



Skills for Care & Development  
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# Training Framework

for the Prevention, Identification, Support and  
Care of Child Victims and Survivors of Modern  
Slavery and Human Trafficking and Information  
and Resources to Support the Training

in association with



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London



Bakhita Centre for Research on  
Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse  
Applied Research, Education and Training

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# Foreword



Modern slavery is an egregious crime. Individuals from the widest variety of backgrounds suffer extreme exploitation, often for many years. They may come into contact with a range of frontline practitioners from across both statutory and non-statutory services, so it is vital that practitioners are well-equipped to know both how to identify modern slavery, as

well as how to respond effectively. Those providing specialist support need to have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the support offered is compassionate and meets the needs of victims and survivors in the short term, while also assisting their longer-term recovery and preventing the risk of re-trafficking.

As the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, I have a UK-wide remit to encourage good practice in the detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences and the identification of victims. In my Strategic Plan for 2019-2021, I underlined the importance of training to assist with the improved identification and referral of victims. Following publication of the Modern Slavery Training Standards Framework for adults last year, I am pleased that the Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse at St Mary's University have led on the development of a further framework that reflects the specific circumstances and needs of child victims of trafficking.

Partnership working is an essential part of our response to modern slavery and again, I am encouraged to see that this framework has been carefully developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from the statutory and non-statutory sectors. I welcome the inclusion of underpinning guidance and principles within the framework, as well as the emphasis on trauma informed care and culturally sensitive approaches. We know that both are fundamental in building rapport with victims and survivors and offering support that is suitable for and respectful of their individual needs. Given the national attention on child criminal exploitation and the recognition of the challenges that frontline practitioners can face in responding to extra-familial harm, it is helpful to see the specific section of the framework that is applicable to this cohort of children.

In 2020/2021, 10,685 individuals were referred into the NRM. Of those, 4,946 were children, accounting for 43.5% of all referrals. Whilst this number remains steady from the previous year, the number of children identified has previously risen substantially, from 3,338 in 2018/19 and 2,418 in 2017/18. These figures are significant and reflect an increasing level of understanding and awareness among frontline practitioners. However, there is more to be done.

I endorse these standards as a national framework and recommend that professional bodies and organisations adopt them and integrate them into their training materials and learning programmes, and use them when commissioning specialist services for child victims of trafficking.

**Dame Sara Thornton, DBE QPM**  
Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

# Introduction

An increasing number of children are being identified as victims of modern slavery, based on the data produced by the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in the UK. The NRM recorded 4946 child victims in 2020, which is a 60% increase on the numbers referred in 2018. NRM statistics rely on child victims being identified and referred, thus NRM data is an underestimate of the numbers of children at risk of exploitation, abuse and different forms of modern slavery. A 2021 report states only 26 children were identified as victims of human trafficking in Ireland in the period January 1, 2014 to September 30, 2019, but the research indicates some forms of child exploitation may not be recorded.<sup>1</sup>

Front-line professionals play a key role in identifying child victims, safeguarding them and in ensuring their needs are met. This Training Framework is intended to help professionals in their varied roles as they encounter and support child victims and survivors from a range of cultural, racial and national heritages.

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## Purposes of document:

- ▶ To establish clear training standards for those involved in preventing, identifying, supporting, and caring for child victims/survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT).
- ▶ To provide information to aid understanding of children and modern slavery and human trafficking, and that can inform responses including the development of training.

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This framework aims to establish clear training standards for those involved in preventing, identifying, supporting, and caring for child victims/survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT). These training standards set out the knowledge and skills required by those who may meet child victims and survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking. The priority of this framework is to improve the experience of care and support for those who have been exploited through modern slavery and human trafficking. It is also intended to promote a public health response to MSHT and to help equip professionals, especially those operating at a strategic level.

A further aspiration in providing this framework is that organisations will be able to review their current arrangements for defining and delivering education and training and through the adoption of the framework align their approaches. Such alignment should then have benefits in ensuring consistent approaches, which, through the use of learning outcomes, should be more educationally focused and valued. This has the potential to promote organisational and system wide efficiencies by encouraging the adoption of education and training that meets recognised standards and in doing so help to prevent unnecessary duplication of education and training delivery. It is intended that professional bodies will integrate the standards set out here in their own training standards and curriculum. This resource contains, as far as possible, useful material for the UK and Ireland.

The second key purpose of this document is to provide information to aid understanding of issues related to children and MSHT and that can be used to help training.

This framework, as far as possible given time and resource restrictions, has been developed to align with key policies, including:

- Modern Slavery Act 2015,
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015,
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims Act (Northern Ireland) 2015,
- Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act (2013) Ireland,
- The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards 2018,
- The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct For all Professionals working with Survivors of Human Trafficking and Slavery,
- The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime,
- and BASNET Action Plan on Race Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The exploitation of children through modern slavery and human trafficking is present in every facet of our work and personal lives, and therefore this framework is for everyone. In particular this framework is applicable for those leading and working in/as:

- National Referral Mechanism (NRM) First Responders,
- non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with survivors or their parents/carers,
- health and social care services,
- law enforcement and criminal justice agencies,
- civil society,
- community based organisations,
- education provision,
- national and local government,
- and independent advocates.

## Underpinning Values and Guiding Principles

### The following values underpin all the subjects in this framework:

- Person centred practice and trauma informed care that recognises the circumstances, concerns, goals, beliefs and cultures of the child, their family and friends, and acknowledges the significance of spiritual, emotional and religious support.
- Practice that keeps the child at the centre of multi-agency integrated care and support, and actions taken in relation to the child's best interests. Contextual safeguarding is one such approach.
- Practice that is sensitive to the support needs of family and friends, including children and young people, both as part of crisis response and long-term support.
- Practice that aims to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in service delivery, in staffing and in monitoring and evaluation.
- Practice that is sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the child.
- Awareness of the importance of contributing to the on-going improvement of care and support, participating as appropriate in evaluation and development, and of involving the people receiving care and support in that process.
- Encourage a public health approach which seeks to promote children's well-being, to prevent further harm and exploitation, and to protect and support them in adverse circumstances, whilst at the same time aim to put measures in place at a population level to prevent modern slavery and child trafficking from occurring.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Breen, Amy Erbe Healy, and Michael G. Healy. Report on Human Trafficking and Exploitation on the Island of Ireland, 2021. [https://www.mic.ul.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/140/2021\\_HTEPII\\_Report.pdf](https://www.mic.ul.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/140/2021_HTEPII_Report.pdf)

- Taking responsibility for one's own learning and continuing professional development, for contributing to the learning of others, and ensuring the well-being of self and others thus ensuring the service/ organisation helps to mitigate chronic stress, burnout and vicarious trauma for people who are supporting vulnerable children and young people.

#### The following guiding principles underpin this framework:

- **Uphold Human Rights:** Principles of protection and respect for children's rights are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This applies to all children, irrespective of nationality.
- **Modern Slavery is Child Abuse:** Modern slavery and human trafficking are forms of child abuse and should be treated as such.
- **Safeguarding:** As modern slavery is child abuse, a child suspected of being exploited should trigger a statutory safeguarding response. The statutory safeguarding response is necessary as a referral to the National Referral Mechanism does not safeguard children. An aspect of safeguarding might include exploring whether the threshold is met for a Section 47 investigation in England and Wales, or an Article 66 investigation in Northern Ireland where there is suspicion that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A multi-agency response to safeguarding should be undertaken.
- **Address Intersectionality:** Professionals need to take account of intersectionality (gender, age, nationality, immigration status, class, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexuality) in meeting the individual needs of child victims of MSHT.
- **Age Assessments:** These should only be done where there is significant reason to believe a child is over 18 and they should continue to be treated as a child under section 20 of The Children Act 1989, Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Section 76 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Article 21 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Each devolved administration should follow the presumption of age principle in their respective human trafficking legislation. Until an assessment of the person's age is carried out by a local authority, or the person's age is otherwise determined, the relevant authority must assume that the person is a child for the purposes of exercising its functions under the relevant enactments.
- **Parents and Carers as a Protective Factor:** Parents and carers should be considered as safeguarding partners where they act as a protective factor.
- **Partnership Working to Support Children:** Partnership working is key to understanding the full picture and providing support for children. This should also extend to coordination in the evidence being submitted to the NRM process which should include children's social services, the police, education and health professionals.
- **Referral of Children to NRM:** All children identified as potential victims of modern slavery MUST be referred into the National Referral Mechanism by First Responders.
- **Interventions with children:** Criminalisation of children can be harmful and other methods of intervention should be prioritised.
- **Advocacy Role:** Stakeholders advocate for and with child victims of modern slavery.
- **Children Supported to Develop and Thrive:** A child victim of human trafficking or modern slavery must be given opportunities to develop, learn and thrive and they must be supported and encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- **Notion of a Perfect/Ideal Child Victim is Problematic:** Recognise that any assessment of exploitation or victimhood should not be influenced by the notion of a 'perfect'/ideal victim. Professionals may need to challenge biases, assumptions and stereotypes around work with children, including who is a victim, how they act, and how they are treated and supported.

- **Smooth Transition of Support from Child to Adult:** Professionals work with children and stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition of services and support for a child victim after they reach the age of 18.
- **Impact of Grooming and Trauma on a Child's Brain:** Recognise that brain remodelling occurs intensively during teenage years, up until around the age of 25 and recognise that trauma can significantly impact this stage of brain development and may lead to behavioural difficulties, problems with attachment, trust, and may impact on their views of themselves, of others, and the world.<sup>2</sup>
- **Cultural Intelligence:** Professionals who come into contact with children who might be victims of modern slavery need to be culturally competent<sup>3</sup> and be willing to challenge stereotypes and discriminatory practice.

## Care and support

This term has been used in this document as a generic term to represent the services provided to victims/survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking. That is, we begin from an understanding that victims should primarily be met with compassion and respect. This is informed by the principles of The Trauma Informed Code of Conduct.

## Trauma Informed Care

Trauma-informed methods of working are based upon an understanding of the harmful effects of traumatic experiences together with fundamental principles of compassion and respect.

Please see **The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct**<sup>4</sup> which was developed by the Helen Bamber Foundation as a professional guide for best-practice when working with survivors. It was written by the Head of Counter-Trafficking Rachel Witkin and Katy Robjant, a consultant clinical psychologist specialising in the treatment of PTSD and other related disorders in asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking. For professionals working in Scotland you may want to participate in the National Trauma Training Programme in order to develop your knowledge and skills.<sup>5</sup>

## Cultural Considerations and Inclusive Responses

Any child could be a victim of modern slavery. There are a number of cultural considerations which front-line professionals should consider when interacting with a child. These include the provision of culturally appropriate food, ability to practice their faith, and access to staff of either gender in order to build rapport and ensure dignity. In Wales children are entitled to have all services provided in the Welsh Language.

2 The Scottish Sentencing Council, The development of cognitive and emotional maturity in adolescents and its relevance in judicial contexts January 2020. [www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/media/2044/20200219-ssc-cognitive-maturity-literature-review.pdf](http://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/media/2044/20200219-ssc-cognitive-maturity-literature-review.pdf)

3 For information about what a cultural competence means in terms of approach and service delivery see Cultural Competence in Birmingham Children's Trust. <https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/2664/cultural-competence-260618.pdf>

4 [https://www.helenbamber.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Trauma%20Informed%20Code%20of%20Conduct\\_April%202021.pdf](https://www.helenbamber.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Trauma%20Informed%20Code%20of%20Conduct_April%202021.pdf).

5 This website provides information on the training and education resources developed by the National Trauma Training Programme to support the skills and knowledge of the whole Scottish workforce. <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/>

Some children who are identified as victims of modern slavery have limited or no understanding of English. In order to ensure that children are able to understand what professionals are saying and that children can communicate their views and experiences, professional and accredited interpreters should be used, preferably in person but using a virtual or phone-based interpreter where this is not possible. Moreover children may be more comfortable/willing to talk about emotive issues in their native language/language of choice. For example, in Wales children may wish to speak to someone in Welsh. A child's ability to read or understand written English should also be taken into account when any written material is provided.

Children might feel better able to disclose their experiences to someone who could better understand their cultural norms, practices and is sensitive to their cultural needs. The provision of culturally appropriate support services could also be a factor in the child's recovery process and assist them to regain their sense of self and identity.

The BASNET Action Plan on Race Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for the UK Modern Slavery sector<sup>6</sup> highlights the intersection of race, culture and ethnicity in promoting and fueling child trafficking. Professionals must develop the cultural intelligence required to provide appropriate support services for child victims.

## Scope of the Framework

The framework aims to describe core knowledge and skills i.e. that which is common and transferable across different types of service provision. Specialist or organisation specific skills and knowledge are outside the scope of the framework. Additional learning outcomes may be locally determined to meet education and training needs in specific settings for example according to local context, risk assessment or policy.

## How to use the Framework

### Structure of the framework

Within each subject, the learning outcomes are presented for relevant tiers and specialist areas. The learning outcomes are intended to provide a clear focus on what a learner should know, understand or be able to do following completion of any learning activity.

The framework is incremental in relation to the roles that professionals occupy and the knowledge they need to identify and safeguard child and young people who are victims of MSHT (Tier 1), have a First Responder role or provide support and care to child victims as part of their role (Tier 2), work with child victims and survivors of MSHT on a regular basis, providing support and care including criminal justice (Tier 3), or have a role in identifying, supporting and caring for children who are identified as victims of child criminal exploitation linked to county lines as a form of modern slavery. Not all subjects will be relevant to all people.

This Training Framework also seeks to encourage a public health approach to MSHT; a way of thinking and acting collectively to promote children's well-being, to prevent harm and exploitation and to protect and support them in adverse circumstances (see supporting material).

Prevention and Tier 1 seek to encourage primary prevention of child exploitation and modern slavery by preventing harm and exploitation, or by escalating data on the problem of child exploitation upwards in order to encourage an institutional/multi-agency response to counteract circumstances that create vulnerabilities and to prevent further exploitation of children locally.

Tier 2 fits with elements of the service design components of a public health approach to modern slavery.<sup>7</sup> Agencies with contact with children can promote secondary prevention through early identification of child victims and intervention which can minimise the harm they experience.

Tier 3 fits with service delivery components of a public health approach to modern slavery.<sup>8</sup> Professionals supporting child victims/survivors can promote tertiary prevention by intervening in order to reduce the severity of harm and to aid children's recovery.

### How the framework can support you

The exploitation of people through slavery and human trafficking is present in every facet of our work and personal lives, and therefore this framework is for everyone. It sets out minimum standards that we should all achieve in our knowledge, skills, and practice to enable careful, thoughtful and attentive identification, care and support of victims/survivors of MSHT.

This framework is applicable for those leading and working in:

- NRM First Responders
- Health and social care services
- Law enforcement and criminal justice agencies
- Civil society
- Education provision
- National and local government
- Independent advocates

Use of the framework will also support educational organisations, in particular those training students in health, social care, education, criminal justice and law enforcement, youth work, early years and childcare settings, housing services or housing associations and business and management to create high quality training materials and courses.

The framework also supports the assessment of competence, training needs analysis, and provision of standards of professional capabilities.

## Information to Aid Understanding and Support the Development of Training

A wide range of information has been provided to help ensure training reflects current knowledge and expertise around child victims of MSHT, contextual situations that need to be addressed, international and national policies in relation to MSHT and safeguarding of children, and referral processes including the National Referral Mechanism and Independent Child Guardians. A list of resources that may aid training development has also been included (See sections 11-19).

6 Race Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the UK Modern Slavery Sector. <https://bmeantislaavery.org/reports/the-basnet-modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking-race-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-action-plan/>

7 Elizabeth Such, Kate Hayes, Jonathan Woodward, Ines Campos-Matos and April McCoig. *Refining a public health approach to modern slavery*, June 2021

8 Ibid.

# Tiers or Specialisms of Core Knowledge and Skill

## Prevention

This tier is intended to aid those who seek to prevent the exploitation of children and its related harms. It is aimed at those professionals who have strategic roles working on community safety or in violence reduction or modern slavery. For example:

- Community Safety Partnership, Health and Well-being Boards, Violence Reduction Units, Safeguarding Boards and Modern Slavery Partnerships.
- Community Safety leads, Violence Reduction Leads or Modern Slavery Leads in police, local authorities, the NHS and Public Health.

## Tier 1

The tier is considered a baseline for every professional. The knowledge and skills required in Tier 1 should be sufficient for those who may encounter victims in the course of their work. You have a role to play in identifying and referring potential victims for safeguarding and support. For example:

- You work in health and social care, early years and childcare, youth work, drug and alcohol treatment services, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies (including young offenders institutes, immigration and detention centres), provide legal advice, are part of civil society, faith groups, education, local government, Immigration Enforcement or Border Force.
- You work as foster carers or in an organisation providing support to children and young people, e.g. youth clubs, children's homes or semi-independent living.
- You have a job where you go into people's houses for the purposes of maintenance or regulation, e.g. landlords and estate agents, housing associations, fire and rescue, or gas safety.
- You work for a transport company and might come across children who are travelling for the purpose of being exploited, for example the British Transport Police, private hire/taxi firms, or bus drivers.
- You work in an industry where it has been evidenced that people are exploited through acts of MSHT, for example hospitality, or taxis.

## Tier 2

The tier will be relevant to you if you are a First Responder, or your role will require you to provide care, support or advice to a victim/survivor of trafficking. For example:

- You have a First Responder duty.<sup>9</sup>
- You work in a health and social care provider, youth services, law enforcement and criminal justice agency, civil society organisation, education, national or local government, or act as an independent advocate, and require some knowledge of how to provide high quality support because you encounter individuals who are victims/survivors of MSHT in your working environment. Most of the individuals you support are not victims/survivors of MSHT, but some are. For instance, you might work in a A&E, a school or pupil referral unit, a young offenders institute, a detention centre, a youth project, or you are a social worker in a local authority.

## Tier 3

The tier will be relevant to you if:

- You work in an organisation providing day-to-day practical support for child victims/survivors of MSHT, for example as a social worker, Independent Guardian/Independent Child Trafficking Guardian, legal practitioner, support worker in an NGO working with child survivors, staff in a residential home for children and foster carers.
- You work in a health and social care provider, law enforcement and criminal justice agency, civil society organisation, education, or national or local government. Most of the individuals you support are victims/survivors of MSHT, and the support you provide is beyond day-to-day practical support, and includes critical advocacy and psychosocial interventions.
- You supervise those who are providing day-to-day support to victims/survivors of MSHT.

## County Lines (which is one type of Child Criminal Exploitation) as a form of Modern Slavery

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), driven by County Lines is currently a common form of child modern slavery in the UK and appears to be rising year on year. When dealing with County Lines CCE, there are additional complexities relating to the frequent criminalisation of these young victims and the complex grooming and re-wiring that occurs. It is for these reasons that a separate section has been created for this form of exploitation.

This tier will be relevant to those who identify, support and care for, and engage with child victims of criminal exploitation within County Lines.

- You have a First Responder duty.
- You work in a health and social care provider, law enforcement and criminal justice agency, civil society organisation, education, national or local government, or act as an independent advocate.

# Learning Outcomes

## Prevention as a Public Health Response

### Understanding Vulnerabilities and Risk of Child Exploitation and Modern Slavery

1. Understand the problem of modern slavery affecting children at a national and a local level.
2. Understand the factors that can make children more vulnerable to risk and poor outcomes and place them at risk of child exploitation and modern slavery, at a national level but particularly within the local context.
3. Understand factors within a child's family or immediate social context that may increase a child's vulnerability to exploitation and modern slavery.
4. Identify how to collect and share data amongst key partners locally in order to understand the extent of child vulnerability to exploitation and modern slavery.

### Forms of interventions

5. Understand why modern slavery is a public health problem that requires effective whole system engagement and responsibility in order to prevent exploitation and harm.
6. Understand the need to consider the child within the context of their life in order to recognise risk, protective factors and potential methods of protection and intervention.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-modern-slavery-as-a-first-responder>



7. Understand different interventions within different settings (e.g. reduce risk of perpetration via civil orders).
8. Understand the cycle of exploitation and harm and where preventative activity can intervene not just at an individual level but at relationship, community and societal level across the whole lifecourse.<sup>10</sup>
9. Understand the role that whole system approaches can play in preventing child exploitation and in protecting them.
10. Understand the need for a culturally sensitive approach to working with children and their families.
11. Understand the importance of incorporating the voices of children and young people into strategic approaches and
12. Be aware of the value of feeding back impact of interventions and strategic approaches to frontline staff.

## Tier 1

### What is MSHT?

1. Understand the different forms of modern slavery that affect children and young people, including for example, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, CSE, CCE, and related forms of exploitation such as forced marriage. Understand that modern slavery is not static and new forms of exploitation affecting children may evolve.
2. Be aware that children under the age of 18 cannot consent to their exploitation.
3. Be aware that child victims are diverse and include British children and foreign national children.
4. Be aware of the methods used to recruit, groom and control children, and understand how these may act as barriers to children engaging and disclosing.

### National and International Legal Frameworks and Rights

5. Know what is meant by the terms modern slavery and human trafficking, the associated terms, its legislative framework, and the blurred lines between human smuggling and human trafficking.
6. Be able to recognise signs and indicators of the different forms of modern slavery experienced by children and be aware of the importance of professional curiosity and judgment in identifying child victims.
7. Understand child exploitation through the lens and context of Child Protection and Safeguarding, Child Abuse, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and a Public Health lens.
8. Be aware of who to report concerns to within your organisation so that a child can be identified and referred.

### Safeguarding and Referral

9. Understand your safeguarding role if you identify a child as a potential victim of MSHT.
10. Know who to report concerns to that the child might be a victim of MSHT, including in your organisation, First Responders, Children's Services or the police.

<sup>10</sup> For more information see the CAPRICORN Framework which could be adapted in relation to modern slavery as it recognises the different upstream and downstream actions that local partnerships can take to prevent children becoming victims of modern slavery. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-offending-and-re-offending-by-children/collaborative-approaches-to-preventing-offending-and-re-offending-by-children-capricorn-summary>

11. Understand the importance of documenting key elements of the child's experience and the way in which language used in documenting experiences can have positive or negative consequences on how children are treated and supported. Language that stereotypes or criminalises young people and their behaviour risks damaging the child's trust in professionals, discourages professional curiosity and may significantly hamper optimum support. It may also hamper understanding of the impact of trauma and rewiring on behaviour.
12. Be aware of the importance of sharing information about children in order to reduce re-traumatising them through repetitive questioning. Working in partnership is vital to ensure they are safeguarded and supported.
13. Be aware that you may need to escalate information to a Specific Point of Contact on Modern Slavery or a Safeguarding Lead in order that your organisation obtains a better understanding of a risk or problem of modern slavery in your local area. Data sharing of pseudo anonymised/anonymised can be used to inform prevent approaches at a system level and reduce harm.

### Understanding Self in Practice

14. Understand the Trauma-informed Code of Conduct for professionals working with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking and how to put these into practice.
15. Be aware of and seek to challenge potential internal bias and stereotyping that can affect your professional decision-making and that can prevent the identification of child victims. The adultification of some victims is an example of such bias.
16. Be able to challenge organisational practice that may reflect bias and stereotyping and have adverse effects on child identification and referral.
17. Be able to reflect on how new knowledge and skills affects professional practice.

## Tier 2

### What is MSHT?

1. Understand the different forms of modern slavery that affect children and young people, including for example, labour exploitation, domestic service, CSE, CCE, forced marriage and that modern slavery is not static and new forms of exploitation affecting children may evolve.
2. Be aware that children under the age of 18 cannot consent to their exploitation.
3. Be aware that child victims are diverse and include British children, foreign national children and unaccompanied migrant children.
4. Understand the complex range of factors (e.g. gender, immigration status, poverty, stigma, threat to family) that make British and foreign national children and unaccompanied migrant children vulnerable to modern slavery, subject to a higher risk of going missing and to re-trafficking.
5. Be aware of the methods used to recruit, groom and control children, and understand how these may act as barriers to children engaging and disclosing.
6. Develop cultural intelligence by understanding how culture can impact on risk of modern slavery and human trafficking and on children's experiences of MSHT.

### National and International Legal Frameworks and Rights

7. Know what is meant by the terms modern slavery and human trafficking, the associated terms, its legislative framework, and the blurred lines between human smuggling and human trafficking.

8. Be aware of the key policies and protocols covering modern slavery and human trafficking in relation to child victims in the relevant jurisdictional areas and the roles and responsibilities of your organisation.
9. Be aware of Modern Slavery Act, Section 45 statutory defence, The Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, Section 22 statutory defence and Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, Section 8. As of 2017 there was no provision in Irish law on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they were compelled to do so.
10. Be able to recognise signs and indicators of the different forms of modern slavery experienced by children and be aware of the importance of professional curiosity and judgment in identifying child victims.
11. Understand child exploitation through the lens and context of Child Protection and Safeguarding, Child Abuse and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
12. Understand the National Referral Mechanism, the professional duty to refer to a First Responder and the statutory duty for First Responders to refer children to the NRM.
13. Know where to get further help and information in your organisation in terms of identifying, safeguarding and referring child victims of MSH.
23. Be aware of joint work and protocols between police and children's services in order to plan for and remove a child victim from harm, and to undertake the assessment of the child's needs.
24. Be aware that you may need to escalate information to Specific Point of Contact on Modern Slavery or a Safeguarding Lead in order that your organisation obtains a better understanding of a risk or problem of modern slavery in your local area which will require a strategic response to prevent and to reduce harm.

#### Meeting of Victims/Survivors Person-Centred Victim Care

25. Understand the importance of a multi-agency response to child victims to ensure they are safeguarded and a holistic needs assessment is undertaken to inform a support plan.
26. Understand the support available to child victims of modern slavery, including Independent Child Trafficking Guardians/Independent Guardians, and statutory and third sector organisations, and any support pathways.
27. Understand the way in which cultural intelligence can aid the support of child victims drawn from diverse communities.
28. Understand the way in which services need to reflect the diverse needs of children and are appropriate in relation to gender, culture, religion, disability and sexual orientation.
29. Understand the importance of enabling children to make some choices in relation to their care and support.

#### Safeguarding and Referral

14. Understand and follow existing statutory safeguarding duties for protecting children from harm, including a multi-agency response.
15. Understand the process of the NRM referral, the obligation to continue to engage with the Home Office once a referral has been made as First Responders are the point of contact for the Single Competent Authority/Competent Authority and the benefits of referral.
16. Understand what a good NRM referral looks like.
17. Understand the referral process to children's service and to child advocates (e.g. Scottish Guardianship Service, Independent Guardians in NI, Independent Legal Representative in NI, Independent Child Trafficking Guardians in two-thirds of England and Wales) and their responsibilities for child victims.
18. Understand and identify barriers to disclosure and options to overcome them (including that some victims may not identify themselves as victims and that experience of discrimination and biased treatment can act as a barrier that can influence the extent to which a child might feel it is safe to disclose).
19. Be able to support child victims of modern slavery to talk about the things that have happened to them through an approach of listening and helping them be at ease based on careful and thoughtful questioning where the complexity of experiences is understood.
20. Understand the importance of documenting key elements of the child's experience and the way in which language used in documenting experiences can have positive or negative consequences on how children are treated and supported. Language that stereotypes or criminalises young people and their behaviour risks damaging the child's trust in professionals, discourages professional curiosity and may significantly hamper optimum support. It may also hamper understanding of the impact of trauma and rewiring on behaviour.
21. Be aware of the importance of sharing information about children in order to reduce re-traumatising them through repetitive questioning. Working in partnership is vital to ensure they are safeguarded and supported.
22. Understand the complex situation and dynamics involving parents as protective factors and safeguarding partners and the different tools (e.g. risk assessments) that can be used to ensure it is safe for the child and the parents.

#### Understanding Self in Practice

30. Understand the Trauma-informed Code of Conduct for professionals working with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking and how to put these into practice.
31. Be aware of and seek to challenge potential internal bias and stereotyping that can affect your professional decision-making and that can prevent the identification of child victims, for example the adultification of some victims.
32. Be able to promote organisational practice that fosters equality of access and fair treatment of children and that encourages diversity and inclusion in service delivery and in the employment of practitioners.
33. Be able to reflect on how new knowledge and skills affects professional practice.
34. Be aware of the possibility of secondary trauma and the strategies to protect yourself.

## Tier 3

#### National and International Legal Frameworks and Rights

1. Understand the rights of a child (e.g. rights to survival and development, to non-discrimination, respect for views of the child, right to information, to confidentiality and to legal support around immigration status and asylum claims) and how a rights approach shapes how professionals interact with children and influences the way in which services are offered. (from N Ireland report on supporting HT children)
2. Know a child's entitlements to support under Article 12 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the EU Directive where applicable, domestic modern slavery and human trafficking legislation, relevant legislation aimed at safeguarding and supporting children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and how to advocate in circumstances where these are lacking.
3. Understand the non-punishment principle, including the Section 45 defence in the Modern Slavery Act, Section 8 of the Scottish Act, Section 22 of the Northern Ireland Act and how that can be used correctly. There is no specific provision in Irish law on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking.

4. Know how to keep victims/survivors of MSHT up to date on progress of police investigations and prosecutions and what measures are needed before and after court.
5. Be aware of what support is available for victims/survivors giving evidence in criminal proceedings.
6. Know what services to contact if a survivor is not happy about a decision or treatment they have received from a professional body e.g. police, Home Office.

#### **Meeting of Victims/Survivors Person Centred Victim Care**

7. Understand that building trust with child victims will take time and may be facilitated by providing practical support and consistent interest and care (Scottish report on child trafficking)
8. Understand the cultural contexts of trafficked children, and the implications for communicating and engaging with the diverse group of children and designing and providing appropriate services, (including ensuring access to professional DBS checked interpreters, diaspora community support and familiar foods where relevant).
9. Understand the need for a culturally sensitive approach to working with children and their families.
10. Understand the impact of trauma on an individual's wellbeing, and how to respond and support someone who experiences its effects.
11. Understand the importance of survivor-centred care and communication in therapeutic and support relationships.
12. Be able to assess if and when it is appropriate to start discussing the past or future with a survivor of trafficking.
13. Be aware of ongoing measures of control that may be used by traffickers, and have designated measures to reduce risk, including protocols around children who go missing, including where appropriate referral to Operation Innerste.
14. Be able to demonstrate how to use the trauma-informed code of conduct in care, support and advocacy.
15. Know how life story information enables more effective support and advocacy.
16. Be able to support survivors to communicate and advocate for themselves as appropriate.
17. Understand methods of disruption and prevention and explore alternative routes to mitigate the risk of re-exploitation

#### **Care and Support Needs**

18. Understand that care and support needs are likely to change over time and what aspects of a survivor's life is likely to influence this.
19. Understand how to obtain adequate background information about the child in terms of experiences at home, during their journey and, where relevant, on arrival in the UK/Ireland, over a period of time in order to undertake a holistic assessment of needs and develop an appropriate support plan to deal with the child's complete and often complex experiences, and taking into consideration the thoughts, wishes and feelings of the individual.
20. Understand the importance of enabling child victims to engage with other victims which undermines social isolation and allows them to build relationships through shared activities.
21. Understand the importance of explaining processes and supporting young people through complex systems.
22. Know the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's support provision and be able to identify other partner agencies to refer to or partner with to provide a high-quality service.
23. Be able to conduct risk assessments at different points in the survivors' care, such as, at point of identification; whilst living in care; whilst living with protective parents or guardians, at points of transition; and during longer term care.

24. Be aware of the process police and other criminal justice agencies go through in gathering evidence and best practice in supporting children who are willing to engage with police, a criminal investigation and a prosecution.
25. Know when to and be able to gather additional evidence from identified professionals to support applications for asylum or leave to remain or for legal claims.
26. Understand the importance of helping child victim's transition to adult care recognising their ongoing support needs and risk of being re-trafficked.

#### **Understanding Self in Practice**

27. Understand the potential emotional impact of providing care and support to victims/ survivors of MSHT.
28. Be aware of how your behaviour, body language, tone of voice and overall response can influence a survivor's understanding of your role, organisation and whether you can be trusted.
29. Be able to promote organisational practice that fosters equality of access and fair treatment of children and that encourages diversity and inclusion in service delivery and in the employment of practitioners.
30. Be able to use reflective practice to better understand the self as a practitioner, the impact you have on others, and how to improve standards of care and support.
31. Be able to promote TRAUMA-INFORMED organisational practice for staff and clients, being aware of the possibility of secondary trauma and strategies of TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP.
32. Be able to offer support to other staff through reflective supervision, which gives space and time to explore individuals' wellbeing.

## **County Lines (which is one type of Child Criminal Exploitation) as a form of Modern Slavery**

#### **What is the Phenomenon of County Lines?**

1. Understand the definition and reality of County Lines and the consequences for child victims.
2. Be able to recognise signs and indicators of County Lines/CCE, which include child sexual exploitation of male and female victims of CCE, and be aware that County Lines is dynamic and thus indicators evolve.
3. Be aware of the way in which grooming and rewiring of children/ young people are used in CCE as recruitment and control mechanisms, and how this can impact on the way children behave and interact with professionals.
4. Understand the factors that make groups of children/young people vulnerable to County Lines/CCE but be open to the evolution of County Lines and to new risk factors. (For example, risk factors include extra-familial harm, school exclusions, drug addiction, neuro-divergence and SEND – Special Education Needs and Disability.)
5. Be aware of the importance of professional curiosity in engaging with children who are victims of County Lines/CCE, including some who might have committed crimes while being exploited.

#### **National and International Legal Frameworks and Rights**

6. Understand the phenomena of County Lines as a form of child criminal exploitation (CCE) encompassed within the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

7. Be aware that children under the age of 18 cannot consent to their exploitation.
8. Be aware the appearance of children's spoken, written and body language may appear as consensual.
9. Understand County Lines/CCE through the lens and context of Child Protection and Safeguarding, Child Abuse and Modern Slavery and Trafficking, not Anti-Social Behaviour or gang involvement or lifestyle choice.
10. Be aware of Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act (Statutory Defence) in relation to CCE and the responsibilities of police to continue to investigate a modern slavery crime.

### **Safeguarding and Referral**

11. Understand the statutory duties for protecting children from harm, through a Section 47 investigation, under the 1989 Children's Act or an Article 66 investigation in Northern Ireland. In Scotland, Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, with its duty to promote welfare may be one policy lever to protect children from harm.
12. Understand the process of a referral to the National Referral Mechanism and the processes of safeguarding children and young people including referral to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians/Independent Guardians where available.
13. Understand what the National Referral Mechanism means in the context of children and the continued need to safeguard and support a child while waiting for a decision to be made. In addition, understand the NRM as a continuing process which requires professionals to update the Competent Authority and thus inform the decision-making process.
14. Understand the significance of missing episodes, the importance of return home interviews, preparing 'grab packs', recording thoroughly and circulating information of children as high risk missing.
15. Be aware of the potential impact of bias and stereotyping on professional decision-making which can have adverse impacts on child identification and referral. The adultification of some victims is an example of such bias.
16. Understand the important role that protective parents/guardians can play in helping to identify their child as a victim of County Lines, and in safeguarding and supporting their child, and understand how to engage parents/guardians in early stages. This includes understanding the complex situation and dynamics involving parents/guardians as protective factors and safeguarding partners and the different tools (e.g. risk assessments) that can be used to ensure it is safe for the child and the parents.
17. Be aware that siblings and parents of victims of County Lines may be vulnerable and need safeguarding as secondary victims.
18. Understand and identify barriers to disclosure and options to overcome them (including that some victims may not identify themselves as victims, and that experience of discrimination and biased treatment can act as a barrier that can influence the extent to which a child might feel it is safe to disclose).
19. Identify other children or vulnerable adults who may also be being exploited and make appropriate referrals.
20. Understand the importance of sharing information in a timely manner and across area borders, but also of sharing only on a 'need to know' basis where there is risk of harm.
21. Understand the importance of 'an appropriate adult' and be aware of the risk of this person exploiting the child.
22. Be aware that you may need to escalate information to Specific Point of Contact on Modern Slavery or a Safeguarding Lead in order that your organisation obtains a better understanding of a risk or problem of modern slavery in your local area which will require a strategic response to prevent and to reduce harm.

### **Meeting of Victims/Survivors Person Centred Victim Care**

23. Understand the way in which cultural intelligence can aid the support of child victims drawn from diverse communities.
24. Be able to support victims of CCE to talk about the things that have happened to them with careful and thoughtful questioning to ensure the complexity of experiences is understood.
25. Be aware that statements and accounts of County Lines exploited children may directly contradict that of parents due to rewiring process.
26. Understand the importance of documenting key elements of the child's experience including being missing, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), trauma/serious harm, plugging<sup>11</sup>, and the way in which language used can have positive or negative consequences to how children are treated and supported. Language that stereotypes or criminalises young people and their behaviour risks damaging the child's trust in professionals, discourages professional curiosity and may significantly hamper optimum support. It may also hamper understanding of the impact of trauma and rewiring on behaviour.
27. Understand the importance of ensuring children are aware of the professionals they are encountering and are involved in discussions about their futures, whilst recognising that rewiring is likely to continue to hamper children's agency; be aware that children may present as the voice of their groomers in County Lines.
28. Understand the Trauma-informed Code of Conduct for professionals working with survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking and how to put these into practice.

### **Care and Support Needs**

29. Understand the importance of early intervention, and how this may prevent children from becoming deeply embedded and trapped in County Lines and transitioning to 'alpha victims'.
30. Understand what, if any, support is available to child victims of CCE, including statutory and third sector organisations and be aware of the support pathways available to identified victims of CCE.
31. Be aware of the importance of sharing information about children and working in partnership to ensure they are safeguarded and supported, and conversely be aware when specific information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
32. Understand that CCE does not stop on the victim's 18th birthday, and the importance of transitional support as vulnerable trafficked children may transition to vulnerable trafficked adults.
33. Understand how information obtained in relation to victims of County Lines may be shared in order to disrupt or prevent County Lines.

### **Understanding Self in Practice**

34. Understand the potential emotional impact of providing care and support to victims/ survivors of MSHT.
35. Be aware of how your behaviour, body language, tone of voice and overall response can influence a survivors' understanding of your role, organisation and whether you can be trusted.
36. Be able to promote organisational practice that fosters equality of access and fair treatment of children and that encourages diversity and inclusion in service delivery and in the employment of practitioners.
37. Be able to use reflective practice to better understand the self as a practitioner, the impact you have on others, and how to improve standards of care and support.

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11 'Plugging' refers to drugs being concealed anally or vaginally for transportation purposes.

38. Be able to reflect on how new knowledge and skills affects professional practice.
39. Be able to promote TRAUMA-INFORMED organisational practice for staff and clients, being aware of the possibility of secondary trauma and strategies of TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP.

## Information and Resources to Support the Training

### Terminology

We understand that there are differing views about terminology used, however for the purposes of this framework the terms used in this document are set out below and their meaning clarified. Some of these definitions in this section have been taken directly from The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards 2018, and The Trauma Informed Code of Conduct, and the website of the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, to ensure consistency across key guidance documents.

#### MSHT

This acronym has been used throughout as shorthand for Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

#### Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is an umbrella term encompassing slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion and deception. Slavery violates human rights, denying people of their right to life, freedom and security.

The UN's Palermo Protocol defines human trafficking as the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat, or use of force, coercion or deception... to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation'. This has become the commonly accepted definition of human trafficking in international law. According to this definition, trafficking includes sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude, any form of slavery and removal of organs.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 redefines the legal terms of trafficking and slavery offences in England and Wales. These new offences – an amalgamation of pre-existing legislation and 'new' modern slavery terminology – cover definitions of 'slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour', 'human trafficking' and 'exploitation'. Similar legislation has also been passed in Scotland and Northern Ireland: Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, and Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. Ireland passed the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 and subsequently amended it, the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013.

The terms 'human trafficking' and 'modern slavery' are often used interchangeably. However, there is a distinction: the Modern Slavery Act differentiates human trafficking offences from offences of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, as does legislation in the other legal jurisdictions.

The government has described the difference as follows:

For a child to have been a victim of human trafficking there must have been:

- **Action** (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, which can include either domestic or cross-border movement)
- **Purpose** of exploitation (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, financial exploitation, illegal adoption, removal of organs)

For a child to have been a victim of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour there must have been:

- **Service** (an individual provides a service for benefit, e.g. begging, sexual services, manual labour, domestic service)

It is important to note that children cannot consent to their exploitation. However, common means used to exploit children include threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability. Understanding some of the means used to control and exploit children can be helpful when providing and planning support services.

#### The Multiple Forms of Exploitation

The UK government has produced a *Typology of Modern Slavery Offences*, which provides an overview of the various forms of exploitation that are prevalent in the UK (labour exploitation, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and exploitation for criminal activities), common modus operandi, as well as victim and offender profiles. These typologies may be relevant in the Republic of Ireland. Some typologies are specific to children like child sexual exploitation while in other typologies for domestic servitude or gang related criminal exploitation reference is made to the many child victims.

Expressions of exploitation may also change over time as offenders create new ways to exploit people. It is, however, important to note that cases of trafficking and victims will often not sit neatly into one category or the other. Frequently, exploitation can take multiple forms, and children can be manipulated and controlled in various ways. Therefore, whilst it is useful to understand the various forms of trafficking and modern slavery, it is essential to understand that in reality there may be no clear distinction between the exploitation types.

For more information about the different types of trafficking and their indicators, there are a number of resources that can be consulted, for example: the UK Human Trafficking Foundation's *Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities (Definitions and Indicators)* or the 2019 COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) *Human Trafficking and Exploitation Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities*.

#### Child

A child is a person under the age of 18.

#### Child Trafficking

'Child trafficking is defined in the United Nations' Palermo Protocol as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt" of a child for the purpose of exploitation and recognises that a child cannot consent to his or her own exploitation, regardless of whether he or she seemingly agrees to any element or genuinely understands the situation. A child is any person under the age of 18. The definition of

child trafficking differs from that of adults, which requires an additional element to be present – the ‘means’ of trafficking. Although the ‘means’ element is not required for the legal definition of child trafficking, it is often still a feature. **Child trafficking is child abuse and a human rights violation which must be treated as such, within a child protection context**’ (ECPAT, Child Trafficking in the UK: a snapshot, 2020, p. 6). Means may be very important in the care design for child victims.

## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)<sup>12</sup>

CCE is an overarching term that is often used to include children who are involved in ‘County Lines’ exploitation and also those who are victims of other forms of criminal exploitation. It may include forced begging, stealing and cannabis cultivation.

## County Lines as a form of CCE

‘County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults<sup>13</sup> to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons’ (Home Office, *Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance*, 2018, p 2). Since this definition was adopted the phenomenon of County Lines has also become localised.

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Department for Education has defined CSE in England as: ‘Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology’.<sup>14</sup> Scotland<sup>15</sup>, Wales<sup>16</sup>, Northern Ireland<sup>17</sup> and Ireland<sup>18</sup> also have policy related to child sexual exploitation.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACE

Adverse Childhood Experiences are events in childhood that cause severe stress, fear and powerlessness in children, to the extent that their developing brain and body may be negatively affected through complex internal pathways including stress hormone release and psychological responses.

ACE are linked to an increased relative risk of a host of diseases and disorders in adulthood from depression and anxiety through to cancers and autoimmune diseases. Social and relational difficulties are also recognised.<sup>19</sup>

The original ten forms of Adverse Childhood Experiences include physical, sexual and verbal abuse; physical and emotional neglect; a family member with a mental illness, a family member addicted to alcohol or another substance, a family member in prison, witnessing a mother being abused (domestic violence) and losing a parent to separation, divorce or death.

The concept of ACE has since been extended to many other experiences that can cause severe stress, fear and powerlessness in children. War, community violence, racism and other forms of discrimination can also affect children in these ways. Grooming<sup>20</sup> can also have this impact and has been linked to CSE and CCE. Trafficked children and adults have frequently experienced ACE before, during and after exploitation.

Children who have experienced ACE are at increased risk of Developmental Trauma (see section on Brain Development in Children who Experience Trauma).

## Victim/survivor

Both terms are used here to refer to the different ways individuals may reference their own experiences. Additionally, the term ‘potential victim’, ‘suspected victim’ and ‘victim’ are legal definitions. Where ‘potential victim’ is used in the training framework, it is only in relation to the official terminology within the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referring to a person who has not yet received their conclusive grounds decision. ‘Suspected victim’ is the formal term used in Ireland.

The training framework does not define when or where to use victim or survivor within developed modules but it is recommended that care is given over the use of these terms as people with lived experience may have a preferred terminology. If the organisation or trainer is able, a consultation with those with lived experience would help guide the use of terminology within the context of the training.

## ‘Alpha Victim’

‘Alpha victim’ is a term that is sometimes used to indicate where victims have progressed to recruit and exploit others, and their conditions may improve despite remaining a victim themselves. This is not always a term that is accepted within the sector but it is commonly used, particularly within law enforcement.

12 In Ireland as in all EU Member States that have adopted the expanded definition of human trafficking provided in Directive 2011/36/EU, the term used is ‘exploitation for the purposes of criminal activities’.

13 In Wales, the term used is ‘adults at risk’.

14 Department for Education, *Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision-makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation*, 201, p.5.

15 See <https://www.gov.scot/policies/child-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/>

16 See <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-sexual-exploitation.pdf>

17 See <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guidance.pdf>

18 See <https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2017/2/eng/enacted/a0217.pdf>

19 Hughes K, Bellis MA, Hardcastle KA, Sethi D, Butchart A, Mikton C, Jones L, Dunne MP. The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet*

20 The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) defines grooming as follows: ‘Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person’s family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.’

# Specialist Topics for Professionals Involved in Identifying, Supporting and Caring for Child Victims/Survivors of MSHT

Professionals working with child victims/survivors will find that a contextual safeguarding approach will provide an effective way to respond. Many of the topics raised below will help professionals respond to the context that has created vulnerability to modern slavery and need to be understood as part of the safeguarding response to children.

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to practice, policy and system design that takes account of the many different factors that contribute to trafficking and exploitation. As such, context will vary in different places – there will be no one size fits all approach, as the issues highlighted below will have differential impact and importance depending on the context.<sup>21</sup>

However, what this approach has to achieve will be the same wherever it is applied. It has to target the contexts in which trafficking and exploitation occur, from assessment through to intervention; it has to address needs and risk through the lens of child welfare, not immigration or crime reduction; it has to engage and draw on knowledge and partnerships across specialist services and civil society. In short it has to take an ecological approach to all aspects of children's lives and circumstances.

## Accompanied and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children often face a multitude of complex and traumatic experiences when arriving in the UK. When considering a child's needs, it is important to take into consideration all aspects of their journey to this country. This trauma can include the impact of their previous experiences, such as potentially fleeing war, conflict and persecution in their country of origin. Furthermore, their journey to the UK can be dangerous, with many experiencing separation from their family and exploitation. The perils inherent in this journey can be deeply traumatising in themselves.

On arrival in the UK it is easy to assume that children will feel a sense of safety and security however this is often far from reality as they enter a new phase of challenges which can be re-traumatising. As a population, these children arrive with significantly higher levels of Post-Traumatic Stress and trauma symptoms. They then may face complex legal processes which for many unaccompanied children may involve an age assessment, access to limited financial and material resource and isolation. In addition to this, these children may be placed in multiple locations across the country, whilst adjusting to a new language and culture. These difficulties can mean that a sense of stability and belonging can be hard to achieve at a time when it is desperately needed. It is essential that practitioners take into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities unique to this group of children and provide tailored interventions that account for the level of trauma they have experienced.

## Adultification

Adultification is a form of bias where children are perceived to be more adult like. This means, some children may not be afforded the same protection, care and curiosity as their peers. Adultification can impact any child, from the language professionals use such as, 'streetwise' or the assumptions made about a child's perceived strength. However, research has identified that Black children are more likely to experience adultification bias – this is due to racism acting as the compounding factor influencing the extent to which professionals carry out their safeguarding duties.<sup>22</sup>

Black children are more likely to be perceived as not being innocent, vulnerable and in need of nurture. Instead, this is replaced with suspicion, increased culpability and assumed deviancy. Therefore, it is important that all professionals actively commit to reflect, acknowledge and address their biases and prejudice. This includes holding courageous conversations and embedding equity, diversity and inclusion as an underpinning area of all service provision.

## Child and Adolescent Brain Development: The Basics

Brain development begins within the womb, and adaptations to danger and threat may begin before the baby is born. During this sensitive stage, babies' brains and bodies may also be affected by other harms such as high maternal alcohol or drug use (which may be coping mechanisms in a very challenging circumstance), violence, malnutrition and lack of antenatal care. Children may also be exposed in pregnancy to other high stress environments affecting their mother, such as modern slavery, domestic abuse, severe poverty, racial discrimination or migration-related challenges.

The early years of life are vital for healthy brain development. Young children need to feel safe, loved, nurtured and protected. They need active, attuned and responsive communication with their caregivers – the foundations for healthy attachment, shaping their view of themselves, others, the world, and providing a safe base from which to explore, be curious, make friends, play, and learn. Physical health and wellbeing also affect brain development, including factors such as nutrition, exercise and the impacts of any disease, disorder, disability or injury.

Between approximately the ages of 10-26 years children's brains undergo very significant periods of growth, change and remodelling influenced by their age, experiences and puberty hormones. Brain changes that take the child towards adult thinking start at the back of the brain, with the front of the brain (the pre-frontal cortex) responsible for decision-making, planning, thinking through of consequences of actions, problem solving and impulse-control developing last. During this time, the brain can rely more on its 'danger-alert' centre (*the amygdala*) to help decision making more than adults do. The amygdala is associated with emotions, instinctive behaviour, impulses and aggression. It is also normal for different aspects of development to mature at different speeds, for example, whilst a child may be physically or academically very capable, their emotional age may be much younger.

In early adolescence (approx. 10-13 years), children often grow quickly and start to enter puberty. At this age, thinking can be very black and white (concrete) with issues or people either seen as good or bad, right or wrong, great or awful without much ability to see all the spectrum in between. Children can also be quite focused on themselves and may feel like others are judging them. They may push for more privacy and react strongly against boundaries.

21 <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2019/03/25/contextual-safeguarding-new-way-identifying-need-risk/>

22 Davis, J. and Marsh, N. (2020) Boys to men: the cost of 'adultification' in safeguarding responses to Black boys, *Critical and Radical Social Work*, vol xx, no xx, 1–4, DOI: 10.1332/204986020X15945756023543

Between approximately 14-17 years (middle adolescence), puberty and physical changes continue along with increased interest in romantic and sexual relationships. For children questioning their gender or sexual identity this can be a very stressful time, especially if unsupported. At this age, peer pressure and the need to be accepted by the peer group is very important. Children may struggle with their parents/carers for increasing independence. Even though middle adolescents may look physically mature, their **brains remain significantly different from adults**. A child at this age may have more ability to think abstractly, consider consequences and the 'bigger picture' but may well be unable to apply these thoughts in the moment. Strong emotions may still rule decision-making. Even children with healthy brain development do not think and see the world as adults do and **cannot consent to their exploitation, regardless of their belief they made a fully free decision**.

By late adolescence (18-21+ years) the brain continues to develop. Young adults with healthy development *may* have the ability now to better judge risks and rewards and have a better sense of their identity and values.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma (well recognised before, during and after modern slavery and human trafficking and which may reflect contextual factors like migration, poverty and racism) can profoundly disrupt normal patterns of brain development.**

## Brain Development in Children who have Experienced Trauma: The Basics

Children can become victims of trafficking online and/or offline from birth onwards. Children can be exploited for many reasons, including their developmental vulnerabilities and more limited and innocent 'child's view' of the world and others. Children can also be manipulated by provoking powerful emotions including fear, shame and guilt (as well as happy feelings, such as feeling accepted in an aspired-to peer group, or being given a gift), more readily believing what they are told by adults with more power. Some children feel a very strong need to support their family during difficult times and may be attracted by apparent ways to gain needed money or material goods when other options are not known or available to them. In such circumstances, the desire to support parents or siblings may be used by exploiters, knowing that children are very unlikely to understand and measure up the risks of what exploiters may ask them or demand them to do. These interpersonal aspects of MSHT can cause particularly complex trauma and attachment responses as it occurs in the context of a child's human relationships.

### Trauma and survivor mode

Trauma is an internal response to situations of fear and powerlessness. Children and adolescents in MSHT exploitation are frequently exposed to actions and relationships that provoke stress, fear and a sense of powerlessness. For children and adolescents without a safe, trusted adult to work through these feelings (due to physical isolation and/or emotional isolation through parental unavailability or grooming etc.), the appropriate biological and psychological stress responses may not be easily processed in a healthy way. Additionally, once within County Lines exploitation, the frequency of fear responses being triggered can be very high and there is no ability to calm before the next threat arrives. These situations can effectively lead to children becoming 'stuck' in high-alert survival mode which has major impacts on brain and body development.

The 'survival-mode' and trauma response behaviours have a wide spectrum of presentations, all with some purpose of trying to protect the child. These behaviours stem **from subconscious and instinctive protective responses and are not the free choice of the child** from a range of options.

The basic threat responses include **the fight, flight, freeze, appease and submit responses** (examples below, not exhaustive):

1. **'Fight' response** can look like aggression, 'disrespectful behaviour', agitation, irritability, wariness, anger, pushing people away, controlling or demanding behaviour and increasing physical presence etc.
2. **'Flight' response** can look like self-protection through running away, hiding, hyperactivity, disruptive, clumsy or 'silly' behaviour, inability to concentrate due to considering ways to escape the threat (remember as professionals we may be the perceived threat)
3. **'Freeze' response** can look like a child who is distracted, not listening, confused, forgetful, physically still or not moving as asked. Children may also look distant, have poor eye contact and struggle to communicate.
4. **'Appease and Submit' (may be called 'collapse')** responses are self-protective as children try to minimise harm to themselves by making themselves as small and unnoticeable as possible, and/or by doing what more powerful others demand or seem to be pleased by. Children may have low mood, appear withdrawn, not questioning or answering questions beyond the minimum, compliant, easily bullied.

More complex means of self-protection can also be employed by children, including lying and rejection of safe adults. Situations may be complicated by the child feeling shame and horror about their actions and/or coping mechanisms, responding by pushing away people who care to avoid the deep pain of rejection. Memory, timelines and the ability to verbalise their experiences may also be disrupted.

For children with layers of adversity and trauma, forms of dissociation may occur with the potential for major disruption to a child's memory, core identity and personality. In effect, the overwhelm from their negative experiences can only be survivable by finding escape and coping mechanisms within their subconscious mind, particularly when they have been unable to escape from harm physically. Dissociation is often poorly recognised and misunderstood, leading to much confusion for both the child and the adults trying to interpret their behaviour.

The chronic stress hormones that maintain the 'survival mode' also increase the relative risk of a host of physical and mental health problems in the short and long term, from depression to cancer. Additionally, children may be drawn to coping mechanisms with health consequences such as alcohol, smoking, substances, unhealthy food and self-harm to manage their psychological distress. Whilst living in 'survival mode', many children will also struggle to maintain their learning at school or other skills no longer vital for survival itself.

Children and adolescents exploited in MSHT are highly likely to have trauma and complex trauma responses. They require trauma-informed care from all professionals involved to ensure their behaviours are not dismissed as 'bad behaviour' and are recognised as protective mechanisms. Trauma specialist psychotherapy must be considered. Restoring children's safety and calming the threat response is paramount to supporting healing and restoration of healthy development.

More details on developmental trauma, child trafficking and health can be obtained in the footnote.<sup>23</sup> NHS North Lanarkshire developed a video on Trauma and the Brain to help police and other professionals

23 Wood LCN, Child modern slavery, trafficking and health: a practical review of factors contributing to children's vulnerability and the potential impacts of severe exploitation on health, *BMJ Paediatrics Open* 2020;4:1. Available online at: <https://bmjpaedsopen.bmj.com/content/4/1/e000327> and Beacon House Developmental Trauma Close Up (Updated January 2020) Available online at <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Developmental-Trauma-Close-Up-Revised-Jan-2020.pdf>



understand the traumatic impact of abuse and what it means for how they interact with victims.<sup>24</sup>

## County Lines Rewiring

SPACE<sup>25</sup> describe the characteristic manipulation and exploitation tactic prevalent within County Lines as a 'Pied Piper' *rewiring*, as this goes far beyond that suggested by the term grooming. It is a cult-like, intense form of brainwashing leading to an extreme change in a victim's character, the impact of which is significant, triggering radicalisation into criminality, serious violence and extremism as well as fabricated, scripted claims of familial abuse. Victims fervently choose organised crime groups over family as a symptom of the deadly puppetry remotely controlling not only their actions and movements but thoughts, decisions and consent, with children magnetised and mobilised by extra-familial instructions no matter the familial pull or guidance.

## Language Used During Engagement with Child Victims/Survivors or Used in Recording Relevant Information

The use of language when supporting trafficked survivors is vital in developing their independence following experiences of exploitation. Using language which allows survivors to make their own choices within safe boundaries supports them in developing a sense of agency and safe/unsafe decision making. For example, when making appointments with a survivor, they can be given the choice of date, time and location. This is a safe decision – it doesn't give them the option to disengage entirely, which young people still in situations of exploitation may try to do, but it does allow some independent thinking and the element of choice.

Unconditional positive regard is an important approach with survivors – no matter what they have been through, language can be used to reinforce that they have value, they are important, and they deserve to be safe. Due to the psychological abuse survivors experience from traffickers, they often develop unsafe or overly self-critical thinking patterns. These thinking patterns can become mental protectors. Breaking them down takes significant time and professional intervention. It is important for survivors to know that the people around them understand them and do not think negatively of them as a result of their protective barriers. A helpful phrase when dealing with a survivor making unsafe decisions or experiencing negative emotions can be "I understand, but I don't agree" – when you start by explaining that human beings commonly have different ways of thinking and that disagreement can be healthy, this phrase then externalises the issue and allows survivor and professional to seek a common understanding, rather than the survivor feeling that their feelings are "wrong".

**Appropriate Terminology and Language:** Victim Support and the UK National Police Chief Councils have provided professional guidance on *Appropriate Language: Child Sexual Exploitation And/Or Child Criminal Exploitation*. The report states that it is imperative to use 'appropriate terminology when discussing children and young people who have been exploited, or at risk of exploitation. Language implying that the child or young person is complicit in any way, or responsible for the crimes that have happened or may happen to them, must be avoided.

Language should reflect the presence of coercion and the lack of control young people have in abusive or exploitative situations, and it must recognise the severity of the impact exploitation has on the child or young person.

Victim-blaming language may reinforce messages from perpetrators about shame and guilt. This in turn may prevent the child or young person from disclosing their abuse, through fear of being blamed by professionals. When victim-blaming language is used amongst professionals, there is a risk of normalising and minimising the child's experience, resulting in a lack of appropriate response'.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, the recent report, *Making Words Matter: Attending to Language when working with children subject to or at risk of Exploitation*, draws on research and experience to make a strong case for why language matters. Moreover, it explores the 'impact of language use and the implications it has on providing effective support to children and young people who have been subject to exploitation. It refers to language used verbally and that which is written in files, referrals, assessments and reports' (2021, p.5). It provides helpful suggestions for practitioners and services in terms of attending to language in their work with children and young people.<sup>27</sup>

## Trigger Warnings

People who have experienced traumatic events can often experience distress when reminded of those events. This can be the result of either direct reminders, such as being asked to talk about the events, or from events not directly related to their own experience but similar enough to act as a reminder, such as an abuse victim/survivor seeing portrayals of abuse on television. These reminders are sometimes called **triggers**, as they may trigger the distress response in survivors.

A **trigger warning** is a method of alerting survivors to potentially distressing content and allowing them the opportunity to either choose not to engage, or to prepare themselves to be able to proceed. Survivors of trafficking are likely to have experienced multiple traumas. When supporting them, trigger warnings are a useful tool for preparing them for the content of any discussions and enabling them to make informed decisions with regard to their own distress management. When working alongside a survivor, it is advisable to discuss before the start of every session what you are likely to cover, how they can let you know if they are experiencing distress, and how they would like you to respond to their distress. You may want to give examples of common trigger warnings and ask if there are any they would like you to be mindful of.

Common examples include providing advance warning that sessions may include discussion of violence, sexual assault, domestic abuse, verbal abuse/threats, self-harm/suicide, imprisonment, misogyny, and homophobia/transphobia, though this is certainly not an exhaustive list. It is also worth letting survivors know how to look for trigger warnings in everyday life. For example, at the start of every film or TV show on Netflix, warnings will appear in the top left-hand corner of the screen advising of any content which some viewers may wish to avoid.

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24 See: <https://vimeo.com/325875547>

25 SPACE is a self-funded organisation founded in January 2018, in response to the national prevalence of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and the County Lines phenomenon which has entrenched thousands of young children and people into serious violence and organised crime. <http://www.bespaceaware.co.uk/>

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26 <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Guidance-App-Language-Toolkit.pdf> p. 2

27 Appiah, A., Baguley, S., SPACE, & Farooq, R. (2021). *Making Words Matter. Attending to Language when working with children subject to or at risk of Exploitation: A Practice and Knowledge Briefing*. NWG Network, Derby, UK

# Relevant Convention and Domestic Policies in Relation to Children

These training standards are designed to support those working with children and young people. They have been framed within the international human rights framework governing the rights of the child, which is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They have been designed, as far as possible, to complement different approaches, policy and legislation requirements in relation to the different legal jurisdictions of the UK, England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland which need to be considered. For further information, please see:

## UK (including England and Wales)

- Home Office (2018) Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance\\_-\\_Sept2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance_-_Sept2018.pdf)
- Home Office (2021) Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/993172/Modern\\_Slavery\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_\\_EW\\_\\_Non-Statutory\\_Guidance\\_\\_SNI\\_\\_v2.3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993172/Modern_Slavery_Statutory_Guidance__EW__Non-Statutory_Guidance__SNI__v2.3.pdf)

## England

- HM Government (2011) Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practiceguidance>
- HM Government (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942454/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_inter\\_agency\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)
- Department for Education (2017) Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591903/CSE\\_Guidance\\_Core\\_Document\\_13.02.2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf)
- Home Office (2021) Interim Guidance for Independent Child Trafficking Guardians. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/990138/Interim\\_guidance\\_for\\_Independent\\_Child\\_Trafficking\\_Guardians.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990138/Interim_guidance_for_Independent_Child_Trafficking_Guardians.pdf)
- Department for Education (2017) Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery: Statutory guidance for local authorities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children>
- Department for Education (2014) Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

## Wales

- *Welsh Government (2018) Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk.* <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/working-together-to-safeguard-people-volume-5-handling-individual-cases-to-protect-children-at-risk.pdf>
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures for Children.

<https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/>

- All Wales Practice Guides:
  - *Safeguarding Children from CSE.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p10.html>
  - *Safeguarding Children who may be trafficked.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p3.html>
  - *Safeguarding Children from CCE.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p1.html>
  - *Safeguarding Children who go missing from home or care.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p9.html>
  - *Safeguarding children from harmful practices related to tradition, culture, religion or superstition.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p2.html>
  - *Safeguarding Children from Online Abuse.* <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p6.html>

Home Office (2021) Interim Guidance for Independent Child Trafficking Guardians. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/990138/Interim\\_guidance\\_for\\_Independent\\_Child\\_Trafficking\\_Guardians.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990138/Interim_guidance_for_Independent_Child_Trafficking_Guardians.pdf)

- Wales Safeguarding Project Procedures Board (2020)
- All Wales Practice Guide, Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p9.html>

## Scotland

- *Safeguarding Children in Scotland Who May Have Been Trafficked (2009)* [http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/files/documents/safeguarding\\_children\\_in\\_scotland\\_who\\_may\\_have\\_been\\_trafficked\\_2009\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/files/documents/safeguarding_children_in_scotland_who_may_have_been_trafficked_2009_guidance.pdf)
- The Scottish Government (2013) *National Child Protection Guidance in Scotland.* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland/documents/>
- *National Referral Mechanism (NRM): Toolkit for First Responders in Scotland.* <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/National%20Referral%20Mechanism%20Toolkit%20March%202021.pdf>
- The Scottish Government (2013) *Inter-Agency Guidance for Child Trafficking: Child Trafficking Assessment National Referral Mechanism.* <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2013/11/inter-agency-guidance-child-trafficking/documents/00437636-pdf/00437636-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00437636.pdf>
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Trauma Training Programme. <https://transformingspsychologicaltrauma.scot/>
- National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation. <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2016/03/scotlands-national-action-plan-prevent-tackle-child-sexual-exploitation-update/documents/00497283-pdf/00497283-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00497283.pdf>
- *COSLA Human Trafficking and Exploitation Guidance* <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/resources/human-trafficking-exploitation-guidance>
- *Scottish Government Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy.* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trafficking-exploitation-strategy/>
- Scottish Government (2017) National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2017/05/national-missing-persons-framework-scotland/documents/00517676-pdf/00517676-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00517676.pdf>

## Northern Ireland

- *Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Child Victims and Potential Child Victims of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery 2018*, Guidance issued by The Health and Social Care Board and The Police Service for Northern Ireland (currently under review). [https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/files/working\\_arrang\\_guid.pdf](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/files/working_arrang_guid.pdf)
- *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016*. <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>
- *Protocol for Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Officers of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse – Northern Ireland 2018*. <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/policies-protocols-and-guidelines/Protocol-for-Joint-Investigation-by-Social-Workers-and-Police-Officers-of-Alleged-and-Suspected-Cases-of-Child-Abuse-Northern-Ireland-March-2018.pdf>
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 – Section 21 covers the role and remit of Independent Guardians. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ni/2015/2/contents>
- Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) (2015) Runaway and Missing from Home and Care, Missing children Protocol <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/policies-protocols-and-guidelines/Missing-Children-Protocol-June-2015.pdf>

## Republic of Ireland

- Children First Act 2015. <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/4ed9ba-children-first-act-2015/>
- Children First Guidance. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/114c50-children-first-national-guidelines-for-the-protection-and-welfare-of/>
- TUSLA Child Protection and Welfare Handbook. [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF\\_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf)

## Public Health Approach to Modern Slavery

A public health approach to prevent modern slavery seeks to prevent human trafficking and modern slavery, to reduce the potential for future exploitation of children and to limit and reduce the harm caused to child victims. It advocates a whole system approach where agencies, often already working in partnership, come together in a more coordinated manner and respond more effectively to the problem at a population level rather than solely in terms of the individual victim. The public health approach 'is a way of thinking and acting collectively to address a problem that can damage health and wellbeing.' Taking a public health approach in relation to children means:

- Using data and intelligence to understand the problem at a population level;
- Understanding the risk factors which can make a child more likely to become a victim and protective factors which can mitigate against victimisation;
- Looking at what is driving or causing the problem and framing it as part of a complex, multi-level and interdependent system;
- Focusing on generating long term as well as short term solutions;
- Protecting and promoting health and wellbeing;
- Not being constrained by organisational or professional boundaries; and
- Addressing inequalities, social justice and human rights.<sup>28</sup>

28 Elizabeth Such, Kate Hayes, Jonathan Woodward, Ines Campos-Matos and April McCoig, Refining a public health approach to modern slavery, June 2021 and World Health Organization, The public health approach, 2011. [www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public_health/en/)

## International and Domestic Victims' Entitlements

The European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ('the Trafficking Convention'), which was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2005, sets out minimum standard requirements for victims' identification, protection and assistance (Arts. 10-16). They place obligations on the UK and the Republic of Ireland. In addition the Convention makes specific reference to children. Article 12 places an obligation on States to ensure access to education for child victims. Moreover it says "each Party shall ensure that services are provided on a consensual and informed basis, taking due account of the special needs of persons in a vulnerable position and the rights of children in terms of accommodation, education and appropriate health care." Article 16 refers to repatriation and makes particular reference to how programmes of return need to ensure children are reintegrated into their own society. It says, "with regard to children, these programmes should include enjoyment of the right to education and measures to secure adequate care or receipt by the family or appropriate care structures."

In addition to the Council of Europe's Trafficking Convention, in 2011 the EU adopted the Directive on Preventing and Combating Trafficking which reinforced the need for an integrated, holistic, and human rights-based approach to trafficking. The Directive creates a legal obligation for EU Member States to provide victim-centred support that is tailored to survivors' needs and delivered for an adequate length of time (2011/36/EU, para.18, Arts. 11-12). Directive 2012/29/EU provides additional rights to protection of children and the standard has to be read in combination with Directive 2011/36/EU.

For more information, refer to 'The EU Rights of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings on the Rights and Entitlements of Trafficking Survivors' (EU Commission, 2013). These are set out below and currently remain applicable in the Republic of Ireland and the UK.

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The Directive on Preventing and combatting trafficking requires that victims are granted assistance which includes 'at least standards of living capable of ensuring victims' subsistence'.

This includes:

- ▶ Access to a recovery and reflection period of at least 30 days to recover;
- ▶ Access to safe accommodation and material assistance;
- ▶ Access to translation and interpretation services;
- ▶ Access to legal advice;
- ▶ Access to medical services; and psychological services;
- ▶ Access to compensation;
- ▶ Access to vocational training and employment opportunities (when a resident permit is granted);
- ▶ Assistance for a safe repatriation and return.

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## Domestic process

The UK ratified the Council of Europe Trafficking Convention and opted into the EU Directive. In 2009 the UK government established a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to identify possible victims of human trafficking and provide them with the protection and support during the identification process. The NRM is a policy scheme, rather than a statutory system. It is compulsory to refer all child victims into the NRM. First Responder organisations have responsibility for referring children. See footnotes to identify First Responders for England and Wales<sup>29</sup>,

29 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>

Scotland<sup>30</sup> and Northern Ireland<sup>31</sup>.

The Republic of Ireland ratified the Trafficking Convention and opted into the EU Directive. The Irish government established a National Referral Mechanism with An Garda Síochána (Irish Police Service) as the First Responder. The Minister for Justice has announced changes to the NRM that will be based on a multiagency approach involving Civil Society Organisations as trusted partners. Legislation for the revised NRM is expected before the end of 2021.

## Local Authority, Health and Social Care Trusts, The Child and Family Agency Responsibilities

The Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance for England and Wales makes clear that 'Local authorities are the primary service provider for safeguarding child victims regardless of their nationality or immigration. Relevant child protection procedures, as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* must be followed if modern slavery is suspected.' For Wales, the relevant child safeguarding protocols must be followed. Local authorities also have this responsibility in Scotland as outlined in the *Human Trafficking and Exploitation Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities*. In Northern Ireland the responsibility for care and support lies with Health and Social Care Trusts who must act in compliance with the Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Joint Protocol. It is then the responsibility of the lead social worker to refer a child to the Independent Guardians in Northern Ireland. In Ireland The Child and Family Agency (Tusla) has responsibility for children identified as potential victims of human trafficking and operate under the Children First Guidelines.

Best practice for children's social care is to keep children informed of what is happening in relation to the NRM as well as support using trauma-informed and age-appropriate methods of communication in a language that they fully understand

## National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Process

A National Referral Mechanism has been developed in the UK. The Republic of Ireland also devised an NRM. Both governments responded to their obligation under Article 10 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; "in identifying and helping victims, including children". The effectiveness of the identification process and support system are assessed by GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings).

## First Responder

In the UK and Ireland, First Responder organisations<sup>32</sup> are authorised to refer a potential (child) victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism. First Responder organisations have specific responsibilities to:

- Identify potential victims of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and/or forced or compulsory labour through the use of indicators.
- Gather information, from multiple agencies where possible, in order to understand what has happened to child victim.
- Refer child to Independent Child Trafficking Guardians or Independent Guardians where they exist.
- Refer child to the relevant Local Authority children's services for safeguarding.
- Contact the police if there is an immediate threat to the child victim.
- Explain the NRM to the child, making use of professional interpreters where this is necessary to ensure they understand what is happening to them in terms of a referral to the NRM, safeguarding and the role of the guardian where they are available.
- Refer child to NRM by completing an NRM form. First Responders in the UK can complete the NRM referral by accessing the Modern Slavery Portal: <https://www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start>.
- Continue to engage with the relevant Competent Authority, by updating records with new information, or as a result of the Competent Authority seeking additional information to aid decision-making.

Practitioners should be aware there are different cohorts of First Responder organisations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

## Referring Children

When encountering a child victim, First Responders should ensure the Local Authority children's services are contacted immediately as the NRM **does not** safeguard children. An NRM referral should still be made by the First Responder who identified the child victim. Child victims do not need to consent to enter the NRM in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and as such, an NRM referral should always be made using the Modern Slavery Portal. Even though children do not need to consent to enter the NRM every effort should be made to ensure the child understands what is happening. In Scotland there is no legal duty to refer to the NRM, although Scottish Government policy indicates that children suspected as being victims of trafficking are referred.

The First Responder should always make a referral to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG) service if available in the area in England and Wales. It is the responsibility of the lead social worker to refer a child to the Independent Guardians in Northern Ireland, or Guardians for unaccompanied minors in Scotland.

The First Responder may need to engage with Operation Innerste in order to better safeguard unaccompanied migrant children (see below).

The First Responder should liaise with the multi-agency response team safeguarding and supporting a child victim, in order to obtain information to update the Competent Authority and aid their decision-making. In addition, they have a responsibility to update the Competent Authority if it requests additional information. The First Responder has an ongoing responsibility for each child it refers to the NRM as the NRM is a process not a one-off event.

30 [https://portal.scot.nhs.uk/staticresources/eLearning/Human%20Trafficking/HumanTrafficking\\_14.htm](https://portal.scot.nhs.uk/staticresources/eLearning/Human%20Trafficking/HumanTrafficking_14.htm)

31 Includes enforcement agencies, Migrant Help and Health and Social Care Trusts.

32 For example, the police, local authorities, the Salvation Army, Immigration Enforcement, some NGOs. First Responder organisations vary across the legal jurisdictions.

## Independent Child Trafficking Guardians or Independent Guardians

At the time of publication, Independent Child Trafficking Guardians have been introduced in two-thirds of local authorities across England and Wales.<sup>33</sup> In Northern Ireland Independent Guardians are appointed to assist, represent and support a child where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the child is a victim of trafficking in human beings. In Scotland there are Independent Guardians for all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and children who have been trafficked. They provide the guardianship role and work with but are independent from the local authority social worker. This is a national service in Scotland and covers all 32 Local Authority areas. In Ireland guardianship for unaccompanied migrant children is delegated to the body TUSLA (state family and child agency). The practical implementation of this guardianship is provided by social workers working for TUSLA.<sup>34</sup>

## Operation Innerste

Is a multi-agency response to better safeguard unaccompanied migrant children who arrive in the England and Wales via irregular means. It is an initial welfare procedure, there will be no questions about asylum claims, or any other immigration applications. It seeks to enable agencies to build trust and rapport with the child to maximise the safeguarding opportunities to prevent the child going missing and prevent further harm, re-trafficking and re-exploitation. Operation Innerste aims to provide the child with the appropriate immediate safeguarding response, ensuring they are not arrested and allowing a child to express their needs and concerns. Authorities are then able to provide the correct support, services and protection all children are entitled to. Fingerprints and photographs are taken as reference points if children go missing, are trafficked, commit a crime, or are found in distressing circumstances. Police should request an Innerste pack from The National Command and Control Unit (NCCU) on telephone 03000 134 999 (available 24/7), upon identification of an unaccompanied migrant child. Local Authorities should request the attendance of the Home Office Safeguarding Advice and Children's Champion to a Section 47 strategy meeting also via The National Command and Control Unit (NCCU: telephone 03000 134 999).

## NRM Decision-Making

Both the UK and the Republic of Ireland governments have established their own NRMs which operate as the framework to identify victims. The following are the decisions and roles that form part of this process.

### Reasonable Grounds Decision

The Single Competent Authority must determine from a referral from a First Responder whether they suspect but cannot prove this person is a potential victim of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and/or forced or compulsory labour. The result is either positive or negative. The aim is to make decision within five working days of the referral.

### Conclusive Grounds Decision

The Single Competent Authority must determine whether, 'on the balance of probabilities' there are sufficient grounds to decide the individual being considered is a victim of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and/or forced or compulsory labour.

### Single Competent Authority/Competent Authorities

The Single Competent Authority is a department within the Home Office who receive all referrals from First Responders. The Single Competent Authority makes a decision on all NRM referrals regardless of nationality or immigration. The single Competent Authority must make the Reasonable Grounds Decision, and Conclusive Grounds Decision. If a negative conclusive grounds decision is made this is sent to the Multi-Agency Assurance Panel who review the case and if the Panel believe that processes have not been adhered to, they can send it back to the SCA for further consideration. In 2021 the Modern Slavery Unit launched a series of pilots to test devolving the responsibility to make NRM decisions from the Home Office to local authorities. The one-year pilots will test whether determining if a child is a victim of modern slavery within existing safeguarding structures is a more appropriate model for making modern slavery decisions for children.

In Ireland the decisions are currently made by the An Garda Síochána, but the NRM is undergoing change which will involve more agencies in referring victims, and in the identification process. The Irish government is proposing that the Department of Justice Immigration Services, Department of Social Protection, The HSE, Tusla, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and the International Protection Accommodation Services also become Competent Authorities with power to identify victims of human trafficking.

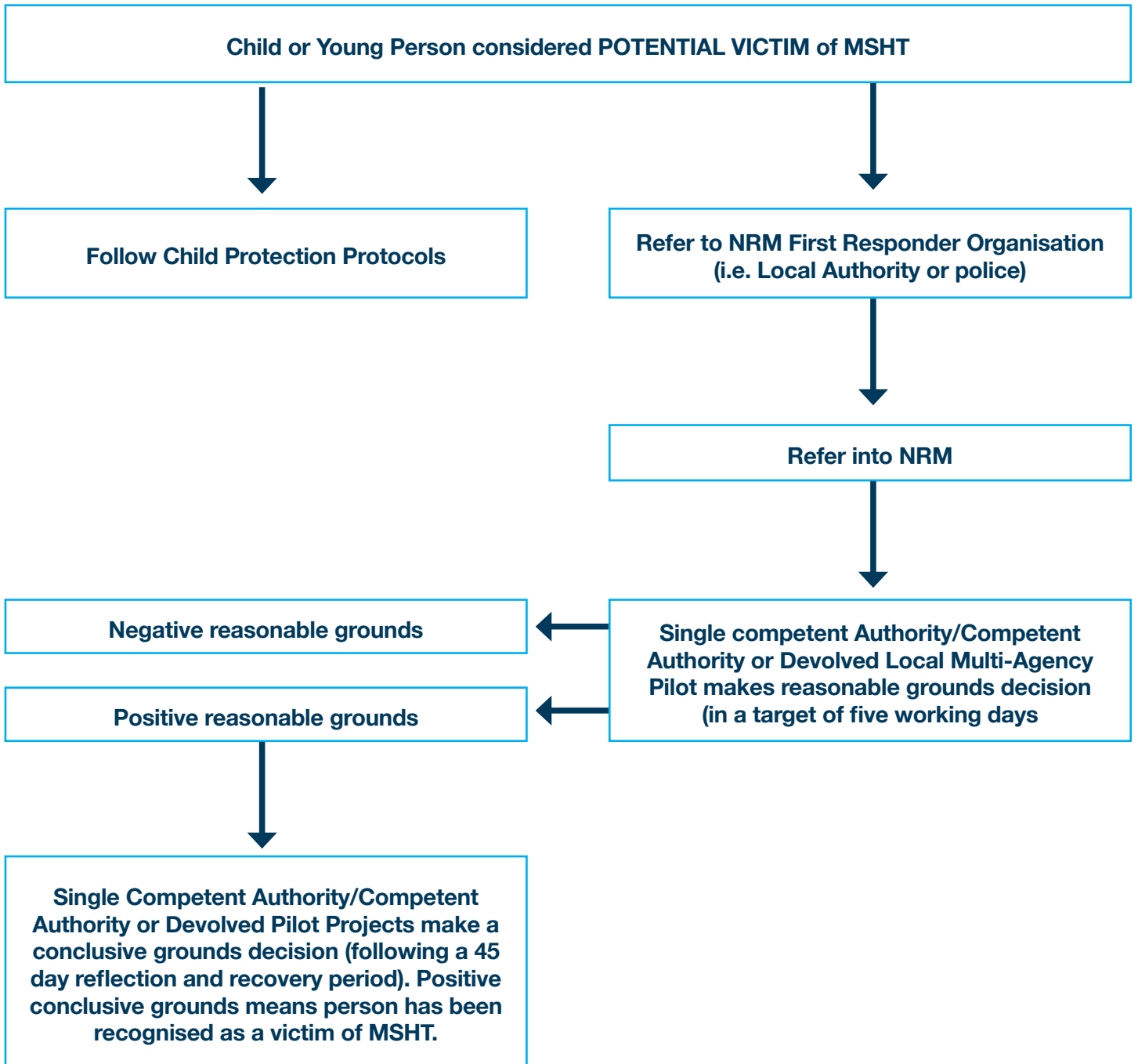
### Discretionary Leave to Remain for Victims of Trafficking

The standard for a residence permit for children is clarified at Article 14 (2) which states that 'the residence permit for child victims, when legally necessary, shall be issued in accordance with the best interests of the child and, where appropriate, renewed under the same conditions.' The explanatory report to ECAT goes on to state at paragraph 186: 'In the case of children, the child's best interests take precedence over the above two requirements. The words "when legally necessary" have been introduced in order to take into account the fact that certain States do not require for children a residence permit.' Current discretionary leave policy states: "the best interests of the child is regarded as a primary consideration (although not necessarily the only consideration) and one that can affect the duration of leave granted. See section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 for further guidance, and article 14(2) of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.' For further info see: <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/child-trafficking-in-the-uk-2020-snapshot>.

33 Home Office, *Interim Guidance for Independent Child Trafficking Guardians*, May 2021. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/990138/Interim\\_guidance\\_for\\_Independent\\_Child\\_Trafficking\\_Guardians.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990138/Interim_guidance_for_Independent_Child_Trafficking_Guardians.pdf)

34 In Ireland child victims under the age of 12 go into foster care. The provision of legal advice remains problematic in Ireland and resources for this are not formally and sufficiently allocated. Decisions for important matters, such as application for international protection are taken by the social case worker responsible for the child victim.

# Referral Process for Children



# Additional Resources

## (not exhaustive)

### Safeguarding

COSLA, *Human Trafficking and Exploitation Guidance and toolkit*, 2019. <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/resources/human-trafficking-exploitation-guidance>

Department of Health and Social Care, *Bridging the Gap: transitional safeguarding and the role of social work with adults*, 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bridging-the-gap-transitional-safeguarding-and-the-role-of-social-work-with-adults>

Wroe L., *Contextual Safeguarding and 'County Lines'*, October 2019, University of Bedfordshire: Institute of Applied Research. <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/contextual-safeguarding-and-county-lines/>

### Resources on Service Delivery

ECPAT, ReACT project resources which seek to increase the capacity of representatives to provide appropriate support and uphold the rights of trafficked children during legal proceedings in key trafficking destination countries. <https://www.ecpat.org.uk/react-resources>

National County Lines Co-ordination Centre videos on YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3yY\\_GgyH6-clM9DPY7JUJpw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3yY_GgyH6-clM9DPY7JUJpw)

The Children's Society produces a number of helpful resources that can be accessed through this link: <https://www.flipsnack.com/CAT7CFEBBDC9/all-prevention-resources/full-view.html>

These include:

- *Responding to Children telling you they have experienced Sexual Abuse, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, 2021*
- *Online Safeguarding: The Dark Web – What it is?*
- *The National Referral Mechanism: A guide for parents*
- *British Transport Police Development Officers: A 2 minute guide to how British Transport Police can support partnership approaches to Child Exploitation through intelligence sharing.*

University of Bedfordshire, *Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme* web resources. <https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk>

### MSHT Policy

Home Office, *Devolving Child Decision-Making Pilot Programme – General Guidance*, June 2021. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/993067/Devolving\\_Child\\_Decision\\_Making\\_Pilot\\_Programme\\_\\_General\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993067/Devolving_Child_Decision_Making_Pilot_Programme__General_guidance.pdf)

Home Office, *CHILD EXPLOITATION DISRUPTION TOOLKIT: Disruption Tactics*, 2019. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/794554/6.5120\\_Child\\_exploitation\\_disruption\\_toolkit.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/794554/6.5120_Child_exploitation_disruption_toolkit.pdf)

Home Office, *National Referral Mechanism Statistics*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, *The Modern Slavery Act 2015 Statutory Defence: A call for evidence*, October 2020. <http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1480/the-modern-slavery-act-2015-statutory-defence-a-call-for-evidence.pdf>

### Public Health Approaches – learning from its application to violence reduction

Evidence based approaches to violence reduction: A discussion paper. <https://csnetwork.org.uk/en/publications/latest-reports>

Public Health England, *County Lines exploitation: applying All Our Health Guidance*, February 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/county-lines-exploitation-applying-all-our-health/county-lines-exploitation-applying-all-our-health>

South Yorkshire Public Health and Violence Reduction has produced a number of resources that can be useful in understanding a public health response to modern slavery and to help understand trauma informed attachment.

- What does it mean to start with the needs of the population? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgfqw2Pw4I4>
- Trauma informed attachment part 1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWITsiW2m\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWITsiW2m_U)
- Trauma informed attachment part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hTR1NTGGQM>

### Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Helplines

Modern Slavery Helpline UK <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/>

Useful Helplines in the UK and some other countries <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/helplines>




# Skills for Care & Development Sgiliau Gofal a Datblygu

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## SKILLS FOR CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

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