

If human trafficking was happening around you, would you recognise the signs?

Human trafficking is an organised crime but it is also a local crime. While sex trafficking regularly grabs the media headlines, the majority of human trafficking is for labour, or Modern Slavery as the UK Government has defined it in its proposed new legislation to combat human trafficking. The perception of labour trafficking is men working in the fields or cockle picking on a beach, and while human trafficking victims are found in these environments, a victim of human trafficking is just as likely to be a hotel housekeeper, an office cleaner, or working in a nail salon.

There is a common misconception that human trafficking victims cannot be nationals of the UK. This is not true, the essential elements which define a human trafficking victim are that they have been exploited and moved from one place to another. Hence, a young British national who has been transferred by the traffickers from one UK city to another can potentially be a victim of human trafficking. The exploitation can be the taking of the wages that a worker has lawfully earned working on a farm, or the selling of a person from one gang to another, or forcing a victim to work in a house and look after the children of the house for free.

Typical workplaces for labour trafficking are fast food takeaway shops, hand car wash, farms, private houses where cannabis is being grown. But the person begging on the street and the labourer on the local building site is just as likely to be a victim of labour trafficking.

We should all be aware of the local communities in which we live and work and report anything suspicious.

So what is suspicious?

What are the indicators of a potential victim of human trafficking?

They will usually not communicate freely, they will not tell you anything about their background or their life including their address, they will rarely have money, they may always be in the company of another person who seems to control what they do (the enforcer), they may be wearing inappropriate clothing for the time of year or the job they are undertaking, and have signs of bruising or other injuries. They may be transported in a group, and may not have access to their documents. Having possession of a mobile phone doesn't mean that the person is not a human trafficking victim, and many victims will actually have some affinity to the enforcers or the traffickers, particularly in situations where the victims have been trafficked from an early age and lived with the traffickers for many years. The traffickers may be considered family by the victim, and they may want to protect them from law enforcement, hence they may be very uncooperative if spoken to by law enforcement. A trafficking victim will

often not welcome law enforcement with open arms, and may try to protect the trafficker.

So what can you do to combat human trafficking?

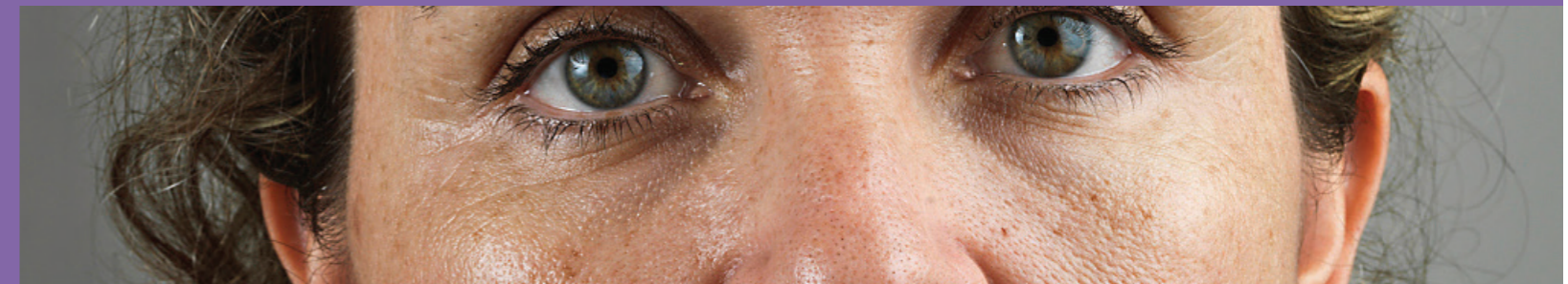
Keep your eyes open and report anything which appears out of place in your local community on 101 for non emergencies or 999 for emergencies.

Migrant Help offers free training on identifying indicators of human trafficking victims to law enforcement, and community safety units via a grant from Lankelly Trust.

For further information contact mhl@migranthelp.org or 01304203977.



I AM



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