

Child Trafficking and modern-day slavery snapshot 2018

What is Child trafficking ?

Child trafficking is defined as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt” of a child for the purpose of exploitation. The definition of child trafficking differs from that of adults, which requires an additional element to be present – the ‘means’ of trafficking. The means element refers to the “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” . Essentially, child trafficking is child abuse and a human rights violation,

Recent Trends

There are currently no accurate figures of how many child victims of trafficking there are in the UK. However, the Government estimates that there are 13,000 victims of modern slavery nationally, of which around a third (more than 4,000) are believed to be children.

In 2017, there were 2,118 children referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is the current system for identifying victims of trafficking and modern slavery. Children comprised nearly half (41%) of the total number of suspected trafficking victims in 2017, and the number of children suspected of trafficking rose by a staggering 66% compared to the previous year. This shows that awareness of the issue is increasing, but we are aware that the true number of child victims of trafficking is most likely substantially higher. This indicates that significant barriers remain and continue to impede our ability to identify, refer, and support these children

Common types of exploitation

Of the children referred into the NRM in 2017, the most common exploitation types recorded were labour exploitation (48%) and sexual exploitation (26%), followed by unknown exploitation (20%) and domestic servitude (6%).

Keeping safe online

Whilst child trafficking was initially viewed as predominantly a crime and immigration issue in the UK, independent from child sexual exploitation (CSE) and other internal trafficking issues, there is increasing understanding that child victims of trafficking are often exploited in multiple, overlapping ways.

One issue that has received increasing recognition is child criminal exploitation (CCE) in the form of ‘county lines’ drug running, where young people may be exploited to facilitate the transportation and sale of drugs from major cities into smaller towns and rural areas. A 2017 NCA report found that 65% of police forces in

the UK reported county lines activity linked to exploitation of children, with 42% of forces specifically reporting children 'running' (moving drugs/money) on behalf of drug lines.¹² Many of these children are exploited, but they are still not recognised as victims and continue to be criminalised with limited recognition of their safeguarding needs

Signs

Signs that a child has been trafficked may not be obvious but you might notice unusual behaviour or events. These include a child who:

- spends a lot of time doing household chores
- rarely leaves their house, has no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- is orphaned or living apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care
- lives in substandard accommodation
- isn't sure which country, city or town they're in
- is unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- might not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- has no documents or has falsified documents
- has no access to their parents or guardians
- is seen in inappropriate places such as brothels or factories
- possesses unaccounted for money or goods
- is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings, required to earn a minimum amount of money every day or pay off an exorbitant debt
- has injuries from workplace accidents
- gives a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children.

What can I do as a tutor/trainer assessor?

As a professional working with young people at FIT UK, you may have opportunities to identify issues early so it is important to familiarise yourself with the signs that a young person is being exploited and to share this information by completing the safeguarding disclosure form and alerting your safeguarding lead. Other steps you can take to help protect young people include:

- Staying alert to changes in behaviour
- Ensuring you know who the safeguarding lead is and that you are aware of the safeguarding disclosure process to follow if you have concerns about a young person.
- Visit websites such as the NSPCC's [Child Trafficking Advice Centre](#). Read their factsheet on the [National Referral Mechanism](#) to find out more.

