

Key responsibilities

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 28 July 2015 Updated 28 July 2015

Written by College of Policing

3 mins read

Where a person is reporting an offence of modern slavery, or the [person making first contact](#) suspects that an adult or child may be a victim or witness to such an offence, the key responsibilities below should be fulfilled. These are intended to make sure that the potential victim receives the appropriate level of service and support by setting out the priority areas of focus for each person involved in an investigation.

General

Dealing with all victims or potential victims

- You should take immediate steps to make a victim or potential victim safe.
- You should be trained and competent in recognising and responding to the signs of modern slavery. If not, seek guidance from a line manager, duty officer or specialist officer with the requisite knowledge and professional expertise to assist.
- You should treat the situation, or report, seriously from the start and remain victim-focused at all times.
- You should be alert to and check for indicators of exploitation (refer to exploitation indicators).
- You should exercise professional curiosity and ask open-ended questions to establish the context of the situation or report being made.
- You should assess the available information to ensure the safety of the person, their family and others who may be at risk.
- You should begin an investigation as soon as you believe a modern slavery crime may have been committed, regardless of whether a potential victim makes an allegation, whether a report is made, or whether consent to be entered into the national referral mechanism (NRM) is provided or refused.

- You should arrange for a referral to be made into the national referral mechanism (NRM) for children, and for an adult if they consent. This may mean seeking guidance from a line manager, duty officer or specialist officer with the requisite knowledge and professional expertise to assist.
- You should try to ensure that the same police personnel and interpreters deal with the potential victim so that rapport can be established.
- You should record all information, decisions, actions and outcomes on the appropriate database(s).
- You should consider the welfare needs of the victim(s) and contact appropriate support services immediately, employing the services of an accredited, independent, approved interpreter where necessary.
- You should be aware that some offenders are victims of modern slavery, and that section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 provides a statutory defence for slavery or trafficking victims who commit certain offences, if it can be evidenced that they were compelled to commit the offence as a result of exploitation.

Additional considerations for dealing with child victims or potential child victims

- You should presume a potential victim to be a child if there are reasons to believe so and their age is uncertain.
- You must liaise with local authority children's services and seek advice from the local child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) immediately if the victim is a child or believed to be a child. See section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
- You should consider your powers under section 46 of the Children Act 1989 to take a child into emergency care where the child is at significant risk of harm.
- You should explain clearly your role to the child and provide them with emergency contact numbers, highlighting that these are non-chargeable.
- You should be alert to and check for indicators of child exploitation (refer to exploitation indicators).
- You must treat a child who is reported missing from secure accommodation as a missing person. Carry out a risk assessment and take immediate reasonable steps to find the child and make them safe.

Role-specific

Call handler

- You should gather all the information you can that will help to establish:
 1. Person's name, date of birth and place of origin.
 2. Location held.
 3. Brief nature of the offending that the person is being subjected to.
 4. Who is responsible.
 5. If the person is aware of others in the same situation.
 6. If so, how many, their ages and location(s).
 7. If any of his or her friends or family are in danger as a result.
 8. Caller's current whereabouts.
 9. Caller's call-back number.
 10. Immediate level of risk perceived, including risk associated with returning the caller's call.
 11. Whether the caller requires transportation, and make arrangements for this ensuring that their contact details are recorded.
- You should inform your line manager, who will assist in identifying any potential offences committed.
- You should conduct checks on the police national database (PND), police national computer (PNC), and local, regional and international intelligence databases to assist with victim/witness/perpetrator identification.

Person making initial contact, including station reception staff

- You should take immediate steps to make a victim or potential victim safe.
- You should arrange for the person to be taken into a private room.
- You should take a child (a person under the age of 18 years) to private, child-friendly surroundings with an appropriate adult or child advocate in attendance.
- You should use the National Decision Model and the modern slavery indicators to progress an investigation.
- You should inform your line manager, duty officer or a specialist officer, who will assist in identifying any potential offences committed.
- You should not use a member of the victim's family, friends or peers as interpreters.

- You should take necessary measures to prevent the victim/potential victim from going missing with the risk of being re-exploited, by arranging secure accommodation, supervised closely by adults when this is needed.
- You should take the initial steps of an investigation and establish the following details, where possible:
 1. Person's name, date of birth and place of origin.
 2. Location held.
 3. Brief nature of the offending that the person is being subjected to.
 4. Who is responsible.
 5. If the person is aware of others in the same situation.
 6. If so, how many, their ages and location(s).
 7. If any of his or her friends or family are in danger as a result.
- You should tag incidents/intelligence reports with the correct crime category (OPERATION EAGLE). See Police National Modern Slavery Data Tool on the POLKA Modern Slavery community for further guidance (this link is available to authorised users who are logged on to the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA)).
- You should conduct checks on the police national database (PND), police national computer (PNC), and local, regional and international intelligence databases to assist with victim/witness/perpetrator identification.

Investigator

- You should check that all key responsibilities for the person making initial contact (as above) have been fulfilled, particularly that the victim or potential victim is safe.
- You should ensure that steps are taken to manage the risk posed by the perpetrator, for example arrest and detention, application for civil protection orders, appropriate bail conditions, closure orders.
- You should ensure that the interview is conducted by and in accordance with Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings (ABE) guidelines.
- You should consider the use of an incident management log at crime scenes.
- You should be aware that some cases of modern slavery involve a financial aspect and so require financial investigation/evidence gathering/seizure of assets.

- You should be aware that some cases of modern slavery involve an international aspect so you should make full use of Eurojust, Interpol, joint investigation teams.
- You should seek early advice from the CPS specialist prosecutor.

Line manager/duty officer

- You should check that all key responsibilities for the person making initial contact (as above) and the investigator (as above) have been fulfilled, particularly that the victim or potential victim is safe.
- You should consider and manage resources in line with the investigation.

National occupational standards

The [UK Commission for Employment and Skills \(UKCES\)](#) has developed national occupational standards for workers who may be in contact with potential victims of modern slavery during the course of their daily duties. There are standards to:

- [identify potential victims of modern slavery](#)
- [respond to potential victims of modern slavery](#)
- [refer potential victims of modern slavery to nationally approved referral agencies](#)
- [assess the needs of potential victims of modern slavery](#)
- [plan support for potential victims of modern slavery](#)
- [support the safeguarding of potential victims of modern slavery](#)

Tags

Modern slavery