



# A Scoping Project on Child Trafficking in the UK

June 2007



Making every child matter ... everywhere



Home Office

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**Border & Immigration Agency**

Produced by CEOP on behalf of the Home Office and the Border and Immigration Agency



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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Scope and Purpose</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>11</b>
Questionnaires	
Interviews	
Data Collection	
Ethical Considerations	
Methodological Limitations	
<b>Intelligence Gaps</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment</b>	<b>16</b>
1.1 Quantitative Data Gathered	16
1.2 Probability Levels for Trafficking	17
1.3 Source Countries	19
1.4 Background of Victims	22
1.5 Age Ranges	24
1.6 Gender	26
1.7 Identified Profiles of Child Trafficking Trends	27
1.7.1 Chinese Children (72 children)	
1.7.2 Western and Eastern African Girls (102 children)	
1.7.3 Afghan Boys (19 boys)	
1.7.4 Vietnamese Children (22 children)	
1.7.5 Eastern European Girls (14 girls)	
1.7.6 Other Profiles	
1.8 Transit Countries	34
1.9 Method of Entry	35
1.10 Separated and Accompanied Children	37
1.11 Methods of Control	41
1.12 UK Geographical Areas	42
1.13 Exploitation	42
1.14 Traffickers' Tactics	46
1.14.1 Asylum Process	
1.14.2 False Identity Documents	
1.15 Missing Children	48
1.16 Victim Support and After Care	50
<b>Part 2 – Awareness Assessment Overview</b>	<b>54</b>
2.1 Defining Child Trafficking	54
2.2 Victim Identification	56
2.3 Data Systems	56
2.4 Inter-Agency and Multi-Agency Working	58
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>63</b>
Annex A – Abbreviations and Acronyms	65
Annex B – Indicators of Child Trafficking	66
Annex C – Questionnaires to Forces	67
Annex D – Questionnaire sent to Children's Services	69
Annex E – Questionnaire sent to Border and Immigration Agencies	71
Annex F – Questionnaire sent to NGOs	74
Annex G – Letters Explaining the Scoping Report to Responding Agencies	76

## Foreword

Human trafficking is the scourge of modern society. It is an appalling crime and causes terrible pain and trauma to its victims. The Government has indicated its commitment to tackling the problem head-on, from the introduction of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation to better co-ordination of support and care for the victims.

On 23 March 2007, the Government published its Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking and signed the Council of Europe Convention Against Trafficking in Human Beings. Our Action Plan shows a very real commitment to combating this awful crime. But it is the trafficking of children that generates unanimous cries of horror. To combat the problem effectively, we need better intelligence and a better understanding of the extent of the problem. That is why we commissioned CEOP to conduct this study – so that all the agencies involved have a better idea of the scale and nature of child trafficking affecting this country.

Children are the most vulnerable members of any society, and as victims of trafficking they are subject to the true horrors and cold hearted attitude that is the core thread running through this area of criminality.

Children are not a commodity. They are not an item that should be bought and sold and yet such trade is a sad fact of life. Children are trafficked for a variety of reasons – sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and social security fraud to name but a few. Not only that but young people are trafficked from all over the world and within countries, often resulting in life long and devastating impact on the victims.

This study is not a complete picture of child trafficking into and within the UK, and therefore cannot be viewed as a comprehensive analysis of child trafficking. It will however help us get to the heart of the issue, to understand the complexities and then in turn bring offenders to justice in order to limit their opportunities and disrupt and dismantle their activity.

That is a bold task and there will be no overnight success. But what we have here is the beginnings of our map - the start of what the route and challenge ahead looks like and sign posts that will steer the many agencies involved in the prevention, investigation, law enforcement and protection of the child victims of human trafficking.



Vernon Coaker  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary  
of State, Home Office*



Jim Gamble  
*Chief Executive, CEOP Centre  
ACPO Lead, Child Trafficking*



Child Trafficking is a covert and highly varied activity impacting all areas of the UK. Children are being trafficked into the UK from abroad, as well as to some extent within the UK also. There is also evidence to show that children have also been trafficked from the UK to other countries. The full extent of child trafficking is still unknown, but in recent years increasing awareness has resulted in better intelligence gathering. Reports of child trafficking by both Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the statutory agencies have been steadily increasing over the years.

In mid-2006, the Home Office commissioned the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) to conduct an intelligence gathering project to try to establish the level of existing information and understanding of child trafficking. It was anticipated that such an assessment would also provide a preliminary view of the nature and scale of child trafficking in the UK. There was, and still is, a real need to understand this crime better so that strategic action to combat child trafficking and to safeguard victims is informed by an evidence-based approach. There is as yet no centrally held data on child trafficking in the UK. Any data collection at the local level is in its infancy due to low level of awareness of the issue amongst practitioners and senior managers. Data collection is one of a number of actions contained in the Government's recently-published UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking.

This report should not be read as a comprehensive analysis of child trafficking into and within the UK. Neither should it be used to estimate the total number of children who have been trafficked into and within the UK but rather as a scoping exercise. This project should be seen as the first stage of a more in-depth study or "strategic threat assessment".

The report has two distinct parts – the first being an assessment of the degrees of awareness of the various agencies and their ability to identify potentially trafficked children, collect data and work with other key agencies involved in their care and protection. Part two is an account of the case data and CEOP's assessment of it.

Using the UN definition of trafficking, and its specific directions as to child trafficking, the research team collected and collated information and data from 41 police forces and law enforcement agencies, 20 Children's Services, 21 Border and Immigration Agencies and eight NGOs in the UK. The research team gathered case data from these agencies of child trafficking that came to their attention between March 2005 to December 2006, and where the victim was still under the age of 18 years in March 2005. Qualitative data from these agencies was also sought and, in particular, from practitioners who have experience of working with child trafficking cases to gather further knowledge on the current level of institutional understanding of child trafficking in the UK.

The research team developed a profile of indicators to help identify and recognise a child victim of trafficking using the London Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC) profile. From referrals the research team identified 330 unique cases of children that fitted the profile. These cases were categorised into four levels that aligned with the probability of the child having been trafficked, based on the amount of information gathered and the degree of matching with the profile. Of the 330 children that fit the profile, 70 were categorised as level 1 (low probability of trafficking), 70 as level 2 (medium probability), 85 as level 3 (high probability) and 105 as level 4 (very high). Forty-four source countries in total were identified in the study and varied in regions, mainly consisting of the Far East, South East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Africa, Eastern Europe and the Baltic states.

Children trafficked, or suspected to have been trafficked to the UK, came from a range of backgrounds, all of which highlighted various vulnerabilities within their home countries. In the context of growing migratory trends throughout the world and specifically to the UK and their

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# Executive Summary

specific lack of security in their countries of origin, these children are particularly vulnerable to the growing globalisation of exploitation. Significantly, children who had already become victims of trafficking are, perhaps most vulnerable to being re-trafficked.

## Report findings

The findings, as detailed in Part 1 highlight the following key data:

Of the 330 children fitting the child trafficking profile:

- 85% (276 children) were found to be between the ages of 15 and 17.
- 24 children were found to be between 13 and 14 years of age.
- 14 children were documented as 12 and under, the youngest being a 9-month-old baby.

These findings should be viewed with two caveats: a) For many of the children identity documents were false or did not exist, therefore the accuracy of the information lacks complete reliability; b) Some children's ages have been estimated using age assessment tests undertaken by Children's Services. Furthermore, many of the children were trafficked years before their case came to the attention of the agencies.

In 227 (67% of total) of the total 330 cases documented in the data set, the type of exploitation the child was being trafficked or suspected to be trafficked into was unclear. This particular point highlights some of the challenges the research team faced when conducting this work and demonstrates the need for more robust and consistent systems to both collect and record data about cases of child trafficking if we are to gain a wholly accurate picture of the true nature and scale of this problem.

Fifty six percent (185) of the children documented in the data set were girls, and 42% (140) were boys. However, of those cases where there was clear evidence the child was trafficked (level 4), 87% (91) were girls.

## Reasons for trafficking

There were a greater proportion of girls than boys identified in levels 3 and 4 cases than in levels 1 and 2. Consequently there is a more serious concern highlighted overall for girls than boys. Of the 91 girls in level 4, 59 (65%) were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 21 (23%) were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude. The remainder were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for purposes of drug trafficking, cannabis cultivation, and other forms of criminal activity, adoption, servile marriages, benefit fraud and other forms of labour exploitation such as in restaurants.

The nature of exploitation in 128 (92%) of the cases of 139 boys recorded in the data set, the type of exploitation was unclear. This could highlight a number of possibilities. Firstly, that these boys are being smuggled into the UK, rather than trafficked. Secondly, it could show that the types of exploitation boys are involved in are not as easily identifiable as it is for girls. For the 11 boys' cases where information regarding the exploitation was given, these included for cannabis cultivation, labour exploitation, begging and domestic servitude.

## Ethnicity

Chinese children, both girls and boys, from the ages of 13 to 17 have been identified as a specific group of children being trafficked into the UK.

There were 102 cases of Western and Eastern African girls recorded in the data set between the ages of 12 and 17 years of age. The biggest source country in these regions is Nigeria with 38 girls. These cases were recorded as trafficked or suspected to be trafficked into the UK mainly for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

# Executive Summary

Afghan boys are another group of children who have been specifically identified as a vulnerable group given the substantiated patterns over recent years. The data set includes 19 Afghan boys, although more were reported.

Vietnamese boys and girls have been identified as a specific vulnerable group with 22 children documented in the data set. Some of these children were found being exploited in cannabis “farms” or “factories” and others were suspected to have been trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Eastern European girls have been identified in the data set as a vulnerable group in the UK for exploitation in the prostitution industry.

## Trafficking into the UK

The port and method of entry is not very clear for all of the cases. Of the 330 children, 140 were recorded as having entered the UK through an airport. Sixty-five children were recorded to have entered the UK through seaports. Five children were reported to have entered by train from the Euro tunnel and for the rest (119 children) the port of entry is unknown. It has further been observed in the data set that where the information was available, more girls (91) than boys (43) entered the UK by air and more boys (50) than girls (15) entered the UK by sea. The trends show that most of the children that entered the UK in lorries were boys, however, there have been at least two cases where girls were found to have been transported in the same way.

Many children travelled through third countries on their journeys to the UK. These transit countries are often also nexus points in the trafficking chain from the source country to the UK. Of the 330 cases in the data set, 70 cases report entering the UK overland, by train or via seaport, thereby necessitating the existence of a transit country. For a further 119 cases the type of port used to enter the UK is not known.

## Method

A pattern revealed by the data set shows that only seven of the children trafficked from China were recorded to have been accompanied. Of the 72 children trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked from China, 56 (78% of all Chinese children) were recorded to have been separated on entering the UK. The highest source region from where children seem to be trafficked accompanied by an adult is Western Africa (35) and Eastern Africa (20). The trend definitely presents the differences in how trafficking of children is carried out from different regions of the world. Boys entering the UK by sea have shown the highest likelihood of entering as a separated child.

The exercise has shown that child trafficking is a nationwide concern as it affects almost all parts of the United Kingdom. As shown in the report, there is some evidence of the enforced movement of children around the UK after their trafficking into the UK.

## Child traffickers

Traffickers of children seem to vary between those that are highly organised and linked with other organised crime, particularly immigration and vice, and those that are individually opportunistic and have trafficked a child on a more informal basis. Traffickers from Albania and China seem to be the most sophisticated and organised. Informal trafficking on the other hand tends to be mainly in regard to exploitation in domestic servitude as well as some instances of sexual exploitation. Trafficking for domestic servitude is often carried out by families that bring over children from source countries in order to look after their children and family members.

This report also found that many children trafficked into the UK claim asylum during and as part of the trafficking process. Systems and procedures for child safeguarding, protection and asylum are blatantly exploited by traffickers who smoothly evade authorities and keep control of



these children. A substantial proportion of the case data pointed to the use of false identification documents. The majority of separated children documented in the data set entered the UK with a false passport or no passport at all.

Of the data sample, 183 (55% of total children) children were found to be missing. In a handful of cases, the children were suspected to have been re-trafficked. Often, the children that are rediscovered after a period of time spent missing are reluctant to provide an accurate account of what happened to them when they disappeared. Clearly children who have already been victims of trafficking are particularly vulnerable to re-trafficking and further exploitation.

## **In conclusion**

The report's findings illustrate significant concerns about child trafficking into and within the UK and go some way in explaining the level of current knowledge.

This scoping exercise has also begun to examine the work being carried out by specific sectors and agencies in the UK in regard to child trafficking. It is clear that much good work by police forces, Children's Services, the Border and Immigration Agency and NGOs is taking place. There are some excellent examples of good practice including the positive application of child safeguarding procedures and agencies using their initiative to raise awareness amongst their staff and to provide training.

In the voluntary sector a number of research initiatives have been undertaken in this field. Within each sector's respective role, improvements could be made in order to support progress at a national level. A fundamental element to this is that all matters regarding children should be wholly contextualised within a general child protection environment. General children's safeguarding strategies and policies need to continue being strengthened to better respond to child trafficking cases.

This means, for example, that cases of missing children should be screened by police to check for any possibilities of trafficking; that Local Authorities facilitate all child protection procedures to be fully accessible for all children; that children entering and those who have entered the country in suspicious circumstances are better identified and screened by the immigration service; and that NGOs and statutory agencies are able to work even better together.

Some migrant children are at great risk of falling into exploitative circumstances. Better identification of these children is integral in progressing our combined multi-agency response to child trafficking, from both a child safeguarding and protection and a criminal justice point of view.

This necessitates a greater awareness of child trafficking at all levels and across sectors; better joined up working both within and across all sectors; more resources to provide specialist and general child protection initiatives for 'at risk' children; more specifically tailored training of all practitioners; improved will amongst agencies and sectors to tackle the problem; and an integral change in culture and approach to 'at risk' migrant children.

With the advent of the UK Action Plan on Human Trafficking, growing awareness surrounding the issues around child trafficking and the launch of the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) the turning point for an overall change in responses has been recognised and is progressing. This scoping research on the current level of knowledge on child trafficking is only the first step - a baseline survey - from which future steps and actions can take place.



# Introduction

From the outset of the creation of the ACPO child trafficking portfolio, it became evident that the nature and scale of trafficking of children into and within the UK is not known. Existing research and knowledge indicates that child trafficking is both hidden and covert in nature. In addition, child identification, assessment, referral, safeguarding and care is a complex area and the many agencies involved often have limited means of recording child trafficking and exploitation as a concern or risk factor, if they are aware of it at all.

Policy advisors are aware of anecdotal evidence surrounding child exploitation and trafficking, however the lack of reliable and accessible data has previously impeded the ability to produce a comprehensive strategic and tactical response. Such data would need to be collected dynamically and regularly in order to identify and monitor the problem. This would best be achieved by the development of a central intelligence focal point working through multi-agency collaboration. It was recognised that such a focal point should be tasked with producing a UK Strategic Threat Assessment (STA) for child trafficking, to ensure that agencies are able to respond to child trafficking via an intelligence-led approach. To this end, CEOP were commissioned by the Home Office and the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) to produce a scoping exercise on child trafficking within the UK as a means of providing a solid foundation for a STA.

Through the various governmental, as well as non-governmental, systems and infrastructures, especially in the area of child protection, there is much data and information recorded surrounding children. This data is gathered through the overall framework for the safeguarding of children. Much of this data can give us valuable information about those children who may have been or are currently in situations of exploitation. Therefore, interrogation of these existing systems, in order to develop a baseline picture of what we currently know, was the purpose of this scoping project. In essence, the purpose of this research has been to implement a quick data mapping of the combined knowledge across relevant sectors regarding children trafficked into exploitation in the UK.

“Trafficking” and “Child Trafficking” for the purpose of this report is defined at Part 2.

**“Policy advisors are aware of anecdotal evidence surrounding child exploitation and trafficking, however the lack of reliable and accessible data has previously impeded the ability to produce a comprehensive strategic and tactical response”**



## Scope and Purpose

The primary reason for producing the Scoping Project on Child Trafficking (Project) was to advise how an eventual STA should be produced. Not only would the project provide a baseline for further assessment of the problem, but also as an excellent means of building the necessary first steps in terms of data collection and formulating relationships with statutory and non-statutory agencies.

The overarching aim of the project was to provide an overview of how UK agencies define child trafficking within a conceptual and practical context. In achieving this aim the project sought to specifically:

- Identify databases used by statutory and non-statutory agencies to record cases of child trafficking;
- Assess child trafficking levels of knowledge amongst UK agencies with expected involvement in this area;
- Identify relevant child concern databases used by practitioners where children have gone missing or who are at risk of harm;
- From a sample of missing children, and using the “trafficked child” profile developed by the London Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC), engage the child’s key worker to assess the probability of a positive identification of the child having been a victim of trafficking; and
- Consider what additional analysis / investigative actions might help in refining the assessment of child trafficking estimates, based on the LACPC profile.

**“The overarching aim of the project was to provide an overview of how UK agencies define child trafficking within a conceptual and practical context.”**

The scoping research was coordinated by two legal researchers from CEOP and involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Qualitative data surrounding knowledge and understanding of child trafficking and exploitation was primarily collected by means of a questionnaire and, where appropriate, supported by follow-up interviews. These mechanisms are described in more detail below. Broadly speaking, the questionnaire and interview methods were designed to elicit information regarding the mechanisms used by agencies to collect and record data pertaining to child trafficking cases, as well as to better understand how agencies dealt with child trafficking on a case by case basis. The specific probes in the questionnaire were designed to:

- Elicit the criteria used by each agency to identify a child trafficking case;
- Identify specific databases used by practitioners within each agency; and
- Assess levels of knowledge on child trafficking demonstrated by each agency.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with agencies, where further information about their operational practices was required, in order to sufficiently understand how these agencies responded to cases of child trafficking. These interviews were conducted with relevant personnel from responding agencies such as Asylum Screening Units (ASUs), airports, NGOs and Children's Services teams who have directly worked on cases of actual or suspected child trafficking.

Quantitative data was gathered through use of the questionnaire which requested information from responding agencies about actual cases where child exploitation and trafficking was suspected or found. The data set was restricted to focus on cases that each agency had encountered or dealt with in the last 18 months. Respondents were permitted to include information about cases the agency had dealt with before this period on the basis that the victim was under 18 years of age as of March 2005. Where further clarification from questionnaire respondents was required, follow-up communications by telephone and email were undertaken.

### Questionnaires<sup>1</sup>

Questionnaires were specifically designed for police forces, Children's Services, NGOs and the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA)<sup>2</sup>. They were tailored to each agency to elicit information on how they understood the concept of trafficking and how they responded to this 'perceived' problem. Each questionnaire was designed to obtain information in the following areas:

- Definitions used for recording mechanisms.
- Data recording systems
- Processes underpinning inter-agency communication
- Case specific information

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaire sought information relating to data collection and recording mechanisms used by responding agencies. These sections consisted of a series of probes designed to elicit detailed information that permitted an assessment of the level of knowledge and understanding of child trafficking and exploitation within each agency.

Sections 4 and 5 of the questionnaire requested data relating to actual and possible cases. In this case, the research team required information about any and all cases where a child may have been trafficked and/or exploited. To ensure consistency across the sample of cases referred, responding agencies were provided with criteria for case selection derived from the UN definition of Trafficking of Persons<sup>3</sup>. To this end each questionnaire included a checklist

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<sup>1</sup> Samples of pro-forma questionnaires may be found in Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> The questionnaires were designed with the kind help of the Advisory Panel members.

<sup>3</sup> Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime.

of risk indicators for the identification of relevant cases. This list of indicators consisted of elements from the London Area Child Protection Committee's (LACPC) profile, with further additions contributed by the research team.

On reviewing returned questionnaires any ambiguous information supplied in individual responses was clarified through email, telephone correspondence or face to face meetings. Normally, these discrepancies would be the result of the questionnaires not being properly filled out as directed, due to time constraints on the part of the respondents.<sup>4</sup>

## Interviews

It was originally planned that interviews would be carried out once responses from questionnaires were received. However, given the limited length of time for the study and the time-consuming nature of filling out the responses for many agencies, these interviews were generally carried out before full responses were received. The interviews involved visiting agencies such as the BIA Asylum Screening Units (ASUs) at Croydon and Liverpool, as well as airports and NGOs in order to better understand their work and mandates, along with the types of issues and situations these agencies tackle on a regular basis. The interviews were carried out by one or two members of the research team with either one or more interviewees at a time. Whether the interview was of a group or an individual depended on which persons were relevant and available within each respective agency. Clearly, where interviews were undertaken on the phone, it was always between one member of the research team and one interviewee.

This qualitative research has laid the foundations for the development of a mutually respectful multi-agency approach, as it allowed the CEOP research team to gain an invaluable understanding about each of these agencies, and understand the problem from various perspectives.

## Data collection

Of the questionnaires that were distributed to agencies across the UK, the following were received:

### **41 Police forces and law enforcement agencies<sup>5</sup> in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as other law enforcement agencies.**

Case data only consisted of known cases of investigations and criminal charges of crimes related to child trafficking per se. These did not consist of children reported as missing by immigration or Children's Services, which would fall into the agreed profile of a child trafficking case.

### **20 Children's Services.**

Each of the London Local Authorities that responded were counted as one, as well as each Local Authority for any other city, even where the latter may have included a consolidated response from all of their respective boroughs. Information and case data was taken mainly from the narrow pool of children dealt with by asylum teams who were classified as "Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children". Some of the larger cities of the UK are not covered in the project findings due to non-completion of the questionnaires. Data, including that of cases, from many of the known 'hot spot' areas was not received, so it is estimated that the sample quantitative data gathered in this research is heavily under represented. Some of the agencies from well known 'hot spot' areas only gave a representative sample rather than all case data stored due to lack of resources to retrieve the data. At least two Children's Services from whom significant data was expected did not manage to respond to the questionnaire. These 'hot spot' areas have been identified as Local Authorities that receive a high number of referrals of separated children from ports within their remit regions.

<sup>4</sup> An example of discrepancies for clarification was where respondents would give details of various cases in one box without separating them from each other. It was therefore important to ensure the ages or other characteristics given were corresponding correctly with each of the respective cases referred to.

<sup>5</sup> These include SOCA and UKHTC.

## **21 responding agencies from the UK Border and Immigration Agency (BIA).**

These include units, departments and agencies within Border Control, Enforcement and Removals, BIA Intelligence Service and Managed Migration. Case related data that was given consisted primarily of those cases where there was some solid foundation for suspicion that trafficking activity had occurred. Information received from these agencies was particularly valuable as the wide range of types of responses received highlighted that BIA was very broad and diverse in the work it carried out and cannot be as easily compared with the other sectors participating in this research.

## **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO).**

Qualitative information given by NGOs demonstrated that these organisations had the most developed understanding and knowledge about aspects of child trafficking and exploitation. For example, this was partly highlighted by the fact that NGOs could most clearly identify a child victim of trafficking and could in all cases state the reason for such identification. However, in relation to quantitative data, there was a mixed response received, again highlighting the diverse characters of various voluntary sector agencies in the UK. Three NGOs provided CEOP with all the case data they had, whilst one NGO admitted having many cases but was not willing to share it. The three other NGOs were only able to give a representative sample due to lack of resources.

Questionnaires were sent to all police forces in the UK resulting in a higher number of overall responding agencies from that sector. The BIA distributed the questionnaires nationally from two focal points within the agency. With respect to Children's Services, questionnaires were sent to a shortlist compiled by the research team. The shortlist was made up of those Children's Services that had been identified as having cases of possible child trafficking. These Children's Services were initially identified by locating missing unaccompanied children on the National Register of Unaccompanied Children (NRUC)<sup>6</sup>. The corresponding Children's Services from where unaccompanied children had gone missing were sent questionnaires. Subsequently, during the course of the research, further Children's Services were identified through incoming data from responding agencies and from the other sectors that stated various Children's Services from or to whom children had been referred. As and when these Children's Services were identified, questionnaires were sent out to them. NGOs were selected by identifying those that undertaken child trafficking case work, with the help of NGO partners. In order to encourage agencies to respond, further letters outlining the value of the scoping exercise were sent out to all agencies.

## **Ethical considerations**

Given the sensitivity of data regarding children and seriousness of child trafficking, measures were taken to ensure that all data was kept confidential and the identity of the children protected.

In collecting data from agencies, the purposes of the data collection and research were explained in a letter within the main document consisting of the questionnaire.<sup>7</sup> The letter also clearly outlined the contact details of the research team in case of any further queries. Whereas the vast majority of the respondents were satisfied with this explanation, some agencies required further justification of the purposes of the data collection as well as written undertakings that the raw data would not be used for any other purposes and that CEOP would require written authorisation before the raw data could be shared externally. Each responding agency was able to send data to the research team in the way they felt most comfortable. This included, email, post or other more secure avenues of sharing intelligence.

In order to protect the identities of children a selection of criteria were applied when referring to specific cases within the report. Firstly, the personal identity of each child was changed. Secondly, where the case was not already in the public domain, further precautions were taken

<sup>6</sup> This database is used to record details of Unaccompanied Children by Local Authorities.

<sup>7</sup> See Annex C

to generalise the details of the case referred to. This was carried out to ensure the specific details of the case would not allow identification of the child.

In order to ensure the accuracy of the research, as well as to verify that responding agencies who gave confidential data were satisfied with the way case data was referred to, statutory agencies were sent an advance copy of the report. This gave these particular agencies an opportunity to raise any objections. Furthermore, advance copies of the report were also sent for review to specific statutory partners for verification of technical details. All feedback was carefully considered and subsequently integrated into the report where appropriate.

### Methodological limitations

The exercise of gathering case data is also very time intensive. This is all the more so when considering that a great deal of effort needs to be made in building relationships, trust and confidence with respondents before such data gathering exercise begins. This relationship building was an integral part of the research team's activity in following up responses. There were specific agencies in the BIA, Children's Services and NGO sectors whose participation in the research would have been significant but whose response was not received.<sup>8</sup> This was also another reason as to why follow up interviews were carried out before specific responses were received, as such meetings helped to develop rapport and mutual understanding about each others' work. It is clear that this continuation of data gathering should develop without losing the present momentum attained from networking with all participants from the research, particularly for purposes of undertaking a Strategic Threat Assessment on child trafficking.

The methodology was designed in order to focus on separated or unaccompanied migrant children at risk of trafficking. Given that children at risk of being trafficked may be migrants, indigenous, unaccompanied, separated or accompanied, the scoping exercise cannot be considered to adequately represent trends for child trafficking from all groups of children.

The scoping exercise was designed as a short research project in order to take a snapshot of the current understanding of child trafficking and responding systems in place throughout the UK. It is clear that it can only have give a very preliminary assessment into the problem and can by no means produce a definitive study of the overall nature and scale of the problem. Therefore, it is obvious that had more time and resources been available for the study, more in-depth evidence could have been gathered to better substantiate some of the overall conclusions and findings. Hence, the methodology was designed in order to best facilitate the overall benefit from the most experienced stakeholders in child trafficking rather than all of them.

The original designated time frame for the scoping project was a period of three months, for data gathering, analysis and report production. This initial three month time frame ran from September 2006 to December 2006. After this point, it was concluded that the data gathered, especially in regard to quantitative data, was not sufficient to give an adequate picture of national trends. Thus, the deadline for those significant agencies that had yet to respond was extended to 1 March 2007. Thus, this report can be seen as a rapid assessment of all the data, both qualitative and quantitative, received up until and including 2 March 2007<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> In two cases the relevant data was sent after the deadline set and even after the data analysis had been completed and therefore could not be included in the findings.

<sup>9</sup> The date of the last receipt of data included in the report.

# Intelligence Gaps

During the formulation of this report the following intelligence gaps were identified:

- a. Not all available data on children trafficked was collected due to the:
  - Difficulty in retrieval due to disparate data systems within some agencies and inadequate resources to complete the questionnaires;
  - Short time span for scoping; and
  - Need to establish partnerships both in technical and policy levels.

A combination of these reasons resulted in some general reluctance to share data with the research team.
- b. Further information is required on the criminal networks who are involved in child trafficking. A preliminary assessment shows that larger organised groups can be sophisticated in their strategy whilst individuals and smaller groups appear more ad hoc or opportunistic in their approach.
- c. More financial information is needed on money laundering techniques used by trafficking groups, specifically in relation to the flow of monies and level of profit accrued.
- d. Although the limited data within the project has begun to highlight trends about source countries, gender and purpose of exploitation, further intelligence is sought on these issues. Agencies need to be made aware of the following:
  - Source countries, including particular cities, towns and villages that have children being trafficked in to the UK;
  - The areas of exploitation that are fuelling the demand for the trafficking of children. Findings show that children have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour exploitation, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking, general street crime and begging.
  - Methods of recruitment and control need further understanding. This would increase awareness of both victim care as well as prevention in source countries.

**“ The areas of exploitation that are fuelling the demand for the trafficking of children. Findings show that children have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour exploitation, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking, general street crime and begging ”**



## 1.1 Quantitative data gathered

Quantitative data, in the form of actual cases of suspected or confirmed child trafficking, received cumulatively from the above mentioned agencies, amounted to a total of 330 individual children who satisfied the profile developed from the LACPC.<sup>10</sup> These cases ranged from circumstances where the individual seems to have been in a dubious situation, to circumstances where the child has unambiguously claimed that they have been trafficked into exploitation. The span of cases therefore covers children who are missing, and their whereabouts are not known, to those cases where police investigations have resulted in convictions of traffickers. Therefore, this should not be seen as the total number of children that have been found to be trafficked.

Furthermore, the following caveats also need to be considered when reviewing this material:

- All findings of this report are based on secondary and tertiary information referred to the research team. Data sent from all responding agencies was assessed according to the definition of Child Trafficking under International Law, which is further explained in Section 2.1. The reliability of the data referred to the research team, from police, Children's Services, BIA agencies and NGOs was not tested. This scoping study only looked to assess the existing data currently held by all these agencies, as relating to child trafficking in the UK. Therefore, it looks at all the existing evidence of child trafficking within the parameters of current understanding, such as by focusing on separated children seeking asylum. Further conclusions are reached as a combination of the data set and the qualitative information gathered from the responding agencies, as well as a wider group of practitioners that have worked in the field. Some of these conclusions cannot be further substantiated through the statistical analysis given the limited scope of this assessment.
- Measures have been undertaken to ensure that the same cases are not counted more than once. This may happen where a child has been referred from one agency to another and where both those agencies may have referred to the same child. The research team has attempted to minimise the risk of double counting by cross checking names, dates of births, referral agencies and other circumstances and characteristics noted for each child. The majority of respondents provided sufficient personal information about each individual child in order for this risk to have been properly minimised. Given that some agencies only gave anonymised data means that there may be some cases of double counting, however, it estimated to be no more than about five cases.
- Agencies within the largest metropolitan areas and those whose remits cover international ports such as airports, seaports and train stations, are identified as 'hot spot' areas, which act as transit and destination points for the trafficking of children. Therefore, it was felt that these agencies held the most significant knowledge and case information. Some of these agencies did not manage to respond to our questionnaire, despite repeated attempts at convincing them about the importance of this survey. Many expressed that they did not have the resources to collate the information required, especially as they had so many such cases. Other agencies said they would respond but failed to, and others simply did not respond to any communications. Given the limited information expressed by some agencies about the numbers of children recorded through their systems, it is estimated that this research could have benefited from up to another 100 referrals of children that would have fallen within the devised profile.<sup>11</sup>
- A substantial number of cases of suspected child trafficking were referred to the researchers, but which could not be included in the data sample due to:
  - Insufficient information given; or

**“Cases ranged from circumstances where the individual seems to have been in a dubious situation, to circumstances where the child has unambiguously claimed that they have been trafficked into exploitation”**

<sup>10</sup> See Annex A for the profile used.

<sup>11</sup> This figure has been calculated using the numbers of children that were received after the deadline and, based on the types of responses of other similar Children's Services, a rough estimate of what two other Children's Services with large ports within their areas might have referred in their response.

# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

- The number of children in these cases was not clear and unidentifiable and it concentrated on the traffickers
- The case fell outside of the 18 month remit and the child had reached the age of majority by March 2005.

It is estimated that at least 20 to 30 such cases were referred to the research team. The trends and themes of these cases were similar to those found in the main data set.

- Over half of the responding agencies did not return any case data to the research team and only answered the qualitative questions. It is clear from analysis of responses, where a 'nil return' was provided, that there were different interpretations of what constituted child trafficking, along with disparate systems to record information on such cases. It is our view that there exists - amongst some of these agencies - a lower level of institutional understanding or awareness of child trafficking and exploitation, either at the conceptual or the practical level. This is reflected by the data collection systems employed by some agencies, which lack the capacity to record relevant information about child trafficking. This was also evidenced by the fact that other agencies from the same region did give case data and also informed the research team that they referred these cases to those agencies which gave a nil return. Therefore, it can be concluded that cases that would have fallen within the profile given at the back of the questionnaire were too difficult to identify. Other agencies who gave a nil return usually did not have an adequate definition for child trafficking. Those agencies that had a better knowledge and understanding of child trafficking mostly responded with case data. The only exception to this trend were those agencies that had too much case data and felt they did not have the resources to transfer the information to the research team as mentioned above.
- Child trafficking is both hidden and covert in nature, therefore, will inevitably result in any figure produced on child trafficking to be under-estimated. Most victims are unable to report this crime. In addition those that are able to have contact with a statutory or non-statutory agency may not have their case defined or identified as child trafficking due to issues concerning lack of awareness and capacity.
- This scoping research project was based on existing knowledge. Therefore, the focus has been on separated children and those that have gone missing from care. Had the target been of a broader group of vulnerable children, such as all vulnerable children identified at risk of exploitation whether or not they were separated asylum seeking children, the results may be have been different. This broader remit for examination is anticipated for the STA.

## 1.2 Probability levels for trafficking

As a means of appropriately assessing the data, and determining the likelihood of whether a case presented to us was indeed child trafficking, the data was categorised into four sections. It should be noted that categorisation depended on the amount of information available on each case. More intelligence gathering about any one case could increase or decrease the level of categorisation. Therefore, it is possible that if all the information on every case was available, that all the cases could be categorised as actually trafficked. On the other hand, it could also mean that many of the cases were not actual trafficking cases at all. The below table outlines some of the criteria used to categorise each case.

<sup>10</sup> See Annex A for the profile used.

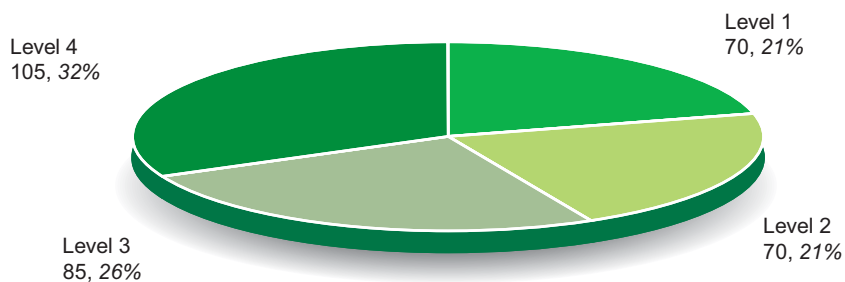
<sup>11</sup> This figure has been calculated using the numbers of children that were received after the deadline and, based on the types of responses of other similar Children's Services, a rough estimate of what two other Children's Services with large ports within their areas might have referred in their response.

# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

Level	Trafficking probability	Supporting evidence
4	Very High	Conviction, admission of exploitation by the child, other evidence of exploitation.
3	High	Law enforcement investigations consistent with recognised child trafficking profiles produced by statutory agencies <sup>12</sup> and/or the LACPC. But no intelligence on exploitation in individual cases.
2	Medium	Matched about 2 or 3 low level <sup>13</sup> indicators within the LACPC profile or child classified as missing with dubious circumstances.
1	Low	Missing children referred to us by an agency as a possible case but with no supporting information about any dubious circumstances.

It must be emphasised that each individual case was categorised according to the information given to the research team. Many agencies gave only basic information about each case, without explaining why it was suspected to be a case of trafficking. The research team was not able to follow up with every agency to elicit more information about each case. Furthermore, it should be noted that some cases did not fall within any of the categories and were, therefore, omitted.

**Figure 1: Levels of Probability to Trafficking Activity**



Of the 105 out of 330 cases included in the data set within Level 4, 31 were referred by law enforcement, 26 were referred from BIA, 14 were referred by Children's Services and 34 were referred by NGOs. Of the 85 cases categorised in level 3, 26 were referred by law enforcement, 14 by BIA, 44 by Children's Services, two by NGOs.<sup>14</sup> The trends highlighted amongst the referring sectors indicate a number of key characteristics of the role that each plays in responding to the trafficking of children.

Each agency encounters children at different points of the trafficking chain from their respective remits. BIA are dealing with the immigration and asylum aspects, local authorities are responsible for the care of children and law enforcement are responsible for protecting children from criminals. NGOs encounter children through their varied work around protection of children and vulnerable persons in numerous ways, such as through flexible provisions of support services. Therefore, each agency has referred cases to the research team from their particular angles of perception, which they feel consist of at least suspicions of child trafficking.

<sup>12</sup> Child Trafficking Profiles: Determined by the Police, Local Authorities or the Immigration Service after identifying a trend during a given period of time that would lead to the conclusion that trafficking activity is taking place.

<sup>13</sup> "Low level" meaning that the indicator checked was an indicator of general vulnerability rather than one that directly highlighted suspicion of trafficking, such as "is withdrawn and refuses to talk" or "who is cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good".

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted here that these figures only relate to the first time referral of a case. For example, sometimes the same case was referred to the research team by an NGO and subsequently by BIA. The first referring agency only has been recorded and thereafter any further referral of the same case is recorded by flagging the case with a mark for double or triple count in the database. So in fact each of the agencies referred more cases altogether, although not more than just a handful and so these figures only represent the number of *unique* cases referred.

The thresholds for suspecting child trafficking in any given case, generally vary according to each sector, and specifically vary according to each agency. This has led to most of the cases referred by Children's Services being categorised in levels 1, 2 and 3, as they have consisted largely of children going missing in dubious circumstances, but where the exploitation type they may have fallen vulnerable to is unknown. Whereas cases referred to by police and ASUs mainly consist of the types of cases that are categorised as level 4, given that there is some clear evidence to show that the given child was trafficked. This is usually due to the availability of information relating to the type of exploitation the child was trafficked into. This information is often from the children themselves or other investigations carried out by the referring agency. It is important to note that the research team did not judge the reliability of the information given by the referring agencies. All information given by each responding agency, whether BIA, police, Children's Services or NGOs, the research team assumed was sufficiently reliable to use for the purposes of the scoping study.

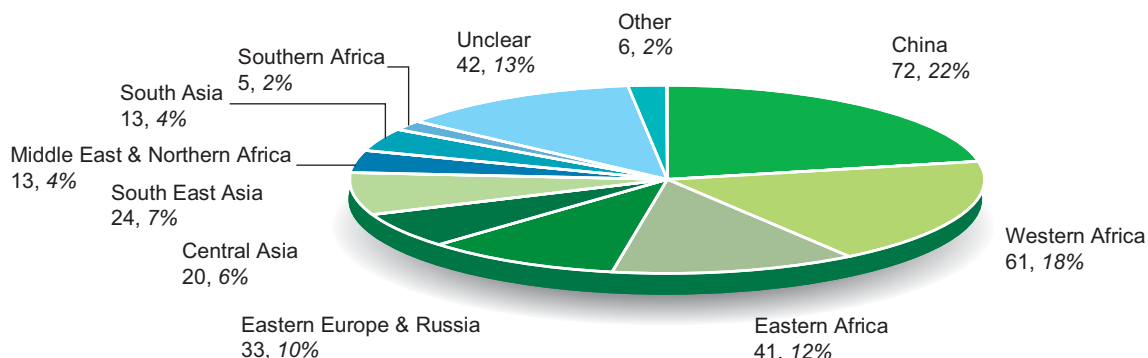
It is also important to note the distinction between child trafficking and child smuggling.<sup>15</sup> Where children are categorised as levels 1, 2 and 3, highlighting the probability of trafficking activity according to the amount of information available, other conclusions of what may have happened to these children can also be drawn. One of these possibilities is that children are simply being smuggled into the UK. This would be referred to as 'facilitation' and only consists of facilitating the illegal entry of another (a child in this case) across an international border (in this case, into the UK). With the real absence of the intent to do this 'for the purposes of exploiting' that child, the person transporting the child would only be a smuggler, not a trafficker. Given the difficulty in proving intent to exploit a facilitator, often many criminal cases that are possibly trafficking cases are prosecuted as simply facilitation cases. Therefore, it is likely that some of the cases included in the data set are cases of child smuggling rather than trafficking. Nonetheless, children who are smuggled are still vulnerable to falling into a trafficking situation afterwards and their situation is still of concern, from both a general protective stance to a possible trafficking case.

### 1.3 Source countries

Forty four source countries in total were identified in the study and varied in regions, mainly consisting of the Far East, South East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Africa, Eastern Europe and the Baltic states. In order of priority, these countries are China (70), Nigeria (38), Vietnam (22), Afghanistan (19), Eritrea (14), Romania (14), Albania (10), Kenya (9), India (7), Algeria (7), Sierra Leone (6), Somalia (6), Guinea (5), Cameroon (5), Uganda (5), Moldova (4), Burundi (3), South Africa (3), Sudan (3), USA (2), Iraq (2), Ivory Coast (2), Liberia (2), Lithuania (2), Pakistan (2), Russia (2), Bangladesh (2), Ghana (1), Belgium (1), Benin (1), Brazil (1), Bulgaria (1), Ethiopia (1), Iran (1), Japan (1), Mali (1), Mongolia (1), Palestine (1), Singapore (1), Syria (1), Thailand (1), Togo (1), Zimbabwe (1), Zambia (1) and one case reported was an internal trafficking case. In 46 cases, the source countries of children found to have been missing in dubious circumstances was not given, although in some of the cases there was enough information to allocate a source region.

<sup>15</sup> See Part 2 Section 1 for legal information about child smuggling.

Figure 2: Source Regions



From the data set collected, China is the relatively largest source country for children who are vulnerable to trafficking. Of the 72 children included in China as the source region, this includes the 70 children who claimed to be from the Chinese mainland or Hong Kong (1), as well as two children whose source country was not given but whose names were Chinese and ethnicity was recorded as Oriental.

Of these 72 children, 45 were girls, 24 were boys and for 3 children the sex was unclear from the data given. It is not certain where these children come from within China. However, some other indicators may provide some hints. For example, most of the children were recorded as speaking Mandarin as their main language, which is largely spoken in Northern and South western China and is the predominant language/dialect in China. There were at least two cases where Cantonese was recorded as a language spoken by the child. This language is predominantly spoken in Guangdong and in parts of Guangxi in Southern China as well as in Hong Kong and Macau. One child's home province has been recorded as Hubei, which is in Central China.

Of the 72 Chinese children, 58 appeared to have come through airports into the UK. For 67 of them, the purpose of their transportation to the UK is unclear. Information about the exploitation for which these children may be being trafficked for is also largely unknown. Only five cases of Chinese children consisted of any exploitation related information. These consisted of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation such as in restaurants, credit card fraud, drug dealing and domestic servitude. The main reason as to why the purpose of their transportation to the UK is unknown is because 63 (88%) Chinese children in the data set are missing.

The second largest source region for children trafficked or vulnerable to exploitation in the UK is Western Africa (61 children). Thirty eight (60%) of these children are recorded as having Nigerian nationality. The remainder were thought to come from Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Togo and Benin. For the five girls trafficked or thought to be trafficked from Guinea, it is not clear whether they came from the Republic of Guinea (Guinea-Conakry) or Guinea – Bisseau. At least one of the girls is from Guinea-Conakry.

Of the 61 children trafficked or vulnerable to exploitation in the UK from Western Africa, 51 (84%) were girls. Thirty-eight children (62%) were categorised as level 4 and therefore found to have been trafficked. Twenty six of these were girls who had been trafficked into sexual exploitation. Three more girls are suspected to have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Nine girls and one boy were found to have been trafficked for domestic servitude (one of these nine girls has also been counted as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation).

The other cases included international drugs trafficking and labour exploitation. For 22 of these children, the purpose of their transportation to the UK is unclear. Of all the Western African children registered in the data set, 36 were recorded to have been accompanied by an adult whilst entering the UK.

Eastern Africa is highlighted as the third largest source region for the trafficking of children to the UK with 41 children, according to the data set. This included children from Eritrea (14), Kenya (9), Somalia (6), Uganda (5), Sudan (3), Burundi (3), Ethiopia (1). Thirty of these children are girls, 10 are boys and for one the sex was not given. Twenty two of these children are in level 4 and therefore can be assumed to have been trafficked into the UK. The types of exploitation these children have been trafficked for are domestic servitude (10), sexual exploitation (9), and benefit fraud (4), while the remaining cases are unclear. Four of these children are siblings and were being exploited as a group.

Eastern Europe and Russia was recorded as the next largest source region with 33 children in the data set. This includes Romania (14), Albania (10), Moldova (4), Lithuania (2), Russia (2) and Bulgaria (1). These 33 cases consisted of 18 girls who were trafficked to the UK for purposes of sexual exploitation. Of the 14 boys from Eastern Europe, only one case is categorised as level 4, and this was trafficking for the purpose of begging. All of the boys except one are missing, however none of the girls recorded in the data set are missing.<sup>16</sup>

The number of Eastern European children recorded in the study's data set is considered an under-representation of the real proportion of this trend by the research team. It is suspected that Eastern European cases of child trafficking are less likely to come to the attention of the authorities through airports and borders, both because they enter clandestinely and also because they may come through European channels. In contrast, African and Chinese children are coming to the notice of authorities by arriving with false or no passports and/or claiming asylum. Some BIA interviewees stated that it was the practice that children travelling on or with EU passports were not checked as vigorously as those holding non-EU passports. If this is correct then this creates an exploitable area of weakness. It is understood that the BIA policy around this issue is that all passports should be checked in the same manner.

It should be noted that many of the children trafficked or suspected to be trafficked to the UK, enter the UK with a false passport or none at all. This means that determining the country of origin depends on the child's claim, language used, as well as other characteristics. This is not always an easy process and interviewees have questioned the reliability of information provided by some groups of children who claim they are from certain countries. For example, interviewees have raised concerns about whether children saying they are from Afghanistan are in fact from Pakistan or Iran and children who say they are Liberian are in fact Nigerian. Respondents speculated that the reason for any such false claims is to better the individual's chances for acquiring asylum and to prevent deportation.

Additionally, it is pertinent to point out that children included in the data set, as well as other cases of children that were not included, were not always trafficked from their country of origin to the UK. In some cases they were trafficked from their home country to another country first and subsequently sold onto a third person to be trafficked again to the UK. In such cases, the third country acts as both a source and transit country as the child may have been in a situation of exploitation in that country for many years. For example, there was one case in the data set where a child was trafficked from another EU country to the UK for purposes of domestic servitude. It is not clear whether this child was born in that EU state or whether she had been taken there from another region or country. Given some of the trends seen in the UK there is a concern that this child had originally been trafficked from Africa to that EU country before being further trafficked to the UK. In another case, a young child of Western African

<sup>16</sup> Possible reasons for this are given under the Section on "Missing Children".



origin, suspected to have been transported to the UK for exploitation, was actually travelling from North America where it seemed the child had been resident. In one Eastern African case the child was recorded to claim he was of Nordic nationality, although did not have identification to prove it. In another case involving two children whose nationality is unclear, they were initially brought over from North America when first brought to the attention of the authorities. It should be noted that according to the BIA, people sometimes claim false nationality. This could be for a variety of reasons usually aimed at acquiring immigration status in the UK.

It is noted that the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking contains detailed actions which highlight work already under way to tackle trafficking at source. The Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development (DfID) already support a number of projects to raise awareness, address the factors that make poor people vulnerable to trafficking, and to build capacity of source and transit countries to deal with organised immigration crime. It is suggested that further collaborative work should be undertaken in all these areas of activity between the UK and the identified source countries. This should focus on particular towns or villages where there is a recognised trend of child recruitment for exploitation in the UK. Further assessments should focus on examining these specific trends and working with UK foreign missions and local organizations in those countries on prevention strategies. The most appropriate prevention strategies would look at both raising awareness amongst vulnerable communities, and also research in the specific vulnerabilities of those at risk of trafficking. Such progress in the understanding of vulnerabilities would support the improvement of prevention work at the source.

In addition, as the Trafficking Action Plan also highlights, more needs to be done at embarkation ports in source countries where the relevant immigration authorities could actively aim to identify individuals at risk of trafficking. This should also cover the issuing of UK visas to children. Recently a new procedure has been brought into place which only allows child visas to be issued with an accompanying adult who must also be accompanying them when the child travels to the UK. If not, then the child will be turned back. Efficient risk assessments and procedures are currently being developed by UK Visas in order to inform issuing officers of signs to look out for in regard to trafficking. This work should also be juxtaposed with a long-term strategy to prevent the issues that make individuals susceptible to trafficking, as well as to work with foreign and international law enforcement to bring traffickers to account.

### 1.4 Background of victims

Where information has been forthcoming, vulnerable children were reported to have come from broken families or destitute circumstances within their own countries. Many of the African children reported having been orphaned, victims or prisoners of war, victims of sexual and physical abuse, forced into marriages, victimised by traumatic traditions such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and victims of police and social brutality. Most of these children have come from poor families and with little access to education. This highlights the fact that children who are relatively vulnerable are targeted within source countries to be trafficked. Significantly, children who are already victims of trafficking are perhaps most vulnerable to being re-trafficked. The reasons for this are that they are already in an exploited position, dehumanised and the 'property' of another, making them most vulnerable to be re-sold to another owner. Furthermore, if a child victim of trafficking is viewed as an investment from which a trafficker aims to profit, the removal of that child from his or her trafficking situation can be a huge business loss. This may also help understand why traffickers will target those children that they have already trafficked and who may have managed to escape or be recovered. Cases registered in the data set, as well as anecdotal information given by some interviewees, corroborate the finding that trafficked children are at a high risk of being re-trafficked. These cases present evidence of recovered victims going missing again and found to have been forced back into exploitation.



Those trafficked from the different parts of Africa into the UK for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude tend to have come from the most destitute backgrounds. These children describe their previous life in terms of wars, abject and relative poverty, years of physical and sexual abuse, miscarried abortions, prison, witnessing murders, neglect and a desire to escape. Some of the girls believed they were being rescued from their destitution and still refer to these persons who brought them to the UK as their rescuers.

One girl reports running away from her village in order to escape from FGM. After witnessing her sister go through the ceremony and suspecting she had either died or had been seriously injured during the procedure she became afraid and ran away. This child still does not know what happened to her sister. Thereafter, she became homeless and began selling sex on the streets and fell vulnerable to traffickers. Some children reported being in exploitation within their home countries, including prostitution and domestic servitude. Children reported suffering from domestic abuse in their families before falling victim to trafficking. This included both physical and sexual abuse. One child describes being orphaned at six years old and then being brought up by her grandmother until she died when the child was aged 12 years. The child began living on the street and turned to prostitution to survive. One day the police arrested her and kept her in custody for three weeks as there was no one to bail her out. The police raped her while she was in custody. Eventually an 'ex-punter' bailed her out and his girlfriend then trafficked her to the UK.

Those coming from Eastern Europe reported to have been befriended by 'boyfriends' and thereafter trafficked. These girls tend to have had more access to education but are vulnerable in that they suffer from neglect and abuse in the family. Many see the chance to come to Western Europe as a dream come true. It is this desire to escape their particular domestic and economic situation that traffickers exploit by, for example, befriending them and pretending to be successful in the west. Some of the Eastern European cases also documented that the children had been initially trafficked into Italy for prostitution. In one case, which was not included in the data set as she had reached the age of majority before March 2005, a girl was trafficked from Albania to Italy and into prostitution. The traffickers brutally raped and beat her, forcing her to use drugs until she became addicted. At one point she was recovered by the Italian authorities and returned to the Albanian authorities, only to be sold back to another set of traffickers. This time the traffickers brought her to the UK and forced her back into prostitution.

Those children coming from the different parts of Asia appeared to have been strongly influenced and successfully controlled by their traffickers. Consequently, eliciting information about their previous lives, trafficking circumstances and exploitation was extremely difficult. One respondent who is an immigration lawyer, and often deals with child trafficking cases, stated that once a trusting rapport was built with African and Eastern European child victims, they would often talk about everything, however, with Chinese and Vietnamese children it is extremely difficult to draw out a full story and testimony. One orphaned child who was trafficked from South East Asia describes how her guardian informed her he was sending her to the UK so that she could have a better life and handed her over to an agent. Over the next year, the child was trafficked overland to the UK. The child believes her guardian genuinely cared and wanted a better life for her. Eventually she was found in a cannabis factory in the UK and was sentenced to imprisonment for cannabis cultivation. Her testimony does not incriminate any other person and, when referring to other persons possibly involved in her exploitation, she refers to them only as her friends who she feels she is indebted to. In one case involving another South East Asian girl reported by an NGO, she felt her friends had rescued her however it was those 'friends' she was reported to be at risk from. Many of the South East Asian victims of trafficking carry a huge burden of responsibility and duty for their family and loved ones. Exploiters often take on the role of a "mother" or "uncle" and express familial

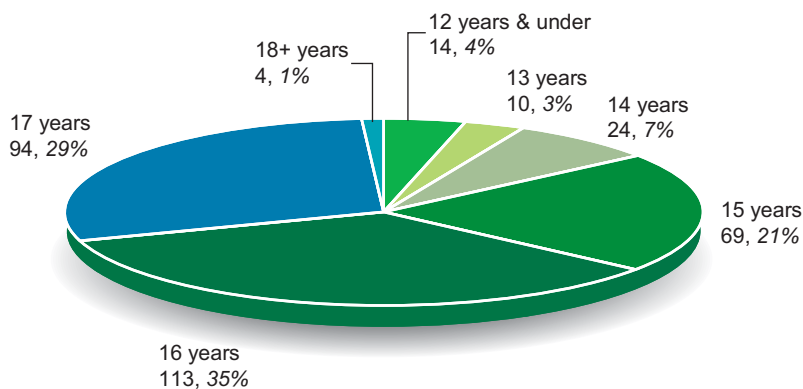
# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

affection for their victims. This instils feelings of loyalty by which traffickers are better able to manipulate their victims. This loyalty is very strong and the main instrument used by traffickers to control victims.

Some of the children said they had been trafficked from their home countries to another country where they were held in exploitation for many years. They were then sold on and further trafficked to the UK. In one case a young girl described how she was sold to a family in Sudan who then took her with them to the Middle East to work as their domestic slave. Years later the family moved to the UK and brought her along with them. One boy's case describes him being sold to a man in South Asia who took him to Dubai to work in a restaurant. Years later when the man was leaving the country he sold the boy to another man who brought him to the UK to be forced into domestic servitude.

## 1.5 Age ranges

Figure 3: Age Range



Although clear information regarding identification documents of the children was not given in every case, it is clear that most of the children included in the data set have come into the UK with false or no passports and documents. This means that ages of these children have been acquired by i) accepting the date of birth and age as given by the child; or ii) through an age assessment carried out by Children's Services. Given the relative unreliability of such methods, as opposed to valid passports and/or birth certificates, ages of children recorded here should be seen within these caveats.

It must be emphasised that when victims of trafficking are identified, they have often been through a period of exploitation already and were trafficked when they were younger. Many of the children identified as trafficked in this survey were trafficked when they were much younger and have been in situations of exploitation for many years. Some of the children that were exploited in domestic servitude were trafficked as young as seven years of age and have only come to the attention of the authorities or NGOs once they were older and able to seek help.

Ninety one percent (300) of the children identified as fitting the trafficking profile were between 14 and 17 years old at the point when they came to the attention of the referring agency. Those that were suspected or proved to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation were older children between 14 and 17 years of age. Whereas those trafficked for domestic servitude were between about 12 to 17 years old.

The youngest child referred to the research team was nine months old at the time and was being brought into the UK by an unrelated guardian. It is not clear if the child was being brought in for exploitative purposes however, the circumstances surrounding the case were suspicious enough for the agency to refer this case to the research team as a possible trafficking case. There was also a child of four years old suspected of being brought into the UK for illegal adoption. The adult claimed that he was bringing the child to the UK in order to adopt, even though the child's home country had not authorised the adoption. One five year old child being brought through a port was suspected of being trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude. One child of six years of age was being trafficked into the UK with three siblings to be used for benefit fraud.

It should be noted that those under 14 years of age could have been missed due to the limitations of this scoping project. Given the knowledge that many child trafficking victims come from the pool of separated children claiming asylum entering the UK, this research has been more focused on that area. The majority of responses from Children's Services came from either the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) team, or the asylum seeker support teams within the broader Social Services Departments. Furthermore, it is easier to detect dubious circumstances surrounding a child when they come to the attention of the authorities through existing safeguarding systems. Instances of these are where a child is seeking asylum alone, or where a child is arriving in the UK with false or no documentation. However, where a child is being trafficked the child would not necessarily come to the attention of the authorities. Where the child is not seeking asylum, has been brought in by an adult masquerading as the guardian and the child is on that adult's passport without photo identification, it would be very difficult to detect the child as being trafficked. It should, however, be recognised that updated procedures on passports (biometrics etc) require all who travel to produce a photo I.D. It is thus considered rare for children to be travelling on an adult passport with no photo I.D.

Those under 14 years of age are more likely to be accompanied by adults and, therefore, much less likely to come to the attention of the authorities. The trend of separated children entering the UK, whether or not claiming asylum, seems to be principally of older children from 14 years and upwards. A significant focus of the exercise was on unaccompanied children at risk of trafficking, rather than accompanied children at risk of trafficking. The data set shows that younger children are more likely to be accompanied. Therefore, the under representation of younger children in the data set may be attributed to the fact that they are more likely to be accompanied rather than unaccompanied and, therefore, fell outside of the main focus areas of the scoping project.

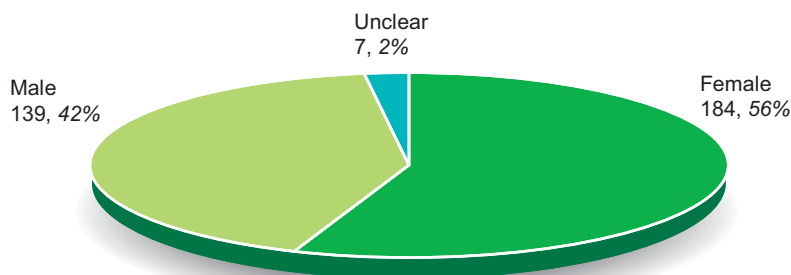
The trend in age may also suggest that older children are used for particular reasons. For instance, older children are less likely to be placed by local authorities in supervised accommodation or foster care. This provides the trafficking agents with the opportunity to make contact with children with minimum interference or detection from carers. On the other hand, the possibility that some adults may be abusing the rights granted to under 18s by claiming to be minors when they are not must also be considered. It should also be noted that the recorded age of the children may not be the real age of these children. Although age assessments are often carried out when age is disputed, the outcome of these age assessments is inevitably an estimate. Furthermore, as will be presented below, many of the children who go missing from care disappear before a proper age assessment has been carried out.

Arrangements are in hand to address these issues as part of the current BIA public consultation "Planning Better Outcomes and Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children".

## 1.6 Gender

Fifty-six percent (185) of the children recorded in the data set were girls, and 42% (140) were boys. However, of those cases where there was clear evidence that the child was trafficked (level 4), 87% (91) were girls. In fact, there were greater proportion of girls identified in levels 3 and 4 cases than in levels 1 and 2. For 94 of the 185 girls included in the data set, no information regarding their possible exploitation was recorded. As many of these girls are missing from care, it is possible that they were not trafficked. However, given the circumstances of their cases there is a concern they may have been trafficked, especially where they follow an identified trend of child trafficking. Subsequently these cases have been categorised in levels 1, 2 and 3 depending on specific case characteristics, such as identified trend of girls using the same modus operandi. Of the remaining 91 girls, 59 (65%) were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 21 (23%) were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude. The rest were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked for purposes of drug trafficking, cannabis cultivation, adoption, servile marriages, benefit fraud and other forms of labour exploitation such as in restaurants and other forms of criminal activity. Many of the girls trafficked for domestic servitude also reported being sexually abused.

Figure 4: Gender Range



Of the 139 boys recorded in the data set, the type of exploitation they were being trafficked or suspected of being trafficked into the UK for was unclear or unknown in 128 (92%) cases. Consequently, the exploitation type was only known for 11 of them. One boy was suspected to have been trafficked to the UK for begging, another boy for benefit fraud, four for cannabis cultivation, two for domestic servitude and three for other forms of labour exploitation such as in restaurants, car wash or toilets. The fact that 92% of boys' cases do not include any information about the exploitation type raises a number of key issues. Firstly, that these boys are being smuggled into the UK, rather than trafficked. Secondly, it could show that the types of exploitation boys are involved in are not as easily identifiable as it is for girls. All cases in the data set have satisfied the criteria in the list of indicators in Annex B and, therefore, there is a concern regarding possible trafficking raised by the responding agencies that referred these cases.

Many of these cases signify where a boy has entered the UK through a port, been accommodated in local authority care and subsequently goes missing. Seventy-six percent (105 boys) of the boys in the data set are recorded as missing from care. These cases have been referred to the research team as 'at risk' cases. Secondly, this may also show that boys who are trafficked into the UK are exploited in ways that are not as easily identified as exploitation types for girls. For example, the research team has been referred cases of at least three boys who were allegedly trafficked into the UK for purposes of cannabis cultivation, and

who were arrested when the police raided the cannabis factory. Clearly these children were not originally identified as victims of trafficking or exploitation, but as young offenders and charged with an offence of cannabis cultivation. Although at least two cases of girls exploited in cannabis factories have also come to light, it is an accepted trend that it is usually boys rather than girls found in such factories.<sup>17</sup> Thirdly, there is also less self identification of boys as victims of trafficking and exploitation. Research into the specific conditioning and psychological effects of trafficking on boys is even less available than for girls. Lastly, there is also the assertion that these boys have not fallen into exploitation and therefore have not been trafficked. However, such an argument ignores the fact that - according to the UN Palermo definition<sup>18</sup> - a child cannot consent to his or her exploitation and therefore being found 'working' within an illegal industry would in and of itself constitute as being exploited by another. Therefore, even in the absence of self identification, a case worker should identify the child as trafficked. Another pertinent pattern to note here is that most of the children entering by the seaport and/or clandestinely are boys. It seems that travelling in such perilous ways is seen as largely unsuitable for girls by traffickers and agents.

## 1.7 Identified profiles of child trafficking trends

There have been specific trends of children being trafficked into the UK who have been identified both by interviewees from law enforcement, BIA, Children's Services and NGOs, as well as through the case data gathered. These patterns highlight specific networks in trafficking between 'suppliers' and 'purchasers'. It also suggests that it must be a lucrative business for the traders of children and, in addition, they are using well established routes. These profiles are examined in more detail in this section using the available information gathered during this scoping study.

### 1.7.1 Chinese children (72 children)

Chinese children, both girls and boys, from the ages of 13 to 17 have been identified as a specific group of children being trafficked into the UK. This has been further supported by the fact that the majority of children in the data set having originated from China, consisting of 72 children. The trend - as expressed in the information - is that these children arrive in the UK separated and with false or no passports/documents and claim asylum. They are given temporary admission by the BIA and referred to Children's Services. Subsequently, Children's Services provide accommodation to the child according to their specific needs. Within 48 hours of being accommodated the child disappears. Although this trend has also been identified with other nationalities of children, it is strongly consistent and acute within the Chinese group.

As mentioned above, the home provinces of these children are largely unknown, however, Hubei province has been recorded in one case. Hong Kong has also been highlighted as a source or transit place, especially as some of the children were recorded to have Cantonese as their first language instead of Mandarin. However, given the number of children of this profile being brought into the UK and the ways they are being transported in, it is speculated that these children are being recruited from a number of different places and provinces in China.

The scoping demonstrates that at least 58 of the 72 children (81%), trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked from China, entered the UK through an airport. Cases of this profile in the data set have been reported to have entered in at least nine different UK airports including Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, East Midlands, Belfast, Prestwick and Doncaster Robin Hood.

<sup>17</sup> Most raids on cannabis factories in the UK have not recovered children inside the premises. However, of the children that have been recovered, it is mainly male children who are found as asserted by Police, NGOs and Probation staff at one Youth Detention Centre.

<sup>18</sup> See Part 2.1 on definition of Child Trafficking.

## Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

Of the 72 children, 45 were girls, 24 were boys and in three cases the sex of the child was not clearly given. The qualitative and quantitative information has exhibited a clear bias towards girls, indicating a number of findings, namely one or more of the following:

- It is easier to recruit girls than boys;
- It is easier to maintain control over girls than boys; or
- There is a larger market for exploitative services for girls than for boys.<sup>19</sup>

It is not always clear from which flights each child arrives on, as by the time they reach the immigration hall, there are passengers that have alighted from all different flights. These children present themselves with false or no passports or documents, which interviewees suspect have either been destroyed or given to another person who was travelling on the same flight. This raises concerns as to whether an agent is travelling on the same flight but separately. Once the child passes through Immigration and is accommodated, the agent collects the child. In some cases, BIA has managed to identify the flight the child came from by posting immigration officers at the door of the aeroplane when the passengers alight. In other cases where a Chinese child has been identified promptly; subsequent checks in aircraft toilets have recovered destroyed remains of Korean and sometimes Japanese passports.<sup>20</sup> This is further corroborated by cases where early identification of the child has enabled the elicitation of the exact flight the child flew in on in order to investigate details of the child's checking onto the flight. In one such case, it was found that the child had checked in with a Korean passport onto a flight from France, although the child had presented without documents in the UK. In another case, two Chinese children were found in the airport while destroying their Korean passports. In one case a Chinese child was found to have used a Japanese passport.

In at least 11 cases, the incoming flights have been direct from China, mainly Beijing. However, other cases have consisted of flights from Europe, especially from numerous cities in France, Spain and Italy. Other countries from where children are thought to transit are Switzerland, Greece, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Russia.

In 67 cases (93% of total Chinese cases), there was no information about each child's possible exploitation. This is also aligned closely to the finding that in 63 of the 72 Chinese cases (88% of total Chinese cases), the child is missing from care. However, given the strongly consistent trends in each of these cases, and the identification of these trends as child trafficking patterns by all four sectors, 55 of these cases have been categorised as level 3. Qualitative information supported by the few cases where the child has been found after being exploited points to the children's absorption into the Chinese community. Of the five Chinese children found to have been in exploitation, all were girls that had been abandoned once they had become pregnant.

Information as to the possible exploitation of Chinese children is limited due to the fact that a large proportion of them that are missing. The few children who have resurfaced have been found to be very evasive about where they were and what happened to them. Of the five girls that have resurfaced, three were found to have been sexually exploited, one of whom was made to engage in other types of criminality, another described working in restaurants but was not willing to explain her pregnancy, while another described being in domestic servitude. The information available suggests that Chinese children have been carefully influenced and manipulated by their exploiters not only to evade authorities, but also to keep their exploiters from detection. However, other sources and case information points to the trafficking of Chinese girls into the UK for sexual exploitation as a significant threat.

Anecdotal evidence regarding one particular case, where a group of Chinese girls were prevented from being trafficked to Canada for sexual exploitation by a Singaporean Chinese trafficker, raises some concern that the UK may be being used as transit country for onward

<sup>19</sup> There is also the possibility that the trend is simply a random bias in this data set, although, given the consistency of this finding from respective regions of the UK, it is unlikely.

<sup>20</sup> This finding has been made from both interviews and cases registered in the data set.



trafficking. In this particular case, the girls had been resident in the UK for some time. In another case, a Chinese girl was found at the airport and seemed to be lost. While immigration and the police were interviewing her, they received several phone calls from a Chinese man claiming to be her 'uncle'. The child was subsequently accommodated and shortly thereafter went missing from care. Therefore, it seems that even though many of these children are entering the UK separated, there are persons expecting and waiting for them in the UK. Follow-up interviews, as well as patterns displayed in the data set, point to a high level of organisation around the trafficking of Chinese minors. Certain agencies have allocated specific staff and teams to deal with just these cases alone.

### 1.7.2 Western and Eastern African girls (102 children)

The pattern of Western African girls being trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude was highlighted by many agencies. The quantitative data gathered by the research team found that these trends were not only represented in the data set (61 Western African girls in data set), but also mirrored by cases from Eastern Africa (41 Eastern African girls in data set), although less in number. Given the similarities, the two profiles have been presented together.

Girls from the age of 12 to 17 years of age are being brought into the UK from at least 16 different countries in Western and Eastern Africa, including Benin, Ghana, Cameroon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Altogether 76 girls from Western and Eastern Africa have been recorded in the data set as trafficked or probably trafficked to the UK (levels 3 and 4). Twelve years is the youngest recorded age in the data set for domestic servitude and 14 years for sexual exploitation. The largest source country for girls from Africa is Nigeria with 38 cases. In some cases BIA suspect that girls claiming to be from various Western African countries are actually from Nigeria. The patterns of Western and Eastern African child trafficking do not closely follow the profiles identified for the Chinese children. Compared to the Chinese cases highlighted, there appears to be relatively less involvement of organised criminals.

In a substantial number of cases three appeared to be a developed trend of Western African girls, especially from Nigeria, entering the UK through airports, claiming asylum, being accommodated by Children's Services and then going missing from care. These cases included both girls entering separately or accompanied by an agent. In other cases recorded in the data set, Western African girls have been found on the street having escaped from their captors. In other situations, cases have been referred to the Police or a local authority by an NGO. Western and Eastern African cases have also consisted of testimonials, which highlight the varied and vulnerable backgrounds from which these girls originated within their source countries.

Apart from in one case where one girl entered the UK by train, all other cases, where the information was available, entered the UK through an airport.

Of all the Western and Eastern African girls recorded, 19 were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked to the UK for domestic servitude and 36 for sexual exploitation. Western and Eastern African girls were the group with the highest recorded incidences of self referral to the authorities. Furthermore, this group of children also gave relatively more information about their respective backgrounds than any other group.

A handful of African girls who were found to have been sexually exploited described how they were 'rescued' by a white man who came to their village and spoke their native language. In all such cases the child only remembers the first name of the trafficker such as 'John' or 'Samuel'.



Once in the UK many of the girls describe how they were taken to a house and locked in a room. Some girls describe ordeals such as being raped by the man who brought them to the UK and then being 'pimped out' to different men every day. In one case a girl was raped and beaten every day by her trafficker.

In most of the cases like these, the girls describe a situation when they were able to escape, however, a degree of caution needs to be expressed here as to the veracity of some accounts. In one case involving a Western African girl, the police reported to have found a script of her 'story' in her room. The girl had actively sought the help of the police and claimed that she had escaped from captivity after being trafficked into prostitution. This script is reported to have been the same 'story' she told in her interview leading the police to believe that she had fabricated her claim.

Those that were trafficked into domestic servitude also have similar types of stories which usually encompass how they were either working for a family in Africa, often orphaned and/or poor. Subsequently they are recruited or deceived into coming to the UK where they are almost always promised a chance to go to school. Often the children may understand that they will be required to undertake domestic chores in addition as a way of repaying the family.<sup>21</sup> Their travel documents are never seen by them and therefore the full extent of false passport use in such cases is not known. However, they are often told to say they are a child of the family or a relative of the accompanying adult. Once in the UK they are put to work in a house never to be allowed out. One girl describes being taken to several houses around the UK taking care of children and never being allowed to go out. These types of cases have come to light after many years of domestic servitude suffered by the victims. It is often only when the children whom the victim is caring for have grown-up or the family moves away and the child become free of their exploitative situation, that the victim's case surfaces. In some cases these abuses only come to light when the child becomes aware of needing to secure their status in the UK for fear of deportation.

### 1.7.3 Afghan boys (19 boys)

Although a trend of Afghan boys being smuggled or trafficked into the UK has been highlighted by some agencies, relatively little is known about it. A pattern of Afghan boys entering the UK clandestinely through seaports has been monitored by some respondent agencies who have estimated more such cases than are included in the data set. Due to insufficient individual data only 19 such cases of Afghan boys have been included in this research. Another two cases were reported of Afghan boys, but not enough specific detail was given to include them in the data set.

In the absence of information about where these children are going when they enter the UK, what they are doing and who is caring for them, Children's Services, BIA and NGOs have concerns that these children are being exploited. In at least three of the cases recorded in the data set, Afghan boys have been found to be third country applicants for asylum, but have disappeared from care. In the two cases referred but not included in the data set, the information had highlighted situations of suspected debt bondage with 'employers'. This pattern is further corroborated by information given by interviewees who have commented how these boys are eager to work rather than go to school stating that they need to 'pay back' funds.

All the boys were aged between 13 and 17 years and all entered the UK clandestinely.<sup>22</sup> They were mainly discovered with other asylum seekers on lorries. It seems that some of the boys may have come from a region close to the Iranian border, as recalled by some directly, and other boys remembered having travelled through Iran on their way to the UK overland. Many

<sup>21</sup> Even where children may have known of their awaiting circumstances in the UK, as long these circumstances are exploitative, this would still fall within the definition of child trafficking.

<sup>22</sup> As mentioned, the ages of the boys were mainly elicited from the boys' testimonies or through age assessments.

of the boys' testimonies highlighted that they did not know which other countries they travelled through on the way to the UK. This may mean that either they did not stop or alight anywhere else on the way, or just that they were not aware or informed. Given that those that are smuggled usually know of the countries they are travelling through, it seems likely, therefore, that these boys may have been enclosed within the lorry for many days before entering the UK. At the same time, they could be concealing this information due to their asylum claim.<sup>23</sup>

Some agencies commented that there are suspicions as to whether all these boys are from the border regions of Pakistan rather than Afghanistan. It is difficult to distinguish between boys from the Western region of Pakistan as they have similar characteristics. Also, the boys are recorded as speaking Pashto, which is also spoken in Northwest Pakistan. It is clear that there is a definitive trend of Afghan boys being transported into the UK to areas in the West Midlands where there is a known Afghan community. Investigations have revealed a specific town where these boys are bound, where they are suspected to be involved in labour exploitation. Although Afghan boys have been found in Nottingham and Lincolnshire, the main area where they are discovered is in the West Midlands. In one case, brought to the attention of the authorities, two boys who had travelled from the same village were found to have entered the UK in the back of a lorry. The referring agency reported how the boys thought they had arrived in Birmingham, highlighting their knowledge of their destination in the UK. As stated, in the absence of definitive information about the reason for their travel to the UK and what the intention was for them when they arrived, it could be argued that these may be simply cases of people smuggling but -that said - the responding agencies were sufficiently concerned that these may be cases of trafficking that they referred them to the researchers..

Most of these Afghan boys are accommodated by Children's Services, but are subsequently reported to go missing. In only two cases the boys were found not to be missing and in another two cases it is unclear as to whether they are missing or not. In one case, an Afghan boy is being accommodated by Children's Services but is also suspected of being exploited, as he is gone for most of the day and returns late with physical signs of being engaged in manual labour.

### 1.7.4 Vietnamese children (22 children)

During the course of this research a handful of live cases involving Vietnamese children recovered in cannabis factories were referred to the research team. These cases were referred by the NGO sector who has raised the concern that these children are being trafficked for the purposes of exploitation in cannabis factories. This was in addition to the cases involving Vietnamese children referred to the research team in response to the questionnaires.<sup>24</sup> There is also some anecdotal information that Vietnamese girls are being trafficked into places such as nail bars for purposes of exploitation, including sexual.

The data set has registered 22 Vietnamese children, of whom 11 are girls and 11 are boys aged between 14 and 17 years. In six of these cases, children were found to have been arrested in cannabis factories, one other was found to have been in sexual exploitation and another in labour exploitation though unclear what type. For 14 children the purpose of their suspected trafficking is unclear.

The girl who was trafficked to the UK for sexual exploitation entered the UK by air and was found on the street. This fact, along with other circumstances of her case, separates it somewhat from the rest of the cases that show similar patterns. Firstly, no other case is registered as having entered the UK by air. Three children entered by train and the information given show them as being quite young and using false or stolen Vietnamese passports. For

<sup>23</sup> See below.

<sup>24</sup> Although relative to the overall number of raids on cannabis farms nationally, children are not commonly found working in the factories.

seven others, entry was recorded to have been clandestine, overland and through a seaport. For the remaining 11 cases, the means of entry is unknown, however the research team suspect this was also overland given the similarity in trends with the 'seaport' cases. Anecdotal evidence from both the quantitative and qualitative information has assembled a narrow picture of the routes and transportation used for trafficking of Vietnamese children. Some children have described their journey as long and arduous, including being locked up in containers and going hungry. The journey taken overland follows a path through the North Vietnamese border into China, up through China to Beijing, and then on the Trans-Siberian Express through to Russia. From Russia various means of transport are used to transport the children through North Eastern Europe to Western Europe to the UK. Some of these routes may also be being used by Chinese traffickers of Chinese children.

Vietnam is a source country for trafficking children to many other destinations within the South East and Far East Asian region such as Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Macau as well as China and Europe. Given that migration within Vietnam is relatively difficult, and that the destinations for trafficking of Vietnamese have been found to be different for those trafficking North and South Vietnamese, it is speculated that those Vietnamese children being trafficked overland are coming from areas of North Vietnam. This is corroborated by one case where a girl recalls her home city as Hanoi in her testimony.

The cannabis factories that have been raided highlight the highly organised business of cannabis cultivation in the UK. Houses have been transformed into highly efficient industrial cannabis production works using technical knowledge that necessitates the involvement of experts in such cultivation. Such factories require immense amounts of electricity for hydroponics to grow cannabis. People from Vietnam are transported over in debt bondage to work in these factories. The labour needed for the daily care of the plants is not intense and therefore two or three persons at most are allocated to a few houses. Debt bondage is symptomatic of trafficking activity, as it is used by traffickers to maintain control over their victims.

Tragically, at least four children registered in the data set appear to have been exploited in cannabis factories, but were not identified as victims of trafficking, and were arrested for cannabis cultivation. If these children were in fact trafficked, then this unfortunate consequence may be attributed to the lack of awareness and capacity in some forces and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) areas to recognise the indicators of child trafficking. The plan to publish multi-agency guidance will however help to improve knowledge and awareness.

### 1.7.5. Eastern European girls (14 girls)

The pattern of Eastern European girls trafficked to the UK for purposes of sexual exploitation is mirrored by the patterns of trafficking of Eastern European women. In the data set, at least 14 girls from Eastern Europe and Russia were recorded to have been trafficked to the UK for prostitution. The countries include Albania (8 girls for sexual exploitation), Romania (3), Lithuania (2) and one from Russia. In one of these cases there were mixed records as to whether the girl was from Kosovo or Albania.

The testimonies given by girls in this group, as with the African girls, sheds relatively more light on the backgrounds of the children, as well as methods of recruitment by traffickers. These accounts reveal that this group of children encounter extreme levels of violence in their ordeals. Unlike the types of violence described in the African cases, the testimonies from this group points to the violence as the primary modus operandi for maintaining control over their victims. In at least two cases, children have claimed to have been kidnapped by traffickers in Albania and forced into prostitution in the UK. One other child described having witnessed a murder

committed by her traffickers. In almost all these cases, victims recall being raped repeatedly until they were compliant and then made to have sex with 'clients'. Others included in the data set describe being coerced by their traffickers who threaten to harm the girls' families back home and use different methods of intimidation. In more than one case the child recalls being told the price for which she had been bought and her responsibility to pay this back. These 'debts' begin from £1,500.

In at least two of the cases, the child's parents have contacted police in their respective countries due to their suspicions that their daughters have been trafficked. In most of these cases, girls are deceived by men who have befriended them. In one case, a Romanian girl was promised the opportunity to earn a lot of money in the UK.

The traffickers display signs of being highly organised, especially where victims describe Albanian gangs who seem to be organising the whole process from recruitment to end exploitation. The testimonies also point to their networks with police in source countries in order to facilitate trafficking, and in one case allegedly sold a girl back to the traffickers after being rescued in Italy. At least three of the Albanian children reported having been trafficked to Italy and then to the UK, so Italy is highlighted as a hub for this particular route for trafficking. Two others describe being trafficked overland through Western Europe. The evidence points to trafficking by lorry as the most common method of transportation of Eastern Europeans through Western Europe. However, this could be a biased pattern if Eastern Europeans being trafficked through airports are not being detected in the same way.

One other child describes being trafficked overland in a lorry to the UK through Eastern and Western Europe. She was told to say she was the driver's niece. At one crossing point in Eastern Europe, the driver had to pay bribes to border officials in order to get across. Once in the UK she was given two fake EU passports from two different states.

In the UK, girls describe their places of exploitation as brothels and saunas. Some are quite high class and their age is falsified by a new passport. In one case, a Lithuanian girl was given a new passport on arrival to the UK, which showed her age as over 18. This child had already been in exploitation in her home country and was told that brothels in the UK are very strict about age. These girls also testify to being trafficked around the UK to various saunas and brothels every few months where they encounter women of different nationalities, including Eastern Europe, Asia and the UK. One case, that was not included in the data set, describes a woman who was trafficked to Italy into prostitution as a girl. Subsequently, she was trafficked to the UK and was 'pimped' for many years. She had been made a drug addict in order for her 'pimp' to maintain control. She was physically and sexually abused on a regular basis and when she became ill and 'unattractive' she was 'pimped' out on the streets. After seven years of exploitation she came to the attention of the authorities. The case records describe a woman that looked much older than her stated age, with physical scarring of injections and cigarette butt burns on her body and in a terrible psychological state.

### 1.7.6 Other profiles

Other profiles which have been notified to the research team though not drawn out in the case data set include:

- Somali children being used for benefit fraud;
- Bangladeshi boys being exploited in restaurants; and
- Romanian children being brought into the UK for under age marriages and street crime.

## 1.8 Transit countries

The trends identified from the information gathered in this scoping research suggests that many of the children trafficked or suspected as having been trafficked to the UK do not come directly from their source countries. Many come through transit countries before being trafficked to the UK. This trend would seem inevitable given that the UK is an island and that many of the children entered through seaports, as well as the fact that flights to London often connect from other EU or Middle Eastern countries. However, the trends shown as to the role of transit countries also raise concerns as to whether they are just countries through which traffickers travel or whether places in these countries act as nexus points where victims change hands, documents as well as other modus operandi in order to evade detection. Although information in this area is rather limited, in some cases, children have reported being in transit countries for more than just the purpose of passing through and in other cases corroborating trends have been found.

Of the 330 cases registered, 70 cases report entering the UK overland, train or via a seaport, thereby suggesting that a transit country or countries was used. For a further 119 cases the type of port used to enter the UK is not known. In at least 21 cases the child has claimed to have come directly from their source country. Therefore, for 119 cases<sup>29</sup> (36% of total cases) there is information regarding a transit country through which the child travelled to the UK. It must be noted, however, that these cases also include instances where the child has reported a stopover in a country before coming to the UK. These cases of stopovers were recorded as relevant information, given that anecdotal information has pointed to instances where airport lounges in transit countries are used as meeting points where children may change hands and the identity documents of either the children and/or the agents are changed.

Transit countries named included states from many different regions highlighting flight stopovers as well as probable and possible nexus points in Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia. Of all the transit countries, those in Europe such as France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium were mentioned most often. Other countries recorded in Europe were Portugal, Greece, Czech Republic, Hungary, Albania, Republic of Ireland and Switzerland. Specific cities were named in most of these countries. Transit countries named in trafficking from China and Vietnam were China, Hong Kong and Russia. The Middle East was named as a region through which at least one child was kept in exploitation and Dubai specifically was named a number of times as both stopover flights, as well as a nexus point for trafficking. Libya was named as another country in which flights from Nigeria stopover. African countries named as transit countries were South Africa, Zimbabwe, Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. Iran, Pakistan and Malaysia were also named as countries children recalled going through on their journeys to the UK. Other children mentioned stopovers, as well as travelling through countries by both land and air, but did not know which countries these were.

Where children have entered through seaports, the last transit country would be France, Belgium, the Netherlands or the Republic of Ireland.<sup>30</sup> Any country from which ships and sea craft can land on UK soil could be a possible transit country. Children entering through seaports may also have been through more than one transit country, especially where their travel has been overland, necessitating the crossing of numerous borders, particularly through EU member states. In some cases children have reported being trafficked to the UK overland from countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Vietnam. The children transported overland from Afghanistan claim to have travelled the whole distance over many days in the back of a lorry. The cases of Vietnamese and Chinese children trafficked overland reported to have travelled by foot, boat, train and motor vehicles. The Trans-Siberian Express train has been highlighted as at least one leg of transportation used to traffick children from China and Vietnam. All these journeys seem arduous and long. One child described her journey as having taken a year,

<sup>29</sup> One case was an internal trafficking case and so there is no relevance of an international port.

<sup>30</sup> The Common Travel Area incorporates the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Passengers travelling within the CTA must meet the criteria set by the Immigration Rules (IDI chapter 1 (sec 2) to qualify for entry.

during which she remembers being lonely, hungry and very afraid. One NGO describes the case of a child trafficked to the UK from Vietnam locked in a container for months. In some of the Eastern European cases children describe being trafficked from Albania to Italy by speedboat. All these cases where children have travelled overland to the UK highlight the role played by transit countries, especially at any and every border control the child has crossed in their journey to the UK. The child would have inevitably had to pass through both immigration and embarkation controls in each of these countries. Given the ease of crossing borders within the EU, it further heightens the importance of checks taking place at all the Schengen borders. Additionally, these cases highlight the lengths taken by traffickers, of using different types of transportations in order to evade detection. This also significantly demonstrates that many children are trafficked through EU countries and brought in by traffickers through European channels, perhaps because the level of checks at passport control are much lower than those coming from non EU countries. This highlights the importance of EU wide measures and the need for the UK and other EU member states to develop a more harmonised and integrated approach at the practical level.

In one case, included in the data set, a child was identified whilst being trafficked out of the UK. In a trend of trafficking cases identified before the scoping period for this research Western African girls were detected being trafficked through the UK to Italy. This highlights that the UK has been used as a transit country before, and given that at least one child in this data set was identified whilst leaving the UK, this trend still exists. Furthermore, given that 184 (55%) of the children trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked into the UK are currently missing, the possibility of their further transit to other countries cannot be dismissed. The relatively lower embarkation controls in the UK, when compared with arrivals control, highlights that this type of activity may be evading detection. These relative lower controls on persons leaving a country may also point to why other transit countries, such as those named above, are not identifying children being or suspected of being trafficked from there to the UK.

## 1.9 Method of entry

The port and method of entry is not very clear for all of the cases. Of the 330 children, 140 were recorded as having entered the UK through an airport. Sixty five children were recorded to have entered the UK through seaports. Five children were reported to have entered by train from the Euro tunnel and for the rest (119 children) the port of entry is unknown<sup>31</sup>. It has further been observed in the data set that where the information was available, more girls (91) than boys (43) entered the UK by air and more boys (50) than girls (15) entered the UK by sea. Many of the children who came into the UK through the seaport came in clandestinely on the backs of lorries. The trends show that most of the children who entered the UK in lorries were boys, however, there have been at least two cases where girls were found to have been transported in the same way.<sup>32</sup>

The airports used by traffickers and other types of agents to bring children into the UK seem to be varied. Although trends have been identified of children trafficked or vulnerable to trafficking coming through large ports such as Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham and Kent, there are also many instances of such children being brought in through Prestwick, Belfast, Doncaster, East Midlands, Stansted, Hull and Gravesend. Other seaports and docks have also been identified through which internal trafficking of these children is undertaken, such as from the Republic of Ireland to Wales and Northern England. Of the 65 children who entered the UK via a seaport the trend is relatively strongly represented by the figures from west coast seaports, an increasing trend of children entering in from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has also been noted anecdotally as well as within the data set. This may also have been a result of BIA Border Control Command for Scotland and Northern Ireland recently raising their vigilance in this regard and therefore encountering such cases. It has been found that traffickers are able

<sup>31</sup> One case was an internal trafficking case.

<sup>32</sup> See Section on Transit countries for more information on method of transportation.



to evade detection and obscure their routes by using various points of entry into the UK. During follow up interviews with respondents who have direct experience of working on immigration controls dealing with child trafficking and smuggling cases, there is intelligence available to suggest that traffickers and people smugglers change their tactics to avoid the controls that have been put in place at UK entry points to avoid detection and enable their activities to succeed.

Due to the historic precedents of children entering the UK in suspicious circumstances at particular large airports and seaports such as Heathrow, Gatwick and Dover, there has been some success in the development of multi-agency teams working jointly to respond to the problem. These advances in multi-agency working have largely been developed around the growing concern of child trafficking over recent years, as evidenced by initiatives such as Operation Paladin. Reports regarding children entering the UK in dubious circumstances, including possible trafficking, from regional airports such as in Scotland and Northern Ireland seem to be more recent, particularly in the last year. This could highlight either or both of two conclusions. Firstly, that there is a growing awareness of such cases in regional airports in recent times resulting in a higher number of reports. Secondly, it could suggest that the development of multi-agency working at the larger ports has resulted in a change of tactics by traffickers and facilitators who are then using other regional and relatively smaller ports to bring in children. This is supported by views given by respondents from all four sectors in follow up interviews as well as cases received by specific border control agencies from regional airports who report an increasing number of children fitting the profile entering the UK in more recent years. Responses from these regional airports show an increasing awareness about the situation since more cases of separated children have been identified. One port reported that they had recruited a field intelligence officer to specifically deal with such cases, which they say has in turn led to a higher number of cases of possible child trafficking and facilitation being identified.

It appears that traffickers are taking advantage of the lack of multi-agency presence at some ports. To work towards resolving this issue, the UK Action Plan is clear that more is being done to ensure that each port should have front line staff who have received training on child trafficking identification and victim care. In addition, more ports should either have a multi-agency presence or that access to partner agencies should be instantly accessible for appropriate advice and/or referrals. Social workers have been allotted to work at certain ports, including Asylum Screening Units (ASU), where higher instances of children entering the UK in dubious circumstances has been identified over a prolonged period of time. However, at most ports social workers are not as easily accessible. Wider mandates should be given to staff in these teams where a child is identified as being at risk in order to have the capacity to properly check documents and testimonies.<sup>33</sup>

There is also documentary evidence of children being moved around the EU in order for their exploiters to claim benefits in their name from different EU governments. This presents further opportunities for detection by arrivals control as these children are already being exploited at this point, unlike when children are first trafficked into the UK and where the exploitation has not yet started.<sup>34</sup>

The trends highlighted in the data gathered in this research, both quantitatively as documented in the data set, as well as qualitatively shows that children trafficked into the UK do not usually have control of their identity documents. For those children who were accompanied by an adult whilst entering the UK, identity documents would never be in their possession. Accompanied children entering the UK for purposes of exploitation would sometimes not even know if they

<sup>33</sup> Frontex (EU Border Agency) has been established to incorporate cooperation and a uniform approach in dealing with children. Operation Agelaus which operated from 1st -28th Feb 07 at Heathrow/Gatwick/Manchester targeted all passengers travelling from 13 EU countries into the UK (through EU control). Its aim was to raise awareness of trafficking/smuggling and identifying vulnerable children.

<sup>34</sup> The detection of a trafficked child during his or her transit is very difficult given that the intention to exploit is harder to prove. Without proving the intention to exploit, the case could be one of simply child smuggling or facilitation.



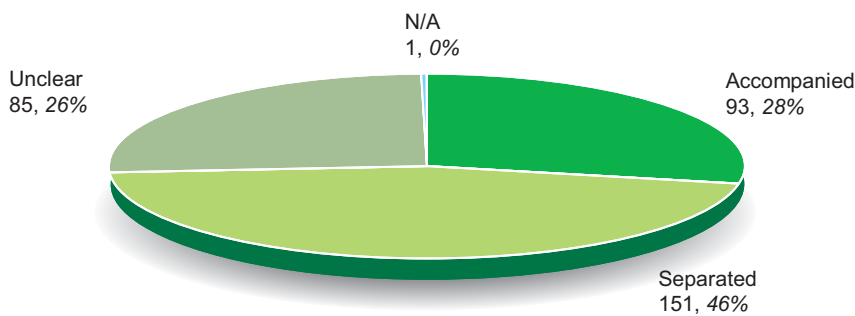
had a passport or not as their trafficker would manage all the travel arrangements. In some cases children were presented as the son or daughter of the accompanying adult, and the adult's passport would have children added on to it. In these situations children would be told what to say when asked questions at the airport. It is pertinent to consider that most children would not be in possession of their documents whilst travelling with their parent or guardian, and may not even know of their existence, especially if they are particularly young.

It should be noted that visa requirements for children, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, have also acted as a means of prevention of children boarding UK bound flights in the source country. Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs) have found cases of possible abuse of documents in these circumstances.

Finally, it should be noted that Asylum Screening Units (ASU) are considered ports. Even though they do not act as ports where persons gain physical entry to the UK, it is through these ASUs that people who have gained only temporary admission may apply for asylum to gain leave to remain, by being referred on to the New Asylum Model (NAM) case working team.<sup>35</sup>

## 1.10 Separated and accompanied children

Figure 5: Accompanied or Separated



The current BIA consultation on unaccompanied asylum seeking children, commonly referred to as the 'UASC Reform Programme', accepts that the term 'unaccompanied asylum seeking children' is not always helpful and that some stakeholders prefer a different terminology (for example, 'unaccompanied children seeking asylum') to describe lone asylum seeking children. Given that it is now widely recognised and understood among key stakeholders, the description 'unaccompanied asylum seeking children' is still used currently.

An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is:

- an individual who is under 18 and applying for asylum in his/her own right; and is
- separated from both parents and not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so.

Following this, for the purposes of the research, a separated child is one who was not accompanied by an adult who is a legitimate guardian when entering the UK. Therefore, children who entered the UK with other children, such as their siblings, have been classed as separated. However, given that mostly all of the children trafficked into the country are not trafficked by a real relative or a legitimate guardian, most trafficked children enter as separated children as defined above. However, many of these separated children are brought in by an

<sup>35</sup> Should a person claim Asylum at ASU, they would undergo initial procedures and checks. This would include Photographs/fingerprints, PNC/WICU checks and Screening I/V. this is then referred to the New Asylum Model (NAM) where a caseworker will take ownership of the case and process accordingly. It would only be at the end of the process that any decision to grant/refuse leave would be undertaken.

adult masquerading as a guardian and are therefore not identified as separated children. These parameters would have been more consistently applied if children could be detected and categorised on entry, rather than through a later identification. Considering that this is difficult, in many cases a child who was accompanied by an adult who was not a legitimate guardian has been recorded as accompanied, so as to reflect the record of the referring agency. In these cases the accompanying adult was, at the time, believed to be the legitimate guardian/relative by the authorities. Thus, there have been instances where children have been classified as accompanied children where they were originally brought in as part of a family, even if later they were found not to have been related and/or the child was subsequently exploited. Therefore the data in this section on the whole, reflects children who have presented themselves with accompanying adults on arrival, whether or not they were legitimate guardians.

There has been a perception amongst a number of agencies that trafficked children entering the UK are usually unaccompanied by any adult, whether or not a legitimate guardian. This study has shown that children appeared to be alone but were in fact sometimes separated from their agent at the point when they passed immigration control. It has therefore been found that 'separated children' is a more appropriate term to describe these children. There is work going on to align terminology surrounding the definitions of accompanied and unaccompanied children across agencies.

The research found that of the 330 children registered as trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked into the UK, 150 (50%) were separated on entering at the ports and 93 (28%) were accompanied by adults who were believed to be their legitimate guardian on entering the UK<sup>36</sup>. Some of the children who were separated entered with another child or at least other separated children on the flight but claimed not to know each other. Of the 93 cases where an adult was accompanying the child, these adults often pretended to be the mother or father of the child. In some of these cases, the adult had their children's details added to their passport and tried to pass off victims as their own children. In one particular case, a woman was caught trying to smuggle three children into the UK on her passport which had details of her own children. However, the details of children on her passport did not include photographic identities of her children, only dates and places of birth. The immigration officers noted the peculiar behaviour of the children, who seemed not to be talking to the 'mother'. After arrest it was discovered that the woman was of a different nationality to the children and they did not even speak the same language. The woman was found to have smuggled numerous other children into the UK on the same passport from another EU member state. In one case, a child was recorded to have been trafficked and accompanied by her own mother in order to traffick drugs across to, and around, the UK. Although the mother and daughter were travelling together, it was the child who was carrying the drugs.

Significantly, in a number of cases, especially where the trafficking was for the purposes of domestic servitude, girls have been trafficked to the UK accompanied by whole families. This trend has been particularly true for those girls trafficked from both Western and Eastern Africa where they were sometimes already working for the family in domestic servitude and were simply brought over as part of the family.

In other cases, these accompanying adults have pretended to be aunts, uncles, grandmothers and other relatives of the child. Sometimes these adults are in couples and claim to be the guardians of the child as permitted by the real parents. In one such case a South Asian couple were trying to bring in a young child for purposes of adoption. The couple claimed the father had given them permission to care for the child and that the mother had not wanted to care for her daughter, however checks conducted by BIA revealed that the child's source country authorities had not sanctioned this adoption.

<sup>36</sup> This figure has been recorded as such by the direct information given by referring agencies. In most of these cases, it is difficult to say whether the child was accompanied by a legitimate guardian or not. However, the accompanying adult was only found to be a real family member in a handful of cases.

## Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

Cases where the child was identified as trafficked after their exploitation, debriefings, and other interviews with the children by each of the relevant agencies, revealed whether the child was accompanied or not when entering the UK. In many of these cases, children referred to strangers that had recruited them in their home countries and brought them to the UK. These strangers are sometimes referred to by their first name but tend to be either strangers of the same race as the children, or in the case of a handful of African cases, a white male stranger. The various stories regarding white male strangers seems to be consistent in these cases, as the child claims that the stranger rescued her from her situation in Africa and brought her to the UK to either sexually exploit her, to abuse her or to abandon her. One girl trafficked from Western Africa claimed to have been brought to the UK by her white female lover who then prostituted her in the UK. One Eastern African child referred to a Chinese man trafficking her to the UK from her home country.

In Eastern European cases, girls claimed to have been trafficked by their 'boyfriends' however, it seems as though sometimes these girls were accompanied by their 'boyfriends' or other agents when entering the UK, and that in some cases they came over alone.

A pattern revealed by the data set shows that only seven of the children trafficked from China were recorded to have been accompanied. Of the 72 children trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked from China, 56 (78% of all Chinese children) were recorded to have been separated on entering the UK. The highest source region from where children seem to be trafficked accompanied by an adult is Western Africa (35) and Eastern Africa (20). Thirty five (58% of all Western African children) Western African children were accompanied, by an adult believed by authorities to be a legitimate guardian, when entering a UK port and for a further 14 it was unclear as to whether they were accompanied or not. Twenty (49% of all Eastern African children) children trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked from Eastern Africa were accompanied by an adult. The trend definitely presents the differences in how trafficking of children is carried out from different regions.

Another pattern exhibited from the data set is that the 60 (65% of all accompanied children) accompanied children recorded as trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked were recorded as entering the UK through an airport compared to only six (6%) entering through a seaport. All five children entering the UK by train were accompanied by an adult claiming to be a legitimate guardian.<sup>37</sup> Seventy eight (52%) of the total number of separated children in the data set were recorded as entering the UK through an airport and 58 (38% of total separated children) entered through the seaports.<sup>38</sup> This information leads to the conclusion that separated children arrive by both sea and air but children accompanied, by an adult claiming to be a guardian, are more likely to arrive by air.

As mentioned above, where the information was available, more girls (91) than boys (43) entered the UK by air and more boys (50) than girls (15) entered the UK by sea. Boys entering the UK by sea have shown the highest likelihood of entering as a separated child. Additionally, the charts below give the proportions for the age ranges of children that were found to have entered accompanied and separated respectively. Once again, it should be noted that for many of these cases, the age at which they were actually transported over the border would have been years younger than that recorded in the data set.<sup>39</sup> However, the distinction between the two graphs emphasizes that the higher the probability of a child being accompanied by an adult whilst entering the UK the younger the child is.

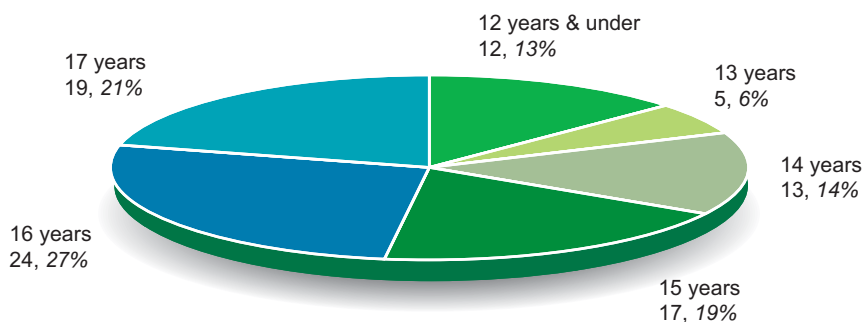
<sup>37</sup> For the rest of the accompanied children, it is unclear what type of port was used to enter the UK.

<sup>38</sup> For the rest of the separated children, it is unclear what type of port was used to enter the UK.

<sup>39</sup> The recorded age of the child is the age at which the report was made to the referring agency and the case recorded rather than the age when the child was first trafficked.

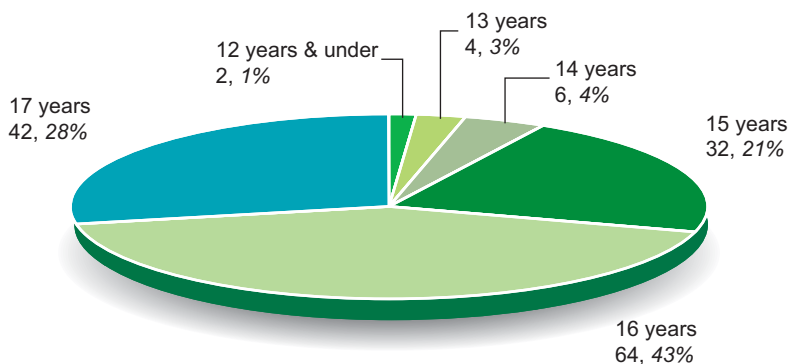
# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

**Figure 6: Age Range of Accompanied Children**



The 12 cases registered in the 12 years and under category included one baby of nine-months, one three-year old, two four-year olds, one five-year old, one seven-year old, two nine-year olds, one 11 year old and three 12 year olds. The overall low number of children of younger ages in the data set, coupled with the relative difficulty in identifying children who are accompanied by adults claiming to be parents or relatives of the child, leads to a concern that more children of younger ages may be being brought into the UK for dubious purposes but are going undetected. This is corroborated by the testimonials gathered from older children who claim to have been trafficked over five years before.

**Figure 7: Age Range of Separated Children**



Of the two cases listed of the six and eight-year olds arriving unaccompanied from Canada (1% shown in chart above), the two boys were together and were cared for by the flight attendants on the journey over.

It should be noted here that those who sought asylum at the Asylum Screening Units (ASUs) are also included in this figure. Of the 27 cases referred to the research from the ASUs, 25 children were accompanied by an adult, only one consisted of a lone child and in another case it was unclear whether the child was accompanied or separated. These cases however, may signify where trafficking or suspected trafficking may already have been identified and therefore the child's rights to asylum are being sought on the basis of humanitarian protection.

This report recommends that statutory and non-statutory agencies dealing with child trafficking cases should also pay due focus and attention to those that are accompanied by an adult on entry to the UK. In addition, unaccompanied children should be viewed as separated, thus

reinforcing the probable risk to children exiting immigration control. It should be noted that whether the child is accompanied or unaccompanied, the invariable characteristic of a victim of trafficking will be the influence and control the trafficker will maintain over that child.

## 1.11 Methods of control

In order for a child to be trafficked and exploited, the trafficker must be able to maintain control over the victim. Traffickers are known to employ assorted methods of control and influence over children, which often vary according to the specific characteristics of the child as well as the trafficker.

Physical and sexual violence is a common occurrence in the trafficking of children. This finding has been further substantiated by the case data documented. The highest incidence of physical and sexual violence has been recorded within the groups of Eastern European and Russian girls and Western and Eastern African girls. As mentioned above, the similarities and the regularities of the physical and sexual violence used by Albanian traffickers on their victims underscore this use of violence as their *modus operandi* to 'break in' victims. Children describe being repeatedly raped and gang raped, physically beaten and injured as well as burnt by cigarettes. Often the victim's are beaten in front of each other in order to instigate fear in and to the whole group. One Western African girl recollected being raped by her captor every day and being beaten in her stomach regularly over the course of months because she had become pregnant. Girls have recalled injuries to their vagina and regular stomach aches after being raped. The most severe forms of sexual violence have been drawn out for those children trafficked for sexual exploitation. However, victims of domestic servitude have also regularly reported being sexually abused, raped and physically abused in the homes they are exploited in. In one Western African case, a girl reported that she had witnessed her trafficker murder her mother before trafficking her to the UK. Victims are hardly able to seek medical help and perhaps only do so when they are seriously ill or injured. In a few cases, this is how they have come to the attention of authorities.

As well as the psychological fear caused by sexual and physical violence, traffickers further use fear as a method to manipulate. Threats are almost customary means of instilling fear in victims and if a high degree of violence is used at first, the use of threats is all the more powerful to wield over a child. Children are threatened by physical and sexual violence. Children have been threatened that their families back home will be killed or harmed. In some cases identified before the ambit of this scoping report, African girls were controlled by their traffickers by using voodoo. This has been reported to have deeply affected the victims, to the extent that in one particular incident, one of the victims who was gradually benefiting from her rehabilitation was completely traumatised after a minor accident, strongly believing that the voodoo spirits had caught up with her. In the cases involving South East Asian children emotional manipulation by instilling a sense of loyalty in victims of trafficking is a common tool for control. It is speculated that, given the cultural base for this instrument and the similarities with Chinese culture, that such methods may also be used by Chinese traffickers. This is further reflected by the difficulty in acquiring testimonials from South East Asian and Chinese children.

The use of drugs has been used in the cases recorded of trafficking from Eastern Europe in sexual exploitation. This is a familiar method used by pimps to control women for paying 'clients' and is also reported here to be used on girls for the same purpose. The use of pregnancy as an instrument for oppression is also used on girls as put forward by an NGO respondent. Such an assertion raises concerns about one recent child death case review of a child that was brought to the attention of the researcher although is not included in the data set. The baby of a suspected child victim of trafficking was found dead. The child's mother had been working in various restaurants and there are suspicions that her oppressors were caring for her baby while she was 'working'. This case is currently under investigation.

# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

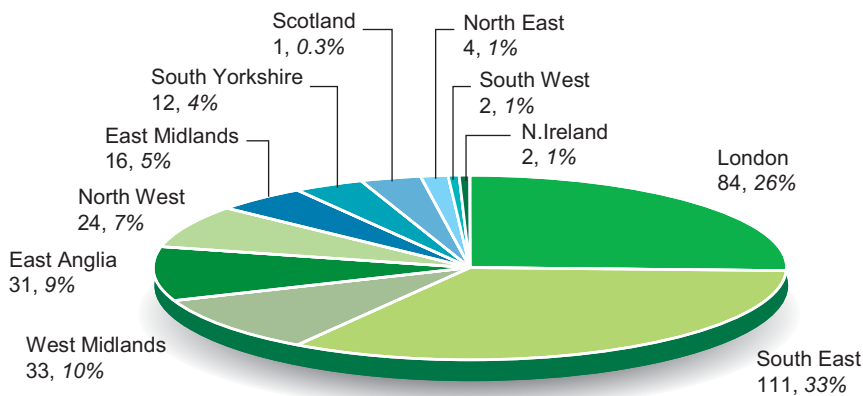
The cases in the data set support the assertion that trafficked children commonly report being locked up and only come to the attention of the authorities when they have managed to escape. Some children managed to escape on arriving to the UK however others depict being held captive for months or years before they were able to escape. Escapes have occurred where the exploiter left a door unlocked or where the child was left alone for a while. Other cases describe punters and other women in the brothel facilitating the getaway. In one case, the receptionist at a massage parlour was the person who identified the child and reported it to an NGO.

Debt bondage is a method of control used by exploiters worldwide but is relatively under-represented in both the qualitative and quantitative information gathering for this scoping project. Those exploited through cannabis factories have been reported to have 'debts' to pay back to their agents. Furthermore, girls trafficked from Eastern Europe have also reported to have had to pay 'debts' to their traffickers for the price they were bought for.

The examples shown in this section display the varied methods of traffickers to restrain and dominate their victims. These methods seem to depend on what works best and most efficiently in terms of that particular group of children. Culture plays a large part in the grooming, recruitment, manipulation and the subsequent exploitation of the child. Furthermore, often victims' immigration status or the commission of an offence whilst in exploitation is used to manipulate control over them. Victims' distrust of the authorities, especially police and immigration, further prevent victims from coming forward and identifying themselves.

## 1.12 UK geographical areas

Figure 8: UK Regions where children identified



Each of the cases referred to the research team was categorised into regions of the UK according to where the child was identified as a trafficked or suspected victim. In only one case the region was unclear. The chart shows that an overwhelming majority of 195 children (59% of total) were identified in London and the South East. Furthermore, it should be noted that those identified in Essex as a result of coming through Stansted Airport were categorised as East Anglian although it could just as easily have been categorised as London.

The pattern highlighted above can be used to make a number of various conclusions. Firstly, it highlights those areas of the UK where the capacity and experience in the identification of trafficked children is more advanced. Secondly, child trafficking is a nation-wide concern as it affects almost all parts of the UK. Thirdly, children are being trafficked to London and the South East region in particular, but other urban areas such as Birmingham and Manchester also disclosed significant numbers of cases. The data set shows the trends to these areas are



the same for level 3 and 4 cases as well as levels 1 and 2 cases. This shows that there is also a significant concern that children following these routes could be being trafficked, even where there is relatively less information about their intended exploitation. Lastly, the pattern also shows that regional ports such as those in Northern Ireland, East Midlands and Doncaster may be transit areas for the trafficking of children to areas in the UK where the demand exists given that most level 4 cases, where there is information regarding the exploitative element, were found in London and the South East. The finding expressed in this paragraph was based on information mostly received from agencies around London and the South East, Birmingham and Manchester. Clearly this may distort the picture at a national level. Therefore, in future, such data collection needs to include more agencies from outside these major conurbations.

Despite the focus on the major conurbations, it is significant to note the data set shows that every region in the UK has been affected by the trafficking or suspected trafficking of children, except for Wales. Furthermore, there is adequate information in the data set to show that foreign victims are trafficked internally around the UK. In one case identified in the West Midlands, a child who had been trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation was subsequently trafficked internally in the UK to various regions to be prostituted in brothels, hotels and saunas. She described Bristol as one of the cities to where she was trafficked into exploitation. Given this evidence, child trafficking should be a cause for concern even in Wales, especially considering that children have been found to be travelling to and from England and Ireland by sea and road via Wales.

As shown in the case referred to above, there is some documentation of the enforced movement of children around the UK after their arrival into the UK. This is mostly documented in cases of sexually exploited children where they are transported to different brothels and massage parlours around the country. These places are usually in the larger cities around the country. There are also reports of some children forced into domestic servitude changing hands between different families.

Within certain profiles of children trafficked into the UK, trends over geographical and chronological ambits have been noted. For example, cyclical trends of certain groups of children of the same nationality being brought to the attention of the authorities highlight the workings of individual trafficking or smuggling rings<sup>40</sup> who seem to be regularly recruiting the children in the source countries and transporting them to the UK over a passage of time. Once the children are brought into the UK and in effect 'handed over', they go back to the source country for the next batch of recruits. In other cases, traffickers move to different cities to either cater for differing demand and to evade authorities. As mentioned above, local intelligence is rendered incomplete where the traffickers change destination for a different city. This again brings momentum to the argument that a national and central focal point for intelligence gathering is necessary and a Strategic Threat Assessment (STA) should be progressed. An STA would map the child trafficking trends across the UK. It is evident there are geographical patterns, however the limited time frame and resource constraints within this project prevented further focus on this matter. An STA that provides further focus on this aspect of trafficking would inform the national intelligence picture and would ensure that more police forces would have the required intelligence to place child trafficking within their force control strategy.

### 1.13 Exploitation

In 227 (67% of total) of the total 330 cases documented in the data set, the type of exploitation the child was being trafficked or suspected to be trafficked into was unclear. Therefore the patterns shown in the rest of the data should be seen as only a limited representation of the exploitation types and their relative proportions.

<sup>40</sup> It is not clear if these rings are trafficking or smuggling children into the UK. The distinction would lie in whether those rings have the intention of transporting these children "for the purposes of exploitation".

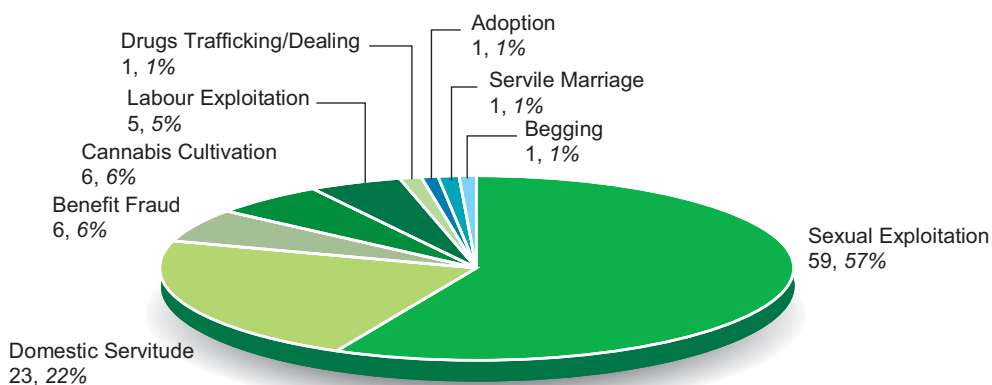
# Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

The types of exploitation that children have been found to be trafficked into within the data set include the following with actual figures in brackets:

- sexual exploitation (59),
- domestic servitude (23),
- cannabis cultivation (6),
- benefit fraud (6),
- drugs trafficking/dealing (2),
- begging (1),
- servile marriage (1),
- credit card fraud (1).

Some children reported to have been exploited in more than one of the above types of exploitation, for example, one girl described how her traffickers sexually exploited her as well as forced her to sell illegal drugs and engage in credit card fraud until she became pregnant and was abandoned. Her case has been categorised above in sexual exploitation. Another child described how she was trafficked into domestic servitude and then later trafficked into sexual exploitation. This highlights the vulnerability of children trafficked as they are completely at the mercy of their traffickers to be abused in any way that may be profitable.

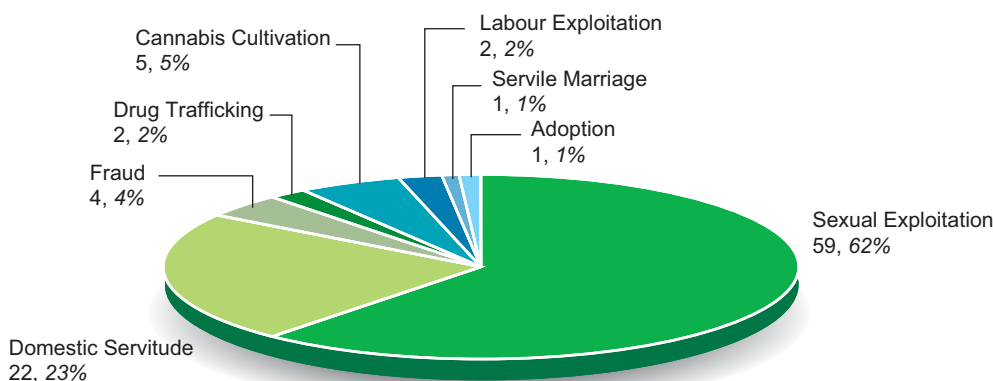
Figure 9: Exploitation Types



Apart from the quantitative information included in the data set, evidence gathered through qualitative research has highlighted the trafficking of children for the purposes of under age marriage as well as various types of street crime such as pickpocketing.

Further analysis of the data set shows a clear distinction between the exploitation types between girls and boys. Ninety (49%) cases involving girls. of the total 184, had information about the purpose for which they were trafficked or suspected to have been trafficked. Of these 90 cases, 59 (66% of total exploitation types recorded for girls) counts of sexual exploitation were mentioned, 22 (24% of total exploitation types recorded for girls) counts of domestic servitude were recorded and six other types of exploitation were recorded at least once. This not only shows the high level of sexual exploitation that trafficked girls face in the UK, but also the varied types of exploitation girls face when trafficked into the UK.

Figure 10: Female Exploitation Types



Significantly, of the 139 recorded cases involving boys in the data set, 128 cases (92% of total boys' cases) did not have any information on the exploitation type the child was being or suspected to be being trafficked into the UK for. Of the 11 cases where there is information regarding the exploitative element, four were trafficked for cannabis cultivation, three for labour exploitation, two for domestic servitude, one for begging and one for benefit fraud. One of these boys was suspected to have been trafficked into the UK for domestic servitude and had been previously trafficked to another country from his home country for labour exploitation. The lack of finding of the exploitation type for 92% of the boys' cases highlights the possibility that these boys may be being smuggled rather than trafficked in. As mentioned above, given the specific circumstances present in these cases and the cause for concern as to why they are being brought in the UK, these cases have been included in the data set as possible trafficking cases. It is clear that even smuggled children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and/or exploitative situations.<sup>41</sup> Further, there is also the consideration that some of these boys may have given a false age at arrival in order to evade authorities and therefore may in fact be adults.

It has been observed that some types of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation are more easily identifiable than other types, such as domestic servitude. Furthermore, exploitations in which boys may be engaged may also not be as easily identifiable by agencies. For instance, there have been relatively few identifications of child exploitation in various forms of labour. A few children have been exploited in restaurants and one boy described being made to clean cars and toilets. Afghan boys are suspected to be involved in manual labour, although none of the cases in the data set was registered as such. Romanian boys have been reported to be trafficked in for various forms of street crime such as pickpocketing as well as begging which was only reflected in the data set by one case. Where children, especially older children, are seen working they are more likely not noticed. Where boys may be engaging in criminal activity they are more likely to be arrested and prosecuted. Such speculation is supported by three cases of boys included in the data set who have been charged with the offence of cannabis cultivation. Recent enforcement action by the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police has revealed a growing trend in the prevalence of Roma children from Romania engaged in London and other towns and cities who are being apprehended for low level crimes such as pick pocketing and begging. This has raised concerns not only around the fact that they are being exploited to commit crime, but that many appear to be in the country with unrelated adults. A multi-agency response is being considered to tackle the problem.

It is clear that more investigation and research needs to be undertaken in regard to the all the forms of child exploitation in the UK. Once exploitation types can be properly identified, the demand for services rendered by child exploitation can be better targeted.

<sup>41</sup> It is possible for persons to fall into a trafficking situation even after they have been smuggled into another country. See Part 2 for definitional information on child trafficking.

## 1.14 Traffickers' tactics

Traffickers of children seem to vary between those that are highly organised and linked with other organised crime, particularly immigration and vice, and those that are individually opportunistic and have trafficked a child on a more informal basis. Those trafficking children for sexual exploitation tend to be linked to organised groups of varying levels, however, there are many cases also reported where children have been trafficked and 'pimped' by only one person thereby highlighting individual opportunists who also engage in this trade.

Traffickers from Albania and China seem to be the most sophisticated and organised. Child victim testimonies highlight links with other forms of immigration crime such as in the production of false identification documents, illegal drugs manufacturing and trafficking and dealing; money laundering as well as prostitution rings in the UK and Italy. Vietnamese traffickers also seem to be relatively organised and point to links with cannabis cultivation in the UK. Informal trafficking on the other hand tends to be mainly in regard to exploitation in domestic servitude as well as some instances of sexual exploitation. Trafficking for domestic servitude is often carried out by extended families that bring over children from source countries in order to look after their children and family members.

Trafficking for benefit fraud is somewhat more organised than that noted for domestic servitude, however, not as organised as that for sexual exploitation and other forms of labour exploitation. The levels of criminal organisation can be gleaned from the amount of ongoing activity in the exploitation of children involved in each of these sectors as well as the amount of people directly involved in the exploitation.

### 1.14.1 Asylum process

Children trafficked into the UK do not all come to the attention of the authorities, especially where the traffickers intentionally evade this. However, many children seem to be brought to the attention of the authorities intentionally in order to exploit the system. Where an unaccompanied or separated person from abroad presents themselves as a child in need to the authorities, a local authority is obliged to abide by the law, which offers a variety of services to those less than 18 years of age.

In terms of those separated children that arrive alone and claim asylum (UASCs) they are dealt with speedily by the BIA. After all the security checks are made BIA place these children into the care of the local Children's Services. In order to enable the BIA to refer the child to Children's Services and therefore to allow the child to leave the port, the child is given 'leave to enter' the UK. Where the child has no documents or they are false, leave can only be granted on a temporary basis as their reasons for entering the UK need to be established. The only other alternative for the BIA if temporary admission is not given is to refuse entry and return the child. However, in the absence of suitable arrangements for the care and protection of the child on reception in the originating country the BIA cannot return the child. Furthermore, the BIA cannot keep the child at the port for longer than 24 hours and therefore in the interests of the child, give temporary admission and make a referral to the local Children's Services. Once children become looked after they are placed in accordance with their needs. Children's Services are responsible for the care and protection of the child in accordance with the child's needs. In accordance with this process, the child may be granted permanent leave to remain until they reach the age of 18 following application for asylum and where their care and protection in their originating country cannot be reasonably secured.

These systems of child protection and asylum seem to be blatantly exploited by traffickers who evade authorities and keep control of these children. The asylum process and protection systems for children clearly provide an avenue for children to acquire legal immigration status in the UK until the age of 18 years. The relative ease with which children can gain such leave

to remain in comparison to adults highlights a potential advantage for traffickers who exploit children rather than adults. The relatively reduced chance of a child being returned rather than an adult entering the UK in the same circumstances means that the traffickers 'investment' in transporting a child into the UK for exploitation is more secure. This abuse of the asylum system also explains why adults may also masquerade as children for different reasons, including for the purposes of exploitation in the UK. The research findings show that even where children later disappear from care, their chances of being returned if found are still small, if they are still under 18 years of age.

In some cases 'looked after children' continue to be exploited whilst still under the care of the authorities. The reasons for this are complex and could be due to a range of factors. There may be insufficient awareness, training and support from the practitioners in how to best protect the best interests and welfare for this particular group of vulnerable children. There were examples of such children being put in unsupervised care due to their age. In addition, some refused education and some were reported to have become involved with older men or were in possession of mobile phones that they couldn't possibly afford. There seemed to be a pattern of children disappearing at regular times of the day. It is clear that support for professionals working in this difficult area needs to be further advanced to prevent abuse of the processes and procedures that have been put in place for the safeguarding of such vulnerable children.

#### 1.14.2 False identity documents

A substantial proportion of the case data pointed to the use of false identification documents. The majority of separated children documented in the data set entered the UK with false or no passport. Some of these children have been found to have used a false passport to check in then subsequently destroyed the passport or given it to an agent. Other children have reported being given a false passport on arrival in order to prove they are over 18 years of age when being sexually exploited in brothels. False passports recorded to have been used for these various purposes have been British, Korean, Japanese, Lithuanian, Romanian and Spanish. It is speculated that more nationalities of passports are most probably used given the prevalence of false passports used in other countries.

Furthermore, given the present situation of the European Union (EU) and the openness of borders, immigration controls must accept identification documents which do not include basic biometric data such as a photograph of the child where the child is added to a parent's passport. EU citizens, depending on the country they are from, are able to enter the UK on national identity cards. One immigration officer commented he believed that such identity cards could easily be replicated by one adept in counterfeit methods. In addition, children can be put onto the passport of a parent or guardian without photographs.<sup>42</sup> This has already been found to be a common tactic of traffickers who regularly transport children by disguising them as their own. Where the passport is issued by an EU country, the trafficker, and the children being trafficked, have a relatively easier time passing through lower levels of checks through immigration control. Often the children as well as the traffickers have been found to be of a different nationality than claimed. This is could be due to:

- The availability of the false passports;
- The ease with which persons of a certain nationality can enter the country; or
- The fact that persons of a certain nationality may have a stronger claim for asylum.

In a number of interviews with the Immigration Service, officers voiced their frustrations at both resource and legislative restrictions. For example, it was felt that immigration officers need more time to check each passenger coming through immigration controls. Currently there are relatively little embarkation controls and therefore little is known about who is leaving the country.

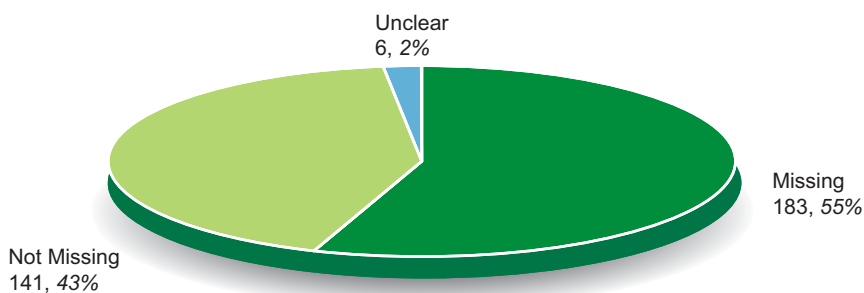
<sup>42</sup> Airline best practice states: All IATA/CAWG members should adopt as best practice the ICAO Annex 9 standard 3.15, which states that "contracting states shall issue a separate passport to each person, regardless of age".

## 1.15 Missing children

There is an identified trend of separated minors entering the UK and claiming asylum on arrival. These children are usually between 15 and 17 and may be accommodated into either foster carers, semi or unsupervised care, according to their initially assessed needs, only to subsequently go missing under dubious circumstances. These children are possibly en route in their trafficking process. Many of these children have been found to be following very particular and strict instructions once entering the country. They seem to act in similar ways with similar stories once accommodated and go missing, usually within 48 hours. These similarities are clearly more than coincidence. Social workers and other front line workers report accommodated children behaving suspiciously by phoning numbers they have been given or meeting suspicious adults outside the premises. In one case a car reportedly arrived outside premises and the child jumped out of the window and into the car. From follow up interviews with BIA staff and police at certain ports there was a suggestion that children were arriving on flights and through seaports at common times such as early morning, late night and during weekends. It was further suggested that traffickers used this *modus operandi* as they believed that they would encounter fewer staff working on arrivals controls at these times. Further work will need to be done to evidence these assertions and allow change in tactics by UK authorities to be considered. In addition, from the research and interviews with key professionals there is a clear trend that when separated children are accommodated in temporary accommodation they go missing within 48 hours. This appears to be particularly acute on weekends and evenings. Once again, there is a need to learn more about this assertion to see where the gaps in policy and procedure in this aspect of safeguarding may be. Once these children go missing, or 'abscond' there are very few that are found. Less than ten of these missing children have been reported to be found and very little information has been gleaned from them. Additional measures to protect these children are largely not in place. In some cases measures that have been implemented through local initiatives, such as 'warning talks' (see below), have had limited success. It should be noted that the fact that children are missing from care does not necessarily mean they have all been trafficked into exploitation. However, please see below for a breakdown of the category levels of these cases, based on the amount of information that was available in each case.

Under the law, in regard to children in the UK, children that are 'in need' are the responsibility of the local authority in which the child is looked after. Where children enter the UK without any or adequate guardianship, they become the responsibility of Children's Services in which they entered the UK. Depending on the needs of the child, taking into consideration characteristics such as age, the child is accommodated in local authority care such as foster care, children's homes or unsupervised care. Unsupervised care may encompass places such as hostels and hotels.

Figure 11: Missing or not?





## Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

Of the data sample, 183 (55% of total children) children were found to be missing. Of the 183 children recorded as missing, 105 (57% of total missing children) are boys and 74 (40% of total missing children) are girls. In four cases of missing children the sex of the child was not clearly given to the research team. Seven of the missing children were level 4 and therefore assumed to have been trafficked already. Of those in level 3, or where they fit the identified trends of trafficked children, there are 71 cases. Fifty missing children were categorised as level 2, all of which were referred by the National Missing Person's Helpline (NMPH).<sup>43</sup> These were tertiary referrals to the data set and therefore more information could not be gleaned in each case. It is estimated that had these 50 cases been directly referred to the research team by the individual Children's Services themselves, they would have been categorised in higher levels. This is due to the fact that NMPH were informed in each of the cases by case workers that they were suspected to have been trafficked due to the dubious circumstances surrounding their disappearance. The remaining 55 cases were logged under level 1 as there was very little information about the circumstances of the disappearance. Level 1 cases show least relative probability of being trafficked cases but still show that there is a degree of concern that these children could be trafficked as they have still satisfied some of the profile criteria of a trafficked child.

In a handful of cases, children that have already been found to have been trafficked and exploited and have been put into care, went missing again. This has in some cases resulted in the child running away in fear or perhaps even back into the control of their traffickers. Often, the children that are rediscovered after a period of time missing are reluctant to provide an accurate account of what happened to them when they disappeared. In one particular case a young girl went missing from local authority care and was found a year later, pregnant in a different geographical area. When Children's Services spoke to the girl she provided an inconsistent account. This could be for a number of reasons, including fear or distrust of the authorities and the successful control and manipulation of the traffickers.<sup>44</sup>

Clearly children who have already been victims of trafficking are particularly vulnerable to re-trafficking and further exploitation. In one case where the child had been found to have been trafficked and still at risk of exploitation, the Children's Services responsible changed the place of accommodation of the child in order to avoid exploiters getting access to the child again. This helped protect the child from falling victim to his exploiters again. This also highlights the importance of the child's determination and capacity to also protect themselves.

There is also the possibility that children could be trafficked or transported out of the UK to other countries. This possibility cannot be ruled out without further information. There have been at least two investigations in the last five years (only one of these cases is recorded in the data set) where girls were discovered to have been trafficked out of the UK to other countries for sexual exploitation. Both investigations revealed many girls who had been brought in from other countries and the UK was being used as a transit country. In one of the cases the girls had been residing in the UK for some time therefore there may be an argument that the UK has been used as a source country for trafficking. The girls had been brought in from other countries and therefore the UK was being used as a transit country. In the latter case, the girls had been residing in the UK for some time.

There has been some general discussion amongst respondents about the adequacy of care that children at risk of trafficking are given. Some interviewees felt that where children were accommodated in unsupervised care, there was more opportunity for the traffickers to access the child. There has been some corroboration of this assertion through findings from various agencies as well as from cases included in the data set. There was not enough information in the data set to properly analyse the incidences of disappearances of children from different types of accommodation. However, where children have gone missing from supervised or

<sup>43</sup> Five children referred by NMPH have since been found, though it is not clear if they were trafficked/ exploited or not.

<sup>44</sup> This case was identified as a possible to probable case of trafficking given the girl's profile, similarity to other cases of trafficking, information given in her testimony as well as other signs of abuse. Clearly this is not hard evidence to prove trafficking, however, there is significant cause to be concerned in this case that she may have been.

foster care, there is usually more information surrounding their disappearance. For example, carers are able to inform investigators what the child may have been worried about, any behavioural changes leading up to the disappearance as well as information about cars or persons the child may have left with. In one particular case, the foster care placement was successful in that it averted the child from initially running away and when she did run away the information given by the carer was integral in finding her again. In some cases the child had spoken with carers about their situation and had even given numbers of persons they were told to contact once in the UK. However, Children's Services are not always able to place children with foster parents due to their lack of availability and competing priorities for placements.

The research has only uncovered a proportion of the children at risk of trafficking who go missing from care. A larger assessment regarding missing children at risk of trafficking is needed in the UK. One of the most concerning trends exhibited by this scoping exercise is that very little is known of what has happened to these children. Furthermore, children vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation continue to go missing with relative ease and there is little that authorities are able to do about it. It is a recommendation of this report that the feasibility of a biometric system that is used to capture facial images of children entering UK ports for the purposes of identification and tracking should be considered. There are software systems available where a database could be built up to aid later identification of children who have gone missing and may have been recovered, such as the system used by CEOP to identify child victims of sexual abuse in images and video material.<sup>45</sup> The development of this process would help to track these children and could help to more easily establish their whereabouts to remove them from harm.

### 1.16 Victim support and after care

Children who have been trafficked and exploited need appropriate and specialised after care and support. Trafficked children often have a history of abuse and vulnerability. In addition to the original abuse and vulnerability of the child's background, trafficking and exploitation would have had additional traumatic effects on the child. As well as physical injuries children in the data set have been recorded as suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies and miscarriages, trauma, depression, drug addition and psychological instability. At least one child in the data set is known to have attempted suicide. Such psychological states also result in alcohol and substance abuse and affect all other areas of a child's wellbeing.

What is appropriate victim care depends on what extent the child has been abused and exploited. However, what is clear is that once a child is in this country, he or she must be protected according to the law. It is also pertinent for aftercare services to consider that often child victim's of trafficking have commonly come from vulnerable and difficult backgrounds which themselves may be a huge source of trauma for the child. In some cases, abuse and neglect suffered before their trafficking situation may have a deeper affect on victims than their exploitation situation.

Under the Children's Act, the Government has a duty to take care of all children in need, regardless of their status in the UK. Therefore, child victims of trafficking are accommodated by Children's Services under local authorities. This includes separated children arriving at the ports who claim asylum, as well as any children found to have been trafficked. Depending on the needs of the child and his or her age, maturity and independent living skills, children are placed in either foster care or supported lodging with unsupervised care. Unsupervised care consists of hostels and where there is no more room, hotels. The majority of children that have gone missing from care have gone missing from unsupervised or semi supervised accommodation, although there have been cases where children have gone missing from foster care as well.

<sup>45</sup> This database software is called ChildBase.

## Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

More than three interviewees<sup>46</sup> expressed their feeling that child victims of trafficking were not treated the same as children who were British born. It was felt by these respondents that due to the lack of immigration status of these victims, some Children's services approached these cases from an immigration status, rather than a child protection point of view. It was commented upon by these interviewees for example, that Children's Services were sometimes reluctant to provide accommodation to children where they had been brought in to the ASU by a stranger of the same nationality as the child for the reason that the stranger could take care of the child if they were willing to do so. It is clear that if a stranger found a British born child and took her to the authorities, that stranger would not be allowed to take the child home, even if he was willing and able to.

Furthermore, many cases referred to Children's Services regarding victims of trafficking have needed much more support than can be adequately given. Even though the current child safeguarding and protection procedures, if applied correctly, should convey enough protection and care in the majority of child trafficking cases identified, it is the misapplication of these procedures which results in inadequate care for child victims in most known cases. In one case, a 16 year old girl went into local authority care after presenting herself. She told appropriate social workers and medical staff that she had been trafficked from West Africa and had been forced into prostitution. She was at various times accommodated by different people and institutions that were all unable to appropriately care for her. She could not speak English, was uncommunicative and was found to be 'uncooperative'. Social workers and foster carers struggled to cope with her needs and requested she be moved. Even though the young girl repeated her history of sexual exploitation, and was hardly eating, sleeping or speaking, no one invoked the existing child protection procedures. She was seen by various professionals such as doctors, psychologists and social workers however, each saw her within their isolated sectors and did not cross reference with each other. At one point she was taken into an accident and emergency ward and suffering from an unidentified chronic disease. Tragically, she eventually died in the ward. A subsequent Serious Case Review by the relevant local authority stated that even though she died of natural causes, the various agencies failed in providing her with the care she was entitled to and represented *"an indictment of the statutory agencies and left the sub-committee questioning whether such a situation would have prevailed other than for a young, black person who had just entered this country as an unaccompanied asylum-seeker."*

Once a child is identified as a victim or at risk, the way in which the child is treated and supported will influence the level of intelligence and evidence gathered from that child which must be channelled to bring their traffickers to account. Furthermore, for each child taken from a trafficking situation, it is also an economic setback for their exploiters and sends them a strong message. However, in many cases identified in the study, a complaint was not filed with the police. NGOs informed the research team that children are often afraid and distrustful of the police and do not see any benefit in making a complaint. In the case of Chinese and other South East Asian children, care and concern for their exploiters also prevents them from filing criminal complaints about them. One respondent explained that if such children were treated immediately as a child protection rather than an immigration case, it would help build a better rapport between the child and the relevant social worker, thereby encouraging the child to work with the police in order to both help protect the child as well as to bring the traffickers to account. However, without an adequate child protection approach as a response to children claiming to have been exploited, regardless of their immigration status, acquiring a victim's complaint and testimony is an uphill struggle.

The Immigration status of a child victim itself is also of utmost importance in his or her appropriate aftercare. Presently, 'unaccompanied asylum seeking children', or more appropriately, "separated children", are usually able to acquire Discretionary Leave to Remain

<sup>46</sup> These responses were gathered through follow up interviews rather than on paper.

(DLR) in the UK until they are 18 years of age.<sup>47</sup> One immigration lawyer who was interviewed believed that it is becoming increasingly harder for child victims of trafficking to acquire Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK. One NGO providing services for victims of trafficking referred to young women who they have been supporting for a few years. They were trafficked and exploited as children and now that they have turned 18 years of age are afraid that they will be deported. In many of these types of cases, NGOs report that victims of trafficking often go missing, run away or become very afraid that they will be returned. Those whose application for ILR on humanitarian grounds is refused after turning 18 years of age face removal however, many are not returned and remain in the UK with no immigration status. These young people are unable to work legitimately or enrol into any education. In one case, a young woman managed to secure a place in nursing school but was subsequently refused due to her immigration status. She had been trafficked to the UK as a child and forced into domestic servitude for a number of years. She has still not been deported and remains dependent and in limbo. It is clear that better aftercare and treatment of child victims of trafficking, even when they attain majority age, is vitally needed.

Some Children's Services struggle to provide the resources and capacity to appropriately provide a level of care, including specialist aftercare, for child victims of trafficking. In the case of suspected victims who arrive as separated children at ports, there are examples of where they are given specific 'warning talks' about the nature of risk they are facing in terms of trafficking and exploitation. Thereafter they are given specific advice to follow; however, this has not been seen to be successful as yet as these same children continue to go missing. Even though clear directions have been given about not going out alone and not talking to strangers on the telephone, the control and influence of the agents and traffickers appears to be much stronger. Traffickers give these children clear directions regarding who to call and where to go on arrival in the UK. The control exerted by traffickers over these children illustrates why they need more targeted and efficient methods of response from all relevant agencies. Again, this often consists of much time and energy in building a trusting rapport with the child and to directly focus on their fears and needs. This may mean more protection for them and/or their families.

Better care of vulnerable and trafficked children would also greatly assist law enforcement and intelligence gathering. Proper victim identification and appropriate care may help the police to uncover trafficking activity and more important evidence leading to the traffickers.

Finally, but of most importance, is the need for child victims of trafficking not to be arrested and prosecuted for crimes committed whilst being in their exploitative situation. Although these mainly relate to immigration crimes, the study did also reveal cases of child victims of trafficking being prosecuted and convicted of cannabis cultivation. Four such case reports of children being arrested and going through the criminal justice system have been included in the data set. Such unfortunate consequences for child victims of trafficking highlight the lack of ability of both the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service in properly identifying a trafficking child.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) accepts that there is a need for police forces and partner agencies to develop an enhanced understanding and awareness of child trafficking in relation to the exploitation of young people (under 18) associated with cannabis cultivation in the UK. This is important in order that front line staff and investigating officers may better consider the needs of the child or young person found in such circumstances.

Since this study was commissioned there has been positive action generally to address the increasing problem of human trafficking into and within the UK. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) has been established and there is now a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the UKHTC in each force.

<sup>47</sup> This age requirement has, with the introduction of the New Asylum Model (NAM) on 5 March 2007, been changed to 17.5 years. As part of the process all children are now interviewed by specially trained child protection officers with specialist child safeguarding training and experience.

## Part 1 - Case Data: Initial Assessment

The creation of UKHTC, launched in October 2006, is directly linked to the introduction of the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking, published by the Government in March 2007. The UK Action Plan has been developed to ensure police and partner agencies maintain a joined up and strategic approach to tackling human trafficking in all its forms. The aim is to increase knowledge and understanding of human trafficking, to raise awareness of the issue and to encourage the public to come forward with information. The UK Action Plan includes objectives aimed at increasing awareness and ensuring frontline staff have the right tools and expertise to identify victims of trafficking, including child victims.

In March 2007 the UK Government also signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. This has yet to be ratified but is an indication of the Government's commitment to the problem.

ECPAT UK (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography And the Trafficking of children for sexual purposes) has been commissioned by the Home Office to produce an 'e learning tool' that will help to raise knowledge, awareness and appropriate reaction to cases of child trafficking. The tool will be web based and promoted widely to reach all professionals, including police officers and support workers involved in the care and welfare of children.

In the meantime, ACPO confirm that it is important to increase the awareness of police, CPS and partner agencies to the indicators of child trafficking. This will ensure that children and young people who have been exploited through child trafficking and have been engaged in cannabis cultivation are considered as victims and not suspects wherever appropriate.

ACPO is facilitating dissemination of the issues raised to relevant points of contact within forces. It will also prompt a review of force Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to incorporate guidance in relation to cannabis farms, the link with human trafficking and the associated exploitation of children and young people.

Lastly, working closely with the UKHTC, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the Home Office, the BIA, NGOs and other relevant agencies, CEOP plans to establish a child trafficking unit to provide a child protection focus to efforts to tackle the problem of human trafficking involving children.

If the definition of trafficking of children under the Palermo Protocol is followed, children are not able to consent to their own exploitation. However, this is not reflected in UK law, which still requires proof of some element of deception or coercion that has been exercised over the child.<sup>48</sup> Given the generally exploitative conditions and the criminality involved in working in cannabis factories, the matter of whether there has been harbouring for the purpose of exploitation is hardly arguable. The research team felt that such cases met the criteria of level 3 and 4 cases and the subsequent prosecution of such children instead of care is a re-victimisation of these victims by the criminal justice system.

<sup>48</sup> See Part 2 for descriptions of legislation on trafficking involving children.



## 2.1 Defining child trafficking

In order to properly identify a child trafficking case, there is a need to properly define what child trafficking means. The definition for child trafficking used by the UN Palermo Protocol is distinct from that used for Trafficking in Persons but is enumerated within it. Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime<sup>49</sup> states:

*For the purposes of this Protocol:*

- (a) *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by the 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 of 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. 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;*
- (b) *The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;*
- (c) *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;*
- (d) *“Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.*

The UN definition of Trafficking in Persons is largely accepted and the universal use of this definition aids the global harmonised approach necessary for each and all countries in responding to this issue.

The UN definition makes an important distinction in its defining of trafficking where it involves children. The standard definition of trafficking consists of mainly three elements. The first element is the group of **actions** or the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person. The second element is the **means** by which the actions are carried out: by threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. The third element is the **purpose**: the purpose of exploitation which 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. In order to prove trafficking, all three elements would need to be evidenced. The hardest of these elements to prove is often the means, as victims of trafficking are controlled in many different ways, making it difficult to ascertain whether their presumed consent to their own exploitation was valid or not. Where one of the means, as described above, can be proven then according to subparagraph (b), the consent is not valid.

Of utmost importance is the distinction given to trafficking of persons who are under 18, i.e. children. This is that according to subparagraph (d), “means” do not need to be proved in order to find a child has been trafficked, therefore stating that a child is not capable of consenting to his or her own trafficking or exploitation. Hence, the definition of child trafficking can be defined as; **the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation**. With only two elements of the action and the purpose,

“The standard definition of trafficking consists of mainly three elements. The first element is the group of actions or the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person. The second element is the means by which the actions are carried out... The third element is the purpose”

<sup>49</sup> This Protocol is also known as the Palermo Protocol.



the discounting of the means makes child trafficking a broader definition than the standard definition of human trafficking. The significance of this distinction must be well understood in order to properly identify child victims of trafficking.

The UK legislation does not deal with child trafficking as a separate offence. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 covers trafficking into, out of, or within the UK for any form of sexual offence. The equivalent Scottish provisions are contained in section 22 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004, consists of an offence of 'trafficking for exploitation', which covers non-sexual exploitation, including trafficking for forced labour and the removal of organs. According to this legislation, whilst the means do not necessarily have to be proved with children under 18 it is still a requirement to prove that the child was requested or induced. This is problematic when involving very young children and babies, as they cannot be requested or induced, nor do they have the capacity to agree or comply. Work is ongoing to consider amendments to existing legislation to tighten this particular clause.

Legislation specific to children is only in regard to sexual offences aiming to protect children from abuse through prostitution and pornography. These offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 cover the paying for the sexual services of a child; and causing, facilitating or controlling the commercial sexual exploitation of a child in prostitution or pornography. Similar offences in Scotland are contained in the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005.

Immigration-specific legislation is often used to prosecute child smugglers. The offence of 'facilitation' is often used where children have been brought into the UK by illegal means and there is insufficient evidence of any intent to exploit. This offence is enumerated under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and encompasses the assisting of unlawful immigration to member state of the European Union.

Of the 41 respondents from the police and law enforcement sector, 33 forces stated that they did not have a specific definition for child trafficking. Of these 33 forces, three stated that they used the standard definition for trafficking in persons for children. Three forces referred to UK legislation and guidance and five forces and law enforcement agencies referred to the Palermo Protocol.

Local authorities mentioned that they used a specified definition. Many referred to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children' which advocates the use of the UN definition. A number of agencies questioned in this project used a wider definition of child trafficking.

Almost all of the NGOs used the UN definition with the exception of one that said that their policy was to include trafficking, exploitation and smuggling as child trafficking and therefore used an even wider definition of child trafficking than the Palermo Protocol.

The conclusion reached from the assessment by the research team is that the definition of child trafficking is different among different agencies. Some do not have a definition, some define it narrowly and others widely. Such lack of uniformity in interpretation of the problem produces inaccuracies and inconsistencies in data collation. This in turn impedes the search and retrieval of data in a consistent manner. Furthermore, harmonised definitions of child trafficking are necessary in order to best develop a multi-agency and national coordinated approach.

### 2.2 Victim identification

An accurate and accepted definition of child trafficking leads to a better comprehension of the problem conceptually. This leads to an improved grasp of the practical understanding of child trafficking, which in turn follows on to an improved capacity to identify a child who may fall into the profile of trafficking.

Quite significantly, due to a lack of awareness many agencies were not able to identify cases of child trafficking and take appropriate safeguarding actions even where they were clearly dealing with such cases. Even where an agency showed a good level of knowledge on child trafficking in theory, often they were found not to apply it practically. It was discovered that agencies were reluctant to identify a case as trafficking or even suspected trafficking and would only do so if a referring agency had labelled it so beforehand. In one reported incident, an agency informed us how a victim of child trafficking was unable to lodge a complaint with the local police station because the officer in charge did not believe her and believed she was only trying to further her asylum claim. In other statutory arenas however, certain BIA, police and Social Services staff felt that an approach should be adopted whereby every separated child entering the UK must be treated as a potential victim of trafficking, pending a full assessment of the circumstances surrounding their arrival. The identification stage is undoubtedly the most important part of any counter trafficking activity. Without identification of a victim, trafficking activity may never be uncovered and thus the problem remains hidden and the victim continues to suffer the harsh consequences of their abuse by continued or further victimisation.

Where agencies have progressed in recognising a problem of child trafficking through good victim identification, attempts have been made to develop response strategies. However these responses remain lacking in reliable intelligence and sufficient resources, as well as deficient support at top management level. This is dealt with in more detail below.

Overall, better *identification* of trafficked children is necessary in order to better recognise and more deeply understand the problem. This will need a higher level of awareness of child trafficking both in theory and in practical terms.

### 2.3 Data systems

In order to monitor and evaluate the occurrence of child trafficking and any related activities, information about observations, cases and symptoms needs to be properly recorded within existing data systems. Where this is done efficiently, data can be collected and collated in order to reveal trends, patterns and an overall picture in any given area or from a national point of view. Where child trafficking is not recognised as a particular or relevant problem, information is not adequately recorded and therefore retrieval of any data considered relevant to child trafficking is challenging and tedious.

Databases in which information is recorded within the various agencies targeted in this study have been purpose built for the specific role of that agency. These have been largely found to lack the ability to adequately record information on child trafficking in a holistic way. Even where relevant information is recorded each database holds this important information in various disguises due to the individual limitations of each agency. For example, with police forces, data on child trafficking cases is stored as whatever charge was made against a defendant (the trafficker), and this is determined with the amount of evidence available. Consequently, cases are generally stored as a host of criminal offences such as facilitation or different types of sexual offences. In fact, there have been very few charges and prosecutions of trafficking. Children's Services on the other hand profile cases where children have gone missing from care, and this may be the only means available to determine if trafficking has

occurred. It is acknowledged that all children missing from care in these circumstances may not be victims of trafficking. However discussions with practitioners, intelligence profiling and mapping of data, suggests that a significant number may well have fallen victim to trafficking and exploitation. It should also be noted that focusing only on those missing from care, obviously does not include those children that have been trafficked and are being exploited but are not, and were never, in the care of Children's Services. These children are an unknown quantity.

Different data collection systems hold different parts of the whole picture both within geographical regions and across them. If all the data regarding missing children in dubious circumstances, children suspected of being exploited, and investigations for child facilitation, sexual exploitation or other types of exploitations details regarding children entering the UK in dubious circumstances, could be collected in one location and analysed using a uniform profile, a fuller baseline survey of the national picture (as already stored in existing data systems), could be undertaken. However, this scoping study has revealed that even the segments held by certain agencies in regard to children being trafficked, cannot be retrieved easily. Within agencies, different data is logged in different systems and this makes it extremely difficult to simply collect all the information stored on one specific case. Therefore in order to search for any cases of child trafficking on a given set of databases one would need to begin with some level of knowledge of that case already. Otherwise, it is difficult to identify the cases in which trafficking may be occurring. This also has an impact on the ability to collate multiple data because in most instances a researcher will not have knowledge of individual cases they will be looking for in the databases to have the ability to provide a comprehensive strategic overview.

The research benefited most from those agencies where cases of child trafficking were known personally to people filling out the questionnaire. For those agencies who responded to the questionnaire through a member of staff that who had no personal knowledge of such cases, the responses were less thorough. Thus, information regarding cases of children being trafficked is difficult to retrieve.

Where the responder, or a specific agency have shown a low level of awareness of child trafficking in general this has also impacted on the case data gathered as they would have been less able to identify a possible case of child trafficking. On numerous occasions, an agency would contact the research team to inform them that they had no cases of children having been or suspected of being trafficked. At deeper inquisition and after giving some example cases of a typical profile of a child trafficking case, the responder would often state that they did have such cases. On being asked why they had not identified this as a possible case of child trafficking, the response would be that there was no such evidence to prove this and neither did the referring agency identify it as such. This exhibits how the lack of awareness of child trafficking has biased the number and types of child trafficking cases that have been gathered in this study.

In some instances, agencies were reluctant to respond to the questionnaire as they felt that their remit did not cover identification of child trafficking. Such agencies did not deny having general access to children who were vulnerable, but felt that it was not their responsibility to identify whether a child was being exploited or not. Rather it was felt that such a responsibility lay with Children's Services and so if they found any case where there was any possibility of abuse, the child would automatically be referred to Children's Services.

Certain agencies from all sectors provided good quality data both quantitatively and qualitatively. The members of these agencies who responded to the questionnaire and gathered cases have had personal knowledge and experience with these cases. Significantly,

many of these agencies had less technical data collection systems and the most important information was gleaned from notes made in victim interviews and longer term interaction with the children involved.

Therefore, the lack of adaptability of data collection systems has highlighted the need for a more improved system of consistent and dynamic data gathering of child trafficking. Furthermore, advance notice to all agencies that cases of child trafficking should be flagged and reported would ease the burden in the long run.

### 2.4 Inter-agency and multi-agency working

It is universally accepted that trafficking needs to be combated by a multi-agency approach. Strong links and networks are required both at local, regional, national and international levels. Such networks should consist of:

- Knowledge of key focal points in other departments and agencies;
- Consistent, regular and dynamic relationship building both technically and personally; and
- Efficient and regular data and intelligence sharing.

The study uncovered a lack of inter and intra-agency joined up working. This was particularly apparent during case analysis. For example, it was common for a local authority and police force in the same geographical area to mention that they liaised with the other on a regular basis with regard to child trafficking related cases. With regard to the BIA and police forces, various departments and units commented that any cases of child trafficking or exploitation they would come across would be referred to another unit or department. However, in some cases when that other agency or relevant department or unit provided case data, the information would be different to that provided by the other agency. In some instances, the other agency or department responded that they had no such cases. This led the project team to conclude that either:

- Agencies were applying inconsistent definitions and identification processes in cases of child trafficking; or
- Multi-agency liaison needs to be more harmonised.

A small proportion of good practices have been identified throughout different regions in the UK where agencies are advanced and progressing in joined up working, and have built models of good practice. Such models have been built up over a number of years due to the appropriate identification of child trafficking problems and development of intelligence based activity. Many of these good practices have built up around ports in the UK such as operation Paladin under the auspices of the Metropolitan Police and BIA as well as the Joint Intelligence Unit and SERINT (South East Regional Intelligence Unit) in Kent under the partnership of Kent Constabulary and BIA. Such models highlight good examples of a localised multi-agency approach and intelligence gathering and sharing. These more advanced areas need further resources to be able to retrieve and log intelligence in a more consistent way. Such initiatives have been identified mainly in the South East region and this may explain why more cases have been identified in this area. However, levels of awareness amongst specific agencies in cities such as Manchester and Birmingham also draw attention to the history of such patterns in those cities. The lack of awareness and capacity even in these areas where progress has been made is one of the reasons why this research received limited data. Other regions where multi-agency responses are being developed need even faster progression. This gradual trend is partly due to the fact that recognition of child trafficking as a problem has been more recent. Efforts need to be made to transfer lessons learned from regions involved in joined up working to avoid 're-inventing the wheel'. Additionally, there needs to be a national focal point for the collection of this intelligence in order to have a faster and more efficient nationwide and intelligence led anti-trafficking strategy.

## Part 2 – Awareness Assessment Overview

Other issues to note are that different statutory and non-statutory agencies are led by different legislation and have different mandates. A child victim or a suspected child victim of trafficking will encounter different agencies and professionals during the lifetime of their contact with the authorities. Each of these authorities will view that child from the perspective of their organisation's role and responsibility. For example, a doctor would look at the child's medical needs; a police officer would focus on the law enforcement and protection needs and so on and so forth. These various perceptions of the whole, is highlighted by the distinctive types of information and data that each sector provided this research work. For example, police forces gave case data where there was a minimum level of evidence to raise such a concern, such as a testimony or the finding of exploitation. Children's Services referred cases where children showed peculiar behaviour and went missing. Where children went missing from care, reports have always been made to the local police. However, such cases of missing children were only referred to the research team by Children's Services and not the same police force. This finding is not critical of individual agencies but merely demonstrates the diversity in perspectives of respective agencies. However, it does raise the question as to whether police would treat a case differently where there was an element of suspicious child trafficking activity involved. In some cases it has been found that a positive identification of the child as a victim has little consequence in the overall response to the trafficking activity detected.

In accordance with specific legislation and systems surrounding child protection, where there is concern over the welfare of a child in the UK, there exist clear guidelines as to how any agency should act.

The main guidance enumerating the roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children for all agencies is the DfES Guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children.<sup>50</sup> This guidance delineates what an agency should do where there is concern for the welfare of a child, where the child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. Where a child is found to be at risk of significant harm the relevant Children's Services should allocate a specific social worker to the case to carry out an initial assessment. The police and NSPCC also have powers to intervene in these circumstances. Where the concerns are supported, the next step would be for the local authority to convene a strategy meeting which should include members of the various sectors relevant for the case of the particular child the concern is about. This would usually include a Social Worker and the Police and other relevant agencies. In dealing with alleged offences involving a child victim, the police should normally work in partnership with Children's Services an/or other agencies. While the responsibility to instigate a criminal investigation rests with the police, they should consider the views expressed by other agencies. The guidance refers to particular groups of children who are thought to be particularly vulnerable and for whom there should be particular concern if they are identified. These groups include, amongst others, migrant children, child trafficking as well as children abused through prostitution. However, of the 120 cases referred to the research team by Children's Services, 14 reportedly consisted of a strategy meeting regarding the relevant child. In two of these cases a section 47 investigation under the Children Act 1989 was carried out.

In one case, a girl went missing from one local authority to be found being exploited in a cannabis factory in another Children's Service area. She was arrested and convicted of cannabis cultivation and nearing her time for release it became clear that the young girl was at risk of re-trafficking. It was necessary for the child to be safe and cared for appropriately on her release but there ensued a disagreement between the two local authorities from whom she had gone missing and had been found respectively. Neither Children's Services wanted to take responsibility for caring for the child and felt that by law the other one was responsible. This disagreement continued while the girl was in detention pending her appeal for sentence and due to be released imminently. Her vulnerability to falling back into exploitation had been detected by her Youth Offending Team officer, who had diligently been pursuing a resolution for

<sup>50</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to Inter-Agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, published in 2006.

her case. Eventually the Children's Services in whose area the girl was found took responsibility for providing accommodation. Whereas clearly defined protocols in such matters are often the subject of disagreement over interpretation and wrangling between local authorities, where this is over a child protection matter of a possible victim of trafficking, such disagreements lead to the child being deprived of her rights. In this case of the legal disagreement over who held the responsibility of a child where she goes missing in one area and is found in another is an important aspect of victim aftercare that needs to be ironed out.

There is a general lack of understanding, capacity, resources, will and clarity surrounding the procedures and responsibilities of agencies in each sector. This again highlights the need for increasing awareness and joined up working however it also exhibits why it is initially difficult for different agencies, even within the same sectors, to work together. These difficulties need to be eased in order to help agencies to work better together. A national focal point for intelligence could have the crucial role of co-ordination between agencies at national and local levels.

For example, authorities may come across a child who comes in the country unaccompanied or separated. At this point it is very difficult for an immigration officer to identify if that child is being trafficked as the act of trafficking is only clear if there is an intention to or an actual exploitation of the child. Even if there are strong suspicions that a child is being trafficked, what can be done to put a stop to it and to prevent their exploitation? In such a case, BIA would refer the case to Children's Services who would then be responsible for the care and protection of that child. The specific interaction and counter trafficking actions a joint BIA and local authority would undertake in order to protect the child are hampered by a number of conditions inherent in child trafficking activity. These are i) the child is usually under the heavy control and influence of her traffickers and will say and behave as she has been told to ii) the authorities are restricted with their particular remit and resources. Agencies are not well informed on existing procedures that may be invoked in order to protect the child, and even where agencies are informed about these procedures there are often high thresholds for each case to cross before those procedures are put in place due to resource and capacity restraints. A clear identification of the child as trafficked or at risk of trafficking needs to be made at the outset and a policy regarding procedures to follow in such cases must be implemented. Where agencies collaborate, there can be a cross pollination of any information gleaned without each waiting for another referral agency to ring the alarm bell. Thus, as is highlighted later, data and intelligence sharing and coordination are integral in a multi-agency response.

Lack of intra-agency working is mainly symptomatic of larger and more bureaucratic agencies. The reason for this is lack of communication between different departments, and lack of understanding of the specific roles of each area. This needs to be addressed for intra-agency working to become effective. In one police force, a respondent informed the team that they were the single point of contact for child trafficking cases. However after further investigation it was apparent that they were not sighted on a number of cases their agency was dealing with. This was due to the various data systems that might have included trafficking cases and lack of expeditious information sharing.

Inter-agency working is mainly lacking where priorities between organisations are not matched. For example, in some regions, cases and intelligence surrounding suspect child trafficking are not being properly investigated by the police due to a lack of resources allocated to such activity. In these instances such cases are referred to immigration authorities who are left to deal with them within the limits of their remit, as illustrated above. Additionally, where there is lack of clarity between unit role remits there is a risk that cases are not picked up due to competing resource demands. This occurs for example where one unit in a force deals with sexual offences or "vice" and another deals with child abuse. Where a case of child trafficking is detected, (in the absence of a trafficking unit) it may come under child abuse, vice or sexual



## Part 2 – Awareness Assessment Overview

offences unit teams. Since the commencement of this project however each police service has appointed a single point of contact (SPOC) for human trafficking which should go some way to alleviating this problem.

The scoping identified a handful of well “joined up” working practices at the local level. These examples of successful partnerships between police, immigration and childrens services were more often informal than formal. Smaller agencies were able to work more informally resulting in much better sharing of information and intelligence in order to provide a more holistic approach to any given child case. There seems to be an emergence of a bottom-up approach to responding to child trafficking. Front line staff have more tangible confrontations with actual cases and consequently have a better level of awareness about this problem, and they are informally linking up horizontally with officers and staff in other relevant statutory agencies to find the best suited solution to each case. In London and in some other areas multi-agency teams of immigration officers, police child protection officers and social workers have now been established following the lead of the operation Paladin team bases at Heathrow.

The emergence of child trafficking awareness, which inevitably consists of joined up multi-agency working, is consequently often borne by front line staff who are starting to recognise the signs of trafficking and respond to the risk of harm from which the child needs protection. This recognition does not as yet always appear to be fully appreciated by middle and senior management.

The pockets of successful joined up working are at local levels and therefore need to be drawn upon at regional and national levels in order for other localities to be able to draw lessons as well as avoid duplication within other areas. Many of these multi-agency arrangements are informal and it is advised that these should be established on a more formal basis. Child trafficking trends detected in one locality are only one part of the whole picture. If these local trends could be monitored on a regional and national basis, clearer pictures of trends and patterns could be elicited. The scoping shows similar and connected patterns of child trafficking in different regions, whereas the local agencies in each of those areas are not aware of each other’s trends. If they were aware each local set of agencies would be better suited to responding and dealing within their own locality. Again this highlights the need for a better flow of intelligence sharing among agencies at all levels. The UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking includes proposals for a national referral mechanism and data base of cases for trafficking cases. This work is already underway and will greatly assist in alleviating this problem.

## Conclusion

This scoping exercise has clearly highlighted some key trends and patterns in child trafficking into and within the UK. Though it is not a definitive study into the nature and scale of the problem, it is the first step in helping to better understand the problem itself, as well as to constructively assess existing responses. By both examining a sample of trafficking cases and agency responses, the scoping study has presented a preliminary assessment of where we are today in confronting the problem and safeguarding the child victims.

This snapshot may be used as a future measure of how progress is made toward tackling this most complex problem. Due to its hidden nature and the lack of sound intelligence about its prevalence, it is clear that in dealing with child trafficking the overall response requires the development of consistent and harmonized definitions, systems and procedures. There remain gaps in our understanding and knowledge about the scale and nature of child trafficking, which must be filled over time. However, the recognition that there are significant concerns about child trafficking and exploitation of children in the UK suggests that a more co-ordinated and consistent approach must be adopted.

The recent launch of the UK Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings, the governments signature of the Council of Europe Convention, the establishment of the UK Human Trafficking Centre, the developing work of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the ongoing work of individual police forces, such as the Metropolitan Police who have set up a specialist Trafficking Unit, highlights the growing recognition of trafficking in human beings as a real and significant threat to the UK. The ongoing important work being undertaken by NGOs and Children's Services to protect children is also recognised. It is hoped that the new NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line, in partnership with ECPAT UK and CEOP, will support the development of protecting and safeguarding children against this seemingly growing threat.

It is clear that child trafficking needs to be tackled within the context of the overall work being undertaken around trafficking of human beings. However, it is also equally recognised that trafficking of children is a distinct area for which policy and strategy should be developed within a Child Safeguarding context. A safeguarding approach ensures that the welfare of the child is paramount at all times. A consistent and harmonised approach, in this manner, in regard to all issues of children, will support the adoption of consistent definitions, systems and policies. 'Supplementary Guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children Who May have Been Trafficked' Is to be published later this year which will provide clear guidance of all front line staff in England who may come into contact with trafficked children.

Notably, all sectors involved do take the problem of child trafficking seriously and practitioners within these sectors are calling for better support, training and awareness around the issues. Work and approaches developed by individual and multi-agency initiatives must be further built upon and developed into models of best practice that all agencies can subscribe to and implement where appropriate. Much good work has already been done and significant resources are now being made available for training and support but it is clear that there is much more to do. The establishment of a child trafficking unit within CEOP aims to progress the work and further develop the specialised work undertaken through this scoping research.

**“ It is clear that child trafficking needs to be tackled within the context of the overall work being undertaken around trafficking of human beings. However, it is also equally recognised that trafficking of children is a distinct area for which policy and strategy should be developed within a Child Safeguarding context ”**

# Recommendations

## Recommendations

### The following recommendations flow from this assessment:

- A UK Child Trafficking Strategic Threat Assessment (STA) must be conducted as a priority to produce a national intelligence picture of the nature and scale of child trafficking. This assessment would impact upon all agencies involved within this area of crime and would ensure that each response is informed through an intelligence-led approach. The STA would inform the national intelligence picture on child trafficking. This would enable police forces to have a clearer idea of local intelligence, hence providing them with an evidence base to place child trafficking within their force/regional control strategy. The subsequent effect of this inclusion should see police forces recording this activity far more rigorously.
- Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) need to develop protocols to respond to and record child trafficking cases to undertake the analysis and dissemination of relevant data as a matter of priority. This would also require training all teams within local authorities that deal with children and respond to child trafficking to ensure the interest and welfare of the trafficked child remain paramount at all times. Currently identifications are only being made from a narrow group of children.
- As part of the overall response to trafficking of human beings being developed through the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking, it is recommended that a child trafficking desk with a child protection focus be established to provide specialist expertise and intelligence, working closely with UKHTC to deliver the most appropriate response to this crime.
- The feasibility of biometric data of children coming into the UK being collected and stored within a specialised database such as ChildBase<sup>51</sup> should be explored. This could then be checked and updated in regard to any further service provision for children such as when claiming asylum or otherwise coming to the attention of the police or Children's Services. Such a system would allow an efficient method of identifying and tracing separated children within the UK. This data might also be updated on embarkation of children from the UK so that the database could inform relevant agencies on whether individual children were still in the UK. The feasibility of such a scheme, in both financial and practical terms, is currently being considered and researched by CEOP as part of the ongoing ACPO portfolio work on child trafficking and victim identification. However, it is recognised that our intelligence-led embarkation controls may not easily provide a solution in ensuring that children had safely left the UK. Moreover in particular it would not provide an answer to European Economic Area (EEA) national children who benefit from the freedom of movement and whose details are rarely recorded by the Border & Immigration Agency. But the possibilities need to be explored.
- There is a need for training of front line officers and workers in terms of awareness raising to be continued. The government's 'UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking' outlines the work already being done around awareness raising and training of key agency staff. The UKHTC have already begun to run training programmes for police officers on human trafficking. Within the BIA, a full, revised training package for immigration officers is being prepared and due to be delivered to all frontline staff as soon as the final package has been agreed. This is expected to be agreed within the next three months. In addition, the Home Office and DfES have been preparing for the issue of national best practice guidance for professionals who encounter trafficked or exploited children to be published as Supplementary Guidance to Working Together later this year. ECPAT UK has also been funded to further develop their existing training programmes that have been rolled out to local authorities and to produce an 'e-learning tool' relevant for all front line staff. More can

**Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) need to develop protocols to respond to and record child trafficking cases to undertake the analysis and dissemination of relevant data as a matter of priority**

<sup>51</sup> ChildBase is the UK's national database of images of child abuse, which is housed at CEOP.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations

however be done to concentrate on conceptual as well as practical understanding of child trafficking and the central importance of victim identification to uncover trafficking activity. Such training should be bespoke to the area of work for each agency and should include a focus on multi-agency working as there is need for agencies to work together far more closely than current practices indicate. This will also assist greatly in the identification of children who are or have been victims of trafficking. This training will be a supplement to “Working Together to Safeguard Children”.

- Agencies should adopt a consistent definition of child trafficking and thereafter ensure that each have a flagging system and focal point for the collation and dissemination of information and intelligence about suspected child trafficking cases. This would significantly ameliorate the retrieval of data for trafficking cases. This work should be co-ordinated by Local Safeguarding Children Boards following national guidance that will be forthcoming (see UK Action Plan). It is essential that each agency has a nominated individual or team that is sighted on all child trafficking cases or those that have such implications.
- The current method of assessing the age of children should be reviewed. Furthermore an improved reliable method of assessing age should be developed. This would better identify those persons who are children from those who are not, enabling better protection for children overall. This recommendation echoes proposals in the Home Office UASC reform programme ‘Planning Better Outcomes and support for Asylum Seeking Children’.
- Where children, who have been trafficked, are subsequently found to be involved in criminal activity, a consistent and rigorous approach needs to be adopted within the criminal investigation process which recognises the coercion to which they may have been subjected, as well as their best interests and welfare, at the same time as the offence of offending. Policy and guidance needs to be developed to assist investigators and prosecutors in this sensitive and complex area of criminality and exploitation.

## Annex A - Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASU	Asylum Screening Unit
BIA	Border and Immigration Agency
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
ChildBase	A national database storing images of children
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DLR	Discretionary Leave to Remain
EU	European Union
ECPAT UK	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of children for sexual purposes
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IATA/CAWG	IATA Control Authorities Working Group
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain
JIU	Joint Intelligence Unit
LACPC	London Area Child Protection Committee
LSCBs	Local Safeguarding Children Boards
NAM	New Asylum Model
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NMPH	National Missing Persons Helpline
NRUC	National Register of Unaccompanied Children
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
SERINT	South East Regional Intelligence Unit
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency
STA	Strategic Threat Assessment
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
UKHTC	UK Human Trafficking Centre
UN	United Nations

## Annex B Annex B - Indicators of Child Trafficking

These were used to determine trafficking likelihood and categorise cases between levels 1 and 4 (taken from the London Safeguarding Children Board, formerly the London Area Child Protection Committee).

- (1) Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone
- (2) Is driven around by an older male or 'boyfriend'
- (3) Is withdrawn and refuses to talk
- (4) Shows signs of sexual behaviour or language
- (5) Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease
- (6) Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- (7) Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- (8) Works in various locations
- (9) Has limited freedom of movement
- (10) Appears to be missing for periods
- (11) Is known to beg for money
- (12) Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents. The quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
- (13) Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- (14) Has not been enrolled in school
- (15) Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- (16) Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, perhaps for the travel costs, before being able to have control over his/her own earnings
- (17) Hands over a large part of their earnings to another person
- (18) Is excessively afraid of being deported
- (19) Has had their journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family
- (20) Does not have possession of their own travel documents
- (21) Has false papers, and these have been provided by another person
- (22) Is unable to confirm which adult is going to accept responsibility for her/him
- (23) Fits current profiles for those at risk of exploitation
- (24) Has entered the country illegally

Or, the person:

- (25) In control of the child has applied for visas on behalf of many others, or acts as guarantor for other visa applications
- (26) Who guarantees the visa application has acted for other visitors who have not returned to their countries of origin on the expiry of the visa



# Annex C

## Annex C – Questionnaires to Forces

### Child Trafficking Scoping Exercise: Questionnaire

Please ensure that information supplied by your force relates to cases received within the past eighteen months.

Name:

Force:

#### 1. Definitions for Recording Mechanisms

- a. Does your force use a specified definition for child trafficking.? If so what is it.?
- b. If your force does not use a specified definition for child trafficking, do you distinguish between adult and child trafficking? If so, how?
- c. Does your force record information on child trafficking, only if the individual is below the age of 18?
- d. Does your force have a flagging or alert system that flags up cases of potential child trafficking?
- e. How many cases of facilitation have been dealt with by your force that may constitute child trafficking?
- f. Does your force record separate entries for child trafficking victims and adult trafficking victims?
- g. For the purposes of recording data, does your force make a distinction between child trafficking and child smuggling?

#### 2. Data Systems

- a. Which systems (IT or manual) does your force use to record child trafficking information?
- b. Is there a nominated individual/department in your force that has the responsibility for recording information on child trafficking? If so, who/which department has this responsibility?
- c. Which factors would prompt your force to record a case as “child trafficking”?

#### 3. Process of communication

- a. Which agencies would your force typically liaise with when dealing with a case of child trafficking?

#### 4. Prevalence of Child Trafficking into the UK

- a. How many cases of child trafficking has your force dealt with?
- b. Please provide a brief outline of each case. The synopsis should include the information below  
(If the information is not available for each question please denote with “NA”)
  - (1) On what date your force became aware of this case
  - (2) How your force became aware of this case
  - (3) Name of child(ren)
  - (4) Age of child(ren)
  - (5) Origin of child(ren)
  - (6) Date of birth of child(ren)
  - (7) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
  - (8) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child
  - (10) Country/Region child was trafficked from
  - (11) Whether your force holds any details on the child’s trafficking route prior to entry into the UK?  
(please state how your force obtained this information)
  - (12) The port used to facilitate the child’s entry into the UK  
(please state how your force obtained this information)
  - (13) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor?
  - (14) The name and relationship of any individuals that accompanied the child in to the UK
  - (15) Details of why the child was trafficked into the UK  
(please state how your force obtained this information)
  - (16) Details of what happened to the child once in the UK
  - (17) The agencies your force liaised with in relation to this case
  - (18) The outcome of this case?  
(including successful or pending prosecutions)

**5. Possible Case of Child Trafficking: Identified after entry into the UK**

a. How many cases has your force dealt with where a child:

- (1) Is a non UK national;
- (2) Has entered the UK ;

**and**

The child has come to the attention of your force because:

- (3) They are the victim of sexual abuse
- (4) They are involved in organised theft/begging
- (5) They are involved in exploitative labour
- (6) The child is being cared for by adults that are not their parents, and these individuals have not complied with the legal requirements for private fostering arrangements
- (7) The child has been reported as 'missing'
- (8) The child fits the profile of an exploited individual  
(*please see guidance notes at Annex A*)

b. Please provide a brief outline of each case. The synopsis should include:

- (1) Name of child(ren)
- (2) Age of child(ren)
- (3) Country of origin of child(ren)
- (4) Date of birth of child(ren)
- (5) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
- (6) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child
- (7) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor
- (8) The name and relationship of any individuals that accompanied the child in to the UK
- (9) Any details on the child's travelling route prior to entry into the UK  
(*please state how your force obtained this information*)
- (10) The port used to facilitate the child's entry into the UK  
(*please state how your force obtained this information*)
- (11) Details of locations the child has resided in the UK and what activities they have been involved in

# Annex D

## Annex D – Questionnaire sent to Children’s Services

### Child Trafficking Scoping Exercise: Questionnaire

Name of person completing form:

Local Authority Department:

Name of Team:

Contact Details:

#### 1. Recording Mechanisms

- a. Does your department use a specified definition for child trafficking? If so what is the definition
- b. For the purposes of recording data, does your department make a distinction between child trafficking, child smuggling or any other form of child exploitation? If so how is this information recorded
- c. Which systems (IT or manual) does your department use to record information on child trafficking and potential child trafficking concerns?
- d. Which factors would prompt your department to record a case as “child trafficking”?
- e. Which agencies, both statutory and voluntary, would your department typically liaise with when dealing with a case of child trafficking?

#### 2. Child Trafficking into the UK.

Please complete the form below for each case where it is believed trafficking may have occurred

- (1) Name of child
- (2) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
- (3) Age of child (or estimated present age)
- (4) Origin of child(ren)
- (5) Date of birth of child(ren)
- (6) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child
- (7) Country/Region child was trafficked from
- (8) If the child has gone missing when was this?
- (9) On what date your department became aware of this case
- (10) How your department became aware of this case
- (11) Whether your department holds any details on the child’s trafficking route prior to entry into the UK?  
*(please state how your department obtained this information, if this is based on the child’s disclosure or story of their journey to the UK please say so)*
- (12) The port used to facilitate the child’s entry into the UK (please state how your department obtained this information).
- (13) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor?
- (14) The name and relationship ( if known) of any individuals that accompanied the child into the UK
- (15) The name and relationship of any individuals that had care of the child on arrival in the UK prior to their reception into Local Authority Care
- (16) Details of why you believe the child was trafficked into the UK (please state how your department obtained this information)
- (17) Details of what happened to the child once in the UK
- (18) The agencies your department liaised with in relation to this case
- (19) The outcome of this case
- (20) Was the child subject to a Section 47 investigation or any other form of protection emanating from the 1989 Children Act
- (21) Whether the child is reported ‘missing’ from the care of social services, private fostering or the care of relatives
- (22) If the child is ‘missing’, please state how long the child has been ‘missing’ for
- (23) If the child is ‘missing’, please state the circumstances surrounding the disappearance
- (24) If the child is ‘missing’, please provide the name of the Police force the missing report was made to
- (25) Did you inform the police that you believed this child to have been the victim of traffickers.  
If so what was the response you received
- (26) Are you aware of any attempts by the police or other agencies to locate the whereabouts of the child

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Information about this child will not be used other than for research purposes and will remain confidential to the research team.*

## Annex D – Questionnaire sent to Children’s Services

For each case could you please tick all the indicators that were relevant, as this will help the research team to identify the likelihood that the individual in question was a victim of trafficking.

Please also ensure that you state the name of the case on each form.

### Annex A

- (1) Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone
- (2) Is driven around by an older male or ‘boyfriend’
- (3) Is withdrawn and refuses to talk
- (4) Shows signs of sexual behaviour or language
- (5) Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease
- (6) Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- (7) Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- (8) Works in various locations
- (9) Has limited freedom of movement
- (10) Appears to be missing for periods
- (11) Is known to beg for money
- (12) Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents. The quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
- (13) Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- (14) Has not been enrolled in school
- (15) Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- (16) Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, perhaps for the travel costs, before being able to have control over his/her own earnings
- (17) Hands over a large part of their earnings to another person
- (18) Is excessively afraid of being deported
- (19) Has had their journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family
- (20) Does not have possession of their own travel documents
- (21) Has false papers, and these have been provided by another person
- (22) Is unable to confirm which adult is going to accept responsibility for her/him
- (23) Fits current profiles for those at risk of exploitation
- (24) Has entered the country illegally

Or, the person:

- (25) In control of the child has applied for visas on behalf of many others, or acts as guarantor for other visa applications
- (26) Who guarantees the visa application has acted for other visitors who have not returned to their countries of origin on the expiry of the visa

# Annex E

## Annex E – Questionnaire sent to Border and Immigration Agencies

### Child Trafficking Scoping Exercise: Questionnaire

Please ensure that information supplied by your unit relates to cases received after March 2005.

Name:

IND Agency:

#### 1. Definitions for Recording Mechanisms

- a. Does your unit use a specified definition for child trafficking? If so what is it?
- b. If your unit does not use a specified definition for child trafficking, how do you distinguish between adult and child trafficking? Are separate entries recorded for children and adults?
- c. Does your unit record information on child trafficking, only if the individual is below the age of 18?  
(Please state what type of information is recorded)
- d. Does your unit have a flagging or alert system that flags up cases of potential child trafficking? If so, what is the system?  
(Please state how up-to-date the information is)
- e. How many cases of facilitation or smuggling have been dealt with by your unit that may involve elements of child trafficking?
- f. For the purposes of recording data, does your unit make a distinction between child trafficking and child smuggling? How do you define each offence?

#### 2. Data Systems

- a. Which systems (IT or manual) does your unit use to record child trafficking information? What processes are in place to ensure these are accurate and robust?
- b. Is there a nominated individual/department in your unit that has the responsibility for recording information on child trafficking? If so, who/which department has this responsibility?
- c. Which factors would prompt your unit to record a case as “child trafficking”?

#### 3. Process of communication

- a. Which internal teams and external agencies would your force typically liaise with when dealing with a case of child trafficking?
- b. What is the role of BIA once the organization has liaised with other agencies?

#### 4. Prevalence of Child Trafficking into the UK

- a. How many cases involving child trafficking has your unit dealt with since March 2005?
- b. With regard to the cases outlined above in 4a. Were the identified individuals involved in other offences?
- c. Please provide a brief outline of each case. The synopsis should include the information below

(If the information is not available for each question please denote with “NA”)

- (1) On what date your unit became aware of this case
- (2) How your unit became aware of this case
- (3) Name of child(ren)
- (4) Age of child(ren)
- (5) Origin of child(ren)
- (6) Date of birth of child(ren)
- (7) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
- (8) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child
- (9) Country/Region child was trafficked from
- (10) Whether your unit holds any details on the child’s trafficking route prior to entry into the UK?  
(please state how your unit obtained this information)
- (11) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor?
- (12) The name and relationship of any individuals that accompanied the child in to the UK
- (13) Details of why the child was trafficked into the UK (please state how your unit obtained this information)
- (14) The agencies your unit liaised with in relation to this case
- (15) Please state which social services the child was referred to
- (16) The outcome of this case? (including successful or pending prosecutions)

## Annex E Annex E – Questionnaire sent to Border and Immigration Agencies

### 5. Possible Cases of Child Trafficking: Identified after entry into the UK

#### a. How many cases has your force dealt with where a child:

- (1) Is a non UK national;
- (2) Has entered the UK ;

and

The child has come to the attention of your unit because:

- (3) They are unaccompanied/separated
- (4) They arrived at the airport without the required travel documentation  
*(please provide information)*
- (5) They arrived at the airport with forged documentation
- (6) An airline had concerns about the child's welfare:
  - (i) The relationship between the child and the accompanying adult appeared suspicious.
  - (ii) The child may have been drugged or held captive before the flight.
  - (iii) Other concerns
- (7) The child arrived with an adult that is known to travel with unrelated children on a regular basis
- (8) Child maintains s/he is an age much older or younger than they look
- (9) Girls are dressed in guise (wig) or in old style but have western style skimpy clothing in suitcase
- (10) On arrival a solicitor or legal representative has been informed by a third party of their arrival and attempts to make contact with Immigration or Social Services
- (11) The child fits the profile of an exploited individual  
*(please see guidance notes at Annex A)*

#### b. Please provide a brief outline of each case. The synopsis should include:

- (1) Name of child(ren)
- (2) Age of child(ren)
- (3) Country of origin of child(ren)
- (4) Date of birth of child(ren)
- (5) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
- (6) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child.
- (7) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor
- (8) The name and relationship of any individuals that accompanied the child in to the UK
- (9) Any details on the child's travelling route prior to entry into the UK  
*(please state how your unit obtained this information)*
- (10) The port used to facilitate the child's entry into the UK  
*(please state how your unit obtained this information)*
- (11) Details of locations the child has resided in the UK and what activities they have been involved in.



# Annex E

## Annex E – Questionnaire sent to Border and Immigration Agencies

### Annex A

#### GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Child	An individual under the age of 18 <sup>52</sup>
Exploitation	An individual is involved in an act that serves the advantage of another. This will include as a minimum prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs <sup>53</sup>
Separated	Previously referred to as “unaccompanied”. The word separated is now used, as often the trafficker will accompany a child on their trafficking route. However, the trafficker will ensure that the child enters immigration control alone and will meet with the child afterwards.
Smuggling	An individual directly or indirectly provides financial or other material benefit to another, to facilitate their illegal entry into a State of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident. <sup>54</sup>
Trafficking	An individual is recruited, transported/ transferred (from one country to another or within the individuals own country) or harbored by means of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● a threat</li><li>● use of force or other forms of coercion of abduction;</li><li>● fraud;</li><li>● deception;</li><li>● the abuse of power;</li><li>● the position of vulnerability;</li><li>● giving or receiving of payments of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control of another person</li></ul> The above would have taken place for the purposes of exploitation. <sup>55</sup>

#### Points to Note

It is important to provide names, date of birth and countries of origin when completing the questionnaire. This information will significantly reduce the risk of “double counting” cases across the various agencies. It is crucial that this does not occur, otherwise this may impede the results of the scoping exercise.

Completed questionnaires must be marked as **CONFIDENTIAL** as they will contain personal information relating to individuals.

<sup>52</sup> The Children Act 1989.

<sup>53</sup> Palermo Protocol (Annex II to the Convention; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children).

<sup>54</sup> Smuggling Protocol (Annex III to the Convention: Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air).

<sup>55</sup> Palermo Protocol (Annex II to the Convention; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children).

# Annex F

## Annex F – Questionnaire sent to NGOs

### Child Trafficking Scoping Exercise: Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Recording Mechanisms

- a. Does your department use a specified definition for child trafficking? If so, what is it?
- b. For the purposes of recording data, does your department make a distinction between child trafficking, child smuggling or any other form of child exploitation?
- c. Which system/s does your department use to record information on child trafficking and potential child trafficking concerns?
- d. Which factors would prompt your department to record a case as “child trafficking”?
- e. Which agencies would your department typically liaise with when dealing with a case of child trafficking?

#### 2. Child Trafficking into the UK

- a. As mentioned in the introduction to this questionnaire, please provide a brief outline of each case. The synopsis should include:
  - (1) On what date your department became aware of this case
  - (2) How your department became aware of this case
  - (3) Name of child(ren)
  - (4) Ethnicity of the child(ren)
  - (5) Age of child(ren)
  - (6) Origin of child(ren)
  - (7) Date of birth of child(ren)
  - (8) The primary and secondary languages spoken by the child.
  - (9) Country/Region child was trafficked from.
  - (10) Whether your department holds any details on the child’s trafficking route prior to entry into the UK?  
*(please state how your department obtained this information)*
  - (11) The port used to facilitate the child’s entry into the UK  
*(please state how your department obtained this information)*
  - (12) Whether the child arrived in the UK as a separated or accompanied minor?
  - (13) The name and relationship of any individuals that accompanied the child in to the UK
  - (14) The name and relationship of any individuals that have taken charge of the child now that they are in the UK
  - (15) Details of why the child was trafficked into the UK  
*(please state how your department obtained this information)*
  - (16) Details of what happened to the child once in the UK
  - (17) The agencies your department liaised with in relation to this case
  - (18) The outcome of this case
  - (19) Whether the child is reported ‘missing’ from the care of social services, private fostering or the care of relatives
  - (20) If the child is ‘missing’, please state how long the child has been ‘missing’ for
  - (21) If the child is ‘missing’, please state the circumstances surrounding the disappearance
  - (22) If the child is ‘missing’, please provide the name of the force the missing report was made to

## Annex F – Questionnaire sent to NGOs

### Annex A

- Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone
- Is driven around by an older male or 'boyfriend'
- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk
- Shows signs of sexual behaviour or language
- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- Works in various locations
- As limited freedom of movement
- Appears to be missing for periods
- Is known to beg for money
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents. The quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- Has not been enrolled in school
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, perhaps for the travel costs, before being able to have control over his/her own earnings
- Hands over a large part of their earnings to another person
- Is excessively afraid of being deported
- Has had their journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family
- Does not have possession of their own travel documents
- Has false papers, and these have been provided by another person
- Is unable to confirm which adult is going to accept responsibility for her/him
- Fits current profiles for those at risk of exploitation
- Has entered the country illegally

or, the person:

- In control of the child has applied for visas on behalf of many others, or acts as guarantor for other visa applications
- Who guarantees the visa application has acted for other visitors who have not returned to their countries of origin on the expiry of the visa

## Annex G - Letters Explaining the Scoping Report to Responding Agencies

*(Slightly varied versions of the following letter were sent along with the questionnaires to agencies.)*

Child Trafficking has become a serious concern globally, at the EU level as well as in the UK. Recent reports and research highlight mainly anecdotal evidence of the scale and nature of the problem. There is a clear need to deepen our understanding of the practical issues surrounding the proper gathering of data concerning children who are, or are at risk of, being trafficked.

The Immigration Nationality Directorate and the Home Office have commissioned CEOP, The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, to undertake a Scoping Exercise on Child Trafficking in the UK. The aim of this exercise is to identify how statutory and non statutory agencies deal with data relating to child trafficking. Furthermore, the project will deliver an initial assessment of the information currently available and will inform and lay the foundations for a wider and deeper Strategic Threat Assessment of Child Trafficking.

This Scoping Exercise was originally planned to be completed by December 2006. Data was gathered from Police Forces, Social Services, NGOs and IND agencies. Presently, it has been jointly decided that further relevant data would significantly benefit the Scoping Exercise and therefore the deadline for questionnaire has been extended.

Giving consideration to the seriousness of the issue being investigated, and the integral role of Police Forces, your participation in the study and response to the questionnaires would be significantly appreciated. Therefore, I thank you in advance for completing the questionnaire and sending it to Aarti Kapoor at [aarti.kapoor@ceop.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:aarti.kapoor@ceop.gsi.gov.uk).

Due to the strict timetable imposed upon the CEOP research team to complete this exercise, I would be grateful if completed questionnaires could be sent to Aarti by Friday 9 February 2007.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that completed questionnaires are marked as CONFIDENTIAL. All data will be used for research purposes only and not passed to any other organizations.

Please note that following the submission of your questionnaire, members of the CEOP research team may contact you to arrange an interview. This will be to discuss your response in more detail.

Please note there are guidance notes at Annex A to aid the completion of the questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this valuable research that will help to meet the needs and protect these most vulnerable children and young people.

Jim Gamble  
ACPO Lead, Child Trafficking  
CEO, Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre



Home Office

**Border & Immigration Agency**

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