

Two Page Guide

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is defined within the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) and categorises offences of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Modern slavery forces someone into the position of exploitation. This may involve: forced labour (in agriculture, construction, hospitality etc.), domestic servitude, [sham marriage](#) (not a genuine marriage, one party seeks immigration advantage), removal, begging, drug cultivation, forced marriage (guide 3), illegal adoption, the prostitution of adults, child sexual exploitation and organ harvesting (trade of human organ or other tissue for means of transplantation).

Modern slavery and human trafficking are linked with people smuggling but there are fundamental differences: modern slavery and human trafficking involves the threat of or use of force, coercion or deception against a victim, and people smuggling involves migrants being helped with entry into a State through illegal means.

Signs that someone is a victim of modern slavery include but not exclusively: a lack of identity documents or passport; reluctance to give an address and explain how they came to be here; lack of basic necessities; little or no money; language barriers; living in insecure or overcrowded accommodation; showing signs of trauma or mental ill health; acting as if they were instructed or coached by someone else; others speaking on their behalf when spoken to directly, limited social interaction or contact with people outside their immediate environment and / or limited freedom of movement. A child or adult has been trafficked if he or she has been moved within a country, town or city, or across borders - whether by force or not, by someone whose intention is to exploit them for their own profit. Any form of child trafficking ([guide 13](#)) is abuse and requires a safeguarding response. The trafficking of children involves coercion, deception or exploitation by others even when a child appears to be willingly engaged in an act or a situation. Wherever a child has been recruited, transported or transferred for the purpose of exploitation, they should be considered to be a victim of trafficking, this includes whether or not they have been forced, deceived or the child/young person believes that they are traveling willingly from one location to another, for example, where a child takes a bus or walks from one location to another for the purpose of exploitation. Children cannot consent to their own exploitation.

Who are first responders?

The local authority is a [First Responder](#), along with the police, youth justice, probation, [UK Visa and Immigration](#), the [Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit](#) and the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#). First responders have a responsibility to identify potential victims and refer cases to the NRM.

What is the National Referral Mechanism and what does the law say?

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was introduced in 2009 to meet the UK's obligations under the [Council of European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(2012\)](#). At the core of every country's NRM is the process of locating and identifying 'potential victims of trafficking'. It is available to all victims of modern slavery in England and Wales.

The NRM is a victim identification and support process. It is designed to enable agencies including the police, UK Border Agency, local authorities, and non-governmental organisations - to co-operate, to share information about potential child and adult modern slavery victims and facilitate their access to advice, accommodation and support.

The NRM also enables the National Crime Agency, (NCA) and the [Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit \(MSHTU\)](#) to collate national data about the scope and nature of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. In 2017, the NCA reported a 35% increase (5,145) from 2016 in the number of potential victims. The MSHTU provides a central point of expertise and coordination for the UK's response to modern slavery and the trafficking of human beings.

What should practitioners do?

All practitioners who are concerned that a child or adult may be a possible victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, have a responsibility for identifying the person as such and putting them in touch with the responsible authorities and support providers. In Warwickshire this means that where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child to be a victim of Modern Slavery and trafficking offences:

For children or young people up to age 17 – practitioners should report to the police (phone 101 or in an emergency 999) in order for them to investigate the offences committed (i.e. Modern Slavery and trafficking offences)

A referral should be made to the local [MASH](#) as trafficking and exploitation means a child could be at risk of or experienced [significant harm](#) and Child Protection processes need to be followed. If trafficking is known or suspected, a referral to National Referral Mechanism must be made by a First responder. Ideally this should include information gathered from a range of agencies who have had contact with the child.

For adults aged 18 and over – the practitioner should seek the consent of the potential victim for a referral to the NRM. However, the practitioner should always report their concerns to the police on 101 or 999, depending on the urgency of the situation. A discussion again should determine who will complete the NRM form for potential adult victims of modern slavery. If an adult does not give consent for an NRM referral, the practitioner should instead ensure that an MS1 Duty to Notify form is completed. This does not name the person of concern but requires the practitioner to provide as much other detail as possible.

For further information about the NRM, please see the [Duty to notify guidance](#).

For more information The NRM forms and more information are available from the government's [Modern Slavery webpages](#). There is also a [webpage and helpline](#) tel: 08000 121700. You can also read the [National Referral Mechanism guidance](#) for first responders.