



Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Promoting the Rights and Welfare of African Children

SECOND EDITION

## WHAT IS CHILD TRAFFICKING?

Safeguarding African Children in the UK Series **2**



WHAT IS CHILD TRAFFICKING?



**WHAT IS CHILD TRAFFICKING?**



	Page
1 About AFRUCA	4
2 Africans in the UK	5
3 What is Child Trafficking?	6
4 Is Child Trafficking Modern Day Slavery?	8
5 What are the Causes of Child Trafficking?	9
6 What are Children Trafficked for in the UK?	10
7 Witchcraft, Oath Taking Rituals and Child Trafficking	13
8 Where are the Children coming from?	14
9 What are the Implications of Child Trafficking?	14
10 How can We Address Child Trafficking in our Community?	15
11 UK Immigration System and Child Trafficking	19
12 AFRUCA – Our Work on Child Trafficking	20

# 1 About AFRUCA



AFRUCA- Africans Unite Against Child Abuse was established in May 2001 to promote the rights and welfare of African Children in the UK. We also work in partnership with other organisations in Africa and across Europe.

With offices in London and Manchester, AFRUCA works with UK practitioners working with children and in the African community to raise awareness and educate everyone about issues affecting the welfare of children so we can all act to protect them from abuse and harm. Our work includes:

- **Awareness Raising:** within the African community across the UK and among young Africans about children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions and UK legislation promoting the rights and welfare of children.
- **Information, Education and Advisory services:** to raise the profile of African children in the UK and elsewhere, increase awareness of their needs, improve policies and practices, and develop the leadership potential of young Africans. Activities include research and publishing reports; media work; conferences, seminars, workshops, and training programmes for parents, policy makers, service providers, community leaders, and young people; community meetings; advice and consultancy services.
- **Advocacy and Policy Development:** working closely with policy makers, especially within the framework of the Government's "Every Child Matters agenda", to shape the development of policy and regulatory action to promote the welfare of children.
- **Community and International Development:** in partnership with others, establishing programmes and projects to help relieve some of the suffering and hardship that African children experience.
- **Service Provision:** supporting African parents and working with families in crisis at the point of breakdown and disintegration.

For further information about our work, please visit our website at [www.afruca.org](http://www.afruca.org)

## 2 Africans in the UK



The UK, through its historical links with a number of English speaking African countries, and also due to its reputation as the most multi-cultural country in Europe, has become home to many African people. According to the 2001 census, there are over 587,000 Africans in the UK with 78 percent of these living in London. However, we believe this figure is very unrepresentative of the true number of Africans in the country. This is due to the fact that many Africans do not have legal status in the UK and so are afraid to present themselves to the authorities. Many Africans are also in the country as asylum seekers and so do not register to vote. According to the census, Africans are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the UK overtaking Afro-Caribbean and other ethnic groups. In addition, the number of African children in the UK grew from about 96,667 in 1992 to about 145,667 in 2000 – a phenomenal 50% increase over the eight-year period. Over the past years, there has been a consistent growth in the number of separated African children arriving in the UK correlating with the increasing population of Africans in the country. Children and young people come in unaccompanied, or as unaccompanied asylum seeking young people or with others who are not their parents or immediate family members as privately fostered children.

### Key Statistics from 2001 Census

- In 2003, 41% of all Asylum applications were from Africa
- Africans are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the UK
- Officially, 587,000 Black Africans in the UK
- 145,667 African children in the UK

It is our firm belief that many of these young people have been transported into the country to be exploited and abused in different ways. Without appropriate intervention, most of them would experience untold suffering and hardship at the hands of their exploiters over a long period of time. In one or two cases in London, child victims of trafficking have ended up being killed by those abusing them.

This publication examines the phenomenon of child trafficking in the UK and the role that members of the African community can play to protect victims.

AFRUCA has produced the "Safeguarding African Children in the UK" series of publications to highlight different safeguarding issues and to assist members of the African community in the UK to know more about different forms of child abuse and how to identify the signs so that children can be safe and be better protected. The "What is Child Trafficking?" publication is one in the series.

### 3 What is Child Trafficking?



Child Trafficking is a growing problem across the UK and in Africa. There are many complex definitions but for simplicity's sake, we at AFRUCA define it as follows:

*"The trafficking of children shall simply mean the movement of children for the purposes of exploitation and abuse."*

In the UK, the phenomenon of child trafficking was first noticed in 1995 by social workers in West Sussex Social Services. Young girls travelling unaccompanied on flights from West Africa landing at Gatwick Airport would come to claim asylum. Put in the care of social services, days or weeks later, they would disappear from care. Before long, a pattern began to emerge: children, mainly Nigerian girls, were being trafficked to Europe via the UK to become sex workers. A lot of these girls spoken to by social services talked about owing their exploiters huge sums of money which they have to pay back otherwise terrible things would happen to them or their families back home. Since that time, many more cases have come to the fore. These days, child trafficking for many other purposes has come to the attention of charities and government agencies across the country. African children are being transported to the UK to be used as slaves in many different ways.

In realisation of the growing problems of child trafficking, the UK government has put in place a law to tackle the problem and criminalise the practice. Child traffickers – those who transport children so they can exploit them – can go to jail for up to 14 years for committing this crime.

Recently released figures by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) show that between April and December 2009 alone, over 200 African were referred to the agency by charities and other organizations as victims of human trafficking. Most of them, including children, were from; Nigeria which had a reported 89 victims, Sierra Leone with 13 victims, Kenya with 5 victims, Ghana with 3 victims, Zimbabwe with 16 victims, Eritrea with 5 victims, Uganda with 14 victims, Somalia with 5 victims, and lastly Sudan with just one reported victim.

In 2007 the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) reported that at least 330 children fit the child trafficking profile. There were 102 cases of West and East African girls between the ages of 12 and 17 recorded. The biggest source country identified in the data is Nigeria with 38 girls.





## Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling

The terms 'trafficking' and 'smuggling' are often used interchangeably, but in fact they mean different things.

**Human smuggling** is the process whereby people pay to be illegally transported into a country. Upon arrival, the smuggled 'customer' is free to do as they please. An example is when parents pay a smuggler to help them bring their child into the country. Once the child is delivered to the parents and money has exchanged hands, the relationship with the smuggler ends.

**Human trafficking**, on the other hand is when the person who is taken into the country becomes a victim – because they have been forced to come into the country or deceived by false promises of a job or better living conditions. Once in the country, the trafficked victim is not free, but at the mercy of the trafficker, who denies them basic rights and exploits them in all kinds of ways.

This is not to say that the act of human smuggling is right, safe or legal. UK laws forbid the transportation of people into the country illegally. Not only that, there have been instances where parents have paid for their children to be smuggled into the country only for the children to end up being exploited and abused by the smuggler. In some instances, the children are never delivered to the parents but end up stolen and used for other purposes. The parents never see their children again.



## 4 Is Child Trafficking Modern Day Slavery?



The trafficking of children in different African countries, between countries, regions and out-side Africa to other continents like Europe is indeed a growing problem. The scale of the problem is as massive as it is confounding. Experts in Africa have suggested that at least 1 million African children are victims of trafficking and exploitation within Africa itself.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) - the United Nations agency charged with addressing labour standards, employment, and social protection issues, around the world, there are 12.3 million people in forced labour, bonded labour, forced child labour, and sexual servitude at any given time; other estimates range from 4 million to 27 million. 56% of all forced labour victims are women and girls.

Human Trafficking means big money - according to UN estimates. Worldwide human trafficking is worth about \$32 billion annually. This means that human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity in the world - after drugs and arms trafficking.

Despite the above, human trafficking is a hidden trade due to the clandestine and criminal nature of the activity. This is why it is always difficult to give accurate figures of the number of victims. However, because of the scale and extent, experts have suggested that present day trafficking of Africans to the West is fast approaching the same level as the trans-Atlantic slave trade. During this period, millions of Africans perished en route to the New World or ended up as slaves in the new Americas, the Caribbean and parts of South America.



## 5 What are the Causes of Child Trafficking?



Child trafficking involves trading in children as commodities. As a business, it also operates according to the law of supply and demand. At one end of the scale, there is a huge demand for children – both boys and girls – to meet the requirements in the sex industry. In addition, children are needed to meet the demands in the adoption market, for cheap labour, for different forms of crime and other illicit activities that adults can not perform.

Statistics show that 50% of Africans are children below the age of 18 years old. A lot of these children are orphans or street children. They are living in abject poverty, in conflict situations or uncared for by their communities – whatever the reason. These are the children prone to being trafficked. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has created a generation of African children with no one to look after them. A lot of them resort to life on the streets. Given these realities, it is not surprising that compared to their lives of abject poverty, these children are vulnerable to the temptation of ‘a better life’ in Europe. Although some children are trafficked after being kidnapped or abducted from their homes, the reality is that most child trafficking victims will be trafficked by someone they know, either in their own community, or even within their own family. A child’s parents or guardian may have been deceived by the promises of a better future for their child to come and live in a country like the UK. In reality, only a life of slavery and exploitation awaits them.

Child trafficking is also fuelled by certain cultural practices among Africans. Although caused by poverty, it is neither uncommon nor unusual for children to be engaged in different forms of hard and hazardous labour. On the streets of many African cities, children are exploited as hawkers, beggars and for other dangerous activities. In most African homes, from a very early age, girls are expected to be able to perform certain duties, including cooking, cleaning and baby sitting, as part of their socialisation process. In the extended African family system, parents have traditionally sent their children to live and work in other households – sometimes entrusting them to better-off relatives in the cities. Increasingly, however, many people are abusing these traditional practices, exploiting the vulnerability of these children. The Women Consortium of Nigeria claims that 80% of children in forced labour in Nigeria are victims of trafficking.

In addition to the above, it is important to highlight the role that corruption has played in fuelling the trade in African children. This means that trafficking syndicates are able to procure documentation to transport victims out of their countries without being checked by local border controls. Also, inept embassy and immigration officials in the UK are seen as complicit in fuelling the trade in children due to their inability to safeguard victims who present at the visa office or the port of entry.

## 6 What are Children Trafficked for in the UK?



Children are trafficked from Africa to the UK and other parts of Europe for a variety of reasons: In the UK, some of the children and young people we have worked with at AFRUCA were trafficked for the following purposes:

### Domestic Servitude

Many children and young people deceived into coming to the UK for a better life have ended up as domestic slaves in the country. By far the highest numbers of children we have come across at AFRUCA are in this category. Hidden away in people's homes, they spend their lives caring for families, cooking, cleaning, looking after children and performing other tasks inside the home. They work long hours and most of the time, are deprived of education. When they do go to school, this is usually for a very limited period and they do not get the time to study at home. They are deprived of access to health care – most of them only go to hospital as a result of serious illness or injury. As children, they are deprived the love, affection and attention of a loving adult. In addition, they suffer untold physical, mental, verbal and psychological abuse. They are hardly paid for their work. In many cases, girls are also sexually abused. A lot of the children in this situation are also used to claim state benefit, although the money is not used to look after them.

For most of these children, reaching the age of 18 brings its own problems. As young adults, they are deemed too old to be controlled unlike when they were much younger. They are also now past the age when the exploiter can claim state benefits for them. They therefore end up on the streets after many years of being exploited. They become homeless, with no identity, no job prospects, no skills and no form of support.

### Case Study One

*"Maria" was taken by a relative from her village in Togo to live in Nigeria. She ended up being sold as a domestic servant to a Nigerian family in Lagos. She worked with them for two years looking after their home and taking care of their 2 children. Later, the family decided to migrate to London. They brought "Maria" with them and she continued her role as a domestic servant. She was not allowed to leave the house and she never went to school. She was always beaten and not given enough food to eat. After hearing her cry many times, neighbours reported her case to social services who came to rescue her and took her into care.*



## Sexual Exploitation

Other children will be trafficked expressly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and may end up working as prostitutes. So many young African girls have been tricked into coming to Europe to work in the prostitution business. Many of these girls have also been made to undergo oath rituals before being trafficked into Europe. See section below on "Oath Rituals As a Means of Coercion". In some instances, African girls are bought and sold on by family members and traffickers to brothel owners in Europe. In countries like Italy, Spain and Holland it is common to see young African girls on the streets prostituting. These girls would have to work for years and years before they are able to pay back what the traffickers claim is money owed. If they refuse, they are threatened and beaten up or their families back home are beaten up until they fully submit.

### Case Study Two

*"Angela" is an Aids orphan who lived in Kenya as a street child. As a way of sustaining herself, she sold sex to tourists in Mombassa. She was approached by one of her punters who promised to help her by bringing her to the UK so she could go to school and have a new, decent life. He got her a passport and a visa and they travelled on the plane to London. On arrival, they were met at the airport by two men who took her away. She never saw her "friend" again. "Angela" was locked up in a house where men would come to have sex with her. One day, her exploiter went out and forgot to lock the door from behind. "Angela" was able to escape. She was taken by a sympathetic passer-by to a police station where she was referred to social services.*

## Benefit Fraud

Children are also used to claim benefits from the state. These benefits very often do not go towards meeting the needs of the children in whose name they were claimed, as they continue to live in poverty and hardship. Most child domestic servants fall in this category. In addition, children living with others in a private fostering situation are also used to claim benefit and are equally prone to abuse and harm. The story of Victoria Climbié, the 8 year old Ivorian girl is well known in the UK. Brought into the UK for benefits purposes, she suffered untold cruelty and abuse at the hands of her exploiter. She died as a result of her abuse.

In many cases of trafficking for benefit fraud we have come across, once the trafficker can no longer claim money on behalf of the child they are thrown out on the streets. The young person would be forced to find a way of sustaining themselves. This also makes them vulnerable to abuse and further exploitation.



## Forced Labour

AFRUCA has come across many cases of children trafficked into the country to undertake different forms of unsuitable work for children. There are known cases of children working in African restaurants, food stores and shops without pay, for long hours when they are supposed to be at school.

### Case Study Three

*"Kunle" and his brother aged 9 and 10 years old were brought into the country by relatives after the death of their father in Nigeria, with promises that they will go to school in London. Once they arrived in the UK, they were both forced to help run their aunty's Nigerian restaurant in south London. Their day-to-day tasks included going to the market every other day to buy the foodstuffs used in the restaurant and carrying the foodstuffs home on foot since they were refused transport money. "Kunle" and his brother would walk long distances to and from the marketplace. If they took too long to return, they would be severely punished for being late. On return from the market, they would cook the food, serve customers, wash dishes and clean up the restaurant. They were woken up at 5am every day and went to bed at midnight. Even though they were allowed to go to school, this was not regular. It also put more burden on them as they were still expected to carry out all their daily chores regardless. Eventually they were both able to break free from their abusers. Now in their 20s, they are still trying to cope with the effects of their long term exploitation and abuse.*

## Illegal Adoption

Children from Africa as well as other parts of the world have been brought to the west after having been stolen or illegally adopted in other poorer parts of the world. The wife of a Kenyan evangelist was recently jailed in Kenya for child abduction.

### Case Study Four

*"Segun" was brought to London from Nigeria 4 years ago at the age of 13 by a man who promised to help him fulfil his dreams of becoming a footballer. He said he knew how to help young boys join football clubs in the UK. "Segun" was living with a friend of the family as both his mother and father had died. His father had died 6 years earlier. He has no siblings and no primary carer. The person who brought him used false papers so "Segun" has no proof of ID other than his birth certificate. Once in the UK he was made to work at a car-wash in South London during the day and at the weekends he worked as a toilet attendant at a nightclub. All the money he earned went to the man who had brought him to the country. After about a year of abuse "Segun" eventually managed to escape from his abuser. "Segun" is now under the care of social services with the support and assistance of AFRUCA.*

## 7 Witchcraft, Oath Taking Rituals and Child Trafficking



### Oath Rituals as a Means of Coercion

"Belief in witchcraft is common in Africa and entails a faith in unseen supernatural forces capable of bringing prosperity or harm to a person (see "What is Witchcraft Abuse?"). Juju priests occupy a high standing within societies due to their power to engage in this supernatural realms. Traffickers are known to exploit these beliefs through using elements of juju and oath rituals to coerce and subjugate their victims. Before leaving for destination countries, many victims are made to take oaths of allegiance, secrecy and confidentiality to bind them to their traffickers, ensure compliance and guarantee the repayment of the huge sums of money claimed to be owed for transporting the victims to Europe for their upkeep. Many victims fearful of the repercussions of the oath taken are compelled to endure their suffering in silence without recourse to help or support. The fear of juju makes it extremely difficult for agencies to support victims and for the authorities to investigate, prosecute and bring suspected traffickers to justice.

### Case Study Five

*"Barbara" was trafficked from Nigeria to the UK where she was forced to work as a prostitute by her trafficker. Before being trafficked she was taken to the shrine of a 'Juju' priest. He performed an oath ritual stipulating that if she betrayed or disobeyed him or her trafficker, the mini-gods would punish her with nightmares, madness and even death. She was cut with a razor on her torso, head, back and waist then chalk was rubbed into the wounds before she was made to eat a raw chicken heart. Lastly, the priest put cuttings of her nails, pubic and armpit hair and personal items such as her underwear in a jar. After years of exploitation "Barbara" eventually found a way to escape her trafficker with the help of a client. The police investigated the case but "Barbara" frequently refused to cooperate. When asked about places and people's names she would say she had forgotten. "Barbara" often became aggressive or tearful when questioned further by officers who had begun to doubt her honesty. When asked to identify the house she was kept in she refused telling the officers that if she did the mini-gods would punish her and she would die. It became apparent that "Barbara's" behaviour was caused by her fear of the oath ritual she had undertaken. (Case study courtesy Andrew Desmond, London Metropolitan Police Service)*





## Witchcraft and Child Trafficking

Belief in witchcraft has also been identified as a reason for the abuse of children by some parents and guardians. Witchcraft abuse refers to the phenomenon of branding children as witches and subjecting them to different forms of abuse as a punishment or in an attempt to exorcise evil spirits from them. The branding of children as witches is a commonplace response to such problems as poverty, deprivation, unemployment, lack of success, family breakdowns, and even ill health. These misfortunes are blamed on children believed to be in possession of malevolent powers. They are then subjected to many forms of abuse as well as being thrown out of the home and isolated from the rest of the community. The common traits used to identify children as witches are often trivial, they include; disabilities such as autism, epilepsy and Down's syndrome; rudeness and delinquency, left handedness, exceptional intelligence and being from a broken family. In Africa, children expelled from their homes become "street children" and are very vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking. You can read more about witchcraft abuse in our publication: "What is Witchcraft Abuse?"

## 8 Where are the Children coming from?

Almost every country in Africa has a child trafficked into the UK for exploitation. In our work at AFRUCA we have come across children from different parts of the continent – from West Africa, East Africa, Central and Southern Africa. Most of the victims of trafficking we work with come from countries with colonial ties to the UK. These include Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Sierra Leone. However increasingly, recent research in the UK has also identified children from other countries. These include Morocco, Togo, Benin, Guinea Conakry, Eritrea, Burundi, Congo DR as well as Angola.

## 9 What are the Implications of Trafficking?

Child victims of trafficking suffer in many different ways. The emotional and psychological anguish experienced by victims lead to long term mental problems, post traumatic stress syndrome and other psychological damage. The lack of access to education means most victims are condemned to a life-time of poverty since they are unable to access good quality jobs because of their reduced level of education. For most victims, the frequent physical punishment and abuse also results in very serious and long term medical conditions. In other cases, victims contract STDs, including HIV/Aids, leading in some cases to illness and death.



For many victims in the UK, their suffering does not end with the exploitation and abuse experienced at the hands of their abusers. Escape from bondage into the real world also leads to new realities. The issue of identity becomes paramount for ex-victims who do not have any proof whatsoever of who they are, their names, countries of origin and date or place of birth. For this reason, many victims are unable to claim asylum since they are unable to submit papers without the above details. As people living illegally in the country, they are at risk of being arrested, detained and deported by the authorities.

In addition, lack of proof of identity and the right to stay in the country means victims are unable to work and are unable to sustain themselves and keep a roof over their heads. Condemned to a life-time of poverty, crime, criminality and prostitution become the only option for most victims.

For this reasons, the implications of trafficking are not limited to the victims alone. By our own actions, as Africans, we are helping to create a growing underclass of marginalised and disaffected young Africans whose lives have been blighted by the activities of fellow Africans in the UK. This also means we are helping to propagate suffering and poverty amongst fellow Africans in the country. Society also suffers the impact of trafficking. A growing number of marginalised young people lead to increasing numbers of crime being committed. A growing number of disaffected young people create an easy pool of recruits for unscrupulous religious leaders to brainwash and radicalise for their selfish purposes.

## 10 How can we Address Child Trafficking in our Community?

Child trafficking is a huge problem demanding responses from every part of the community. As a first step, every member of the community must be able to identify a child victim of trafficking when they see one. They must also know what to do to help a victim or prevent child trafficking. They must also know how to report cases to the authorities.

### The Three Steps to Safeguard a Victim

- Step One - Know the indicators or signs of child trafficking and exploitation
- Step Two - Know what to do to help victims
- Step Three - Know how to report cases of trafficking, exploitation and abuse



- Step One - Know the indicators or signs of child trafficking and exploitation

### Signs of Domestic Servitude

- Unexplained bruises or injuries on different parts of the body
- Does not go to school or, if at all, does not attend school regularly
- Is always tired and/or asleep in class
- Does too much work in the house and is left alone with children for long periods
- Has limited freedom of movement, hardly leaves the house
- Is malnourished, is not allowed to eat regularly or eat proper food
- Is not taken to hospital when ill
- Is always beaten or starved as punishment
- Is working in a restaurant, in a shop or for other businesses, all the time, especially when they should be at school
- Looks unkempt and uncared for. Does not own a winter-coat and goes out in the cold with no coat or proper shoes
- Carries heavy groceries from the shops or market every-time but hardly ever takes a bus or other transportation
- Looks sad, miserable and does not have anyone to talk to

### Signs of Sexual Exploitation

- Has a sexually transmitted disease or has tested positive for HIV
- Is pregnant or wants an abortion
- Is always beaten or punished
- Does not go to school
- Does not have a passport or does not have access to a passport
- Is driven around by an older male or boyfriend and not allowed to talk to other people or have friends around her
- Lives in a house with an excessive number of men visiting all the time
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money everyday
- Is excessively afraid of being deported
- Has to pay off an exorbitant debt. Owes a lot of money for someone her age
- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk
- Is always sad and miserable
- Is afraid of dying from a terrible illness or going mad

ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE ONLY INDICATORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE CHILD HAS BEEN TRAFFICKED. HOWEVER THESE INDICATORS SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED. IT IS BETTER TO ENSURE A CHILD IS SAFE FROM POSSIBLE HARM.



- Step Two - Know what to do to help victims

## **Everyone has a role to play in supporting and protecting victims:**

### 1) What is the role of individuals?

- Being vigilant within the community by looking for signs of child abuse and exploitation
- Participating in workshops and seminars that are held on issues of child trafficking to learn more about this issue
- Showing genuine interest in a child you know is being abused and exploited and reporting this to the authorities
- Educating friends, families, faith leaders and others about the damage child trafficking does to victims and the need to eradicate it in our community
- Reporting people you know are trafficking children and exploiting them to the police and other authorities
- Joining our Facebook Campaign located at this link  
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=314714899242>

### 2) What is the role of the African media?

- Write news articles and hold programmes on radio and TV to help bring the issues of child trafficking to the wider attention of the public
- Inviting policymakers and members of parliament to speak on what current progress has been made on the issue of child trafficking
- Generate debates within the community on what can be done to tackle the issues of trafficking
- Educate the community through the different media of communication

### 3) What is the role of our faith organisations?

- Have a fully functioning child protection policy in place to safeguard children and ensure all those working in faith organisations are trained to know the indicators of child abuse and trafficking
- Openly condemn the acts of child trafficking for the purpose of domestic servitude, prostitution and other forms of abuse
- Work closer with children's charities like AFRUCA and statutory bodies to develop projects that can help educate the faith community and safeguard children
- Have a method of accountability for new churches and newly ordained Pastors to ensure the wrong people are not using religion to exploit the vulnerable people in our community



#### 4) What is the role of the community at large?

- We must educate our children to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation
- We must be aware of the laws in place to stop trafficking and exploitation of our children and work to ensure these laws are properly enforced
- All those who interact with children in the community must be taught how to recognise children who are victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse
- We must not be afraid of reporting known traffickers to the authorities
- We must all work together to safeguard our children from abuse, exploitation and trafficking

#### • Step Three - Know how to report cases of trafficking, exploitation and abuse

If you suspect a child has been trafficked and is being abused and exploited, here is what you must do:

##### 1) Get the necessary information. This includes:

- If possible, the name of the child
- The address where the victim is being held
- If possible, the name of the trafficker or abuser
- If you can, keep a record of what you have seen and heard as evidence

##### 2) Contact the necessary agency for help immediately.

Here is a list of who to contact:

- a)** Call your local authority children's service. Contact details can be found on their website or you can simply dial the council's main reception and they will be able to direct you to the children's services. The number can be found on your council tax papers
- b)** Call the police on the national number 999 if you live in the UK
- c)** Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. (You do not have to give them your details if you feel that you may be at risk for passing on this information)
- d)** If you are unable to contact any of the above agencies for any reason, call us at AFRUCA on: 0844 660 8607 or email us at: [info@afruca.org](mailto:info@afruca.org)

# 11 UK Immigration System and Child Trafficking



Most children trafficked to the UK arrive as unaccompanied minors seeking asylum or children accompanied by adults pretending to be their “auntie” or “uncle”. Children are forced to enter the UK with a false passport and forged documents. If they enter the country with their genuine documents, the trafficker will take these away from them and will ensure that the children are not in contact with any authorities. With no documents as proof of identity, children are left vulnerable as the authorities too often treat them as illegal immigrants.

However, following the UK Government’s ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking, public authorities now have the duty to identify and protect victims of trafficking. One of the key factors in complying with the Convention is the introduction of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which provides a framework within which public bodies such as the criminal justice agencies, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), local authorities and third sector partners can work together to identify victims of trafficking and provide appropriate protection and support.

Local authority Children’s services are ‘First Responders’ and should refer individuals who they think may be evidencing signs of being a victim of human trafficking to designated ‘Competent Authorities’ such as the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and UK Borders Agency (UKBA), who will work with partners to make an assessment.

The NRM allows for victims whose cases have been identified as genuine to remain in the UK for up to 45 days in order to recover from their ordeal. After this, they may be entitled to a one year temporary residence permit depending on the nature of their case. The NRM guarantees the provision of support to victims of trafficking which includes; safe temporary accommodation, medical treatment, help in coping with the experience, provision of a translator or interpreter, and legal advice.



## 12 AFRUCA: Our Work on Child Trafficking



AFRUCA is the only African charity in the UK campaigning against child trafficking in the country. We work closely with others to sensitise the community – both in the UK, other countries in Europe and in Africa, to provide support for child victims of trafficking and to influence relevant governments' policies and regulatory action.

Guided by the four "P's" as laid down by the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Protection of children, Prevention of violence, Prosecution of criminals and Participation of children in our programmes, we offer the following services:

- Protection and Provision of Assistance to child victims of trafficking: this is a referral service aimed at helping trafficked children to access specialist legal advice, health, education and social care services.
- Children's Participation through our Survivors' Forum. A peer support group for victims to enable young people to provide each others with mutual support and assistance.
- Prosecution: we work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service and the Serious Organised Crime Agency. We also often act as expert witnesses in immigration and criminal cases.
- Prevention: Community empowerment to enable response to the crime and better safeguards for African children/victims. We run educational and sensitisation programmes to help improve knowledge and understanding of the issues and how to help protect victims.
- 1 Million Africans Against Human Trafficking campaign on FACE BOOK: the Campaign has been launched by AFRUCA to raise awareness of the scourge of human trafficking and to encourage Africans take a stand so that there will be no place for traffickers to operate and hide.
- Skills development for practitioners through training and seminars to help develop their knowledge and understanding of key issues so they can better safeguard victims.
- AFRUCA in Nigeria: the best long term solution to end human trafficking is to tackle the "supply" problem at its source. AFRUCA's newly established branch in Nigeria will work on the ground to help combat some of the factors that lead to children being trafficked.



1. What is Child Abuse?
2. What is Child Trafficking?
3. What is Private Fostering?
4. What is Female Genital Mutilation?
5. What is Witchcraft Abuse?
6. What is Physical Abuse?
7. What is Sexual Abuse?

Our Safeguarding African Children in the UK series of publications are produced to help raise awareness among members of the UK African community about different forms of child abuse and what they can do to help address these.

This publication can also be downloaded from our [website at www.afruca.org](http://www.afruca.org)



Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Promoting the Rights and Welfare of African Children

---

Our Safeguarding African Children in the UK Series of publications include:

- 1** What is Child Abuse?
- 2** What is Child Trafficking?
- 3** What is Private Fostering?
- 4** What is Female Genital Mutilation?
- 5** What is Witchcraft Abuse?
- 6** What is Physical Abuse?
- 7** What is Sexual Abuse?

**Head Office UK:**

Unit 3D/F Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP.  
Tel: +44 0844 660 8607 Fax: +44 0844 660 8661

**Regional Office UK:**

Unit 98-100, 23 New Mount Street, Manchester M4 4DE.  
Tel: +44 0844 660 8607 Fax: +44 0844 660 8661

**AFRUCA Foundation Nigeria:**

AFRUCA Foundation for the Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable Children,  
PO BOX 4599, Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.  
Tel: +00 234 8139539063

Email: [info@afrucanigeria.org](mailto:info@afrucanigeria.org) Website: [www.afrucanigeria.org](http://www.afrucanigeria.org)



AFRUCA is a UK Registered Charity:  
No. 1093027  
and a Company Limited by Guarantee:  
No. 4306536