

Human Trafficking and Exploitation

The number of people trafficked for slavery or other exploitation in the UK has risen sharply to more than 2,700, (National Crime Agency). The rise often includes people lured to the country after meeting people via online dating or job recruitment sites. Romania remains the most likely country of origin for victims, followed by Poland and the UK. Trafficking does not have to involve crossing international borders. Adults may be trafficked and or exploited for the sex trade, domestic servitude or sweat shop labour or other reasons.

Loss of freedom is a defining feature of trafficking. Trafficked victims are often not allowed to leave the premises where they are held or if they do, they are accompanied by a trafficker. Victims suffer frequent and severe abuse, both physical and psychological. Violence and physical harm are the hallmarks of trafficked women, in particular.

There are two ways a child may enter the UK; either accompanied by adult/s or as unaccompanied minors. Most children are trafficked for financial gain. This can take the form of payment from or to the child's parents and, in most cases, the trafficker also receives payment from those wanting to exploit the child once in the UK. Some trafficking is by organised gangs, in other cases individual adults or agents traffic children to the UK for their own personal gain. Children may be used for a number of reasons. Younger children are sometimes trafficked for the purposes of adoption outside of their country of origin. This can include payment, coercion or the deception of birth parents into relinquishing a child as well as abducting children. Teenagers are often trafficked for domestic servitude or sexual exploitation. Younger children can be trafficked for benefit fraud or for sweatshop or decoys for drug dealing. Some children may be brought into the UK illegally by family members in order to give a child a better life.

As has been highlighted in the press in a number of English towns, such as Rotherham, Oxford and Bristol, there is a very serious problem of vulnerable adolescents, particularly children in care, being targeted for sexual exploitation by organised criminal gangs of men. Immediate contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is imperative if it is suspected that a young person may be in such a situation. They are often children who are hard to reach because they no longer trust adults.

If you are concerned about any child or adult please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers or Kent Police.

Risk factors which could indicate that a child may have been trafficked to the UK and/or exploited within the UK

- Has entered the country illegally.
- Has no passport or other means of identification.
- Has false documentation.
- Is unable to confirm the name and address of the person meeting them on arrival.
- Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone.
- Possesses money and goods not accounted for.
- Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement/temporary accommodation.
- Is driven around by an older male or 'boyfriend'.

- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk.
- Shows signs of sexual behaviour or language.
- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease.
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves.
- Has gone missing from local authority care.
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day.
- Works in various locations.
- Has limited freedom of movement.
- Appears to be missing for periods.
- Is known to beg for money.
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents. The quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good.
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice.
- Has not been enrolled in school.
- Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, e.g. for travel costs, before having control over own earnings.
- Is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings by another person.
- Is excessively afraid of being deported.
- Has had their journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family.

Many of these factors are equally applicable to adults who are being exploited.

Relevant links to NSPCC and Kent Safeguarding Children websites:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/research-and-resources/>

<http://www.kscb.org.uk/professionals/trafficking.aspx>