

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is the umbrella term used by the UK, to cover human trafficking, forced and bonded labour and forced marriage.

The definition set by United Nations Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons 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)

The UK Government defines Modern Slavery as having three components:

'An Act: 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'

The National Referral Mechanism is the system used in the UK to identify and offer support to survivors of human trafficking. The data here shows the number of referrals to the NRM, however this is widely held to be just the tip of the iceberg, of the number of trafficked persons in the UK.

As you can see, the majority of referrals in the last two years have been British nationals.

National Referral Mechanism Statistics

2019

10,627
potential victims of
modern slavery were
referred

Majority referred were UK
Nationals:
27% UK
followed by Albanian,
then Vietnamese

2020

10,613
potential victims of
modern slavery were
referred*

Majority referred were UK
Nationals:
34% UK
followed by Albanian
(15%), then Vietnamese
(6%)

*The plateau in referrals is considered to be due to Covid19 and restrictions

'In the UK a high percentage of trafficked people are British, highlighting that domestic trafficking can be as prevalent as transnational trafficking'

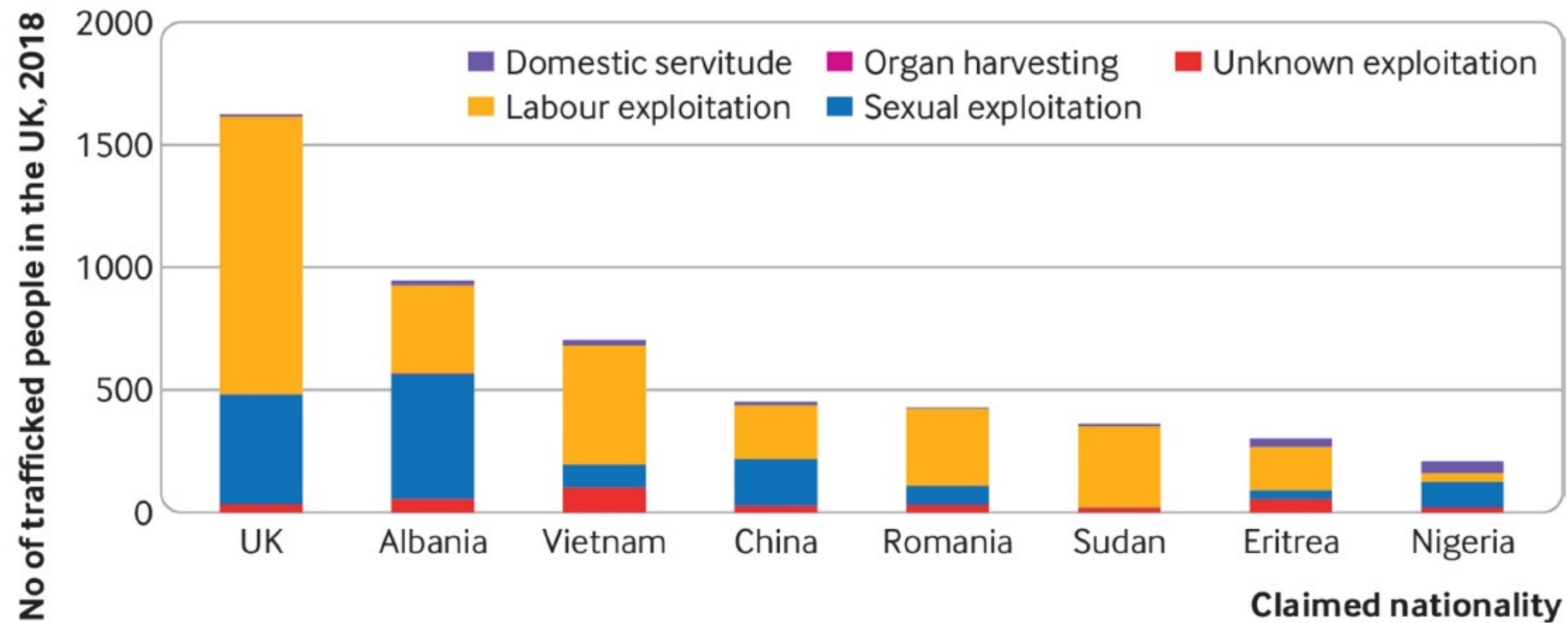


Fig 1 | Top eight claimed nationalities of people trafficked in the UK, according to National Referral Mechanism data from 2018¹¹

(Hunt. J, Witkin. R, Katona. C. Identifying human trafficking in adults, *BMJ* 2020)

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.

The report goes on to say

'In the past five years, 89 million people experienced some form of modern slavery for periods of time ranging from a few days to the whole five years.'

'Although these are the most reliable estimates of modern slavery to date, we know they are conservative as significant gaps in data remain.'

Similarly, in a report published in 2020, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that in 2018 data, '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.

A report titled 'Stacked Odds', that followed the release of the 2018 Global Slavery Index, explores why women and girls make up a large proportion of those who are trafficked.

They found that:

'One in every 130 females globally is living in modern slavery. In fact, women and girls account for nearly three quarters of all victims of modern slavery. Although modern slavery affects everyone, there is no escaping the fact that it is a gendered issue. Females account for a staggering 99% of all victims of forced sexual exploitation, 84% of all victims of forced marriage and 58% of all victims of forced labour.'

for every 10 victims

50%

of detected victims were
trafficked for sexual
exploitation

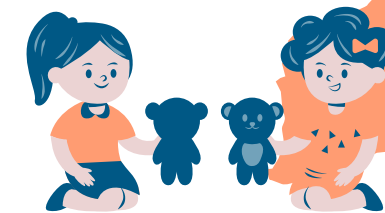
5

are adult women



2

are girls



So, 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 or actual enacting of violence from a pimp, by physically restraining an individual inside a premise, or from the pimp withholding basic human rights, for example, food and shelter until the exploited individual has earned enough or has 'serviced' a requisite number of 'punters'. Often sex trafficking involves movement of the trafficked individual from place to place. This could be just down the road, across the country, or across borders.

This is not an exhaustive guide to the variety of ways an individual can be sexually exploited.

*punter = common language to describe an individual paying another for sexual services

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.

Vulnerabilities to Sex Trafficking

childhood sexual abuse

childhood sexual exploitation

homelessness

domestic abuse

living in social care

economic deprivation

emotional abuse

In a report written by Luton Public Health, published in 2019 in their toolkit 'Women Exploited by the Street Sex Trade' - they conducted research amongst women, who we would define as being sex trafficked locally and nationally.

They found that:

100%

who participated
were victims of
child sexual
abuse

85%

suffered from
Child Sexual
Exploitation

85%-

92%

suffered from
mental or
physical abuse

How do traffickers work?

To answer this question, in part, I will share with you a story about Mia.

This story is a combination of common stories. Mia is a fictional name.

Mia is from Eastern Europe and growing up, her Father was an alcoholic who beat his children. Mia was used to this and expected it. As she grew older, she was told that she would have to marry a man that her Father chose for her. The man who was chosen was a lot older than she was, and she knew that she didn't really have a choice. It was stay and marry this man, or run away. Whilst plans were being made for this arranged marriage, Mia met someone who came to visit her village, he was young and exciting, someone who over time seemed to really care about her and love her. He offered her marriage, independence, a home and a good life. Believing herself to be in love, and wishing to escape the life she knew, Mia left the country with her 'boyfriend'. He made all the arrangements, including getting her a passport and buying the flight tickets. Mia was so excited and full of hope. When she arrived in their destination country, Mia's passport was ripped up in front of her face. She was taken to a room in a house, locked in and told she would now have to work to repay the cost of getting her there. Mia was taken out onto the streets every night, and forced to have sex with men who approached her. She was one of a few women, watched over carefully by the traffickers, who took all of the money. One night, Mia was picked up in a car of 3 men, who drugged her unconscious, and attempted to re-traffick her to the UK. Thankfully, Mia was noticed by UK Border Force at the airport on arrival. She was taken to a safe space, separately from her traffickers, and she took the opportunity to tell them what had happened to her. I met Mia, as her support worker, a few months after she was rescued. She was then 19 years old.

'Other tactics include the use of deceptive recruitment processes, seduction and romance, false job advertisements, lies about educational or travel opportunities or some are sold into slavery by family members.'

(Bridging the Gaps, 2020)

Trafficking happens for three main reasons:

It is profitable

It is a hidden crime

There is a demand