced into the control of others who seek to profit from their exploitation and suffering.

Trafficking does not just occur across borders and can refer to children being moved within or between towns and cities by being tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes. Children do not have to have been physically moved by an offender; they may have travelled independently or on foot but under instruction from the abuser or having been provided with a location. Internal trafficking can include; transporting the victims, arranging the transport, coercing the victim to travel to the destination, receiving the victim at the destination or harbouring.

What does the law say about it?

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).

There is a wide range of UK legislation and guidance relevant to trafficked and exploited children including (but not exclusively):

- Children Act 1989 -Sections 47, 67 (Private Fostering) and Children Act 2004
- 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;
- The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants...) Act 2004 -includes the offence of 'trafficking for exploitation' which covers trafficking for forced labour and the removal of organs;
- UK Borders Act 2007 -requires the Secretary of State to publish a Code of Practice, 'Keeping Children Safe from Harm';
- The UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking (2007);
- Section 71 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 created the offences of holding another person in slavery or servitude or requiring them to perform forced or compulsory labour without the need to prove trafficking;
- Human trafficking: the government's strategy (2011) sets out the UK government's plans to tackle human trafficking (adults and children) and strengthen support for victims.

Identifying trafficked children

Identification of trafficked children and young people 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.

What should practitioners do?

All practitioners should make themselves aware of the indicators of child trafficking. Any practitioner who believes that a child or young person is being trafficked or is at risk of this should contact the local [MASH](#). MASH in partnership with the police, may undertake a Section 47 Enquiry (safeguarding). 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 also be missing from education, and/ or care or home.

Key contacts and for more information?

Multi-agency safeguarding hub 01926 414144 (out of hours tel: 01926 886 922)

National Crime Agency website [Human Trafficking](#) includes information about the Human Trafficking Centre

[NSPCC Child Trafficking advice centre](#) 0800 107 7057

UK Human Traffic Centre –0844 778 2406; email: UKHTC@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk

[Home Office webpages](#) about human trafficking and the national referral mechanism—a victim identification and support process

[West Midlands Regional online procedures](#)—Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked

[Home Office Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit - Disruption tactics](#) for those working to safeguard children and young people under the age of 18 from sexual and criminal exploitation.

[Bedfordshire University: The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking](#), the only research centre in Europe exclusively focusing on child sexual exploitation and trafficking.