



Gangmasters &
Labour Abuse Authority

Labour Exploitation

Spot the signs



Working in partnership to protect vulnerable and exploited workers

Spot the signs

This guidance has been produced by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority to assist anyone who comes into contact with individuals who may have been trafficked and/or are being controlled by people who wish to exploit them for their labour.

Labour exploitation can be an element of the criminal offences of forced labour or human trafficking, which themselves constitute modern slavery. This guide explains those terms and provides advice on how to spot the signs.

If you have any concerns about the immediate safety of an individual call 999 and ask for the police.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery is a global problem and international crime, affecting millions of people worldwide, including many victims within the UK. Men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds can fall victim to human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude or debt bondage.

There are many ways that people can be exploited - forced to work for little or no pay. Types of exploitation include:

- Labour exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Organ harvesting
- Criminal exploitation

Victims are controlled by force, threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and deception.

Any form of 'consent' given by a victim in these circumstances is irrelevant – no person can have control over another person by these means.

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another, within a country or across borders, with a view to exploiting them.

It consists of three basic parts:

An action - the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person

A means - the threat or use of force or other form of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, a position of vulnerability, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to control a person for the purpose of exploitation

Exploitation - which can include slavery, forced or compulsory labour or services, servitude, forced criminality, sexual exploitation or the removal of organs

Once initial control is secured, victims are usually moved to a place where there is a market for their services. This is often a location where they lack the language skills or other basic knowledge which would allow them to seek help. There may be one person trafficking the victims or a number of different individuals. Victims may also be passed or sold to different traffickers.

Since the introduction of the **Modern Slavery Act 2015**, human trafficking carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

What is forced labour?

“All work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”

International Labour Organization

Forced or compulsory labour is sometimes hidden but often people are exploited in plain sight. Victims come from a variety of backgrounds – they may be UK citizens, EU migrants or from outside of the EU.

Forced labour offences in the UK* apply regardless of the victim’s immigration status or entitlement to work in the UK.

People who are subject to forced labour are typically made to work in sectors such as:

- agriculture**
- food processing and packaging**
- construction
- warehousing and logistics
- hotels, catering, cleaning and other service industries
- manufacturing (in sweatshops)

* The Coroners and Justice Act 2009, Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010

** GLAA licensed sectors

What is debt bondage?

Victims of forced labour may also be victims of debt bondage, where they are tricked into working for little or no money to repay a debt.

An employer or a person controlling them (such as an agent) will use different tactics to trap the victim in an endless cycle of debt which can never be repaid and may even be passed on to their families. Poverty, threats, violence, surveillance and imprisonment are used to make sure they cannot leave or get help.

Debt bondage can also be a significant factor in human trafficking. Victims may be offered a job abroad, to include either 'free' transportation or borrowing money from the employer/controller for travel and/or a job finding fee. Once they have arrived they then find the job either does not exist or is not what was originally offered, and are trapped trying to pay off the debt.

Spot the signs

There are a number of indicators of trafficking and forced labour. Not all of the indicators will apply in every case, and some may not be immediately apparent.

Victims may be reluctant to tell their story through fear of reprisal or not being believed, through a feeling of shame about letting themselves be treated in this way, or because they do not know their rights and the treatment they are entitled to receive.

There is no set number of signs that will indicate that a person is a victim of trafficking or subject to forced or compulsory labour. One or a combination of factors could suggest a person is a potential victim, so each case should be considered on an individual basis.

If during your engagement with a vulnerable and exploited person you believe that the indicators referred to in this guidance are being met, you should seek assistance for them without delay.

The indicators

Restricted freedom - Victims may:

- not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, as those documents are being held by someone else
- be unable to leave their work environment
- show signs that their movements are being controlled
- be unable to move freely
- be threatened with being handed over to the authorities
- be subject to security measures and controls to keep them on the work premises
- depend on their employer for work, transport and accommodation without any choice
- may only travel with other workers
- be controlled through religion, witchcraft, juju etc
- have limited contact with their families or with people outside of their immediate environment
- be unable to communicate freely with others
- be forced to shop at a place they would not choose
- have no access to medical care
- be in a situation of dependence
- be given only leftovers to eat
- come from a place known to be a source of human trafficking

- be subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones
- be found in or connected to a type of location likely to be used for exploiting people
- have false identity documents

Behaviour - Victims may:

- be unfamiliar with the local language
- act as if they were instructed by someone else
- allow others to speak for them when addressed directly
- be distrustful of the authorities
- be afraid of revealing their immigration status
- have limited or no social interaction either in the workplace or at their accommodation
- believe that they must work against their will
- never leave the workplace without their employer
- show fear or anxiety
- feel that they cannot leave
- have to resort to crime in order to get food or money for food
- may need to scavenge for food
- be forced to commit crime if there is no work available for them
- have acted on the basis of false promises

Working conditions - Victims may:

- have no contract
- be unable to negotiate working conditions
- be unable to choose when or where they work
- be forced to work under certain conditions
- work excessively long hours over long periods
- not have any days off
- not be dressed adequately for the work they do: for example, they may lack protective equipment or warm clothing
- not interact with work colleagues
- lack basic training or professional licences
- believe they are obliged to work without pay in return for a favour or provision of accommodation

Accommodation - Victims may:

- not know their home or work address
- not have been able to give their address to friends or relatives
- live in poor or substandard accommodation
- have no choice where they live or who they live with
- live in groups in the same place where they work and leave those places infrequently, if at all
- live in degrading, unsuitable places, such as agricultural or industrial buildings

Finances - Victims may:

- receive little or no payment
- have no access to their earnings
- be disciplined through punishment or fines
- be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- have had the fees for their transport to the country of destination paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back by working or providing services in the destination
- be told that they can pay debts for transport or accommodation when they are found work
- be charged for services they don't want or need
- be forced to open bank accounts
- be forced to sign documents to receive social security benefits, credit agreements or loans
- have bank cards/documents held by someone else
- have wages paid into an account used by other people

Appearance - Victims may:

- suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault
- suffer injuries or impairments typical of certain jobs or control measures
- suffer injuries that appear to be the result of the application of control measures
- have injuries that appear old, untreated or that they cannot explain
- wear the same clothes each day

Assisting victims

Do:

- always maintain a victim centred approach when dealing with potential victims
- explain to the victim what is happening and what can be done to assist
- respect the needs and wishes of the victims
- take the victim to a place of safety where they feel comfortable to talk freely
- speak to victims individually and keep them separate from potential suspects
- keep multiple victims separate to allow them to give their account
- try to build a rapport and trust, dispelling any fear of law enforcement
- be aware that a victim may be suffering from stress or mental health problems brought on by their circumstances
- assess and arrange for any medical needs to be addressed
- look out for signs of any verbal or non-verbal communication between potential victims and suspects and make a note of them
- take account of cultural or religious views the victim may have
- give the victim as much information as you can and, if they consent to enter the National Referral Mechanism, explain what will happen next

- take steps to prevent further contact between the trafficker and their victim(s) by offering support/assistance through the service providers within the National Referral Mechanism
- be aware of the opportunities to gather information relating to, or evidence of, any offences to include obtaining identity documents, travel documents, financial information and communication devices where practical and possible to do so
- make contact with the police, or the GLAA where appropriate, at an early stage, once you have identified the indicators

Don't:

- expect victims to disclose immediately. Some may not know they have been trafficked or subjected to forced labour, some may have been told to lie and/or still be in fear of reprisals to them or their families
- make judgements if they have been complicit in part of their circumstances or work
- use unofficial interpreters or friends of victims to interpret, they may have their own agenda
- treat victims as suspects or immigration offenders
- expect victims to have access to travel or identity documents and, if any are presented, check they are legitimate
- seek to obtain any formal statement at the initial contact unless exceptional circumstances apply

The GLAA - What we do

Modern slavery is a serious violation of human rights.

What we do to fight it

Our role is to protect vulnerable and exploited workers. Through the intelligence we receive from our inspections, the public, industry and other government departments, we investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking, forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage and Employment Agencies Acts.

As the GLAA, we are able to investigate all aspects of labour exploitation in England and Wales but we also work with partner organisations such as the police, the National Crime Agency and other government law enforcement agencies to target, dismantle and disrupt serious and organised crime across the UK.

The GLAA licensing scheme regulates businesses that supply labour to the agriculture, shellfish gathering and food processing and packaging sectors.

Our licensing standards cover health and safety, pay, leave and breaks, transport and accommodation. We also check that tax, National Insurance and VAT regulations are met.

What you can do

Report it

If you have any suspicions of human trafficking, forced labour or worker exploitation you should report it immediately.

You can contact:

The GLAA - 0800 432 0804 or 0115 959 7032
(outside office hours)

Email: intelligence@gla.gov.uk

The Police - 101, or in the case of an emergency 999

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

UK Modern Slavery Helpline - 08000 121 700

Information checklist

The following checklist details the information that law enforcement agencies may find useful to record during an investigation. It will also assist partner organisations to provide the victim with appropriate care and assistance.

- detailed descriptions of those involved
- where the victims are working and/or living
- other relevant locations
- methods used to control/manipulate the victim
- the length of time this has been happening for
- details of any transport used
- travel routes/methods
- financial information
- documents used
- method of recruitment
- national ties
- relations with the exploiter

Further advice and guidance

Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority

www.gla.gov.uk

PO Box 10272, Nottingham, NG2 9PB

Telephone: 0115 959 7052 (Intelligence team)

Email: intelligence@gla.gov.uk

Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit -

Multi-agency unit led by the National Crime Agency

www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre

Telephone: 08000 121 700 (Modern Slavery Helpline)

Salvation Army - UK charity providing support and advice. Key contact for victims in England and Wales

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/modern-slavery

Telephone: 0300 303 8151 (24 hour referral line)

BAWSO - Support for victims in Wales

www.bawso.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 731 8147 (24 hour helpline)

Migrant Help - Charity providing support and advice to victims of modern slavery in the UK

www.migranthehelpuk.org

Telephone: England - 01304 203977 or 07766 668781

Scotland - 0141 884 7900 or 0141 2128553

Northern Ireland - 02890 315744 or 02892 448449

Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA) - for female victims of sexual exploitation in Scotland

www.communitysafetyglasgow.org (search for TARA)

Telephone: 0141 276 7724

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland - for female victims

www.womensaidni.org

Telephone: 028 9024 9041 or 0808 802 1414 (24 hour helpline for all victims of domestic and sexual violence)

NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre - specialist service providing information and advice

www.nspcc.org.uk (search for CTAC)

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

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