

Scottish Government

Guidance for supporting adult victims of trafficking

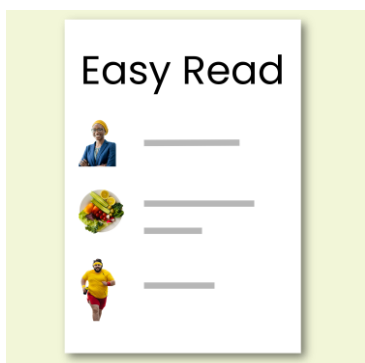
Part 1 of 2



Easy Read



What this document is about



This is an Easy Read document about the support available for adult victims of **trafficking**.

Trafficked means people who have been forced or persuaded to do something that **exploits** them.



You can be trafficked without leaving your home

Exploited means that someone is using them for their own advantage.



This document gives you the information you need to answer our **consultation**.

A **consultation** means that we want to know what you think about something.



Read this information and put your answers in the Respondent Information Form or **RIF** for short.

Send the RIF before 17 June 2026:

- by email to: human.trafficking@gov.scot
- by post to:



Human Trafficking Team
Scottish Government
Ground West 14 and 15
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG





The **Support for Adult Victims of Trafficking in Scotland Guidance** is called **SAVTS** for short.

It explains how Scotland will support adults affected by human trafficking and exploitation.

It is for:



- organisations giving support
- local councils and staff working with people who may be victims
- victims who want to understand their rights and what services and support they can get



The draft guidance has been written by the Scottish Government.

The Government works with anti-trafficking partners and people who have experienced trafficking.

It follows the values in the [Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy 2025](#).

The Scottish Government is responsible for:

- victim support
- public services like health, social care, housing and education
- the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Getting it right for every child or **GIRFEC** for short



GIRFEC is how Scotland supports and protects the wellbeing of all children and young people.

National Referral Mechanism or **NRM** for short



The NRM is the UK system to recognise and support victims of human trafficking or exploitation.

First responders are people and organisations who can add someone new into the NRM.



This is also called **referring** someone.

Referrals are sent in using the [NRM online portal](#), and guidance is in the [NRM toolkit](#).



Referrals into the NRM can only happen:

- if the adult **consents** – this means they agree to be referred



Children must always be referred.

Information about first responders is on page 8 of this document.



Decisions about referrals are made by the UK Government Single Competent Authority (SCA) or the Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority (IECA).



The decisions are made in 2 stages:

1. Reasonable Grounds decision: a first assessment using early information

When a positive Reasonable Grounds decision is made, Scottish Ministers must give the support they think the adult needs.



This can be for 90 days or until a Conclusive Grounds decision is taken – whichever comes first.

2. Conclusive Grounds decision – a final decision



A Conclusive Grounds decision is made when there is enough information to decide if the person has been trafficked or exploited.



When a young person turns 18 they must consent to continue to be in the NRM.

Sometimes a child may need to be referred to Guardianship Scotland.

Guardianship Scotland supports children without parents or guardians in the UK who may be victims of trafficking.



They can be supported until they are 26.

Roles and responsibilities



First responders include:

- Scottish local councils
- Police Scotland
- Home Office organisations including:
 - Border Force
 - UK Visas and Immigration
 - Immigration Enforcement
- the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
- some voluntary organisations

All organisations must make sure that victims are safe by:



- contacting police
- getting urgent medical care if needed
- getting emergency accommodation if needed

Information sharing, confidentiality and record keeping



Information sharing must follow UK data protection laws and rules.

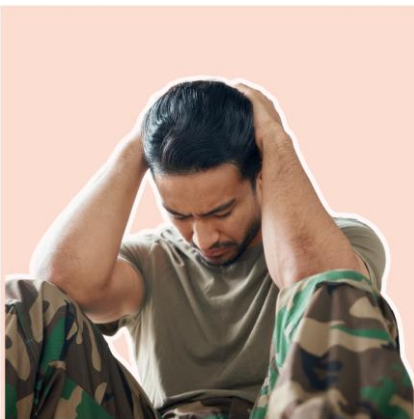
Victims must be told how their information will be shared.

Staff must get regular data protection training and updates.



If staff are not sure about what information can be shared they should get advice from the Data Protection Officer in their organisation.

Standards that must be followed in the way people work



All staff must recognise how **trauma** affects people and they must work in **trauma informed** ways.

Trauma is the emotions you feel when something terrible like a bad or frightening event has happened.



Trauma informed means understanding how trauma can make victims feel and behave.

The National Trauma Transformation Programme has information to support staff with learning.



When someone needs a **psychological assessment** – a check on their mental health and thoughts – it must be done by an expert.



Staff must recognise that some people may not be able or want to talk about what they have gone through.



Support must recognise that people will have different beliefs, backgrounds, languages and needs.



People must be able to get language support.



Services must work together and share information well to keep people safe.

Role and timing of risk and needs assessment



Organisations giving support must do:

- a **risk assessment** when someone is first referred
- a full risk assessment before 1 month has passed and then have regular reviews
- a **needs assessment** for as long as the person is getting support





A **risk assessment** will check if the person is likely to be harmed and what can be done to stop this from happening.



A **needs assessment** is a way to check what services and support people need.



All assessments must be done in a language the victim understands.



If a support worker thinks an adult is at risk they must make a special referral.

Information on support for victims in Scotland

Accommodation

Before a Reasonable Grounds Decision



A law called the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 says that local councils must give advice and temporary or permanent accommodation to anyone who is homeless or may become homeless.



Adults who are homeless and who have **recourse to public funds** can get permanent accommodation, usually after some time in temporary housing.



Having **recourse to public funds** means having the legal right to get some UK benefits and housing support.



Adults with no recourse to public funds cannot get local council housing or homelessness support.

But local councils must still offer free homelessness advice.



Emergency accommodation must be provided where other available options:

- are not suitable
- are not safe because the person could still be exploited
- would leave the adult with no money



A support provider must refer a trafficked or exploited person adult to the local council or support organisations if they have needs they cannot safely manage like issues with:

- drugs or alcohol
- their health



so they can then arrange housing and support.



Migrants' Rights & Entitlements Guidance

Support providers should carry on supporting and use the [Migrants' Rights and Entitlements Guidance](#).

Transport to accommodation is arranged when needed.



This is the end of Part 1.

Now please move to Part 2 of this document.



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