Prevention and identification of children and young adults experiencing, or at risk of, modern slavery in the UK

Project report

The Rights Lab

The Rights Lab at the University is the world's first large-scale research platform for ending slavery by 2030. We are the world's largest group of modern slavery researchers, and home to many leading modern slavery experts. Through our four research programmes, we deliver new and cutting-edge research that provides rigorous data, evidence, and discoveries for the global antislavery effort. Our impact team provides an interface between the Rights Lab research programmes and civil society, business and government, and our INSPIRE project elevates survivor-informed research as a key part of knowledge production to help end slavery.

The goal of ending slavery is ambitious. But in the Rights Lab, we believe that by working together as part of the global antislavery community, we can achieve evidence-based strategies for ending slavery by 2030.

ECPAT UK

ECPAT UK (Every Child Protected Against Trafficking) is a leading children's rights organisation working to protect children from trafficking and transnational exploitation. We support children everywhere to uphold their rights and to live a life free from abuse and exploitation. Our vision is 'Children everywhere are free from exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery.' Our mission is to improve legislation, policy to end child trafficking and transnational child exploitation. To improve the child protection response of professionals in the UK and overseas. To ensure that children affected by exploitation are agents of change and part of the solution.

We take a rights-based approach, centring every child's fundamental human right to be protected from trafficking and exploitation as outlined in national legislation and the international legal framework. Our work is child-centred and guided by the meaningful and ethical participation of the young people we support.

Authorship and acknowledgments

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Foreword

As the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, I care passionately about ensuring that the most vulnerable in society are protected from abuse and exploitation. In my former role as the Deputy Children's Commissioner, my job was to protect and promote the rights of the most vulnerable children and young people. During this time, I heard from children who had been victims of exploitation and saw the devastating impact this has on them and their families. This report from the University of Nottingham Rights Lab and ECPAT UK shines a light on the shocking, growing problem of children being exploited around the country.

Children now make up more than 40% of the total figures of those identified as potential victims of modern slavery in this country. Every child behind that number deserves to be in a loving home with people who care for them. I know so many professionals are working tirelessly for these children, to help their families too, to make sure they have somewhere safe to sleep, far away from the fear of violence and exploitation. But, as this report shows not all children are receiving the support and care they need, and professionals are not always identifying child victims.

Sadly, it is not a coincidence that the numbers of children in exploitation have skyrocketed recently. Many vulnerable children were left unprotected during the pandemic, putting them at risk of being groomed into criminal and sexual exploitation. Since COVID, there continues to be huge numbers of children missing from school, with over 1.8 million persistently absent, with school exclusion and drop out exacerbating the problem and making children more vulnerable to grooming by gangs.

Across the UK, from Cornwall to Carlisle, many British children are being used by gangs to transport drugs and money to and from busy cities like London and Birmingham to quieter coastal and rural areas. As this report shows the number of children exploited in the UK has grown year on year since 2015. Criminals are also exploiting children trafficked to this country to grow cannabis. And there are stories from social workers of unaccompanied children seeking asylum, who have often faced horrific journeys, being picked up from hotels by traffickers. These children should not be in hotels and should be safe from exploitation. The criminal gangs exploiting these children must be brought to justice: we have to see more prosecutions so that the exploitation of children in this country does not continue to be a low risk, high reward crime.

Being a victim of exploitation is horrific and has far-reaching ramifications on a person's life at any age. But to allow children to go through such significant trauma is a failure of the state. We must look at how to prevent children from being vulnerable to exploitation. We need early intervention programmes with adequate support provisions that are victim-centric. Every single child and young person must be provided with the right support to meet their individual needs. This should be outlined in a comprehensive, UK-wide evidence based, time bound, Modern Slavery Strategy, with a dedicated focus on child exploitation. There needs to be targets for each government department to ensure this is everyone's business and priority. And the postcode lottery of support for children who have been exploited must end.

We must go further and faster with support we know works. A pilot programme is taking place for child victims of modern slavery, giving some local authorities and safeguarding partners the ability to identify and support child victims more quickly. This multi-agency working by professionals who know the child and can understand their unique needs is the right approach. As is supporting young victims to cope with the practical and emotional traumas of being trafficked with Independent Child Trafficking Guardians. This support should be expanded across all local authorities. No child should fall through the gaps. Local authorities themselves must also get better at identifying and supporting child victims. Against a growing backdrop of more children being exploited more must be done. The government must provide sufficient funding and resources to local authority services so that they can effectively respond. And local authorities must adequately train their staff to recognise and support child victims. By doing this more children will be supported to get the care and attention they deserve and need.

I welcome this report by the University of Nottingham and ECPAT UK. I look forward to working with them and the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre as we strive for a UK where every child can grow up safe from exploitation and abuse.

Eleanor Lyons
Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

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Abbreviations

CCE:
Child criminal exploitation

CG:
Conclusive grounds

CIRV:
Community Initiative to Reduce Violence

CSE:
Child sexual exploitation

CYA:
Children and young adults

ECAT:
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

EGYV:
Ending Gang and Youth Violence

EFRH:
Extra-Familiar Risk or Harm

EU:
European Union

FOI:
Freedom of Information

ICTG:
Independent Child Trafficking Guardians

ISVA:
Independent Sexual Violence Advisors

KOGS:
Keeping Our Girls Safe

PACE:
Parents Against Child Exploitation

Q4:
Quarter 4

NHS:
National Health Service

NGOs:
Non-governmental organisations

NRM:
National Referral Mechanism

RG:
Reasonable grounds

RPC:
Regional Practice Coordinators

SEND:
Special educational needs and disabilities

STARS:
School Transition and Reach Service

UK:
United Kingdom

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1. Executive summary

> "Government are the biggest part that can make (prevention and early identification of child modern slavery) happen, but they are instead attacking victims rather than looking at the traffickers."
>
> – ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 2, session 1

Child modern slavery remains a significant issue in the United Kingdom with far-reaching implications for children and the wider society. Modern slavery represents a gross violation of children's basic human rights, depriving them of their right to live free from exploitation, abuse, and forced labour. Child victims are often denied their rights to grow and develop in a safe and nurturing environment. The consequences of child modern slavery extend into adulthood, impacting young people's development, mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

The United Kingdom has legal obligations under international conventions and treaties, and domestic legislation to protect children from exploitation and abuse. The Council of Europe Convention Against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT) specifically sets out in Article 5.5 that "each Party shall take specific measures to reduce children's vulnerability to trafficking, notably by creating a protective environment for them."

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of initiatives to improve the prevention and early identification of children who are victims, or at risk of, modern slavery in the United Kingdom from 2015 to 2023.

During this period, there has been a growing awareness of the issue, marked by legislative changes and various policy initiatives following the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and similar legislative packages in devolved administrations. There have been improved measures to address modern slavery of children during this period. Yet, challenges persist in translating legislative measures into effective protection initiatives and some recent measures have even seen loosening in the protection for children, including the removal of consideration for international protection for children arriving to the UK without authorisation, disqualification from protection and increased barriers to identification as potential victims of modern slavery through the National Referral Mechanism. These regressive measures have followed from significant decline of political commitment and prioritisation regarding child modern slavery, and an increase in an anti-immigration political rhetoric not substantiated by evidence.

Through this six-month study, the University of Nottingham Rights Lab and ECPAT UK revealed a lack of a comprehensive and overarching child exploitation strategy that addresses the gaps in existing legislation, particularly focusing on early identification procedures, strategies and practices.

Poor data collection and recording at a local level is deeply concerning and suggests that the UK's wider child protection response to child victims and those at risk is inadequate. This research has identified a worrying lack of consistency in prevention and early identification measures, with significant discrepancies between local recordng of instances of child modern slavery and central government data.

1.1. Key findings

Local authorities' role in identifying children who experienced modern slavery

- Local authorities referred the largest share of potential victims experiencing modern slavery as children into the NRM from 2015-2023, representing 47% (16,446 children) of all referrals across this period. This highlights the critical role of local authorities as first responders in cases of child modern slavery.

- Half of all local authorities that referred children into the NRM from 2018-2023 could not provide basic information such as gender, nationality, location of exploitation, exploitation type, county lines, reasonable grounds decision and conclusive grounds decision, on the children that they had referred in response to FOI requests submitted in this project.

Key risk factors associated with child modern slavery in the UK

- A key risk factor of modern slavery of children is the vulnerability of childhood, as many are targeted simply because of their age, experience, knowledge, and maturity level.

- Other prevalent risk factors identified in this study include not having protective family and guardians surrounding them, as well as being subject to neglect and abuse. This may involve children in care of local authorities and children with a history of adverse childhood experiences such as divorce, domestic violence, abuse, neglect, parental mental health issues, or parental substance misuse.

- For children in care, the shortage of appropriate placements and the frequency of missing episodes significantly increases risk of exploitation.

- The socio-economic background of children has a significant impact on their vulnerability, as families experiencing poverty often induces instability for the children. Examples include parents who may be absent due to working multiple jobs, families not having secure accommodation or secure access to food, and children not being able to maintain education due to an expectation to work to help provide for the family.

- A key risk factor to exploitation is an unstable immigration status. Recent legislative measures such as the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Migration Act 2023 may increase risks of exploitation for children, as the threat of removal from the UK is likely to prevent coming forward to be identified as exploited in modern slavery.

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as those outside of education including through school exclusion and drop out, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Lack of access to legal aid in school exclusion appeals also hinders the ability to prevent exploitation.

- As young people move into adulthood there is significantly less support, this includes the drop of support for children formerly in local authorities' care and for those with protective parents or carers, who will have less influence and authority over decision making.

Early identification and prevention of child modern slavery in the UK

- Analysis of published local authority policy documents demonstrates that child modern slavery and exploitation are most substantially addressed in multi-agency working documents. In these documents, child modern slavery concerns usually shape the whole of the policy and ensure a comprehensive approach from identification to prevention and protection. By contrast, other policy documents either do not engage with child modern slavery or exploitation at all, or peripherally address these practices.

- Limited awareness of terms such as 'trafficking' and 'exploitation', coupled with the absence of certain statutory definitions and variations in definitions provided by local agencies, leads to different interpretations and creates gaps in early identification.

- Frontline professionals overlook indicators of exploitation due to a lack of understanding as well as institutional barriers that significantly hinder early identification. Insufficient or non-existent training provision for first responders and specific training for local authorities' children's services who have duties and obligation to children are also barriers to effective early identification responses.

- There is a lack of a comprehensive and overarching child exploitation strategy that addresses the gaps in existing legislation, particularly focusing on early identification initiatives. Resources are a significant issue hindering prevention and early identification efforts. Local authorities and police forces face challenges due to reduced budgets and increasing workload, thus resulting in limited capacity for frontline professionals.

- The lack of effective communication with children poses further obstacles to identification efforts with a notable gap in engaging directly with children and young people to gather their perspectives on policy and practice initiatives.

- Institutional barriers due to assumptions, stereotypes, and biases within organisations significantly impede early identification efforts particularly for children from minority communities.

- Effective early identification initiatives include: understanding indicators of exploitation; multiagency responses; children's rights compliant intelligence gathering; quality training for professionals; building trust with children; avoiding stereotyping victim profiles; resolving victim blaming language; preventing victim criminalisation; investing in families and communities; and ensuring the critical role of professionals in education.

1.2.   Key summary recommendations

The full list of recommendations in this report can be found in Section 11. Synthesis of the research findings identified five priority recommendations:

1. UK Government must ensure that all departments in central, devolved and local governments have sufficient funding and resources to address and effectively respond to modern slavery of children and young people. In particular, local authority children services must be sufficiently resourced to implement preventative services and effective interventions.

2. The Department for Education, other relevant bodies of devolved administrations, and local authorities should develop and implement early intervention programmes with adequate support provision based on inclusive models and holistic approaches that account for the diverse needs of children and young people vulnerable to modern slavery.

3. UK Government must develop, in collaboration with devolved administrations, relevant government departments, and civil society, a UK-wide evidence-based, time-bound, child exploitation strategy.

4. The Department for Education, other relevant bodies of devolved administrations, and local authorities must improve data collection and disaggregation on all forms of child exploitation, including by creating a standardised system and reporting of information from local authority children's services.

5. The Home Office must ensure that immigration enforcement functions do not increase the risk of modern slavery for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Migration Act 2023, as well as immigration and asylum procedures

2. Introduction

"This (child trafficking) is going to continue happening. We want to use our voice to talk about how to support people who have already been through it. Let them know we are here to support them in recovery."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 1, session 1

In the face of yearly increases of people identified as potential child victims of modern slavery in the United Kingdom, this six-month research study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the critical dimensions surrounding the prevention and early identification of this reprehensible crime. Our focus is rooted in understanding the prevalence and dynamics of child modern slavery, identifying the risk factors that make children and young adults (CYA) vulnerable, and examining existing interventions and initiatives aimed at early identification and prevention.

The risk factors that expose CYA to exploitation emphasise the vulnerability inherent in childhood, the impact of family dynamics, socio-economic challenges, immigration status, and other influential factors. The study scrutinises the experiences of looked after children, those with special educational needs and disabilities, and the consequences of education-related challenges, such as exclusion and dropout rates, on vulnerability to modern slavery. Additionally, we examine the transition into adulthood, a critical juncture where support often diminishes, leaving formerly looked after children and children with protective parents alike more susceptible to exploitation.

Our investigation extends to a thorough review of existing interventions and initiatives in the realms of safeguarding, education, identification, prevention, policing, and local authority children's services. We critically analyse the challenges associated with early identification, including the lack of understanding of modern slavery and trafficking, delayed responses, legislative limitations, resourcing issues, community engagement deficits, communication lapses, institutional barriers, and inadequate practices.

Further, we draw upon the valuable lessons learned from past experiences in the UK, pinpointing early signs, preventative and protective measures crucial for effective identification and prevention. Emphasis is placed on resourcing services, professional training, avoiding premature labelling, building trust through an individualised approach, investing in families and community engagement, and fostering a multi-agency approach to combat child modern slavery.

This research aspires to contribute actionable insights and recommendations to enhance the efficacy of efforts aimed at preventing and identifying early child modern slavery in the UK. By scrutinising the multifaceted dimensions of this issue, we aim to inform policies, practices, and interventions that will collectively work towards creating a safer and more secure environment for the vulnerable children and young adults in our society.

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Important note on terminology

"Defining someone as a victim of trafficking is horrible. That chair in the Home Office where they sit and question you when you are just a child is horrible. The (NRM) process of going through identification is horrible. No one to give you moral support and what does that label (victim) even mean? They asked me if I want an interpreter and I don't even know what they meant."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 6, session 1

In this study, we use **'child modern slavery'** as a term encompassing a set of exploitative practices that can be perpetrated against children and young adults exploited as children. This includes slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking. This captures different kinds of exploitation that children and young adults may be subjected to, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation, forced marriage and organ harvesting.

'Early identification' as used in this study refers to initiatives and efforts to identify CYA who are victims, or at risk of, modern slavery. This goes beyond the formal recognition of CYA as (potential) victims of modern slavery through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and includes initiatives to identify signs and indicators that CYA may be a victim of modern slavery at the earliest possible stage to ensure timely intervention to protect them and to prevent further exploitation.

However, it should be noted that 'early identification' is not widely used in the literature. Records reviewed in this study rather used the term 'identification', without providing the definition or scope of the term. Therefore, this study uses early identification only in cases where the term itself was used in a record reviewed or analysed, or in situations when we are making the distinction between 'early identification' as defined above, and 'identification' as used in the literature.

Prevention is used in this study in a broad sense to capture a range of strategies and actions aimed at preventing the exploitation of CYA before it occurs, as well as prevention of further harm and re-exploitation. This aligns with the literature reviewed in this study where prevention is generally used to refer to both the prevention of harm and the prevention of re-exploitation.

A final note on the use of terminology can be made to highlight that the literature does not seem to make a distinction between identification and prevention. These two terms are generally used interchangeably, and sometimes for the same purposes. This adds further complexity and challenge in the analysis of the literature in terms of 'early identification' of CYA who are victims or at risk of modern slavery and 'prevention' because this distinction is not always made in the literature.

The language of victim (and potential victim) is used in this report in the legal sense, to describe those for whom this legal classification applies. It should be noted that there is some contestation around the use of this term to describe those with lived experience of modern slavery, who may prefer to identify as survivors or people with lived experience. The use of the term victim reflects only the relevant legal classification, and is not intended to replace the use of terms that people may prefer in any given context or case.

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3. Methodology

This section outlines the methods adopted during data collection and analysis. This study combined six primary methods of data collection and analysis: (1) systematic evidence review; (2) analysis of data collected through freedom of information requests from local authorities; (3) local authority policy review; (4) structured key informant interviews; (5) surveys; and (6) survivors participatory workshops.

3.1. Systematic evidence review

A four-stage systematic evidence review was conducted, examining how children and young adults (CYA) are identified as victims, or at risk of, modern slavery in the UK and what works to support early identification, prevent (re)exploitation, and maintain contact.

Stage 1 (data collection) combined database searching with manual searching on Google and NUsearch. At stage 1, we identified a total of 181 records that met the inclusion criteria for further analysis.

At **stage 2 (initial review)**, we reviewed all 181 records to determine which texts should be assessed further. An adapted PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow-chart of study selection was produced, summarising studies retrieved, reviewed, and included. Reviewing abstracts, introductions, conclusions, executive summaries, and overview or brief sections, we selected 95 for further analysis.

At **stage 3** (full review and coding), the full text of records was reviewed to determine whether to include them in the review. At this stage, 10 records were excluded, and an additional 19 records were deprioritised since they were peripherally relevant to the study. Therefore, a total of 66 records met the inclusion criteria. Each record was coded against the literature review coding matrix established *a priori* and qualitatively assessed and summarised through the qualitative review summary template.

Stage 4 (analysis and synthesis) combined quantitative analysis of the coding matrix with qualitative synthesis of summary templates. The findings of the systematic evidence review are analysed in the Systematic Evidence Review Report, published as part of this project.[1]

3.2. Freedom of Information requests to local authorities

The data on child modern slavery in the UK is collected and published by the Home Office (Home Office, 2023). This data provides the number of referrals made by local authorities each year for potential victims. However, the breakdown of the data in terms of gender, nationality, location, exploitation type, county lines classification, reasonable grounds decision, and conclusive grounds decision is not publicly available for each local authority who made a referral. To fill this data gap, we made Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to local authorities who made NRM referrals between 2018 and 2023. Our FOI request template is provided in Annex 1.

3.3. Local authority policy review

In this study, we examined the extent to which child modern slavery and exploitation are addressed across publicly available local authority policy documents. We collected policy documents from 20 different local authorities.[2] The selection of local authorities for the policy review was based on non-probability sampling, utilising subjective criteria. The research team selected these 20 local authorities considering factors such as the ratio of looked after children to unaccompanied children in the population, the incidence of children identified as potential child victims in those areas, and the need to ensure a broad regional representation across all four countries of the United Kingdom.

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[1] Ergul Celiksoy and et al. Prevention and early identification of children and young adults experiencing, or at risk of, modern slavery in the UK: Systematic Evidence Review (Rights Lab and ECPAT UK, February 2024).
[2] These are Buckinghamshire Council; Kent County Council; London Borough of Islington; London Borough of Croydon; Birmingham City Council; Surrey County Council; Shropshire Council; Manchester City Council; Northamptonshire County Council; North Yorkshire County Council; Cardiff Borough Council; Belfast City Council; Glasgow Council; Somerset County Council; Warwickshire County Council; Newcastle City Council; London Borough of Newham; Peterborough City Council; Plymouth City Council; Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

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Policy documents included in the review were collected from local authorities' websites. The documents were in different formats, including policies, guidance, manuals, toolkits, action or strategy plans, multi-agency guidance or protocols, statements, core procedures, and partnership arrangements. These documents concern different policy themes ranging from child protection, identification, and safeguarding to education, disability, missing children, mental health, looked after children, and accommodation.

Across 20 local authorities, we reviewed 179 policy documents. The analysis of 179 documents was undertaken using NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software, with additional quantitative coding conducted in Excel. A detailed analysis of the findings from the policy review is provided in section 7.

3.4. Surveys

An online survey was deployed through Qualtrics and disseminated to relevant stakeholders via email, and through relevant networks and forums. The invitation to participate was directed towards practitioners, service providers, and officials, working on identification and prevention initiatives for children and young adults (CYA) with experience, or at risk, of modern slavery. The survey was disseminated to relevant stakeholders from September 2023 to November 2023. During this period, we received only one survey response. The survey was structured so that results could be integrated with data collected through interviews, providing for a single coherent analysis of both data sources.

3.5. Structured key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with practitioners, service providers, officials, and other stakeholders working on identification and prevention initiatives for CYA with experience, or at risk, of modern slavery. Interview participants were identified by the research team through purposive sampling, on the basis of the relevance of their work to identification and prevention initiatives. Participants were invited to participate via email and were provided detailed information on the project and participation at initial contact.

We conducted a total of 29 interviews through Microsoft Teams. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Representative of qualitative interviewing methods, the researchers followed the structure of the questionnaire provided in Annex 2, while maintaining a level of flexibility tailored to each individual participant's responses. On various occasions, prompts were used for clarification and obtaining relevant information. Each interview was recorded, and a transcript was generated. Participants were provided with the transcripts and invited to make modifications. Once transcripts were finalised, responses were assessed adopting a thematic analysis approach. One interviewee decided to withdraw from the study. The remaining 28 interviews were analysed. One survey response was also included in the interview analysis. The list of interview participants is provided in Annex 3.

3.6. Survivor participatory workshops

The study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the nuanced experiences of child modern slavery survivors in the United Kingdom. A participatory approach was employed to gain the insight of survivors, conducting two workshops with a cohort of seven young people aged 18 to 25 who had previously been subjected to child modern slavery. The participants were mostly of West African nationalities, which will remain undisclosed given the likelihood of providing identifying categories to such a small cohort. The workshops served as a crucial platform for eliciting rich insights directly from young people. Prior to the workshops, ethical considerations were paramount, and informed consent was obtained from each participant orally. The workshops were facilitated in a safe and supportive environment with ECPAT UK, utilising trauma-informed approaches to ensure the emotional well-being of the participants.

Group discussions were employed to capture a comprehensive understanding of young people's views on effective prevention and early identification initiatives. The qualitative data gathered from these workshops were matched thematically to recurring patterns and themes identified in this report through other data gathering means. This methodological approach aims to provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the views of young survivors of child modern slavery in the UK, with the ultimate goal of informing policies and interventions to address this critical issue.

4. Prevalence and dynamics of child modern slavery in the UK

Although the exact scale of child modern slavery has not been rigorously tested, available data shows that the problem is alarmingly prevalent. In 2022, 7,019 people exploited as children were referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the UK's system of identification and support, as potential victims of modern slavery (Home Office, 2023). This represented a 29% increase from 2021 (n=5,456) and a more than 600% increase from 2015 (n=979) (ibid). During the first three quarters of 2023, a total of 5,506 potential victims exploited as children were referred to the NRM (ibid). Despite the increasing number of children in the NRM, evidence shows that both identification and prevention efforts for trafficked children, and those at risk, are failing (Saker, 2022).

NRM statistics reflect the number of children identified as potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, and thus do not reflect the true scale of the phenomenon. Given the hidden nature of modern slavery, reaching an accurate estimation of prevalence is challenging. The Home Office estimated that there were 10,000–13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2013 (Silverman, 2014), which would indicate that for every potential victim referred into the NRM in 2013, there were five victims not referred.[3] The Global Slavery Index estimates that there were 122,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2021 (Walk Free, 2023), almost ten times the number of potential victims referred into the NRM in 2021 (Home Office, 2022). Thus, although there are no reliable estimates of the prevalence of child modern slavery in the UK, NRM statistics are expected to represent only the tip of the iceberg. Further, the demographics and experiences of those formally identified are not necessarily representative of the total population of child modern slavery victims, instead describing only the characteristics of those identified and referred.

Figure 1. Number of people exploited as children (17 or under) referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by referring agency, 2015-2023
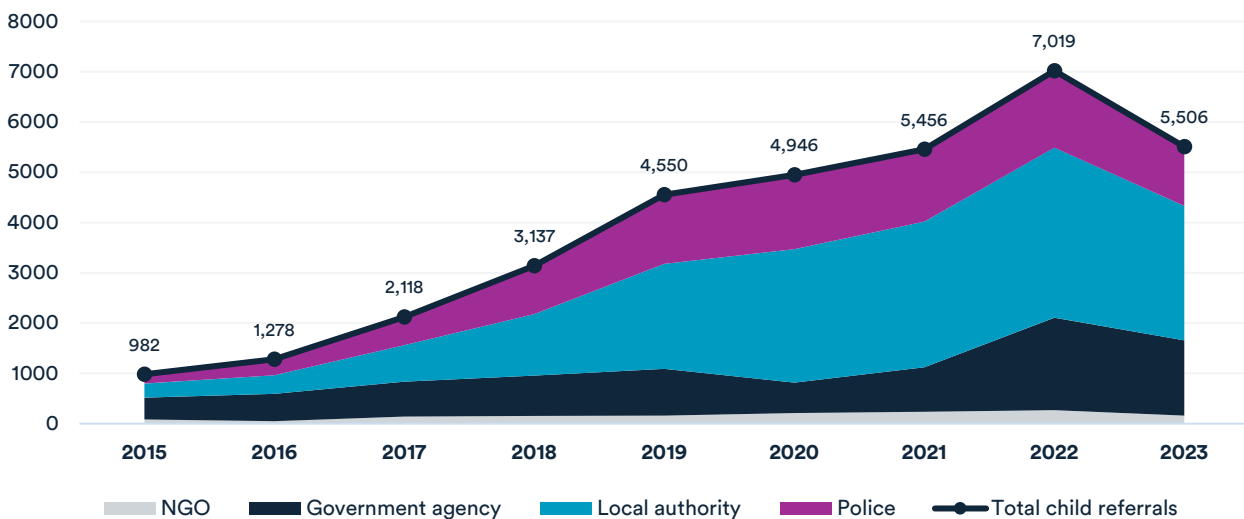
In 2022, 287 different first responder organisations made referrals into the NRM (Home Office, 2023). Local authorities referred the largest share of potential child victims from 2015-2023, representing 47% of all referrals across this period. This highlights the critical role of local authorities as first responders in cases of child modern slavery. They are also part of safeguarding partnerships with other agencies in terms of sharing information, identification, and prevention (Local Government Association, 2022; Local Government Association, 2017). Police and government agencies also refer a large share of potential child victims, representing 26% and 24% of cases respectively. NGOs refer only a small proportion of potential child victims, representing 4% of total child referrals. The NGOs that refer those exploited as children at the highest rates are the Salvation Army (1.7% of child referrals) and Barnardo's (1.4% of child referrals).

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[3] In 2013 the UK NRM received 1,746 referrals of potential victims of trafficking (National Crime Agency, 2014)

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The characteristics of those identified as potential victims of modern slavery exploited as children have radically changed since the adoption of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, particularly as a result of the recognition of child criminal exploitation for drug supply and distribution as a form of modern slavery (Maxwell, Wallace, Cummings, Bayfield, & Morgan, 2019). This poses further challenges to effective prevention and identification, that have not yet been adequately addressed. In Quarter 4 (Q4) of 2019, NRM statistics began disaggregating criminal exploitation from labour exploitation and reporting statistics as a distinct exploitation type (see Figure 2). This immediately represented the largest share of child referrals into the NRM. In Q4 of 2019, criminal exploitation was recorded as a form of exploitation experienced by 56% of child potential victims. This increased to 65% in 2020, then decreased again to 61% in 2021 and 53% in 2022.

Figure 2. Number of people exploited as children (17 or under) referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by exploitation type, 2015-2022[4]
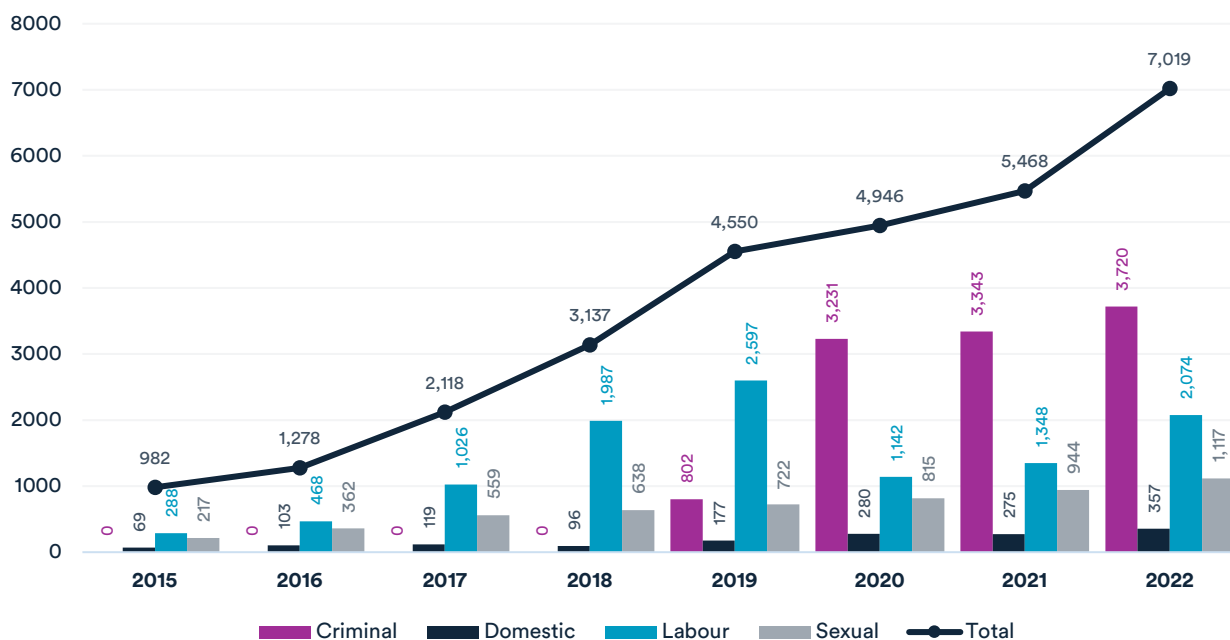

A significant proportion of criminal exploitation cases involving children are categorised as 'county lines' cases. 'County lines' is defined by the National Crime Agency as:

> ...a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Prior to October 2019, county lines cases were recorded as a subset of labour exploitation cases. Since January 2020, a 'flag' within the NRM digital casework system identifies county lines referrals (Home Office, 2023). In 2022, 1,875 children were referred to the NRM as 'county lines' cases, representing an almost 20% increase from 2020 and 43% increase from 2019. County lines referrals are disproportionately male (see Figure 3). From Q4 2019 to 2022, 9,843 males potentially exploited as children were referred into the NRM with criminal exploitation recorded in their cases. This compared to only 1,230 female child potential victims referred in the same period who had experienced criminal exploitation. Given the dominance of criminal exploitation in child referrals during this period, this results in the NRM dealing with a substantially higher number of male children than female children overall. From Q4 2019-2022, 79% of all child referrals into the NRM were male.

[4] Recording of exploitation type in NRM statistics was changed for Q4 of 2019. Prior to this, referrals were only recorded against one exploitation type (domestic, sexual, or labour). After this date, criminal exploitation was included in the NRM statistics, and cases involving multiple different forms of exploitation were also recorded as such. For the purposes of this chart, exploitation type from 2019 onwards represents the number of children recorded against each of the four categories. Where a case included more than one exploitation type, this would be visualised in each of the relevant columns for that year.

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Figure 3. Number of people (17 or under) referred to the NRM as 'county lines' cases by gender, 2015-2022
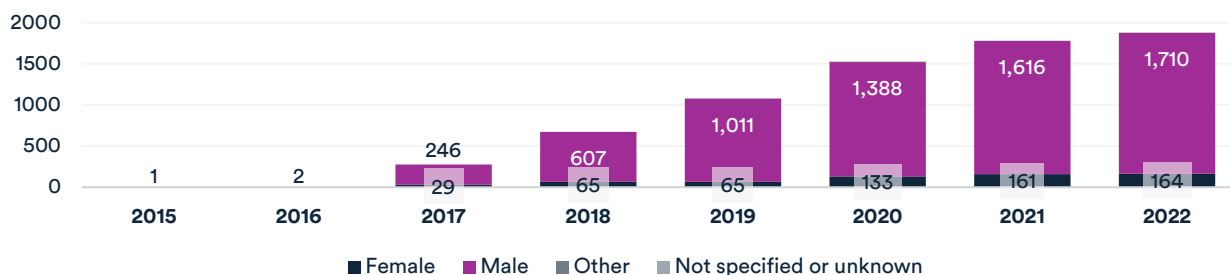
The Department for Education (DfE) produces annual statistics for children in need, a legally defined group of children (under the Children Act 1989), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health in England. These figures cover the financial year, with the latest report for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Factors identified at the end of assessment are additional factors that social workers record as being relevant in a case, with one episode of need potentially having more than one factor recorded. The instances of trafficking recorded as a factor by local authorities is the low figure of 2,710 (Department for Education, 2023). Yet a factor of child sexual exploitation was recorded 15,020 times, child criminal exploitation (included as a category for the first time in 2022) 14,420 times, and the category gangs was a factor identified for 11,110 assessments. This data cannot be interrogated in detail given no disaggregation is provided (ibid). It also encompasses England only and the figures are not comparative to national modern slavery data sets. However, they highlight significant discrepancies between those officially identified as potential victims and children with modern slavery related factors in their child in need assessment.

Published DfE and NRM data do not provide a breakdown of local authority referrals in terms of gender, nationality, location, exploitation type, county lines classification, reasonable grounds decision, and conclusive grounds decision. To fill this data gap, FOI requests were submitted to 197 local authorities who made at least one referral to the NRM between 2018 and 2023, across England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Information was requested on child referrals into the NRM by the specific authority between 2018 and 2023, disaggregated by:

- Gender
- Nationality
- Location of exploitation
- Exploitation type
- County lines
- Reasonable grounds decision
- Conclusive grounds decision

A reminder was sent to each local authority who failed to provide a response within 20 working days. Despite sending reminders, 33 authorities (17%) failed to provide a response as of 25 November 2023. Just over a quarter of authorities (27%) provided information in response to the request (see Figure 5). The majority refused the request on the basis of data not being held (61 authorities, 31%), the request exceeding the cost limit (38 authorities, 19%), or the sensitivity of the information (12 authorities, 6%).

Figure 4. Breakdown of responses to FOI requests
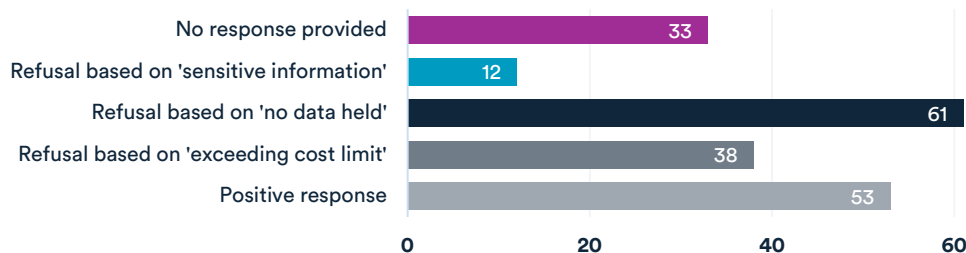
This demonstrates widespread shortcomings in the storage and transparency of data on child modern slavery within local authorities and may further reflect limitations in data collection. Local authorities bear responsibility both for identification and referral and for supporting child victims of modern slavery within their areas. Yet, half of all authorities that referred children into the NRM from 2018-2023 could not provide basic information on the children that they had referred—whether because they did not hold the data, or because the data was not available in an easily accessible format.

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At a minimum, this reduces the evidence available to these authorities in understanding child modern slavery trends in their own areas, lacking information of significant importance in shaping responses and prevention programmes. This is true both where the authority does not hold the data and where the data is not in an accessible format, as in the latter case data has not been processed or stored in a manner allowing for aggregate analysis.

Figure 5. Number of local authorities reporting data in response to the FOI requests by year

Year	Data reported	No data reported
2023	50	3
2022	43	10
2021	40	13
2020	27	26
2019	23	30
2018	18	35

■ Data reported ■ No data reported
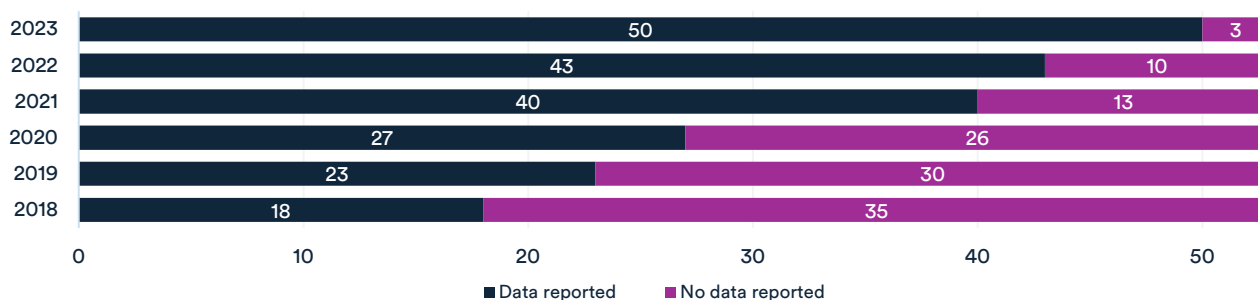
For those authorities that did respond with information, the number of child referrals for whom information was provided varied from only one case to 150 cases.[5] Eighteen authorities provided information for each of the six years included in the request. Local authorities were more likely to report data on more recent years. Data was most often provided for the partial year 2023 (with 50 authorities reporting), followed by 2022 and 2021 (with 43 and 40 authorities reporting respectively) (see Figure 5).

The gender breakdown of child modern slavery referrals by responding local authorities is indicative of broader NRM trends, with higher representation of male child victims than female.[6] In six of the local authorities that responded, only referrals of males were recorded and no female potential victims had been identified and referred (see Figure 6). A total of 37 authorities referred more than 50% males, two authorities referred 50% male and 50% female potential child victims, and five referred a majority of female victims.[7] Notably, Bristol City Council reported 92.3% of referrals from 2018-2023 to be female.

Exploitation type data was reported by 43 of the 53 responding authorities, presenting information on 1,528 total cases from 2018-2023. The total number of cases for which this data was provided by any single authority ranged from one to 117.

Figure 6. Gender of potential child victims referred by responding local authorities
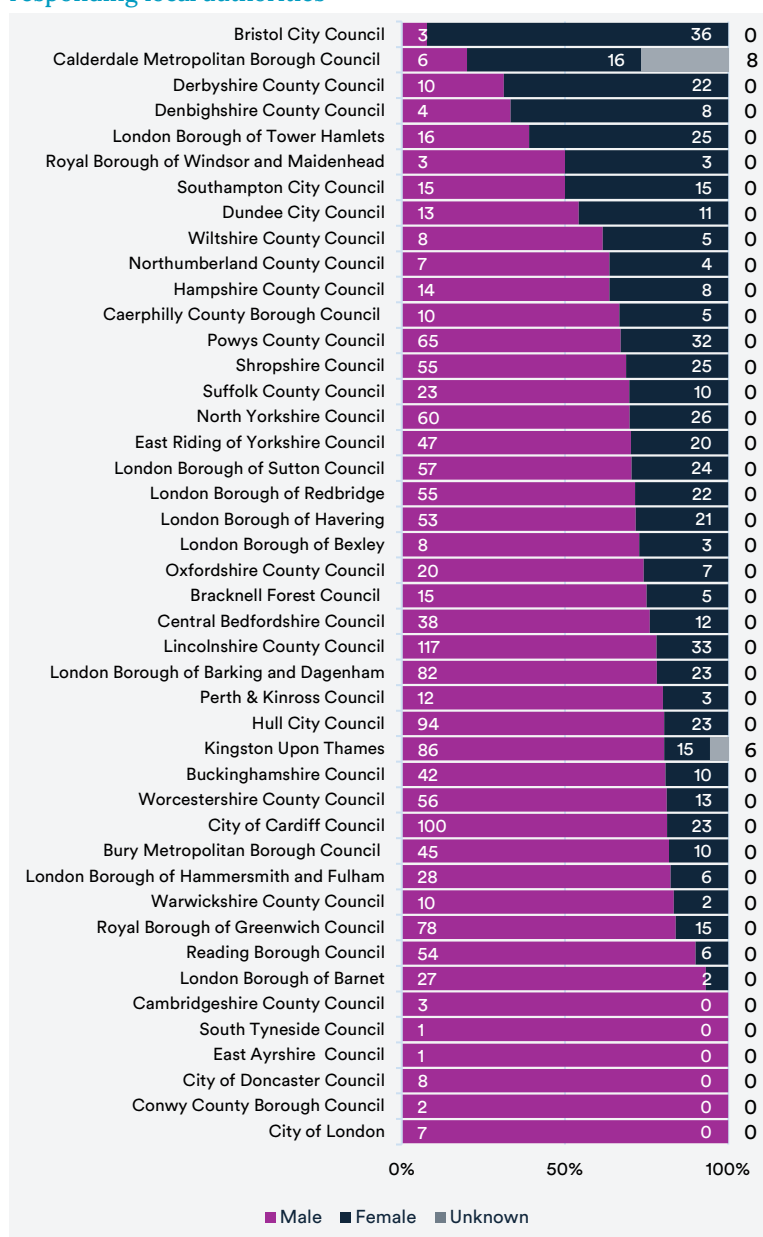
Local Authority	Male	Female	Unknown
Bristol City Council	3	36	0
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	6	16	8
Derbyshire County Council	10	22	0
Denbighshire County Council	4	8	0
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	16	25	0
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	3	3	0
Southampton City Council	15	15	0
Dundee City Council	13	11	0
Wiltshire County Council	8	5	0
Northumberland County Council	7	4	0
Hampshire County Council	14	8	0
Caerphilly County Borough Council	10	5	0
Powys County Council	65	32	0
Shropshire Council	55	25	0
Suffolk County Council	23	10	0
North Yorkshire Council	60	26	0
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	47	20	0
London Borough of Sutton Council	57	24	0
London Borough of Redbridge	55	22	0
London Borough of Havering	53	21	0
London Borough of Bexley	8	3	0
Oxfordshire County Council	20	7	0
Bracknell Forest Council	15	5	0
Central Bedfordshire Council	38	12	0
Lincolnshire County Council	117	33	0
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	82	23	0
Perth & Kinross Council	12	3	0
Hull City Council	94	23	0
Kingston Upon Thames	86	15	6
Buckinghamshire Council	42	10	0
Worcestershire County Council	56	13	0
City of Cardiff Council	100	23	0
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	45	10	0
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	28	6	0
Warwickshire County Council	10	2	0
Royal Borough of Greenwich Council	78	15	0
Reading Borough Council	54	6	0
London Borough of Barnet	27	2	0
Cambridgeshire County Council	3	0	0
South Tyneside Council	1	0	0
East Ayrshire Council	1	0	0
City of Doncaster Council	8	0	0
Conwy County Borough Council	2	0	0
City of London	7	0	0

■ Male ■ Female ■ Unknown

In line with general NRM trends (see Figure 2), criminal exploitation was the most highly reported exploitation type captured by responding authorities (see Figure 7). This was identified in 67% of the cases for which exploitation type data was provided by local authorities. The local authorities reporting the highest total number of criminal exploitation cases in FOI responses were London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (89 cases from 2021-2023), Hull City Council (86 cases from 2021-2023), and Powys County Council (79 cases from 2020-2023). This data suggests that local authorities are playing an active role in identifying cases of potential criminal exploitation of children. This is consistent with NRM data, which shows that 65% of all potential child modern slavery cases reported by local authorities in 2022 included criminal exploitation.

Figure 7. Number of cases recorded including each exploitation type
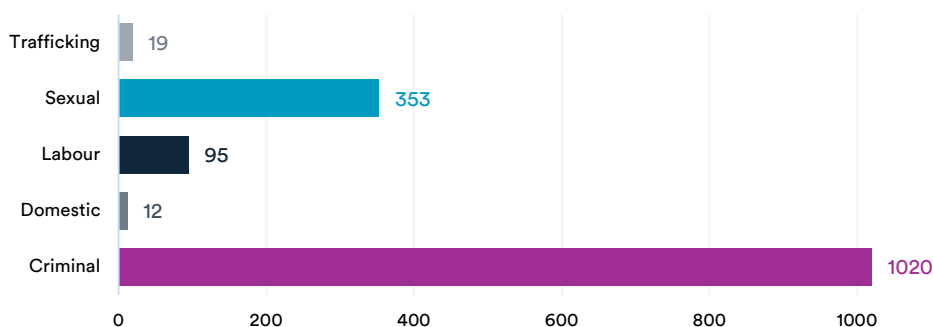
Only 19 authorities provided information on 'county lines' referrals, reporting between one and 34 county lines related referrals in the period from 2018-2023. Of these, Shropshire Council reported county lines information for the most years (2019-2023) with the highest total number of cases (34). The highest number of county lines cases reported in any given year was reported by London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, which identified 24 potential county lines cases in 2023.

Sexual exploitation was identified in 23% of referrals by responding local authorities, aligning broadly with NRM statistics, which showed that 18% of potential victims referred as children in 2022 had experienced sexual exploitation. Of the 43 authorities that reported exploitation type data, 31 recorded at least one referral that included sexual exploitation. Of these, the majority (55%) provided information on less than ten cases including sexual exploitation, nine provided information on between ten and twenty cases including sexual exploitation, and five provided information on more than twenty cases. The highest number of cases involving sexual exploitation was reported by Powys County Council, which identified 44 referrals that included sexual exploitation from 2020-2023.

Local authority referrals (adults and children) have historically had a higher rate of positive conclusive grounds decisions than referrals by any other first responder type (Lumley-Sapanski, Rodriguez Huerta, Young, Nicholson, & Schwarz, forthcoming).[8] Lumley-Sapanski et al explain that this is correlated with both nationality and exploitation type patterns in local authority referrals. In response to the FOI requests submitted, 44 local authorities provided information on conclusive grounds decisions for referrals they had made into the NRM. The number of cases for which authorities reported decision data ranged from one to 104, and a total of 965 cases were represented in responses. Only 30% of local authorities reported on the decisions in more than twenty cases. The data also highlights several local authority areas where positive decision rates in years reported from 2018-2023 for children fall below the overall rate of 90%. For instance, Royal Borough of Greenwich Council reported decisions on 53 cases, with 40% negative conclusive grounds decisions. While the data on decisions is not sufficiently comprehensive to draw firm conclusions on differential results and patterns between different local authorities, it does point to some areas where positivity rates are substantially lower than the average, which warrant further interrogation.

The FOI data secured from 197 requests was partial and incomplete. While some local authorities demonstrated a strong grasp on their referral data in their responses, others reported extremely limited information. Many more reported that they were not able to provide the information, signalling a clear need for more consistent local authority practice with regard to tracking child modern slavery data.

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[8] Overall positive conclusive grounds decision rate for local authority referrals was 90% from 2014-2020, while referrals by police demonstrated a positive decision rate of 87%, NGO and third sector referrals 77%, and government agency referrals 68%.

5. Risk factors of modern slavery of CYA

This section discusses key risk factors for CYA who are at risk of modern slavery in the UK, presenting findings from interviews and secondary sources. However, it is important to recognise that modern slavery is not limited to the discussed vulnerability factors, and as a result any child, and any adult, may be at risk of modern slavery.

5.1. The vulnerability of childhood

"At the end of the day excitement for a (child's) better future will always be abused."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 1, session 1

A key risk factor of modern slavery of CYA is the vulnerability of childhood, as many CYA are targeted simply by virtue of their age, experience, knowledge, and maturity level. Vulnerability has been discussed in relation to common childhood challenges such as bullying, seeking a sense of belonging, isolation and loneliness, bereavement, and parent separation (Interview #10, #12, #16, #19). The vulnerability of childhood is also increased as a result of factors such as mental health and the use of social media (Interview #11, #14, #17, #25; Cousins, 2018; Weston & Mythen, 2022; Hurley & Boulton, 2021; Dando, 2022; Commission on Young Lives, 2022; Robinson et al., 2022; Edwards, 2023).

"Modern slavery can affect anyone. And of course, there are stereotypes, and you can make generalisations, but I think it's really, really, important to note that anybody can be affected by it."

– Interview #5

"Any child from any community and any background is at risk of being exploited. Fundamentally, we can talk about communities that are more at risk of being exploited. But I think it's erroneous to suggest that there is only certain types of young people or certain situations. Fundamentally, child exploitation and human trafficking and modern slavery are often about sophisticated perpetrators, utilising techniques to coerce and manipulating control. If we consider children, they can do that in any way, shape or form, and they can do it with a middle-class kid or a rich child at a boarding school, just as much in principle as they could with a child facing extreme social deprivation and with other factors at play"

– Interview #3

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5.2. Lack of protective family, neglect and abuse

"Trafficking is sometimes from within the family and from people you love and know and it's hard to stop it there. Young people must be able to trust their relatives and people they love. That's where the prevention work should be done. But yes, I agree they should tackle it from the root country."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 4, session 1

A prevalent risk factor identified in this study is the heightened vulnerability of CYA created by the absence of protective family and guardians surrounding them, and/or by being subject to neglect and abuse including from their own families (Edwards, 2023; Dando et al., 2022; Commission on Young Lives, 2022; Hurley & Boulton, 2021; Hallett, 2016). This may involve parents who are not actively involved with their CYA, parents and family members who are involved in criminality or poor decision making, and CYA who have experienced some form of adverse childhood experiences, such as domestic violence, abuse, neglect, parental mental health issues, or parental substance misuse (Interview #8, #11, #12, #15, #17 #19, #22, #24, #29).

"One of the big issues for young people currently is family background. Whether they feel that they are part of a loving, supportive family, or whether there is anything missing in that family dynamic. I'm not talking about financially but, you know, we have seen some instances of children whereby the parents are very rich and have really good jobs, but because the children feel neglected in some way, they seek out attention and love from other people and, unfortunately, those people can be criminal gangs"

– Interview #8

5.3. Socio-economic background and the cost-of-living crisis

"Poverty will always increase risk (of exploitation)"

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 3, session 2

Socio-economic background is underlined as having a significant impact on the vulnerability of CYA (Edwards, 2023; Commission on Young Lives, 2022; Brewster et al., 2020; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner & ECPAT UK, 2021). For families from a poor socio-economic background or experiencing poverty, parents may be absent due to working multiple jobs, families may not have secure accommodation or secure access to food, and CYA may not maintain education due to an expectation to work to help provide for the family (Interview #10, #11, #12, #16, #24, #25 #29). These circumstances have also been exacerbated by additional pressure placed on families through the cost-of-living crisis (Edwards, 2023). As a result, CYA are more vulnerable to criminal or sexual exploitation due to financial need and pressure to provide (Interview #10, #18, #19 #28, #29).

Despite the risk associated with financial resources and means, it is also highlighted that child modern slavery is not unique to CYA who are from a poor socio-economic background. As noted above, modern slavery may affect anyone, including children from high income families. For example, one interviewee pointed out 'middle-class exploitation' where both parents are employed and are out of the house for a long period of time, leaving their children alone and vulnerable to exploitation (Interview #2).

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This is also highlighted by another interviewee who described this as 'affluent neglect', referring to situations where parents provide CYA with what they need materially, but not emotionally (Interview #10).

"You might assume that it would be people from disadvantaged backgrounds that are more vulnerable to exploitation, but we've started to see a bit of a growth in, sort of, what you'd perhaps class as middle-class exploitation. So, when you've got children whose parents are both employed, have often got good jobs, but because they've got good jobs with responsibility, they're often out the house for long periods of time, meaning that after school, kids aren't expecting parents home for several hours, so they hang around on the streets and get involved in stuff and drawn into things that leads to them being potentially exploited. And that we're often seeing that in terms of criminal exploitation" –

– Interview #2

5.4. Immigration status and unaccompanied children

"Going to the police means they will deport you, they only care here (UK) about the passport you have, only care about immigration."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 3, session 2

A key risk factor raised across the literature is the impact of unstable immigration status on increasing vulnerability to exploitation, with a significant increase in vulnerability for unaccompanied children seeking asylum (Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner & The University of Nottingham Right's Lab, 2021; Setter, 2019; Beddoe, 2021; Harvey et al., 2015; UNHCR & British Red Cross, 2022). Of course, immigration status is identified as a risk factor for non-UK nationals. This was echoed within interviews, with concerns highlighting differential treatment of missing episodes and exploitation dependant on race; suggesting that missing episodes and exploitation of CYA from a white British background are responded to with more urgency (interview #24). In addition, interviews highlighted the placement of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in unsafe and inappropriate accommodation, the instability of immigration status, the lack of protective guardians, and the isolation experienced by unaccompanied CYA (Interview #4, #10, #11, #14, #15, #17,#20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #29).

"Some of the people that come here either whether they come over on boats or whether they come over in the back of lorries or though they are complicit in coming over. So, they are vulnerable by the fact that they are in a foreign country, potentially without employment organised before they come here, without means, without a place to live, without contacts and unable to speak the language. So for me that massively increases the pool of vulnerability that we have in the UK"

– Interview #10

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5.5. Looked after children

Looked after children are well recognised as at risk of modern slavery and exploitation due to the added vulnerability of their past experiences of family breakdown or abuse, a perceived lack of safety and security, and the use of inappropriate accommodation (The Centre for Social Justice, 2021; Hallett, 2016; Edwards, 2023; Radcliffe et al., 2020; Shaw & Greenhow, 2020). This was supported across interviews, highlighting the shortage of appropriate placements, the established networks of CYA currently and previously in care, the frequency of missing episodes, and the lack of protection and suitable safeguarding for CYA in care (Interview #4, #6, #8, #12, #19, #21, #22).

Missing from care and accommodation is also highlighted as a significant risk factor for CYA. Interview participants underlined that missing from care and accommodation is a common phenomenon (Interview #8). When missing, children are usually targeted by exploiters and criminal gangs, preventing them from returning to care (ibid). This is further exacerbated by the fact that care accommodations are also known by traffickers (Interview #4). One interviewee particularly highlighted that the news media should act diligently not to report where children are kept, to prevent traffickers targeting these children (Interview #6).

"Where you are accommodated is obviously a significant issue, as a young person. If you are accommodated in a hotel, for example, you are at much higher risk of being subject to trafficking and exploitation. The serious organised crime groups, the trafficking rings, know where the hotels are, and we know that they hang around outside recruiting the young people. In terms of the safety of your accommodation, that's very common. The level of protection you get after you escape from exploitative situation is obviously a big factor in terms of re-trafficking. I think the quality of your care that you receive from the local authority, for example if you are in care, is a significant issue. Local authorities are stretched beyond huge caseloads, unable to provide sort of attention that they need"

– (Interview #4).

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5.6. Special educational needs and disabilities

It is thought that CYA with special educational needs and disability are also more vulnerable to modern slavery and exploitation (Franklin & Smeaton, 2017; Franklin & Smeaton, 2018; Edwards, 2023; Robinson et al., 2022; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2022; Brewster et al., 2021). For CYA with special educational needs or disabilities, there are concerns about the understanding of risk and boundaries and the increased isolation and loneliness that CYA may experience (Interview #10, #12, #16, #17, #19, #22, #19).

"We see it quite often with children that are in a neurodiverse space, so quite a lot of the children that come into our radar, particularly around county lines, there might be traits of autism or ADHD, those kind of things, you know. So again, children who feel like they don't necessarily fit somewhere in the normal course of things, that then leaves them vulnerable to approach"

– Interview #10

5.7. Education, exclusion and drop out

 "Someone giving you money and seeing opportunity, the hard part is that it is our own people family or friends. Having the opportunity to go to school free would be helpful."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 5, session 2

Lack of education, school exclusion and drop out have been widely discussed as risk factors for CYA becoming vulnerable to exploitation (Interview #3, #6, #17, #18, #25, #26, #29; Robinson et al., 2022; National Youth Agency, 2021; Hurley & Boulton, 2021; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022; Maxwell, 2023). The relationship between education and exploitation has been described as a chicken and egg paradox; as many school exclusions are the result of poor attendance and behavioural challenges, which can lead to CYA facing increased risk of exploitation. However, as poor attendance and behavioural challenges are also early indicators of exploitation, the CYA excluded are placed at greater risk (Interview #17, #29).

"School attendance is a really key indicator. There's a real link between children who aren't in education and who are experiencing exploitation. And also, there's a chicken and egg situation there in terms of children experiencing exploitation. Children that are struggling in mainstream school setting and end up at home are hugely vulnerable in terms of being targeted for exploitation, because they don't have that routine. Also they're not having any of those kind of soft outcomes in terms of a sense of belonging, a sense of achievement, a sense of being part of something which kind of really motivates us. So, there's a huge vulnerability around children out of education"

– Interview #17

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Currently, parents and guardians of children cannot claim legal aid for independent review panel (IRP) hearings, which consider the school's governing board decision not to reinstate an excluded pupil, even where a discriminatory school exclusion is alleged. Legal aid was previously available for advice and assistance but not representation in school exclusion cases before changes were brough in 2012. Parents and guardians can still request a special educational needs and disability (SEND) expert to provide independent advice to the panel. However, this is a complex process that many children and families will struggle to engage in effectively. Given the prevalence of risk factors associated with lack of education (and in particular school exclusion), this is a minimal safeguard to ensure vulnerable children and their families have access to legal advice to reduce vulnerability.

5.8. Transition into adulthood

The transition into adulthood has been widely discussed in literature and was echoed within interviews as a period of increased risk (Kohli et al., 2019; Beddoe, 2021; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022; Edwards, 2023). As CYA move into adulthood, there is significantly less support for formerly looked after children, greater independence, and protective parents or carers will have less influence and authority over decision making. For many CYA, at the age of 18 they will experience the sudden end of support, which has been described as a 'cliff edge', as they may not meet the threshold for adult services. The role modelling, safeguarding, and support that CYA have experienced until this point are no longer present, making them more vulnerable (Interview #3, #5, #10).

"There is a lot of risk that that occurs when children are transitioning to adulthood. There is risk around the kind of situations they are experiencing, their own kind of changes into independence. They are losing services or dropping off. There's a cliff edge drop off of support services that may have already been in place. And there is, like for children in care, huge differences in terms of the support they receive from adult services. My experience is that adult services have a much poorer understanding in that transition of exploitation. For children who are looked after, you might have had lots of intervention happening at one point and then it all drops away. And this is a big issue"

– Interview #3

6. Do CYA recognise their own exploitation?

"One thing that would have helped is understanding the law, no one told me they shouldn't have done this to me or explained my basic human rights."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 6, session 2

"What helps is also for young people to know more about their rights, it takes a lot of courage to go out and escape. Like when I walked into a centre and if I hadn't, I would not be here. But what is strange now is that if a young person knows the law, the government uses your knowledge against you, they want a specific kind of victim."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 3, session 1

This section explores how CYA recognise their own experience of exploitation, and whether they understand it as modern slavery, also linking to the challenges associated with early identification. This is a complex and multifaceted issue, as revealed by various perspectives gathered from interviews with professionals working in the field. The understanding of exploitation varies among CYA. While some children are aware of their exploitation, others may not recognise what is happening to them and may not accept that it is happening when they are told.

CYA's recognition of their own exploitation is influenced by factors such as age, cultural background, and vulnerabilities, as well as the type of exploitation they are subjected to. One recurring theme is that younger children may have a limited understanding of exploitation. Generally, the younger the child, the more their understanding of exploitation is limited (Interview #15).

"I think it depends what normalised behaviour is for them, and I think it depends on their age. The younger a child is, the less they will understand it and if that behaviour has been normalised throughout their childhood, then they will simply not understand it as exploitation. Older children who've had a more normal childhood will understand it better"

– Interview #15

In some cases, certain behaviours may have been normalised throughout childhood, for instance, due to poverty or low living standards. This adds further complexity to their recognition of exploitation. Some children might have been working to support their families from a very young age, and only see the exploitative situation as a way to earn a living and fulfil their responsibility toward their family (Interview #6, #24, #25).

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Cultural differences alongside systemic and global inequality also influence how children perceive exploitation. Exploitation might have been normalised due to cultural practices and norms (Interview #29). For instance, in some Southeast Asian cultures, there may be a perceived trade-off in exploitation and modern slavery (Interview #18). Exploitation in the host country may be viewed as a means to a better life in the long run, compared to their situation in their origin country (Interview #4, #15, #23). Economic improvements complicate the recognition of exploitation, as victims may not be willing to acknowledge their traffickers as such due to the perceived benefits.

> "Especially with Vietnamese population, I would say, a lot of those young people are recruited in Vietnam from areas that are experiencing pretty poor living standards. The reality is that their lives are better in the UK than they were in Vietnam. So, they are not actually really willing to give up their traffickers. They don't really recognise what is happening to them as exploitation and as a result they either don't know that it is happening, or they don't accept that it is happening when they are told"
>
> **– Interview #4**

Recognising exploitation also becomes more challenging when the victims have additional needs. Indeed, CYA with additional needs may find it even more difficult to understand the control and coercion involved in exploitation (Interview #19). This vulnerability is exploited by perpetrators, further complicating young people's ability to identify their own victimisation.

The interviews shed light on the difficulties in recognising certain forms of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, given the emotional intricacies involved. A lot of sexual exploitation of CYA revolves around the 'boyfriend modus operandi', where perpetrators simulate affection to manipulate victims into engaging in acts they otherwise would not perform. This emotional manipulation and grooming process, coupled with other vulnerabilities, makes it harder for some victims (particularly young girls) to recognise the exploitative nature of the situation (Interview #2, #19). They firmly believe that they are part of a genuine relationship based on manipulative behaviour such as the provision of gifts or other behaviours associated with a typical relationship, even in the face of tangible signs of exploitation (Interview #8, #27).

Overall, the majority of interviewees pointed out that self-identification as victims is not common among CYA. Children who have exploitative experiences often struggle to comprehend terms like 'trafficking' or 'exploitation'. They generally see their exploiters as helpers or kind individuals, and do not recognise that it is a form of modern slavery.

> "They don't have an idea of these words. These are the buzz words that are in professional circles. If you talk to a Vietnamese young person who has been trafficked, they don't see that that has trafficked. They see that as somebody trying to help them. And if you talk to an Albanian girl who has been brought here to be exploited, they see that as somebody was kind and helping and then they ended up unfortunately in that situation, but they will be moving out of it. So, they don't see, they don't understand the trafficking. Only when you talk to them, when you explain, yes, it may make sense to them, but it's not something that many people have good understanding of it"
>
> **– Interview #7**

There is a recurring pattern where many CYA do not recognise they are being exploited, particularly in the early stages of exploitation. In most cases, they think they are making their own decisions (Interview #10). The normalisation of certain behaviours, the emotional manipulation, and the complex dynamics of exploitation contribute to this lack of awareness.

In certain cases, despite initially perceiving their involvement as a conscious and deliberate choice, they realise the exploitation when they try to leave that situation and understand that is simply not an option (Interview #12). Sometimes, when they progress further down the grooming line, their perception might change, and they might realise they have been lied to (Interview #16). In other cases, clarity may emerge only when they receive support and engage with a professional who assists them in explaining those concepts (Interview #19, #22). However, this is not always the case.

7. Existing interventions and initiatives on identification and prevention of modern slavery of CYA

In this study, we reviewed and identified existing interventions and initiatives relevant to early identification and prevention of child modern slavery in the UK. As part of this project, we conducted a systematic evidence review to provide an overall tracking of relevant academic and non-academic evidence in the literature, including categorical coding and brief evaluations of source methods, content, and findings. Findings of the systematic evidence review are published as a standalone report (Celiksoy et al. 2023). From the systematic evidence review, we identified references to 47 UK based interventions and initiatives on early identification and prevention. We conducted further research on each of these interventions and initiatives to identify their aims and scope. Each was coded against a coding matrix established *a priori* and qualitatively assessed and summarised through the qualitative review summary template. Of these 47 references, 24 discussed needed interventions, such as improved training or secondary prevention programmes, and 23 discussed existing interventions and initiatives directly relating to the early identification and prevention of child modern slavery in the UK. A table of these 23 existing interventions and initiatives can be found in Annex 4. This section discusses key themes emerging across the 23 existing interventions and initiatives.

7.1. Intervention location

Of the 23 existing interventions identified, only 26% were available across the whole of the UK. 52% were available in specific areas of England, 9% of interventions were fully or partially online, 4% of interventions covered both England and Wales, and 4% of interventions were individually based in Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland.

7.2. Intervention funding

Across the 23 interventions identified, 48% were funded through central government funding and 22% were funded by local authorities. Additionally, 22% of interventions were funded directly by charities and not-for-profit organisations and 9% were funded by the police.

7.3. Intervention focus

Six key areas of focus emerged across the 23 interventions: intervention (direct support); safeguarding; education; identification; prevention; and policing. While interventions could be broadly categorised, most interventions placed the focus on a combination of areas.

Intervention (direct support)

65% of the interventions placed a heavy focus on intervention and direct support. For instance, the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence in Coventry and Wolverhampton is designed to engage with children and young people to ensure an exit pathway from criminal exploitation (West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, 2022). Of the 65% of interventions providing direct support, 33% provided family-wide support in the recognition of the importance of supporting families to overcome challenges and thrive for reducing vulnerability to exploitation.

Safeguarding

57% of interventions focused on the safeguarding of children and young people. One example of an intervention with a focus on safeguarding is the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG) service, facilitated by Barnardo's, which is available across three quarters of local authorities in England. Whilst providing ICTGs Direct Workers to support children and young people who have been victim to child modern slavery who lack a figure of parental responsibility for them in the UK, the ICTG's Regional Practice Coordinators also work with professionals around the child who have parental responsibility to ensure that the child is

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appropriately safeguarded and advocate for the best interest of the child in local authority decision making (Kohli, et al., 2019).

Education

48% of the interventions placed a focus on education, and the need to raise awareness of child exploitation and modern slavery. Many of these interventions involved educational programmes for children and young people which aim to teach new skills whilst developing confidence, building resilience, and raising aspirations for the future; such as the Keeping Our Girls Safe Programmes which are available in Oldham and Greater Manchester (Unwin & Jones, 2021). Several interventions, such as Stop it Now! Wales, provide educational programmes for adults that ensure parents and carers have greater awareness of the signs of exploitation and confidently know how to access support (Hudson K. , 2018).

Identification

43% of interventions focused on the identification of children and young people vulnerable to, and victims of, exploitation and modern slavery. One intervention that recognises the importance of early identification is The Children's Society Prevention Programme, located across England and Wales. This programme works to improve the identification of child exploitation and develop the responses children receive on identification by changing the narrative of victimhood and

recognising the complexity of the experiences of abuse (Nelson, 2021).

Prevention

39% of interventions addressed the prevention of child exploitation. One intervention with this focus is the Engage Team in Blackburn with Darwen, who work to identify children and young people who may be vulnerable to child exploitation and modern slavery, with the aim to provide support that will prevent abuse from ever taking place (Weston & Mythen, 2022). Another intervention working towards prevention is Stop it Now! who run a national deterrence campaign that aims to prevent people viewing or sharing sexual images of children online (Stop It Now!, n.d.).

Policing

30% of interventions placed a focus on policing and the criminal justice system. One example of interventions focusing on the response from police is YourPolice.UK, an online Instagram account created to engage with children and young people by publishing relatable and reliable information while also allowing young people to report crimes (National Youth Agency, 2021). Interventions focusing on the criminal justice system included Oasis Restore in Medway, which has provided the replacement of a youth prison service with a newly developed secure education facility that acknowledges the role of trauma and exploitation on engagement with criminal behaviour (Commission on Young Lives, 2022).

7.4. Intervention limitations

Although the reviewed records provided examples of effective and engaging interventions, there continues to be challenges limiting the remit of interventions for early identification and prevention of child modern slavery. A key challenge in this area is the continued postcode lottery of interventions. With only 26% of interventions spanning the entire UK, the accessibility of support is dependent upon where CYAs live. One example is the incomplete roll out of the ICTG service. Despite the commitment in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the service has still not reached national roll out (Selby et al., 2022). Progress has been made in the service roll out, as two thirds of the UK is now covered by the ICTG service, however this needs to continue to ensure that children and young people are not prevented from accessing this essential form of support (Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner., & ECPAT UK, 2021; Selby at al., 2022).

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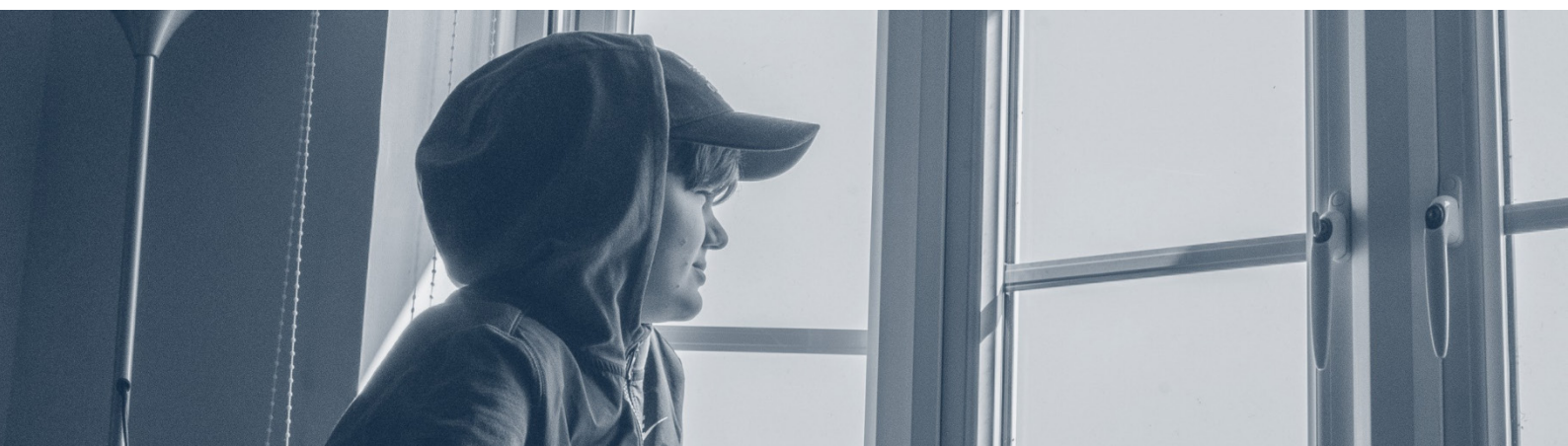
8. Local authority policies on identification and prevention

In the absence of a national strategy on child exploitation (The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2018), we reviewed more than 179 policy documents from 20 different local authorities to explore the extent to which child modern slavery and exploitation are addressed across different local authority areas. We collected, collated, reviewed, and analysed documents available on local authorities' official websites. These documents included: policy documents; guidance; manuals; toolkits; action plans or strategies; multi-agency guidance or protocols; statements; core procedures; partnership arrangements; transformation plans; and declarations of intent. The documents covered a wide range of issues, including: child protection; identification; safeguarding; education; special educational needs and disability; modern slavery and human trafficking; child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; missing children; mental health; looked after children; accommodation; unaccompanied asylum seeking children; domestic abuse; online safety; forced marriage; neglect; physical abuse; harmful sexual behaviours; early help; transition into adulthood; child wellbeing; child care services; and emotional abuse. This section presents analysis of 20 local authorities' policy reviewed in this study.

Figure 8. References to modern slavery and related practices across published local authority policy documents, 2015–2023
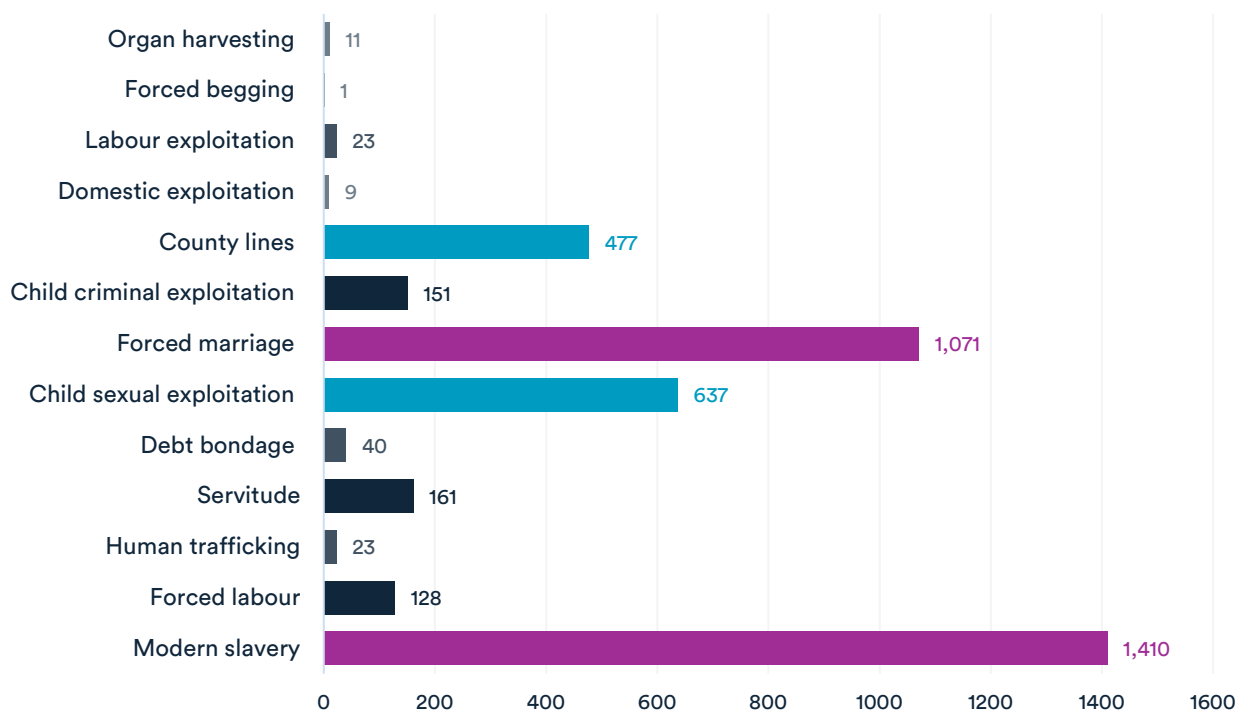
Figure 8 above shows the number of references to modern slavery and related practices in all 179 policy documents across the 20 local authorities reviewed in this study. Modern slavery was the most frequently referenced practice, appearing 1,410 times across all documents. This was followed by forced marriage with 1,071 references. Child sexual exploitation was referenced 637 times, while county lines was referenced 477 times. Interestingly, human trafficking and labour exploitation were each referenced only 23 times across all policy documents, while organ harvesting appeared 11 times.

Across the 20 the local authorities reviewed in this study, Northamptonshire County Council included the highest number of references to modern slavery and related practices, with 337 references (see Figure 9). This was followed by London Borough of Newham and London Borough of Croydon with 312 references and 307 references respectively. The majority of local authorities had more than 200 but less than 300 references to modern slavery in the policy documents reviewed. Cardiff Council had the lowest number of references.

Figure 9. References to slavery and slavery-like practices in published local authority policy documents by local authorities, 2015-2023
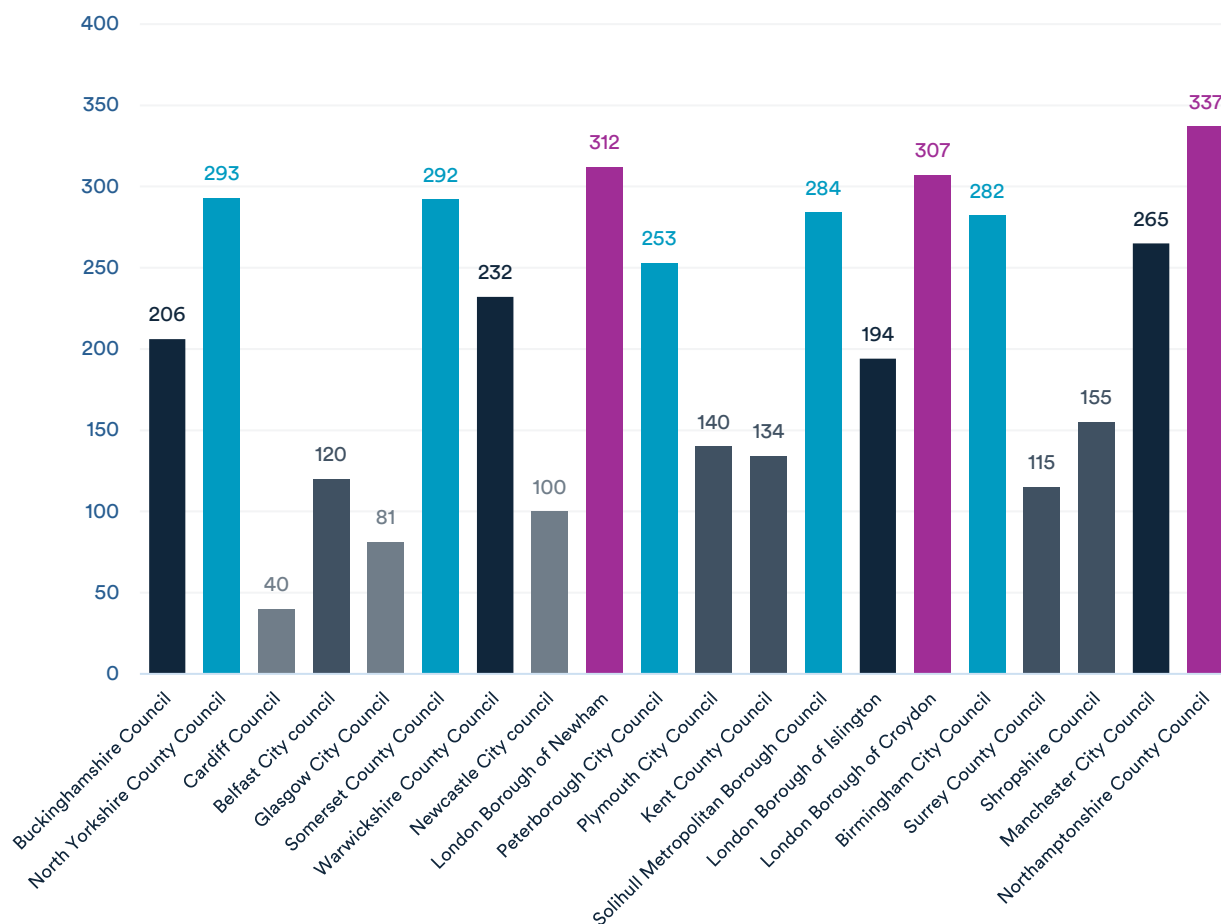
Figure 10 shows the number of references to modern slavery and related practices in local authority policy documents by exploitation type. The reference by local authorities to specific exploitation types varies from one to another, and from one exploitation type to another. For example, modern slavery was the most frequently referenced practice in 45% of local authorities reviewed.[9] This indicates that although modern slavery was the most frequently referenced practice across all 179 local authority documents reviewed, this is not always the case in individual local authority policy documents. Another interesting point, only five local authorities[10] had more than 60% of references to county lines across all local authority policy documents. On the other hand, the references to child sexual exploitation across all local authorities reviewed in this study do not differ dramatically, indicating a similar weight of focus to this particular exploitation type.

Local authorities address child modern slavery in various policy documents. For example, child modern slavery concerns are most widely addressed in multi-agency guidance, providing a comprehensive guidance or protocol to respond to child modern slavery. These documents usually provide the basis of data sharing, support, safeguarding, indicators, procedure, and other useful information about responding to child modern slavery in that area (See, for example: Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, 2021).

Other policy document types where child modern slavery or exploitation are substantially addressed include safeguarding, action plans or strategies, guidance and toolkits. These documents contain key strategies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding, as well as providing provisions for education, special educational needs and disability, mental health, accommodation and care, domestic abuse, online safety, neglect, sexual and physical abuse. Although child modern slavery and exploitation are included in these documents, they are not always the main areas of focus.

[9] These are: Northamptonshire County Council, Shropshire Council, London Borough of Croydon, Plymouth City Council, Newcastle City Council, Somerset County Council, Belfast City Council, North Yorkshire County Council, and Buckinghamshire Council.
[10] These are: North Yorkshire County Council, London Borough of Newham, Kent County Council, London Borough of Croydon, and Northamptonshire County Council.

Figure 10. References to key modern slavery practices in published local authority policy documents by exploitation type, 2015-2023[11]

Council	Sexual exploitation	County lines or CCE	Modern slavery	Forced labour or labour exploitation	Forced marriage
Northamptonshire County Council	16	73	142	30	46
Manchester City Council	41	10	71	6	122
Shropshire Council	27	35	64	9	8
Surrey County Council	16	16	7	3	71
Birmingham City Council	18	28	100	7	120
London Borough of Croydon	56	51	108	6	74
London Borough of Islington	45	21	56	0	69
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	18	32	96	7	122
Kent County Council	18	98	10	10	
Plymouth City Council	5	6	107	9	1
Peterborough City Council	96	6	96	7	35
London Borough of Newham	71	72	67	4	86
Newcastle City Council	2	2	77	54	
Warwickshire County Council	16	38	28	9	130
Somerset County Council	42	51	124	12	44
Glasgow City Council	21	5	6	13	14
Belfast City Council	32	0	44	6	23
Cardiff Council	8	10	6	4	7
North Yorkshire County Council	54	62	108	8	43
Buckinghamshire Council	35	12	93	6	51

■ Sexual exploitation　■ County lines or CCE　■ Modern slavery　■ Forced labour or labour exploitation　■ Forced marriage

Our analysis of local authority policy documents demonstrates that child modern slavery and exploitation are most substantially addressed in multi-agency working documents. In these policy documents, child modern slavery concerns usually shape the whole of the policy and ensure a comprehensive approach from identification to prevention and protection. By contrast, other policy documents either do not engage with child modern slavery or exploitation at all, or peripherally address these practices.

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[11] Modern slavery practices referenced the most frequently are included in this chart, with aggregation of related forms of exploitation for inclusion—labour exploitation and forced labour, child criminal exploitation and county lines.

9. Challenges associated with early identification

This section explores the challenges that impede early identification of CYA who are at risk of modern slavery in the UK.

9.1. Lack of understanding of trafficking

"There are a lot of professionals that it's supposed to be their job but they have never been through it. Police officers have very little understanding, unlike (ECPAT UK Staff member) who has lived experience, so she knows... So employing people who have lived through it or with better training – a director at this residential asked during a 1:1 and was really surprised at what happened to me and she shouldn't have been. There should be more awareness and experience."

– Youth Advisory Group member 6, session 1

Limited awareness of terms like 'trafficking' and 'exploitation', coupled with the absence of certain statutory definitions, and variations in definitions provided by local agencies, leads to different interpretation and creates gaps in early identification (Interview #6, #20) (Espeute & Lanskey, 2023; Harvey, 2015; Olver, 2021). Linked to this point, insufficient training and awareness of trafficking indicators result in the oversight of signs for early identification (Interview #6, Interview #24; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022; Espeute & Lanskey, 2023; Setter, 2019).

"I would say probably lack of awareness or understanding. A lot of people don't understand what modern slavery is and they don't understand what exploitation is. So, without understanding it, you're not going to know how to identify it. There might be some behavioural issues or a child's not going to school. And if you don't understand what modern slavery is, you are not going to think about it in kind of any reasoning of why there's that kind of non-school attendance or if a child's constantly going missing"

– Interview #24

In practice, the focus on sexual exploitation and county lines results in limited acknowledgement of less familiar forms of child exploitation. This might lead to a lack of early identification of children subjected to other forms of exploitation including domestic servitude, forced labour, and financial exploitation (Interview #3).

The common belief that trafficking exclusively impacts non-UK nationals hinders the early identification of British victims (Interview #20). Similarly, the preconceived association of boys with criminal exploitation and girls with sexual exploitation is also another factor impeding early identification of CYA (Commission on Young Lives, 2022; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2022).

9.2. Delay in responses

Early identification depends on professionals recognising concerns and making timely referrals. However, professionals sometimes overlook indicators of exploitation. They may lack understanding, treating potential signs of exploitation as normal teenage behaviour (Interview #12) or overlooking them due to cultural misunderstandings (Interview #15).

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> "We are very regularly seeing that there have been often indicators of exploitation or risk or indicators of risk existing around exploitation for some time, but professionals often are not responding to them at an early stage. They that takes (??) quite some time before they come to their attention or our attention and before there's any meaningful responses. I'd say that's very, very common across a whole range of different audiences and situations"
>
> **– Interview #3**

The lack of self-recognition of children as victims of exploitation, particularly sexual exploitation (see section 6) poses a substantial hurdle to early engagement with support services. Exploitative situations often go unreported, further complicating early identification efforts and creating delays in responses. Similarly, bureaucratic processes and institutional barriers often hinder timely responses, limiting possibilities for early identification in high-risk situations (Interview #14, Interview #29). Indeed, statutory and third-sector agencies often try to manage long waiting lists and engage in a form of passing responsibility, referring individuals to other organisations in the hope that they will take on the role of providing the required services (Interview #12). Additionally, the confusion regarding whether the issue pertains to police, immigration, or social services and in determining the lead agency might cause further delays (Interview #1). Children unknown to local authorities present a significant challenge in terms of early identification due to limited information available to intervene at an early stage (Interview #11).

9.3. Limits of legislation

While national legislation addresses the duties and obligations to children through the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, as well as different types of CYA exploitation, it fails to encompass all different forms, thus resulting in the oversight of certain issues for early identification purposes. Even with regard to local agencies, the legislation is narrowed down to specific types of exploitation rather than addressing broader vulnerabilities (Interview #20).

The complexity and evolving changes in legislation and governance, in particular with regard to the NRM, pose challenges in terms of early identification (Interview #28). Indeed, the evolving legal and policy landscape contributes to confusion among professionals. Additionally, there is a systemic issue where suspicion arising from the first interaction with a child or young adult should trigger immediate NRM actions, but the limited time frame of five working days from the referral could impede the collection of necessary concrete evidence to meet the threshold for a reasonable grounds (RG) decision (Interview #28).

Professionals also express reservations about the impact of legislative changes, such as those introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the Illegal Migration Act 2023, which may shift the focus toward immigration issues rather than trafficking and exploitation, potentially resulting in fewer children being identified (Doughty Street Chambers, 2021; Garbers, 2023). The fear of removal creates a significant barrier to disclosure, as individuals may hesitate to share information about their exploitation due to the imminent threat of being removed from the country (Interview #16).

Concerns are also raised about the adequacy of the Childrens Act and the social care response. Specifically, these systems are perceived to be designed for intrafamilial harm, such as neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse within the family. The lack of focus on, and appropriate tools for, extra-familiar harm impedes the recognition of children at risk of exploitation occurring outside the family context (Interview #24, Interview #27).

Overall, there is a lack of a comprehensive and overarching child exploitation policy that addresses the gaps in existing legislation, particularly focusing on early identification procedures and strategies.

9.4. Resourcing issues

The majority of professionals interviewed recognise resourcing as a significant issue. Local authorities and the police face challenges due to reduced budgets and increasing workload, resulting in limited capacity for early identification (Interview #14). Understaffing, high staff turnover, and the loss of trained personnel poses further challenges to efforts in early identification (Interview #16, Interview #27). The lack of designated teams to deal with early identification of CYA exploitation is a further barrier (Interview #16).

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Moreover, the emphasis on high-risk situations and higher-level intervention reduces the ability to address all the other issues at an early stage (Interview #29(2)).

> "We are very regularly seeing that there have been often indicators of exploitation or risk or indicators of risk existing around exploitation for some time, but professionals often are not responding to them at an early stage. They that takes (??) quite some time before they come to their attention or our attention and before there's any meaningful responses. I'd say that's very, very common across a whole range of different audiences and situations"
>
> **– Interview #3**

The disappearance of crucial avenues such as youth clubs, activities in streets, and community centres due to austerity policies hinders early identification efforts (Interview #27). This is also exacerbated by restricted funding for family support services, parenting programmes and family support models (Interview #21).

9.5. Lack of community engagement

The absence of a 'lower-tier' approach, wherein staff engage directly and establish relationships within the community, makes it challenging to keep an eye on exploitation cases occurring on the ground (Interview #18). Parental awareness is also highlighted as a crucial factor, with many parents being unaware of what to look for or the vulnerabilities their children may face (Interview #10). Likewise, the public lacks awareness on CYA exploitation and knowledge about where to report suspicions, contributing to gaps in the early identification process (Interview #18).

The lack of effective communication with children poses further obstacles to identification efforts (Interview #18). There is a notable gap in engaging directly with children to gather their perspectives.

9.6. Lack of communication and coordination among authorities

The lack of communication between first responders represents a significant barrier. Agencies often fail to communicate with each other, leading to issues such as a lack of information sharing for early identification purposes. Incomplete referrals from other agencies may also lead to missing crucial information about the child's situation (Interview #11).

The complex legislative terrain and overlapping local duties further complicate efforts. Challenges are specifically related to identification by first responders (Interview #11). This also includes a deficiency in communication between central government and practitioners on the ground, which hinders practitioners' ability to respond adequately to changes in statutory guidance (Interview #5).

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9.7. Institutional barriers

"There are institutional barriers that exist, which are about the fact that we have a lot of assumptions and stereotypes and biases across organisations that mean that some children are more likely to receive support than others. We are more likely to notice which children need help from some communities than others. So, for example, there is not enough work done to build relationships and trust with those from minoritised communities, whether that be refugee and migrant young people, whether it be the black community, whether it be all kinds of communities that exist in the UK, there is a need to be proactive and make efforts to build trust. Often, institutions talk about those communities as hard to reach communities. They are not hard to reach. The system is failing to engage them, and it's not investing enough resource and it's not willing to admit its own mistakes" **–**

– Interview #3

Institutional barriers due to assumptions, stereotypes, and biases within organisations significantly impede early identification efforts (Interview #3). Some CYA, particularly from minority communities, face challenges in receiving early support due to a lack of proactive relationship-building efforts. Simultaneously, potential victims may hesitate to share information due to a lack of trust in officials and the fear of not being believed or facing repercussions (Interview #2).

9.8. Inadequate practices

The reliance on 'tick-box' exercises (Interview #28), coupled with the superficiality and generality of risk assessments and safeguarding plans (Interview #7), produces a lack of individualisation for purposes of early identification. The absence of a comprehensive guidance blueprint for early identification poses significant challenges. Further, insufficient research on effective strategies complicates the development of standardised practices (Interview #18).

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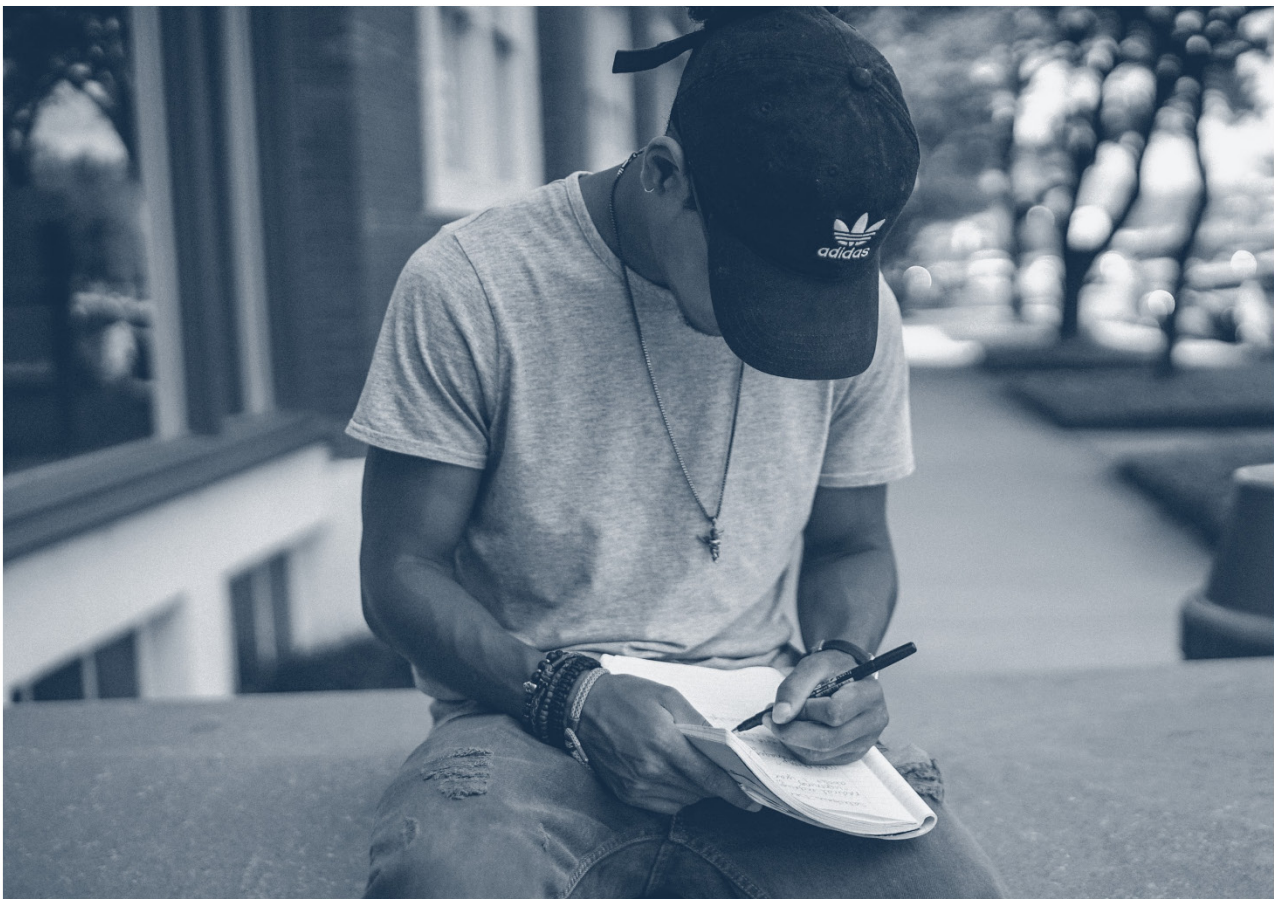
10. Lessons learned for early identification and prevention in the UK

This section provides an overview of what should be done when designing early identification initiatives.

10.1. Early signs and preventative measures

"Creating awareness can start with (professional understanding) not everyone is your uncle and auntie – traffickers use that; education is part of it- like how are they actually related?"

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 1, session 2

Key to early identification and prevention of child modern slavery in the UK is the identification of indicators of exploitation (Hughes-Jones & Roberts, 2015; Mayor of London, 2021; Hurley & Boulton, 2021; Shaw & Greenhow, 2020). Interviewees discussed early signs such as changes in behaviour and mood, unexplained gifts and money, and missing episodes (Interview #7, #18, #20, #22). Once vulnerability factors are identified, protective measures can be put in place to safeguard the CYA, such as a safety plan or risk management meeting (Interview #10, #20, #22).

10.2. Intelligence gathering

Those interviewed stressed that it is essential to gather intelligence from schools, parents, partner agencies, and from CYA directly. While CYA may be reluctant to share information, by asking professionally curious questions to explore how the CYA spends their time and with whom, and monitoring the movement of CYA, agencies can create a picture of the exploitation and the perpetrators, and create a support package to safeguard that CYA (Interview #8, #10, #12, #14, #18, #19, #22). Various professionals interviewed raised the subject of, and encouraged, intelligence gathering through police collection of biometrics of CYA. The rationale expressed is that it allows tracking of CYA who have arrived as unaccompanied children who may have had multiple missing episodes. Through tracking their biometrics, authorities stated they are able to piece together potential modern slavery and exploitation (Interview #1, #8, #10, #12, #14, #15, #18, #19, #22). These initiatives must be developed with robust safeguards to not infringe on the human rights of children.

10.3. Professional training and exploitation indicator tools

"I think every organization or professional that comes in contact with young people should have information and training on trafficking identification like hospitals, GP's and pharmacies. Identification should come from every sector."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 3, session 1

"A big problem is on education, it isn't working in every sector. There should be training of people like GP's etc... and they should understand the mental reasons how people are controlled."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 3, session 2

The use of effective exploitation indicators and risk management tools were commonly discussed within the interviews as methods for identification and prevention. These tools are particularly effective if they explore all areas of life that may pose a risk to a CYA, and if they move beyond basic tick-box systems (Interview #22, #25). However, a criteria-based tool has been useful in triggering relevant safeguarding steps (Interview #16). Through indicator and risk management tools, authorities can work on a multi-agency level to provide tailored support, while also building intelligence (Interview #12, #16, #18).

Effective identification is also based upon extensive training for professionals, with the Human Trafficking Foundation (2022) suggesting that all first responders, magistrates, probation and prison staff, and the Crown Prosecution Service, should be required to complete mandatory training. The importance of effective training was also echoed within interviews, with recommendations of training for anyone who may have direct contact with children and be in a position to identify exploitation, for example, teachers, foster carers, social workers, police, and NHS workers (Interview #8, #11, #12, #14, #15, #16).

10.4. Avoiding early labelling

"My first time going to the Home Office, they didn't believe my age and I was a child. They asked me questions as an adult based on my fingerprint and there was no one to support me. They didn't try to get in touch with any social workers or anyone for the interview. If someone has been trafficked, they should have someone to support them with the Home Office."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 4, session 1

The use of stereotyping victim profiles, victim blaming language, and victim criminalisation has been extensively reported in literature as posing challenges to effective identification and prevention (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022; Edwards, 2023; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner & ECPAT UK, 2021; The Centre for Social Justice, 2021; Wroe, 2021; Lloyd et al., 2023). As a result, the avoidance of early labelling was discussed within interviews as essential for successful identification and prevention work (Interview #20, #24, #25).

10.5. Building trust and an individualised approach

"When I first came in contact with a charity, they asked my background and all of that and it was comfortable and people smiling at the table, and they told me I was trafficked. It began a new journey for me. The situation and environment in the Home Office is really hostile."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 2 session 1

"We don't need more people aware (of child trafficking) but people actually understanding it. The most important thing is to build trust."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 6, session 2

Fundamental to effective identification and prevention is the ability to build trust with CYA. Through building trust and a strong relationship, CYA are more likely to be open to difficult conversations about their experience and make disclosures. Trust can be built through honesty, treating CYA with dignity and respect, and keeping them updated about processes such as applications or referrals (Interview #2, #6, #8, #12, #24, #27, #28).

Literature has emphasised the importance of adopting a public health approach to modern slavery, in which individual needs are considered whilst addressing health, safety and wellbeing of entire populations (Havard, 2022; Kewley et al., 2023; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2022; Such et al., 2021)). Discussed as an individualised approach, interviewees highlighted the benefits of tailored engagement with CYA. This allows for focus to be placed on vulnerabilities and experiences that are unique to each CYA (Interview #12, #20, #21).

10.6. Investing in families and community engagement

"Most people don't know they are being trafficked because it's their family back home or the debts – at the airport they won't engage with it because of the impact it could have to their families back home – they are trapped emotionally not physically."

– ECPAT UK Youth Advisory Group member 1, session 2

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Successful prevention must involve long-term, impactful relationships with entire families. By supporting entire families, it is hoped to keep CYA in education, to prevent CYA involvement in criminality, to prevent CYA going into care, and to build relationship and trust between families and authorities (Commission on Young Lives, 2022; Cody, 2017; Havard, 2022). If authorities can support families from the beginning, it is hoped to provide early help which prevents crisis later down the line (Interview #2, #10, #11, #12, #17 #19, #21, #24).

Interviews also highlighted the impact of community and youth engagement in early identification and prevention (Interview #2, #15, #17, #18, #19, #20, #22, #22). Community services such as schools, health professions, and youth workers are key to building trusting relationships with CYA and identifying those at risk of modern slavery and exploitation (Interview #2, #17).

Case study: AFRUCA Safeguarding Children County Lines Child Trafficking Family Support Service

AFRUCA is a national charity promoting the well-being and protection of children and families in black and ethnic communities in the UK. AFRUCA's County Lines Trafficking Family Support Programme operates in Manchester as an early intervention service in response to the growing problem of child criminal exploitation across Manchester (AFRUCA Safeguarding Children, 2022). The service provides support to families with children older than 11 years old, who may be affected or at risk of county lines and child criminal exploitation. Families are supported to identify the early indicators of exploitation and are provided with support to access early intervention (Saker, 2022, p. 16).

The service provides a wide range of support, including one-to-one parenting support by a Case Worker and peer-to-peer support through Coffee Chats. In addition, parents are given the opportunity to attend group sessions to talk about issues relating to young people, including anti-social behaviour and county lines, as well as receiving training to tackle these issues (AFRUCA Safeguarding Children, n.d.).

10.7. Education

Education plays a key role in effective identification and prevention of modern slavery and exploitation (Cody, 2017; Hudson, 2018; Robinson et al., 2022; Barrow et al., 2021; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022). Teachers have unique insight into the challenges that CYA face both at school and at home and play an important part in the identification of CYA at risk of exploitation (Interview #2). Schools also have the opportunity to engage CYA in education that incorporates essential subjects such as healthy relationships, grooming, knife crime, financial exploitation, and internet safety (Interview #9, #11, #25).

Case study: Contextual Safeguarding – London Borough of Hackney

This initiative was funded by the Department for Education to develop new approaches to safeguarding with an aim to shift the focus of social work from the family home to consider much wider influences (London Borough of Hackney, 2022). It was aimed to find effective ways to protect children from risks outside their family homes by taking into account other risks posed by their peer groups and surroundings. Based on Contextual Safeguarding Theory, this system was intended to address extra-familial risk or harm experienced by adolescents outside the family home, within both real-world spaces and virtual environments, such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, serious youth violence, and gang affiliation. This programme was carried out in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire. The project was evaluated by the Department for Education, finding that Contextual Safeguarding provides a workable framework upon which a system developed to address extra-familial risk or harm may be built. There are some slight indicators that suggest it has the potential to exert a positive impact on practice (Lefevre, et al., 2020).

10.8. Multi-agency approach

Any successful early identification and prevention of modern slavery intervention must be underpinned by an effective multi-agency approach (Harvey et al., 2015; Setter, 2019; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2022; Commission on Young Lives, 2022). An effective multi-agency approach creates an intelligence-led response whilst ensuring organisations have clear roles and responsibilities (Interview #6, #11, #12, #14, #19, #20, #22).

11. Recommendations

This section provides a summary of the most notable recommendations across the literature and the consultation process. The synthesis of the research identified the first five as the priority recommendations:

1. The UK Government must ensure that all departments in central, devolved and local governments have sufficient funding and resources to address and effectively respond to modern slavery of children and young people. In particular, local authority children services must be sufficiently resourced to implement preventative services and effective interventions.

2. The Department for Education, other relevant bodies of devolved administrations, and local authorities should develop and implement early intervention programmes with adequate support provision based on inclusive models and holistic approaches that account for the diverse needs of children and young people vulnerable to modern slavery.

3. The UK Government, in collaboration with devolved administrations, relevant government departments, and civil society, must develop a UK-wide evidence-based, time-bound, child exploitation strategy.

4. The Department for Education, other relevant bodies of devolved administrations, and local authorities should improve data collection and disaggregation on all forms of child exploitation, including by creating a standardised system for collection, storage, and reporting of information from local authority children's services.

5. The Home Office must ensure that immigration enforcement functions do not increase the risk of modern slavery for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Migration Act 2023, as well as immigration and asylum procedures and political rhetoric.

6. Law enforcement agencies must ensure that potential child victims are identified as such, not treated as offenders, and do not face criminal charges as a result of their exploitation.

7. The Ministry of Justice must ensure that legal aid provision is extended to school exclusion appeals as a means to reduce vulnerability for recruitment into exploitation.

8. The Department for Education and other relevant bodies of devolved administrations must ensure that education is promoted as a crucial preventative measure, and a vehicle for early identification of children and young people.

9. Local authorities must ensure that child victims transitioning into adulthood, particularly those with irregular immigration status, receive specialist modern slavery support as part of their entitlement as care leavers. The Home Office must ensure that child victims, who are not former looked after children, access quality support through the NRM when transitioning into adulthood, providing them with the necessary services and support to meet their needs at this crucial stage.

10. The Home Office must provide sufficient resources to ensure that all first responders have mandatory, continuous and consistent training on child modern slavery. Consideration should be given to extend the training framework to other public agencies that are likely to encounter child victims, including professionals working in education and healthcare.

11. The Department for Education and other relevant bodies of devolved administrations must provide specific training on child modern slavery to professionals within children services who have duties and obligations on child protection.

12. The Department for Education, other relevant bodies of devolved administrations, and local authorities should work on awareness raising campaigns to inform the general public and children and young people about child modern slavery, tailored for the different audiences and supported by evidence of effectiveness.

13. Local authorities should conduct proactive outreach and tailor interventions to ensure they are accessible to marginalised families and communities and ensure their involvement in child protection initiatives.

14. The Home Office must immediately roll out the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service to all remaining local authorities in England and Wales.

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Annex 1: Freedom of Information request to local authorities

Re: Freedom of Information Act request

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from [**local authority name**]. This Freedom of Information request is made to access data in relation to children referred by [**local authority name**] to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for children who were identified as potential victims of modern slavery.

I understand that [**local authority name**] referred [**number**] children into the NRM in 2018, [**number**] in 2019, [**number**] in 2020, [**number**] in 2021, [**number**] in 2022 and [**number**] in Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 of 2023.

However, the breakdown of this data is not available in the NRM statistics. Therefore, I would like you to provide me with:

1. **Gender:** How many of children referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 were identified as males and females?

2. **Nationality:** What were the nationalities of children referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023?

3. **Location:** What was the location of the exploitation in the UK for children referred to NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023? Please state how many exploitations referred in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 happened in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

4. **Exploitation type:** For children referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, how many of them were recorded as potential victims of:

- Criminal exploitation
- Domestic exploitation
- Labour exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Organ harvesting
- Domestic and criminal exploitation
- Labour and criminal exploitation
- Sexual and criminal exploitation

- Domestic and labour exploitation
- Domestic and sexual exploitation
- Sexual and labour exploitation
- Criminal and domestic and sexual exploitation
- Criminal and labour and sexual exploitation
- Domestic and labour and sexual exploitation.

5. **County lines:** For children referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, how many of them were recorded as potential victims of county lines?

6. **Reasonable ground decision:** For children referred to the NRM as potential victims of modern slavery by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023:

      6.a. how many of them received a positive reasonable ground decision?

      6.b. how many of them received negative reasonable ground decision?

7. **Conclusive ground decision:** For children referred to the NRM by [local authority name] in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023,

      7.a. how many of them received a positive conclusive ground decision?

      7.b. how many of them received negative conclusive ground decision?

I understand that under the Act I am entitled to a response within 20 working days of your receipt of this request. **Some parts of the request may be easier to answer than others. Should this be the case, I request that you release information as soon as possible.**

If my request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you justify all deletions by reference to specific exemptions of the act. I will also expect you to release all non-exempt material. I reserve the right to appeal your decision to withhold any information or to charge excessive fees.

I would prefer to receive the information electronically **submitted to my email address: ergul.celiksoy1@nottingham.ac.uk.**

If you require any clarification, I expect you to contact me under your section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance if you find any aspect of this FOI request problematic.

Please acknowledge receipt of this request, and I look forward to receiving the information in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

Annex 2: Structure of interview questionnaire

- *Thank the participant for joining the interview, and for their willingness to participate.*
- *Introduce the members of the research team present on the call.*
- *Confirm that they have reviewed the information sheet and signed off the consent form.*
- *Check if they have any questions arising from this.*
- *Check on their decision in relation to anonymisation.*
- *Check on their willingness to be audio-recorded, with a reminder that this is for internal purposes only and will be destroyed as soon as an accurate transcript has been produced.*
- *Remind them that they may withdraw at any point, without negative consequences, at any point before [date] 2023.*
- *Remind them that they will be provided with an opportunity to review the transcript from the session, and to make amendments if they wish.*

Begin recording:

Thank you for joining us today on [date] to provide insights for our study on the early identification and prevention of children and young adults who are victims or at risk of modern slavery in the UK.

This project aims to understand how children and young adults up to 25 years old are identified as victims, or at risk of, modern slavery in the UK and what works to support early identification, prevent (re)exploitation, and maintain contact. Therefore, we are specifically interested in EARLY identification of children and young adults who are at risk of modern slavery in the UK and prevention of these practices.

When we're talking about modern slavery, we're talking about a set of exploitative practices that can be perpetrated against children and young adults. This includes: slavery, servitude, and forced labour AND human trafficking. This captures different kinds of exploitation that children and young adults may be subjected to, including:

- *Sexual exploitation*
- *Labour exploitation*
- *Domestic servitude*
- *Exploitation in criminal activities*
- *Organ harvesting*

Do you have any questions about what counts as modern slavery?

Against this background, we have a series of questions that we'd like to explore with you. Some you may have more insights to share than others, so please feel free to provide as much or as little detail as relevant. You are also free to pass on any questions that are outside the scope of your expertise or which you don't wish to answer for any reasons. We won't require any explanation of this, we'll simply move on to the next questions.

General remit questions

To begin, we'd just like to build a clear picture of the nature of your work.

1. Could you please tell us about the nature of your work, and how it connects to modern slavery involving children and young adults in the UK?

   Follow-up questions:

   1.1. What is the nature of your organisation and its primary responsibilities/objectives in terms of responding to modern slavery of children and young adults in the UK?

   1.2. What is the nature of your role within the organisation?

   (E.g., are they frontline facing, do they interact directly with children/young people, or are they more analytical/strategic in their focus?)

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Modern slavery of children and young adults

We are now going to move on to modern slavery involving children and young adults in the areas you work.

2. What are common factors that you believe place children and young people at risk of modern slavery?

    Follow-up questions:

    2.1. What are the common themes behind the exploitation of children and young adults that you encounter?

    2.2. If you work directly with children and young adults, how do they recognise their own experiences and whether do they understand it as modern slavery, trafficking, or exploitation?

3. What forms of modern slavery are the *BIGGEST* concern in the areas in which you work and how has this changed?

    Follow-up questions:

    3.1. What are typical sorts of cases that you encounter in your role?

    3.2. Has the profile of this changed/evolved over the last 2-3 years? And how?

    3.3. Does this align with what you think the most significant forms of modern slavery that children and young adults are at risk of across the country?

Identification and prevention of modern slavery

We're now going to move on to consider the early identification and prevention of children and young adults who are victims or at risk of modern slavery.

4. What does your organisation do to prevent modern slavery of children and young adults?

5. How does your organisation spot early indicators of children and young people who are at risk of modern slavery?

    Follow-up questions:

    5.1. What policy and procedures do you have in place to follow when identifying children and addressing their needs?

6. Are there other interventions/programmes that you have direct knowledge about or are run by organisations that you have relationship with? In relation to this, are you aware of any interventions/programmes that you would consider as 'best practice' in terms of identifying and preventing modern slavery involving children and young adult?

Current early identification and prevention systems

We are now going to move on to consider the current early identification and prevention systems.

7. Could you tell us your opinions about the challenges associated with *EARLY* identification of children who are at risk of modern slavery and prevention in the UK? What are the biggest barriers to early identification and prevention?

    Follow-up questions:

    7.1. Are there specific legislative and policy issues in the UK that interfere with early identification and prevention work? How do you see this being impacted by recent and ongoing changes in legislation and policy?

    7.2. To what extent do you think that professionals working on modern slavery of children and young adults (those who are working in the same or similar areas as yourself) are informed about modern slavery, the procedures and policies around the identification and prevention? Is there a knowledge gap in practice in terms of the identification and protection of children?

    7.3. Are there funding and resourcing issues that interfere with early identification and prevention work in the UK?

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8. What is your experience of multi-agency working for early identification and prevention of modern slavery of children and young adults? How well are you able to collaborate with other organisations for early identification and prevention?

   Follow-up questions:

   8.1. Who do you work with, and at what level? (Local partnership, regional / national working groups?

   8.2. What do those collaborations do, what are their objectives?

   8.3. What is your experience of information sharing between competent authorities and first responders?

   8.4. Does the organisation and effectiveness of these collaborations vary according to the type of exploitation?

   8.5. Is multi-agency working an 'effective' system for ensuring a child-centred approach?

   8.6. Does any of this work focus on prevention? - if so, what?

Knowledge gaps and improvement

We're now going to move on to consider knowledge gaps and areas for improvement when dealing with the early identification and prevention of modern slavery of children and young adults.

9. What guidance, protocols, policies, and standard operating procedures exist to help guide work on early identification and prevention in the UK? Both within your organisation and more broadly?

   Follow-up questions:

   9.1. What are your views on these materials?
   9.2. Do you refer to these in your work?

10. If you were advocating for a more effective response to modern slavery of children and young adults in the UK, what would you recommend?

    Follow-up questions:

    10.1. Could you describe some positive and good practice in your experience? (Case studies of where things work well?) Are there any success stories, what has worked?

    10.2. What work do you think would be effective to in this space in future?

    10.3. Could you identify any needs of professionals working in this space to better equip them in identification and prevention of modern slavery of children and young adults in the UK?

    10.4. Have you participated in any training in relation to the identification of children and young adults who are victims or at risk of modern slavery? What were these trainings about? Who provided the training? How, if any, did you find these training helpful?

11. Is there any other point or issue you want to highlight as important when thinking about early identification and prevention of modern slavery of children and young adults in the UK?

- *Thank the participant again for participating.*
- *Invite them to share any additional thoughts via email.*
- *Remind them that the transcript of the interview will be shared with them within 3 weeks, and they will be welcome to review and request amendments to their responses.*
- *Remind them that they may still choose to withdraw or change their decision on anonymisation any time before [date] 2023.*
- *Flag that research outputs from the study will be shared with all participants when the research is concluded.*

Annex 3: List of interview participants

Interview No	Name of Participants	Role/Position	Institutions
Interview #1	Matthew Wilkinson	Civil Servant	
Interview #2	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #3	Anonymous participant	Representative of The Children's Society	The Children's Society
Interview #4	Andrew Sirel	-	JUSTRIGHT SCOTLAND
Interview #5	Anonymous participant	Representative of An Anti-Trafficking Organisation	Anonymous
Interview #6	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #7	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #8	Helen Chamberlain	Former Chief Superintendent, Chair of Independent Family Returns Panel	Home Office
Interview #9	Simon Bailey	Director of Strategic Engagement CRC	Child Rescue Coalition
Interview #10	Kerry Loveless	Surrey Police Strategic Lead for MSHTOIC	Surrey Police
Interview #11	Gaby Couchman	UASC Project Manager and Child NRM Devolved Decision Making Pilot Lead	Islington Council
Interview #12	Sarah Parker	Research & Development Officer with Catch22 Young People & Families	Catch22
Interview #13	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
Interview #14	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #15	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #16	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #17	Bryony Smith	Exploitation and Missing Team Manager	Camden Council
Interview #18	Jennifer Hathaway	Contextual Safeguarding Lead	Buckinghamshire Council
Interview #19	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #20	Anonymous participant	Child Trafficking Researcher in Scotland	Anonymous
Interview #21	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous

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Interview #22	Jen Renham	Social Worker for Missing Children	Newcastle Children's Social Care
Interview #23	Anonymous participant	Independent Guardian	Anonymous
Interview #24	Anonymous participant	Contextual Safeguarding Team Manager in Children's Services	Anonymous
Interview #25	Anonymous participant	Police Modern Slavery Lead	Anonymous
Interview #26	Hannah Shepheard	Assistant Service Manager/Guardian	Guardianship Scotland: Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service
Interview #27	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #28	Anonymous participant	Anonymous	Anonymous
Interview #29 (first interviewee)	Anonymous participant	Representative of a charity supporting children who have been trafficked	Anonymous
Interview #29 (second interviewee)	Anonymous participant	Representative of a charity supporting children who have been trafficked.	Anonymous

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Annex 4: Existing interventions and initiatives on identification and prevention of modern slavery of CYA

	Type	Identification and safeguarding
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Safeguarding in Public Spaces Pilot	Brief Summary	This initiative aimed to scope an innovative contextual safeguarding model, applicable in a range of community settings. By including public spaces in the safeguarding framework, the initiative focuses on places where young people socialise and spend time such as shopping centres and transport hubs. The project provided peer education, supporting and training professionals, creating a CSE Safeguarding in Public Spaces Toolkit and research on Awareness and Experiences of CSE in Public Spaces. The project found that young people feel unsafe in public spaces in London, and do not know where to turn for help, as well as finding that adults do not recognise young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation.
	Year	2020
	Location	London
	Implementing authority	Safer London
	Source	▪ Safer London. (nd). 'Safeguarding in public spaces pilot', available at: <https://saferlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Safeguarding-in-Public-Spaces-Research-Report-5-low-res.pdf> ▪ Cousins, V., Working with communities to prevent child sexual abuse, *British Journal of School Nursing*, Vol 13(2), 2018, pp.78-81
	Type	Safeguarding, Policing and Intervention
Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) – West Midlands	Brief Summary	The CIRV programme is designed to engage with children and young adults and ensure an exit pathway from gangs, violence, and county lines. CIRV is a mechanism for identifying risk of child modern slavery and offers interventions for young people to address their needs. CIRV is accessible via an online portal, a mobile phone by voice, via text or WhatsApp facilities 24/7. For young adults under 18 years old, CIRV ensures that the child is supported by a family support worker who will visit the family of the child to explain the intervention and get a consent for the child's involvement in the intervention. This visit is carried out within 24 hours of receiving the referral. In some cases, the intervention takes place without the consent from the family if there is a need for an overriding safeguarding. A Navigator who is a trained police officer engages with the referred person to ensure that the person engage with CIRV. Once a relationship is established between the person and the Navigator, a various interventions are made available to the person, and sequenced.

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	Year	2023 - 2025
	Location	Coventry and Wolverhampton
	Implementing authority	Coventry and Wolverhampton police
	Source	▪ West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership. (2022). 'Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)', available at: <https://westmidlands-vrp.org/app/uploads/2023/01/Community-Initiative-to-Reduce-Violence-overview-v1.2-002.pdf?x59901>
Contextual Safeguarding - Hackney	**Type**	**Safeguarding and Intervention**
	Brief Summary	This initiative was funded by the Department for Education to develop new approaches to safeguarding with an aim to shift the focus of social work from the family home in order to consider much wider influences. It aimed to find effective ways to protect children from risks outside their family homes by taking into account other risks posed by their peer groups and surroundings. Based on Contextual Safeguarding Theory, the new system was intended to address extra-familial risk or harm (EFRH) experienced by adolescents outside the family home, within both real-world spaces and virtual environments, such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, serious youth violence, and gang affiliation. This programme was carried out in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire. The project was evaluated by the Department for Education, finding that the Contextual Safeguarding Theory provides a workable framework upon which system development to address EFRH can be built and there are some slight indicators that suggest it has the potential to exert a positive impact on practice.
	Year	2017 - 2020
	Location	Hackney
	Implementing authority	Hackney Children and Families Service, in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire
	Source	▪ Hackney. (2020). 'Contextual safeguarding', available at: <https://hackney.gov.uk/contextual-safeguarding> ▪ Lefevre, et al. (2020). *Evaluation of the implementation of a Contextual Safeguarding system in the London Borough of Hackney: Evaluation report*. Department for Education. 2020.

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Type	Awareness, Prevention and Intervention
Brief summary	The EGYV programme was designed to provide peer partnership support to change the local authority response to tackling gang and youth violence. The programme consisted of a frontline team of experts and a peer network of over 80 frontline volunteers, made up of youth workers, education, probation, health etc. The programme emphasised the importance of effective multi-agency work and information sharing. The EGYV aimed to map out the different agencies which may have contact with gang members, map the local gangs and areas of serious youth violence, review the procedures for identifying victims and gang members, gather community led feedback, scrutinise prevention and enforcements efforts and make recommendations for improvement, and to agree a strategy for improving the local response to tackling gangs. This project came to an end in 2015 after the Home Office disbanded the frontline team and reallocated funds.
Year	2011 - 2015
Location	72 local authorities
Implementing authority	Home Office
Source	• Andell, P., Addressing county lines: praxis for community safety practitioners, *Safer Communities* Vol 18(2), 2019, pp. 43-53. • Home Office. (n.d.). '*Ending Gang and Youth Violence*', available at: https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s16589/Appendix%201%20Home%20Office%20Peer%20Review.pdf

Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) Programme

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Type	Safeguarding and Intervention
Brief summary	The system-wide model of providing whole-family, joined up, family support services. When delivered as a full-service, family hubs deliver support from pregnancy up to the age of 19 (or age 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities). Family hubs adopt the belief that effective early intervention can improve the wellbeing, education and life chances for young people. Family hubs aim to strengthen families, help prevent family breakdown, and support separating families. By using a family wide approach, which is key to integrated working, family hubs work with an entire family to overcome challenges and build stronger relationships, in turn providing timely prevention which reduces future need for crisis intervention. Family hubs have been in existence since 1989, and have gone through several name changes, including 'family centres' and 'sure start'.
Year	1989 – present day
Location	75 councils in England
Implementing authority	local authority
Source	▪ Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plai Sight. A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm*, Commission on Young Lives, 2022. ▪ Family Hubs Network., (n.d). *Policy*, available at: https://familyhubsnetwork.com/policy-background/#:~:text=The%20origins%20of%20Family%20Hubs,of%20the%20original%20welfare%20state. ▪ Department for Education. 2023. *'Family Hubs: everything you need to know'*, available at: https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/09/family-hubs-everything-you-need-to-know/

The label on the left side of the table: **Family Hubs**

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	Type	Safeguarding and Intervention
Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG)	**Brief summary**	Specialist independent support for trafficked children. Independent child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG) work in England and Wales directly with trafficked children without parental responsibility in the UK, to provide one-to-one support, advocate on behalf of the child, and promote their best interests. Regional Practice Coordinators (RPC) work indirectly with trafficked children who have those with parental responsibility in the UK, aiming to upskill existing professionals surrounding the child and ensure the best interests of the child are reflected in decisions made by public authorities. The ICTG service was introduced in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, however full roll out has not yet been achieved. Positive developments of the project include the current piloting of the removal of the 18-month time limit on support, and the piloting of continuation of support post 18-years in limited areas.
	Year	2014 – Trial of ICTG service 2017 – present day – provision under Barnardo's
	Location	Wales, East Midlands, West Midlands, Bedfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, London, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey, Essex, Greater Manchester, North & West Yorkshire, Lancashire & Merseyside
	Implementing authority	Barnardo's, funded by the Home Office
	Source	• Human Trafficking Foundation. Child criminal exploitation and the need for consistency. Human Trafficking Foundation. 2022 • Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner., & ECPAT UK., *Child trafficking in the UK 2021: a snapshot*, 2021 • Kohli, R, KS., et al. *An evaluation of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians – early adopter sites*, Home Office, 2019 • Weatherburn, A., and Mellon, Y., 'Child trafficking victims and legal guardians: Exploring the fulfilment of the EU trafficking directive in the context of the UK modern Slavery Act 2015 – Best practice or not fit for purpose?', *New Journal of European Criminal Law,* Vol 10(2), 2019, pp.107-127. • Williamson. 2019.'Tackling Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Wales' in Winterdyk, J., & Jones, J. (Eds.). *The palgrave international handbook of human trafficking.* Springer International Publishing, 2019, pp.1052-1067.

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	Type	Safeguarding and Intervention
Guardianship Scotland	**Brief summary**	Guardianship Scotland replaced the Scottish Guardianship Service in April 2023. Guardianship Scotland provides support to unaccompanied minors arriving in Scotland through a multitude of programmes. *Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG)* The ICTG service provides specialist statutory support to all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have been trafficked to and within the UK. The ICTG advocate on behalf of a child to ensure that their best interests are reflected in the decisions made by public authorities. *Participation Project* Guardianship Scotland provides a participation project which aims to empower young people by giving them a space to learn new skills, and to access education, volunteering and employment. It gives young people the space to use their voice and talk about issues that are important to them. *Wellbeing Project* Guardianship Scotland recognise the impact of trauma on the lives and experiences of many young people they work with. The Wellbeing Project, run in partnership with the NHS Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service, provides therapeutic groups, activities and workshops to provide the space for young people to recognise and acknowledge their feelings.
	Year	2010 – present day
	Location	Scotland
	Implementing authority	Scottish Refugee Council and Aberlour Children's Charity, on behalf of the Scottish Government
	Source	• Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner., & ECPAT UK., *Child trafficking in the UK 2021: a snapshot*, 2021 • Scottish Refugee Council. (n.d.) '*Guardianship Scotland: National Child Trafficking Support Service*', available at: https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/direct-support/children-and-young-people/ • Scottish Refugee Council. (2022) '*Glowing report for Scottish Guardianship Service*', available at: https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/glowing-report-for-scottish-guardianship-service/

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	Type	Criminal Justice and Safeguarding
Oasis Restore	**Brief summary**	Oasis Restore is a redesigning and replacement of youth prison services through the creation of secure education. Instead of focusing on punitive justice and security, Oasis Restore places a focus on helping young people to come to terms with the consequences of criminal behaviour, understand the stories behind the actions, and support young people towards making amends and preparing for a positive future. Oasis Restore acknowledges the role of traumatic early life experiences and exploitation can have on a child's engagement with criminal behaviour and aims to bring the treatment of young people in the criminal justice system in line with the understandings of mental health and trauma informed care.
	Year	Opening in 2023
	Location	Medway
	Implementing authority	Oasis, in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice
	Source	• Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plain Sight. A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm,* Commission on Young Lives, 2022 • Oasis Restore. (n.d.) '*Our Approach*', available at: https://www.oasisrestore.org/life/our-approach
	Type	Policing and Intervention
British Transport Police County Lines Taskforce	**Brief summary**	The British Transport Police secured funding from the Home Office to create a County Lines Taskforce, working on County Lines operations in conjunction with the Police. British Transport Police look out for key signs of exploitation, such as a child travelling alone during school hours, late at night or on a regular basis. On identification, a referral is made to the Police and efforts are made to safeguard any child vulnerable to exploitation from county lines.
	Year	2019 - present day
	Location	UK wide
	Implementing authority	The Police and British Transport Police, funded by the Home Office
	Source	• Brewster, B., et al., Covid-19 and child criminal exploitation in the UK: implications of the pandemic for county lines, *Trends in Organized Crime*, Vol 26, 2021, pp. 156-179 • British Transport Police. (2020) '*BTP County Lines Taskforce – It's role, results and efforts to tackle gangs*', available at: https://www.btp.police.uk/news/btp/news/england/btp-county-lines-taskforce--its-role-results-and-efforts-to-tackle-gangs/

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	Type	Safeguarding and Intervention
Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA)	**Brief summary**	ISVA work with a young person who has experienced sexual violence, to help them understand what has happened and what will happen at each stage going for. They support and child whilst the police are investigating what has happened and offer practical and emotional support aside from the police investigation. ISVAs can directly support any child aged 13 and over and will support parents and carers of children under 13 years of age. ISVA's are often accessed through local rape and sexual abuse centres.
	Year	1990 – present day
	Location	UK wide
	Implementing authority	Different providers implement the service in different regions. For example: IDAS implement the ISVA service in Yorkshire, and the Survivors Network implement the ISVA service in Sussex.
	Source	• The Centre for Social Justice. *Unsafe Children Driving Up our Country's Response to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*, The Centre for Social Justice, 2021. • IDAS. (n.d). *'Support for children who have been sexually abused'*, available at: https://sexualviolence.idas.org.uk/surviving-sexual-violence-and-abuse/support-for-children-who-have-been-sexually-abused/ • Survivors Network. (n.d.) '*Children and Young People's Service'*, available at: https://survivorsnetwork.org.uk/get-help/children-young-people/
Project Pheonix	Type	Education, Identification, and Intervention
	Brief summary	Project Pheonix aims to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation, to help people to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation and to report it. Project Pheonix also aims to provide support to victims and those most at risk of child sexual exploitation. Project Pheonix emerged out of the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, under the intention to improve the strategic response to child sexual exploitation and make Greater Manchester a beacon of good practice.
	Year	2012 – present day
	Location	Greater Manchester
	Implementing authority	A multi-agency movement made up of statutory bodies, non-governmental organisations and boards.
	Source	• It'sNotOkay. (n.d.). 'about' available at: https://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/about/ • Weston, S., & Mythen, G., Disentangling practitioners understandings of child sexual exploitation: The risks of assuming otherwise?, *Criminology & Criminal Justice,* Vol 22(4), 2022, pp. 618-635.

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	Type	Education, Prevention and Identification
Ariel Trust Violence Reduction Education	**Brief summary**	The Ariel Trust provides a serious of violence reduction educational interventions which are designed to help school facilitate evidence based, active learning programs in response to challenges such as grooming and exploitation. Two key interventions offered are the 'Safe Skills' and the 'Grassing or Grooming' programs. 'SafeSkills' is designed for ages 9-12, and was developed to improve young people's safety in relation to the risks associated with grooming. The program consists of four modules, with three modules placing a focus on risks of sexual exploitation, and the fourth on the grooming for criminal exploitation. SafeSkills is designed to empower young people by developing their resilience, communication skills, and network of support. 'Grassing or Grooming?' is designed for ages 10-12, and was developed to support young people to develop the necessary skills to refuse and resist grooming associated with criminal exploitation and gangs. Using media and role play, young people have the opportunity to practice using the vocabulary to effectively intervene or seek help from a responsible adult.
	Year	2007 – present day
	Location	Online, Liverpool
	Implementing authority	Ariel Trust, in partnership with agencies including NSPCC and Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership
	Source	• Ariel Trust. (n.d.) '*SafeSkills: Developing Resilience to Grooming*', available at: https://arieltrust.com/safeskills-grooming • Ariel Trust. (n.d.) '*Grassing or Grooming? (SafeSkills)*', available at: https://arieltrust.com/grassing-or-grooming-safeskills • Weston, S., & Mythen, G., Disentangling practitioners understandings of child sexual exploitation: The risks of assuming otherwise?, *Criminology & Criminal Justice,* Vol 22(4), 2022, pp. 618-635.

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Type	Prevention, Identification and Intervention
Brief summary	Using a safeguarding model, the Engage Team place focus on prevention, protection of those identified, and pursuit of offenders of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. The Engage team also delivers training to raise awareness of exploitation in staff working directly with vulnerable children and young people, alongside conducting Return Home Interviews with children missing from home, and risk reduction plans. *Prevention*: The Engage team works to identify children and young people vulnerable to child exploitation and provide support to prevent abuse from ever taking place. *Protection*: The Engage Team conduct a thorough exploitation assessment and create an agreed support/risk management plan, whilst providing intensive one-to-one support. *Pursue*: The Engage Team also work towards the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators of child exploitation.
Year	2008 - present day
Location	Blackburn with Darwen
Implementing authority	Multi-agency approach of Police, Youth Justice Services, Health, Housing, Substance Misuse Services, Childrens Social Care, Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE)
Source	• Weston, S., & Mythen, G., Disentangling practitioners understandings of child sexual exploitation: The risks of assuming otherwise?, *Criminology & Criminal Justice,* Vol 22(4), 2022, pp. 618-635. • Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. (n.d.) '*Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation*', available at: https://blackburndarwenchildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_cse_and_conr.html#6.-the-engage-team-%E2%80%93-blackburn-with-darwen's-dedicated-child-exploitation-team

The Engage Team

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	Type	Prevention, Education, and Identification
Prevention Programme	**Brief summary**	The Prevention Programme aims to raise awareness and understanding of child exploitation and abuse; placing a focus on three key areas. *Everyone's responsibility:* The Prevention Programme emphasises the role that everyone has in preventing exploitation. The Programme provides training and resources that empower communities and businesses to actively protect young people. *Reframing narratives*: The Programme aims to change the narrative of victimhood by taking an inclusive approach to recognise the complexity of the experiences of abuse. The Programme works to improve the identification of child exploitation and develop the responses children receive on identification. *Increasing collaboration:* The Programme also encourages effective multi-agency working and the importance of working together to better prevent child exploitation.
	Year	2017 - present day
	Location	England and Wales
	Implementing authority	The Children's Society, funded by the Home Office
	Source	• Weston, S., and Mythen, G., Working with and Negotiating 'Risk': Examining the Effects of Awareness Raising Interventions Designed to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation, *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol 60(2), 2020, pp.323-342. • Nelson, C., The Children's Society Prevention Programme: Evaluation Report April 2020-March 2021, *The Children's Society,* 2021. • CSE Police and Prevention.(n.d.) 'Prepare. Prevent. Protect. Pursue', available at: http://www.csepoliceandprevention.org.uk/index.html#:~:text=The%20programme%20is%20aimed%20at,child%20sexual%20abuse%20and%20exploitation. • The Childrens Society. 2023.'Evaluation of the Prevention Programme', available at: https://www.flipsnack.com/CA7CFEBBDC9/evaluation-of-the-prevention-programme-main-report.html

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	Type	Prevention, Education and Identification
Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS) Programmes	**Brief summary**	Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS) was set up to address the prevention and early identification of young people experiencing exploitation. The Charity aims to works through holistic education programmes to build resilience, confidence and transferable skills. KOGS provide as series of 12-week accredited programmes, and a series of 4-week short courses, which address healthy relationships, grooming and exploitation. KOGS also provides a peer mentoring service and one-to-one support and counselling. KOGS aim to educate using different arts to explore sensitive issues and build young people's confidence. KOGS aim to empower young people by developing self-esteem and positivity. Finally, KOGS aims to inspire young people to build safe peer networks, gain skills and raise aspirations.
	Year	2011 – present day
	Location	Oldham and Greater Manchester
	Implementing authority	Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS)
	Source	• Unwin, P., & Jones, A., 'Educate, Empower and Inspire': An Evaluation of a Preventative Service for Young People at Risk of Sexual Exploitation, *Child Abuse Review,* Vol 30(1), 2021, pp. 62-70. • Keeping Our Girls Safe. (n.d.) 'About Us', available at: https://www.kogs.org.uk/?page_id=254 • Keeping Our Girls Safe. (n.d.) 'Programmes', available at: https://www.kogs.org.uk/?page_id=225

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	Type	Prevention, Intervention, and Safeguarding
SHiFT Programme	**Brief summary**	SHiFT aims to break the destructive cycle of children and young people caught up in, or at risk of, crime. SHiFT provides one-to-one intensive, trusting, and tailored support with multi-disciplinary practitioners, known in the service as 'Guides'. Through this support, SHiFT aims to meet the needs of children and young people and set them up for a bright future. SHiFT works with children, young people, and those around them for a period of 18 months.
	Year	2019 – present day
	Location	Kingston, Richmond, Greenwich, Bexley, Tameside, Manchester
	Implementing authority	SHiFT
	Source	• Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plain Sight: A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm,* Commission on Young Lives, 2022. • SHiFT. (n.d.) '*SHiFT Practices',* available at: https://shiftuk.org/shift-practices
	Type	**Identification, Intervention, and Safeguarding**
School Transition and Reach Service (STARS)	**Brief summary**	The School Transition and Reach Service (STARS) is a service developed to support families and their children who are likely to struggle with the transition from primary school to secondary school. STARS provides intensive family and community-based support for families where risks factors have been identified that place their child at an increased risk of child exploitation. STARS provides two programmes that focus on factors which can increase the potential risk of child exploitation and provide a 12-month program addressing the risks and impacts of Domestic Abuse. Through their programmes and support, STARS aims to increase children and young people's protective factors, increase resilience, and their ability to manage emotions and relationships.
	Year	2020 – present day
	Location	Kirklees
	Implementing authority	Kirklees Council
		• Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plain Sight: A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm,* Commission on Young Lives, 2022 • Kirklees Council (2022). '*Early Support Team - STARs Facilitato*r' available at: https://kirklees.tal.net/vx/mobile-0/appcentre-ext/brand-4/candidate/so/pm/1/pl/4/opp/6451-Early-Support-Team-STARs-Facilitator/en-GB

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	Source	• Kirklees Business Solutions. (n.d.) *'Mental health and wellbeing for pupils'*, available at: https://kirkleesbusinesssolutions.uk/Page/19105
Stop It Now! Wales	**Type**	**Prevention, Education, and Identification**
	Brief summary	Stop It Now! is a charity set up to work towards the prevention of abuse from ever occurring and preventing it from happening further. Stop It Now! runs across the UK to provide a confidential helpline, live chat and secure messaging service for anyone with concerns about child sexual abuse. Stop It Now! also provides a Parents Protect website where parents and carers can access support on how to protect their children online and offline. In addition, Stop It Now! provide a range of self-help online resources for anyone concerned about their own behaviour towards children. Stop It Now! runs a national deterrence campaign, which aims to prevent people from offending by viewing or sharing sexual images of children online. Stop It Now! Wales provides more directed intervention through the provision of adult educational prevention programmes and an early intervention project which supports vulnerable families in Wales.
	Year	2002 – present day
	Location	Wales
	Implementing authority	Stop It Now! Wales, funded by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation
	Source	• Hudson, K., Preventing child sexual abuse through education: the work of Stop it Now! Wales, *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, Vol 24(1), 2018, pp.19-113 • Stop It Now! (n.d.). '*Helping parents and carers*' available at: https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/stop-it-now-wales/helping-parents-and-carers/ • Stop It Now! (n.d.) '*How we prevent child sexual abuse*' available at: https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/how-we-prevent-child-sexual-abuse/

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Supporting Families Programme	**Type**	**Prevention, Identification and Safeguarding**
	Brief summary	The Supporting Families Programme provides targeted interventions for vulnerable families facing complex problems or multiple disadvantages, including those with children at risk of exploitation and abuse. Supporting Families take a family-wide approach, utilising keyworks to provide specialist support. The Supporting Families programme aims to see families thrive, to drive systematic change locally and nationally, to promote effective multi-agency working, and to identify those at risk and provide the right support at the appropriate time.
	Year	2013 – present day
	Location	UK wide
	Implementing authority	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities , Department for Education, and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
	Source	- Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plain Sight: A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm,* Commission on Young Lives, 2022 - UK Government (2023) 'Supporting Families', available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/supporting-families - UK Government (2022). '*Chapter 1: Introduction and objectives*', available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-programme-guidance-2022-to-2025/chapter-1-introduction-and-objectives
Safe Accommodation Project – Pilot Project	**Type**	**Awareness, Safeguarding, and Intervention**
	Brief summary	The Safe Accommodation Pilot Project aimed to improve the front-line practice of interventions with children affected by exploitation, to develop expertise within the sector to improve responses to child exploitation, and to keep children safe from harm. The Pilot consisted of three elements; 1. Direct work with 88 young people in local authority care who were at risk, or victims, of trafficking or sexual exploitation 2. To raise awareness through training courses for local authority foster carers and professionals 3. To create specialist foster placements for young people at risk, or victims, of trafficking or sexual exploitation An evaluation of the pilot found that an improvement in front-line practice, improved responses by those working in the sector, and that most of the young people involved in the pilot were kept safe from harm.

	Year	2011 - 2013
	Location	UK
	Implementing authority	Barnardo's, funded by the Department for Education
	Source	• Shuker, L., & Pearce, J., Could I do something like that? Recruiting and training foster carers for teenagers "at risk" of or experiencing child sexual exploitation, *Child & Family Social Work* Vol 24(3), 2019, pp. 361-369. • Shuker, L. (n.d.) '*Evaluation of Barnardo's Safe Accommodation Project for Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young People*', available at: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/barnardo27s-sa-project-evaluation-full-report__3_.pdf
Turnaround	**Type**	**Criminal Justice, Prevention and Identification**
	Brief summary	Turnaround is an early intervention scheme providing Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales £60 million in funding for improved early intervention and prevention of children entering the youth justice system. Turnaround aims to achieve positive outcomes for children and to prevent children from offending and entering the youth justice system. In doing so, Turnaround aims to improve the socio-emotional, mental health, and wellbeing of children and young people. Additionally, Turnaround aims to build on work already done and to improve effective multi-agency work. Turnaround does not prescribe what interventions should be used by local Youth Offending Teams but believes that the local teams are best placed to understand the needs of children and young people in their area.
	Year	UK
	Location	2022 - 2025
	Implementing authority	Youth Offending Teams, funded by the UK Government
	Source	• Commission on Young Lives., *Hidden in Plain Sight: A national plan of action to support vulnerable teenagers to succeed and to protect them from adversity, exploitation, and harm,* Commission on Young Lives, 2022. • London Innovation and Improvement Alliance, (2022), '*Turnaround Programme Guidance*' available at: • https://liia.london/download-file/1033

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	Type	Policing, Awareness, and Intervention
YourPolice.UK Instagram Account	**Brief summary**	YourPolice.UK is an Instagram account created by the National Police Chiefs Council, to use social media to be able to effectively engage with children and young people. The account publishes reliable information and advice about the police and crimes, whilst allowing young people to accessibly report crimes to the police wherever they are and whenever they need to.
	Year	2019 – present day
	Location	Online
	Implementing authority	National Police Chiefs Council
	Source	- National Youth Agency, *Between the Lines, United Kingdom*, Report, March 2021 - Police Digital Service (2023) *'Creating opportunities for digital engagement between children and young people and policing – Webinar'*, available at: - https://pds.police.uk/creating-opportunities-for-digital-engagement-between-children-and-young-people-and-policing-webinar/ - Daily Mail (2021). '*Police spend £350,000 a year on Instagram account that targets teenagers by asking them: 'Why do the police have rainbow cars?'* available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10031507/Police-spend-350-000-year-Instagram-account-targets-teenagers.html
	Type	Safeguarding and Intervention
Northern Ireland Independent Guardian Service	**Brief summary**	The Northern Ireland Independent Guardian Service has developed close working relationships with the Guardian Ad Litem agency in Northern Ireland. The Guardian Ad Litem agency is appointed by the courts to represent the best interests of the children and young people throughout the court processes and ensure that their voices are heard.
	Year	2018 – present day
	Location	Northern Ireland
	Implementing authority	Barnardo's Northern Ireland, funded by the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Board
	Source	Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner., & ECPAT UK., *Child trafficking in the UK 2021: a snapshot*, 2021

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