Southwark Safeguarding Children Board
Multi agency protocol for protecting children at risk of CSE

July 2018
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Appendix 1  Southwark CSE Process Map

Appendix 2  Southwark CSE Risk Screening Tool

Appendix 3 Southwark CSE Risk screening tool guidance.

Appendix 4  Child Sexual Exploitation Warning Signs – ‘SAFEGUARD’

Appendix 5 Types of Sexual Exploitation

Appendix 6 Initial CSE strategy discussion
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 No single agency can respond alone to Child Sexual Exploitation. A coherent local response is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This will involve:

- Identifying and protecting the victims of sexual exploitation
- Identifying perpetrators and people of concern, securing justice for victims and obtaining prosecutions
- Identifying locations or ‘hot spots’ in the local area where CSE is likely to occur
- Analysing case histories to identify themes in terms of patterns of abuse, victim profiles and perpetrator profiles.

1.2 This protocol is intended to explain what CSE is, how it can be identified, and what to do where professionals have concerns.

1.3 It is important to remember that CSE is a form of sexual abuse and the London Child Protection Procedures should always be followed where a concern is raised. Children at risk of CSE should be referred to children’s social care and the normal Child Protection process followed – including information gathering, strategy discussion, investigation and where appropriate a child protection conference or Child in need network meeting.

1.4 Children who are vulnerable to CSE can, following assessment, be held outside of Children’s social care where the concerns do not meet the threshold for a response under S17 or S47 CA 1989. See the **Southwark SCB Thresholds document** for examples of the indicators of need which would require an early help response or a response under section 17 or section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

1.5 Assessment of, and planning for young people at risk of, or being sexually exploited, needs to be flexible and take account of each child’s individuality, the uniqueness of their circumstances and the changes that may occur for them over time. Child sexual exploitation is dynamic. The young person’s circumstances can change and on occasions deteriorate very rapidly. All professionals should be aware that assessments need to be continual and display vigilance.

1.6 Southwark holds monthly Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings. The MASE is a strategic meeting which has tactical oversight of CSE cases, information, intelligence and activity. It does not review individual cases but may discuss cases where there is a common
theme or a need to resolve a particular difficulty or an issue with interagency working.

2. DEFINITION OF CSE

The current definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

a. In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or

b. For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

‘Child Sexual Exploitation, definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from CSE’, DfE February 2017

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- May occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media);
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
Grooming

Sexual exploitation is commonly characterised by the grooming of young people. This process is carried out by perpetrators to gain their trust. Perpetrators often target children who are already vulnerable – who may have troubled family histories and/or be bullied outside of the home and socially isolated. Once the young people are thought to be sufficiently emotionally involved, violence and intimidation is often used to ensure compliance. In addition, perpetrators may give drugs and alcohol to victims and encourage addiction in order to ensure they become dependent on them for the supply of these substances.

3. Indicators that a Child/Young Person may already be being Exploited

The following signs and behaviour are seen in children who are already being sexually exploited:

- Missing from home or care;
- Absent from school for whole of part days;
- Sexually-transmitted infection/s;
- Injuries causes by sexual activity;
- Pregnancy and termination/s;
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations;
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites;
- Involvement in offending;
- Receipt of gifts and money from unknown sources;
- Physical injuries;
- Drug or alcohol misuse;
- Change in physical appearance – for example, the SCR review into CSE in Oxfordshire reported young people 'looking gaunt’
- Estranged from their family;
- Poor mental health;
- Self-harm;
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

See Appendix 4 for Child Sexual Exploitation Warning Signs – ‘SAFEGUARD’
4. Models of Sexual Exploitation

These are the current identified models of CSE – see Appendix 5 for a full description of each model.

**Boyfriend model**

**Peer on peer exploitation**

**Organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking**

**Inappropriate relationships**

**Familial**

**Opportunistic**

**On-line**

**Gangs and groups**

**County lines**

5. Contextual safeguarding

Young people at risk from CSE are, in most cases, vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the local community. These threats can take a variety of different forms from online safety, exploitation, sexual, by criminal gangs and organised crime groups to the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation and trafficking. Assessments of children at risk of CSE should always consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and/or welfare of a number of different children and young people who may or may not be known to local authority children’s social care.
6. Raising concern about a child and CSE

6.1 LA Children's Social Care holds the lead responsibility for responding to children abused through or at risk of sexual exploitation.

6.2 The police hold the lead responsibility for the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators. The work to support children and young people at risk of or experiencing CSE should be carried out in conjunction with the work to disrupt and/or prosecute perpetrators.

6.3 Any professional or individual concerned that a child is a victim of or at risk of CSE should raise this concern by completing a safeguarding referral form and send to Southwark MASH. Contact details MASH@southwark.gov.uk.

6.4 If a professional is unsure whether to make a referral they should discuss with their safeguarding lead or ask to discuss the case with a duty social worker in MASH.

6.5 Southwark use a CSE Risk Assessment screening tool (Appendix 2). This risk assessment tool has been designed to be used by professionals working with children and young people for whom there are concerns that they may be vulnerable to, being targeted for or involved in child sexual exploitation (CSE). Professionals should discuss any concerns with their designated officer before using this screening tool.

6.6 Where a Southwark social worker is assessing a young person at risk of CSE they should always complete a CSE risk assessment screening tool on the MOSAIC system.

6.7 Where the CSE concern does not relate to an existing open social care case

- Within 24 hours of receipt of a safeguarding referral form or Police MERLIN report the MASH duty manager will initiate information sharing via the Multi Agency Information sharing system (MAISy).

- The MASH duty manager will inform the CSE and Missing co-ordinator of any CSE referrals that come into MASH in order that these can be appropriately tracked.

- The police in MASH will create a CRIS (or add to an existing CRIS) which is then categorised in terms of risk by the MPS Sexual exploitation Team (SET) within 24 hours.

- In all cases where CSE is likely or suspected, the case will be allocated to a social worker to carry out an assessment under section 17 of the CA 1989 to identify the child's level of risk and need for service provision. The social worker will complete a Single Assessment as part of this process.
• The social worker will complete a CSE risk assessment screening tool and will discuss the case with the CSE and Missing co-ordinator.

• Where the assessment indicates that the young person may be at risk of significant harm the social worker will convene a CSE strategy discussion involving the Police CSE team and other appropriate professionals. A Section 47 enquiry will then be initiated.

• See Appendix 6 for a pro forma agenda of the Initial CSE strategy discussion

• The assessment may indicate that the child is in need and that services are needed to prevent impairment to their health and development

• Where concerns do not meet the threshold for S17 intervention, there will be no further action by Children’s Social care but the child may be referred on to early help or universal services. In these cases, the social worker will advise the referrer verbally and in writing as to why the agency is to take this position.

• Child protection procedures may be more useful when the parents are thought to be neglectful or collusive with the sexual exploitation, but the reason for the decision should always be recorded. Where it is decided that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation (suffering significant harm) but child protection procedures are not necessary this decision and the reason should be recorded on the child's file.

• Where a child protection enquiry is not needed an assessment should take place under section 17 Children Act (if this has not already happened) and the child should be made subject of a child in need plan. All CIN plans should be reviewed at, at least 3 monthly intervals, until they are no longer needed.

• Whenever possible, the child and their parent/carer should be invited to CIN meetings. However, family attendance must be carefully assessed and only agreed if attendance will not compromise the child's safety or the progress of the investigation. The final decision should be taken by the child protection or team manager. This decision should be clearly recorded on the child's case file.

6.8 Where the CSE concern relates to an open social care case

• Where a concern arises, or a referral is received on an open case, this will be forwarded by MASH to the allocated social worker.
• The allocated social worker should inform their manager
• The social worker will complete a CSE risk assessment screening tool and will discuss the case with the CSE and Missing co-ordinator.

• Where the assessment indicates that the young person may be at risk of significant harm the social worker will convene a CSE strategy discussion involving the Police CSE team and other appropriate professionals.

6.9 Where the CSE concern relates to a young person looked after by Southwark

• As above the MASH team will forward the concerns or referral to the allocated social worker. This may be a safeguarding referral or a MERLIN relating to a missing episode or CSE concern.

• The allocated worker will inform their manager

• Where the child is Looked after and living in another borough, the CSE police in the local area will be contacted. The social worker will liaise with the CSE lead in the host area as well as the local CSE and missing co-ordinator.

• The social worker will complete a CSE risk assessment screening tool

• Where the assessment indicates that the young person may be at risk of significant harm the social worker will convene a CSE strategy discussion involving the Police CSE team from the host area and other appropriate professionals. Consideration should be given to inviting the fostering link worker, residential manager and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

• The child's IRO will always be informed of new information and changes to placement and care plans.

The CSE strategy meeting for looked after children should consider the following:

i) Whether the child should remain in their placement;

ii) Risks to other children in the placement;

iii) The appropriateness and method of informing the child's parents. If children are accommodated, parent/s must be informed of all significant matters. When a child is subject to a care order, generally their parent/s should be informed of such a significant matter. A decision not to inform the parent/s should be recorded on file;

iv) The need for assertive action to be balanced against the need to not unduly increase
the likelihood of the child running away in response to the action being taken;

v) Any consideration of restriction of liberty or confiscation of property needs to be agreed by the team or service manager responsible for the child’s case;

vi) The need for active work to be undertaken with the child to address issues of their self-esteem, relationships, sexuality, sexual relationships and health;

vii) If the child is in a residential unit or a foster care placement, the staff or foster carers should be asked to take positive action to clarify and record suspicions. This could include monitoring any suspicious activity in the vicinity of the home and informing the police and recording and passing on to the police information about adults causing concern such as details of appearance, cars etc.;

viii) Whether there are patterns to the young person going missing. For example, are they missing for short periods of time during the school day or do they go missing over weekends?

ix) Monitoring callers to the home, or adults collecting children by car and whether visitors who are causing concern should be turned away and, if yes, how the young person should be informed of this and supported to deal with it;

x) What efforts should be made to dissuade the child from leaving – this could include talking to them and involving them in alternative activities including escorting them to these activities where necessary;

xi) Ensuring the child is aware of any legal issues, including advice that staff cannot safeguard money which is reasonably suspected to have been gained through sexual exploitation. When staff do acquire such money, they must retain it and seek legal advice;

xii) Whether telephone calls and online communication should be monitored and whether it is necessary to restrict the use of or confiscate a mobile phone/computer which is being used inappropriately. Reasons for any of these actions should be included in the care plan;

xiii) If a child has left their foster home or residential unit and staff/foster carers are concerned that they are at risk of exploitation, they should inform the local police and pass on relevant information. They should also inform the child’s social worker;

xiv) The importance of children returning home receiving sensitive and welcoming responses.

The care plan and placement plan should be updated with the decisions of the meeting. There should be:

- A clear plan to safeguard and support the child
- A discussion of how to ‘disrupt’ contact with identified perpetrators and
- Possible orders police could obtain to protect the young person

If the child is in foster care, the social worker and fostering link worker should meet with the foster carer to discuss the outcome of the strategy meeting and the steps to be taken by the foster carer. This needs to take place in consultation with the fostering team manager.

Whether or not the child is moved from their placement, the other children in the placement should be monitored to identify whether they are also at risk of harm from, or are in some way supporting, the sexual exploitation.

The child's behaviour and attitude may be extremely challenging, and carers and staff will require ongoing support, advice and training to manage this behaviour. Either the manager of the residential unit or the fostering link worker must ensure adequate resources are in place to meet staff needs.

6.10 Where the concern relates to Children who are Care Leavers

Where a young person who has left Care and is over 18 is considered to be at risk of exploitation, they should be considered as vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation. It may be appropriate, depending on the capacity of the young person, to involve the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The CSE and missing co-ordinator should be consulted and the CSE risk assessment screening tool can be used to identify risk factors for the young person.

The pathway plan for any young person where there are concerns about sexual exploitation should specifically identify their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, and address the factors known to impede successful recovery from sexual exploitation (e.g. homelessness, poverty, lack of educational and employment opportunities and lack of supportive social contacts).

6.11 Where the concern relates to groups of children or complex abuse

- Where a CSE referral relates to multiple victims or perpetrators, the Head of Quality assurance should be contacted and a Complex strategy meeting will be arranged – chaired either by a CP co-ordinator or by the CSE and missing co-ordinator. Attendees should include social workers, police, schools, Youth offending service and health professionals e.g. specialist safeguarding nurse and /or senior Community Paediatrician.

- The meeting will review the information and where possible map out the connections and links identified.
7. Role of the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meeting

The Southwark MASE is held monthly and is jointly chaired by the Assistant Director, Safeguarding and the DI for Public Protection.

The purpose of the MASE meeting is:

- To have tactical oversight of CSE cases, information, intelligence and activity both across Southwark and for Southwark children placed out of borough.
- To identify and deliver a partnership response to short, medium- and longer-term themes, trends and patterns emerging from CSE cases.
- To direct resources and activity in response to identified trends or patterns
- To identify and remove blockages or obstacles in cases

The membership of the Southwark MASE meeting includes:

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<th>Role/Title</th>
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<td>Assistant Director Safeguarding, Children's Social care</td>
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<td>Detective Inspector, Public protection</td>
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<td>CSE Police team</td>
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<td>CSE and Missing Co-ordinator</td>
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<td>CAMHS safeguarding lead</td>
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<td>Senior manager, Care service CSC</td>
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<td>Senior manager, Safeguarding Service CSC</td>
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<td>Senior Manager, Clinical Practitioner service CSC</td>
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<td>Quality assurance unit CSC</td>
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<td>CSE Prevention co-ordinator</td>
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<td>CSE analyst</td>
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<td>Lead nurse for Safeguarding, Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of safeguarding, Education</td>
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<td>Children Missing Education lead</td>
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<td>Probation</td>
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<td>Youth Offending Service</td>
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<td>Housing safeguarding lead</td>
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<td>Head of Family and early help</td>
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<td>Youth Service</td>
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<td>Nominated SASH lead</td>
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<td>+ additional members as requested e.g. London Ambulance service.</td>
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Named leads from each agency are expected to attend these meetings, as well as any specialist providers.

The MASE meetings consider the following:

- Currently identified victims of CSE and those young people who are very vulnerable to CSE.
- Those people who are identified as perpetrators or ‘people of concern’
- Any identified ‘hot-spots’ of CSE within the borough that are of concern
Any identified themes around known victims of CSE in the borough

All agencies that attend MASE will collect information and data on work they do in relation to the following - including the outcomes of this work where possible:

- The prevention, disruption and prosecution of CSE;
- The identification of localities, peer groups, gangs etc which present an increased risk of CSE;
- The young people they work with who are at risk of or experiencing CSE.

This information should be provided to the MASE meetings (this is in addition to the normal arrangements for reporting issues and concerns as and when they arise).

The MASE meeting may consider looked after children placed by other boroughs in Southwark who are at risk locally. In these circumstances it may be necessary to set up ‘Cross borough’ meetings to consider how the different MASE’s can work together to protect young people.

For each new young person screened onto the MASE list, the Southwark Clinical Practitioner service will offer the social worker a consultation. This will be offered with the aim of supporting systemic and psychologically informed responses to CSE as well as identifying where there is need for clinical intervention.

8. Maintaining accurate data

8.1 It is the responsibility of the CSE and missing co-ordinator to maintain an accurate record of all young people known to be at risk of CSE.

8.2 The MASE list is made up of all those young people who have been subject of a CSE risk assessment tool and who currently meet the threshold for overview by the MASE panel.

8.3 The CSE risk assessment tool gives an indication of whether a young person:

- Is not at risk of CSE (green)
- Is vulnerable to CSE (amber)
- Is likely to be victim of CSE (red)

The tool is numerical and is dependent on accurate information having been gathered. All CSE assessments must be reviewed and signed off by the social worker’s line manager and the CSE and missing co-ordinator. It may be that where the ‘score’ for a young person is low due to lack of information the managers and CSE co-ordinator may consider that the young person’s name should still be placed on the MASE list in order for more intelligence to be gathered.

8.4 The MASE list of young people currently at risk of CSE is presented to the MASE meeting on
a monthly basis. The list is subject to analysis and gives an indication of the CSE victim profile.

8.5 The CSE police also report to MASE on a monthly basis to give information about open investigations, perpetrators and local ‘hot spots’ for CSE activity.

9. The Role of the Police

9.1 There are numerous offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, along with the Child Abduction Act 1984 that can be used against those that exploit children. See The London Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol 3rd edition June 2017.

9.2 The priority for the police is the investigation and prosecution of offenders who have been involved in abusing the child through sexual exploitation. This role should be undertaken in accordance with the principle of multi-agency co-operation to safeguard children.

9.3 Police may become aware of children being involved in sexual exploitation through normal police work on the streets, in the course of other criminal investigations, through referrals from other agencies or information direct from the public.

9.4 The initial police response to the discovery of a child who is being, or is at immediate risk of being, abused through sexual exploitation, must be to remove them from the source of harm and ensure that any necessary evidence is secured. This action must be followed by referral to LA children's social care. Following this, a strategy discussion/meeting will be convened.

9.5 The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) categories 1-3 are defined below

**Police Category 1**

A vulnerable child or young person, where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any of the CSE warning signs have been identified. However, at this stage there is no evidence of any offences. These children will normally be worked with by the local CSE police team.

**Police Category 2**

Evidence a child or young person is being targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, perceived affection, sense of belonging, accommodation (overnight stays), money and goods etc. This will also include a child or young person being sexually exploited through the use of technology and without the child or young person receiving any reward i.e. the exchange of indecent images on-line. The likelihood of coercions and control is significant. These children will be worked with by the Central Sexual Exploitation team or Sapphire.

**Police Category 3**

A child or young person whose sexual exploitation is habitual, self-denied and where coercion/
control is implicit. This is often carried out by multiple perpetrators. These children will normally be worked with by Sapphire police.

The three MPS categories relate to levels 3 and 4 of the Southwark threshold document and cases that meet the above criteria will normally be either children in need or subject to child protection plans. If there are suspicions that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation, but there is no immediate or direct evidence (Category 1: Risk Assessment Framework), the police officer noting the concern should complete a Merlin report for referral to the MASH and also complete a non-crime CSE CRIS to enable an appropriate action plan to be set. If a crime has been committed, the matter will be allocated to an appropriately trained officer to investigate from either a Sapphire Unit or the MPS Sexual Exploitation Team.

If the child already has an assigned social worker, the referral will go to the social worker who will refer to the SC&O5 referral desk for creation of a CRIS report.

All interviews with the child as an actual or potential victim should be conducted, as far as possible, in accordance with the best evidence interview. However, flexibility needs to be applied, as it may take a number of interviews before the child is able to make, or complete a statement.

If the child has made a statement and/or is a potential witness, witness protection and witness support should be considered as early as possible.

When made aware of cases of actual or suspected CSE, Police should follow the Pan-London Operating Protocol for dealing with such cases. This will include attendance by officers from the local Borough and the Sexual Exploitation Team at MASE and strategy

**Police contact details:**

**NB If a professional wishes to report a crime they should always use 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)**

**Southwark CSE Police**

Social workers can contact the CSE police team to discuss concerns around CSE or to request attendance at a CSE strategy meeting.

Group e-mail: [MDMailbox-.CSE@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:MDMailbox-.CSE@met.pnn.police.uk)

The following numbers can be contacted:

0207 232 6235/ 6476

07787005769

Officers on the Southwark CSE Police team (as at 10/7/18):
10. Trafficked children

_Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone’s vulnerability. It is possible to be a victim of trafficking even if your consent has been given to being moved. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of human trafficking within your own country [16]._

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may have been trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation – both within the United Kingdom or across international borders – a referral form [17] should be completed and sent to the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Centre (MSHTC) via e-mail at communication@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk. Once a referral has been made, trained decision makers will assess and make a decision on whether an individual is a victim of trafficking or modern slavery (this process is referred to as the National referral Mechanism or NRM).

For further information see the advice available at the National Crime Agency website

There is also guidance for working with and interviewing children who may have been trafficked available at: