

# Forced Criminality



## What is Forced Criminality?

Forced criminality involves victims, often children, who are forced to commit a range of crimes, including counterfeit DVD selling, bag snatching, ATM theft, pick-pocketing, forced begging, forced sham marriage and cannabis cultivation. Victims are often subject to multiple types of criminal exploitation at the same time.

## 'Vulnerable to prosecution'

"Forcing others to undertake criminal activities is a lucrative and a low-risk enterprise for traffickers. Treating victims of trafficking as criminals rather than protecting them, perpetuates the crime and guarantees impunity for traffickers. It also compounds any existing fear the victim may have of the authorities and reduces the likelihood that they will assist in further investigations" (Race in Europe: Victim or Criminal)

## Statistics:

- *Of the 2,255 individuals identified by the UK Human Trafficking Centre in 2012, 362 (16%) were trafficked for the purposes of criminal exploitation.*
- *The most prevalent form of child trafficking in the UK is for cannabis cultivation.*
- *The most common country of origin for potential victims of trafficking for forced street crime was Romania (12%)*

## The signs: cannabis farm

- Plastic bags over windows of private properties.
- High levels of heat and condensation.
- Strong and sickly sweet smell.
- Constant buzz of ventilation.
- Visitors at unsociable hours.

## The signs: on your high street

- Young, elderly/disabled foreign national begging in public places/on public transport.
- Obvious signs of abuse.
- Fearful of adults (especially law enforcement).
- One adult is the guardian of large group of children.
- Large group of adult/child beggars moving daily to different locations, returning to same location every night.

## Useful resources:

- 'Trafficking for Forced Criminal Activities and Begging in Europe', Anti-Slavery International.
- 'Child Trafficking for Forced Criminality', ECPAT UK
- 'Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked', Department for Education.

## Who to contact?

ECPAT UK is the primary organisation working with trafficked children in the UK. [www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)

Call **101** to contact your local police or 999 in an emergency

Call the Salvation Army's 24-hour confidential Referral Helpline on **0300 3038151**

You can call the NSPCC's helpline on **0808 800 5000**