

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

no documents

work-related injury

minder present

trauma

distrustful



Can you read the signs?

How health workers can
identify and help victims
of human trafficking

Human trafficking occurs across Scotland. A recent inquiry by the Equality and Human Rights Commission found evidence of trafficking in Argyll, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Skye and Aberdeen.

Not all victims are illegal immigrants. Some are trafficked from the EU and others are victims of domestic trafficking within the UK.

This leaflet does not cover child trafficking. Separate guidance exists on responding to children who have been trafficked. Contact your local child protection lead or visit: **www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/02/18092546/0**

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. People are taken from their communities by force, fraud or coercion, mainly for:

- **sexual exploitation:** in prostitution and other areas of the sex industry
- **domestic servitude:** as nannies and servants in private homes with poor treatment and long working hours
- **forced labour:** in construction, agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, textiles, hotels, catering, nail bars, care homes, car washes and so on
- **forced criminal activities:** such as, growing cannabis, selling pirate DVDs or bogus charity collections.

Often, victims have been lied to about the work, pay and conditions offered in job opportunities. Traffickers maintain control through violence, rape, threats, imposed debts and psychological dependency.

Health problems for victims

The health of trafficking victims is at risk because of:

- exposure to infectious diseases
- repetitive physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse
- chronic lack of food, sleep or shelter
- hazards – poor ventilation or sanitation, dangerous machinery, lack of protective equipment and so on.

Health problems may include:

- bruises, burns and other physical injuries
- malnourishment, dehydration, serious dental problems
- sexually transmitted infections including hepatitis B and HIV
- pregnancy, from rape or prostitution
- unsafe abortions
- infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis
- depression, confusion, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder
- substance misuse.

Identifying victims of trafficking

Victims of trafficking may sustain injuries and illnesses that frequently fall to the NHS to address in a safe and confidential way. For a trafficked person, contact with someone in the health service may be the first – or only – chance to tell their story or ask for help.

There are no definitive symptoms to identify victims of trafficking but the following potential signs might alert you:

Migrated locally or internationally for work commonly associated with trafficking



Trauma symptoms

Injuries associated with abuse

Injuries or illnesses associated with unprotected labour and poor exploitative working or living conditions



Possible trafficking situation

Presence of a minder. Patient is fearful, distrustful.
Patient does not speak local language

What can you do?

You have a unique opportunity to offer the first step towards safety and recovery for a victim of trafficking.

- Prioritise the safety of the patient.
- If you suspect the victim is in immediate danger, notify the police.
- See the patient alone, even if they are accompanied.
- Record as much information as possible.

After medical treatment, sensitively enquire about health and living circumstances:

Does anyone have your identity documents?

Are you free to come and go as you wish?

What are your work/home conditions like?

Can you leave your job/home if you want?

Is anyone forcing you to do anything you don't want to do?

Have you or your family been threatened or harmed in any way?

Marcin's story

Marcin, 33, Romania

Marcin came to Scotland with the promise of work and cheap accommodation. On arrival he had his passport taken and was forced to share a house with 24 other men, sleeping in cramped, damp conditions with only one cooker and one toilet. He and the others were bussed every day to pick fruit and vegetables for 14 hours with no time off. After deductions for rent, bogus tax payments, property bills and transport costs, Marcin had £10 left a week to live on. Complaints were met with abuse and threats.

Marcin collapsed from malnourishment and exhaustion. He was taken to A&E where the doctor was able to help him share his experience and to put him in touch with Migrant Help who supported him to safety.

Marisca's story

Marisca, 18, Poland

Marisca came to Scotland having been promised work as a nanny. On arrival she was forced into prostitution, made to live in a brothel and was expected to have unprotected sex with 'punters'. Marisca first attended her GP when she was seven months pregnant. She appeared frightened, had no identity documentation and was accompanied by a man who insisted on staying throughout the appointment.

The GP referred Marisca to a service for vulnerable pregnant women where the midwife was concerned that she was a victim of trafficking and contacted TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance) on her behalf. Marisca agreed to meet with a member of TARA and told her story. TARA gave Marisca support, advice and help to access safe accommodation. Marisca gave birth to her baby boy and is now living safely in another part of Scotland.

Suraiya's story

Suraiya, 25, India

Suraiya thought she was moving to Scotland for an arranged marriage. Instead she became a virtual slave who cleaned, cooked and worked in the family business. She had to sleep in the basement and was only allowed to eat the family leftovers. She wasn't allowed out on her own and her rare calls to her own family in India were monitored.

Suraiya sometimes saw her GP but was always taken by a family member who spoke for her. It was only after a very violent incident that she was seen alone and the police were involved. The GP referred Suraiya to Shakti Women's Aid. Her visa had expired and she wasn't protected under immigration law. Because her GP had documented appointments, injuries and concerns about trafficking, Suraiya was able to successfully apply for indefinite leave to remain in the country. Suraiya still works with Shakti as she attempts to rebuild her life.

Support for victims

There is a national system to provide care and support to victims of trafficking. If you suspect someone is a victim, contact:

TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance) for female victims of sex trafficking

Tel: 0141 276 7724

Migrant Help for all victims trafficked for economic exploitation and male victims of sex trafficking

Tel: 07766 668781

Police

If you have concerns for someone's safety and suspect that they may be a victim of trafficking, contact your local police station.

Support for health workers

United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre provides 24-hour advice on legal and immigration issues.

Tel: 0844 778 2406

www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/about-the-ukhtc

For detailed guidance refer to *What health workers need to know about human trafficking*

www.gbv.scot.nhs.uk



You can also access the e-learning module for health workers on your role in identifying and responding to victims of human trafficking from **www.gbv.scot.nhs.uk**

Victims can have a complex series of health problems. Further information about: commercial sexual exploitation, rape and sexual assault, and childhood sexual abuse is available in the resources section at **www.gbv.scot.nhs.uk**

We are happy to consider requests for other languages or formats. Please contact 0131 536 5500 or email nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net



Learn more about your role in identifying and supporting victims of trafficking by visiting **www.gbv.scot.nhs.uk** where you can also access an e-learning module.

www.healthscotland.com
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