



protecting children everywhere

Child Trafficking Q & A

1. What is child trafficking?

Child trafficking is the movement of children within and/or across borders using force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation.

2. What are children trafficked for?

Children are trafficked for all kinds of economic and sexual exploitation. In the UK they have been trafficked for domestic servitude, prostitution, illegal adoption, benefit fraud and as cheap labour on building sites, in restaurants and drug manufacturing facilities. Even when children are trafficked for labour exploitation they remain highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation at any time of their trafficking experience.

3. How many children are trafficked?

- 1.2 million children are being trafficked annually (UN & ILO).
- ECPAT UK's research found 35 cases in 17 London boroughs, but 32 out of 33 London boroughs were concerned about other potential cases (ECPAT UK 2003). However, statistics are difficult to gather because trafficking is a covert and criminal activity. In addition, most countries do not monitor or document this human rights abuse.

4. What makes child trafficking possible?

A myriad of complex factors make children particularly vulnerable to trafficking and these include: absence of parental care; drug or alcohol abuse; poverty; gender inequality; growth of technology and child sex tourism; political instability and emergencies; discrimination; child labour; abduction and corruption.

5. Who are the children trafficked to the UK?

The UK is a destination and transit country for trafficking. To avoid detection, traffickers constantly vary their routes and methods. Most of the children are from countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and South East Asia.

6. Why do the children not seek help or escape?

Traffickers control their victims through coercive tactics, deception, removal of identity documents, confinement, threats, physical or sexual violence, creating distrust and fear of authorities, instilling fear through voodoo rituals and demanding the payment of ever increasing 'debts'.

7. Who are the traffickers?

All the people involved in the process of trafficking children within a country, across borders and exploiting children at the final destination are traffickers. They may be part of a well-organised criminal network, or individuals helping out in only one of the various stages.

8. What are the consequences for children?

Child victims of trafficking can suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse; health problems; pregnancy and abortions; post-traumatic stress disorders; loss of trust and often exhibit anti-social and fearful behaviour.

9. Does the UK have laws against trafficking?

Sexual Offences Act 2003: criminalises trafficking for sexual exploitation and makes it an offence to traffic into, within and out of the UK. The maximum sentence is 14 years.

Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc.) Act 2004: makes it an offence to traffic in all forms of labour exploitation and carries a maximum penalty of 14 years.

The Children Act 1989: mandates the provision of services and accommodation for children in need.

10. What is ECPAT UK doing to prevent child trafficking?

ECPAT UK is at the forefront in providing research, training and policy advice on the trafficking of children into the UK and is an active member of several multi-sectoral working groups.

We also add an international perspective on children's rights because we belong to an international network of ECPAT groups spanning over 60 countries.

ECPAT UK is campaigning for:

- UK Government to ratify the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against the Trafficking of Human Beings* and thereby ensure that trafficking victims are protected.
- A lead co-ordinating agency on child trafficking that has the leadership and resources to develop and ensure the implementation of policies, including co-ordinating information sharing across agencies and sectors.
- A national multi-agency framework on child trafficking that takes responsibility for data collection and documentation on trafficking.
- Partnerships with trafficking 'source' countries to safeguard and prevent children being re-trafficked.
- Implementation of the recommendations of the Metropolitan Police Operation Paladin Child, including formulating risk indicators to help identify children being trafficked or at risk.