



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What is the National Referral Mechanism?

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. The NRM is also the mechanism through which the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) collect data about victims.

What should I do?

Any agency or organisation that has concern for a child they believe may be a victim of human trafficking should make a referral immediately to the Children and Families Service and notify the Police. This is to ensure that arrangements can be put in place to 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.

Organisations like the County Council, the Police and the NSPCC are “first responder” organisations. When Children’s Services and the Police have assessed the indicators of trafficking and arrangements have been put in place to safeguard the child, first responders should refer the child to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) using their referral form ([available here](#)).

There is no minimum requirement for justifying a referral into the NRM and consent is not required for children. You should communicate honestly with the child about your concerns and reasons for referring them into the NRM.

It is important that practitioners make careful notes about what is disclosed, as a child’s credibility can be challenged if the child is subject to immigration control on the basis of their disclosure being made in instalments. This will support the child and help others understand the process of disclosure. It is important to consider the potential victim’s safety and that of their loved ones. Confidentiality and careful handling of personal information is imperative to ensure the child’s safety.

The Duty to Notify

Northamptonshire County Council has a duty to notify the Home Office about any potential victims of Modern Slavery. For children, completing the NRM form is sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

What Happens to Existing Child Protection Arrangements?

Nothing, a referral into the NRM and any subsequent decisions do not replace or supersede established child protection processes, which should continue in tandem.

Age Assessments

Where there is reason to believe a victim could be a child, the individual must be given the benefit of the doubt and treated as a child until an assessment is carried out. An age assessment should only be carried out if appropriate to do so, and should not cause a delay in referring into the NRM.

What happens next?

Once a referral has been made, trained decision makers will assess and make a decision on whether an individual is a victim of trafficking or modern slavery. There is a **two stage** process where trained decision maker will decide if there are “**reasonable grounds**” to believe the child/young person has been the victim of trafficking (normally within 5 working days of receipt of the referral). The first 5 days also provides for a child to be kept in safe accommodation (i.e. away from the trafficker). A “conclusive decision” will be made regarding whether the child has been the victim of trafficking after a 45 day reflection period.

Further Information:

[NSCB Modern Slavery Procedure](#) and [NSCB Trafficked Children Procedure](#)
[How to refer a victim of Modern Slavery Factsheet](#)