



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Children and Young People – Trafficking

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Trafficking

Child trafficking into and within the UK has become an issue of considerable concern to all professionals with responsibility for safeguarding children.

National Crime Agency statistics since April 2014 show a significant increasing trend in the numbers of trafficked children being identified and referred. 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.

It is essential that professionals working across social care, education, Health, immigration and law enforcement develop an awareness of this activity and an ability to identify trafficked children and to safeguard appropriately.

Trafficking of children is defined as:

Act: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and/or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

Means: threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the [abuse](#) of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation

Purpose: Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Trafficking does not just occur across borders and can refer to children being moved within or between towns and cities. 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.

Children can be trafficked for:

- [child sexual exploitation](#)
- criminal activity, including:
 - cannabis cultivation
 - street crime - such as pickpocketing, begging and bag theft



- moving drugs
- benefit fraud
- immigration fraud
- selling pirated goods, such as DVDs
- domestic servitude, including:
 - cleaning
 - childcare
 - cooking
- forced labour, including working in:
 - restaurants
 - nail bars
 - factories
 - agriculture
- illegal adoption
- unreported private fostering arrangements (for any exploitative purpose)
- To seek asylum

This list is not exhaustive and children who are trafficked are often exploited in more than one way. **For this reason, all agencies should remain vigilant.**

Accompanied children

There are many legitimate reasons why children are brought to the UK, such as economic migration with their family, education, re-joining their family or fleeing a war-torn country. Some children will have travelled with their parents or carers.

Unaccompanied children

More is known about groups of unaccompanied children as they often come to the notice of the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). Unaccompanied children may come to the UK seeking asylum (unaccompanied asylum seeking children – UASC), or they may be here to attend school or join their family. A child may be the subject of a private fostering arrangement.

If the child is unaccompanied and not travelling to his or her customary care giver, or if there are some concerns over the legitimacy or suitability of the proposed arrangement for the child's care in the UK, they should be referred to local authority children's social care services as soon as possible.

Some groups of children are instructed by their traffickers to avoid contact with authorities. In other cases, the traffickers insist that the child applies for asylum as



this gives the child a legitimate right to remain in the UK. **Be aware that some adults will present as a child for this reason.**

Actions to be taken:

- Any concerns should be reported to the Local Authority Children's Social Care in the area that the Child is residing at.
- All cases of trafficked children should be referred to the [National Referral Mechanism](#). Specific public authorities have a 'duty to notify' the Secretary of State of any person identified in England and Wales as a suspected victim of human trafficking or slavery. This **requirement applies to the Police, Local Authorities, [the National Crime Agency](#) and the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#).**

Further information on Trafficking and responding to concerns can also be found in the Regional Child Protection Procedures for the West Midlands by following this link:

[2.1 Children affected by Exploitation and Trafficking \(including Gangs\) | West Midlands Safeguarding Children Group \(procedures.org.uk\)](#)