



## Guidelines for writing a clear referral for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The National Referral Mechanism is the process used to record and support victims of trafficking in the UK. There are two pathways; one for children and one for adults (18+). This guidance is more targeted towards referring children, but much of it also applies to referring over 18s.

### Purpose of the NRM

It is important to remember that the NRM is an evidence gathering process. When writing a referral, you should be collating evidence and observations from other people who know and work with the young person you are referring. This is so that all evidence available to the network at that point is included.

Other professionals, including those who are not First Responders, can submit written statements to the NRM to support the referral once submitted. Alert the wider professional network (as well as the young person and family, if appropriate) that you are submitting a referral. The referral form for a child can currently be found [here](#). All NRM decisions are now made by the Home Office.

**Note:** a child does not have to consent to be referred into the NRM, but once they turn 18, they can withdraw the referral.

There are two stages of the NRM: Reasonable Grounds and Conclusive Grounds:

- For a positive Reasonable Grounds decision, the threshold is 'I suspect, but cannot prove' [that this person is a victim of modern slavery]
- For a positive Conclusive Grounds decision, the threshold is 'on the balance of probabilities' [there is enough information to conclude that this person is a victim of modern slavery]

When writing a referral, be concise and clear about why you suspect that the young person could be a victim and any relevant information you know at the time of the referral.

If additional information or disclosures occur while the referral is being considered, you **must** send this information to the NRM, citing the case reference number.

**Note:** If the young person also has a pending immigration case, check in with their solicitor. Some of this information may have already been collected and an NRM referral may affect an immigration claim. Similarly, if there is an ongoing criminal case, alert the criminal solicitor that you are making a referral so they can inform the court appropriately.

### Supplementary indicator lists

- [UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking \(GIFT\)](#)
- [International Labour Organisation](#)



## What to include

- ✓ Indicator list: carefully look at the indicator list provided, including all indicators you or the network have observed. Remember there are two ways to mark these indicators, 'suspected' and 'confirmed'. Use both thoroughly;
- ✓ Further indicators: if there are factors which have led to your concerns which are not included in this list, you can refer to other established lists of modern slavery or trafficking indicators. We've included some of the most widely recognised below;
- ✓ Structure: in the written section, begin by using the indicators as headings. Under each indicator, include how this indicator was observed, on how many occasions and by who;
- ✓ Vulnerability: also include any additional information about the young person's vulnerability to exploitation. This could be social isolation, a history of exploitation, mental ill health, educational or learning needs or any other factor which in your professional opinion makes them particularly vulnerable. Be clear about why you're including this information;
- ✓ Events: if there are specific events *linked to* the suspected exploitation, then outline these. This can include contact from adults which may indicate grooming or coercion, occasions on which they were threatened, disclosures they made about exploitative relationships etc.

## What not to include

- ✗ Excessive history or narrative without being clear as to why you believe its relevant;
- ✗ Don't cite police reports without being clear about why you found those events concerning. It is unlikely that the official police report will highlight these elements as they are written for a different purpose;
- ✗ Don't use specific dates unless necessary, as they may cause more confusion if recorded slightly differently elsewhere. The month and year is often appropriate;
- ✗ Don't use language which refers to the potential victim as an 'offender' or 'perpetrator', as this is not the purpose of the referral and can undermine an assessment of their victimhood;
- ✗ Don't include statements about the young person's motivations or state of mind, without being clear about what led you to this conclusion. Observations are important to include, just be clear about who and how you observed this.

## Remember!

- ★ The NRM is an evidence building process, so include all the factors that contributed you to having concerns and show your reasoning clearly;
- ★ Including suspicions and concerns is important, just remember to include the why, what, how and when of these observations;
- ★ Your professional opinion is important, especially about the specific vulnerability of a young person you have interacted with. Be clear about what exactly has led you to the referral and why you think they might be particularly vulnerable to grooming and exploitation.