



# UK: Giving hope to trafficked people



Supporting refugees and victims of trafficking

The power of kindness

## What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the movement of people by means of coercion, deception or force for the purpose of exploitation. It is one way in which people end up in situations of slavery, such as forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Trafficking affects an estimated 40 million people worldwide. Women are disproportionately affected and make up at least 70% of trafficked people.

Around a quarter of all trafficked people in the world are under 18. Some are transported across the globe, while others don't even leave their hometown. It is a destructive and yet lucrative trade, generating profits of \$150 billion a year for traffickers.

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TIFFANY  
CIRCLE

## What is life like for a trafficked person?

People who have been trafficked may not know they have been deceived until they arrive at their destination, at which point they have already been exploited.

Many have been separated from their families and had their possessions and travel documents taken away, robbing them of their identity and autonomy. They are often kept in awful conditions. Deprived of food and water, they live in perpetual fear and isolation, fighting for their survival on a daily basis. Trafficking victims are often forced to provide labour for free or are sexually exploited, and can spend anything from a few days to many years trapped, living and working in inhumane conditions.

Even if trafficked people are removed from the situation, their story doesn't always end with their freedom. Lasting mental and physical effects have an impact on many survivors of trafficking, who may have feelings of shame, a destroyed sense of trust and flashbacks.

On top of health problems, women who have been sexually exploited are often hesitant or unable to return home, as they can be rejected and ostracised by their families or communities. This can put them at great risk of being trafficked again. Moreover, the lack of options and statutory provisions for trafficked people means that hundreds are likely to become destitute here in the UK. Faced with sleeping on the street, some women are forced to swap sex for a place to sleep.

Photo © Simon Rawles / BFC.



In 2017:

68%

of adult  
women

and

61%

of female  
children

who were referred to the government in suspected trafficking cases, were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

## Who is affected?

The trafficker may be a stranger, but very often they will be a familiar face – a boyfriend, relative or friend of the family. Traffickers seek people living in vulnerable conditions, and build a trusting relationship with them, which they then exploit. Traffickers will even forge false relationships with women, drawing them in and gaining their trust in a time of need before exploiting them for financial gain. Young women, parents struggling to support children and those who are unemployed or have few options are also regularly targeted. Unstable conditions resulting from civil war or natural disasters can also make people more vulnerable to trafficking.

A trafficked person could be anyone: a woman longing for personal freedom, a university graduate with few employment options in their country, someone with learning difficulties who says “yes” to a job offer they don't fully understand.

**Anyone, no matter their gender, nationality, wealth or background, can fall victim to this horrendous crime.**

During 2017, 5,148 people were identified as potentially trafficked in the UK.

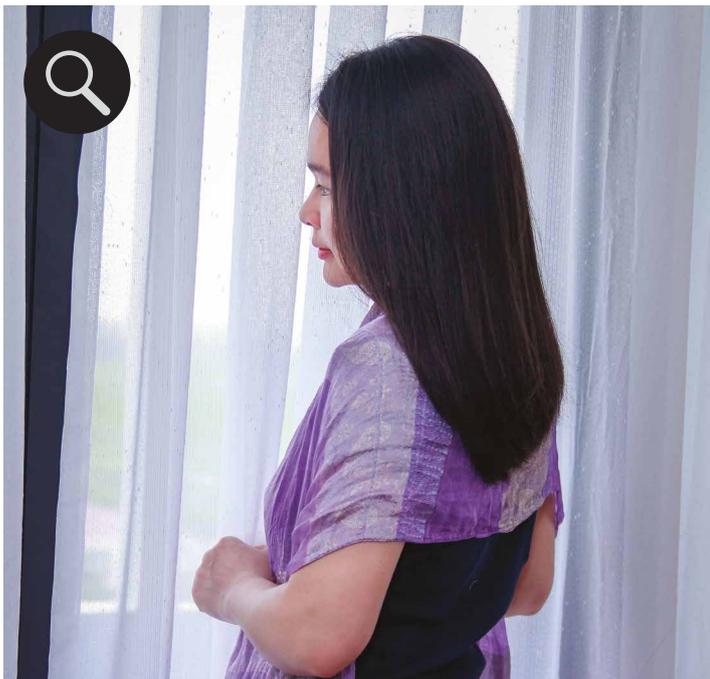
This is a 35% increase from 2016, indicating the severity of the problem but also the increased public awareness and improved detection of trafficking. However, there are many more trafficked people, living in slave like conditions, who have not been identified or do not want to report being a victim of trafficking, for fear of reprisal or being stigmatised.

People are trafficked into the UK from all over the world, but a large and growing number of people are also trafficked within our own borders. In 2017, for the first time ever, the UK was the most common country of origin for victims of trafficking, with 819 people, including 676 children, having reported being trafficked, a 151% increase from 2016.

## Refugees are among the most vulnerable

Refugees and asylum seekers are especially susceptible to trafficking and their journey is quite different. They are often desperate, having fled persecution, conflict or extreme poverty in their countries of origin. Refugees and asylum seekers do not always know where they will find their next meal or sleep for the night. They rely heavily on the generosity of complete strangers to survive, leaving them open to manipulation and malevolence. The traffickers lure in vulnerable refugees with the promise of false opportunities to study or work abroad.

The refugee crisis in Europe has seen an unprecedented influx of people arriving on the continent and thousands are in danger of being trafficked. Many refugees lack statutory support and are unable to work, putting them at risk of destitution. When facing homelessness and desperately seeking food, shelter and financial assistance, refugees are extremely vulnerable to being deceived or coerced by traffickers, who seem to offer a chance of escape to a better life. Traffickers are increasingly targeting refugee camps, soup kitchens and food banks. If we don't reach out a hand to people, traffickers will.



### LINH'S STORY

When Linh\* was referred to 'Your Space', she was pregnant, homeless and in need of urgent support. She was extremely traumatised, having recently arrived in the UK from Vietnam, and required urgent medical care. Following her discharge from hospital, we accommodated Linh for one week, and provided her with a specialist caseworker.

Our caseworker quickly established that Linh was a survivor of trafficking who wished to pursue an investigation into crimes committed against her, and understand her best options of seeking protection in the UK.

Our team worked with Linh to help her understand the complex government support systems, and sought advice on her behalf about her right to claim asylum. With our help, Linh entered the government support system with a full understanding of her rights and entitlements, having made an informed decision to choose this path.

\*not her real name.

Photo © Nadia Shira Cohen

## How can Tiffany Circle help?

We want to ensure any trafficked person receives the support they need, wherever they are in the UK, but we cannot do this without you.

The Tiffany Circle was instrumental in setting up 'Your Space' and funding provided by our members enabled the establishment of the project in three areas, in the East Midlands, the North West and London. The success of this project has enabled us to further develop it, enabling us to support people with often very complex cases at various stages of their journey to recover from being trafficked. Our 'Your Space' model has also been recognised by the UK Government and we have been providing advice to, and collaborating with, other organisations to improve the support offered to other victims of trafficking.

The continued support of the Tiffany Circle will enable us to expand 'Your Space' and our services to help victims of trafficking into new areas, particularly those identified as trafficking 'hotspots'. This will allow us to support more people and in turn help them to escape

a life of exploitation and to rebuild their lives. Your support can help to make these plans a reality.

### Within each area we will:

- Provide a specialised trafficking caseworker who will support anyone identified as having been trafficked. The caseworker will reach out to find trafficked people as well as receive referrals and walk-in clients. They will run training sessions and offer psychological and emotional support, but most importantly they will offer victims a safe space and time for them to make their own, informed choices about their next steps. Every affected person would be able to discuss their options and receive support for a period of up to 12 weeks.
- Work with local partners to develop clear referral pathways to increase the number of trafficked people who are being identified.
- Offer a 24-hour phone line to take trafficking referrals and provide emotional and practical support and advice.

## What can the British Red Cross do?



**Provide casework and access to support groups** to help victims of trafficking regardless of their situation. We support them to navigate complex government referral mechanisms, which can be especially difficult for trafficked people, who may not understand their rights or speak English. We help people should they wish to stay in the UK, return home or bring their traffickers to justice.



**Prevent more people from being trafficked** in conjunction with a range of partners and other national Red Cross societies. We want to develop a Europe-wide approach to identifying and supporting victims of trafficking. By providing evidence of the scale of the situation, the complex needs of trafficked people and through sharing best practice we want to advocate for real, long-term change in the way that trafficking is identified and victims supported.



**Raise awareness of trafficking** in its various forms and provide information for potentially trafficked people to let them know help is available and what their options are.



**Provide protection** by building the capacity of our staff and volunteers so we are better able to identify and support trafficked people.



**Offer a safe place to sleep** by providing both emergency and longer term accommodation. Women who may have been sexually exploited are especially vulnerable and require specialised accommodation where they feel safe and no longer at risk.



**Reunite families** through our family tracing and family reunion services. These allow us to find missing family members and reunite parents with their children.

**We want to see a world where trafficking does not exist and, for as long as it does exist, for there to be robust support and protection offered to the victims of trafficking to rebuild their lives with dignity.**

## With your support:

**£75,000** would enable us to run our specialist Anti-Trafficking support service, including 'Your Space' in one area, providing specialist casework advice, emergency accommodation and destitution support for victims of trafficking and running community outreach activities to raise awareness of trafficking.

**£40,000** would provide emergency accommodation for up to 100 people, identified as victims of trafficking, helping to reduce the risk of destitution.

**£15,000** would provide 300 hours of interpretation allowing trafficked people to be fully informed and empowered to make their own choices.

**£6,000** would enable us to support up to 50 people living in destitution for three months, ensuring they have enough money to eat and survive, whilst receiving support that will help them determine their future.



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