



Spotting the Signs & Reporting

Spotting the Signs

Each situation of human trafficking is different but there are some identifiable common indicators. Many of the most common are outlined below along with some everyday scenarios to help put them into context. Victims will rarely self-identify, so by being aware of the indicators you will know what sort of questions you need to ask to identify a victim.

General Trafficking Indicators

Trafficking victims are often lured into another country by false promises and so may not easily trust.

They may:

- Be fearful of police/authorities
- Be fearful of the trafficker believing their lives or family members' lives are at risk if they escape
- Exhibit signs of physical and psychological trauma e.g. anxiety, lack of memory of recent events; bruising, untreated conditions
- Be fearful of telling others about their situation
- Be unaware they have been trafficked
- Have limited freedom of movement
- Be unpaid or paid very little
- Have limited access to dental or medical care
- Seem to be in debt to someone
- Have no passport or someone else is holding it
- Be regularly moved to avoid detection
- Be controlled by use of witchcraft e.g. Ju Ju

Indicators for Forced Labour

Forced labour exists where all the work or service which is exacted from any person is exacted under the menace of a penalty and the said person has not offered himself voluntarily for that work or service.

- Threat or actual physical harm
- Restriction of movement or confinement



- Debt bondage i.e. working to pay off a debt or loan, often the victim is paid very little or nothing at all for their services because of deductions.
- Withholding of wages or excessive wage reductions
- Withholding of documents e.g. passport/security card
- Threat of revealing to authorities where worker has irregular immigration status
- Employer unable to produce documents required
- Poor or non-existent health and safety standards
- Workers required to pay for tools and food
- Imposed place of accommodation (and deductions made for it)
- Pay less than minimum wage
- Dependence on employer for services
- No access labour contract
- Excessive work hours/few breaks

Indicators for Criminal Activities

The person is recruited and forced/deceived into conducting some form of criminal activity including pick pocketing, begging, cannabis cultivation and benefit fraud. This will often come within the definition of forced labour but the following additional indicators are relevant to various types of forced criminal activity.

Cannabis Cultivation:

- Windows of property are permanently covered from the inside
- Visits are at unusual times
- Property may be residential
- Unusual noises coming from the property e.g. machinery
- Pungent smells coming from the property

Pickpocketing/Forced Begging:

- A young, elderly or disabled foreign national who begs in public places or on public transport.
- They may show obvious signs of being abused such as bruises, cuts or mutilation.
- They seem fearful of adults (especially law enforcers) or their behaviour is jumpy.
- One adult is the guardian of a large group of children.



- A large group of adult or child beggars that is moved daily to different locations but return to the same location every night.
- A group, as described above, moves together on public transport i.e. walking up and down the length of a train or bus.

Benefit Fraud:

- Relationship between a child/adult is unclear e.g. may not look like they are related
- No proof of relationship between an adult/child
- A single adult registers a large number of children
- Adult registers a large number of adults and/or children at a single address
- Victim complains that someone has helped them fill in forms for benefits but they have not received any money

Indicators for Domestic Servitude

A particularly serious form of denial of freedom – includes the obligation to provide certain services and the obligation to live on the other's property without possibility of changing status.

- Living and working for a family in a private home
- Not eating with the rest of the family
- No bedroom or proper sleeping place
- No private space
- Forced to work excessive hours; “on call” 24 hours a day
- Never leaves the house without the employer
- Malnourished
- Employer reports them as missing or accuses of crime if they try to escape

Indicators for Sexual Exploitation

- Movement between brothels, sometimes in different cities
- Sleeping on work premises
- Limited amount of clothing and a large proportion is sexual
- Substance misuse
- Forced, intimidated or coerced into providing sexual services
- Subjected to abduction, assault or rape



- Movement is controlled e.g. picked up and dropped off at work location
- Someone other than the person receives money for the services
- Ordinary residential housing/hotels are used more and more.

Indicators for internal trafficking of children for Sexual Exploitation

“An abuse of a child’s vulnerability by a person’s position of power or trust, exploiting that position to obtain sexual services in exchange for some form of favour such as alcohol, drugs, attention or gifts”

Engage Team, Blackburn

- Child going missing / Truancy
- Secretive
- Unexplained money/presents
- Experimenting drugs/alcohol
- Grooming / Associating with older males (not in normal networks)
- Significantly older boyfriend
- Social activities with no plausible explanation
- Seen entering or leaving vehicles with unknown adults
- Evidence of physical / sexual assault (STD’s)
- Low self image / self harm / eating disorder

Scenarios*

These scenarios are designed to put the indicators of trafficking into some everyday contexts.

*The scenarios below are fictional but aim to highlight very real circumstances up and down our country.

Scenario #1 – police officer

On a Friday night a call is received by a 999 operator. The caller complains of shouting and fighting in the house next door. A unit is sent out to investigate. They arrive at a house occupied by a large number of men of different nationalities, including Brits, who are clearly intoxicated. The officers find out that the cause of the disturbance is one man who is taking all the wages of the other men and giving them just £15.00 a week to live on.

How would you respond in this situation?

Victims of trafficking live on our door step, in residential homes in our community. You might come across them when carrying out your daily duties. The question is, would recognise them?



The law:

This could be a case of Holding Someone in Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour (Section 71 Coroners Act 2009) or Trafficking People for Exploitation (Section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Treatment of Claimants Act 2004).

Relevant indicators:

- withholding of wages or excessive wage reductions
- overcrowded accommodation provided by 'employer'
- no personal space and potential victim sleeping on the floor
- large number of men of similar age at one address
- large variety of nationalities residing at one address

Would you treat this as drunk and disorderly, or could you dig deeper to find out what situation these men are in?

Scenario #2 – public figure

A young woman is caught stealing clothes from a shop in the city centre. She is caught on CCTV and the staff detain her while they wait for the police. When they arrive the woman leaps up and repeats over and over that she just wants them to help her get her passport back! Someone she works for has taken it and refuses to give it back.

Are you concerned about high rates of petty crime in your community, the police time spent addressing it and its impact on the general public?

Victims of human trafficking are often coerced into committing petty crime as part of their exploitation; others do it to survive or to attract attention and receive help. Recognising and tackling human trafficking can play a key part in improving wider societal problems.

The law:

This could be a case of Trafficking People for Exploitation (Section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Treatment of Claimants Act 2004) or Holding Someone in Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour (Section 71 Coroners Act 2009).

Relevant indicators:

- withholding of documents e.g. passport or other identity document
- insufficient wages to purchase necessities, a form of economic coercion used by traffickers



Enquiring into the situations of those committing petty crime can reveal the existence of a market for exploitation in your community. Can you use your position of influence to do more to assist those who recruited for exploitation and recognise them as victims of human trafficking and not perpetrators of petty crime?

Scenario #3 – teachers or youth worker

One of the young girls you work with has become more and more withdrawn over the last few months. She doesn't seem to engage with others in her peer group as much as before and you've noticed she appears low and moody a lot of the time. Her attendance has dropped and you can't seem to get her to tell you why. One day you notice that she is collected in a car driven by an unknown older male.

If you have concerns about a young person, does the risk of human trafficking come to mind?

The fact is that girls and boys of all ages in our country are at risk of grooming for sexual exploitation. Some of those who are groomed will end up being trafficked internally within the UK or externally overseas for sexual exploitation.

The law:

This girl could become a victim under a number of UK offences including Paying for the Sexual Services of a Prostitute Subject to Force (Section 14 Policing and Crime Act 2009), Trafficking into the UK for Sexual Exploitation (Section 57 Sexual Offences Act 2003), Trafficking within the UK for Sexual Exploitation (Section 58 Sexual Offences Act 2003) or Trafficking out of the UK for Sexual Exploitation (Section 59 Sexual Offences Act 2003).

Relevant indicators:

- young person becomes secretive
- young person associates with unrelated older males
- young person seen entering or leaving vehicles with unknown adults
- young person exhibits low self-image
- young person displays gifts bought for them

It may be vital to the welfare of this young person that you act fast, would you recognise the hallmarks of grooming and trafficking?

Scenario #4 – Homeless shelters, street pastors, doctors, housing associations & other frontline agencies

Outside a day centre which hosts a large group of homeless men every day, a couple of smartly dressed men turn up and speak to a small group of 19 -20 year olds. A week later they return and speak to the same men. When you query who they are, one of your regulars tells you they



offered him and a few of other guys some work in agriculture in another part of the country for the season and perhaps longer. Apparently these recruiters are paying for his trip and arranging accommodation and employment documents. Your regular's really pleased because this means he can support himself and his parents back home and maybe even buy a car.

Do you know how to safeguard your service users against human trafficking?

Trafficking for forced labour happens within the UK, into the UK and out of the UK to foreign nationals and British citizens. Traffickers target vulnerable populations, such as the homeless, those with alcohol or substance dependency or with outstanding arrest warrants with attractive job offers.

The law:

These service users could be victims of Trafficking People for Exploitation (Section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Treatment of Claimants Act 2004) or Holding Someone in Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour (Section 71 Coroners Act 2009).

The relevant indicators:

- informal recruitment methods e.g. approaching a vulnerable population
- transport paid for by recruiter
- accommodation organised and paid for by recruiter
- seasonal work carries particular opportunities to disguise irregular labour provision

Would you be able to help these men understand the potential dangers of accepting this offer before it's too late?

Scenario #5 – Social services

A case of potential child neglect is brought to the attention of the Child Protection Team at the Social Services where you work. You are assigned the case which relates to a family who are relatively new to the UK. It quickly becomes apparent that the parents will need a lot of support around their parenting skills. You also find out that the father of the family has a job somewhere and works nearly 14 hours every day but is still not bringing home enough money to feed the family. Some of the children are exhibiting signs of malnourishment and living conditions at the house are desperate with other tenants coming and going and overcrowding.

Would you treat this simply as a child protection issue, or would you try to find out more about this family's circumstances?

Unfortunately, whole families are sometimes trafficked into and around the UK for the purposes of exploitation. Traffickers maximise their profits by using different for family for a variety of forms of exploitation. Adult family members may be used for forced labour, females



may be groomed for sexual exploitation and children may have their identities used for fraudulent benefit claims.

The law:

As well as other offences such as fraud this family could be victims of specific trafficking offences such as Trafficking People for Exploitation (Section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Treatment of Claimants Act 2004), Trafficking within the UK for Sexual Exploitation (Section 58 Sexual Offences Act 2003) or Holding Someone in Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour (Section 71 Coroners Act 2009).

The relevant indicators:

- excessive working hours
- withholding of wages or excessive wage reductions
- overcrowding in accommodation
- unusual mixture of tenants at a property
- recruited for employment in home country
- employment on arrival in UK not what was promised

Can you ask a few more questions regarding the husband's employment and the circumstances of their travel to the UK?

Reporting human trafficking

If you suspect a case of human trafficking and/or think you may have identified a victim, then contact Hope for Justice on:

0845 519 7402 or operations@hopeforjustice.org.uk

If you believe that you or another person is in immediate danger of harm you should always dial 999 first. However, as soon as you are safe, please contact Hope for Justice to share the details of the case so that we can follow up with the police and the victim and assist them both where possible.