

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – What Are These?

Modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) are not new phenomenon and have been a worldwide issue for centuries. Slavery was abolished in 1833; however, more people are victims in 2019 than ever before. The Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2015, which provided a legislative framework for law enforcement agencies.

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, harbouring and transporting of people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception and coercion. They are forced to work against their will. Trafficking is a process of moving and enslaving people, deceiving them into a situation with no foreseeable way out.

Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and opportunistic criminals, profit from exploiting human beings. These criminals will indiscriminately target any member of a community that is seen to be weak and or vulnerable. Victims can be British, of foreign nationality, of any age and gender. People can be trafficked for many different forms of exploitation such as forced prostitution, child sexual exploitation, forced labour, child labour, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage, child marriage and forced organ removal. OCGs or opportunist criminals will control victims by installing fear. They will threaten them, be physically and verbally abusive, take away their identification, and threaten their families and friends. They can also use elements

of the victim's religious and cultural beliefs to install control.

There are many industries near you or that you may work in that could be involved in exploitation, they include agriculture, car washes, nail bars, catering, construction, cleaning services, restaurants, factories, hospitality, shipping and the travel and tourism industry.

Why do people traffic?

A criminal can sell their commodity once, however, a human being can be sold used and exploited indefinitely.

Modern slavery and human trafficking offer huge financial gain for criminals. The victims can be embroiled into debt-bondage, which they then owe to the traffickers. Trafficking is predominantly by organised crime groups (OCGs), but there are cases where there is opportunistic criminality involved. For example, individuals or agents traffic people to the UK for their own personal gain such as domestic servitude etc.

Victims trafficked for one type of exploitation are likely to be used for other types of exploitation. Victims may also be resold to other OCGs both nationally and internationally and are likely to have little knowledge of their location or where they have been.

OCGs will utilise everything they can to make money from their victims this can include organising benefits, obtaining bank accounts and credit. Consequently, building up debt in victims' names.

They use victims to commit crimes such as shoplifting; cultivating drugs; county lines drug dealing; pick pocketing; sexual exploitation.

General Indicators that could identify victims of trafficking may present as:

- Withdrawn and submissive, someone who appears controlling, who speaks for the individual, may accompany them.
- Fearful and anxious, lack of eye contact.
- Never left alone.
- Distrustful of authorities.
- Poor living conditions.
- Vague about where they live and work.
- Perhaps they are picked up and dropped off from work at unusual times.
- Someone paying for his or her travel.
- Wear the same clothes every day.
- Living and working at the same address.
- Looking mal nourished and unkempt.
- Having no GP or record of registering with a GP.
- Having delayed seeking medical help for injuries, being vague about what caused the injuries and reluctant to give a medical history.
- They may also have old and untreated injuries
- Not being in possession of their passport and personal documents that may be held by a third party, these documents may be false.

- Having limited social / family contact.
- Lack of belongings no phone etc.
- Bonded by debt.
- Lacking funds with money from wages deducted for accommodation and food.

General Indicators of grooming and exploitation in children and young adults:

Any young person regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity and sexuality can be at risk of being exploited. However, there are a number of factors that can increase a young person's vulnerability.

These include children or young people who:

- Go missing, especially on regular occasions from home or care;
- Have a history of domestic abuse within the family environment;
- Have a history of abuse (including child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect);
- Have experienced or are experiencing problematic parenting;
- Have parents who take drugs and/or who are alcohol-dependent;
- Have parents with health problems;
- Are young carers within the family unit;
- Experience social exclusion as a result of poverty;
- Have experienced recent bereavement or loss;
- Have unsupervised use of social networking chat rooms/sites;

- Have mental ill health;
- Have social or learning difficulties;
- Have low self-esteem or self-confidence;
- Misuse alcohol and/or drugs;
- Have been or are excluded from mainstream education;
- Are involved in gang activity;
- Attend school with other young people who are sexually exploited;
- Are friends with individuals who are sexually exploited;
- Do not have friends in the same age group;
- Are being bullied;
- Live in care, foster care, hostels and/or bed and breakfast accommodation – particularly when living out of their home area;
- Are homeless;
- Have associations with gangs through relatives, peers or intimate relationships.

Children from loving and secure homes can also be victims of exploitation. The characteristics common to all victims are not always their age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation, but their powerlessness and vulnerability.

Know the signs

Children and young victims often do not recognise they are being exploited. However, there are a number of signs that could indicate a child is being groomed:

- Changes in temperament or suffering from depression, mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Association with other young people involved in exploitation and having older boyfriends/girlfriends;
- Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting or stealing;
- Being absent and truanting, lack of interest and frequent poor behaviour;
- Considerable change in performance.

Identity

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Change in appearance,
- Family and social relationships;
- Children or young people who become estranged from their family;
- Sudden hostility towards family members;
- Becoming physically aggressive towards family and friends;
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late;
- Involvement in exploitative relationships or association with risky adults;
- Young people being found in towns or districts where they have no known connection;

- Young people who have more than one boyfriend or who share their boyfriend;
- Children or young people seen entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Becoming detached from age-related activities and social groups;
- Being sexually active;
- Receiving phone calls and/or text messages from unknown adults;
- Children or young people who appear to be recruiting others into exploitative situations.

Health

- Evidence of drug, alcohol and/or substance use. Abusers may use drugs and alcohol to help control children and young people;
- Unexplained physical injury;
- Children or young people who are self-harming and demonstrating suicidal thoughts and tendencies.

Terminology explained

Grooming - Making someone feel cared for, giving someone affection, building an emotional connection and trust with someone for the purpose of exploitation. The grooming process can be over a long period of time or can happen quickly. Grooming techniques can also be used on those associated with a victim in order to support access to that victim. Many victims do not recognise manipulative techniques used by the perpetrator. Grooming can happen in person or via the Internet.

Trade in Human Organs - Organ harvesting involves trafficking people in order to use their internal organs for transplant. The illegal trade is dominated by demand for kidneys. These are the only major organs that can be wholly transplanted with relatively few risks to the life of the donor.

County Lines Crime - County lines crime/gangs commonly involve the illegal distribution and dealing of drugs from one city/town to another location. Organised crime groups will travel across county's and use a branded mobile phone line (county line) to notify customers of their location and drugs they have available. They recruit and use vulnerable children and young adults who are exploited and forced to carry drugs and money between locations for them.

Cuckooing - This is when drug dealers/organised crime groups take over the home of a vulnerable individual and use it as their base for selling/manufacturing drugs. Commonly, drug users are targeted and are offered "free" drugs in exchange for using their home, however anyone who is vulnerable could be at risk and forced in to this crime.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - Is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, for no medical reason. It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting".

Debt Bondage - Occurs when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. They are tricked into working for little or no pay, with no control over their debt. Most or all of the money they earn goes to pay off their loan. The value of their work invariably becomes greater than the original sum of money borrowed. Criminals will continue to increase the victim's debt, which, ultimately means they will never be able to repay it.

Clandestine - A clandestine entrant is a foreign national who tries to enter the United Kingdom with the aim of avoiding immigration controls by way of concealment, for example, in a vehicle.

People Smuggling - Involves the provision of a service typically, transportation or fraudulent documents to an individual or family who voluntarily seeks to gain illegal entry into a foreign country. It is possible that what begins as people smuggling can later turn in to human trafficking and modern slavery.

Human Trafficking - Human trafficking involves the movement and exploitation of men, women and children for the purposes of forced labour, domestic servitude or sexual exploitation.

Forced Criminality - Adults and children are trafficked and forced to commit crimes such as cannabis cultivation, ATM theft, shop lifting, county lines drug dealing, pick pocketing and benefit fraud or forced begging.

Organised Crime Groups - Organised crime Groups can be defined as serious crime planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis.

Domestic Servitude - Is the seemingly normal practice of live-in help that is used as cover for the exploitation and control of someone, usually (but not always) from another country. It is a form of forced labour. Victims of domestic servitude may appear to be nannies or other domestic help, but the moment their employment arrangement transitions into a situation whereby they cannot leave on their own free will, it becomes a case of enslavement.

Why would victims mistrust authorities?

Victims of a foreign nationality may come from a country where the law enforcement and government are corrupt and not trusted by the general public. Their traffickers will use this to install control and fear by telling victims that the UK is also corrupt and the police will beat them, put them in prison or send them home if they try to contact them.

Victims trafficked and or smuggled through the UK Border could have seen uniformed Border Control Officers and be told by their traffickers that they allowed them passage over the border thus giving the perception to the victims that law enforcement is corrupt and not to be trusted.

Many of the victims may have little or no ability to speak English, which means that they are unable to understand what's going on around them; this in turn will increase their anxiety and ability to trust strangers and law enforcement.

If the victims have been smuggled through border controls and then been trafficked in to exploitative services they

will not want to engage with authorities for fear of repercussions for entering the country illegally.

British nationals are also trafficked and will be controlled using the same fear techniques; their traffickers will be physically and verbally abusive to them and will threaten their friends and families. The victims will be vulnerable and may come from disadvantaged or poor backgrounds, which could make them susceptible to being exploited and having little trust of authorities. However, it is important to be aware that anyone can become a victim of exploitation.

If victims have been coerced in to criminal exploitation they will be reluctant to come forward, for fear of repercussions from the Police for the crimes they have been forced to commit.

The criminals will install such control over the victims that they will have nothing and see no way out which makes them reluctant to come forward. A reluctance to seek help doesn't mean they don't want it as they might fear deportation or violence to them or their families.

What can you do?

Essex Police take modern slavery and human trafficking extremely seriously. We want to work together to raise awareness of this crime; the signs can be difficult to see and are often hidden. However, knowing the indicators and industries mentioned in this issue, being vigilant and asking questions when something doesn't feel right could potentially save a victim from further harm and exploitation. Your input as a member of the public and or the role or industry you work in could mean that you are best placed to recognise the signs of trafficking.

It is important that "If you see something, you say something".

Be vigilant, think about your surroundings -

- Hotels, Airbnb's, Landlords etc. could be providing accommodation to groups of people who are being controlled or exploited.
- Taxis, trains and buses could be used when transporting victims.
- Petrol stations and service stations, could be used for picking up or dropping off victims.
- Criminals will look to take advantage of locations where vulnerable people may be found for example outside of schools or where a charity might provide refuge etc.

Together we can ensure that the services we receive and products we choose are slavery free. Help raise awareness and pass the message on, slavery must stop.

If you do suspect anything please call:

- If there is an immediate threat to life, call **999**;
- You can also report anything suspicious via **“Do It Online”** or by calling **101**;
- The Modern Slavery Helpline telephone number is - **0800 121 700**;
- Crimestoppers, for reporting anonymously, the number is - **0800 555 111**.

Helpful Apps for further information and indicators

- The STOP APP;
- Unseen;
- Endslavery;
- Safe Car Wash app created by the Clewer Initiative.

Some Useful Websites

www.stopthetraffick.org

www.justiceandcare.org

www.unseenuk.org

www.antislavery.org

Helpful contact & awareness training

Marsha Humphreys - Protect and Prevent Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Co-ordinator Essex Police.

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