# Risk and identification

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Written by College of Policing
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There is no definitive profile of a person who is potentially at risk of being enslaved. Victims can be poor, rich, children, adults, male, female, and of diverse nationalities, cultures, religions and sexual orientation. Often, victims of modern slavery may not appear to be vulnerable, or believe themselves to be a victim, but it is likely that they are. It is crucial that the person making **first contact** with a potential victim is aware of and can identify the **indicators of modern slavery**, and that they take immediate action to safeguard the potential victim and protect their welfare.

For further information see:

- **Home Office: Victims of modern slavery – Competent authority guidance, version 3.0**
- **APP Child sexual exploitation, Risk factors**
- **ILO C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention**

# Victim profile

According to professional expertise, individuals are considered to be at greater risk of becoming a modern slavery victim if they meet the criteria below.

## Social

They:

- are vulnerable, for example, are homeless, are hitchhiking, have addictions, have limited education, have a disability, experience mental ill health, have a learning difficulty, are missing, are in the social care system, are missing from care, lack family support, or have a weak or absent social network
- come from a country or culture where the buying and selling of people is not prohibited
- come from a country or culture where witchcraft, for example, juju, is practised

- have limited or no knowledge of modern slavery, making them vulnerable to being deceived
- are in a foreign country and cannot communicate in the language of that country
- have debts in their home country or are managed into debt by perpetrators as a result of their illegal migration
- have previously been incarcerated in their home (or third) country, resulting in isolation and desperation for belonging

## Political/legal

They:

- live in a state of persecution or conflict and seek to flee
- live in a country with a weak judicial system where there is likely to be corruption, and are inadequately protected by the law
- hold illegal identification documents, or none at all
- have an outstanding arrest warrant for minor criminal offences, for example, failure to pay child maintenance

## Economic

They:

- live in a state of poverty or unemployment and are desperate for opportunities to work and earn money
- have limited employment or promotion opportunities and are seeking better prospects elsewhere
- want a better education than is being offered to them

# Control methods

Perpetrators use the control methods shown below to engage or coerce vulnerable individuals, who often fit the victim profile, in exploitative work or into becoming perpetrators:

## Abuse

For example:

- abducting or kidnapping victims

- committing verbal, physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse against the victim, their family or someone they know, in private or in public
- charging unreasonable fines
- using threats and intimidation
- withdrawing basic provisions, for example, food, accommodation, sanitation, mobility
- increasing workload

## Creating dependency

For example:

- plying vulnerable victims with free alcohol and/or drugs
- being the only source for free food and accommodation
- guarding victim identities and legal documentation so that their mobility and access to state services is controlled, for example, hospitals; they are unable to leave and seek work elsewhere; and they are at risk of trouble with the police in other countries if they report an offence without presenting legal identification
- through a **relationship**

## Deception

For example:

- presenting a false scenario in which the potential victim is convinced that they can improve the quality of their life and that of their family
- recruiting for non-existent jobs and education placements
- misrepresenting the job and work conditions, for example, women going abroad and believing they will be employed as domestic workers but ending up in prostitution
- offering refuge with the intent to **exploit**

## Emotional control

For example:

- threatening to harm or intimidate the victim, the victim's family or someone they know in the UK or in the victim's home country unless they comply with the perpetrator's demands

- making victims believe they are colluding in illegal activities with perpetrators and are complicit in the offence
- reinforcing to victims that they will not be believed if they approach the UK authorities to make a report, engendering fear and suspicion. Victims may have been deceived previously by corrupt authorities in their home country. Those who have no experience of the UK police may have been convinced that a similar or worse culture prevails in the UK
- instilling in victims a fear of possible deportation or imprisonment in the UK
- making victims feel attached to the family of perpetrators and 'adopting' them as a member of the family, so that they feel unable to make a complaint against the family (victims may call the mother and father figures 'Ma' and 'Pa' to reinforce familial attachment)
- indoctrination
- false claims over victim earnings
- removal of basic human rights including sanitation, food, freedom to choose

## Exploiting cultural beliefs so that victims believe they will bring dishonour to themselves and their families if they do not comply

For example:

- faced with debt claims from perpetrators, victims feel morally bound to work until debts are paid off
- perpetrators may marry brides from their home countries and transport them to the UK. On arrival, husbands and their families may threaten the brides with divorce and deportation if they do not comply with demands, making them victims of exploitation
- perpetrators may perform spiritual practices, for example, witchcraft, to coerce victims into exploitation
- perpetrators may threaten to disclose information about the victim engaging in pre-marital sexual activity unless they comply with the perpetrator's demands, leading to sexual exploitation and/or prostitution. The victim may have been raped

## Financial control

For example:

- managing victims into debt by charging them excessive fees for visas and other travel documents, food, accommodation, tools and transport
- giving victims a loan that is hard to pay back because the amount of the loan and the interest on it are inflated
- controlling access to victims' bank accounts
- managing wages so that victims are not sure what they are being paid and what fees are being deducted
- claiming hereditary debt bondage

## Grooming

For example:

- developing **inappropriate friendships** or intimate relationships with victims
- offering gifts
- praising victims by affirming 'what a good worker they are' and that they are working 'longer hours than any other person'
- reassuring victims that they will be paid a lump sum wage in the future

## Isolation

For example:

- locking victims into rooms
- forcing victims to work and live in the same accommodation
- allowing very limited or no contact at all with victims' families, other victims, the local community or those in the locality from the same nationality
- frequently changing the victim's location
- removing privacy
- denying victims access to a telephone, mobile or the internet

# Exploitation indicators

Victims of modern slavery may manifest some of the indicators of exploitation below. Not all the indicators need to be present for a person to be referred to the **NRM**. Some indicators may be difficult to identify immediately – officers and staff making first contact must show professional

curiosity to better understand the circumstances and experiences of the **victim**.

# All forms of exploitation

## Where might victims be found?

- In their homes.
- In transport vehicles en route to the location of exploitation.
- On the streets (‘street slaves’, collecting or delivering charity bags, homeless on the streets).
- In houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).
- In poor and/or substandard accommodation.
- Sleeping in a shared and/or inappropriate space.

## What are the indicators?

Victims of modern slavery may:

- disclose experience of sexual exploitation, forced criminality and begging, labour exploitation and/or domestic servitude, or organ/human tissue/blood harvesting
- recite stories that perpetrators have forced them to learn when approached by authorities, leading to interviews with errors and a lack of credibility
- come from a place known to be a source of modern slavery, for example, Romania, Poland, Albania
- be of any age, gender or nationality
- have very few items of clothing or luggage
- be illegal tenants or trespassers in private property
- be closely monitored/directed/controlled by dominant female and/or male members of the group, and allow others to speak for them when addressed directly
- have a history with unexplained moves and gaps
- have a pattern of street homelessness
- live or travel in a group, sometimes with other women/men who do not speak the same language, and with persons who are not relatives and whom they do not know or have a clear relationship with
- be falsely reported as missing
- be physically unable to or feel that they cannot leave their situation
- have suffered exploitation and abuse in their country of origin and on their journey to the UK

- eat apart from their exploiters and eat leftovers
- show signs of physical neglect, for example, malnourishment, poor health and sanitation
- show signs of depression, psychosis, suicidal behaviour and/or anxiety
- suffer injuries typical of certain jobs or control measures, or directly the result of assault
- have tattoos, scars or other symbols/marks on their body indicating ‘ownership’ by their exploiters
- be mistrustful of authorities as victims may have been convinced by the exploiter that authorities are corrupt
- have false identity or travel documents, not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, and be afraid of revealing their immigration status
- have poor spoken English
- have no freedom of choice or privacy
- not know their home or work address
- have been bought and sold
- have little or no access to their earnings or cash of their own
- work excessively long hours over long periods and not have any days off
- have limited or no access to medical care
- have limited or no contact with their families or with people outside their immediate environment, and are isolated
- be involved in survival offending, for example, pickpocketing, shoplifting
- have convictions for minor offences from different locations
- be ‘invisible’ to local authorities and service providers, for example, health, education, housing
- have had the fees for their transport to the country of destination paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back by working or providing services
- be charged excessively for accommodation, food, travel etc

# Child exploitation

A child is any person below 18 years of age. Child exploitation is child abuse, and child protection procedures should be followed in such cases. Children are often subject to multiple types of exploitation.

## Where might victims be found?

- In care homes.
- Missing from care.

- In a private fostering arrangement. This is when a child under 16 years (under 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for by a person who is not their parent or a close relative, ie, step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts, whether of full blood, half-blood, or marriage/affinity. In cases of private fostering, the parents and prospective carers must notify their local authority. A privately fostered child may be exploited.

## What are the indicators?

According to the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, the national referral **form** for child victims of trafficking and **ECPAT UK**, child victims of any exploitation, including those in private fostering, may:

- have no or limited access to their parents or guardians
- have a social care placement breakdown
- have no friends of their own age outside work and live apart from other children
- be married under the minimum legal age of 16 years – in England, Wales and Northern Ireland a person also requires parental consent if aged under 18 years
- have no access to education
- have no time for playing
- be engaged in work that is not suitable for children
- travel unaccompanied by adults
- be required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- live as gang members with adults who are not their parents

At the crime scene there may be:

- the presence of child-sized clothing typically worn for doing manual or **sex work**
- children looking intimidated and behaving in a way that is not typical for children of a similar age
- the presence of toys, beds and children's clothing in inappropriate places such as brothels and factories
- the claim by an adult that he or she 'found' an unaccompanied child
- accompanying adult insisting on speaking for the child
- finding unaccompanied children carrying telephone numbers for taxis
- the discovery of cases involving illegal adoption, for example, the presence of a child with a person who is obviously not the parent

- equipment that is designed or has been modified so that it can be operated by children

When officers encounter a child, it is important to consider these questions as the responses may reveal further indicators.

- Has the child come from another country? What is the purpose of their visit?
- Who is looking after the child and what is their relationship?
- Can the carer provide documentary evidence of having parental responsibility for the child?
- Are any of the child's household members known to the police and might they constitute a risk to the child?
- Does the physical condition of the child's home, number of occupants, and general standard of care give rise to concerns about the child's welfare?

# Sexual exploitation

This is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

## Where might victims be found?

- Brothels.
- Private residences.
- Nightclubs.
- Strip clubs.
- Online – recruitment agencies, adult pornographic sites, child abuse sites.
- Escort agencies.
- Massage parlours.
- Red light districts.
- Hotels.

## What are the indicators?

Victims of sexual exploitation may:

- have clothes that are mostly the kind typically worn for doing sex work

- only know how to say sex-related words in the local language or in the language of the client group
- have had unprotected and/or violent sex and are unable to refuse due to coercion, threats and/or fear
- be advertised in brothels or similar places offering services to women/men of a particular ethnicity or nationality
- move from one brothel to the next or work in various locations
- have a sexually transmitted infection
- be pregnant
- be unable to negotiate working conditions
- be controlled and isolated in the workplace
- be travelling in expensive transport that is beyond their affordability
- never leave the work premises without their exploiter and be subject to security measures designed to keep them on work premises
- depend on their exploiter for work, transportation, accommodation, food, clothing

# Labour exploitation

Victims are forced to work very long hours in often hazardous conditions and hand over the majority or all of their wages to their traffickers or controllers. Violence and threats may be used against victims or against their families if they fail to comply.

## Where might victims be found?

- Homeless shelters.
- Soup kitchens.
- Farms.
- Factories.
- Sweatshops.
- Construction sites.
- Restaurants.
- Cleaning companies.
- Car washes.
- Fishing fleets.
- Care homes.

- Nail bars.
- Massage parlours.
- Employment agencies.
- Leafleting.
- Recycling sites.

## What are the indicators?

Victims of labour exploitation may:

- be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- not be dressed adequately for the work they do, for example, lack protective equipment or warm clothing
- live in overcrowded, unhygienic, degraded and unsuitable places such as in agricultural or industrial buildings, outbuildings and adapted accommodation
- often be legally employed by a legitimate employer
- be fed only leftovers and be given insufficient meals
- look malnourished and suffer from nutritional imbalance
- lack basic training and professional licences
- be unable to negotiate working conditions
- be in low paid, low skilled and unattractive work
- be controlled and isolated in the workplace
- not have a labour contract
- be travelling in expensive transport that is beyond their affordability

Their workplaces may have:

- notices posted in languages other than the local language
- no health and safety information
- health and safety equipment that is of poor quality or is missing
- evidence that workers must pay for tools, food or accommodation or that those costs are being deducted from their wages
- an employer or manager who is unable to show the documents required for employing workers from other countries, for example, a work permit
- an employer or manager who is unable to show records of wages paid to workers.

# Domestic servitude

Victims live and work in households where they are forced [or expected] to work through threats of serious harm and may be subjected to physical and sexual assaults. There is often restriction of liberty and movement and victims may not be able to leave their accommodation. They cook, clean, care for children and older people, and provide manual labour.

## Where might victims be found?

- Cleaning companies.
- Private residences.

## What are the indicators?

Victims of domestic servitude may:

- live with a family
- be sent to work for other family members of the employer
- be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- have no labour contract
- not be allowed to use the facilities of the employer

# Criminal exploitation

Victims are often deceived or coerced into helping their exploiters acquire financial benefit. They may be involved in fraud, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking, begging, selling babies and children into adoption, forced and sham marriages, transporting other modern slavery victims, charity bag scams, and signing multiple mobile telephone or laptop contracts.

# Illegal adoption

Not every illegal adoption is exploitation. A child might, for example, be sold or adopted illegally but not exploited. The purposes of baby-selling and modern slavery are not necessarily the same.

Some people assume that baby-selling for adoption is a form of human trafficking because it results in a profit from selling another person. However, illegally selling a child for adoption would not constitute trafficking where the child is not intended to be exploited. Baby-selling generally results in a situation that is non-exploitative with respect to the child. Where the ‘parents’ are looking to

adopt the child and provide a loving home, it should be considered as an illegal adoption case but not as a case of trafficking.

## Where might victims be found?

- Cannabis factories.
- Adoption centres.
- On the streets.
- Online businesses.
- Transport companies.
- Booking offices.
- Public transport.
- Banks.
- Retail shops.
- Registry offices.
- Supermarkets.

## What are the indicators?

Indicators of benefit fraud may include:

- a single adult registering a large number of children, possibly residing at the same address

Victims of forced criminality and begging may:

- participate in the activities of organised criminal gangs
- travel with the gang in large groups with only a few adults
- be punished if they do not collect or steal enough
- be producing, carrying and/or selling illicit drugs
- have physical impairments that appear to be the result of mutilation or natural birth defects, for example, curvature of the spine
- be unaccompanied minors who have been ‘found’ by an adult of the same nationality or ethnicity

Cannabis cultivation indicators may include:

- property that is locked from the outside, whose windows are permanently covered from the inside
- pungent smells and noises of machinery coming from the property

- visits at unusual times

## Organ/human tissue/blood harvesting

Victims are trafficked to sell their body parts and organs for transplant.

### Where might victims be found?

- Private hospitals/residences.

### What are the indicators?

Victims may have suspicious unexplained scars on their bodies.

## Tags

Modern slavery