



What the Professionals Know:

The trafficking of children into, and through, the UK for sexual purposes

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The Trafficking of Children into, and through, the UK for sexual purposes

Background to project

In September 2000, ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking) groups from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK started research into the trafficking of children¹ from Eastern Europe to their respective countries. The research aim was to get from fiction to fact on the trafficking² of children, as past research on trafficking has often centred on the trafficking of women, rather than children. The project was developed by the ECPAT European Law Enforcement Group³, and coordinated by Defence for Children International, the Netherlands Section. The project was largely funded by the STOP Programme of the European Commission and the Oak Foundation.

Methodology

The following piece of research is the first of its kind in the UK, as no research has been carried out into the trafficking of children into the UK for sexual purposes. The only UK report on the trafficking of women was published in the summer of 2000⁴. However, due to this limited amount of information available on Eastern European children, both in literature and from experts, child trafficking from other countries was also researched.

Within the remit of the project, each researcher was to undertake a minimum of 15 interviews. By the end of the UK research, 24 interviews had been carried out. These interviews lasted on average for one and a half hours, and were undertaken using an open questionnaire. Although the questionnaire compiled for the research was used in most of the interviews, in some cases the respondent was not asked set questions, as their expertise lay outside of the whole questionnaire, such as a lawyer advising on existing law only. As the project finished in April 2001, this paper has been up-dated accordingly.

Problems encountered

Information on child trafficking has been difficult to obtain, and for the purposes of this report, organisations that worked with women were also approached. This is because the trafficking routes used for children are often the same as

¹ For the purposes of this report the term children refers to all people under the age of 18 years of age, as specified under article one in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

² According to the ECPAT European Law Enforcement Groups, trafficking is "Any behaviour which facilitates the entry into, transit through, residence in or exit from any territory, for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It is irrelevant whether force is used or the child has been misled". Sexual exploitation is "the use of a child in prostitution or the exploitative use of a child in other sexual practices, including the use of a child in pornography and forced marriage". Personal Communication (2000).

³ The ECPAT European Law Enforcement Group was formed to allow ECPAT groups throughout Europe to work together on projects, in relation to the commercial sexual exploitation of children, legislation and law enforcement.

⁴ Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the extent of, and responses to, trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series, Paper 125. Home Office.

those used for women. Additionally, the forms of recruitment and enslavement are also similar, and many children found in the sex industry are picked up by organisations working with women as the children maintain that they are over 18 years of age. It is for these reasons that the relevant groups working with women were contacted.

Although this research aimed at finding out the situation of trafficking in the United Kingdom, due to the limited time for the research very little information could be found on Northern Ireland and therefore there was not enough information to ascertain whether there is trafficking into this area. However, those that were contacted over the phone were unable to provide any information that indicated that children were being trafficked. With regard to Scotland, three interviews were carried out, and a number of phone conversations were undertaken, yet there was no evidence to show that trafficking of children was taking place in Scotland. This view is contradicted by newspaper reports on the trafficking of women and children into Scotland⁵. At the start of the research the police interviewees from Scotland were asked about these reports, but said that there was no foundation to the stories. However, by the end of the research, newspaper reports from Scotland contained quotes from one of the research interviewees stating that they were concerned about the issue.

Interviews

Within the project framework, the researcher was asked to interview members of organisations that fitted into three categories. These areas were: officials (Immigration, police), non-governmental organisations (child care and refugee organisations, HIV Service Providers⁶) and observers (academics, journalists, lawyers). Furthermore, information was gathered via telephone calls, meetings and conferences. In total, including those interviewed, approximately fifty people have been contacted regarding the issue of trafficking of children into the UK.

Those interviewed were:

Officials

Chief Immigration Officer, Heathrow Airport
Metropolitan Special Branch, Ports (Heathrow Airport)
Detective Superintendent - Sussex Police
Inspector - Clubs and Vice Unit, Metropolitan Police
Detective - Desk Officer, INTERPOL
National Criminal Intelligence Service - Serious Sex Offender Unit
Inspector - West Midlands Police
Chief Inspector - Strathclyde Police (Glasgow)
Constable (2 interviews) - Strathclyde Police (Glasgow)

⁵ Sunday Mail (14.1.01) 'Scots sauna boss held me as sex slave'; Sunday Mail (4.3.01) 'Face of a Slave Trader'.

⁶ HIV Service Providers are organisations that provide health services to female and male sex workers, drug addicts and homeless people.

Non-Governmental Organisations and Child Care Organisations

Children's Society (2 interviews)

HIV prevention project for sex working men and women, Central London

West Sussex Social Services

HIV prevention project for sex working women, South London

HIV prevention for sex working women, Birmingham

National Missing Persons Helpline

Refugee Council

Observers

Lawyer - Family Law

Professor - Applied Social Studies Unit, University.

Researcher at a London University

BBC Journalist

Lawyer - International Law.

Structure of the report

The following report is divided into five sections. The first looks at the existing legislation and policy in relation to human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children in the UK, the second reviews existing literature on the trafficking of children for purposes of sexual exploitation, and other relevant issues, such as the trafficking of women and child involved prostitution. The third section reveals the results of the interviews. This section brings together the relevant professionals' views on the situation of trafficking of children into the UK. The penultimate section focuses on case studies of trafficked children, whilst the final section provides conclusions and recommendations for further action based on the findings from the research. A bibliography can be found at the end of the report.

UK Legislation and Policy

International legislation

According to a number of international conventions, the trafficking of human beings is unlawful and appropriate measures must be taken by States to combat the problem. However, due to the scope of international conventions, they are generic and hard to implement and monitor. In some cases Governments are able to ratify Conventions but not have any national laws relating to that specific legislation. This is the case in the UK for trafficking. The UK Government has ratified and signed a number of Conventions relating to this issue, but as noted later in the section, has yet to bring in any legislation that prohibits the trafficking of human beings in the UK. The following Conventions and Articles have been ratified by the UK Government⁷.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

The Declaration sets out the rights of every human being. There are no articles directly relating to the trafficking of people, but the Declaration as a whole declares that every individual has the right to freedom, which is fundamentally missing in those who have been trafficked.

Convention for the Rights of the Child 1989

This Convention recognises the needs of children as being different to those of adults. Under this Convention Articles 34 and 35 relate directly to offences of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking of children.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

The Optional Protocol was adopted in 2000, but will enter into force on the 18th January 2002. As stated in its title, this Protocol does not relate directly to the offence of trafficking, but to the offences of child prostitution and pornography.

International Labour Organisation C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

Under ILO Convention 182, the use of children in prostitution and pornography are regarded as forms of labour that should be prohibited. Due to the nature of this Convention, and its relation to work, trafficking is not included, but the final product of trafficking, the exploitation of a child, is forbidden.

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

This protocol was signed by the UK Government at the end of 2000 and is the most recent international legislation on the issue of trafficking. Additionally, it states a definition which is being widely adopted by those working on the issue of trafficking.

"Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use

⁷ For the complete relevant articles, see appendix.

of force or other forms of coercion, of abductions, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of 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.

Under this protocol a child is anyone under the age of 18 years of age.

EU legislation

The year 2000 saw the circulation of a proposal from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The proposal entitled 'Council Framework Decision on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings', was open to consultation and is due to be finalised by the end of 2001. Once this legislation is introduced it is legally binding to all EU Member States, including the UK.

Included in the above circulation was another document from the Commission entitled 'Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography'.

Additionally, in November 2001 the European Commission (Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs) circulated a discussion paper entitled 'Short-term Permit to Stay Granted to Victims of Trafficking or Smuggling who Cooperate in the Fight Against Smugglers and Trafficking'. This paper, although open for consultation, has already raised one issue, that of including the victims of smugglers and traffickers in the same paper, thereby implying that the victims have the same needs, and that smugglers and traffickers should both be punished. However, although this paper does not look into the issue of smuggling it must be noted that the two issues are, usually, quite separate as people who use smugglers do so for their own benefit and the smuggler does a 'service' for the person wishing to be 'smuggled'. Traffickers, on the other hand, do not provide a service, but use the child for their own gratification/ income, and the child is ultimately exploited.

Background to UK legislation

Currently, there is no legislation in the UK that pertains particularly to the trafficking of people into, or out of, the UK. Legislation does exist which can be used to convict those involved in prostitution, but as yet, trafficking as such has yet to be made illegal. Legislation also exists in the form of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and Offences against a Person Act 1861, which relate to the offences of rape, assault and murder, which may have been inflicted on the trafficked victim.

The main act relevant to trafficking is the Sexual (Sex) Offences Act 1956. However, in January 1999. A review of the Act was carried out through consultation meetings with relevant experts, resulting in recommendations,

which were published in June 2000⁸. In the following section, as well as the relevant provisions within the Sex Offences Act, the preliminary recommendations from the review will also be referred to. Additionally, articles within the Children Act 1989 are also relevant to the protection of children from prostitution, as is guidance developed in 2000 entitled 'Safeguarding Children from Prostitution'.

Sex Offences Act 1956

As stated earlier, the Sex Offences Act is currently under review, as the current legislation has become out dated. One area of contention regarding the Sex Offences Act is the length of sentencing regarding a man living off immoral earnings (Section (S) 30)⁹, a woman exercising control over prostitutes (S31)¹⁰ procurement of women and under 21s for prostitution (S2 & 23)¹¹, and encouraging an under 16 year old into prostitution (S28)¹². These first two offences carry a sentence of seven years imprisonment, whilst the latter carry a penalty of two years imprisonment. However, it is not uncommon for the sentences for those convicted under Sections 30 & 31 to be given a sentence of 18 months¹³. According to police respondents, Section 30 and 31 are the main sections that have been used to convict traffickers, but to obtain a full seven year sentence, the trafficker can only be charged for procurement if the female had not worked as a prostitute before, was forced into prostitution, and is willing to testify. If it can be proved that the female had been cautioned or convicted for prostitution previously, the provision would not hold.

Section 22¹⁴ applies to the outward bound trafficking of people, but relates specifically to women and not girls. Furthermore, there must be proof of 'intention', which, unless other victims have been found to testify, is very hard to prove. According to all the respondents, victims of trafficking are often terrified of their traffickers, and are unwilling to testify against them. Furthermore, in

⁸ Home Office (2000) 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences'.

⁹ Section 30: It is an offence for a man knowingly to live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution.

¹⁰ Section 31: It is an offence for a woman for purposes of gain to exercise control, direction or influence over a prostitute's movements in a way which shows she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution.

¹¹ Section 2: It is an offence for a person to procure a woman, by threats or intimidation, to have unlawful sexual intercourse in any part of the world.

Section 23: It is an offence for a person to procure a girl under the age of twenty-one to have unlawful sexual intercourse in any part of the world with a third person.

¹² Section 28: It is an offence for a person to cause or encourage the prostitution of, or the commission of unlawful sexual intercourse with, or of an indecent assault on, a girl under the age of sixteen for whom he is responsible.

¹³ Home Office (2000:p106) 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences'.

¹⁴ Section 22: (1) It is an offence for a person:

(a) to procure a woman to become, in any part of the world, a common prostitute; or

(b) to procure a woman to leave the United Kingdom, intending her to become an inmate of or frequent a brothel elsewhere; or

(c) to procure a woman to leave her usual place of abode in the United Kingdom, intending her to become an inmate or frequent a brothel in any part of the world for the purposes of prostitution.

practice S22 and Sections 23¹⁵ and 24¹⁶ are rarely used¹⁷. This is due, in part, to the low penalty compared to section 30, but mainly because of the need for the victim to testify. In summary, the existing laws do not fit the crime of trafficking, and currently the police are finding it difficult, if not impossible to convict traffickers. The traffickers, under existing laws, are very rarely committing any serious offences, as in many cases the girls enter the country legally, leave care voluntarily, and exit the country voluntarily. They may use false documents, but are rarely forced into prostitution in the UK. However, if there was an offence of trafficking an investigation into the process would reveal that the children go with the traffickers out of fear and that the trafficker intends to force the children into sexual exploitation.

The Review of the Sex Offences Act 1956

The recommendations from the Review of the Sex Offences Act are currently being used to inform future policies and legislation¹⁸, particularly in relation to crimes that have developed since the Act's implementation, such as the trafficking in children for sexual purposes. Two areas that are relevant to this report are trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The review states "the fact of trafficking should be sufficient to prove the offence. Evidence of deception, coercion and force would add to the seriousness of the offence"¹⁹. With regard to the pimping or sexual exploitation of children, the review states that a number of respondents to the review felt that there were few effective provisions in the law. The review further noted that "Section 28 (offence of causing prostitution of a girl under 16) was very limited in its scope as it could only apply to a person in charge of the child, and it had a very low penalty"²⁰. It was also suggested that more emphasis should be put on the person buying the services of the child, rather than the child.

With regard to the age of a child, the review stated that the age of consent should remain at 16 years, but the review proposes that no one under the age of 18 should sell sex, or be sold for sex.

The following recommendations were made in the review²¹:

"To combat recruitment by deception in the UK a new offence was proposed to replace section 3²² of the 1956 Act:

Recommendation 14: There should be an offence of obtaining sexual penetration by threats or deception in any part of the world".

¹⁵ See footnote 10.

¹⁶ Section 24: It is an offence for a person to detain a woman against her will on any premises with the intention that she shall have unlawful sexual intercourse with men or with a particular man, or to detain a woman against her will in a brothel.

¹⁷ Home Office (2000) 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences'.

¹⁸ At the time of writing, the Sex Offences Act of 1956 is still under review.

¹⁹ Home Office (2000:p114) 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences'.

²⁰ Ibid (2000:p106).

²¹ Ibid (2000).

²² Section 3: It is an offence for a person to procure a woman, by false pretences or false representations, to have unlawful sexual intercourse in any part of the world.

“Recommendations 49: There should be a specific trafficking offence. This offence could involve bringing or enabling a person to move from one place to another for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation (e.g. knowingly facilitating transportation), for reward. Any such new offence should have attached powers to trace assets overseas”.

“Recommendation 50: The review considers that the commercial sexual exploitation of children should be dealt with by specific offences in which 'child' should refer to any person up to the age of 18, and where sexual exploitation means the use of a child in prostitution or in the making of pornography”. According to one police respondent, this will help close the current loophole that leaves 16 and 17 year old children unprotected, as currently those who prostitute this age group are sentenced under laws relating to adults, rather than children, which carry light sentences of a maximum of two years imprisonment.

“Recommendation 51: It should be an offence to:

- buy the sexual services of a child
- recruit, induce or compel a child into commercial sexual exploitation
- participate in, facilitate or allow the commercial sexual exploitation of a child or;
- receive money or other reward, favour or compensation for the sexual exploitation of a child”.

“Recommendation 52: There should be offences of:

- exploiting others by receiving money or reward from men and women who are prostitutes
- managing or controlling the activities of men and women who are prostitutes, for money or reward”.

This section of recommendations apply to replacing Section 30 & 31 (living off immoral earnings, and exercising control), and are less gender specific.

With regard to the poor conviction rate under Sections 22 and 23²³, the review considered consolidating “an offence around procurement in terms of recruiting or procuring anyone to work for sex in any part of the world”²⁴.

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act was implemented in 1989 to protect all children in the UK, including those temporarily in the UK. There are a number of provisions that apply to a child’s welfare that could be used to protect child victims of trafficking, and other provisions that apply specifically to sexual exploitation.

²³ See footnotes 13 and 10 respectively.

²⁴ Home Office (2000:p116) ‘Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences’.

Section 17 imposes a general duty on every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within its area who are in need by providing an appropriate range and level of services.

Section 20 states that all local authorities have the duty to provide accommodation to any child who has no adult who has parental responsibility for them, has been lost or abandoned, or their care giver is unable to provide appropriate accommodation or care.

Section 30 states that a court can grant an order for an applicant, such as a local authority, to take over the supervision and care of a child. However, no care orders or supervision orders can be made to a child who has reached 17 years old.

Safeguarding Children in Prostitution

'Safeguarding Children in Prostitution' was published by the Department of Health in 2000, as supplementary guidance to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. In summary the guidance draws on expert knowledge to propose that children found to be involved in prostitution should not be criminally prosecuted, but should be treated as victims. The guidance states that the "primary law enforcement effort must be against abusers and coercers who break the law and should be called to account for their abusive behaviour"²⁵. The report emphasises this by saying "anyone engaging in sexual activity (whether for money or not) with a girl or boy under 16 (whether male or female) and a man engaging in sexual activity with a boy under 18 is committing an offence"²⁶. The maximum penalty for sex with a minor under 13 years is a life sentence, and under 16 years is two years. Furthermore, due to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, a caution against a prostitute can no longer be made to a female under 18 years.

Immigration Act 1971 and Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Under Section 25 (1) charges can be made for facilitating the entry into the UK of a person thought to be an illegal entrant. According to Kelly and Regan²⁷ these charges are often used in order to make clear to the court that the case involves trafficking. In practice, complex evidential requirements often make allegations difficult to prove²⁸. Additionally, according to the 1999 Act, Section 29, facilitation of entry can only be proved by showing that the person facilitating the entry did so 'for gain'. According to police and Immigration Service respondents, this is extremely hard to prove, especially when all the assets which may prove the person facilitated entry are outside of the UK.

²⁵ Department of Health (2000:p10) 'Safeguarding Children in Prostitution'.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000:p10) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series. Home Office.

²⁸ Home Office (2000:p106) 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences'. Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000:p10) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series. Home Office.

Existing Research into the Trafficking of Children and Women into the UK, and Children Involved in Prostitution in the UK

Trafficking of unaccompanied asylum seekers

Since 1996, police have been investigating the disappearance of unaccompanied asylum seekers from a UK Social Service's care home. The first newspaper article on this investigation was printed in 1998²⁹. By this point nine children had already gone missing. Kelly and Regan³⁰ and Ayotte³¹ both refer to this investigation in their reports. However, neither report provides many details of the means of transport or procurement. They do relate the facts that the children are West African girls, mainly from Nigeria, who, on entry, are taken into residential care homes in the south-east of England. From these homes, the girls contact their trafficker or are contacted by their trafficker, and soon after disappear. Police investigation has shown that the girls are taken to Europe, with Italy being a favoured destination. It is here that they are forced into prostitution. Kelly and Regan state that the trafficking of West African children into Italy has long been recognised, and due to this, immigration controls are tighter on flights directly from West Africa. However, there are more relaxed immigration controls on flights coming in from the UK, as a "significant number of Black British young people travel to Italy for holidays and school trips"³².

The research into the trafficking of unaccompanied minors through Social Services is also documented by Ayotte and Williamson³³. However, these authors draw on the experiences of advisers who are employed by the Refugee Council to advise children of their rights and support their asylum claims. What has emerged from this line of enquiry is the possible trafficking of Chinese children. In these cases, Chinese children are referred to Panel Advisers, but contact is rarely made. Ayotte and Williamson quote that "Many Chinese children do not want to receive help from Social Services and seem to 'disappear' within the Chinese community. It is known that some of these children are working in sweat shops or restaurants paying off large debts to traffickers. One Adviser stated she had only been able to contact two Chinese children out of approximately 50 who had been allocated to her"³⁴.

An investigation by a BBC journalist in November 2001 looked into the trafficking of West African girls into Europe³⁵. This investigation was based on the Victoria Climbié case. Victoria was taken by her aunt, from Côte d'Ivoire to France and then the UK, on the pretext of giving Victoria a good education.

²⁹ Crawley Observer (11.2.1998) "'Teens Lured into Ring of Vice' Fear'.

³⁰ Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000:p19) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series. Home Office.

³¹ Ayotte, W (2000:p66) 'Separated Children coming to Western Europe: Why They Travel and How They Arrive'. European Union and Save the Children.

³² Kelly, L & Regan, L: *ibid*.

³³ Ayotte, W & Williams, L (2001) 'Separated Children in the UK: An Overview of the Current Situation'. Refugee Council and Save the Children.

³⁴ *Ibid* (2001:p47)

³⁵ Stickler, A & Addison, A (12.11.2001) 'West African Child Trade'. BBC Radio 4.

Instead Victoria, aged 8, was tortured over a period of seven months and finally died. It appears that her aunt was using her to claim her benefit. This case highlighted the movement of West African children into Europe, and the report estimated that 10,000 West African children are living with strangers in the UK. The investigation also revealed that it was easy to buy legal documents to transport children who pose as the trafficker's daughter and when asked, the British Ambassador to the Côte d'Ivoire, thought that not all the 200 - 300 visas issue annually to children were to the genuine parents or guardians of the children concerned.

Another investigation by Ian Pannell for the BBC³⁶ looked into the trafficking of West African girls in general, and into the UK. Pannell includes in his report the use of 'voodoo'³⁷ to coerce the girls into working for their sponsors. Additionally, an article printed in the Post Express, Lagos³⁸ further verifies that there is an established trafficking route from West Africa to the UK. The report states that "two major attempts in two weeks at child trafficking between Lagos and London have been foiled by the Deputy British High Commissioner". The two foiled attempts involved 22 children and 14 adults, but over recent times, the High Commission argues that they have detected over 200 cases of possible trafficking. This form of trafficking involved adults applying for visas for 'their' children. However, the High Commission staff noted that many of the children travelling with their 'parents' were unable to tell the staff the same name as that stated on their passports, and the child's surname was different from their 'parents'. The Deputy High Commissioner also stated that he believed the UK was not the final destination of the children.

Trafficking of children from various countries of origin

The Society for Advanced Legal Studies cite a case of a man stopped by customs at Heathrow Airport, as he was leaving the country. The man was destined for an Eastern European country, and although a mechanic by trade, was found carrying surgical gloves and medicines. He was also carrying letters showing he had tried to obtain visas allowing him to bring back two 12 year old girls from Eastern Europe. On investigation, it was found the man had been travelling to Eastern Europe, posing as a doctor, and trying to persuade Eastern European families to allow him to take their sick children back to the UK for treatment³⁹. The same report cites a newspaper story relating to the trial of three 'Russian gangsters' who were given sentences totalling eight years for the trafficking of Russian and Lithuanian women and girls into the UK for prostitution. The newspaper report⁴⁰ told the story of one woman, aged 24, who had been kidnapped by the gang, taken to the UK, and sexually abused by two

³⁶ Pannell, I (20.7.2000) 'Trafficking Nightmare for Nigerian Children'. BBC PM Programme (Radio and BBC Online: www.bbc.co.uk).

³⁷ 'Voodoo' has become a generic term that describes ritual ceremonies, although this voodoo may not be what specialists in traditional religion mean when they refer to 'voodoo'.

³⁸ Onuorah, C (16.9.2000) 'British Envoy Busts Child Smuggling Racket'. Post Express, Lagos

³⁹ Family Law Working Group(1999:p44) 'Report on the Cross Border Movement of Children'. The Society for Advanced Legal Studies.

⁴⁰ Evening Standard (1.3.1999) 'London's new sex slave trade from Russia'.

of the gang. Once the woman had escaped, police raided the flat of the traffickers, and other flats known to be used by the gang. In one of these flats, police found a girl they believed to be 15 years old, although she stated she was 18 years old. This Lithuanian girl asked to be sent home, and was taken to the airport the next day.

Other newspaper reports provide further evidence of trafficking. On the 17th and 24th December 2000 and 14th January 2001, The Observer newspaper ran three stories entitled 'Child Sex for Sale'. The first of the series interviewed a 14 year old Nigerian girl who had been sold to traffickers by her father. The girl, Fayemi, told the reporter she had stayed with five other girls, one as young as six. Fayemi was able to escape and was found working the streets of south London. The reporter also talked to a few other girls who had escaped their traffickers. The second of the series interviewed a self confessed trafficker, drug dealer and pimp called Carlos. Carlos traffics under age girls as 'it's safer for him'. The article describes the increase of crack cocaine on the streets, and the correlation of the increase of street workers' dependence on drug dealers, who then become their pimps.

Carlos states that he normally pays £2,500 for a young girl from South Africa, although he tells the journalist that he has just paid £800 each for two girls, he believes are under 14, from a deprived area in South Africa. One major difference in Carlos' story from other reports of trafficking, is that Carlos maintains he sends money back to the children's parents, and as much as £500 to £700 a week. In this particular case, Carlos 'orders' girls, who are then 'delivered' by a courier. However, Carlos states that "they're not even property: they're commodities... You've bought them and they have to do what you tell them"⁴¹. He also maintains that he currently has five girls working for him, all of whom he has made drug addicts. By being addicted, Carlos' can exert more control over the girls.

The Observer's final article interviewed a Vietnamese man, Toan, who brings in girls from Vietnam, for the sex industry in the UK. In the article, Toan declares that two years ago he paid £20,000 for a girl, yet today, he only pays half. Furthermore, the girls are trafficked with the help of Immigration Service officials in Vietnam. They are flown to France, and then driven to the UK. Toan supports Carlos' statement by saying that men who buy the girls like them to be drug addicts, so they are easier to 'own'. Furthermore Toan says "But because there are so many girls, they are very cheap: they charge only £2 - and that's for the man to do what he wants all night long"⁴².

With regard to knowing what the girls will have to do, Toan argues that they are well aware of their job, and are in fact, keen to come to England. However, once the girls are older, no one wants to own them and as Toan says "It doesn't matter what happens to them once they get old and that's why I have such a good business".

⁴¹ The Observer (24.12.2000) 'Child Sex for Sale'.

⁴² The Observer (14.1.2001) 'Child Sex for Sale'.

Further news reports indicate that children are trafficked into the UK. On the 15th February 2001, police raided brothels in London's red light district and arrested between 28 and 31 people, including prostitutes and pimps. The number of those arrested varied according to the report, yet both newspapers confirmed that two juveniles under 16 had been arrested. The Evening Standard⁴³ also stated that 'all of the women taken into custody were born abroad with most coming from Eastern European countries'. The report further added that 'Scotland Yard said 75 percent of London's prostitutes are smuggled illegal immigrants' ⁴⁴. It must be noted that there is no evidence to prove that any of the women arrested had been trafficked, but such an increased presence of migrant sex workers indicates that some may have been trafficked. Additionally, this supports some respondents' views that children in the sex industry must gain access via someone who knows how the sex industry works. For many this access is gained through their traffickers or pimps. This point is even more relevant to children from Eastern Europe, who speak very little English and have no knowledge of the way the sex industry operates in the UK.

Another article regarding the trafficking of women and children, was published by the Sunday Mail⁴⁵. This report relates to a case of two Chinese girls who had responded to a job advert in China. The job required female travelling companions for a Chinese woman coming to the UK. They arrived in London, and after a few days of sightseeing with the woman and her nephews, the girls were offered the chance of visiting Edinburgh. After flying into Glasgow Airport, the girls were taken to a flat and badly beaten. From then on the girls were forced to work as prostitutes for eight months in a sauna, by a Triad gang. They eventually escaped with the help of a client, and returned to China. Strathclyde Police argue that in Glasgow alone, there could be "20,000 Chinese aliens". Furthermore, the police believe that "thousands of other young illegal immigrants are trapped in slavery after being lured by the 'Snakeheads'. In recent years, the Snakeheads have smuggled Thai, Chinese, and, more recently, Russian girls into Glasgow"⁴⁶.

Although the article stated that the 'girls' who had managed to escape were in their late teens, the article does add that "Girls aged under 16 years will be kept in flats for exclusive use by Chinese customers before 'graduating' to saunas and then being discarded"^{47/48/49}.

⁴³ Evening Standard (16.2.2001) 'Three in Four London Vice Girls Victims of the Slave Trade'.

⁴⁴ Yahoo.co.uk, 16.2.2001, BBC Online, 15.2.2001.

⁴⁵ Sunday Mail (14.1.2001) 'Scots Sauna Boss Held me as a Sex Slave'. Scotland.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ It must be stated, that whilst the author is unable to verify any of the above journalist's findings, their evidence is consistent with the results of the research.

⁴⁹ Further article references on trafficking of women in Scotland see the bibliography.

Trafficking of women into the UK

According to Kelly and Regan⁵⁰, based on statistics and figures from 1998, it can be estimated that between 142 and 1420 women are trafficked into the UK each year. Kelly and Regan's report was commissioned by the Home Office as part of their Police Research Series. Information on trafficking was gained from 36 police forces in the UK. The results indicated that "the majority of police forces have limited knowledge of, and thus give limited attention to, trafficking and there is a danger that this unintentionally creates a climate of toleration for trafficking of women into and within the UK"⁵¹. However, those forces that were able to provide information indicated that the first signs of trafficking were detected about 10 years ago in Triad controlled brothels in London. Since then, women from Thailand and Central and Eastern Europe countries are most likely to be trafficked into the UK.

The report details four forms of recruitment, these are:

- Complete coercion through abduction or kidnapping
- Deception by promises of legitimate employment
- Deception through half truths, such as promises that they will be employed in entertainment, dancing or even stripping.
- Although some women are fully aware that they are going to work in prostitution, they put themselves at the mercy of traffickers in order to migrate to Western Europe. However, they are not made aware of the extent to which they will be indebted, intimidated, exploited and controlled⁵².

The forms of recruitment from Central and Eastern Europe come in two main forms. The first involves adverts in the media "for well paying jobs abroad, through a (possibly bogus) employment agency"⁵³. The second entails a single man approaching a woman in a bar or club, where they are offered the chance to earn lots of money. Some of the traffickers are relatives or family friends, whilst some women believe that the man is not her pimp, but her boyfriend. The size of the trafficking network varies from a few individuals working together, to large highly organised groups. These groups may also be making money from drugs and money laundering, which are believed to be linked to the trafficking of human beings.

Kelly and Regan detail the movement of the trafficker and their 'cargo' into the UK. They point out that women rarely enter the UK by illegal means, such as being smuggled in lorries. These women enter on legitimate or illegitimate documents, and are accompanied by the trafficker or an English speaking man who poses as her husband or boyfriend. Some women arrive by plane, especially if they are from Thailand or Africa, although sometimes, the trafficker and victim fly into another European country, and travel by Eurostar train into

⁵⁰ Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series. Home Office.

⁵¹ Ibid (2000).

⁵² Ibid (2000:p24).

⁵³ Ibid.

the UK. On arrival, the woman is sometimes told to apply for asylum, as the trafficker knows the process will take at least a year.

Once in the UK, the woman is taken to a brothel, where her false papers and passport are confiscated by the trafficker. For many of the women, the reality of their situation is only perceived at this point. Kelly and Regan state "For some, discovering that there is no good job, the debt they owe is £5000 - £15,000, and that they have to pay it off in three months, are a series of shocks. For others is it the virtual imprisonment, lack of papers and that they will receive no money for three months, which are the realities they have not anticipated"⁵⁴. There are some who have anticipated earning nothing for three months, but have been led to believe that after this 'pay back' period they will be able to keep the money. However, they are then told of the overheads, such as flat rents, food, maid and laundry bills that they have to pay for. In reality the woman are allowed to keep very little money, if any. Any protestations are followed by threats from the trafficker to hurt her or her family.

This study has given an insight into the trafficking of women into the UK. Of particular interest are the police responses, and the overall lack of awareness of the issue. Apart from the pro-active Clubs and Vice Police Unit in London, very little attention is given to the trafficking of women by other police forces. Amongst other recommendations, the report highlights the need for more attention to be given to this area.

Children abused through prostitution in the UK

Child abuse through prostitution in the UK is not uncommon, and research by certain children's groups have brought attention to the situation of many children involved in prostitution. Due to the hidden nature of the problem, accurate statistics on commercially sexually exploited children are difficult to find. Hard statistics can be found from police records and cautions given to youngster caught soliciting. Between 1989 and 1995, there were 2,380 cautions, and 1,730 convictions, in England and Wales, of children under 18. One of these cautions was given to a 10 year old ⁵⁵. However, as children are no longer cautioned or convicted for prostitution, statistics are no longer kept by the police.

These figures reveal only a proportion of those being prostituted, as many children abused through prostitution work in 'off-street' locations, to avoid police detection. Another way of gauging the number of children involved in prostitution is to gain contact through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with abused children. A report published by Barnardo's⁵⁶, entitled 'Whose Daughter Next' (1998) carried out research into what contact agencies had with children involved in prostitution. Based on the responses of 48 agencies, the report, using the most conservative interpretation of the agencies

⁵⁴ Ibid (2000:p25).

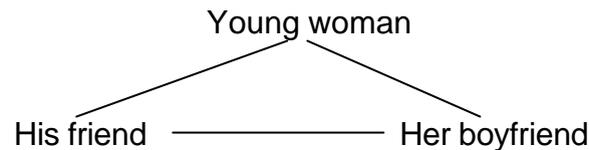
⁵⁵ Lenihan, T & Dean, p (2000: p27) in Barrett et al, 'Youth Prostitution in the New Europe'.

⁵⁶ For further reading on children abused through prostitution see, Palmer, T (2001) 'No Son of Mine!'. Barnardo's.

responses, estimated that in a 12 month period, the organisations had contact with 55 boys and 267 girls under 16 years old, and a minimum of 94 boys and 338 girls aged between 16 and 18 years.

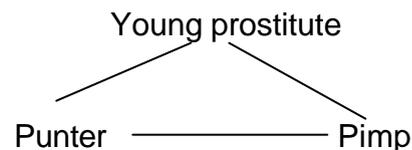
The way children find themselves involved in prostitution, is in some cases, similar to those who find they have been trafficked for sexual exploitation. Barnardo's (1998) clearly outline the way young people become involved in prostitution, through three different diagrams:

Young women's view of her situation:



In this case it is the girl's perception of her relationship with her boyfriend, that allows the abuse and control to be sustained.

Commonly accepted view of prostitution:



The young person involved in prostitution, according to Barnardo's⁵⁷, reacts in much the same way as the 'young woman', in that she protects her abuser, due to the repercussions if she does not. Men who procure sex from minors are child abusers, and should be viewed as such. However, the research revealed that "in practice, the police often fail to intervene to protect girls from adult male 'customers'. It appears that they sometimes adopt the commonly accepted view of the 'prostitution triangle' and see the girl as a prostitute, not as an abused child"⁵⁸.

The final triangle is how Barnardo's see the situation:



In this triangle, Barnardo's argue that children are not prostitutes, but abused children, and should be 'labelled' as such. The abuse a child undergoes is sexual, physical and emotional. The pimp is an adult abusing a child, through exploitation, control, coercion, assaults and rape, whilst the punter is a child sex offender.

⁵⁷ Barnardo's (1998) 'Whose Daughter Next'.

⁵⁸ Ibid (1998:p17).

A further study by The Children's Society⁵⁹ revealed the various reasons and means that children enter prostitution. These include adopting prostitution as a survival strategy, becoming involved so they can buy material goods they couldn't otherwise afford, and earning money for drugs. The study also states that numerous research shows "that poverty is strongly related to entry into prostitution"⁶⁰. Additionally, the study also revealed that for some, prostitution is an easy way to gain money, compared to other forms of illegal activity that are their only other options.

With regard to the way children enter prostitution, The Children's Society's research demonstrates that that majority of children become involved in prostitution due to peer group association. Those without this association entered on a freelance basis (without any help) whilst a small minority were coerced. However, many of those interviewed asserted that they did not have pimps, and were not forced into prostitution. This assertion contradicts the above Barnardo's report which, as we have seen, proposes that girls are often coerced into prostitution by men they believe to be their boyfriends. In Barnardo's report entitled 'No Son of Mine!', it is stated that "girls appear far more likely to be controlled by a pimp/abusing adult than boys". This reflects the different ways in which girls may get involved in this lifestyle and their modus operandi whilst involved. Although traditional pimping is far less common for boys, there have been occasions when pimping of boys has been identified⁶¹. However, in relation to trafficking, it is interesting to note that Kelly and Regan⁶² state that some women are unknowingly trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation, as they believe their travelling companion is their boyfriend and not a man who will soon control them and their sexuality.

⁵⁹Melrose, M, Barrett, D & Brodie, I (1999) 'One Way Street? Retrospectives on Childhood Prostitution'. The Children's Society and University of Luton.

⁶⁰ Ibid (1999:p28).

⁶¹ Palmer, T (2001) 'No Son of Mine!'. Barnardo's.

⁶² Kelly, L & Regan, L (2000:p19) 'Stopping Traffic: Exploring the Extent of, and Responses to, Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in the UK'. Police Research Series, Paper 125, Home Office.

What the Professionals Know

The following section is based upon the results of 24 interviews carried out from September 2000 to April 2001, and with updated information from October 2001.

Definitions of trafficking

As stated in the first section, the ECPAT European Law Enforcement Group used a definition of trafficking for this research (see Section One). Those interviewed were asked whether they used a definition in their work. In response to this, the majority of those interviewed did not use definitions of trafficking, and one police respondent felt that using a definition would restrict their work. Five respondents did use a definition of trafficking, but these varied from using definitions already defined by other organisations, such as the European Commission and the Coalition Against Trafficking of Women to look at the difference between smuggling and trafficking. When asked this question, the Immigration Officer stated that smuggling is for the benefit of the smuggled person, while people who are trafficked are subjected to exploitation, be it slave labour, debt bondage or sexual exploitation. In some cases the person may think they are being smuggled, but are in fact being trafficked, as they are unaware of their fate. One respondent felt that trafficking describes people/ drugs/ guns being moved from country to country and also added that those trafficked are given to believe that they will be working under different circumstances, whether this is in prostitution or not. It is the working conditions that differ, even if the women or girls know they will be working in prostitution. Another interviewee stated that trafficking was the selling of a person to a third person in another country.

Is trafficking a priority?

None of the interviewees had the sole responsibility of looking at the issue of trafficking. Five, however, did give priority to the trafficking of children. One of these worked closely with trafficked children, but also worked with children who were not trafficked, therefore, it was not their sole responsibility. Three more respondents were beginning to give the issue some priority as they realised that the situation was starting to show itself, which meant it was becoming worse. Nine gave no priority. Of these, two were police (national and international) and two were HIV prevention programmes working with adults. However, since the main research was completed in April 2001, the international police organisation has started to take the issue of trafficking more seriously. For the remaining respondents, the issue of trafficking was not a priority, but was dealt with as necessary, such as academics, lawyers and the press.

The level of interest into the issue of trafficking has increased in the last six months, with conferences and seminars being held on the issue, and sub-groups being set up within organisations who are concerned that they may be working with trafficked children. However, the level of priority has not yet risen, as those working on the issue are doing so alongside their day to day work. What is noticeable is that voluntary organisations are increasing their work on the issue and anti-trafficking programmes are being set up within the UK to look into the situation of trafficking.

First awareness of trafficking

The responses to how people first came into contact with trafficking was very varied. For those working with HIV prevention programmes, they have become involved due to a large influx of Eastern European women into the sex industry in the UK. It must be noted, that none of the health projects visited had definitely come into contact with minors. However, the programmes believe that some of the women they come into contact with are under 18 years of age, even though they state they are over 18. Of the three respondents from HIV prevention programmes one said that no women actually state that they are trafficked, although they may have alluded to the fact. Of the remaining two HIV programmes, one had worked with a woman who had wanted help to escape her trafficker, whilst the other had gained the trust of women who had told her of their experiences. All these projects were aware of trafficked women, as past experience has enabled them to spot 'tell tale' signs of trafficked women. These include the women pretending they are from another country, such as Italy, when it is obvious they are Eastern European. In some cases, the women start to speak Italian but on examination it is revealed that they know very little Italian. Additionally, women will ask for leaflets in Italian, but then pick up leaflets in Kosovan, Albanian etc. Other signs include the control their 'boyfriends' have over them, their lack of control in where they work and who their clients are. One police respondent said that their first contact was through two trafficking cases of Eastern European women five years previously.

Three respondents from Social Services, the police and an NGO first became involved through a police investigation into asylum seeking children missing from care. For the Chief Immigration Officer, their first contact came in the late 1980s, early 1990s. This was in regard to 200 Zambian children brought into the UK under 'sponsorship' from a charity. A subsequent police investigation concluded that the children had been brought into the UK for sex offenders. For the remaining interviewees their contacts has been through research into the area, as journalists and academics. Of the respondents, one vice police officer had had no contact with any trafficked children or women, and knew very little of the issue.

Finally, although not personally involved in the case, the Chief Immigration Officer interviewed believed that the trafficking of West African children had been going on for about 30 years.

Why are children trafficked?

The reasons why children are trafficked are numerous, but include poverty, lack of employment opportunities, discrimination within the culture, such as that which defines female children as less important than boys, and instability within sending countries due to conflict. However, what appeared to be different in the case of West Sussex girls (see below) is that they were duped into being trafficked through 'voodoo' or 'ju ju'. In many cases, trafficking victims do go willing with the trafficker, either because their parents have told them they must, or because they think they will end up in a better life, and that the horror stories that they may have heard from other victims will not happen to them.

Additionally, the reasons why, and the means of trafficking are very similar to those referred to by Regan and Kelly in Section Two.

How do children enter the United Kingdom, and what for?

Children enter the United Kingdom through various means. Some enter as unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers at airports, and sea ports (ferries and road transport). Additionally, some enter on student visas, as language students, or on tourist visas. However, a number of respondents believed that the children were increasingly entering using illegal means, such as a stowing away on ferries, cars, lorries and freight trains and using fake passports.⁶³ Children are also brought in by adults who state that they are their dependents, or are met at the airport by an adult who declares themselves to be a relative. It was also suggested that children could be brought in via Internet transactions, foster arrangements, and contracts as domestic staff.

The majority of the respondents believed that the children were brought into the UK for purposes of sexual exploitation, either within the UK, or in Southern Europe. A number of respondents stated that many of those brought in are trafficked due to deception and false advertising. One NGO knew of a woman who had come believing she would be an au pair, only to be forced into prostitution. The interviewees also understood that children were trafficked for other reasons, such as, credit card fraud, drug trafficking, domestic service, adoption and forced marriage. However, all those who stated other reasons, had little evidence to support this, and stated only possibilities.

What happens once they are in the UK?

What happens to the children once they enter the country is largely unknown to many of the respondents. The police investigation into the missing unaccompanied minors from Social Services has produced the most hard evidence into trafficking^{64/65}.

On arrival at Gatwick Airport, in the county of Sussex, the majority of girls⁶⁶ declare themselves to Immigration as asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors. Many of these girls have used false passports in order to leave Africa but these are often destroyed on the plane. At one point the girls stated that

⁶³ With regard to fake passports, two sisters known to Immigration as possible traffickers had their bags searched on one trip out of the UK. Both were found to be carrying British passports, which, when checked, were shown to be false. The passports were later found on girls entering the UK and Europe.

⁶⁴ This form of trafficking can be called the 'asylum route'. All the girls submit an asylum claim, which allows them to stay in the UK until a decision is taken. This gives time for the trafficker to decide what to do with the girl.

⁶⁵ The police investigation (Operation Newbridge) only investigated missing girls who were Nigerian, or appeared to be Nigerian, but alleged they were another nationality. However, West Sussex Social Services have also had children from China go missing. Social Services are unsure as to what the Chinese children will be used for.

⁶⁶ Those missing from care are not just girls. However, due to the majority being girls, and Social Services knowledge that the girls are used in prostitution, the police investigation only looked at girls. It must be noted that some of the boys may be used in prostitution, and that the means of disappearance are the same for girls and boys.

they were under 18 years of age, even if they appeared not to be. At other times, depending on the tactics of Social Services and Immigration, the girls declared they were over 18 years of age, even if they were 14 years old, to avoid being taken to a safe house.

Once they have been identified by Immigration, Social Services are contacted. What happens to the child depends on their age and the Social Services that they have been referred to. Those referred to West Sussex Social Services are taken in under Section 20⁶⁷ of the Children Act 1989. They are then placed in the safe house set up to take in girls thought to be at risk of being trafficked. However, other Social Services do not always provide safe accommodation to children who are 16 and 17 years old, as they are thought to be able to manage in bed and breakfast accommodation. In the case of those in West Sussex care the children go missing from one day to six months after they are admitted, although some never go missing at all. Those that do go missing are taken to London, and then driven or flown to Europe, with the main destination being Italy.

In other cases, West African girls arrive in the UK to meet at 'uncle' or 'auntie', who are in fact no relation to them, and unknown to them. The Immigration Service have intelligence to prove that many of those picking up 'nieces' are not related. Another method of taking children through immigration is also seen in the form of 'legal representatives' appearing at the airport, declaring that they will legally represent the child. In this case someone on the flight must contact the organisers, who in turn contact an accomplice, who phones Immigration saying he will represent the girl legally. In cases such as these Immigration are not allowed to prevent the child from going with the legal representative, who maintains he will look after the child. However, in some cases, such as those at Gatwick, West Sussex Social Services are informed of the child's arrival and will go to the airport to pick up the child personally if they believe the child to be at risk.

Once picked up by West Sussex Social Services (what happens in other Social Services is unknown), the girls are under instruction, by the traffickers, to contact someone or await the trafficker's contact. In some cases, the girls have been abducted from the homes, as they are unwilling to go with the traffickers. Additionally, the police believe there are other children in the homes who are helping the traffickers to identify the whereabouts of the child. West Sussex Social Services also follow a pattern whilst trying to protect the children. This includes a few months of close monitoring by the staff in the safe house, followed by unsupervised monitoring, with the aim of placing the young person in independent accommodation. Due to this close monitoring when first admitted, some of the girls have smashed and jumped out of windows to escape.

Those not involved in the West Sussex cases, but with the trafficking of Eastern European children could not be as precise about what happens to the

⁶⁷ Section 20 states that all local authorities have the duty to provide accommodation for any child in need within their area.

youngsters. However, one interviewee from an NGO said that if a woman or a child is being trafficked then she will either be met at the port of entry or will have to phone a number on arrival. She may also have an address, and will go to this address or be taken to this address. From there she is forced to work. Another respondent from an HIV prevention programme believed that women were first taken to London to work, and then moved to other known red light districts throughout the country. This particular case relates to women, but as noted before, the trafficking route for children is often the same as that for adults.

Where do the children come from⁶⁸?

All but one respondent were able to state where the women and children they had come into contact with had come from. All said that there had been a huge increase in women from Eastern Europe especially Albania, to the extent that very few English women work in the flats in Soho. The main countries of origin are Eastern and Central Europe including Russia, Lithuania, Albania, Romania, and Bulgaria. Additionally one respondent (NGO) knew of one Egyptian woman, and Somalian, Moroccan and Ethiopian women.

With regard to Thai women, respondents from NGOs and the police said that there were not as many as in previous times⁶⁹, but women and older children were still coming from South East Asia. Interviewees knew of South American and Chinese women. Those involved in the asylum route cases, said that the majority of these children were Nigerian, although some alleged they were from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Ghana. There are also Chinese minors. One interviewee said 'all over'.

Legal entry, illegal activities

Many of the respondents felt that the child's route into illegal activities was pre-arranged before the child left their country of origin. It was also suggested that due to the family of the children paying for their child to be taken overseas, the child then has to pay back the family. Therefore, the child has to work at whatever the trafficker forces them into, and further control over the child is facilitated by threats of violence to the child's family. In the case of West Sussex children, the girls from West Africa have all undergone 'voodoo' ceremonies, which tie them to the trafficker. In particular, the girls from Nigeria appear to be petrified of their trafficker and the curse that has been placed on them. All the Nigerian girls have body scarifications carried out during 'voodoo' ceremonies, and they have had samples of their hair (head and pubic) and finger nails taken to be included in the 'curse'.

Once a 'curse' has been placed on the child, the only way for it to be lifted is by paying back the money owed. If the curse is broken (e.g. the child is unable to pay back the money, or escapes from the trafficker), it is believed that they and

⁶⁸ Although this question referred to children, responses from those working only with women were included as past experiences and literature reveal that women and children usually come from the same countries of origin.

⁶⁹ A few years ago there was a large influx of Thai women into the UK sex industry, now the large influx is from Eastern Europe.

their families will come to harm. Unfortunately, in some cases related to the girls in West Sussex's care, their families in Nigeria have been contacted by the trafficker, in order to find out the whereabouts of the child. In the cases where the families have refused to help the traffickers they have been severely physically assaulted.

With regard to paying back the money, this is a known form of contemporary slavery known as debt bondage. Typically, the family will take out a loan, with the view to the child paying back the loan. However, no terms are agreed, and in reality the child never pays back the loan, due to high interest, and other costs that are added to the original loan, such as transport, accommodation and food. In the cases of the West Sussex girls, they owe more than £25,000 to the trafficker. This amount was given to them the girls in lira (as they are destined for Italy), but in reality they have no idea how much this really means in repayment terms.

Furthermore, children also end up in illegal activities by being forced to work by men they thought were their boyfriends. This form of seduction and then pimping was raised a number of times by HIV prevention workers, who argued that many Albanian women come into the UK with a boyfriend, and are then forced into prostitution.

Numbers of children trafficked

Child trafficking through West Sussex Social Services

Although it was impossible for anyone to put an exact figure on the number of children trafficked into and through the UK. The West Sussex Social Services provide some good indicators. With regard to the trafficking of children through West Sussex, 66 children have gone missing since September 1995. The following is the breakdown of nationality, age at disappearance and gender:

Nationality	Age	Gender	Number Missing
Nigerian	13	Female	1
	14	Male	1
	15	Female	5
		Male	1
	16	Female	4
		Male	1
	17	Female	8
		Male	2
	22	Female	1
Liberian	16	Female	1
	17	Female	4
Sierra Leonean	14	Male	1
	15	Male	1
	16	Female	7
		Male	3
	17	Female	4

		Male	3
	18	Female	5
Gabon	18	Female	1
Ghana	16	Female	
		Male	2
	17	Female	1
		Male	2
Sudan	17	Female	1
Kenya	16	Female	1
China	15	Female	1
	16	Female	1
	17	Female	2
		Male	1

As well as those that have gone missing, West Sussex Social Services also have the following (see box below) still in their care who they believe are at risk of being trafficked. Of these, it is thought that a number may be in contact with the traffickers. There is evidence to suggest that the boys are involved in credit card fraud and drug dealing, while the girls are involved in prostitution. West Sussex Social Services know of one girl who is definitely involved in prostitution. She owes the trafficker nearly £50,000 and has kept an account of how much she had paid back. In the summer of 2001, this was about £1,090.

African	Female	19
	Male	17
Chinese	Female	2
	Male	4

The most recent cases of disappearance were in August 2001, and the most recent arrivals were in September 2001.

All the figures above reveal the number of children that have gone missing, but do not show the trends. In many cases, it is alleged that the children are Nigerian, but come in under different nationalities that are more likely to be claiming asylum. This is shown in the cases of Liberian unaccompanied minors. For instance, the first Liberian child arrived in March 1997 and went missing the same day, the next four arrived between June and August 1997 and went missing by the end of August. After that no more Liberian minors were found. Additionally, although Sierra Leonean minors have been admitted by West Sussex Social Services continuously, these too reveal the methods of trafficking. In September 1999, six Sierra Leonean's entered the UK on the same day and were admitted to West Sussex Social Services. They all then went missing a month later, on the same day. This happened again in September 2000, when five entered, and all went missing five days later.

The changes in numbers through the years must be noted. The following outlines the numbers that have gone missing since the first case in 1995.

Year	Number missing
1995	1
1996	1
1997	7
1998	11
1999	23
2000	19
2001	4

The above table clearly reveals an increase in the trafficking of children through West Sussex Social Services, although there are measures in place to try and prevent children going missing. Furthermore the table reveals a great decrease in 2001, which may be due to the traffickers realising the police, Immigration and Social Services are aware of their movements, and causing the traffickers to stop using Gatwick airport as an entry point.

Apart from these precise figures from West Sussex Social Services, other respondents involved in the investigation (Operation Newbridge) were able to give further figures. This police operation became a National Crime Squad (NCS) enquiry in January 2000, but ended in April of the same year. In that time the Immigration Service was passed 120 referrals from Ports Immigration Officers. These referrals were with regard to unaccompanied children who fitted the 'at risk of trafficking' profile. Of these "more than 25% were sufficiently suspicious, or obviously linked to the targeted traffickers, to be referred to the NCS team⁷⁰". During this time, the Immigration Service identified nine individuals thought to be traffickers, all of whom were referred to the NCS. Another respondent from the Immigration Service stated that, apart from West Sussex Social Services, they knew of at least 15 children missing from another Social Services. Additionally, statistical information is available from British Immigration officials overseas. In Lagos, after being briefed in August 1999 on the victim profile, 92 potential victims were stopped embarking at Lagos Airport in November 1999 alone.

Eastern European children

When asked in the interviews about the numbers of Eastern European children being trafficked, the majority of the interviewees were unable to answer this question. Those that did consisted of police and HIV prevention workers. One police respondent said that in 75 brothels in Soho, there are about 5 -10 young people, aged 15-17 years old working in prostitution. However, all the 'children' say they are over 18. Since this interview, the same police respondent has recently worked on two cases of 15 year old Romanian girls who were very open about their age, and asked the police for their help. These girls were not found in Soho but in flats in other areas of London. He believes that the age of the girls is getting younger, because of cases such as these. In general the girls are kept in 'off-street' locations, such as saunas, flats and 'safe' houses.

⁷⁰ Personal Communication (23.4.01).

HIV prevention workers were also unable to verify the ages of girls. From one HIV project of 1777 contacts made between July and September 2000, 491 of these were Albanians, compared to 820 from the UK and Republic of Ireland and 114 from South East Asia. However, all these stated that they were over 18 years old, with most saying there were aged between 21 and 22 years. Project workers argue that some of these are definitely below 18 years old, and it is not uncommon for them to find girls looking like 'scared rabbits', with no coping strategies. A further clue to their age is revealed through smear tests. All clients receive a smear test if they are over 20 years of age. Any smear tests below this age show abnormalities, due to an immature cervix. The smear programme has shown that many of the clients have abnormal smears, disclosing that the girls are under 20, and are probably about 17 - 19 years old.

In another project, out of 21 saunas visited, project staff believe there are about 35 - 40 trafficked women. The final HIV prevention programme felt that the increase in migrant sex workers was very notable, but again in over 18 year olds. In the quarter leading up to December 1999, 500 clients were contacted, of these about 20 were thought to be trafficked. In the quarter leading up to December 2000, this number had risen to 50 or 60 women, which is an increase of 9%. Both of these projects stated that the average age was 18 - 25, but that there were some girls who looked under 18 years.

Soho: a red light district

Soho's red light district is quite different to other red light areas in England, as the area is well known by members of the public, and well policed. It is well policed in that the flats are often checked to ensure that no under-age girls are working in them. This means that there are unlikely to be under-age girls working in Soho, and if they are under-age they will be 16 and 17 year olds, who are able to maintain that they are over 18 years old. It would be extremely rare for a girl to advertise the fact that she is under-age, as this area has the only pro-active vice squad in the country.

The Soho area, however, can give good indications about how the sex industry runs, and would also indicate where under-age girls would be held. As noted above, girls who are obviously under 18 years old would not be found in Soho. Soho consists of walk-in flats and phone flats. The first consist of one maid and female sex worker (from now on referred to as 'working woman'). One woman working on her own is not illegal, but two women constitute a brothel or a 'nest', which is illegal. The maid in this situation controls who works in 'her' flat. It may be more than one girl, but on different days. Soho flats are a good point of entry for anyone starting in the sex industry, as they are easy to get access to and find out about. Additionally, this is the first stop for many coming into the UK. Working in a flat is off-street prostitution, and makes it harder to find women.

In the case of walk-in flats, the maid provides some security for the working woman. In return, the working woman must pay a daily wage to the maid, and pay for the daily rental on the property. One respondent gave a figure of £350 to £400 a day outgoings for a working woman. This consists of £80 to £100 wages for the maid and £300 for the rent. If the working woman does not make enough money in one day to cover these costs, the debt is transferred to the next day. It

must be noted that to be able to pay this high sum of money a woman may have to 'service' between 30 and 40 men a day, as the cost of straight sex is £20.00, with a time limit of 10 minutes. Additionally, because of this need to make such large sums of money, without any alternatives, the women have no control over the men they agree to have sex with, or whether sex is protected. A number of respondents stated that due to the higher number of migrant women working in Soho, some sexual practices, such as anal sex, are now common, although before they were a 'specialist service'. Additionally, maid's wages and rental fees are usually higher for migrant women, as they have less control over where they work, and are usually disadvantaged by not speaking English.

Also found in Soho and the surrounding area are phone flats. These are flats that are advertised in phone boxes around London, and are rented by the woman working in the flat. Similar to the walk-in flats, the landlord may or may not know what business is being conducted in the flat. In the phone flats, the working woman has more control and employs the maid. The maid provides security through vetting the client on the phone before they come to the flat. There may be up to three women working in the flat, but not at the same time. Additionally, phone flats charge more. This is also the specialist end of the market, such as the dominatrix, and the customers tend to be regulars. In some cases saunas are licensed premises, which do not employ under 18s, and which may be strictly enforced to provide masseur services only. Working in both types of premises is more permanent than working in walk-in flats, and more discrete, which means a person must have some ability to access them or have knowledge of the sex industry.

Finally there is the escort agency and street work. In relation to the escort agency, women need to know about the sex industry before they are able to have access area of work. Contact is still made through advertising, but the client expects more talking and socialising, which makes this area of the market only accessible to those with a certain degree of English. For those involved in working on the street, this is often dangerous, and an area of sex work that is often drug related. The majority of those working on the streets are British.

Furthermore, a new area is opening up, and this is in relation to new private members clubs. These clubs employ mainly non British girls, who do not speak much English. It is thought that there is some level of control over the girls in this situation.

In relation to all of the above, one respondent was able to talk about the changes in Soho over the last few years, due to the large influx of Eastern European women. Since April 1999, the majority of women entering Soho have been from Albania, and other Eastern European countries. The respondent stated that now there are no English girls working in Soho. It is known that when one girl leaves to work elsewhere, she is replaced. Recently, they have only been replaced by Eastern European women. This view is supported by Paul Holmes from the Metropolitan Police, quoted in the Sunday Times Magazine⁷¹

⁷¹ Sunday Times Magazine, The (18.2. 2001) 'The Sex Slaver Trade: Captive Market'.

as saying that "more than 70% of women working in brothels in Soho are from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe".

To support the suggestion that women are being trafficked into Soho, is the fact that over the last 6 months, women 'fresh off the boat', are turning up at phone flats and saunas asking for work. To the respondent, this indicates that someone is telling them where to work, as they have not had time to find out about the sex industry. This was also noted by a respondent in Birmingham, who had heard about foreign men bringing women to saunas everyday, and asking the proprietors whether they want the women. However, some proprietors only accept women who come to the saunas on their own, and speak English, to avoid trouble with possible pimps. There is further evidence in Soho of a large influx of foreign women into the saunas. Women working in saunas usually work on a permanent basis, yet reports of five new women appearing in a saunas every week, have been heard by a respondent. In this case, five women are then moved on to another sauna. The respondent believes that someone is organising the women to work in different places. This high a turnover has never been reported before.

Although all the above relates to Soho, and therefore it is unlikely to relate to children, it describes the sex industry and the large influx of Eastern European women into the sex industry. It is just as easy to bring in children as women, if not easier, as a child can not only come in as unaccompanied, or come in with an adult posing as their parent. These children are then moved to off-street working areas, possibly walk-in flats or phone flats, where they are well hidden. Additionally, children do not have to be advertised. In some cases, girls aged 15 to 17 years old could be working in a flat, and if a client finds themselves with a younger girl they will come back. For the children who are under 15 years old, and have been trafficked, they will be kept well hidden, not advertised, and a known clientele will know where to find them. However, no respondent was able to give any information about children younger than approximately 15 or 16 years of age, except for the instances of West African children.

Another area in relation to children is their movement within the UK. Although not many of the respondents were able to provide information on this aspect, it is known that women who have been brought into the UK to work in Soho do move around the country. This is often because they have made contacts with other working women who work outside of London, whilst working in Soho. It may also be because those moving the women around made their own contacts, or face less chance of detection if the women are constantly moving.

Characteristics of victims

When asked about the collection of information on the characteristics of victims, the following institutions were cited: the police, Social Services, Immigration Service and the University of North London. Only in the latter case was the information not provided as to what they had found out, the first three all related to the children missing from care. One respondent said that there were small NGOs collecting their own information, but due to no centralised recording place, this data was unavailable.

With regards to the children missing from care, as of July 2000, West Sussex Social Services put together an 'at risk profile'. This was circulated to the police and the Immigration Service. This profile applies to children entering the country, and declaring themselves asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, to ensure they are taken into Social Services. This profile was put together to spot the vulnerable children more easily. The profile reads:

- Male or female
- Aged 12 - 28
- May maintain to Immigration Service that they are older than they appear.
- Come from West Africa (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia) or from China.
- May have documentation which is not West African.
- Anxious/ distressed (particularly wanted to know where they are, use the phone, etc).
- May have been drugged or held captive prior to flight.
- Girls may wear wigs.
- Girls often wear 'old style' clothes, but have modern, westernised, skimpy clothes in their luggage, often with British labels.
- Girls are submissive and cowed, uncommunicative and tense, and often fail to make eye contact, although it is recognised that this is a cultural norm for some. However, this may be the case even when the social worker and carers have known them for some time.
- Interest is shown by suspected perpetrators.
- On arrival a solicitor or legal representative has been informed by a third party of their arrival and attempts to make contact with Immigration or Social Services.
- Some of the young people who fit the profile are known to be accomplices of the perpetrators.

National legislation and law enforcement

Is existing legislation adequate to combat the problem of trafficking?

Out of the 24 asked, only 15 answered. All 15 felt that the existing legislation is wholly inadequate and out-dated. Apart from problems with the existing legislation it is felt that there is a lack of understanding and an inability to take the issue of trafficking seriously. Coupled with this is the difficulty in proving and investigating trafficking offences, and the lack of victims willing to testify. Other respondents complained that the sentences handed out were too light, and the lack of cross-border communication and country agreements on sentencing.

As stated in Section Two, and by all those who answered questions on legislation, there are currently no measures in national legislation that relate specifically to an offence of trafficking. However, one respondent felt that there is an increased awareness of the issue, and in relation to this, an increase in intelligence to combat trafficking.

Weak points in national legislation

Those interviewed found many weak points in the UK's national legislation⁷². One police respondent felt that the main problems were that it is hard to prove offences have been committed, as there is never enough evidence under existing legislation to take the case to the Court⁷³. This problem was also noted by a Social Services care worker, who had found that the victims' evidence was not considered safe because the girls had lied when they entered the UK. Three respondents from the Immigration Service and the police answered that the 'for gain' stipulation in facilitation of entry means that unless the trafficker is caught with the money on them, it cannot be proven that they were paid to transport a person over a border.

One police interviewee argued that there is adequate legislation under the Sex Offenders Act 1956, but that sentencing guidelines are poor. In the UK, a person caught trafficking 2 kg of cocaine would be sentenced to between eight and fifteen years in prison. However, for a human trafficker to be given a maximum sentence of seven years under Section 30 and 31⁷⁴ of the 1956 Act, the victim must testify. Not only must the victim testify, she must also prove that she would not have entered prostitution had she not met the trafficker, and that there was physical and/or mental coercion. Without the testimony, the trafficker will get two years. It is interesting to note that in a recent case of the 15 year old Romanian, the trafficker was charged with rape, abduction and pimping, and would have got over 10 years in prison, if convicted. However, the girl did not arrive at Court to testify⁷⁵.

Further criticisms against existing legislation is that the legislation attacks the victim, rather than the trafficker or the client, and that there is a need for harsher sentences for those forcing under 18s into sexual exploitation. Additionally, it was raised throughout the interviews by various people from all three categories, that there is currently no organisation that accepts trafficked women or children as referrals from the police or HIV prevention programmes. It was felt that there is a real need for this service.

How to increase conviction rates

The respondents felt that there are a number of ways to increase conviction rates. Many agreed that there is a need for better intelligence at ports or entry and embarkation, better intelligence with regard to the movement of traffickers,

⁷² Scotland has different legislation to England and Wales, but due to the lack of time, differing laws were not researched. No comparisons were made with English laws, but interviewees did state that trafficking laws were necessary in case trafficking cases appeared.

⁷³ Police searched one suspected traffickers house and found evidence of trafficking. This evidence was considered circumstantial by the Criminal Prosecution Service.

⁷⁴ Section 30: It is an offence for a man knowingly to live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution.

Section 31: It is an offence for a woman for purposes of gain to exercise control, direction or influence over a prostitute's movements in a way which shows she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution.

⁷⁵ Personal Communication, November 2001, from a police respondent interviewed earlier in the year.

increase the resources to all front line authorities, and share intelligence between agencies and law enforcement. It was also thought that a unit should be set up to manage the communication between EU countries, on traffickers' movements, and to have a partnership between agencies to share relevant information. Furthermore, taking out the 'for gain' in legislation, making the aiding and abetting of forging passports an offence, and introducing heavy penalties and legislation against traffickers, were all thought ways to increase conviction rates.

The protection of minors

Any minor within the UK should be protected under the Children Act 1989 and The Sex Offences Act 1956, yet the respondents cited incidences that reveal that children are not as protected as they should be. With regard to the Children Act, it was stated that if a child is found to be unaccompanied, the Immigration Service contact Social Services, who then look after the child. Immigration are able to grant children temporary admission to the UK. However, Immigration pointed out that on many occasions the Social Services have requested Immigration to ask the child to make their own way to Social Services. It has also been known for Immigration to find the child still waiting at the airport the following day, after sleeping on the concourse all night. One police respondent supported this lack of care, when he stated that when they take a child found to be soliciting, they put her under police protection, while the Social Services are contacted. The police officer said that when the Social Services find out the child is 16 or over, they 'don't want to know'. In cases like these the police let the child leave the police station. The Social Services have told the police that they are under-resourced and unable to take children of this age, as there are younger children more in need, although they are under a legal obligation to care for the child.

Additionally, one respondent felt that barriers were set up by Social Services, who, due to low staffing, did not see child prostitution or trafficking as a priority, and were not proactive in helping children at risk of being prostituted.

Improvements to legislation

It was felt by one respondent that changes could be made by completely rewriting the Immigration Act 1971 and the Sex Offences Act 1956. A number of interviewees from NGOs also felt that legislation is not child friendly, as it always labels the child as a refugee or asylum seeker first, before seeing them as a child. Other recommendations included providing legal guardians to unaccompanied children under Section 20 of the Children Act, rather than accommodating them under Section 17. With a legal guardian it was thought that the child would be better protected, as there is an adult who is held responsible for the child's disappearance. With regard to unaccompanied minors, one respondent argued that with an estimated 10,000 unaccompanied minors in the UK, the Government should take the problem more seriously. Furthermore, one policeman commented that under the Children Act 1989, children are well protected, yet Social Services do not use the Children Act to its full capacity, and because of this 16 and 17 year olds are 'let down'. However, West Sussex Social Services know that they have 'let down' the children in their care, and this due to the current asylum laws. Under the current legislation, the

girls are not granted asylum, but have to appeal. On appeal some are granted exception leave to remain (ELR). In one case even ELR was not granted, and the girl is due to be deported. Therefore, West Sussex Social Services are unable to assure the girls that they will be kept safe.

When Social workers convince the children that they will be able to stay in their care, they do not know if this is correct. In all the cases, the girl's applications for asylum have been turned down, and they have had to go through an appeal process. In one of these cases, even their appeal for exceptional leave to remain has been turned down.

Protection, rehabilitation and repatriation of trafficked victims

When asked about prevention programmes, only that of West Sussex Social Services was known of. West Sussex Social Services have set up a safe house for the girls, and try to tell the girls that they will be safe if they stay there and inform them of the reality if they go with the traffickers. The programme introduces the girls to 'normality' by sending them to school, involving them in the community, and due to this some of the girls have decided to stay in the UK.

In relation to rehabilitation, West Sussex is again the only place known to try and rehabilitate the victims of trafficking. As many of the girls have undergone sexual, physical and mental abuse, they are in need of help. One girl in particular had continual nightmares that the traffickers were going to kill her. Since Social Services' intervention, she is no longer scared. Additionally, Social Services provided rehabilitation to one girl who was returned to the UK after she had been trafficked to Italy. Social Services were able to offer her rehabilitation, and have re-housed her in another part of the country. Although she is over 18 years old, they are still providing support for her.

The repatriation of victims was unknown to all respondents, although they all felt that there was a need for such programmes to ensure that it is safe for children to return to their own country of origin, if they so wish.

What is the role of the police in combating trafficking?

There were many replies to this question, which appear to fall into four main categories:

Investigation/ Intelligence/ Surveillance: It was thought that the police's role was to investigate the disappearances of children from care, carry out surveillance on the 'safe' houses, and collect the corresponding information. Additionally, the police should carry out background checks on 'uncles' and 'aunts' who claim to be the relatives of children already identified as being at risk of trafficking.

Detection/ Enforcement: The police's role in this case would be to detect those responsible for trafficking and to bring about prosecution. However, as noted earlier, there are currently no laws to prosecute traffickers. One police respondent indicated that they currently use charges of abduction, abuse and deceit to prosecute, but that these laws have sentences that are too light to deter traffickers.

Support/ Care/ Protection: Currently, there are no organisations with the remit of protecting and providing support to trafficked victims. Although many considered this was the role of an NGO, police should provide protection to a trafficked victim during their court case, and after, if the victim decided to stay in the UK.

Collaboration: It was suggested that the police could work closely with authorities in the countries of origin and with the Social Services to provide protection to the children. Additionally, it was suggested that the police should work with immigration and Customs to prevent victims leaving the country with their traffickers. Collaboration with Immigration could also take the form of Immigration Service collecting intelligence on individuals' movements, and passing this onto the police.

Additional suggestions included establishing a police unit whose sole responsibility is combating human trafficking, and providing more information to rural police forces which are unaware of trafficking and rescuing victims.

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in combating trafficking?

It was suggested by those interviewed that NGOs were best placed to provide support and accept referrals from police forces and service providers. It was further thought that NGOs may even be the first point of call for victims of trafficking. As a first point of call, one police respondent felt that any NGO providing support to trafficked victims must accept the responsibility of informing the police of a trafficked victim, even if they didn't tell the police all the details. As non-statutory organisations, many respondents felt that NGOs were in the right position to be able to build up trust with victims, possibly provide English lessons and collect any information that would help prosecutions.

Additionally, the NGOs' role could involve raising awareness amongst the general public and organisations. One respondent pointed out that refugee organisations, amongst others, have known about trafficking for years, but have never raised the issue. Another role of NGOs could be to act as a communicator between Social Services and Immigration, as it was thought there was a lack of communication between these two important organisations. It was also thought that NGOs were in a position to be able to lobby the Government for effective legislation

The role of children

The main role of children was considered to be as peer educators, raising awareness amongst other children of the danger of trafficking, and to make other children aware of adults who try to manipulate them. One police respondent felt that the child's role was one of a victim, and therefore as a complainant, as without a complainant there is no crime.

Difficulties faced by professionals in their work

Nearly all the respondents said that their biggest difficulty was lack of resources, low staffing levels and lack of adequate legislation. Difficulties faced by HIV prevention programmes included the fact that their funding is for HIV programmes only and not for wider reaching work. There is also an inability

to refer the women or young people to any organisation, particularly one looking after trafficked victims and there is a lack of communication with Social Services. Furthermore, one NGO respondent stated that to run a safe house for children at risk of being trafficked, costs twice as much to run and three times the cost in staff, compared to normal care homes. This makes being able to justify resourcing such an expensive project difficult, as there is a lack of priority from the Government on this issue. Additionally, one police respondent felt that difficulties were faced in trying to get victims to testify, and their unwillingness to cooperate.

Clients

When asked about the demand for young girls, the main responses were "men" and "already existing markets". Additionally, those in connection with the missing from care cases were able to answer that Northern Italy drove the demand for West African women. A number of possible explanations for Italy were given such as the already existing Mafia networks, and that Italian men prefer black women, who are perceived as 'rare' and 'exotic', but also inferior to Italian women.

Nearly all the those interviewed stated that customers find children through word of mouth, existing brothels and flats, paedophile networks, phone booth and newspaper advertising and internet chat rooms. One police respondent said that children would not be found in well known red light districts, such as Soho, because the police are too active. In areas like these, if one brothel found out a child was being prostituted, they would complain to the police, due to competition between brothels. Additionally, children are imported to order, and in situations where a family brings in a child, they find the customers for the child.

How can we find the children before their customers do?

The respondents felt there were a number of ways to intervene. This could be by intercepting the children while en-route and in transit, stop them getting on planes in Lagos, and working with the host country's immigration, police and education system.

Many interviewees felt that intelligence, surveillance, undercover work and policing was required. One police respondent argued that an airline should be charged £2,000 every time an unaccompanied child arrived without documentation, as documents would have been required to board the planes⁷⁶. To stop this, the police officer suggested that every unaccompanied child should hand over their travel documents to a member of the air crew on inbound flights. The documents would then be returned on landing.

The majority of the respondents stated that intervention would be dangerous. However, one police interviewee said it would be no more dangerous than normal police work.

⁷⁶ The charging of airlines for carrying passengers without legal documents is already carried out. The airline is charged £2000.

Are trafficking networks involved?

Networks are involved, yet this ranges from one person bringing in one child or adult, to a number of individuals bringing in lots of women and children. It was stated that none of the traffickers could work strictly on their own, as they need to have contacts to gain access to the sex industry and move illegal women or children around. Immigration also noted that the traffickers that appear at the airport to pick up the children change every six months. A number of other respondents had noted that the Russian groups worked in larger numbers, bringing in lots of women, yet the Albanian men worked one-to-one with their 'girlfriend'.

Should sending countries share the responsibility with regards to the issue of trafficking?

All those questioned felt that the countries of origin shared responsibility, but how much depended on the state of the country. One respondent stated that if there was no functioning infrastructure in the country due to war etc. then the country could not be held responsible.

In relation to how the problem should be overcome, a number of interviewees said there is the need for awareness of the problem in the country of origin, and parents and children need to realise what actually happens to the children who are taken overseas for a 'better life'. Further education must be made available to girls and women, with the harder task of providing employment at the end of education. It was pointed out that war, poverty and economic imbalances cause trafficking, and it is these problems that must be addressed, possibly through foreign aid and women's co-operatives. What must be understood is why children leave, and the cultural attitudes, such as fear of voodoo, which lead women and children to fall prey to traffickers.

With regard to West African girls, it was suggested that all passengers boarding the plane in Lagos, Nigeria, should be checked. On general issues, it was thought that trafficking is made easier by corrupt officials in countries of origin. It was thought that adequate pay, enforcement and a change in cultural attitudes would help to prevent corruption. Additionally, better policing, and at a national and a multi-national level, were cited as ways to overcome the issue, as was investigating the trafficking routes and finding the recruiters.

Case Studies

Case study one

The following case study has been taken directly from a member of staff of Anti-Slavery International. The interview was carried out between this member of staff, and the victim, Jane. A social worker was present throughout the interview. Jane is now 17 years old.

Jane lived with her aunt and brother, in Benin City, Nigeria. She says both her parents are dead.

Someone she knew asked her to go to a club. She didn't know what to expect, but when she was taken into the building she knew that it was one of the secret clubs she had heard about. She describes walking into one of the rooms and there being women's heads hanging from the ceiling.

She was forced to take part in a number of rituals which involved drinking blood. The people who were in charge told her that she was now a member of their group, and that she must swear complete secrecy, if she told anyone she would die.

She went to a local church and asked for their help. She says she told the preacher everything, despite the death threats. The preacher said that the church would pray for her. She stayed away from the cult, but a man from the cult visited her on a regular basis, saying that she must go back, and that if she did not they would find her and kill her. She was very scared of the cult and wanted to get away from them. She says that she started to have terrible nightmares about the people in charge of the cult.

Then, the man who visited her said that he could help her. He told her that he knew people who could take her to London. She had her photo taken and they sorted out a passport. She was 15 years old.

The traffickers picked her up and took her to a building she didn't know. Again there was a ritual. This time it involved her bathing in water that had been specially prepared with herbs and other things. They cut her body and they made her hold a live chicken and cut it. This time they told her she owed them money, and that if she didn't pay it back she would die. She didn't know how much money it was because they gave the amount in lira (Italian currency). They also said that if she told anyone about the voodoo, gave the name of the man who gave her the passport, told anyone about the plan, or tried to run away, then the chicken would die, and they would know that she had betrayed their trust. This would result in her death, her body would swell up and she would die.

She was given her passport and told to remember a phone number that she was to ring on arriving in the UK.

She was taken to the airport, there were no problems with immigration on leaving the country. At this stage she had no idea what was going to happen to

her when she arrived in the UK, she just wanted to get away from Nigeria and away from the cult.

She didn't know what to do when she got off the plane in Gatwick, so she followed everyone else. At UK immigration they asked her nationality, she told them "Nigerian", and they asked why she had a British passport. They took her to the interview room. They asked if she had somewhere to stay, or whether someone was meeting her. She explained that she was supposed to ring a phone number, but she had forgotten the number.

She was taken to a safe house, which she says she didn't like because she was treated like a prisoner, and people seemed suspicious of her.

She was then placed in another safe house. Here she was sharing a room with another girl from Nigeria. This girl had also been trafficked. She could remember her phone number and said she was going to use it because otherwise she wouldn't be able to pay back the money. At this time Jane started to get worried about paying the money back, and what would happen if she didn't.

Very early one Sunday morning she woke to hear the other girl in the bathroom. All her belongings were packed. She asked the girl what she was doing, and the girl said she had phoned the number and was being collected. She offered to ask them if they'd also take Jane. Jane agreed and the two of them escaped out of the back door of the safe house.

She said that she was very scared in the car because the men in the car were shouted at the other girl, telling her that she'd messed up at immigration. They drove to London and were taken to a flat. One of the men took the other girl away and left Jane with the other man and a third girl. Jane was not told why she was there or what would happen to her, she was scared.

She slept on the floor and was not allowed out of the flat. The man went to work during the day, and often the girl also left the flat, so she spent a lot of time alone, locked in the flat. The only food she had were crisps and chocolate that the girl brought her.

The man came back and said that he was taking Jane to Germany for a short trip. She said she didn't want to go and he shouted at her. He gave her a new passport, which belonged to a woman who was 28, and Jane said the photo didn't look anything like her. The man told her that she must remember the name in the passport, the date of birth and the age.

They left the flat and drove to a port. The man made her wear a big coat, to make her look bigger and older. She only had light summer clothes on. The man went to buy the tickets, and left Jane in the car. Jane saw a police car. When the man came back he was stopped by the police, who questioned him. The man said that he didn't know Jane, but was just giving her a lift. They looked at Jane's passport and asked her name. She couldn't remember the name in the passport, but told them that she was 28. They didn't believe her,

and said was a child. They asked her if she knew the man. Previously, the man had told her to say that he is her boyfriend, but now he denied knowing her so she became confused. She told the police that she didn't know the man because that was the truth, she didn't know who he was.

The police let the man go and took her to the police station. She spent two nights in a cell. She didn't eat anything, and when she asked if they would bring her a biscuit they refused.

She told the police the whole story. She explained that she ran away from the safe house. She is given a solicitor (who bought her some chocolate, the only food she ate while she was there). The police told her that they have found the woman who owns the passport she had, and the passport had been stolen. (At this stage she became confused about the time she spent in the cell. She talked about it as if it was 5 days. The social worker said that Jane found this time very traumatic, and that her memory of it suggests it seemed much longer than 2 days.)

She was taken to a detention centre in a van. She said they wouldn't believe her age. (It is unclear as to whether this is the police or the staff of the detention centre).

She was told that a letter from Nigeria had arrived for her. It was from her mother saying that she was worried about her and that she must come home to Nigeria. The letters said that Jane was not 15, but 21. Jane tried to explain that her mother is dead and that it must be the cult who is writing the letters.

The social worker explained that the letters have been passed on by a Nigerian Solicitor. The staff believed the letters over Jane's explanation. West Sussex Social Services then found out that the solicitors were already being investigated by immigration for being involved in trafficking. The social worker has a copy of some of the letters. She said she has no idea how the solicitors knew that Jane was in the detention centre.

Jane said that at this point 'everything started to mess up.' She was very scared about what would happen to her if she has to go back to Nigeria.

Jane was visited by the social worker while she is in the detention centre. It took the social worker 4 months to convince them that Jane was a victim of trafficking, and is telling the truth. Jane was in the detention centre for 5 months in total.

After she came out of the detention centre she was placed in a safe house. She told the social worker everything, including details of the voodoo. She then fell down the stairs and twisted her ankle, and she became terrified that this was the voodoo. Some weeks later her lips swelled up and again she was terrified it was the voodoo, especially as she'd been told that she would die through her body swelling. She was taken to accident and emergency and spent over a week in hospital. The Doctor said it was a result of an infection, but he also said he'd never seen a reaction like it before.

Jane has been in touch with her aunt and her brother by phone. She has told them that she is healthy and well, but has not told them where she is. Her brother has received anonymous letters asking where Jane is. Jane is scared that her brother may be in danger. All she wants is to go back to Nigeria, but she is terrified about what will happen to her if she does.

She goes to school and is learning to read and write. She hasn't made any friends and is not eating. She is obviously very distressed. She does not sleep and says she has terrible dreams. She says that she has had enough of this life, that there is nothing left for her and that only god can help her. The social worker said that the Doctor is prescribing her anti-depressant drugs. She also said that Jane had to have a blood test so the Doctor could check for other health problems that could be contributing to her mood and resistance to food. Jane found the blood test incredibly traumatic, and the social workers think that this is because of the voodoo rituals, and she commented how difficult it was because the health service has no understanding of what Jane has been through.

Jane has 4 years exceptional leave to remain.

Further information on the case:

The man who was taking Jane to Germany was known by the police for suspected trafficking cases. When they typed in his name they spelt it wrong, which is why he was allowed to go when Jane was taken to the police station. He left the country the next day. He returned two days later and Dover alerted the police and he was picked up, and his passport was taken from him. The police asked to inspect his flat and he agreed. They found photos of Nigerian girls, phone numbers in Nigeria, UK and Italy, addresses and evidence of voodoo. The case was sent to the Crown Prosecution, who said all the evidence was circumstantial and the case never made it to court. Again the suspected trafficker left the country, using a second passport, but the social worker thinks that he will have returned and will be trafficking girls again.

Case study two

This case is also from West Sussex Social Services. Patricia (not her real name) stated that she was 17 years old, and had been living in Nigeria when she heard about a place in town that could help her get to Europe. She was aware that she would be made to work as a prostitute, but saw this as her chance to leave Nigeria, and believed she would be able to escape the traffickers once in the UK. Unlike many other girls who were controlled through threats made after they partook in a voodoo ceremony, Patricia didn't believe in voodoo, as she was a Catholic. After entering the country and claiming asylum she was taken to a Social Services care home. Immediately she refused to go with the traffickers, but was abducted and taken to London. In London Patricia was kept in a flat for three days, with three or four other girls. From London, they were driven to Belgium, to a remote, rural area, where she was kept under close supervision, due to her initial reluctance. Her final destination was Italy. In Italy, she managed to escape and went to a church. She then contacted Social

Services, who contacted the police. The authorities in Italy looked after her until British police collected her.

By this time Patricia was 18 years old, but due to her age when she was first admitted to care, Social Services agreed to look after her. She is now in Social Services accommodation in another part of the country. Unfortunately, due to the Patricia's unwillingness to provide information to the police, no action has been taken against the traffickers. Additionally, her application for asylum has been turned down and she is currently appealing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is trafficking of children into the UK for sexual purposes. There is also the use of the UK as a transit point for traffickers, taking children through the UK, to be forced into sexual exploitation elsewhere in Europe. Estimates of the numbers involved are very difficult to make, if not impossible. However, we should not be concerned with statistics. We do know that at least 66 children have been trafficked through the UK, and that many more are at risk of being sexually exploited in the UK. This in itself should be enough evidence to show that the UK has a trafficking problem, and that action must be taken immediately.

As detailed in the report, children are being brought into the UK through two distinct channels. The first is the use of the asylum system and Social Services by the traffickers to look after the children and keep them in places known to the traffickers, without any expense. These children are then taken out of care and trafficked to Europe, especially Italy. This form of trafficking involves, mainly, West African girls.

These children are usually trafficked by, or at their parent's request, although some are abducted. It is thought a minority of the children know that they will be forced into sexual exploitation, but are unaware of the true extent of the situation. Additionally, some have hoped to escape the traffickers, and use the traffickers as a means to be smuggled into the UK. However, they are abducted and nevertheless forced into prostitution. Up until August 2001, 66 children had gone missing from West Sussex Social Services, the youngest being nine years old. Another 42 are thought to be 'at risk' and fit the profile of trafficked victims. Those documented as missing from care, are all missing from only one Social Services. It is unknown as to the extent of the number of children missing from other Social Services who may have been trafficked.

The second form of trafficking is of predominantly Eastern European females. These females are being bought in, either by a 'boyfriend' (one to one) or by 'Mafia' (lots of girls at once). The prevalence of children amongst this form of trafficking is unknown. HIV prevention programmes and the police believe that there are young people (aged 16/17 years old) being trafficked, although all the girls maintain they are 18 years or over. Many of these female children and adults are duped into prostitution. They are forced to work in flats or saunas (none are found working on the streets) and have very little control, if any, over their working conditions or money.

There are other areas of trafficking that have not been reported on as they were impossible to research in the limited amount of time available. However, they could be possible entry points for a large number of trafficked children. For instance it is hard to investigate how many children enter the country with adults pretending to be their parents, or are smuggled in and therefore do not come into contact with any Social Services or other services. Children are also brought in under sponsorship. Furthermore, Immigration and other organisations state that there are between 5,000 and 10,000 unaccompanied children in the UK. These figures may contain a large number of children being

sexually exploited. One respondent felt that, although the UK wasn't saturated yet with women and girls being trafficked, there would, in the near future, be problems and 'turf' wars would start between rival gangs. It is also unknown as to whether 'British' children are being trafficked out of the UK for sexual purposes elsewhere.

The difficulty in finding information on the trafficking of children, and women, must be looked at in depth by those groups that will increasingly come into contact with females who have been trafficked. In most cases, service providers, police and Social Services will be unaware that the child has been trafficked. Very few are willing to testify, and even if they do, their traffickers will face light sentences, as there is currently no law prohibiting the trafficking of humans. Additionally, those testifying cannot be provided with adequate protection, and in some cases, this has made the police turn down cases, as the long term protection of the victim and her family cannot be assured.

The above points all relate to the following recommendations that have come out of this research.

Recommendations

Primary research: This is essential to find out the extent of the problem and the different methods of trafficking, particularly in relation to Eastern European children.

Legislation: Introduction of adequate legislation relating to trafficking and the seriousness of the crime. Adequate protection and support of trafficked children.

Services: There must be funded service provision for victims of trafficking, including the provision of safe houses, counselling, independent legal advice, permanent residency for all children at risk and help with integration into society.

Children in care: Unaccompanied minors thought to be a risk of trafficking, should be put under care orders. This would provide better protection.

On arrival: Unaccompanied children (16 years and below) should have their travel documents looked after by a member of the airline staff, and on arrival to the UK be escorted to Immigration.

The monitoring of unaccompanied children who are picked up by people already suspected of trafficking.

Children arriving in the UK with a partner, or relatives, that are deemed suspicious by Immigration officials, should be interviewed separately to ascertain the real situation. Accredited solicitors should be appointed to represent the child.

Awareness Raising: Campaigns must be set up to raise the awareness of trafficking amongst various organisations, individuals and at a later stage, the general public.

Furthermore, it is essential that awareness raising and education campaigns are carried out in the country of origin, to warn children of the dangers of working abroad.

Communication and Information Exchange: Protocols should be established between Social Services and Immigration on how to best to work with children thought to be at risk of being trafficked.

Implementation of Good Practice and Training: Established protocols, profiles and good practice should be shared nationwide, between all those who may come into contact with trafficked children.

Overseas: Trafficking is often related to conditions of poverty, poor employment opportunities, and unstable countries. Therefore, it is vital that these areas are addressed.

Additionally, many respondents cited corrupt officials as aiding the trafficking of children, therefore, anti-corruption drives are necessary in sending and transit countries.

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LEGISLATION

Sexual Offences Act 1956

Immigration Act 1971

Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Children Act 1989

Appendix A: Sections from Sexual Offences Act 1956 relevant to the issue of trafficking of children

Section 2 and 3: It is an offence for a person to procure a woman, by threats or intimidation, or by false pretences or false representation (S3), to have unlawful sexual intercourse in any part of the world. Both offences carry a sentence of two years.

Section 5 and 6 (1): It is an offence for a man to have intercourse with a girl under the age of thirteen (S5), or a girl over 13 but under 16 years of age (S6). Maximum penalty is life imprisonment for Section 5, and two years' for Section 6.

Section 17: Abduction of a woman by force or for the sake of her property. Maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment.

Section 19: It is an offence, subject to exceptions, for a person to take an unmarried girl under the age of 18 out of the possession of her parent or guardian against his will, if she is so taken with the intention that she shall have unlawful sexual intercourse with men or with a particular man. Maximum penalty of two years.

Section 20: Abduction of girl under 16 or under 18 from parent or guardian. Maximum penalty is two years imprisonment.

Section 22:

(1) It is an offence for a person

(a) to procure a woman to become, in any part of the world, a common prostitute; or

(b) to procure a woman to leave the United Kingdom, intending her to become an inmate of or frequent a brothel elsewhere; or

(c) to procure a woman to leave her usual place of abode in the United Kingdom, intending her to become an inmate or frequent a brothel in any part of the world for the purposes of prostitution.

These offences carry a maximum penalty of two years.

Section 23: It is an offence for a person to procure a girl under the age of 21 to have unlawful sexual intercourse in any part of the world with a third person. Maximum penalty of two years.

Section 24: It is an offence for a person to detain a woman against her will on any premises with the intention that she shall have unlawful sexual intercourse with men or with a particular man, or to detain a woman against her will in a brothel. Penalty of two years.

Section 25 : It is an offence for an owner occupier or manager of a premises to knowingly permit the girls under 13 to have unlawful sexual intercourse. Max penalty is life imprisonment. Under Section 26 the same offence holds for a girl under 16 years, but the maximum penalty is only two years.

Section 28: It is an offence for a person to cause or encourage the prostitution of, intercourse with or indecent assault on a girl under 16. Maximum penalty is two years.

Section 30: It is an offence for a man knowingly to live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution. Penalty of seven years imprisonment.

Section 31: It is an offence for a woman for purposes of gain to exercise control, direction or influence over a prostitute's movements in a way which shows she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution. Penalty of seven years imprisonment.

Appendix B: International Conventions relating specifically to offences of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Article 34: State Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

Article 35: States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

The Optional Protocol was introduced in 2000, but has yet to be brought into force.

Article 1: States Parties shall prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography as provided by the present Protocol.

Article 2: For the purpose of the present Protocol:

- (a) Sale of Children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration;
- (b) Child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration.

Article 3: Each State Party shall ensure that, as a minimum, the following acts and activities are fully covered under its criminal or penal law whether these offences are committed domestically or transnationally or on an individual or organised basis:

- (a) In the context of sale of children as defined in article 2:
 - (i) The offering, delivering or accepting, by whatever means, a child for the purpose of:

(a) Sexual exploitation of the child.

International Labour Organisation C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

Article 3: For the purposes of this Convention, the term *the worst forms of child labour* comprises:

(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

(b) the use, procuring or offering a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or the pornographic performances.

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

This protocol was signed by the UK Government at the end of 2000 and it is the most recent international legislation on the issue of trafficking. Additionally, it states a definition which is being widely adopted by those working on the issue of trafficking. The purposes of the protocol is to:

Article 2 (a): To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children.

(b): To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and

(c): To promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives.

Article 3: Use of terms. For the purposes of this Protocol:

"Trafficking in persons" 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 abductions, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of 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.

Under this protocol a child is anyone under the age of 18 years of age.

EU Legislation

Communication from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Article 1: *Offences concerning trafficking in human beings for the purposes of labour exploitation or sexual exploitation:* Each Member State shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the following acts are punishable:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, subsequent reception of a person, including exchange or transfer of control over that person, when

(a) use is made of coercion, force or threat, including abduction, or

(b) use is made of deceit or fraud, or

(c) there is an abuse of authority or of a position of vulnerability, which is such that the person has no real and acceptable alternatives but to submit to the abuse involved, or

(d) payments or benefits are given or received to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

for the purpose of the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation including in pornography.

2. The consent of a victim of trafficking in human beings to the exploitation, intended or actual, shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph 1a, 1b, 1c, or 1d have been used.

3. When the conduct referred to in paragraph 1 involves a child, it shall be a punishable trafficking offence even if none of the means set forth in subparagraph 1a, 1b, 1c, or 1d have been used.

Article 7 (3): Where the victim is a child, each Member State shall take the measures possible to ensure appropriate assistance for this or her family. In particular, each Member State shall, where appropriate and possible, apply Article 4 of the Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings to the family referred to.