

Guide

Identification of Possible Victims
of Human Trafficking



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Part 1

Introduction

The Coordination Unit against Human Trafficking (KOM) is one of the government's measures in combating human trafficking. KOM's overarching goal is to reduce human trafficking in Norway.

KOM is tasked with:



Facilitating coordination between authorities and organisations



Assisting with methods for identifying and mobilising of assistance and protection for victims



Contributing to interdisciplinary information exchange and competence building

KOM does not deal with individual cases.

KOM is administratively under the Norwegian Police Directorate and has its own mandate from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. This guide is part of KOM's mission.

About this guide

**Do you suspect
that someone is at
risk from human
trafficking?**

Are you worried for someone? Do you want to report someone? Are you seeking advice?

This guide from the Coordination Unit against Human Trafficking (KOM) is useful if you, through your work or voluntary engagement, come into contact with vulnerable people and have concerns that they may be exploited in human trafficking.

The guide provides information on concepts, indicators, and victims' rights, advice on how you can facilitate identification and follow-up, and an overview of the actors you should refer to for assistance and protection, or from whom you can seek guidance.

You will also find a list of relevant authorities and organisations that have roles in the field of human trafficking in Norway and internationally, and that may have other more specialised tools that supplement this national identification guide.



In this guide, the terms 'possible' and 'presumed' victim are used interchangeably. The terms underline the low threshold for the authorities' obligations to provide assistance and protection. If the authorities have reasonable grounds to believe that a person has been a victim of human trafficking, the person is entitled to assistance and protection under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Part 2

What is human trafficking?



Human trafficking violates fundamental human rights and is a serious crime that severely impacts the victims.

Human trafficking is when a person, by violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation or other improper behaviour, forces, exploits or deceives someone into:



prostitution or
other sexual
services



forced labour or
forced services,
including begging



military service
abroad



removal of
organs

Human trafficking is legally defined in sections 257 and 258 of the Norwegian Penal Code. The penalty for human trafficking is imprisonment for up to 6 years, and for aggravated human trafficking, imprisonment for up to 10 years.

All stages of exploitation are punishable. This includes recruiting, transporting, accommodating, and receiving the person who is being exploited, or where the purpose is for the person to be exploited.

The aspect of exploitation is a crucial part of human trafficking. To exploit a person means to use them to gain an advantage for yourself.



The exploitation of minors is considered human trafficking regardless of whether the act involved violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation or other improper conduct.

Consent to exploitation shall always be irrelevant when the person is under 18 years of age, and also when the person is over 18 and has consented as a result of violence, threats, abuse of a position of vulnerability or other improper conduct.

Human trafficking can occur both when one or more individuals, or an organised criminal network, are behind the exploitation. Often, the exploiter has a relationship with the victim. The perpetrator may, for example, be a parent, spouse, partner or travel companion.

The term 'victim of human trafficking' can encompass all individuals, regardless of gender, age, nationality, ethnicity or other group affiliation. Victims in Norway are often foreign nationals in a vulnerable situation. They often hesitate to contact or cooperate with the police or support services.

What the Penal Code says



The prohibition against human trafficking was introduced in 2003, following Norway's ratification of the UN Palermo Protocol. The provisions on human trafficking and aggravated human trafficking are found in the Norwegian Penal Code 2005, sections 257 and 258.¹

Section 257. Human trafficking

Any person who by violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation or other improper conduct forces, exploits or deceives another person into/for

- a prostitution or other sexual services,
- b forced labour or forced services, including begging,
- c active military service in a foreign country, or
- d consenting to the removal of one of the person's internal organs,

shall be punished for human trafficking with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years.

The same penalty shall be applied to any person who

- a facilitates such force, exploitation or deception as specified in the first paragraph by procuring, transporting or receiving the person,
- b otherwise contributes to the force, exploitation or deception, or
- c provides payment or any other advantage to obtain consent for such a course of action from a person who has authority over the aggrieved person, or who receives such payment or advantage.

Any person who commits an act as specified in the first or second paragraph against a person who is under 18 years of age shall be subject to punishment regardless of whether the act involved violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation or other improper conduct. Any person who was ignorant of the fact that the aggrieved person was under 18 years of age shall be subject to a penalty if he/she may be held to blame in any way for such ignorance.

Section 258. Aggravated human trafficking

Aggravated human trafficking is punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years. In determining whether the violation is aggravated, particular weight shall be given to whether the person subjected to the act was under 18 years of age, whether severe violence or force was used and whether the act generated significant proceeds. Any person who was ignorant of the fact that the aggrieved person was under 18 years of age shall be punished if he/she may be held to blame in any way for such ignorance.

¹ We have used Lovdata's translation of the penal provisions, see LOV-2005-05-20-28 Penal Code [here](#).

What the terms mean

Several terms in the Penal Code's provision on human trafficking are further clarified in the legislative documents and case law. Further, there can be challenging grey areas between human trafficking and other offences. Here are some clarifications:

What do we mean by taking advantage of a vulnerable situation¹ and other improper conduct:

Many victims of human trafficking find themselves in a position of vulnerability. This often means they have no choice but to submit to the traffickers. The traffickers abuse this position of vulnerability to their advantage, often for their own financial gain.

Improper conduct can, for example, involve placing someone in a debt situation that is difficult to get out of. It can also include creating fake advertisements for marriage or employment to lure individuals into prostitution or forced labour.

What do we mean by exploiting or deceiving another person?

To exploit means to use someone to gain an advantage. For example, a trafficker may profit from this exploitation. However, it can also involve obtaining another type of benefit.

To deceive or lure someone is to trick or persuade them into participating in something they would not otherwise agree to.

What is the difference between prostitution, pimping, and human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation in prostitution or other sexual services?

Prostitution is engaging in sexual activity or a sexual act with another person, or with oneself, for payment. This refers to the sale of sexual services. Selling sexual services is not illegal, but purchasing sexual services is a criminal offence. Pimping is promoting or facilitating the prostitution of others. An example is renting out apartments. Pimping is illegal.

Individuals may be exploited for prostitution or other sexual services in human trafficking. In such cases, the person is forced, exploited, or deceived into this. The trafficker uses violence or threats, takes advantage of a vulnerable situation, or gains control over the person through other improper conduct.

By other sexual services, we mean exploiting someone to perform sexual acts that are not prostitution. This could include, for example, sexually exploiting children, facilitating children to a paedophile network, or exploiting an adult to provide sexual services to oneself or others.

¹ In international conventions, the expression 'abuse of a position of vulnerability' is used, whereas we have applied the translation of the term as it appears in the penal code provision on lovdata.no.



Many victims of human trafficking are in a vulnerable situation. Human traffickers can exploit this to their advantage, often for their own financial gain.

According to case law, exploitation for sexual services for oneself constitutes human trafficking when the person receiving the service also plays some form of organising or ringleader role.

Are children being exploited? Then it is human trafficking, even if the trafficker does not use violence or threats, take advantage of a vulnerable situation, or engage in other improper behaviour.

What is the difference between social dumping, work-related crime, and human trafficking for forced labour or forced services?

Social dumping is a non-legal umbrella term used to describe situations where workers face poor working and wage conditions. This especially applies when foreign workers have significantly worse conditions than Norwegian workers.

Work-related crime involves actions that violate Norwegian laws on wages and working conditions, social security, taxes, and duties.

Human trafficking in the form of forced labour is the most severe type of work-related crime. To determine whether forced labour may be present, a comprehensive assessment of the worker's specific situation must be carried out.

By forced labour, we mean that the person being exploited did not enter the work voluntarily, or cannot leave it voluntarily.

The individual may have been forced, exploited, or deceived into the employment relationship through the use of violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation, or other improper conduct.

It can also be considered forced labour if there is no genuine and acceptable alternative to leaving the work. Various coercive elements can create an effect of entrapment. Such coercive elements might include the accumulation of debt, power imbalances, promises of residency permits after

completing a certain amount of work, the risk of deportation due to lack of a residency permit, limited alternative employment options, or practical barriers to leaving the job due to lack of money, passports, or knowledge of language and social systems. The worker may effectively be entirely dependent on and bound to the employer. The situation may suggest that it is disproportionately burdensome to leave the job, and that there is, in reality, no other choice but to continue.

Signs of forced labour may include the person living in degrading conditions, being grossly underpaid, or enduring extremely oppressive working and living conditions. The individual may also lack control over their own work and living situation. Additionally, the employer may be violating the Working Environment Act and other laws related to health, safety, and the environment.

Human trafficking can also occur when individuals are exploited to perform forced services for others. This could include begging, street performance or selling, drug-related crimes (such as production, smuggling, or selling), theft, or other profit-driven criminal activities. As with forced labour, the individual may have been forced, exploited, or deceived into the situation through the use of violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation, or other improper conduct.

If the person is under 18, the requirement for coercion is not as strict to classify it as forced labour or services. However, there must still have been some form of pressure exerted by the perpetrator.

What is meant by exploitation for military service in a foreign country?

Individuals can be exploited for military service in other countries through the use of violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation, or other improper conduct. This can involve forced recruitment into armed groups, the use of foreign



Human trafficking does not require a national border to be crossed, and can occur whether one or more individuals, or an organised criminal network, stands behind the exploitation.

fighters, or child soldiers. In Norway, we have not had criminal cases involving exploitation for such military service.

What is meant by exploitation for the removal of internal organs?

Organ transplantation is strictly regulated in international and Norwegian law. It is a criminal offence to remove an organ from a living donor without voluntary, informed and explicit consent. It is also illegal to offer or receive financial gain or any similar advantage in exchange for the organ. Individuals can be exploited for the removal of an internal organ if consent is obtained through violence, threats, taking advantage of a vulnerable situation, or other improper conduct. In Norway, we have not had criminal cases involving exploitation for the removal of internal organs.

What is the difference between violence in close relationships and human trafficking?

In many cases, it can be difficult to distinguish between violence in close relationships, negative social control, honour-related violence, forced marriage, and human trafficking. The perpetrators are often known to the victim and can include parents, relatives, partners, friends, or employers. A common feature is the use of coercion and violence, and the relationship is often characterised by a power imbalance or the victim being in a dependent relationship with the perpetrator. In a case of human trafficking, the aspect of exploitation is, in addition, central, along with the fact that the person is exploited for the purposes specified in the definition.

What is the difference between human smuggling and human trafficking?

Human trafficking often occurs during irregular migration, and can therefore be closely linked to human smuggling. The key difference lies in the purpose of the actions: The purpose of human trafficking is to exploit a person. The purpose of

human smuggling is to transport a person illegally across a national border.

Human trafficking is a violation of the person's human rights. Human smuggling is a violation against the state. Human trafficking does not require a border to be crossed. Traffickers should be prosecuted even if the exploitation occurs within a country's borders. In the case of human smuggling, it is the illegal crossing of a border that constitutes the criminal act to be punished.

Human smuggling can lead to human trafficking. An example might be if a person agrees to be smuggled into Norway but continues to be in a service or debt relationship with the smuggler or the smuggler's contacts after arriving in the country.

What is the difference between modern slavery and human trafficking?

Human trafficking is often referred to as modern slavery. In Norway, the term human trafficking is legally anchored in Section 257 of the Penal Code, which is based on the international legal definition of human trafficking in the Palermo Protocol. Additionally, there is a separate provision on slavery in Section 259 of the Penal Code.

Modern slavery is not addressed in the Penal Code. It is a non-legal term that encompasses various forms of exploitation, such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery, and slavery-like practices. The concept is therefore very broad and is often connected to key development issues.

Myths and misconceptions about human trafficking



There are numerous myths and misconceptions about what human trafficking is. This is unfortunate and can lead to a lack of understanding that the person one encounters may be a victim. Here are some examples:

- The person is not a victim of human trafficking when they:
 - have consented to the exploitation
 - knew what was going to happen to them
 - did not take opportunities to escape
 - are better off now than earlier in life
 - find joy in everyday life
 - decline offers of help
- Only women and children can be victims of human trafficking.
- Human trafficking only involves women being exploited for prostitution.
- Norwegian citizens cannot be victims of human trafficking.
- It cannot be human trafficking when the perpetrator and the victim are related or are partners.
- Human trafficking is a necessary evil in certain cultures and can therefore be accepted.
- Crossing national borders is necessary for something to be defined as human trafficking.



KOM's estimates for the past three years indicate that approximately 200 presumed victims received assistance each year in Norway from public authorities and support services, with around 100 identified as new victims annually.

Who are the victims of human trafficking?

Victims of human trafficking are a diverse group in terms of gender, age, and country of origin. There is also a complex picture regarding the form of exploitation, the degree of exploitation, the level of exposure to threats, and the physical and psychological health damages. The victims in Norway are often foreign nationals in a vulnerable situation, many without legal residence or who have been in the country for a short time. However, the victims can also be Norwegian citizens.

There are no definitive figures in this area, but the UN considers human trafficking to be one of the world's largest criminal industries, alongside drugs and arms trafficking.

The UN organisation UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) produces global reports on human trafficking. UNODC highlights that human trafficking affects all countries as countries of origin, transit, and destination. Most victims are women, but children and men make up an increasingly larger share, and the number of victims of forced labour has risen. The crime has become more complex than before, both in terms of perpetrators, victims, forms of exploitation, and migration patterns. The victim and the perpetrator often share the same background or nationality, which contributes to trust and dependency, and increases vulnerability.

As with most other countries, it is also challenging for Norway to determine the exact extent of possible victims of human trafficking.

KOM produces annual reports on the national situation regarding human trafficking, providing information on trends, measures, and challenges in the field.

KOM's estimates for the past three years (2022–2024) indicate that approximately 200 presumed victims received assistance each year in Norway from public authorities and support services, with around 100 identified as new victims annually.

By assistance, it is meant that the person has received follow-up from one or more agencies, in accordance with the rights of presumed victims.

The individuals may have received multiple forms of assistance, and the figures do not reflect the number of individual persons. However, the figures do provide an indication of the scope of assistance measures provided annually to presumed victims of human trafficking. There is no system in place in Norway to calculate the number of identified victims of human trafficking at the individual level.

There is reason to believe that there are hidden figures when it comes to the extent of human trafficking in Norway and globally. Human trafficking is a hidden form of crime, and many support agencies experience that victims are reluctant to make contact or cooperate with the police or support services.

You can find KOM's annual status reports on human trafficking [here](#).

Part 3

Our responsibility to identify victims of human trafficking





"Trafficking in human beings constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and the integrity of the human being."

*Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197)
16 May 2005, preamble section 3.*

Norwegian authorities have a duty to facilitate the identification of victims. This obligation arises from the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, ratified by Norway in 2008. Identifying possible victims of human trafficking is a prerequisite for providing the necessary assistance and protection to the victims. Identification is also a prerequisite for the police and prosecution authorities to be able to investigate and prosecute traffickers.

The purpose of identifying a person as a possible victim of human trafficking is to:

- contribute to preventing or averting exploitation
- ensure that the person receives information about their rights to assistance and protection
- refer the person to the appropriate agencies for further specialised support
- comply with the duty to avert a criminal offence and the duty to report a concern to child welfare services

Victims of human trafficking rarely identify themselves as victims to authorities or organisations on their own initiative. There are multiple and complex reasons for this, and here are some examples:

- The person is not familiar with the term human trafficking.
- The person is not aware of the rights that a victim of human trafficking has.
- The person feels guilty for being exploited.
- The person feels ashamed of their situation.
- The person fears reprisals against themselves or their family if they ask for help.
- The person is afraid to ask for help, fearing imprisonment or deportation from the country.
- The person has developed a dependency on the trafficker.
- The person believes they are better off in the human trafficking situation than they were before.

Victim of human trafficking is a legal term, not a condition or characteristic of a person. It is the responsibility of the authorities to verify a person as a victim of human trafficking, and it should not be expected or required that the person themselves must feel or behave like a victim.



What does the responsibility to identify entail?

According to the Council of Europe Convention, all authorities that may come into contact with victims must have the competence to identify possible victims and have procedures in place to facilitate such identification. This also applies to voluntary and non-profit organisations, as well as private entities, carrying out tasks for the public sector in this field.

- The duty to identify applies whether the suspicion relates to exploitation in Norway or in other countries, including the person's home country. The suspicion can concern whether the person has been exploited or is being exploited.
- Persons without a residence permit should not have to leave the country before the identification procedure is completed.
- It is important to note that there is no requirement for different authorities – such as the police, immigration authorities, and child welfare services – to reach the same conclusion when assessing whether a person is a victim of human trafficking. These agencies operate under different legal frameworks, have different purposes for their assessments, and apply different standards of evidence or likelihood.

Who can identify victims?

In Norway, there is no single agency with a defined task to identify possible victims or to verify whether a person is a victim of human trafficking.

All authorities that may come into contact with victims of human trafficking have a responsibility to facilitate the identification of victims and to ensure they have access to assistance and protection. This also applies to voluntary and non-profit organisations, as well as private entities, carrying out tasks for the public sector in this field.

Voluntary and non-profit organisations play an important role in identifying and referring possible victims for assistance and protection, both through low-threshold services aimed at vulnerable groups and other support measures that offer good opportunities to build trust.

Individuals can also self-identify as possible victims of human trafficking.

Various public agencies, such as the police, immigration authorities, and child welfare services, must assess information regarding possible human trafficking as part of their respective duties. In a criminal case, the final verification occurs through a legally binding conviction of the perpetrators.

Norway therefore has a low-threshold system for identifying and following up on possible victims of human trafficking. This requires that many agencies have solid competence in human trafficking and have procedures in place for identifying and following up on presumed victims.

Part 4

What can be
indicators of
human trafficking?



Where can exploitation occur?

Exploitation of people can take place in many settings, both within legal and illegal enterprises, as well as in private homes. It can involve various forms of exploitation, or a combination of several.



Here are some examples where authorities have identified or suspected human trafficking or grey areas of such exploitation:

- The indoor and outdoor prostitution market
- Other venues for the buying, selling, and exchange of sexual services (exchanging for goods or services other than money), for example:
 - drug arenas
 - grooming venues
 - digital platforms, such as webcams and the sale of images and videos with sexual or pornographic content
 - digital platforms for sharing and live-streaming abuse material
- Massage parlours or beauty salons, such as nail salons
- Restaurant, hotel, and nightlife industries
- Cleaning services
- Housework and childcare
- Au pair scheme
- Marriage (sham, arranged, forced)
- Health and care services
- Agriculture, such as seasonal work in farming and horticulture
- Construction and building
- Car repair and car care services
- Goods and freight transport
- Grocery industry
- Shipbuilding industry
- Aquaculture and fisheries, such as seasonal work at fish processing plants and factories
- Paving and quarrying
- Begging, street performance, and street vending
- Drug-related crime (production, smuggling, sale)
- Property crime, such as shoplifting and pickpocketing
- Loan or welfare fraud (misuse of a person's identity to obtain loans or benefits)

Indicators of human trafficking for adults and minors

Indicators or signs of exploitation can provide you with cues to assess whether a person may be a victim of human trafficking. The indicators are not ranked or intended to be an exhaustive list. The indicators, in isolation, do not necessarily indicate exploitation. It is important that the indicators are considered in context and that you make a holistic assessment.



We have divided the indicators into four main categories that can apply to all forms of exploitation:

- Victims may have a background that makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation.
- Victims may have been observed at or have a connection to locations that increase their vulnerability to exploitation.
- Victims may exhibit behaviour that could indicate exploitation.
- Victims may appear to be controlled by others.

Indicators of human trafficking for adults and minors:



Background and specific vulnerabilities

- belongs to a marginalised or discriminated group, such as related to ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual minority, or social class
- has reduced physical or mental health, or cognitive impairments
- suffers from substance addiction
- carries a heavy caregiving burden
- has limited or incorrect information about regulations (for example, regarding employment or prostitution) and rights in Norway
- has limited language and literacy skills
- is unfamiliar with their residential address or area
- lacks knowledge about their situation, the work or services they are performing, or who they are working for
- lacks knowledge about where to buy food or meet other basic needs
- has a limited social network or lives in social isolation
- has previously been subjected to violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect
- has previously been involved in a human smuggling case
- has previously been registered as a victim in a case of forced marriage, violence in close relationships, or sexual abuse



Additionally, be aware of these indicators for minors:

- has previously been registered as missing from an asylum reception centre
- does not participate in regular schooling
- has already been observed or involved in other activities such as begging, pickpocketing, or drug-related offences



Location affiliation or places of residence

- is observed in places where illegal sale of services or goods frequently occurs
- has frequently moved from city to city and across borders, has little knowledge of past and future travel routes, or has not booked and paid for the journeys themselves
- comes from a country or region known for recruitment into human trafficking, which may also be affected by war or poverty
- lives in degrading conditions
- lives with others in the same situation
- lives and works in the same place



Additionally, be aware of these indicators for minors:

- travels without being accompanied by guardians
- has stayed illegally in Norway or other European countries for an extended period without caregivers
- lives or works with adults who are not guardians
- has unexplained absences from asylum reception centres



Behaviour

- has injuries that may have been caused by violence, abuse, or degrading working conditions, and appears unwilling or hesitant to answer questions about the injury
- seems malnourished, tired, or exhausted, or confirms this when asked
- behaves as if they are being instructed by others
- provides information that seems fabricated and rehearsed, with obvious errors or falsehoods, or inconsistencies with the situation they are in
- expresses fear of being reported to the authorities, such as having their residency status revealed
- expresses a lack of trust in authorities (police, child welfare, immigration authorities) or support services
- does not know or refuses to provide the address of their residence or workplace



Additionally, be aware of these indicators for minors:

- claims to be an adult but appears to be a minor
- exhibits behaviour that deviates from what is normal for children of the same age
- rejects contact with support services and may have committed offences themselves



Appears to be controlled by others

Has a facilitator/employer or a 'fixer' who exerts control:

- is accompanied to and from the workplace/ exploitation site by another person
- is not allowed to be alone with or does not wish to receive help from authorities, support services, or healthcare personnel
- is accompanied by others who do not allow the person to be alone with representatives of the authorities, support services, or healthcare personnel, who do not allow the person to speak for themselves, and/or who interpret for them
- is under video surveillance at the workplace/ exploitation site
- is equipped with a mobile phone, SIM card, or phone numbers they are instructed to call if contacted by authorities
- gives the impression that their movements are being monitored, for example, receives frequent phone calls, SMS, or social media contact during interactions with authorities, support services, or healthcare personnel
- has no or limited access to contact with family, friends, or other social interactions



Additionally, be aware of these indicators for minors:

- has a 'fixer' – an adult who is never far away, who seemingly arranges the child's activities and appears at short notice
- expresses strong loyalty and dependence on the adults around them
- Be aware that parents, relatives, or other accompanying persons may be involved in the exploitation of the child.
- Be aware that accompanying persons to the child may have a different relationship than they claim to have.





Is dependent on the facilitator/employer

- expresses that they have to work or perform tasks for others
- is dependent on the facilitator/employer for income, housing, food, and other basic needs
- expresses strong loyalty towards the people they work for, or may have a romantic relationship with the facilitator (the "loverboy" method)

Expresses fear of the facilitator/employer

- expresses fear of reprisals if they tell others about their situation
- claims to have been threatened with being reported to the authorities
- has previously been subjected to reprisals (violence, abuse) or threats against themselves or their family and friends
- claims to have been forced to break Norwegian laws as part of the exploitation

Lacks control over their own life situation

- lacks control over their own passport or other identity documents, or has missing or seemingly false identity documents
- is moved from city to city or across borders
- lacks control over their living situation, for example, does not do their own shopping or eats separately from other members of the "family"/household
- has made choices under false pretenses or promises, or has been deceived into an unwanted situation
- is unable to end their employment or leave, for example, prostitution, when they wish to

Is exploited by the facilitator/employer

- is bound by debt (for example, for travel) that must be repaid by performing specific tasks, actions, or services
- receives little or no payment for work done or for the sale of sexual services, and has no or only partial access to their own income, or is promised income later
- has money deducted from their pay for expenses related to the job or service
- their identity is misused by others for financial gain (loan or benefit fraud)



Additionally, be aware of these indicators of possible exploitation for prostitution:

The person...

- has a phone number registered on an escort website and advertises with flawless language without being able to speak the language themselves
- is unaware of the advertisement or the photo being used
- does not personally answer the customer phone
- has little control over choosing which and how many clients to serve, and which types of sexual services to provide



Additionally, be aware of these indicators of possible exploitation for forced labour:

The person...

- has received a job offer via internet advertisements
- has a fictitious, incomplete, or no employment contract
- has no ability to negotiate working conditions and salary
- is not qualified for the job, for example, due to lack of education and certifications
- lacks the necessary equipment to perform the job, or must purchase the necessary equipment themselves
- works without pay in exchange for food and lodging, or has deductions from their salary for such costs
- suffers from stress injuries typical of degrading working conditions
- is required to perform heavy or dangerous work and works under poor health and safety conditions

Part 5

What to do if you
are concerned?



How can you identify victims of human trafficking?

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings establishes that Norwegian authorities have a duty to facilitate the identification of victims and ensure they receive assistance and protection. If there are signs that a person is being exploited, you may also have a duty to avert a criminal offence or a duty to report a concern to child welfare services.

It can be challenging to detect that someone is being exploited in human trafficking. The identification of a possible victim of human trafficking often begins with a concern that a person may be subjected to exploitation. In Part 4, you will find an overview of indicators of human trafficking.

Observations, facts and statements made during a conversation with the individual can provide a basis for a comprehensive assessment of the situation.



Observations

Observations may include noticing concerning aspects of a person's behaviour, such as signs of stress or fear in situations where such symptoms appear unusual. Another example could be that the behaviour raises suspicion that the person is being instructed or controlled by others.

Observations can also consist of more verifiable facts, such as the individual not having control over their own passport or identification documents, their own key to their accommodation, or access to their own mail or social media accounts.

However, observations alone rarely provide sufficient grounds to assess whether a person is a victim of human trafficking. Usually, a conversation with the individual is required to make such an assessment.



Conversation

To assess the situation and assist in referring to support services, you should conduct a conversation with the person.

A conversation about possible exploitation can take different forms, depending on the circumstances and your role. If the setting does not allow for a conversation and further assessment, you should, at a minimum, provide information about rights and available support services to potential victims. Identification is a process that may involve multiple conversations to determine whether a person is being exploited. Be mindful of ensuring the individual's safety so that the conversation does not pose additional risks. You may also refer the individual to other professionals or specialised agencies if you are unable to conduct the conversation yourself or if the circumstances are limiting.



If the presumed victim is believed to be a minor, child protection services can be contacted before conducting such a conversation. Minor victims may be relocated, cut off from, or evade contact with authorities and support services if questions are raised about their situation. Child protection services have the authority to order an emergency placement if they determine it is necessary to protect the child.

You can seek advice and guidance from [ROSA](#), which operates the national helpline for victims of human trafficking, and from the [National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children](#). See also the online resource [utnyttelse.no](#).



Use of an interpreter

When a lack of language skills is a barrier to effective communication, you must use an interpreter. Only qualified interpreters should be used. You can find them through the The Norwegian National Register of Interpreters (Nasjonalt tolkeregister), [tolkeregisteret.no](#). This register is primarily intended for interpreter users in the public sector, but it is accessible to everyone. The Interpreter Portal also provides guidelines for booking and using interpreters.

The purpose of the conversation is to:



facilitate for the person to talk freely about potential exploitation



explain the reasons for your concern that the person may be a victim of human trafficking



provide information about rights and available support services to possible victims of human trafficking



offer the individual assistance in contacting support services



Many will respond by rejecting any attempts at a conversation. Often, victims either do not want to or are too afraid to speak about their actual situation. However, the information you provide can be crucial in ensuring that the person knows where they can turn if, at a later stage, they seek help and protection.



Tips for conducting the conversation:

- Begin the conversation by explaining your role and your obligations concerning disclosure and confidentiality. Explain that you are concerned for the person and that there are opportunities to seek assistance and protection if they wish.
- Ensure that you will not be disturbed in the room where the conversation is to take place. Turn off your mobile phone and make sure that no one else can enter and interrupt the conversation.
- Be aware that victims may have experienced severe hardships and, as a result, may suffer from psychological and physical trauma. They may need care in the form of physical safety, rest, food, and emotional support. Consider that a longer conversation may need to take place at a later time.
- Victims of human trafficking often have a deep mistrust of authorities and people offering them help. This is a natural reaction for someone who has previously been deceived or manipulated by others and may have had negative experiences with authorities in other countries. Do your best to earn the person's trust, and carefully consider who should participate in the conversation, where it should take place, and how it should be conducted.
- Be mindful that your questions and messages may not necessarily have the same meaning for the person you are speaking with. It may be necessary to repeat important information several times and ask follow-up questions to ensure that the person has understood your message as intended.
- The information you provide must be realistic, and it is crucial that you never promise anything you are not certain can be fulfilled.



Additionally, be aware of these tips during conversations with minors:

- Parents, relatives, or other accompanying persons may be involved in the exploitation of the child.
- Children are usually very loyal to their guardians or other accompanying persons. It cannot be expected that a child will seek protection from those closest to them on their own.
- Children may have great difficulty articulating their situation, may withhold information, or may tell their story with obvious errors or falsehoods. This can be due to the story being constructed by others and memorised.
- Children typically do not know they are being exploited or have an understanding of their own rights.
- It is important to create an environment where the child feels safe and cared for. Be cautious so that the child does not perceive themselves as being suspected of having said or done something that could result in punishment.



Some tips for questions

Try to avoid using words like 'human trafficking', 'coercion', and 'victim'. These terms may not be clearly understood, and you and the person may have different interpretations of what these concepts entail. Instead of asking directly if the person is a victim of human trafficking or is under coercion, you should approach the situation by asking questions from different angles.

- Start by explaining why you are concerned, for example: I know that people who work/live here [specify] might be in a difficult situation... I see that you are living here at your workplace...
- Use open-ended questions that begin with tell/describe/explain and what/which/how (see examples below). Follow up the information with questions that can shed light on exploitation and coercion based on the specific situation (see examples in italics below). It may be helpful to formulate specific questions based on relevant indicators of human trafficking, as outlined in Part 4. The examples of questions below can be adapted to different forms of exploitation and situations.
- Ask openly if there is anything the person needs help with.

Examples of questions about different forms of exploitation might include:

- **How do you feel about your work situation?**
What do you find challenging? Are you able to leave your work/workplace whenever you want?
- **Can you describe your living situation?**
Who do you live with? Are you free to leave the place where you stay whenever you want?
- **Can you explain how you receive your wages/money for the work you do?**
Who pays you? How often do you receive wages/payment? Do you receive your wages from your employer into your own bank account? Does anyone else have access to your account?
- **How is your financial situation?**
Do you owe anyone money/have debts? Is there anyone who expects you to perform work or services here in Norway to pay off your debt?
- **How do you get in contact with customers?**
Are there any customers you do not serve? Do you decide which customers to accept? Do you decide which services you offer?
- **How did you obtain the SIM card/phone number you currently have?**
Did you purchase the SIM card for your mobile phone yourself? Can you change the SIM card or phone number whenever you want?
- **Describe how you manage your own mail/email/ads/social media accounts.**
Do you control your own mail or email? What about ads/social media accounts? Does anyone else have access to or control over these?
- **How do you access medical or other healthcare if you need it?**
Do you need to ask someone for permission to see a doctor or access other healthcare services? Are you allowed to seek these services on your own?
- **Can you describe how you buy or obtain food or other necessary items?**
Do you need to ask someone for permission to go to the shops or run other errands?
- **Can you describe how you traveled to Norway?**
Did someone else organise and pay for your journey? Were you able to choose when and where to travel?
- **How did you get your passport to travel to Norway?**
Did you have control over your own passport or travel document during your journey to Norway? Do you have control over your passport or travel document now?
- **Can you tell me if there is anything you need help with?** [You should follow up here with information about rights:] *If you are experiencing violence, coercion, or pressure, you may be a victim of human trafficking. Human trafficking involves severe violations of human rights and is illegal in Norway. Those who are affected have the right to assistance and protection. I would like to provide you with information about the rights you may have and where you can get help if you need it.*

You can find more information, advice, and tips related to conducting conversations on the online resource utnyttelse.no.



Here is information you can provide about rights and available support services, which you should tailor to the individual in terms of form and language:

- It is safe to seek help. You do not need to have legal residency to get help in Norway.
- The police can help you if you are in danger or if you want to report those who are exploiting you.
- You can get free help from a legal aid lawyer to report those who have exploited you, or to consider whether you want to report.
- You can get healthcare.
- You can get a safe place to stay. This can be at a crisis centre, reception centre, or specialised housing facility. If you are under 18, you can get a safe place to stay and protection from child welfare services.
- The organisation ROSA has a national 24-hour helpline for victims of human trafficking in Norwegian and English. They can arrange for an interpreter. You can call (+47) 22 33 11 60, or visit the website rosanorge.no. The helpline is free, and you can remain anonymous. ROSA can also assist adult possible victims of human trafficking with information, a safe place to stay, contact with a legal aid lawyer, and other assistance.
- Several other voluntary and non-profit organisations also offer housing and support services for adult possible victims of human trafficking, including the Church City Mission (Kirkens Bymisjon), the Salvation Army (Frelsesarmeen), the Marita Foundation (Maritastiftelsen) and Caritas Norway. The Salvation Army has a dedicated shelter for men.
- The Child Welfare Services shall provide protection to all children residing in Norway who may be subjected to human trafficking or other forms of violence, abuse, and neglect. The Child Welfare Services have a dedicated helpline, Alarmtelefonen (the emergency telephone) for children and youth: [116 111](tel:116111). The helpline is a 24-hour phone and chat service in Norwegian and English. They can arrange for an interpreter.
- You can get a guardian or representative if you need assistance to see to your own interests.
- Do you not have a residence permit? You can apply for a limited residence permit for victims of human trafficking or protection (asylum) in Norway, see udi.no/human-trafficking. Do you want to apply for a residence permit? Contact the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) or the police where you live for help with your application.
- Do you want to return home? UDI can assist you with a safe return to your home country. This includes practical assistance, financial support, and follow-up after you have returned home. UDI collaborates with the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](https://www.iom.int). You can find more information and an application form at udi.no/en/return. Contact UDI or IOM for further information.
- Do you want to know more about working in Norway and your rights and obligations? You can find information from the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority at knowyourrights.no. You can choose the language on the website.

For more information about rights and who is responsible, see Part 7. Also, refer to KOM's information brochure for possible victims of human trafficking at politiet.no/menneskehandel.



Part 6

Where do you report your concern, and how do you follow up further?



When are you responsible for following up on information about possible human trafficking?

If, based on observations or conversations, there is reason to believe that the person is a victim of human trafficking, you shall:

- 1 consider **notifying** the police and child welfare services
- 2 assess whether the person needs **urgent help**
- 3 ensure that **presumed minors** are taken care of by child welfare services or the police for support and protection
- 4 refer **adults** to the appropriate agencies or support services for assistance and protection

Note: Even if there is no reason to believe the person is a victim of human trafficking, they may still be in a difficult situation and need referral to other relevant agencies.

1

Assess whether there is a duty or a right to report

On confidentiality and collaboration

When assisting presumed victims of human trafficking, it is important to uphold confidentiality. Interagency collaboration is essential in order to provide comprehensive support to victims of human trafficking. The person who is to be assisted and protected may require a range of services from various agencies. These agencies should coordinate their services and follow-up to ensure that the assistance is as consistent and predictable as possible. Confidentiality can be maintained either by obtaining the person's consent for the responsible caseworkers to discuss necessary case details, or by discussing the case in a way that the person's identity cannot be traced. It is always beneficial to involve as few individuals as possible within each agency.

When are you obligated to report?

Duty to avert a criminal offence

Everyone has an obligation to attempt to avert serious criminal acts from occurring. The duty to avert a criminal offence under Section 196 of the Penal Code applies to everyone at all times and overrides any duty of confidentiality. Aggravated human trafficking, as outlined in Section 258 of the Penal Code, is included in this duty. Signs of aggravated human trafficking include when the potential victim is under 18 years old, when there is a likelihood of severe violence or coercion being used, or when the act may result in significant financial gain.

This duty is triggered when you become aware that a criminal act will take place, or you believe that it will most likely take place.

You can avert the offence by notifying the local police or child welfare services, or by helping the victim to safety, for example, at a crisis centre, hospital, or another safe place. If there is an immediate danger to life or health, you must call the police immediately at 112. For your local police district, call 02800. For more information, visit politiet.no.

Even if you have previously reported your concern, you must notify again if there is new or increased concern.



When does the duty to avert a criminal offence apply?

The duty to avert a criminal offence under Section 196 of the Penal Code applies to everyone at all times and overrides any duty of confidentiality.

Aggravated human trafficking, as outlined in Section 258 of the Penal Code, is included in this duty.

Are you concerned about a child who is with parents, guardians, or other adults? They may be involved in the exploitation of the child. Therefore, you should not inform them of your concern without clearance from the police or child welfare services. Where a child may be a victim of human trafficking, you may also have a duty to report to child welfare services, in addition to the duty to avert a criminal offence (see below).

Learn more about the duty to avert a criminal offence and how you can act on it at plik.no or the [police's website](#) on the duty to avert a criminal offence and the duty to report a concern to child welfare services in cases of violence, abuse, and exploitation. You can also call the police or child welfare services for advice and guidance.

Duty to report a concern to child welfare services

If you work for a public authority, you have a duty to report a concern to child welfare services when there is reason to believe that a child is being, or will be, exploited for human trafficking (see Section 13-2 (e) of the Child Welfare Act). This duty also applies to organisations and private entities carrying out tasks on behalf of public authorities. It also applies when the person doing the reporting is seeking to remedy the situation.

If you are in doubt about whether a person is under 18 years old, the person should be treated as a child until their age is verified.

Anyone who suspects that a child may be a victim of human trafficking is not responsible for conducting further investigations to confirm or disprove the suspicion. The reporter's responsibility is limited to notifying child welfare services of their justified concern. If it later turns out that the situation was less serious than initially believed, or if the suspicion that

led to the report was later disproven, there is no violation of confidentiality.

Read more about the duty to report a concern to child welfare services on the website of the [Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs](#).



When does the duty to report a concern to child welfare services apply?

Anyone performing a service or working for a public authority shall, without being hindered by confidentiality, report to child welfare services without undue delay when there is reason to believe that a child is being, or will be, exploited for human trafficking.

Are you, as a private individual, concerned that an adult or a child may be a victim of human trafficking?

You can report it to the local police or the child welfare services in your municipality. You can report anonymously to child welfare services. They are obligated to examine the concern and assess whether the case needs to be followed up by an investigation.

There is an emergency helpline for children and youth who have experienced violence, abuse, or neglect. The helpline is open when child welfare services are closed, see Alarmtelefonen (the emergency telephone) for children and youth: [116 111](#).

When can you share information with other public agencies?

Public agencies are permitted to share information with other agencies without breaching confidentiality, according to the provisions of the Public Administration Act and the specific legislation governing the agencies.

2

Assess whether the person (adult or child) needs urgent help

- In case of immediate danger, call the police emergency number 112. Call the police at 02800 if the situation is not urgent. See more about the duty to avert a criminal offence above.
- In case of life-threatening illness or injury, call 113 (medical emergency helpline). Call the emergency clinic (legevakten) at 116 117 if the person needs other immediate healthcare.
- If the person is presumed to be a minor: Call the child welfare services in your municipality or the emergency child welfare service. See the overview at [Barnevernvakten.no](https://www.barnevernvakten.no). You can also call Alarmtelefonen (the emergency telephone) for children and youth: 116 111. In urgent cases, child welfare services can make decisions regarding emergency placement. They can also protect the child through other measures under the Child Welfare Act. See more about the duty to report to child welfare services above.
- If the person is an adult and needs a safe place to stay or access to other assistance: Call the national helpline for victims of human trafficking, operated by the Crisis Centre Secretariat through ROSA: 22 33 11 60 (24-hour service). See more information in section 4 (page 38).



What does the Child Welfare Act say about protective measures for minor victims of human trafficking

- The child welfare services and the prosecuting authority can, under Section 4–5 of the Child Welfare Act, make an emergency decision to place a child in an institution when there is a risk of human trafficking.
- A decision to place a child in an institution when there is a risk that the child may be exploited for human trafficking is authorized under Section 6–6 of the Child Welfare Act.
- Protective measures for children who are victims of or at risk of human trafficking are authorized under sections 6–6, second paragraph, and 10–13 of the Child Welfare Act.

3

Ensure that presumed minors are taken care of by child welfare services or the police for assistance and protection.

- The child should not be left alone or placed in the care of other adults until child welfare services or the police can ensure the protection and safety of the minor. The same applies to accompanying children of a person who may be in an ongoing exploitation situation and who does not wish to receive follow-up, where you are concerned about the child's care.

If you are in doubt about whether a person is under 18 years old, the person should be treated as a child until their age is verified.

- It is essential that child welfare services and the police work closely together when there is suspicion of human trafficking involving minors. For more detailed guidance on collaboration procedures, see the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs' [guide for child welfare services on minor victims of human trafficking](#).
- Child welfare services are responsible for child protection measures for minors who may be victims of human trafficking.
- The police shall assist child welfare services, conduct a risk assessment, and recommend necessary security measures.



Seek advice and guidance

- Contact the National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children:

Call **466 15 000**

E-mail: menneskehandel@bufdir.no

- You can find more information about the responsibilities of child welfare services and the police in protecting minor victims of human trafficking in Part 7.
- Call the National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children for advice and guidance: 466 15 000, email: menneskehandel@bufdir.no. You can find more information about the guidance service [here](#).
- You can discuss the case anonymously with the guidance service, child welfare services, and the police.

4

Refer adults to the appropriate agencies or support services for assistance and protection

You should offer the person assistance in contacting support services. You can find more detailed information about the tasks of the various actors for following up with victims and where to seek assistance

You can find more detailed information about the tasks of the various actors for following up with victims and where to seek assistance in part 7.

The Crisis Centre Secretariat through ROSA operates the national helpline for victims of human trafficking: 22 33 11 60. You can call the helpline for guidance on identifying and assisting adult possible victims. ROSA can:

- conduct a conversation with the person if they wish
- appoint a legal aid lawyer for the person, who can provide guidance on options for filing a police report, applying for a residence permit or assisted return, or safeguarding other legal rights
- contact NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) for assistance the person may be entitled to under the Social Services Act
- assess whether the person can be offered assistance and a safe place to stay through ROSA via crisis centres



Presumed victims of human trafficking are entitled to assistance and protection

- Call ROSA at 22 33 11 60, the national helpline for victims of human trafficking, for guidance and assistance in following up with adult presumed victims.

- contact housing and support services run by other voluntary and non-profit organisations, or by public support services, to assess other provisions tailored to the person's needs. These may include the Church City Mission Nadheim (which also offers Lauras hus, a safe housing facility), the Salvation Army (which also has a men's shelter, Safe House Filemon), the Marita Foundation (which also offers a safe housing facility through Marita Women), Caritas Norway, Pro Sentret, Shalam Kristiansand, and the Red Cross.



Part 7

Presumed
victims' rights
– who can assist
and protect?



What rights do presumed victims have to assistance and protection?

The Council of Europe Convention establishes that individuals identified by authorities as possible victims of human trafficking are entitled to assistance for physical, psychological, and social recovery.



In Norway, presumed victims may be entitled to:

- information about rights and support services
- legal assistance (a minimum of three hours of free legal aid to assess matters relevant to filing a report – the legal aid lawyer can also apply to the County Governor for an extension of the free legal aid grant)
- a reflection period (a six-month limited residence permit) and, if applicable, further residence permit based on specific criteria
- necessary security measures (following a risk assessment)
- necessary healthcare
- safe and adapted housing
- financial support for subsistence (and possible activity programs or employment-related measures)
- exemption from penalties for offenses committed as part of the exploitation
- assistance for safe return and reintegration in their home country



Unaccompanied minors are also entitled to a representative or guardian to safeguard the child's interests.¹ Minors also have the right to primary education and may have the right to secondary education.

¹ Unaccompanied minors who apply for protection (asylum) or a limited residence permit for presumed victims of human trafficking (reflection period, etc.) have the right to a representative, see Section 98a of the Immigration Act. The right to a guardian is outlined in the Guardianship Act, see also the County Governor's website on guardianship, statsforvalteren.no. A guardian can also be appointed for adults who need assistance to see to their own interests due to an injury, illness, or disability.

Who is responsible for providing assistance and protection to victims?

Just as we do not have a single identification authority, there is also no single authority in Norway responsible for providing assistance and protection to presumed victims.

Different sector authorities are responsible for determining whether the conditions for rights are met and for providing follow-up.

These may include the police, child welfare services, immigration authorities, health authorities, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the Labour Inspection Authority, educational authorities, legal aid lawyers, guardians/representatives, and voluntary and non-profit organisations carrying out tasks on behalf of public authorities.

These authorities have primary responsibility for key rights of presumed victims:



Information about rights and support services

All authorities that may come into contact with victims of human trafficking have a responsibility to facilitate the identification of victims and to ensure they have access to assistance and protection. This also applies to voluntary and non-profit organisations and private entities carrying out tasks on behalf of public authorities in this field. Information about rights and support services should be part of the identification process.



Legal Assistance

Presumed victims of human trafficking are entitled to a minimum of three hours of free legal aid to assess their situation and receive guidance on options for filing a police report, applying for a residence permit or assisted return, or safeguarding other legal rights. The legal aid lawyer can apply to the County Governor for an extension of the free legal aid grant.

If the case is reported to the police, the individual is entitled to free legal aid throughout the process. The lawyer can provide advice and assist in contacting other agencies. The lawyer can also help with applications for compensation and damages for victims of human trafficking.

KOM and several support services have lists of legal aid lawyers with expertise and experience in handling human trafficking cases.



Residence permit

Presumed victims can apply for a reflection period or a limited residence permit for victims of human trafficking, or apply for protection (asylum). This also applies to EEA citizens. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) processes applications for residence permits. Read more at udi.no/human-trafficking. Clarification of the residence permit status may impact other assistance measures, such as NAV services and healthcare.



Necessary security measures

Adults: The police must assess the need for security measures when there is a risk of human trafficking or threats of retaliation from perpetrators. The police can also assist agencies providing housing and support services to victims and evaluate the need for tailored security arrangements.

Minors: The police must assist child welfare services in investigating the identity of the child and accompanying individuals, tracing parents, conducting a risk assessment, and recommending necessary security measures. Specific procedures have been developed for police cooperation with child welfare services when there is suspicion of human trafficking involving minors.

How the police work to combat human trafficking:

- Each police district is responsible for preventing, uncovering, and prosecuting human trafficking. There are dedicated human trafficking functions in each police district.
- Victims or others who wish to report perpetrators should contact their local police.
- The National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) has national responsibility for analysis, assistance to police districts, and participation in international efforts to combat human trafficking. Kripos also manages the police's national competence group on human trafficking.
- The police cooperate with many agencies to combat human trafficking. Among other initiatives, interagency cooperation structures and inter-agency centres against work-related crimes (A-Krim centres) have been established as part of efforts to combat labour-related crime.



Healthcare

Presumed victims' right to physical, psychological, and social recovery includes necessary healthcare. The basis for residence currently determines the healthcare rights the victim is entitled to. In Norway, there are no specialized healthcare services for victims of human trafficking; responsibility therefore falls under the public healthcare system. Read more in the Norwegian Directorate of Health's national guide on healthcare services for asylum seekers, refugees, and family reunification, in the [chapter on healthcare for victims of human trafficking](#).



The responsibility for housing and follow-up services differs for children and adults:

Child protection measures

Child welfare services (barnevernet) are responsible for child protection measures for minors who may be victims of human trafficking. This responsibility is regulated by the Child Welfare Act.¹

- Protective measures for potential victims of human trafficking under the Child Welfare Act apply to all children, regardless of whether the child is only on a short visit to Norway or in transit, and regardless of the child's nationality or residence status.
- Child welfare services do not need to document that a child is a victim of human trafficking in order to implement measures under the Child Welfare Act. The decisive factor is whether the child is experiencing neglect, abuse, or has behavioral issues. If a child is being exploited in human trafficking, this can be considered a situation of neglect or abuse.
- Unaccompanied minors are entitled to a representative or guardian to safeguard the child's interests. See also the County Governor's website on guardianship, statsforvalteren.no. Child welfare services must request the County Governor to appoint a representative or guardian.
- The head of local child welfare services and the prosecuting authority can, according to the Child Welfare Act, place a child in emergency care if they are at risk of human trafficking, see Section 4-5 of the Child Welfare Act. Further placement in an institution when there is a risk of human trafficking is authorized under Section 6-6 of the Child Welfare Act. Child welfare services can also protect the child through other measures outlined in the Child Welfare Act.
- When child welfare services justify measures by stating that a child is at risk of being exploited in human trafficking, they must also assess whether the child has specific protection needs, see sections 6-6, second paragraph, and 10-13 of the Child Welfare Act.
- Child welfare services must cooperate with the police to assess the child's risk situation and needs, and implement necessary measures to ensure the best possible care and safety for the child. Specific procedures have been developed for cooperation between child welfare services and the police when there is suspicion of human trafficking involving minors.
- The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), operates the National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children, which provides advice and guidance to the child welfare services and other relevant agencies. You can find more information about the guidance service [here](#).

Read more about the responsibilities and procedures of child welfare services in cases of human trafficking in the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs' [guide for child welfare services on minor victims of human trafficking](#).

¹ See the English translation of the Child Welfare Act [here](#)



Housing and follow-up support services for adult presumed victims

In Norway, we have differentiated housing and follow-up support services for presumed victims of human trafficking:

- The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) is responsible for ensuring that presumed victims of human trafficking who apply for protection (asylum) are offered a place to stay. Asylum seekers are entitled to a place in a reception centre while awaiting the processing of their asylum application.
- Presumed victims who have been granted a reflection period or a temporary residence permit for victims of human trafficking are entitled to services under the Social Services Act, which are covered by the municipality in which they reside. Regardless of residence status, individuals may also apply for the service of information, advice and guidance pursuant to Section 17 of the Social Services Act. NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) is therefore a key agency. NAV Grünerløkka in Oslo provides advice and guidance on human trafficking to other NAV offices across the country.¹
- The public services in what we often refer to as the asylum track and the reflection track are supplemented by dedicated housing or follow-up support services for presumed victims of human trafficking, operated by voluntary and non-profit organisations or other public support services. Several organisations receive government funding to run safe housing for victims of human trafficking, provide individual follow-up, guidance, courses, work training, etc., including the Crisis Centre Secretariat through ROSA, the Church City Mission (Kirkens Bymisjon), the Salvation Army (Frelsesarmeen), the Marita Foundation (Maritastiftelsen), Caritas Norway, Pro Sentret, Shalam Kristiansand and the Red Cross.
- Presumed victims and their children may also be covered by the services provided by the crisis centres. The Crisis Centre Secretariat, through ROSA, coordinates safe housing with access to necessary assistance and information for presumed victims of human trafficking over the age of 18, through the crisis centres, or in collaboration with other support services and organisations. ROSA also operates the national helpline for victims of human trafficking, 22 33 11 60. The service is available 24/7. The target groups include possible victims of human trafficking (in all forms of exploitation and of all genders), support services, organisations, and private individuals. See rosanorge.no.

¹ NAV Grünerløkka operates a national advisory telephone service on human trafficking and coordinates and runs Human Trafficking Support Oslo (HTSO). HTSO is responsible for providing social services to presumed victims of human trafficking in the municipality of Oslo. HTSO contributes to providing coordinated follow-up services and to strengthening competence within the municipality, in cooperation with other actors in the field. Similar coordination measures exist in some other municipalities.



Exemption from penalties for offenses committed as part of exploitation must be considered

Suspects in cases of, for example, property crime, drug-related crime, labour-related crime, violations of immigration laws, or loan and welfare fraud may themselves be victims of human trafficking and forced to commit crimes as part of their exploitation. Article 26 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings requires states to ensure that victims of human trafficking are not unreasonably subjected to prosecution.

This means that authorities must consider refraining from prosecuting a person for actions committed as part of an exploitation situation. This also applies to administrative measures, such as deportation and expulsion.

In order to uphold the principle of non-punishment, it is crucial that all relevant actors have sufficient competence in identification. The assessment of exemption from penalties is therefore closely linked to the authorities' obligation to identify, assist, and protect victims of human trafficking. The assessment is also related to the authorities' positive obligations to prevent, detect, and prosecute human trafficking. Fewer victims will be willing or able to report to the police or cooperate with the authorities if they fear prosecution themselves.

What does an assessment of exemption from penalties entail?

- Where the authorities become aware of, or should reasonably suspect, human trafficking, the person must be referred to and assessed by competent authorities or a qualified body, such as the human trafficking contact in the police district or in your agency, or support services like ROSA. See the contact list in Part 8.
- The assessment by competent authorities of whether there is a reasonable suspicion of human trafficking is not necessarily binding on the prosecuting authority, the immigration administration, or other regulatory authorities. However, the authorities would need to have clear reasons for reaching a different conclusion, and such justification must be consistent with the definition of human trafficking.
- Prosecution of presumed victims of human trafficking does not, in itself, violate convention obligations, but a comprehensive assessment of the trafficking situation must be carried out, along with a proportionality assessment in relation to the seriousness of the offense.

For more information on the requirements for these assessments, you should seek guidance from specialists in human trafficking within the police, UDI, or other regulatory authorities.

**Offer of assisted return and reintegration**

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) offers presumed victims of human trafficking assisted return and reintegration through the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s return programme for vulnerable migrants. Read more at udi.no/en/return.

When applying for assisted return for minors, UDI must cooperate with the police and child welfare services to assess whether returning the child to their parents or other caregivers is in the child's best interests.

Overview of agencies, support services, and online resources

Public agencies:

The Coordination Unit against Human Trafficking (KOM), Norwegian Police Directorate

- For general guidance on human trafficking, an overview of legislation, and key actors in efforts against human trafficking.
- politiet.no/menneskehandel

Healthcare

- In case of life-threatening illness or injury, call **113** (medical emergency helpline).
- Call the emergency clinic (legevakten) at **116 117** if the person needs other immediate healthcare.
- Information about healthcare rights for foreigners in Norway: helsenorge.no/en/foreigners-in-norway
- See also the Norwegian Directorate of Health's national guide on healthcare services for asylum seekers, refugees, and family reunification, [chapter 6](#) on healthcare for victims of human trafficking.
- The Regional Resource Centres on Violence, Traumatic Stress, and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) provide training to healthcare and care personnel on human trafficking. See rvts.no and the online resource utnyttelse.no.

The Police

- In case of immediate danger, call the police emergency number **112**.
- Call the police at **02800** if the situation is not urgent. Ask to speak with the human trafficking group or expert in the relevant district.
- You can notify the police about possible human trafficking via their [tip page](#).
- politiet.no/en

Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)

- For questions about residence permits, assisted return, operation of asylum reception centres, and expulsion cases, see contact information [here](#) or call UDI's helpline at **23 35 16 00** (10:00–15:00, Monday to Friday).
- Read more about human trafficking at udi.no/human-trafficking
- For information about regulations, visit udiregelverk.no/en
- udi.no/en

Child Welfare Services

- If the person is presumed to be a minor, call the local child welfare services (barnevernet) or the emergency child welfare service (barnevernvakten). See the overview at [Barnevernvakten.no](https://barnevernvakten.no).
- You can also call Alarmtelefonen (the emergency telephone) for children and youth: [116 111](tel:116111).
- Report a concern to child welfare services [here](#).
- For advice and guidance for service providers, call the National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children: 466 15 000, or email: menneskehandel@bufdir.no. You can find more information about the guidance unit [here](#).
- See also the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs' [guide for child welfare services on minor victims of human trafficking](#).

NAV

- For advice and guidance, or for assistance under the Social Services Act for adults who have a reflection period or a limited residence permit for victims of human trafficking, contact the local NAV office (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration).
- NAV Grünerløkka provides advice and guidance on human trafficking to other NAV offices across the country and operates a national advisory telephone service. NAV Grünerløkka also operates Human Trafficking Support Oslo (HTSO), which has city-wide responsibility for such follow-up in the municipality of Oslo. Call **99 47 02 79**, or email: htso@nav.no.
- Read more about human trafficking at nav.no.

Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA)

- SUA is a collaboration between the Labour Inspection Authority, the police, the Norwegian Tax Administration, and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). SUA provides assistance to foreign workers who wish to work in Norway. SUA assists foreign workers, self-employed individuals, family members of foreign workers, or employers of a foreign worker with registration certificates, documentation, residence cards, tax deduction cards, and Norwegian identification numbers. You can find SUA offices in Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, and Kirkenes.
- sua.no/en

Support Centre for Crime Victims

- For assistance and guidance to individuals subjected to violence, sexual assault, or violations of personal freedom, contact the Support Centre for Crime Victims in your police district. The support centre can help you with:
 - information and guidance on filing a police report
 - support throughout the process, from filing the report to the conclusion of the case
 - witness support before, during, and after a potential trial
 - assistance in applying for victim compensation
- Call **800 40 008** (open Monday to Friday, 09:00–15:30).
- politiet.no/kontakt-politiet/stottesenter-for-kriminalitetsutsatte (On the website, you will find information in several languages).

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet) is responsible for ensuring that Norwegian businesses fulfill their responsibilities according to the Working Environment Act and the general application of collective agreements. See their website for more information about their offices and responsibilities.
- The Labour Inspection Authority has a website about rights and obligations in the workplace aimed at foreign workers: arbeidstilsynet.no/en/working-hours-and-organisation-of-work/knowyourrights (available in several languages).
- You can find consolidated information for foreign workers and employers from various Norwegian authorities at workinnorway.no.
- You can report issues in the workplace to the Labour Inspection Authority via their tip page: tips.arbeidstilsynet.no/skjema.
- arbeidstilsynet.no/en

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi)

- For information about settlement, training and skills, such as introduction programmes, interpreting services, diversity work, and equitable public services, visit imdi.no/en.

Support Services and Voluntary/Non-Profit Organisations

ROSA

- For guidance on the identification and assistance of adult presumed victims, call the national helpline for victims of human trafficking, operated by the Crisis Centre Secretariat at ROSA: **22 33 11 60** (24-hour helpline). ROSA stands for Re-establishment, Accommodation, Security, and Assistance. The organisation also coordinates assistance and safe housing for presumed victims through the crisis centres. Safe housing and follow-up support are also offered in collaboration with other support services and organisations.

→ rosanorge.no

Church City Mission Nadheim

- The Church City Mission (Kirkens Bymisjon) Nadheim is a service to people who have experience with selling/exchanging sexual services or are victims of human trafficking. The service is available in Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, and Trondheim. Nadheim works through outreach and provides healthcare, guidance, and individual follow-up. Nadheim Oslo also offers a safe housing facility for presumed victims of human trafficking, Lauras hus. The Bymisjon Centre in Oslo and the Church City Mission in Tromsø also operate services in this field.

→ kirkensbymisjon.no/nadheim-english

The Salvation Army

- The Salvation Army (Frelsesarmeen) has several initiatives aimed at presumed victims of human trafficking. Safe House Filemon in Oslo is a housing facility for men who have been subjected to forced labor or services. Filemon also provides individual guidance, follow-up support, and offers work practice opportunities. The Salvation Army also runs the Migration Centre in Oslo, a low-threshold service aimed at foreign nationals with limited rights in Norway. The centre provides individual guidance and legal advice in several languages. The service is aimed at various target groups, including victims of human trafficking and individuals exploited in the labor market. Additionally, the Salvation Army also conducts prison work (Frelsesarmeens fengselsarbeid), which focuses on identifying, advising, and guiding inmates who may be victims of human trafficking in Norwegian prisons.

→ frelsesarmeen.no

The Marita Foundation

- The Marita Foundation (Maritastiftelsen) conducts outreach work and provides individual guidance and follow-up support to individuals involved in prostitution and presumed victims of human trafficking in Oslo. They operate a night-time drop-in café, offer work practice opportunities, and have a safe housing facility for women who are presumed victims of human trafficking through Marita Women.

→ marita.no

Caritas Norway

- Caritas has resource centres for immigrants in Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Drammen, Tromsø, and Arendal. They provide courses, individual guidance, and legal advice in multiple languages. The service is aimed at various target groups, including victims of human trafficking and individuals exploited in the labour market. Caritas also provides guidance to all newly arrived asylum seekers in Norway, including at the National Arrival Centre in Råde. Additionally, they operate a helpline for Ukrainians in Ukrainian and Russian (open Monday–Thursday, 10:00–16:00): **31 40 23 00**.

→ caritas.no/en/

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Norway

- The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) offers presumed victims of human trafficking assisted return and reintegration through IOM's return program for vulnerable migrants. For information from IOM about the return program and brochures in different languages, visit IOM's website or call **23 10 53 20**.

→ norway.iom.int

Pro Sentret

- Pro Sentret is Oslo Municipality's health and social service provider for persons with experience with selling or trading sex, and it is also a national centre of expertise on prostitution. The centre provides a range of services to the target group, nationwide dissemination of knowledge, and guidance to support services. For information on prostitution and assistance to individuals selling sex, call: **23 10 02 00**.
- prosentret.no/en

Shalam Kristiansand

- Shalam Kristiansand offers a low-threshold service, Shalam Women, for women who sell sexual services. They conduct outreach work and provide individual guidance and follow-up support to individuals involved in prostitution and presumed victims of human trafficking.
- shalam.no/shalam-women

PION – Sex Workers' Interest Organisation in Norway

- PION is a non-profit organisation based in Oslo that advocates for all individuals selling sex in Norway, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual identity, or gender expression. PION works to ensure the health and rights of sex workers and offers legal advice.
- pion-norge.no

The VO-helpline – the Norwegian national helpline for victims of domestic violence and abuse – 116 006

- The VO-helpline (116 006) is a free, 24/7 service available by phone and chat for anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse. The service provides support, information and guidance, and assists in finding appropriate help and measures. The VO-helpline is operated by the Crisis Centre Secretariat (Krisesentersekretariatet) on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Families. The website is available in multiple languages.
- volinjen.no

Red Cross

- The Oslo Red Cross (Røde Kors) offers the Refugee Guide program. This program pairs participants with a migration background with volunteer refugee guides to practice Norwegian, build networks, and become socially included in various areas of society. The program is aimed at multiple target groups, including victims of human trafficking. Other activities and services from the organisation are also available.
- The Red Cross offers the EVA program in Bergen and Stavanger. EVA is designed for foreign women in particularly difficult life situations, who have experienced domestic violence, negative social control, or human trafficking. EVA provides participants with one-on-one contact between a volunteer and a participant, where the aim is for the volunteer to support the participant through a challenging situation.
- rodekors.no

Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers (NOAS)

- NOAS provides asylum seekers with information, guidance, and legal assistance: **22 36 56 60**.
- noas.no

Lightup Norway

- Lightup is an international democratic youth organisation that is politically and religiously independent. In Norway, Lightup focuses primarily on the prevention of human trafficking. They offer young people a platform for their civic engagement against human trafficking and develop reports, campaigns, and digital learning resources to prevent various forms of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- lightup-movement.no

National online resources

Dinutvei – the Norwegian national guide to help services and information on rape, other sexual abuse and violence in close relationships

- This guide ('your way out') provides information on violence in close relationships, rape, and other sexual abuse, as well as information on support services and an online Questions & Answers service about violence and abuse. Dinutvei.no is operated by the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The website is available in several languages.
- dinutvei.no/en

Utnyttelse.no

- This online resource on 'exploitation', utnyttelse.no, is for healthcare and social workers, as well as other professionals who may come into contact with individuals who could be victims of human trafficking. The resource is operated by the Regional Resource Centres on Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention – RVTs.
- utnyttelse.no

International organisations

Council of Europe expert group GRETA

- GRETA (Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) ensures that member states comply with their obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. On the website, you will find information on international obligations, thematic reports on human trafficking, and evaluation reports on Norway.
- coe.int/trafficking

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

- The OSCE is a regional security organisation with its own Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Office of the Special Representative provides assistance to member states with a focus on competence enhancement, capacity building, and research in the field of human trafficking. On the website, you will also find thematic reports on human trafficking and country reports.
- osce.org/combating-human-trafficking

The International Labour Organization (ILO)

- The ILO is responsible for developing, monitoring, and enforcing international labour standards through conventions, recommendations, and guiding documents. The ILO also engages in extensive development cooperation to help member states adopt, implement, and enforce conventions and recommendations. On their website, you will find information on international obligations, as well as global and thematic reports on human trafficking.
- ilo.org/forcedlabour

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

- Within the UN, UNODC holds the primary responsibility for combating human trafficking, with the main responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol. UNODC also assists member states in combating this crime. On their website, you will find information on international obligations, as well as global and thematic reports on human trafficking.
- unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

- The CBSS is a regional cooperation council for the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. CBSS develops and implements projects related to competence development and interdisciplinary cooperation on human trafficking. On their website, you can find information about projects, regional and thematic reports on human trafficking, and guides. CBSS has also developed an online resource that provides guidance on handling cross-border human trafficking cases and offers an overview of cooperation partners in the Baltic Sea region (Transnational Referral Mechanism, bsr-trm.com).
- cbss.org/safe-secure-region/anti-trafficking

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