



CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GLASGOW

What does the research tell us?

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“There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know.

There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know.

But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.”

(Donald Rumsfeld)



- Prevalence
- Profile
- Trauma and fear
- Identification & assessment
- Relationships

Do not underestimate the significance of the cultural aspects of children's experiences and of professional's understanding and attitude



DATA SOURCES

- Glasgow CPC 2009 case file analysis
- Glasgow CPC 2010 views of professionals
- Local monitoring and evaluation of National Referral Mechanism
- Social work child protection 'trafficking' database

PREVALENCE

- 28% of UASCs probably been trafficked (2009)
- 1/3 (at least) of UASCs are trafficked ? (2010)
- 14 NRM referrals / in process
- Child protection team database details an additional 40 children (predating NRM referrals or where services have previous concerns)

“Trafficking is much bigger than anybody in Glasgow thinks that it is and what we know of, and the small group that we have, is just the tip of the iceberg. I think there’s a lot more kids that we don’t know about.”



PROFILE

- Females - 68%
- Males - 32%
- 16 & 17 year olds – 50%
- Asia
- Africa
- Eastern Europe
- Central Asia
- Sexual exploitation
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Cannabis factories
- Street crimes
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage (intended)



- Sold / journeys paid for by parents / grandparents / relatives
- Exploitation before, during and after journeys
- Journeys / trafficking of over a year, some children over a year in UK before known to authorities
- Use of safe houses in transit countries, UK and Glasgow

The backgrounds, journeys and experiences of children indicates multiple types of abuse, suggesting that children are rarely trafficked for one type of exploitation, or are at least susceptible to multiple abuses as a result of trafficking (Rigby 2009)



TRAUMA & FEAR

- Professionals often do not fully appreciate the impact of exploitation through trafficking
- Varying presentation of children depending on their backgrounds and circumstances (smuggled / trafficked)
- Children's experiences often not believed by professionals
- Fear of traffickers, authorities, systems, further abuse, being sent back



“Absolute and utter fear of everything, compounded by an entire lack of understanding of what is going on and just being taken from pillar to post of so many different organisations.”



“From their very first involvement, they are particularly terrified of their situation; they’re more scared of authorities, including ourselves, social work, police, health.”

“The fear that they [children] have from people who are involved in the potential trafficking, is far greater than any other consequence that they can experience from anywhere else.”

IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

- NRM indicator matrix a useful guide and with assessment toolkit focuses thoughts onto trafficking
- Matrix questionable for younger children
- Assessment may result in labelling children ('smuggled' 'trafficked' 'facilitated') and later reluctance to change assessment
- Absence of reliable / verifiable information making assessments difficult
- Some evidence that workers are 'waiting' for a disclosure
- CP / NRM process taking too long

IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT



“Traumatised young people may not come out with beautiful precise matching sets of information.”

“With the indicators I mean there’s probably a majority of the asylum seeking population that the indicators would fit. It depends on your definition of trafficking and what you’re looking for I suppose, so the majority of the indicators would fit the majority of the unaccompanied children.”

MEETING NEEDS

- Developing understanding of physical and psychological needs
- Recognition of need for emotional and practical support
- Counselling and therapeutic services that work in parallel with other services (specialist project for trafficked children?)

Barriers

- Little understanding of children's backgrounds, experiences and hopes
(Gozdziak et al 2006)
- Children powerless in trafficking situation and in CP/asylum process
(Breuil 2008)
- Children's agency and self determination may be overlooked
- Do asylum & immigration issues take precedence over multiple care needs ?



RELATIONSHIPS

“I think it’s the relationship. I think the only way we’re ever going to get at it is if we get time enough to spend with young people and build a relationship..... If we’ve got a hope of supporting and helping young people who may have been trafficked we need to be doing it over a significant period of time.”



“I don’t know if the young people necessarily perceive people as traffickers.....They might be getting something they want out of this situation. As I say they might want to be able to get money, so if somebody says ‘here I’ve got a job for you’.”

“It’s difficult to label people traffickers. We’ve got our concerns about who these people are, whether they’re do-gooders, whether they’re relatives, whether they’re people who are willing to help people out, we don’t know. Certainly that would be a worry for me that these people [traffickers] will never be far away from a young person.”

- Children maintain contact with traffickers
- Risk may not reduce over time and there is no guarantee once supported through CP provision that the exploitation ceases



“There’s a lack of awareness out there that it’s a very complex phenomenon, trafficking, it’s an extremely hidden crime and it constantly evolves.....and unfortunately the trafficking networks are so fluid that it will always be able to evolve quicker than the public sector.”



THE STORY SO FAR

- Improvements in identification and assessment
 - Child protection procedures in place and increasing awareness
 - Good multi-agency relationships at the front line
 - Overall positive developments but in 'embryonic' stage
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- Information gathering and assessment process is problematic
 - Lack of understanding of the impact of trafficking
 - No idea about the prevalence of trafficking
 - Limited knowledge base and framework from which to develop 'effective' services



KEY QUESTIONS

- How widespread is child trafficking
- What do effective services look like
- Beyond immediate protection what is a positive outcome
- Is a child protection / NRM / asylum framework appropriate
- What are the backgrounds, life histories and journeys of children