



**Children's Safeguarding and Family Help
Youth Justice Service**
National Referral Mechanism protocol

1 Introduction and purpose of policy

- Some children and young people who come to the attention of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and/or Children’s Safeguarding and Family Help (CSFH) may be victims of exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery. In order to further safeguard and promote their welfare, it may be necessary to refer these young people under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- This policy sets out how YJS and CSFH will work together to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and information gathered and shared in order to meet the needs of these children and young people.

Further information can be found in the Home Office guidance available at:
[National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK](#)

2 Overview of the NRM process

- The NRM is the national framework for the collection and collation of data on victims of trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. The NRM allows agencies to share information and intelligence in order to support victims and gather evidence against perpetrators.
- Under the NRM, frontline agencies working with young people whom it is suspected are victims of trafficking or modern slavery (known as First Responders) will refer the young person on to the Home Office as the Single Competent Authority (SCA).
- The SCA will consider all information provided by the First Responder and within 5 working days of referral will make a “reasonable grounds” decision that the individual is a victim of trafficking or modern slavery.
- This decision will be re-assessed during a 45 day “recovery and reflection” period and during this time no action can be taken in terms of the victim’s immigration status. First responders will also use this period to gather any further information and carry out a more comprehensive assessment in order to help the SCA make a final decision on whether the individual is a victim of trafficking and/or modern slavery. The 45 day period can be extended at the discretion of the SCA if needed to obtain any information.

3 Definitions

- **Trafficking** is defined as ...”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 of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”.
- Trafficking may involve the movement of children into the UK or around the UK, for example between towns and cities. All children who are moved either into or around the UK for the purposes of exploitation will be considered to have been trafficked as a child cannot give consent to the exploitation and is not in a position to choose. All trafficked children will be considered to be at risk of harm.
- **Modern slavery** involves the control of individuals, including their movement (trafficking), for the purposes of exploitation by means of the use of force, threat, manipulation and coercion. Offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 include exploitation such as:
 - slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour
 - sexual exploitation
 - removal of organs
 - securing services by threats, force or deception
 - securing services from a child or vulnerable adult.
- All victims of modern slavery are potentially a victim of crime and any child victim will be considered at risk of significant harm.

4 Procedures

4.1 Identifying young people who may be at risk from trafficking or modern slavery

- As a local authority, Camden is a “first responder” front line agency that is likely to be the first agency to recognise that a young person they work with may be a victim of trafficking or modern slavery.

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- Staff should use the trafficking/modern slavery risk assessment matrix (as shown on the NRM referral form) to establish whether a child is likely to be a victim of trafficking or modern slavery.
- The risk assessment should be used whenever there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child may have been trafficked and/or is a potential victim of modern slavery. It is strongly advised that the risk assessment is always carried out on high risk CSE and CCE cases.
- Cases involving exploitation and modern slavery are likely to be known to CSFH and YJS and may be joint worked.
- **CSFH** should be aware of:
 - CSE cases where the child is being moved within the UK for the purposes of CSE
 - UASC who may have been brought into the UK by traffickers for commercial exploitation such as forced labour, sexual exploitation or servitude
 - privately fostered children who may be in servitude.
- **YJS** should be aware of the likelihood of a child being a victim of trafficking and modern slavery where they have been arrested for their involvement in criminal offences and criminal exploitation such as cannabis cultivation, drug dealing, benefit fraud or begging. This includes drug dealing on the “county lines” model. Children and young people involved in this form of offending may need to be considered as both a victim and perpetrator of exploitation.
- Social workers and YJS workers should also consider the possibility that a child or young person who habitually goes missing may also be a victim of exploitation and a risk assessment may be carried out by any member of staff conducting a return home interview if there is a suspicion that the missing behaviour is linked to CSE or CCE.

4.2 Referral pathways

As child victims of trafficking and modern slavery will be at risk of harm, they must be referred to CSFH for a social work service.

- YJS and CSFH should carry out a CSE or CCE risk assessment where there is a reasonable suspicion of exploitation involving a child they work with.

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- YJS must refer any suspected cases of CSE to the Child and Family Contact team by way of an e-CAF referral.
- Cases involving CCE should be dealt with under the CCE procedures and referred to the most appropriate service.
- All other cases of exploitation, for example forced labour, domestic servitude etc where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child may be a victim of modern slavery must be passed to the MASH for further information gathering involving the MASH police.
- Where the child is already known to services, the allocated social worker or YJS worker should discuss the case with their manager (and for CSE and CCE cases a child protection IRO) to agree whether to convene a CSE or CCE response meeting or a strategy meeting for other forms of exploitation. The MASH may also be approached for any relevant police information and intelligence as part of this discussion.
- If the child is looked after, the social worker should notify the child's IRO.

4.3 Response meeting (CSE and CCE cases)

- A response meeting instead of an NRM meeting should be convened for any case where the risk assessment shows there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child is a victim of modern slavery through CSE or CCE.
- All response meetings must consider the possibility that the child has been trafficked or is a victim of modern slavery.
- The response meeting should be held within 3 working days of the referral and/or decision to convene the meeting and the outcome of the risk assessment should be available to the meeting.
- One of the key decisions of the response meeting should be whether a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be made on behalf of the child and the meeting should be a forum for agreeing the actions needed to make a referral.
- Any CSE or CCE cases that are referred via the NRM will be notified to the MACE group so that the cases can be tracked.

4.4 NRM meeting

- This is a specialist multi-agency collaborative meeting held to discuss cases where the trafficking is related to forced labour and domestic servitude. It should be attended by the allocated social worker and/or YJS case manager and the relevant police officers.
- The purpose of the meeting is to gather the information needed to complete the NRM referral form, including any relevant police information or intelligence on trafficking.

4.5 Deciding on making a referral

When a response meeting or NRM meeting decides to go ahead with a NRM referral:

- The meeting should nominate who will be responsible for completing the form and sending this on to the SCA.
- The completed form should be sent to the SCA within 5 working days of the NRM meeting.

4.6 CSFH assessments

- Where there is a new referral, and a referral under the NRM has or will be made a child and family assessment will be carried out.
- For existing cases, an updated assessment will be carried out and the review of the child's plan brought forward. The relevant reviewing officer should be informed of this.
- Any initial reasonable grounds decision made by the SCA within the 5 day timescale should be included in the assessment.
- A copy of the completed assessment should be made available to the SCA within the 45 day reassessment period in order to support a final decision on the child's status.

4.7 YJS assessments

- The YJS case manager will complete an ASSET plus assessment for all young people where there is a concern that she or he is involved in modern slavery and/or has been trafficked.

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- Where a decision is made to refer a young person to the NRM, then the case manager will update the ASSET plus to reflect this decision, in particular the safety and well-being section.
- A copy of the completed assessment should be made available to the SCA within the 45 day reassessment period in order to support a final decision on the child's status.

4.7 Making a referral

Details of how to make a referral under the NRM can be found at:

<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>

Referrals should be sent to the address below:

<https://www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start>

The SCA will make a reasonable grounds decision within 5 days and a conclusive grounds decision once all the relevant information has been gathered.

Where a negative reasonable grounds or conclusive grounds decision is given, workers can resubmit the request asking the SCA to reconsider, particularly if new evidence has been received that may impact on the decision or where workers believe the decision is not in line with published guidance.

Consent to referral

- Children's consent is not required to make a referral under the NRM but adults must consent.
- If a young person is approaching 18 and is waiting for a conclusive grounds decision, their consent must be obtained and the SCA informed for the process to continue beyond their 18th birthday as they may have access to additional support packages.
- Workers should consider sharing the young person's contact details with the SCA so that they can be notified directly of the decision.