



SEX TRAFFICKING: A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES

Empowering Local Solutions to Local Problems

A collaboration between:



Your neighbourhood matters.

“May 2020, I was contacted by a resident of the Hart Hill area of Luton about a house which had noise and anti-social behaviour linked to it.

The main issues raised by neighbours at that time were around noisy vehicles, vehicles driving the wrong way up the road and shouting and drunken behaviour of males who were hanging around the address.

The neighbours very kindly began keeping a diary for me and were able to (safely) report the registration numbers of cars coming and going to the same address.

From this information along with some of the images of people going in and out of the address, we were able to secure a warrant from court and when we executed it, it emerged that the property had been being used as a brothel.

Two males were arrested from the address with being concerned in running a brothel and we were also able to safeguard a female who was also present offering her assistance from a number of agencies including Azalea.”

Fiona Dawson Acting Inspector 118, Luton Community Policing Team

Your neighbourhood matters. And so do you.

WHY A TOOLKIT?

Luton Against Sex Trafficking, in collaboration with Azalea and Safer Streets have developed this toolkit, with the aim of informing and empowering local communities and civilians to understand and take safe action in order to see sex trafficking reduced in their neighbourhoods.

Luton Against Sex Trafficking exists to empower and inspire communities to find local solutions to the local problem of sex trafficking.

WARNING

This document contains stories and information that are harrowing and may be hard to read, particularly if you have had similar personal experiences.

Please seek support and help if you are in need. 

Samaritans UK www.samaritans.org.uk
or call **116 123** their free 24/7 helpline

MIND www.mind.org.uk
or call **0300 123 3393** Monday - Friday between 9am and 6pm

If you discover, through reading this toolkit, that you have yourself been subject to sexual abuse and/or exploitation please do seek help. Here are some numbers to begin exploring how you can be supported into recovery.

Rape Crisis www.rapecrisis.org.uk
or call **0808 802 9999** daily between 12pm to 2.30pm and 7pm to 9.30pm

Victim Support www.victimsupport.org.uk
or call **0808 168 9111** their 24 hour helpline

Throughout the toolkit there are stories and case studies. All names used are pseudonyms, in order to protect the identity of the individuals who have shared their stories with us. Some stories have been written by survivors, some stories are a combination of a variety of experiences that the authors of this document have witnessed and heard.

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Norah, her story

Norah has experienced a life of hardship and trauma. Experiencing sexual abuse from when she was 8 years old, Norah's path in life was chosen by someone else. It was chosen by the perpetrator who decided to rape and abuse her. Norah grew up believing that this abuse was normal, this was just how people showed love and affection. Her confidence and self-esteem were robbed from her when she was 8 years old, and the woman who grew from this time onward, was fractured.

Over the years, Norah finds herself again and again being manipulated and coerced into relationships that she thought were loving ones. Each new 'boyfriend'; a new hope for affection and kindness that she has craved since she was a child. But each new 'boyfriend' is a pimp, an exploiter, a perpetrator who views Norah as a commodity, someone through whom he can make money. He succeeds in convincing her that he is doing all this for them, and - doesn't he take care of her? Give her a place to live? Gives her drugs? Doesn't this prove that he really does care about her? After all, no one else will love her, except him.



But when the money she has made isn't enough, that's when the violence gets worse.

Out on the streets, Norah has to get enough 'business'. Everything counts so she will be out every night, all night long. She is terrified, every car she gets in – she doesn't know what is going to happen. She could end up dead. But the fear of what will happen when she gets 'home' is stronger, and the fear of losing her 'boyfriend' and having no-one to care for her? Well, don't even go there.

One night, Norah meets a strange group of people who for some, unknown reason, want to give her homemade cakes and protective equipment, like a rape alarm. It's like they care about her. They say they are volunteers from a local charity, just here to chat and spend time with her. They are all from Luton and they really want to look after the people in their town. She sees them a few times over the next weeks. She doesn't say it, but it helps to know there are people out there who care and who don't seem to want anything from her.

She finds that as she sees more of these people, she is becoming aware that there are others who do little things that are kind. When she has to go to the foodbank to get food for her 'boyfriend', someone holds the door open for her, she is offered a cup of tea or coffee, freshly made, just for her. Even though she has only 5 minutes and rushes in and rushes out, she notices. **She begins to wonder, if after everything she has been through, maybe she has a little more worth than she thought.**

Your neighbourhood matters. And so does she.

In conversation with the friendly volunteers at night, the people she meets through the foodbank and the neighbour she occasionally see's when she gets home from 'work' she probably revealed a lot of information about her life without even knowing it. Boundaries have never been her strong point, after her most important boundary, her body, was violated at eight years old. She often receives a phone call from the local safeguarding team who have been told by a concerned individual, that **Norah might not be ok and she might not be safe.** The person on the phone just wants to check if she is ok, and if there is anything she can do to help. Norah isn't ready to say yes to the help yet, but this experience is repeated over the next few years as local residents continue to be concerned for her welfare.



"she might not be OK,
she might not be safe"

And, one day, she is ready.

Norah is now preparing to leave the area to go to a trauma informed, residential rehabilitation centre. This hasn't been an easy journey, and the hardest part is still yet to come. In the last few years there have been glimpses of hope, and moments of respite away from her 'boyfriend'. But to finally be leaving, hopefully for good, is almost unbelievable. The pull to go back to him is always there, and when she feels depressed and anxious, the thought of him and the numbing effect of drugs tugs at her mind, heart, body and soul. She was moved, by a local women's charity, to alternative, safer accommodation about a year ago and this gave her the opportunity to begin to bring some stability into her life again. She sorted out independent access to her benefits and was able to use local foodbank support just for herself.

Thankfully, for the past few years, Norah has heard so many words of affirmation and encouragement from all the professionals in her life, and from the community of neighbours she has found around her. Every kind word mattered; every kind word meant that maybe the lies she believed about herself didn't have to be true. She reflects on this in her preparation to move on and move forwards. **What might have happened if no one had noticed her? What if no one had made those calls to safeguarding, or reported their concerns to the local policing team?** Maybe at the time she didn't fully understand why they did this, but now, she can see how it helped get her to this place.

A place where now, finally, she can choose her healing, her recovery and her freedom.





Part 1

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Terms and Definitions

John/Punter

common language used to describe a sex buyer

Perpetrator/Exploiter/Pimp

an individual who is coercing, forcing, manipulating another human being into being exploited. Often referred to by sex trafficked women as **'Boyfriend/Partner/Husband'**

Kerb Crawlers

sex buyers in cars who loop streets where it is commonly known you can purchase sexual services

Sex work/sex worker

other words that might be used include 'prostitution/prostitute', 'working girl' describing people who are being sex trafficked and are being sexually exploited for financial exchange

The beat

streets/areas where sex buyers know that they will locate women who are being trafficked/ 'pimped out' from whom they can purchase/access sexual services

CSE/CSA

childhood sexual exploitation/commercial sexual abuse

Brothel

a place where men can go to purchase sex from women. These can take the form of a residential setting such as a flat, or can function out of massage parlours, saunas, nail bars/beauticians, dance clubs etc.

'Business'

a common term used to describe 'sex work'

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are terms used to describe a variety of **illicit activities through which an individual is exploited** for the benefit - usually financial - of another individual or organisation.

This can take the form of forced labour, organ harvesting, sexual exploitation, domestic or other servitude. Human trafficking can take place within one country, or involve crossing borders of multiple countries.

In the Home Office Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance for England and Wales, human trafficking is defined as having three components:

'Action: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, which includes an element of movement whether national or cross-border; which is achieved by a...

Means: threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability; for the purpose of...

Exploitation: for example, sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, financial exploitation, removal of organs'

(P.16 section 2.5: Home Office Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance for England and Wales)

The Palermo Protocol, and the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Being definition is as follows:

"'Trafficking in human beings" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.'

(Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking, 2005)

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According to the Global Slavery Index, 'an estimated 40.3 million men, women, and children were victims of modern slavery on any given day in 2016' (Global Slavery Index, 2018). Of these, 71% were female.

Similarly, in a report published in 2020, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that 'For every 10 victims detected globally, five are adult women and two are girls.' And, 'Overall, 50 per cent of detected victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation'. (UNODC Global Trafficking In Persons, 2020)

These statistics reveal an overwhelming picture of the reality of modern slavery and human trafficking, and yet, whilst the crime of human trafficking remains difficult to measure given its hidden nature, we reflect that these numbers could today, be much higher.



What is sex trafficking?

Sex trafficking is when an individual is coerced, forced, or manipulated into providing sexual access or services to a 'punter', often through threats of violence or enactment of violence from a pimp, by physically restraining an individual inside a premise, or from the pimp withholding basic human rights, e.g. food and shelter, until the exploited individual has earned enough or has 'serviced' a requisite number of punters. This is not an exhaustive guide to the variety of ways an individual can be sexually exploited.

"During the first 3 months of 2020, we saw a sharp rise in the number of safeguarding incidents with seven times the number of disclosures of violence and rape versus the same time period in 2019"

(Azalea Charity Log 2020)



Most commonly pimps and sex buyers tend to be male, and those sex trafficked are female. This is not always the case, but predominantly is, and indeed is mainly the case in Luton.

This toolkit focuses on this common presentation of sex trafficking, but it must be noted that there is no limit to who can exploit, and who can be exploited.

'Whilst it is mostly women who sell sex to male customers, male prostitution, in which men sell sex to other men, is also a lucrative business. Some women do pay for sexual services from men, but this is much rarer. Human sexuality is complex and the "sex industry", as it is often called, reflects this – it is far from straightforward. For example, some men want to buy sex from men who look like women, but who have not undergone a sex-change operation e.g. the "lady boys" of Thailand. Transgendered people also work in commercial sexual exploitation.'

(R. Robb and M. Carson, 2020. Pp. 3 'Walk Into Freedom')

There are varied reasons why traffickers exploit other, more vulnerable human beings. In the main, these reasons will always come back to one sought after gain: power.

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Individuals who are trafficked for sexual exploitation are likely to have experienced during their life: childhood sexual abuse and/or childhood sexual exploitation, homelessness, domestic abuse, living in social care, economic deprivation, emotional abuse, and more. Each factor increases an individual's vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and being sex trafficked itself increases an individual's vulnerability to the continuation or reoccurrence of sex trafficking.

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.'

(Department of Education: Child Sexual Exploitation, Feb 2017)

The toolkit 'Women Exploited by the Street Sex Trade', designed for professionals working in Luton, compiled a report with input from women who are caught up in sex trafficking in Luton. The toolkit was published in November 2019. They found that;

'In Luton, our report showed that 100% of the women who participated were victims of child sexual abuse and experienced the loss of a close family member. Many women experienced domestic abuse from a family member and became pregnant before the age of 16.'

(Women exploited by the street sex trade, Public Health Luton)

Additionally; '85% suffered from CSE' and '85%-92% of victims suffered from mental or physical abuse'. (Women exploited by the street sex trade, Public Health Luton)

'100% of sex trafficked women known to support services in Luton are victims of Child Sexual Abuse or Child Sexual Exploitation.'

(Azalea)

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For many women who are trafficked locally and/or nationally, (often British nationals), drugs and alcohol are a large factor in their exploitation. Childhood sexual exploiters often makes use of drugs and alcohol as 'gifts' or 'rewards' either before or after forcing a child into sexual acts. Once a dependency upon harmful substances has been established, it is a life-long journey to recover.

In adulthood, pimps/perpetrators/exploiters employ several tactics to keep a woman in slavery and dependent upon him/them. This could be through the use of violence, threats and humiliation to control her movements and activity; the removal of basic human rights - shelter, food, water; depriving her of support from friends and family until she is totally isolated; through grooming - a tactic used commonly in childhood sexual exploitation, where the girl/woman is befriended the groomer who establishes an emotional connection with her, convincing her that he 'loves' her. Where once drugs and alcohol formed a part of the coercion, it is highly likely that they will become a means to numb and cope with the unfathomable pain of the trauma a trafficked person has experienced.

'Organised criminal gangs prey on and exploit vulnerable people. This can include those with drink or drug addiction issues, poor mental health or who do not speak English as their first language.'

(VERU, Bedfordshire Police)

Internationally trafficked persons may also experience the use of drugs and alcohol as a factor in their exploitation, but there are also other factors that keep a person enslaved. This could involve threats made to harm or kill an individual's family, a fear of local authorities and law enforcement, not speaking or understanding the local language, not having permission to be in the country, and not having access to any identification documents or finances.

'Trafficking victims who do not have permission to work or stay in the country of exploitation face an extra layer of vulnerability. The fear of being exposed as an irregular migrant can be a powerful tool for traffickers, who typically threaten to file reports with the authorities and can more easily keep victims under exploitative conditions.'

(UNODC GloTIP Report)

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For the purpose of empowering readers of this toolkit to understand the potential difference between nationally and internationally trafficked persons, it must also be stated that this is a guide and by no means a definitive. It is possible that there is crossover and similarities, as well as potential differences, between nationally and internationally trafficked persons.

Whilst occasionally an individual's perpetrator may be visible, often-times they will be invisible and it is the individual who is being exploited, that is seen and even blamed.

Trafficked individuals are the visible symptom of a global, systemic, criminal problem that originates with the exploiters, the perpetrators, not the survivors.



"she might not be OK,
she might not be safe"

How do we recognise the signs of sex trafficking?

To help shed some light on the local problem, here are some suggestions on what sex trafficking looks like here.

These descriptors are to help you **observe and report**, we **do not** encourage you to act in ways that would put you or others at risk of harm.



Survivors

Sex buyers

Exploiters

Survivors of sex trafficking

The media has perpetuated a stereotypical idea of a woman who wears high heels, short skirts, fish net tights and the colour red. Often this image is glamourised and is extremely unhelpful when trying to assess if someone, whom you have noticed, is caught up in sex trafficking. Most will actually wear **jeans, t-shirts and trainers** – clothing far away from the cliché.

Due to previous and current experiences of exploitation, women who are forced to work in the street sex trade will have **serious health challenges** and, as described before, are highly likely to be **addicted to drugs and/or alcohol**. Therefore, they will often look **drawn, thin and malnourished**. A tell-tale sign could be a habit of **looking into cars** or **frequently scanning around** for potential punters, and walking very slowly up and down the same street. Women who are caught up in sex trafficking could seem to be 'working' **alone**, or could be gathering **in pairs or groups around key road junctions**.

Many women who are caught up in local or national trafficking, and are often British nationals, can present with a **confident, loud, tenacious personality**, or to some, seem **argumentative**. Sex trafficking survivors, are survivors of intense trauma - often extenuated throughout their life. To survive, many will have deployed tactics such as dissociation. This is where an individual separates themselves mentally from a current experience to the point where the abuse that is happening to them in the present, feels as though it is happening to someone else and they are just observing. Over time, this can develop into dissociative or personality disorders. Women who present with a confident, brash exterior have learnt to survive in harsh circumstances and they need this confident presentation to continue surviving.

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For those who have been sex trafficked internationally, the presentation could look quite different. Unseen defines the indicative signs as follows (emphasis added);

**'A property might have male callers day and night who only stay for a short time
There may be details of sexual activity such as cards and advertisements found nearby**

Sex workers may appear scared or intimidated

The individual may be transported to and from clients

Individuals may be closely guarded

The person may be 'branded' with a tattoo indicating ownership

Sex workers may show signs of physical abuse, including bruising, scarring and cigarette burns

The individual may be unable to keep payment and may have restricted or no access to their earnings

The person may have a limited English vocabulary, restricted to sexualised words

Multiple female foreign nationals may be living at the same address

The person may sleep in the premises in which they work, which could indicate a brothel is operating '

(Unseen, <https://www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery/spot-the-signs>)

Sex buyers

Many sex buyers access women caught in sex trafficking by foot. A man can be observed **walking around 'aimlessly'** and **stopping around bus stops and phone boxes with no intention**. **Frequent sightings** can indicate he is looking to buy sex.

Frequent sightings of cars can indicate that drivers are looking to buy sex or that they live in the neighbourhood. Often sex buyers can be in a full car of hidden males and driving slowly, often **looping the same streets**. This is known as **kerb crawling**.

Sex buyers can be of **all different ethnicities, ages, cultures, religions, economic and academic backgrounds**. There is not one 'group' of people where sex buying is most prevalent. It is across the board.

Reasons why men buy sex include:

- Satisfy immediate sexual urge, entertainment, pleasure
- Seeks variety, wants to select certain physical, racial and sexual stereotypes
- Can't get what he wants sexually or emotionally in his current relationship
- Convenience, no commitment, no emotional connection
- It's a thrill; likes to break a taboo
- It's an addiction or compulsion or result of intoxication
- Male bonding, peer pressure

(Men Who Buy Sex: Who They Buy and What They Know p.21

<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/Mensex.pdf>)

Some sex buyers become 'regular punters' to women that they purchase sex from and will contact or search out the same woman on a regular basis.

Exploiters

Where you may see women visibly 'working', you may on occasion see another **individual**, often but **not always a man**, with them or nearby. This individual could be **hovering nearby**, enabling him/her to observe what is going on.

A pimp may also be seen visibly with a woman, **appearing to be a friendly and attentive boyfriend**.

Exploiters will be 'managing'/controlling the money that is being made by the woman through emotional manipulation or physical violence. The exploiter often has full control over when the woman 'works'. It is often to serve the needs of the exploiter e.g. needing money to fund their drug habit.

CASE STUDIES



"she might not be OK,
she might not be safe"

SCENARIO 1, JEMIMA

Jemima has been on a methadone script for a while now since her 'boyfriend' forced her to try drugs a couple of years ago. However, her 'boyfriend' still makes her inject when he is around. Her 'boyfriend' arranges for men to come to her accommodation throughout the night when he needs more money for drugs. She has to have sex with them or her 'boyfriend' will become aggressive and violent towards her. Jemima's 'boyfriend' tells her that he loves her and that he will always look after her.

What you see

Someone in your block appears to be vulnerable and have a drug addiction. They are thin, unkempt, with poor dental hygiene and are out at irregular hours. You notice many people going in and out of their home. They are loud and there are used needles being left outside. The noise is very late at night and is disturbing your sleep.

1. What could be happening?
2. What does being vulnerable mean to you?
3. What action do you take?
4. How do you keep yourself safe?

SCENARIO 2, TORI

Tori had been told to go out on the beat and earn money by a 'friend', Mark, who lets her stay at his place sometimes. She has been street homeless for a while and so she was grateful when he did her a favour and said she could live with him, provided she returns the favour in one way or another. Mark keeps increasing the amount of money he wants as 'rent', and when Tori cannot afford the amount, he rapes her. Mark is stood round the corner watching Tori from a distance. He wants to know that she is earning as much as she can in an evening.

What you see

You spot a car driving slowly by a woman and speaking with her. She approaches and hangs out of the car window. After exchanging a few words, she gets in the car. You have seen the woman standing on the corner before.

1. What could be happening?
2. What can you do about the potential sex buyer?
3. And the exploited woman?
4. How do you keep yourself safe?

SCENARIO 3, SOFIA

Sofia was brought to the UK by a couple who promised her they would help her find a cleaning job so that she could send money back to support her family. When they reached the UK, the couple kept her passport and forced her to sleep in a room of a flat with 3 other women. Sofia had some savings given to her by her grandmother before she moved to the UK. Andrew, her trafficker, was demanding that she hand it all over to him as rent. He invites other men round to rape Sofia and the other women, and he receives all of the money that they pay to do this. Andrew says that this money pays for the food he occasionally provides the women with. Sofia has heard Andrew on the phone to people talking about how much it would 'cost' to buy the women.

What you see

A woman comes into a bank where you work. She is trying to hide a black eye and seems to be limping. You ask her if you can help, she speaks with an accent indicating that English is not her first language. She tells you that she needs to take all of the money out of her account. You take her to a machine to show her how to do this. Her phone is ringing off the hook. She answers a man who is shouting telling her to hurry up and that people are 'waiting for her at the flat'.

1. What could be happening?
2. What can you do about the potential sex buyer?
3. And the exploited woman?
4. How do you keep yourself safe?

SCENARIO 4, DINA

Dina was abused by her step father when she was young. She ran away from home, and when she was found by the authorities, she was put into a children's home. She was sexually abused by the staff in the children's home. She escaped from here and has lived on the streets ever since. She feels safer here. She begs in the day and she 'works the streets' at night to pay for the bits of food she eats.

What you see

A young looking female is sat outside the shopping centre asking for money. She tells you that she is homeless and that she needs money to eat. You stop to ask her if she is ok, and she tells you that begging doesn't work anymore because there are too many people begging in the town centre. She tells you that she is having to get money in other ways and she looks to the floor when she says this. You can see that she has scars on her wrists that look like cuts.

1. What could be happening?
2. What can you do about the potential sex buyer?
3. And the exploited woman?
4. How do you keep yourself safe?

MYTH BUSTING



"she might not be OK,
she might not be safe"

'It's a form of work that they have chosen'

There is a huge lack of choice. They might have been raised into a family where this has been the environment and expectation, they might know nothing else. They might have been trafficked from another country. There might be complications with their settlement status and they might have no recourse to public funds. They might have a pimp/perpetrator who forces them to sell themselves to make money.

"Many people believe that prostitution is no different from any other business transaction: a service is provided, and money exchanged. But this understanding of prostitution assumes certain things: that the people offering the sexual services are doing so voluntarily, that they get to keep the money they earn, that they can work safely, that the people who buy their services treat them with respect... for the vast majority of people involved in it, the reality is quite different"

Walk into Freedom (R.Robb and M.Carson 2020 p2)

"Sex workers", especially those of age (16+), cannot be raped'

Once there has been a financial transaction, there is an enhanced power imbalance. The sex buyer is immediately in control, and more often than not, their intention is to enact violence. Choice is not a choice because it is a trauma informed choice. The decision is not made with the freedom of choice, but with many external factors controlling it. When money has been handed over, the sex buyer often feels that they can do whatever they please, regardless of direct consent from the woman. Thus, the sex is not consensual and is in fact rape, at any age.

"In prostitution, men use women's and girl's bodies, vaginas, anuses, mouths for their sexual pleasures and as vessels of ejaculation, over and over and over again. Prostitution is not sexual liberation; it is humiliation, it is torture, it is rape, it is sexual exploitation and should be named as such. Consequently, males who use women and girls in prostitution are sexual predators and rapists'

Gunilla Ekberg (2002) cited in Walk into Freedom (R.Robb and M.Carson 2020 p.9)

‘People prostitute themselves to fund their drug addictions – simple as’

It is far from simple. Some are born with addictions, due to a parent or caregiver having an addiction. Some are fed drugs as children and teenagers, by exploiters, to allow for abuse and exploitation. Some turn to drugs to numb the trauma they have experienced; drugs are an emotional pain killer.

‘Children are safe from abuse and exploitation within institutions such as care homes’

Institutions are often a prime place for abuse, exploitation and trafficking to begin. The implicit trust that people place in these forms of authority allows so much of this activity to go undetected.

“In the UK recently, there have been several instances of gangs targeting vulnerable young girls who live in children’s homes, and forcing them to work in prostitution’

(<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/revealed-conspiracy-of-silence-on-uk-sex-gangs-gpg5vqsqz9h> (cited in R.Robb and M.Carson 2020 p.7)

‘Only people from other countries can be sex trafficked’

Humans can be trafficked internationally between countries, but they can also be trafficked nationally, being moved around the country. Often it can be harder to identify local trafficking and exploitation, despite the fact it can go on under our noses.

“A common model of operation used by organised crime groups engaged in commercial sexual exploitation involves setting up temporary, so-called “pop-up” brothels in residential properties. Online sites such as Airbnb and Booking.com provide opportunities for pimps/perpetrators and madams to find short term accommodation in which to operate. As soon as one brothel is closed another one will appear somewhere else- the women are moved from city to city and town to town, and given no choice in the matter”

Walk into Freedom (R.Robb and M.Carson 2020 p5-6)

'Women are not being exploited unless they are being forced to stay in a brothel, against their will, and to give all of the money to the pimp'

Many women, especially those who can be found 'working' on the streets, can project as if they are in control of what they are doing, however this is rarely the case. There is more often than not, a perpetrator watching from a distance. If they are not being controlled by a person, then they are being controlled by their trauma and subsequently their addiction.

'Grooming gangs are always Asian males'

There is no one 'group' of people who are more responsible for grooming girls and women into sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Grooming gangs are of all ethnic backgrounds, religions and cultures. A study carried out shows that:

"The ethnic identities of the men who participated in this research [into sex buyers] were varied. About one-half of the men (47%) described themselves as White British, 11% were Black British or African, 10% were British Asian, 10% described themselves as of Indian or Pakistani descent, 4% were Eastern European and 4% described themselves as having mixed ethnic backgrounds. An additional 14% included Afghan, Australian, Brazilian, Central American, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, western European, White South African, and African American.

Thirty-five per cent of the men in this sample reported no religious affiliation. One-third described themselves as Christian. Ten per cent described themselves as Hindu, 5% as Muslim and 4% as Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh or Spiritualist. Thirteen per cent reported an unspecified other religious affiliation."

(Men Who Buy Sex: Who They Buy and What They Know p.7

<https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/Mensex.pdf>)

'Women who sell sex are always economically poor with no other option'

There is a growing trend for university students to begin 'sex working' to fund their studies and living costs. This is becoming more widely acceptable, even encouraged.

'Several prominent universities, including Bristol, Goldsmiths and my own university of Cambridge have either created their own versions of this guide [Sex Worker Toolkit] or are in the process of doing so. Today, we live in a bizarro-world where, on one hand, universities will smother their students in endless courses in safe sex, consent and student welfare – while simultaneously 'supporting' students working in the most dangerous 'profession' on the planet.'

(P. Coburn, 2021. <https://unherd.com/the-post/why-are-universities-so-keen-to-support-prostitution/>)

"Only young, 'attractive' girls, would be desirable to sex buyers'

There is no 'typical' look to women who are being trafficked and sexually exploited. Sex buyers can have physical preferences that would surprise many, for example, heavily pregnant ladies.

Women who are actively being sex trafficked and sexually exploited may even find some of these myth busters surprising. Many of these horrifying realities have been normalised for them from an extremely young age. Rape, for example, they could consider as 'just part of the job'. It is wrong to allow this normalisation and desensitisation to persist. These long-standing myths must be challenged to allow for a better understanding and an eye for identifying sex trafficking in local communities.



Part 2

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

SCENARIO 1, JEMIMA

- Keep a log of when you hear people entering and exiting the building – at what hours do people tend to come and go? How often in the week is this happening? This can then be passed on to local authorities as a source of evidence for concern
- Safely and discreetly make a note of any car registrations that you notice are linked to the people entering the accommodation – again this can be shared anonymously with authorities
- If drug paraphernalia has been found – **DO NOT TOUCH IT.** Contact your Local Authority to dispose of it, or to receive advise on how to dispose of it. If you are in shared accommodation e.g. a block of flats, contact your landlord or whoever has responsibility for the accommodation and make them aware of what you have found and the concerns that you have. This should trigger the accommodation professional to make some enquiries and express concerns elsewhere for the resident. This is also the appropriate person to notify about noise complaints.
- Contact your landlord or whoever is responsible for the block of flats and voice your concerns



In 2013 the Home Office estimated that there could be anywhere between 10,000-13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK. The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index in 2018 estimated that there could be as many as 136,000 people enslaved in the UK.

(It still happens here: Justice and Care)



In Part 2 of this toolkit, we aim to offer a glimpse into the hope of this situation, and suggest some safe, small, manageable and relevant actions that any person can take.



Why local solutions?

The enormous scale of human trafficking is overwhelming, and it would be wrong if it was not considered overwhelming. Human beings are sold, exploited, abused, raped on mass daily. Yet, as this toolkit will hopefully show, there are many small actions that individuals, families, community groups can take to have a direct impact on the reduction of sex trafficking. **When sex trafficking reduces, hope, freedom, and a bright future increases.**

'The British public can play a unique role in the fight against trafficking by reporting concerns to the police, but almost 60% of people do not know who to tell when they spot the signs. Public awareness has improved though, with 63% saying they are more aware of slavery than they were five years ago. 68% say fighting modern slavery should be a top political priority'

(It Still Happens Here: Justice and Care)

Professional bodies, statutory organisations and charities have a significant role to play in fighting sex trafficking. But **every civilian** has a perspective and observes human activity in limitless, vast ways – often beyond the scope of professionals. There is indeed a thriving, active response to sex trafficking in Luton from professionals' and it is an important part in tackling sex trafficking in Luton. **Professional individuals, groups, statutory bodies and local residents, through working together, can make a bigger impact than alone.**

We all live in neighbourhoods, in communities; rarely do we live totally disconnected from society and the world around us. Whether our connection comes from being part of a busy, thriving social network, attending local faith and community groups, or simply through regularly buying our milk and newspaper from the newsagent down the road.

Somewhere, somehow, we all connect.

Through our connections with each other, comes an opportunity to care for each other. Through caring for each other locally, we work together to find the local solutions. And this is the message of this toolkit, **by caring for each other and caring for our neighbourhoods – all of neighbours, the literal ones and the ones we pass as we go about our daily lives – we are more likely to see sex trafficking reduce and people set free.**



SCENARIO 2, TORI

- Make a note of the car registration plates that you see 'kerb crawling'
- Make a note of the time and place that you have spotted the woman, along with any other incidences
- Consider submitting the information you have seen to faith@lastmatters.co.uk OR SSFcoordinator@luton.gov.uk



The importance of reporting

“May 2020, I was contacted by a resident of the Hart Hill area of Luton about a house which had noise and anti-social behaviour linked to it.

The main issues raised by neighbours at that time were around noisy vehicles, vehicles driving the wrong way up the road and shouting and drunken behaviour of males who were hanging around the address.

The neighbours very kindly began keeping a diary for me and were able to (safely) report the registration numbers of cars coming and going to the same address. From this information along with some of the images of people going in and out of the address, we were able to secure a warrant from court and when we executed it, it emerged that the property had been being used as a brothel.

Two males were arrested from the address with being concerned in running a brothel and we were also able to safeguard a female who was also present offering her assistance from a number of agencies including Azalea.

After this point, we were then able to apply for a three-month Closure Order on the address which was granted by the courts to prevent the tenants from doing the same thing again. The landlord had no idea what was going on until we contacted him to let him know.

Incidents such as above are not as rare as people may think and any information where something just doesn't feel quite right, the Police would love to know. A significant number of warrants have been gained from an initial report where something has been seen and has seemed out of place especially around matters of sexual exploitation.”

Fiona Dawson, Acting Inspector 118 Luton Community Policing Team

What happens with the information that is reported?

When a call is put through to 101 or a report submitted online to report suspicious activity, a person, a car registration place, an address etc, which you believe to be linked to sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, **each report is recorded** and the information will be **put through the police system** to see if there have been **any previous mentions of the same details**.

This will all be saved and **as reports of the same information begin to tally up, action can be taken by officers**. These details may not be communicated back to whoever reported the information depending on sensitivity and so often people do not realise the impact their report has had. However, **all reports contribute to building bigger pictures** which can translate into **action to create a safe community** or could be that **final piece of the puzzle** that has prevented action until that point.



What anyone can do

When you see someone who you think could be being sexually exploited and trafficked:

Keep a written log of what you are seeing, where you are seeing it and the date and time you are seeing it.

- Call Luton Adult Safeguarding Team on **01582 547730** or email adultsafeguarding@luton.gov.uk
- Call Luton Children's Safeguarding Team on **01582 547653** or **0300 3008 123** or email mash@luton.gov.uk
- Report your observations to the Police - **REMEMBER** - any reporting you do can remain **anonymous**. Call **999** in an emergency or **101** if you do not need an immediate response.
- Call the Modern Slavery Helpline 08000 121 700 advisors are well placed to offer information and advice on what you may be seeing.

When you see an individual or group who is/are potentially purchasing sex:

Keep a written log of what you are seeing, where you are seeing it and the date and time you are seeing it. Do **not** approach them and place yourself at risk.

- Submit information about individual buyers and car registration number plates to faith@lastmatters.co.uk
- Report your sightings to the Police in as much detail as possible - **REMEMBER** - any reporting you do can remain **anonymous**. Call **999** in an emergency or **101** if you do not need an immediate response.

If you are unsure about reporting incidents to the police, it can be helpful to begin reporting lesser crimes, such as fly tipping, to get used to the process. After doing this a few times, you may feel more comfortable about reporting crimes such as suspected trafficking and exploitation.

SUPPORTING MEN TO WALK IN A NEW DIRECTION

If someone you know purchases sex, you can make a referral, or empower them to refer themselves, to Flint.

Flint provides a personal and non-judgemental mentoring service that helps men with strong temptations to significantly reduce their purchasing of sex.

Developed by a dedicated team which includes a GP and trained counsellor, the Flint programme can help you to deal with shame, mend damaged relationships and recover a healthy and fulfilling attitude to sex.

Flint's mentoring service shows evidence of improving men's mental wellbeing, and in the words of one of our service users "Flint helps you get free from paying for sex".

In addition, service users have reported improvements in relationships with family members, including their children, and a renewed ability and enthusiasm to engage in community, charitable and social activities.

Go to www.azalea.org.uk/flint for more information or send an email to flint@azalea.org.uk



SCENARIO 3, SOPHIA

- Make a note of a name, if she shared this with you
- Make a note of what the pair of them looked like, what they were wearing – did you notice any distinctive features?
- Make a note of the injuries that you noticed – was it her left or right eye that was bruised?
- Make a note of the times that the CCTV would have picked up footage with the pair in
- Call the police if you feel the lady could be in imminent danger – share all of the details that you have made a note of
- Call the Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700** for advice on how to report this further



Nordic Model: why we need it and how to campaign for it

Currently in England and Wales, it is legal to exchange sexual services for money. However, it is illegal to loiter or solicit for prostitution, rent or allow a property to be used as a brothel, advertise in phone boxes, kerb crawl, or exploit and/or traffic people for selling sexual services. It is also illegal to purchase sexual services from someone who is being forced or coerced and it is irrelevant if the punter is aware that the person is being exploited.

The current law means vulnerable women and girls are not only being exploited by pimps and traffickers, but they are also being criminalised by the state - pushing them further into the hands of traffickers.

In recognising prostitution as a form of violence against women, Sweden has adopted the Nordic model. The Nordic model decriminalises those who are prostituted and instead criminalises purchase of sexual services. It also offers exit and support services to those trapped in the trade. In doing this, the Nordic model tackles the root cause of sex trafficking - addressing the demand that fuels it.

Seeing the success of this model, other countries have followed suit by implementing it including Canada, France, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Northern Ireland and Norway.

If we want to see a lasting change to tackle sex trafficking, then we must implement a Nordic style model in the UK. You can read more about the Nordic Model on the www.nordicmodelnow.org – Movement for the Abolition of Prostitution and you can follow the work of the APPG on Commercial Sexual Exploitation to bring a Bill to Parliament here: Sexual Exploitation Bill: Speech by Dame Diana Johnson MP – APPG on Commercial Sexual Exploitation (appg-cse.uk)

Kate Hardman, MA Human Rights and former Advocate for survivors of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

What not to do

When you witness someone who is potentially being sexually exploited, do not:

- **Place yourself in dangerous situations**
 - If you are witnessing a situation that could be harmful, aggressive, dangerous, remove yourself to a safe space and call the police.
- **Rescue and jump in to be a 'saviour'**
 - If the individual you are observing, or who you may be talking to is in need of help, follow the steps above by calling the police, the modern slavery helpline and/or local safeguarding teams. Details can be found on page .
- **Ignore common sense**
 - Remain aware that the human trafficking and exploitation is a dangerous world, if you are witnessing what could be exploitation do not follow an individual or enter into isolated areas or buildings.
- **Ignore the situation and look the other way**
 - Whilst it is important to keep yourself safe, it is also important to maintain a 'level-head' and consider what it is that you can do. As citizens in community, we have a duty to care for each other.
- **Think 'oh someone else will deal with that'**
 - More often than not, 'someone else' will not, much of the work of reducing sex trafficking is down to the small, everyday actions of local people.
- **Think 'I'll leave that to the professionals'**
 - Reducing sex trafficking and the impact of sex trafficking on communities is everyone's responsibility.

We are all empowered to do something, no matter how small. 100 small actions are far better and more effective than one person taking a big action.

LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO LOCAL PROBLEMS



Daniela, her story

Daniela had moved to the UK once she was old enough to work. Her dad was an alcoholic and he used to beat her and her siblings and Daniela had decided the best thing to do would be to find a fresh start in a different country where she could begin a new life. Daniela had done some research on the internet before she came to the UK, and she had found a flat being advertised for a good rate. She knew she could afford this for a month whilst she looked for employment.

When she arrived at the flat, the landlord was there waiting, a man called Ravi. He seemed nice enough and he said that she could work for him. Daniela was over the moon – what a stroke of luck – accommodation and a job on the day that she landed in the UK. She asked when she could start, and he said that her start date would be next week. He asked her if she had any friends in the area. She said no. He said that he could introduce her to some friends that night, he was going to a party in the flat over the corridor.

When Daniela arrived at the party, there seemed to be a couple of girls her age, but a lot of men Ravi's age or older. Ravi offered her a drink. She hadn't had alcohol before but she took the drink. Very quickly she became dizzy and disorientated. When she woke up, she was in her flat. She felt pain between her legs and her clothes were off. She was terrified and in a lot of discomfort. But Ravi turned up not long after and in a firm way, told her that this was her job now, and he threw her a £10 note.

Ravi stopped taking Daniela to parties, and instead arranged for men to knock on her door. Daniela had been told by the other girls that drugs and alcohol numb the pain and reduce the memory of it all. There would be between six and nine men knocking on her door each night. She would make £10 a night.



Other tenants in the block of flats had heard **the door opening and closing through all hours of the night**. A couple of them had watched out of the window to try and **catch a glimpse of who it was going to the flat** in their block. They had barely seen the young girl who lives in there. Joseph decided to **make a note of how many men would come each night**. He noted down their **registration plates**, by discreetly peeping through his curtains. After a week of keeping this log, **he called 101** to report the information to the police. He also **contacted the housing officer** who was responsible for the block of flats. He said that he had concerns and shared the same information. Joseph was thanked but was told that he would not be updated on how the information provided is progressed.

Quickly, **the police were able to link this information back to Ravi**, who previously had convictions for various offences, including sexual assault and intent to deal. They used this information to request a warrant to search his property and others that he might be linked to.

Safeguarding concerns were submitted by the housing officer, **using the information Joseph had provided**, and this case was quickly deemed urgent and raised to a Section 42. **Various professionals were contacted to liaise about how to best support Daniela. Daniela would be supported to return back to her home country, if she so wanted**. Or she could be supported to change location. The sexual health team and drug and alcohol support team were on hand to arrange emergency appointments, should she want them. In the meantime, emergency accommodation with CCTV and 24-hour security had been arranged whilst she thought things through and made decisions.



SCENARIO 4, DINA

- Signpost her to local charities (such as NOAH, Azalea) who might be able to support her with food provisions, housing, and accessing other forms of support e.g mental health
- Buy her food, express kindness and don't give her money
- Direct her to the local council to enquire about a housing application



Quick Guide to Local and National Services

For further information, volunteering opportunities, to register concerns or to access further training.

LUTON

Azalea

Go to www.azalea.org.uk/volunteer for more information on training and volunteering.

- **TRAINING**

Azalea is a charity which works specifically with women who have been or who are caught up in sex trafficking. Azalea offers a 3-day training course which is tailored specifically to inform and empower individuals to identify and act against sex trafficking in communities, and also to offer an opportunity to serve and walk alongside women who are being exploited in Luton.

- **VOLUNTEERING**

Azalea welcomes residents of Luton and the surrounding areas to volunteer in any number of different ways from essential support roles to frontline volunteering, cake baking to meal preparation, building maintenance to other practical support.

Safeguarding Adults

If you think abuse is taking place - either against you or someone you know - please call the **Safeguarding Adults** team straight away on **01582 547730** or **547563** or email adultsafeguarding@luton.gov.uk and ask for advice.

Luton Against Sex Trafficking (LAST) and Safer Communities

You can report your concerns to these organisations who work together to offer a course specifically designed for people who want to know more about how to see a reduction in sex trafficking in their neighbourhood.

- **REPORTING YOUR CONCERNS**

You can submit information about anything you suspect to be related to sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation to faith@lastmatters.co.uk or SSFcoordinator@luton.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can post any information you have to **PO Box 1290, Luton, Beds, LU1 9HZ**. Information could include vehicle description: car registrations, colour of car, make of car, AND/OR description of person: hair colour/length, approximate age, ethnicity, any other distinctive features. Include what it is that concerns you about what you have witnessed and whether you have reported this information to the police or not. Please include when and where you witnessed your concerns, too.

- **SAFER COMMUNITIES COURSE**

This course is facilitated by frontline workers from LAST/Azalea and FACES who engage with the issues of sex trafficking on a daily basis. It is designed to help you recognise the signs of exploitation and abuse, and empower you with the knowledge of how to pass the message on when you encounter this in your home or community. This course could become available with demand. For more information go to www.azalea.org.uk/last

NATIONAL

If you believe an adult or child is being trafficked and is in immediate danger, you should call **999** straight away.

You can also report suspicions of trafficking by calling **101** or visiting your local police station.

You are always able to state that you would like to remain anonymous when you contact the police or any other national organisation, if you so prefer.

Modern Slavery Helpline

If you are concerned about a potential victim, or suspicious about a situation that is potentially exploitative, you can call the **Modern Slavery Helpline** on **08000 121 700** or submit a report online. The helpline is operated by Unseen, open 24/7 and entirely confidential. The specially trained advisors can take details of your concerns and pass them on to the most appropriate agency to ensure victims are safeguarded and supported as quickly as possible. The helpline is well placed to support you in your continued understanding of how to identify all forms of exploitation.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army provides specialist support for all adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales. Their confidential referral helpline **0800 808 3733** is available 24/7.

NSPCC

If you suspect that a child is being trafficked or is at risk of being trafficked, call the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**

So, what next?

If you are a professional working in Luton and/or Bedfordshire and would like to learn more and stay engaged in this topic, please get in touch with faith@lastmatters.co.uk

How to stay informed

There are an abundance of campaigns, documentaries, films, series, podcasts, books which you can use to educate yourself further on sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation

For the BAVEX campaign including informative visuals and videos go to www.bavex.co.uk/our-campaign and youtu.be/2EqqGQSD9FU

Films/Series

- **Sex Traffic (2004)** - TV mini-series – revealing how women can be tricked and manipulated into international sex trafficking and the corruption within institutions surrounding sex trafficking
- **Three Girls (2017)** - TV mini-series - Based on three young girls who were groomed, sexually abused and trafficked by a group of men in Rochdale and of the failure of the authorities to do anything about it.
- **Evil Up Close - The Suffolk Strangler: Steven Wirght (2012)** - The case of Steve Wright, the Suffolk Strangler, who murdered five prostitutes in Ipswich, England in 2006.

Books

- **Walk Into Freedom (2020)** R H Robb and M L S Carson



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**YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD MATTERS.
AND SO DOES SHE.**