



# One-minute guide

## National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and ICTG

### What is the National Referral Mechanism?

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the framework through which potential victims of trafficking in the UK are identified, so that they can be supported and protected. It is a particular process to be followed when it is suspected that an adult or a child might be a victim of trafficking. In the case of a child, the child's best interests will be a primary consideration in the decision to make, or not to make, a referral into the NRM.

The National Referral Mechanism was established after the government ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT), which came into force on 1 April 2009, and which commits the UK to minimum standards for the protection of victims of human trafficking.

### The Referral Process

If you think you have encountered a child who has been a victim of modern slavery in England and Wales, you should complete a referral via the new online process.

The new online process allows first responders to submit an NRM referral through a single online form regardless of their location in the UK, or whether the victim is an adult or child. The form has been designed to be responsive and will change depending on the options selected – including identifying whether a case is an NRM referral or a DtN referral (for individuals in England and Wales). [Access the new form](#)

The online form will identify whether someone is a first responder by verifying their work email address. First responders will need to complete this verification to progress with the form. After submitting the form (which will be sent to the SCA) the first responder will be sent a link to download a copy. Once it's been received by the SCA it will be assigned a reference number which will be emailed to the first responder.

### Further Information attained

If any further information later becomes available that would be helpful in making a decision about whether the person is a victim of modern slavery you can email this, by responding to the referral receipt email without editing the reference number in the subject line.

Once an NRM referral is submitted, the SCA will then aim to make a reasonable grounds decision within 5 working days wherever possible.

### Reasonable Grounds Decision

(Once a child has been referred into the NRM, the assessing authority (known as the 'competent authority') will, within five working days, make a decision as to whether or not there are reasonable



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grounds for believing that the person has been trafficked. This is known as the reasonable grounds decision.

There is a low threshold at this stage: the test is 'from the information available so far I suspect but cannot prove' the individual is a victim of trafficking. If the competent authority decides that there are no reasonable grounds, there is no right of appeal: the only way to challenge this decision is through judicial review in the High Court.)

### Conclusive Grounds Decision

The competent authority should make what is known as a conclusive grounds decision on whether the person is a victim of trafficking. The test at this stage is whether, on the balance of probabilities, there is sufficient information to conclude the individual is, more likely than not, a victim of trafficking.

In general the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU), which sits within the National Crime Agency, makes the conclusive grounds decision in cases involving British and European Economic Area citizens, and the Home Office makes the conclusive grounds decision in cases where the trafficking decision may affect a person's immigration status.

### Process

Once it has been decided that there will be a referral to the NRM, practitioners need to ensure the child's file is updated to show an NRM referral has been initiated and the outcome.

The Date of the NRM referral should be added to the Summary of the child's needs on Case-notes. Once decisions have been finalised these dates and reference numbers need to be added so they are available for all our emergency contact groups CSPA and EDT.

The child will be referred to Risk Management and should have been identified as at least SIGNIFICANT Risk due to the known Trafficking risk.

### Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG)

As part of the NRM Transformation Programme, we are progressing with the rollout of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs), an independent source of advice for trafficked children.

An ICTG referral should be made in addition to the NRM referral. A First Responder can make a referral by completing an ICTG service online referral form available [here](#) or [here](#) (Welsh). A 24/7 assessment line number for the ICTG service [0800 043 4303] is available for advice on referring a child into the service.



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