



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is a form of organised crime in which individuals including children and young people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. Traffickers and slave drivers trick, force and/or persuade children and parents to let them leave their homes. Grooming methods are used to gain the trust of a child and their parents, e.g. the promise of a better life or education, which results in a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Child trafficking or child modern slavery is identified as child abuse which requires a child protection response. It is an abuse of human rights, and all children, irrespective of their immigration status, are entitled to protection under the law.

Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children and young people may be exploited by parents, carers or family members. Often the child or young person will not realise that family members are involved in the exploitation.

The Challenge

Children who are trafficked outside of the UK may be linked to the immigration system. Practitioners should be aware of the risk of harm to the child if their immigration status cannot be confirmed. To avoid a potential child trafficking / modern slavery situation being misconstrued as an 'immigration matter', it is important that plans for the child's long term safety are linked to their immigration status and any potential modern slavery investigation.

Modern slavery is often hidden in nature, and goes unnoticed in our communities, with under-reporting a major concern. Practitioners have the challenge of reaching out to a vulnerable and an 'invisible' set of children. As well as assessing the significant harm to the child, there will need to be consideration for other key areas such as Police, working with UK Visas and Immigration, foreign authorities and the National Crime Agency.

The types of Modern Slavery?

The term Modern Slavery captures a whole range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:

Sexual exploitation – This includes but is not limited to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos.

Domestic servitude – This involves a victim being forced to work in predominantly private households, usually performing domestic chores and childcare duties. Their freedom may be restricted and they may work long hours often for little or no pay, often sleeping where they work.

Forced labour – Victims may be forced to work long hours for little or no pay in poor conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. It can happen in various industries, including construction, manufacturing, laying driveways, hospitality, food packaging, agriculture, maritime and beauty (nail bars).

Criminal exploitation – This can be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit a crime, such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker.

Other forms of exploitation – Organ removal; forced begging; forced benefit fraud; forced marriage and illegal adoption.

Referral Process / Further Information

Modern slavery is child abuse and any potential victim(s) should immediately be referred to Children's Services via the MASH, as they may be suffering significant harm. Further Information can be found in the NSCP Modern Slavery Procedure and in our Guide to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of Trafficking and Modern Slavery.