

# SET Modern Slavery Guidance

Southend Safeguarding Adults Board  
Essex Safeguarding Adults Board  
Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board

Version 2 (March 25)

## Document Control Sheet

<b>Title:</b>	Modern Slavery Guidance
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide guidance on modern slavery and link to national guidance documents
<b>Type:</b>	Guidance
<b>Target Audience:</b>	Anyone who is working with adults with care and support needs
<b>Date approved:</b>	March 25
<b>Review Date:</b>	March 27
<b>This replaces:</b>	Modern Slavery Guidance January 2022 v2
<b>This should be read alongside:</b>	<p>This document is compliant with all relevant legislation at the time of publication and adheres to the current <a href="#">SET Safeguarding Adults Guidelines</a><sup>1</sup> and <a href="#">SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures</a><sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>The Home Office has produced <a href="#">guidance</a><sup>3</sup> on National Referral Mechanism.</p>
<b>Leads / Authors:</b>	<p>Current document reviewed February 2025 by:</p> <p>Priscilla Tsang (Thurrock SAB) &amp; Bob Fortt (Essex Police)</p>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.essexsab.org.uk/professionals/guidance-policies-protocols/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/safeguarding-policies-procedures/>

<sup>3</sup> <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>

## Contents

Document Control Sheet.....	2
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Definitions .....	4
3. Signs of Modern Day Slavery.....	5
4. Legislation and guidance.....	7
5. What is the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)? .....	7
6. How do you make an NRM referral for an adult or for a child?.....	8
7. The National Referral Mechanism decision making process .....	9
8. Support for victims .....	9
9. Resources and training .....	10

## 1. Introduction

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime and is now referred to under the term “Modern Slavery.” The Care Act 2014 includes modern slavery as a type of abuse, so the approach to managing cases of modern slavery is intricately linked to adult safeguarding procedures. The term Modern Day Slavery is an umbrella term, encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. A large number of active organised crime groups are involved in modern slavery, but it is also committed by individual opportunistic perpetrators. Modern Day Slavery happens everywhere. Exploitation in the UK takes a variety of forms, but most commonly modern slavery consists of forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced criminal activity.

## 2. Definitions

### Human Trafficking

The commonly used definition of human trafficking is often referred to as the ‘Palermo Protocol’ “Trafficking in Persons” means:

*‘The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’*

Although we traditionally think of human trafficking as crossing borders, it can take place within a country and does not require the victim to be moved across borders simply to be moved for the purpose of exploitation. It is also possible to have been a victim of trafficking even if consent has been given to being moved. The purpose does not always have to be achieved for there to be an offence of trafficking; it is sufficient for there to be an intention to exploit the trafficked person.

### Modern Slavery

According to the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/section/1/enacted)<sup>4</sup> a person commits an offence if -

*(a) the person holds another person in slavery or servitude and the circumstances are such that the person knows or ought to know that the other person is held in slavery or servitude, or*

*(b) the person requires another person to perform forced or compulsory labour and the circumstances are such that the person knows or ought to know that the other person is being required to perform forced or compulsory labour.*

Modern Slavery involves the exploitation of a person and legislation mentions holding the person in slavery or servitude or requiring the person to carry out forced or compulsory labour.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/section/1/enacted>

### 3. Signs of Modern Day Slavery<sup>5</sup>

#### Health

- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse and/ or has contracted sexual transmitted infections or has had an unwanted pregnancy
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- Appears to services (doctor/ council) only in the final months of a pregnancy
- Bruises, cigarette burns and untreated injuries
- Broken bones that have not healed properly
- Malnourished
- Learning difficulties
- Drug/ alcohol dependent
- Dental problems and poor hygiene
- Neurological symptoms, headaches, dizzy spells, memory loss
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (symptoms relating to the stomach or intestines)
- Musculoskeletal symptoms (symptoms relating to the bones or muscles)
- Work related injuries often through poor health and safety measures
- Signs of mental health issues e.g. trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks

#### Freedom of movement

- Is accompanied by a person who insists on remaining with them at all times
- Limited freedom of movement/ being controlled
- Limited or no social interaction and poorly integrated into the community
- Dependence on employer for a number of services, for example work, transport and accommodation
- Limited contact with family
- Never leaving without permission from an employer
- Only leaving the house as a group

#### Work

- Wearing unsuitable clothing such as flip flops in winter; no helmet on a construction site
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- Poor health and safety equipment, no health and safety notices and unhygienic, unsafe working conditions
- Excessive working hours, no days off and little spare time to get lunch
- (Perception of) debt bondage
- No or limited access to earnings, pay slips or labour/work contract
- Excessive wage reductions or financial penalties
- Movement of individuals between sites or working in alternate locations

---

<sup>5</sup> Taken from [The Adult Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities](#)

- Workers that are not aware of their rights

### **Behaviour/appearance**

- Appears to be missing for periods
- Having tattoos or other marks indicating 'ownership' by their exploiters
- Victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder, which can result in the following symptoms: hostility, aggression, difficulty in recalling details or entire episodes, difficulty concentrating

### **Documents/immigration**

- Has no passport or other means of identification
- Has false travel/ identity documentation
- Is unable to confirm names and addresses of employer/ contacts/ home/ workplace in the UK
- Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone
- May have 2<sup>nd</sup> mobile phone on their person so the trafficker can listen in
- Is in possession of money and goods which are not accounted for
- Coerced to apply for asylum or warned not to apply for asylum
- Fear of revealing immigration status or lacks knowledge on current immigration status

### **Accommodation**

- Workers are required to pay for food or accommodation via deductions from pay
- Home delivery meal packaging
- Crammed/ rough sleeping conditions including 'beds in sheds', no private sleeping place or sleeping in a shared space
- Cars or minibuses picking up at unusual times
- Not eating with the rest of the family
- Frequent visitors to residential premises
- Lack of family photos and personal belongings
- Post stacked up and discarded envelopes on the floor
- A script by a telephone on making benefits claims
- Unable to show any autonomy over accommodation for example no tenancy, bills, or other paper trail including bank account in their own name
- Living and working in the same place

### **Employer**

- Employer reports them as a missing person rather than family member
- Employer accuses person of theft or other crimes related to their escape
- Employer speaking on their behalf
- Employer unable to produce documents required when employing migrant labour
- Difficult to establish/ prove relationship between adult and child(ren)
- Single adult is contact for a large number of children/ families/ workers

## 4. Legislation and guidance

The [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)<sup>6</sup> sets out how modern slavery and human trafficking should be dealt with. The Act details organisations and responsibilities for “First Responders” which include, recognising signs of modern slavery and a duty to make a referral for all victims through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) (S.52).

**First Responders** are responsible for identifying possible victims that could be trafficked or enslaved. First responders in England include:

- **All those working in local authorities**
- Police forces
- Certain parts of the Home Office (UK Visas and Immigration, Border Force, Immigration Enforcement)
- National Crime Agency
- Gang masters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
- Some designated charities (further details in section 8)

Other legislation which may be useful when supporting victims of modern slavery/trafficking is:

- [Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance](#)<sup>7</sup>
- [Localism Act 2011](#)<sup>8</sup>
- [Housing Act 1996](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities 2018](#)<sup>10</sup>

There is also [The Adult Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities](#) developed by the Human Trafficking Foundation and Anti-Slavery London Working Group which contains lots of useful information.

## 5. What is the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)?

The [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#)<sup>11</sup> is the process in place in the UK in order to identify and support potential victims (PV) of modern slavery. The NRM through the National Crime Agency also collects information about victims to build a clearer picture on human trafficking and slavery in the UK. It was introduced to allow the UK to meet its obligations under the Council of European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery-bill>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

<sup>11</sup> <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>

## 6. How do you make an NRM referral for an adult or for a child?

### If you are concerned about a child (Under 18)

Child trafficking and modern slavery are child abuse. Children (under 18 years) cannot give consent to being moved and therefore the coercion or deception elements do not have to be present.

- If you think a child is in danger, contact the Police on 999.
- Child trafficking is always a [child protection issue](#)<sup>12</sup>, refer the potential victim to Children's Services as soon as possible:
  - Southend: 01702 215007
  - Essex: 0345 603 7627
  - Thurrock: 01375 652802

### If you are concerned about an Adult (Over 18)

- First responders are responsible for identifying and interviewing PVs (potential victims).
- Contact Essex Police on 999 if you think an adult is in danger. If you hold information that could lead to the identification, discovery and recovery of victims in the UK, you can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. Alternatively you can make calls anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
- Contact your local Safeguarding Adults Team as soon as possible:
  - Southend: 01702 215008
  - Essex: 0345 603 7630
  - Thurrock: 01375 511000
- **Referral with consent (NRM)** - To refer a PV into the NRM their consent is needed. This consent must be informed, that is, they can understand what they are agreeing to and potential implications. To be able to give consent, the following needs to be explained:
  - what the NRM is
  - what support is available
  - what the possible outcomes are for an individual being referred
  - It should also be made clear that information may be shared or sought by the competent authorities from other public authorities, such as the police and local authorities, to gather further evidence on an NRM referral.
  - The [NRM online referral form](#)<sup>13</sup> allows first responders to submit a referral for both adult and child victims. Section 8 details support available to PVs.
- **Non-consent and duty to notify (DtN)** - If a victim does not wish to enter the NRM, Section 52 of the Act still makes it a duty for public authorities to notify the

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/safeguarding-policies-procedures/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-](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)

[forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales](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)



Secretary of State if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a PV. This is done by completing an anonymous ['Duty to Notify' \(DtN\) form](#)<sup>14</sup> also known as MS1 form. An MS1 form should only be used if the potential adult victim wants to remain anonymous and does not want specialist support (or if you are not able to contact the potential victim and do not know their personal details). Again completing the DtN helps to build up a picture of modern slavery in the UK. Section 8 details support available to PVs.

## 7. The National Referral Mechanism decision making process<sup>15</sup>

To establish whether a person is a victim of any form of modern slavery (including trafficking), the Single Competent Authority (SCA) who is part of the Home Office will review the information in the NRM and make:

1. **A reasonable grounds decision to establish whether someone is a victim of potential trafficking.**

The threshold at this 'reasonable grounds' stage is low and defined by the principle 'I suspect but cannot prove' that the individual is a potential victim. A reasonable grounds (RG) decision should take up to 5 working days. If the RG decision is positive, they are entitled to support and a 45 day period of reflection and recovery is granted. This is meant to allow the victim to begin to recover from their ordeal and to reflect on what they want to do next.

2. **A conclusive grounds (CG) decision on whether they are in fact a victim.**

During the reflection and recovery period, a conclusive grounds decision will be made based upon the evidence gathered. The standard of proof is on the balance of probability that a victim is more likely than not.

A decision can be challenged and more than one referral can be submitted.

## 8. Support for victims

The NRM provides adults who are potential victims of slavery or trafficking who receive a reasonable grounds decision with short term support (at least 45 days) including:

- the option of gender specific funded safe house accommodation if required
- case work support
- protection
- access to relevant legal advice
- exemption from health care charges
- education support for children

---

<sup>14</sup> <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>

<sup>15</sup> Taken from [The Adult Modern Slavery Protocol for Local Authorities](#)

- independent emotional and practical help

There are a number of organisations available to help support victims of modern slavery and human trafficking:

- [The Salvation Army](#)<sup>16</sup> is contracted by the UK Government to provide support to potential victims of modern slavery/ human trafficking in England and Wales.
- [Leaflets](#)<sup>17</sup> are available in Albanian, Chinese, Czech, English, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Thai, Vietnamese, and Welsh to offer help and advice for people who think they may be victims of modern slavery in the UK.
- [The National Crime Agency](#)<sup>18</sup> has best practice information on dealing with victims and the use of interpreters.
- [UnseenUK.org](#)<sup>19</sup> (run a 24 hour helpline 08000 121 700)
- [Gang masters and Labour Abuse Authority \(GLAA\)](#)<sup>20</sup>
- [Essex Police](#)<sup>21</sup>
- [Southend Against Modern Slavery](#)<sup>22</sup>
- [Medaille Trust](#)<sup>23</sup>
- [Kalayaan](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [Migrant Help](#)<sup>25</sup>
- [BAWSO](#)<sup>26</sup>
- [Refugee Council](#)<sup>27</sup>
- [Barnardo's](#)<sup>28</sup>
- [NSPCC](#)<sup>29</sup>

## 9. Resources and training

The following training resources are available:

- [Modern Slavery awareness booklet](#)<sup>30</sup>
- [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority videos](#)<sup>31</sup>
- [Anti-Slavery Partnership Toolkit](#)<sup>32</sup>
- [Human trafficking awareness for first responders elearning](#)<sup>33</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/referring-victims>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-victims-of-human-trafficking>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.unseenuk.org/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gla.gov.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.essex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ms/modern-slavery/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.sampartnership.org.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://medaille-trust.org.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/> <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.migranthelpuk.org>

<sup>26</sup> <https://bawso.org.uk/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/protecting-children/trafficked-children>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-awareness-booklet>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.gla.gov.uk/who-we-are/modern-slavery/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://policingslavery.co.uk/FirstResponderTraining/>

