Working with Young People who may have been Trafficked - Practical Toolkit for Social Workers:

This toolkit is best used with young people who are newly-arrived in the UK:

**Age** - where there is uncertainty over a suspected trafficked victim’s age, it is now a statutory requirement to presume that the victim is under 18. This presumption only ends when a local authority age assessment takes place or the person’s age is otherwise determined.

**Immediate challenges when you have identified potential trafficking:**

- Many trafficked young people go missing within 48 hours. Anyone coming into contact with a trafficked child has a small and decisive window in which to act. You need to make maximum impact in the shortest period of time.

- Trafficked young people often don’t see themselves as victims, indeed they may think they will be, or are, better off than before. This makes working with them particularly tricky as they may well not see themselves as in danger or exploited.

- Young people are probably steeped in stories which promise or give hope of a better life. Their families may be depending on this, or owe money for their journey to the UK, which ties the young people to their traffickers. Such beliefs and family loyalties can be deeply embedded and hard to shift. They may be associated with deeper significant belief systems such as religious beliefs, juju beliefs (magic / witchcraft).

- There are problems with translating the word "trafficking" - brief interpreters beforehand and explain the different types of trafficking.

- Fear of authorities. Authorities in their country of origin are likely to operate very differently to in the UK, they may have experienced abuse at the hands of authorities previously. They may have been told the authorities here will lock them up or send them back to their own country. Being in local authority care / foster care / a children's home may be a very different experience in their country of origin to in the UK. It may well be very institutionalised and even abusive.

- **Take a photo in case they go missing.**

**Explain who you are:**
Bear in mind the above point about fear of authorities. Explore the child's previous conceptions of figures of authority and uniform. Ensure the child understands the role of children's services and the police as points of safety.

**Example points to use:**
- Authorities in your country are likely to operate very differently to in the UK. You may even have experienced abuse at the hands of authorities previously.
- As a child you have rights in this country.
- As social workers we have responsibilities to keep you safe, to stop you being hurt, to make sure you have somewhere good to live, to make sure you have food and clothes and fun things to do so you can enjoy being a child / young person.

**Gather information that will allow you to complete the trafficking checklist below:**
- Why is the young person here?
- Circumstances in their home country - family life, education, work, health.
- How did they get here?
- What do they want and / or expect to happen now?
- Explore

**The Trafficking Checklist:**
- Entered country illegally?
- No passport or other means of identification?
- Has money / goods not accounted for?
- Is malnourished?
- Shows sign of wanting to abscond or has made attempts to abscond?
- Unable to give name or address of person meeting them?
- Unable to give other details about a person meeting them?
- Has memorised a phone number?
- Has had their journey arranged by someone other than themselves or their family?
- Is accompanied by an adult who insists on staying with them at all times?
- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk or appears afraid to talk to a person in authority?
- Has a prepared story very similar to those other children have given?
- Says they are here to work?
- Shows physical signs of extreme anxiety and nervousness?
- Exhibits self-assurance, maturity and self-confidence not expected in a child of their age?
- Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone?
- Is unable or reluctant to give personal details?

**Talking directly to young people about trafficking:**
Talking to young people about their situation, or what you believe their situation may be, can make a difference. They may not act on it immediately, but it could help them act in the future.

Give young people an alternative view of their situation to consider. Let them know there are ways out of this.

**Example points to use:**

- It is possible that you have been brought to the UK to be exploited or even abused.
- This is called trafficking.
- We know this because some young people have told us that they were forced to work in prostitution or selling drugs or working on cannabis farms, or begging or theft or pick-pocketing, or working in restaurants for little or no money.
- They thought they were going to have the jobs that were OK, and they would be able to save money, but the jobs were not OK and they had to work very hard and got very little or even no money.
- Have you been promised a good job? An education? Somewhere nice to live?
- Think about whether this is a lie. Why would someone offer you this?
- Children under 16 are only allowed to work a little bit in the UK. Any more work than this is illegal and will be in secret so no-one will know about what you are doing, if you are getting paid, and how you are being treated.
- If you have been told to leave where you are to meet people who you don’t know, STOP and think about what may happen to you.
- If you think you can trust the people you are planning to meet, STOP again and think - why do you trust them? What do you really know about them? Why would they help you? People don’t do something for nothing - what are they getting from the arrangement? What will do if you go with them and then you want to leave? Will they let you leave? Where will you go?
- Human trafficking is modern-day slavery.
- It happens here. It is happening to other people now. It could happen to you.
- Us and lots of other organisations can support you to stay safe.

**Methods of control by traffickers to discuss with young people:**

- Taking your identity documents
- Threatening to report you to the police and other authorities and saying they won’t look after you or help you.
- Violence or threats of violence to you.
- Keeping you isolated from other people.
- Keeping you locked up.
- Threatening violence towards your family.
- Telling you that you owe them a lot of money for your journey here and have to work to pay it back.
- Keeping money away from you.
- Frightening you with religious or witchcraft beliefs such as spirit possession.
• Giving drugs or alcohol to keep you under control.
• traffickers may try to control you by telling you that your family will come to harm if you do not cooperate with them.

Explaining how we can help and what we can offer:

• local authority care is likely to be very different in their country of origin. They may have been told that the authorities here will put them in prison or deport them.
• we can help you to feel safe and secure without locking you up. we do not deport children. you have a right to claim asylum, which means asking to stay legally in this country.

Creating a safety plan:

explain to the young person that we are worried about them, we are creating a plan to look after them, and a safety plan to help keep them safe. this will change over time as we get to know them better and understand their circumstances better.

Ask the child what will help them to feel safe - their views are vital, the more on-board they are with the plan the more likely it is to be successful.

Points to consider in a safety plan - all circumstances will vary:

Child’s safety:

• provide a card of emergency contacts
• ensure they know how to dial 999 and that it is a free number
• ensure their belongings and clothing are checked for phone numbers.

Placement:

• foster care or residential placement? carers / staff should have an understanding of trafficking and how to work with trafficked children.
• close adult supervision, consider 24/7 monitoring.
• consider cultural needs - would a placement with carers of the same / similar cultural background be reassuring or create anxieties around past experiences, links to the wider community and fear of being recognised etc, do they feel comfortable associating with their cultural group?
• keep location secret, not revealed to anyone however plausible they appear until a full risk assessment has been completed.
• could be a risk to place with another child who was / suspected to have been trafficked due to possible links with traffickers.
• consider CCTV as an extra precaution.
• carers must be fully aware of the child’s background and make immediate contact with the police in there are concerns about safety.
• carers must be alert to any loitering adults, young people, cars. be vigilant and note down descriptions and number plates.
• Make absconding harder - avoid a downstairs bedroom.
• Young person not to answer the landline.
• Young person not to answer the front door.

**Phones:**
• Temporary removal of mobile phone. Check and record call history and numbers in phone.
• Consider temporarily no access to the internet
• Check whether the young person can access other phones and internet in placement and address this if necessary. Eg laptops and phones with carers at night.

**Movement outside placement:**
• Consider movement outside the placement only being supervised. Consider plan for the carer if the child absconds while away from the placement.
• Consider restricting access to own cultural group.

**Carers / staff:**
• Monitor child for anxieties, injuries, signs of abuse.
• Is the child trying to contact someone?
• Does the child appear to be acting under the instructions of an adult?
• Is the child guarded about their relationships and daily activities?
Concerns about Trafficking - Information for Carers:

Human trafficking is to be deceived or taken against your will, bought, sold and exploited. People are bought and sold for sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice. Men, women and children are trafficked within their own countries and across international borders. Trafficking affects every continent and every country.

Immediate challenges in working with young people who may have been trafficked:

Many trafficked young people go missing within 48 hours. We have a small timeframe in which to act.

Trafficked young people often don’t see themselves as victims, indeed they may think they will be, or are, better off than before. This makes working with them particularly tricky as they may well not see themselves as in danger or exploited.

Young people are probably steeped in stories which promise or give hope of a better life. Their families may be depending on this, or owe money for their journey to the UK, which ties the young people to their traffickers. Such beliefs and family loyalties can be deeply embedded and hard to shift. They may be associated with deeper significant belief systems such as religious beliefs, juju beliefs (magic / witchcraft).

Young people may have significant fears of authorities and people in uniform. Authorities, including police, in their country are likely to operate very differently to in the UK, they may have experienced abuse at the hands of authorities and police previously. If they come from a background where they have not had parents caring for them, their experiences of authorities may be particularly negative. For example, state care of children may be minimal and of a poor standard. Traffickers may have told the young person that authorities in the UK will lock them up or send them back to their own country.

Social workers use the trafficking checklist to identify that the young person may have been trafficked.

The Trafficking Checklist:
- Entered country illegally?
- No passport or other means of identification?
- Has money / good not accounted for?
- Is malnourished?
- Shows sign of wanting to abscond or has made attempts to abscond?
- Unable to give name or address of person meeting them?
- Unable to give other details about a person meeting them?
- Has memorised a phone number?
• Has had their journey arranged by someone other than themselves or their family?
• Is accompanied by an adult who insists on staying with them at all times?
• Is withdrawn and refuses to talk or appears afraid to talk to a person in authority?
• Has a prepared story very similar to those other children have given?
• Says they are here to work?
• Shows physical signs of extreme anxiety and nervousness?
• Exhibits self-assurance, maturity and self-confidence not expected in a child of their age?
• Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone?
• Is unable or reluctant to give personal details?

Talking directly to young people about trafficking:

Social workers talk directly to young people about trafficking. The young person may not act immediately, but having the information could help them to act in the future. The social workers will give the young person an alternative view of their situation to consider, and let them know there are ways out of their situation.

Points social workers will have talked about:

• It is possible that you have been brought to the UK to be exploited or even abused.
• This is called trafficking.
• We think this because some young people have told us that they were forced to work in prostitution or selling drugs or in cannabis farms or begging, or working in restaurants for little or no money, or theft or pick-pocketing.
• They thought they were going to have the jobs that were OK, and they would be able to save money, but the jobs were not OK and they had to work very hard and got very little or even no money.
• Have you been promised a good job? An education? Somewhere nice to live?
• Think about whether this is a lie. Why would someone offer you this?
• Children under 16 are only allowed to work a little bit in the UK. Any more work than this is illegal and will be in secret so no-one will know about what you are doing.
• If you have been told to leave where you are to meet people who you don’t know, STOP and think about what may happen to you. I
• f you think you can trust the people you are planning to meet, STOP again and think - why do you trust them? What do you really know about them? Why would they help you? People don’t do something for nothing - what are they getting from the arrangement? What you do if you go with them and then you want to leave? Will they let you leave? Where will you go?
• Human trafficking is modern-day slavery.
• It happens here. It is happening to other people now. It could happen to you.
• Us and lots of other organisations can support you to stay safe. We can find a safe place for you to live, the chance to get an education, the chance to make a safer future for yourself.
Social workers will talk about methods of control used by traffickers:

- Taking your identity documents
- Threatening to report you to the police and other authorities and saying they won't look after you or help you.
- Violence or threats of violence to you.
- Keeping you isolated from other people.
- Keeping you locked up.
- Threatening violence towards your family.
- Telling you that you owe them a lot of money for your journey here and have to work to pay it back.
- Keeping money away from you.
- Frightening you with religious or witchcraft beliefs such as spirit possession.
- Given drugs or alcohol to keep you under control.
- Traffickers may trying to control you by telling you that your family will come to harm if you do not cooperate with them.

Safety Plans:

The social workers will work out a safety plan with you, and with the young person as far as this is possible.

The safety plan will cover the following points:

Child's safety:

- Provide card of emergency contacts
- Ensure they know how to dial 999 and that it is a free number
- Ensure belongings and clothing have been checked for phone numbers.

Placement:

- Close adult supervision, consider 24/7 monitoring.
- Consider cultural needs - would a placement with carers of the same / similar cultural background be reassuring or create anxieties around past experiences, link to the wider community and fear of being recognised etc, do they feel comfortable associating with their cultural group?
- Keep location secret, not revealed to anyone however plausible they appear until a full risk assessment has been completed.
- It could be a risk to place with another child who was / suspected to have been trafficked due to possible links with traffickers.
- Carers should be fully aware of the child's background and make immediate contact with the police in there are concerns about safety.
- Carers should be alert to any loitering adults, young people, cars. Be vigilant and note down descriptions and number plates.
- Make absconding harder - avoid a downstairs bedroom.
- Young person not to answer the landline.
- Young person not to answer the front door.

**Phones, internet and documents:**
- Temporary removal of mobile phone. Check and record call history and numbers in phone.
- Consider temporarily no access to the internet
- Check whether the young person can access other phones and internet in placement and address this if necessary. Eg laptops and phones with carers at night.

**Movement outside placement:**
- Consider movement outside the placement only being supervised. Consider plan for the carer if the child absconds while away from the placement.
- Consider restricting access to own cultural group.

**Carers / staff:**
- Monitor child for anxieties, injuries, signs of abuse.
- Is the child trying to contact someone?
- Does the child appear to be acting under the instructions of an adult?
- Is the child guarded about their relationships and daily activities?