

What can I do about
HUMAN TRAFFICKING?



INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this, you probably want to do something to combat human trafficking. It's great to have you on board! Restore Glasgow is a Christian charity (SCO51492) that is committed to making Glasgow an inhospitable place for human trafficking through awareness raising, campaigning and prayer. Of course, you don't have to be a Christian to want to combat human trafficking – you simply need to care about humanity.

But what can you actually *do*? The first step is to become informed, and that's where the information in this publication comes in. We will walk you through what human trafficking is, what it looks like, and what you should do if you think you've encountered it.

What is human trafficking?

In simple terms, human trafficking is controlling a person for the purpose of exploiting them.

Traffickers achieve this control by

- the threat or the use of force
- abduction
- fraud or deception
- abuse of their power or of the victim's vulnerability
- or by paying someone who already has control over the victim

Once traffickers have control over a victim, they may sell them on or exploit the victim themselves, by forcing them to work for nothing or for very low pay, to commit crimes, or to enter into a forced marriage. In the next section, we'll look at different kinds of exploitation in more detail.

It's important to know that a victim **doesn't have to be moved across a border** for it to be trafficking.

Many trafficking victims in the UK are actually UK citizens. Even victims who are foreign nationals may already have arrived here before being trafficked. A victim also **doesn't have to be physically prevented from leaving** for it to be trafficking; victims can be kept from leaving by threats against themselves or their families, by being watched (or being told they're being watched), or because they don't know their rights.

How common is trafficking? *Very common.* It's estimated that there are over 50 million people in modern slavery worldwide, and probably **more than 120,000 just in the UK.**¹ Trafficking has been identified in every single local authority area in Scotland, from the Borders to Shetland.

The best thing we can do to combat it, is to **recognise it and report it.**

¹ Global Slavery Index, 2023.

Types of trafficking

LABOUR EXPLOITATION

The most common form of modern slavery in Scotland, and the most common type for men worldwide, is labour exploitation. That means doing a job that you are either not getting paid for, or are not getting paid fairly for, and where you don't have the option to leave.

Common types of work that people are exploited in include car washes, nail bars and the construction industry. But there are also people working in legitimate jobs for well-known companies who are forced to hand over their wages to their traffickers.

Real life example – labour exploitation²

James Keith was a homeless Scottish teenager with a troubled background when he was approached by Bobby McPhee, who offered him accommodation and work building driveways. It seemed like a good opportunity, but the accommodation was squalid, the shifts were long, and McPhee hardly paid James anything.

James tried to leave but McPhee came after him and forced him to return. McPhee then told James that he had 'sold' him to his son, James McPhee.

James tried to escape again, but again the McPhees tracked him down. He and the other men on the McPhee caravan sites were assaulted and treated like animals.

In the end, a Police Scotland investigation led to members of the McPhee family being found guilty of abduction, assault and servitude (enslaving people).

² Widely reported in the media during the court case in 2018.

How to spot labour exploitation

Some common signs to look out for:

- Workers who seem to be sleeping on site
- Workers who don't have proper protective equipment or suitable clothing
- Workers aren't allowed to handle payments
- Someone is always watching over them
- They don't seem to have had basic training
- Price – if it's too low, that's a warning sign

If victims are employed in legitimate jobs, common signs are lots of workers using the same home address or the same bank account. This may mean that their accommodation is being provided by their traffickers, and the traffickers have control of the account their wages are paid into.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Maybe this is the first thing you think of when you think about human trafficking, and it is certainly the most common form of trafficking that affects women and girls, and even sometimes very young children. Victims are often forced into this by someone they trust, like a boyfriend, or tricked by the offer of a legitimate job that turns out to be fake.

Sexual exploitation is when the victim is forced to have sex for the financial benefit of her exploiters. This can be in a brothel, on the street, or online, for posting on pornography sites or livestreaming. The victims may get 'tips' but they don't get paid for their prostitution, and they are not allowed to leave.

Real life example – sexual exploitation³

Livia came from an abusive home with a violent father. Walking home from school one day, she was approached by a cute older boy, Rik, who seemed to like her. He gave her presents and they texted in secret. She fell in love with Rik and told him about her family problems. He suggested that they start a new life in the UK as a couple. She gave him her passport and he made all the arrangements.

Once they arrived in the UK, Rik introduced Livia to some older men and said she would be staying with these ‘friends’ of his for a while. Rik left her with them, and she never saw him again.

The ‘friends’ took her to a flat where there were other girls. They confiscated her phone and told her that she would have to have sex with clients who came to the house. She tried to refuse but they beat her. She had no money, no documents, and no choice but to comply.

³ This is an amalgamation of real life cases to protect anonymity.

How to spot sexual exploitation

Prostitution is a warning sign of trafficking in itself, because most individuals involved in prostitution are trafficked, but here are some more specific warning signs:

- Men coming and going from flats at strange times of the night
- You don't often see the occupants of the flat
- On the street, women are being watched by a minder (who may be on foot or in a car)
- Injuries like bruises, black eyes, cigarette burns
- Victims may have poor English, or only know sexual words in English
- They may appear very nervous or scared

The best thing you can do to spot this form of exploitation is to get to know your neighbourhood and your neighbours, so that you will notice if something seems unusual or concerning.

FORCED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

This category can cover a whole range of crimes, from shoplifting and forced begging to working in cannabis farms and transporting drugs, and the warning signs will vary depending on the specific activity involved.

Victims will often be picked up by the police for the crimes they were forced to commit, at which point the police have a duty to find out whether trafficking has been involved. However, there are signs you can look out for yourself, especially if you have young people in your life who might get drawn into 'county lines' drug trafficking.

Real life example – forced criminal activity⁴

Genti's family got into debt when his sister became ill and needed medical treatment. Genti travelled around Europe doing casual work to send money to his family back in Albania, until eventually someone offered him a job in construction in the UK. They organised his entry to the UK in the back of a lorry and then took him to the 'work' – which turned out to be cannabis cultivation in a disused unit on an industrial estate. The traffickers told Genti that if he tried to leave they would kill him, and if he got away, they would go after his family. They locked Genti inside where he had to water the plants and turn lights on and off, sleeping on a dirty mattress in a corner. He was there for weeks, only seeing another human being when the traffickers dropped off food. Eventually, the police were alerted. Genti was arrested for drugs offences but he was later found to have been a victim of human trafficking and the charges against him were dropped.

⁴ This is an amalgamation of real life cases to protect anonymity.

How to spot forced criminal activity

Because it's so varied, we've broken it down into a few categories here.

Forced begging:

- They may be shadowed by better-dressed handlers
- They may have poor spoken English but signs written in good English
- They may accept only cash donations, not interested in or refusing food or other donations

Forced cannabis cultivation:

- Look out for a smell of cannabis or heat/warmth coming from a building that's supposed to be unoccupied
- You may see people making deliveries or pick-ups, but rarely or never see the occupants

County lines:

This is when people (usually children) make deliveries of drugs or cash, often by public transport. They may get paid for this, or given presents, but they are still being exploited and may be threatened or hurt if they try to stop.

- Victims may have expensive new possessions or cash that they can't explain
- They may have two phones – one personal and one for 'work'
- They may change their friendship group
- They may start to skip school or miss clubs and activities
- They may have unexplained injuries
- Look out for tickets or travel receipts for places they have no good reason to go to

Real life example – County Lines⁵

14-year old Ben was befriended at the school gates by Jason, an older boy with cool clothes and a flashy phone. Jason offered Ben a new pair of trainers in exchange for delivering an envelope across town. Ben was thrilled with his new shoes. A week later, Jason was back, offering cash for another delivery. Soon, Jason was making deliveries regularly, enjoying the money and the attention from his new, older friends. But the trips grew further away, and Ben started missing after-school clubs, and skipping school. When Ben told Jason he wanted to stop, his ‘friend’ became threatening. He told Ben that he had to continue or else his gang would go after his family.

Ben was stopped on a train by the police, and found to be carrying drugs. Fortunately, he was identified as a victim of county lines exploitation, and was supported by child protection services to escape the control of the gang.

⁵ Based on real life stories of county lines happening in the UK.

GENERAL SIGNS OF TRAFFICKING

The information above covers the most common types of trafficking that you might come into contact with, but it doesn't include every kind of trafficking. There's also forced marriage, organ trafficking, and domestic servitude (household servants, which you're less likely to know about unless you come into close contact with that household). However, here are the '**RRIPPS**', which are signs of trafficking in general:

- **R**estricted freedom of movement
- **R**eluctant to seek help
- **I**ntity documents withheld (passport, driving licence, ID card)
- **P**hysical appearance (scruffy, dirty, injured)
- **P**oor living conditions
- **S**trange travel times

What can I do?

Now that you know how to spot the signs that someone may be a victim of human trafficking, what can you do about it? Usually, your first port of call should be the **Modern Slavery Helpline** on **08000 121 700**.

It's good to know that *you don't have to be 100% sure*. The Modern Slavery helpline staff are trained to take the data you give them, combine it with other sources, and make a judgement about what action should be taken, if any. You are simply (and sometimes crucially) giving them more information to work with. See www.modernslaveryhelpline.org for more details.

When you phone them, the call handler will take you through a set of questions to collect the essential details. You can leave your name or you can report anonymously. They also have an app, called 'Unseen' which you can download if you prefer, and submit your report via the app.

Trafficking is a dangerous crime, and those involved can be dangerous; therefore do not put yourself in harm's way. If you think a crime is being committed or someone is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999. For non-urgent police matters, you can contact the police on 101.

At Restore, we would also be happy to speak to you about any concerns or questions you may have. You can reach us at hello@restoreglasgow.org.uk.

What happens after a victim is identified?

When a victim is identified, that is hopefully the end of their exploitation, but it is not the end of their journey. If it seems that a person may have been trafficked, they will usually be registered in the National Referral Mechanism, which means that a branch of the Home Office will make a decision about whether they have been trafficked or not. Assuming the decision is positive, the survivor will be allowed to stay in the UK temporarily while they recover and they should also be referred on for support.

There are a number of organisations in the UK that exist to support people who have been identified as survivors of trafficking. They include the Salvation Army, the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA), Migrant Help, and Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS) amongst many

others. Survivors also usually need legal support to help make a claim that they have been trafficked, and to seek asylum if their experience means that they can't safely return to their home country. Survivors should be able to get Legal Aid to pay for this.

People who have been through trafficking often suffer psychological damage as well as physical harm, and may need mental health support to recover. In the UK, this is available on the NHS. Fortunately, many victims are able to make a full recovery and go on to lead fulfilling lives, whether in the UK or back in their country of origin. One well-known victim of trafficking, Sir Mo Farah, went on to become a UK Olympic medallist! But whatever their future path in life, you can now do your bit to ensure that trafficking victims do not have to stay trapped in slavery.

Further Resources

Modern Slavery Helpline, with the Unseen App

08000 121 700

www.modernslaveryhelpline.org

Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS)

www.sohtis.org

Migrant Help

0808 801 0503

www.migranthelpuk.org

Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA)

0141 276 7724

www.tarascotland.org.uk

Guardianship Scotland – National Child Trafficking
Support Service

<https://www.aberlour.org.uk/get-help/guardianship-scotland>

If you are based in the Glasgow area and would like to organise anti-trafficking training at your workplace, society or organisation, please get in touch at hello@restoreglasgow.org.uk



www.restoreglasgow.org.uk