

# Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET)

## National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Pathway

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# **Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Pathway**

## **Point and purpose**

This document is aimed to ensure that where possible NRM referrals made by First Responders (a list of these can be found on page 3) are undertaken in a multi-agency way ensuring that all relevant information is sought and considered. A referral for an NRM should be considered against all available information and this should be included to ensure that the Single Competent Authority (SCA) are able to make the best decision possible. Where NRM's are made outside of this then they should be followed up with further information to aid decision making.

## **National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Children**

The NRM is a framework for referring suspected victims of human trafficking<sup>1</sup> and ensuring they receive appropriate support. If the potential victim is under 18, or may be under 18, an NRM referral must be made (children cannot be referred in using a Duty to Notify referral). Child victims do not have to consent to be referred into the NRM.

## **National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Adults (18+)**

Where someone who is over the age of 18 years old and is suspected of being a victim of human trafficking then there is a mandatory Duty to Notify (DTN)<sup>2</sup> by the referrer regardless of consent . Where a person over the age of 18 gives consent then an NRM should be made which provides access to a range of support mechanisms from the Salvation Army.

## **Victims who appear to be causing harm**

An individual may be both a victim of trafficking and a person who has caused harm to others. In cases of criminal exploitation, apparent offending behaviour may be a consequence of coercion, control, grooming or threats. Professionals should consider whether the person's actions have occurred within a context of exploitation and should not dismiss a potential NRM referral solely because the individual is perceived as a perpetrator.

## **What to do**

Any professional that has a concern for a child they believe to be at risk of immediate harm should contact the Police.

If you are concerned that a child maybe a victim of human trafficking then you must make a referral to Children's Social Care. This is to ensure that arrangements can be put in place to

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<sup>1</sup> Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation may include criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, or other forms of abuse. Children cannot consent to their own exploitation, and victims may sometimes appear to be offending or causing harm as a consequence of coercion, control, grooming or exploitation.

<sup>2</sup> Duty to Notify (DTN): A legal requirement for specified public authorities to report suspected adult victims of modern slavery or human trafficking to the Home Office. Where an adult does not consent to an NRM referral, a Duty to Notify referral must still be completed to support national intelligence and understanding of modern slavery.

safeguard the child or young person, and the police are made aware that a potential crime has been committed. When age is in doubt, the presumption has to be that the person is a child.

**To refer to children's social care:**

**Southend** - <https://www.southend.gov.uk/childrens-social-care/child-protection>

**Essex** - <https://www.essex.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/report-concern-about-child/make-request-support>

**Thurrock** - <https://www.thurrocklsc.org.uk/lscp/professionals/thurrock-common-assessment-framework-caf>

For all children suspected of being trafficked, a Strategy Discussion (within 72 hours according to SET Procedures) should take place to determine next steps which could include progression to arranging a multi-agency meeting to develop a safety plan and assess the need for the requirement of an NRM referral. On some occasions further information may be required prior to progressing to multi-agency meetings i.e. visits and contact with the child and their parents/carers.

A decision will be made on which first responder e.g. Police, Social worker will refer the child to the NRM using the online referral form if a referral has not already been made. Where a referral has already been made, information gathered from the multi-agency meeting will be used to send updated information to the SCA to ensure that all NRM referrals contain all relevant information to aid decision making. A referral to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians Service must be undertaken at the time of the NRM referral by the referrer.

**Referrals from Police**

Where the Police suspect a child is a victim of trafficking, they will complete a PP57 and immediately refer to Children's Services; on the PP57 the Police will indicate whether a previous NRM has been completed. Following receipt of this, Children's Services will triage the referral and where appropriate arrange a Strategy Discussion and/or a multi-agency meeting to enable a forum to discuss the risks and gather all relevant information, then either send extra information to supplement the existing NRM referral or whether to make a new referral.

In the event that a child identified as a separated migrant is discovered by the Police then the officer should refer to OC Triage to ensure that appropriate actions are undertaken and follow Op Innerste process.

Where a child comes to the attention of Essex Police having had a previous/ current NRM referral made by another force area, then a PP57 will be completed to initiate a multi-agency meeting to gather information to provide supplementary evidence to the SCA to aid decision making.

## **Open cases to Social Care**

Where cases are already open to Social Care and concerns of human trafficking are identified, Social Care will initiate a multi-agency meeting or Strategy Discussion and invite relevant partner agencies including Police (via OC Triage signposting to the relevant policing team) and decisions will be made as to whether a referral to the NRM is warranted and identify who is best to complete this.

## **Referring to the NRM**

Where children are identified as being suspected of being trafficked then the priority must be the immediate safety of the child. Alongside the completion of the NRM referral, the child must also be referred to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians Service. The NRM also enables the National Crime Agency, (NCA) and the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) to collate national data about the scope and nature of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK.

Referrals for the NRM are completed online: <https://www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start>

Referrals for the ICTG service are completed online: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/child-trafficking/ictg-service-referral-form>

Only organisations classed as first responders can refer a potential victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

## **Who are First Responders?**

A First Responder is an individual working within one of these organisations:

- Local Authorities
- Police forces
- UK Visas and Immigration
- Border Force
- Immigration Enforcement
- National Crime Agency
- Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
- Salvation Army
- Barnardo's
- Migrant Help
- Medaille Trust
- Kalayaan
- Unseen
- Tara Project (Scotland)
- NSPCC (CTAC)
- BAWSO
- New Pathways
- Refugee Council

Any “first responder” identifying a potential victim of modern slavery must refer them to the National Referral mechanism (NRM) for consideration by the competent authority. However, referrals which contain limited information may result in a NRM decision being delayed and, in most instances, best practice would dictate that any NRM referral made incorporates the information held on a multi-agency basis which would provide a stronger base for decision making in relation to human trafficking.

**The NRM does not replace or supersede SET Child Protection procedures, so existing safeguarding processes should still be followed in tandem with the notifications to the NRM.**

**A referral to the NRM is not a safeguarding tool and does not protect the child and priority should be given to ensuring the immediate safety of the child.**

### **Escalation Process**

In the event that there are concerns of drift, delay or disagreement in terms of actions then any agency should escalate these concerns according to the relevant agencies’ escalation procedures.