

## **A summary report mapping the scale of internal trafficking in the UK based on a survey of Barnardo's anti-sexual exploitation and missing services**

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Andrea Marie (Barnardo's Research & Development)  
Paula Skidmore (London Metropolitan University)

### **Context of child sexual exploitation and internal trafficking**

Barnardo's has worked on the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE) for over 10 years and has developed considerable experience in the provision of services to support children and young people at risk. In 2006 Barnardo's produced a report that summarised the working method and effectiveness of these specialist services, placed within the context of the legal and policy priorities in operation throughout the UK (Scott & Skidmore 2006<sup>i</sup>). During the data collection of interview material for the case studies within the 'Reducing the Risk' research, it became evident that young people who had been sexually exploited were often being moved by coercers and exploiters to locations other than their place of residence; the most common experience was of being taken to a nearby city, town or borough where sexual exploitation occurred, followed by the young person being returned to their original location, 1 or 2 days later<sup>ii</sup>.

As a result it was believed to be necessary to focus explicitly on this aspect of CSE which, it will be argued here, is a form of 'internal trafficking' being used by some coercers and exploiters to effect even stronger control over those they abuse. In order to further evidence how widespread such internal trafficking might be, it was decided to conduct a focused survey of Barnardo's services throughout the UK to gather up-to-date information<sup>iii</sup>. This is also necessary as the phenomenon appears to be under-recognised by previous research on CSE and needs to be included in future definitions of the crime<sup>iv</sup>.

Barnardo's continues to develop its understanding of this issue through the monitoring of patterns in our child sexual exploitation and missing services and it is anticipated that this exercise will be repeated in late 2007 in order to assess whether occurrence of internal trafficking amongst our service users is growing.

### **Background to this report**

A telephone survey was carried out between September & November 2006 of all Barnardo's services who may come into contact with children & young people who are sexually exploited. These services are located throughout the Four Nations, in predominantly urban locations. The majority of the services who participated in the survey are specialist anti-sexual exploitation services (for a summary of how these services operate please see Scott & Skidmore 2006). A smaller number of services who work with children who go missing from home or care were also contacted.

The telephone survey used a structured interview schedule to determine:

- 1: The number of services who had **direct knowledge of clients** who had experienced internal trafficking in the **previous 12 months**
  - 2: The number of services who had **direct knowledge of clients** who had experienced internal trafficking in the **previous 3 years**
  - 3: The number of services who had **indirect knowledge** of young people who had experienced internal trafficking in the previous 4 years
- In all cases the services were asked about the number of young people they had supported, who had trafficked them and where to and from.

## **A. The extent of internal trafficking**

### **Response**

18 services were contacted and 16 responded. Nine services had direct knowledge of young people who had been internally trafficked and six services had indirect knowledge of young people who had experienced internal trafficking. Two services had no knowledge of young people being internally trafficked.

In total, 76 young people were identified as internally trafficked in the past 4 years. Barnardo's services had direct knowledge of 47 young people who had been moved for the purpose of sexual exploitation – 42 of these cases occurred in the last 12 months. Many of the services that responded believed that there were many more young people involved in internal trafficking, connected to their clients.

*'For every girl we identify, there are another one or two young girls who are of concern connected with them, but we can only work with 15 young people every 6 months.'*

*'Other even younger children were brought along.'*

*'Very few young people who we work with are not being moved, and those are the ones who are sexually abused, not sexually exploited.'*

### **Personal details**

Out of the 47 young people directly identified, 44 were young women.

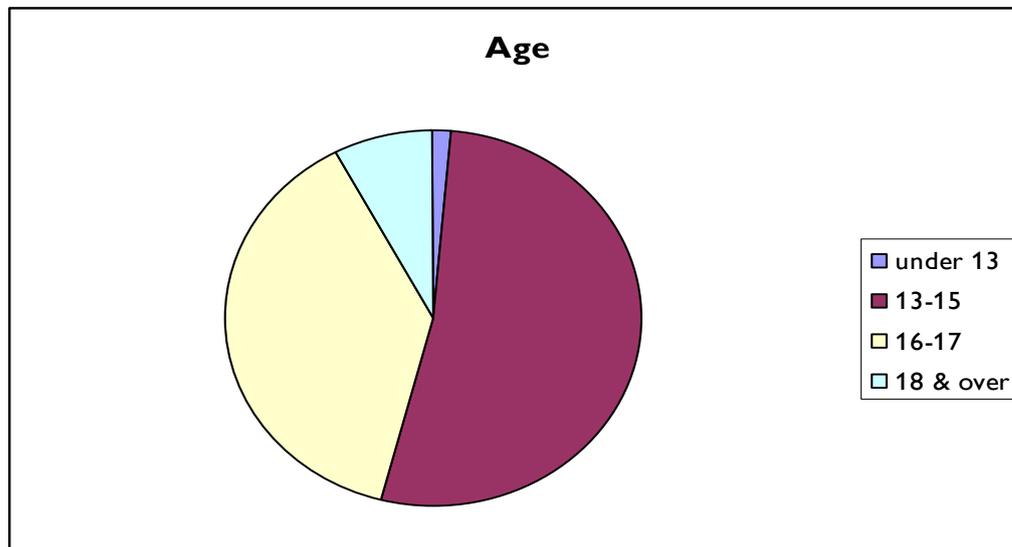
The young people were aged between 12 and 22. Over four fifths of the young people were aged under 18 years old and at least two fifths were under 16. One young woman was possibly aged 12 at the time she was internally trafficked. About a third of the young people were 16. For many young people the incidents of internal trafficking occurred over a sustained period of time.

*'Most of these girls have been abused since they were 13 and occasionally even younger, since which some of them have gone to London.'*

*'The young woman is 19 or 20 now, she was a bit younger at the time, but it has been going on for a number of years.'*

Just under a quarter of the young people were African-Caribbean or dual heritage. Nearly all of these were young women identified by services in the south of England. The rest of the young people were White UK.

Services identified indirectly 29 young people, 26 of whom were young women. All were aged between 13 and 17. About three quarters were under 16. The ethnicity for just over half of these young people was known. There was one Asian young person and one Nigerian young person identified. All the rest were identified as White UK.



### **Movements**

Nearly all of the young people identified directly by the services and three fifths of those identified indirectly were moved/internally trafficked from the local area where the service is based. Most of the other young people were moved from an area near to the locality of the service. For all the young people, the locations where they were moved from were usually their area of residence.

Unlike the young people who the services had direct knowledge of, about a quarter of those identified indirectly were internally trafficked *into* the area where the services are located. This suggests that although services may know of young people moved into their area, they are less likely to work with them directly, even if - as in most of these cases - they are trafficked from only a short distance away.

This may be linked to the nature of the internal trafficking itself, which most services reported involved the young people being moved for relatively short periods of time, predominately evenings and weekends and then returned to their place of residence. The majority of services also said that the young people were moved more than once to the same destination.

*'They all go...regularly for evenings and weekends...the longest they go is for a week.'*

*'They were taken for periods of hours, occasionally they would not return to the next day, but usually it was from 7-8pm to 3-4am [...] It would happen a couple of times a week and then not happen for a while. There was a condensed period of time when the young women were living together in a residential unit when it happened a lot.'*

One service spoke of the young people,

*'...to-ing and fro-ing. They go for less than a week. They tend to go to the same places; they go more than once, for the evening, a few days up to a week.'*

This also suggests that the identification of internally trafficked young people is dependent upon the services' proximity to the young people's area of residence.

*'The reason we have so many cases in [names London Borough] is because the [social services] lead [on sexual exploitation] there is so proactive [in identifying young people who have been sexually exploited].'*

*'Most of the kids are from [names City], it's local kids who are moved around.'*



\* The young people internally trafficked from Yorkshire were trafficked from Hull, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield.

Nearly half of the young people identified directly were internally trafficked to London. On all but one occasion, they were moved there from the South of England. Almost half of those for whom London was the destination were also moved around within South London boroughs; the rest were moved from Southampton and Bristol.

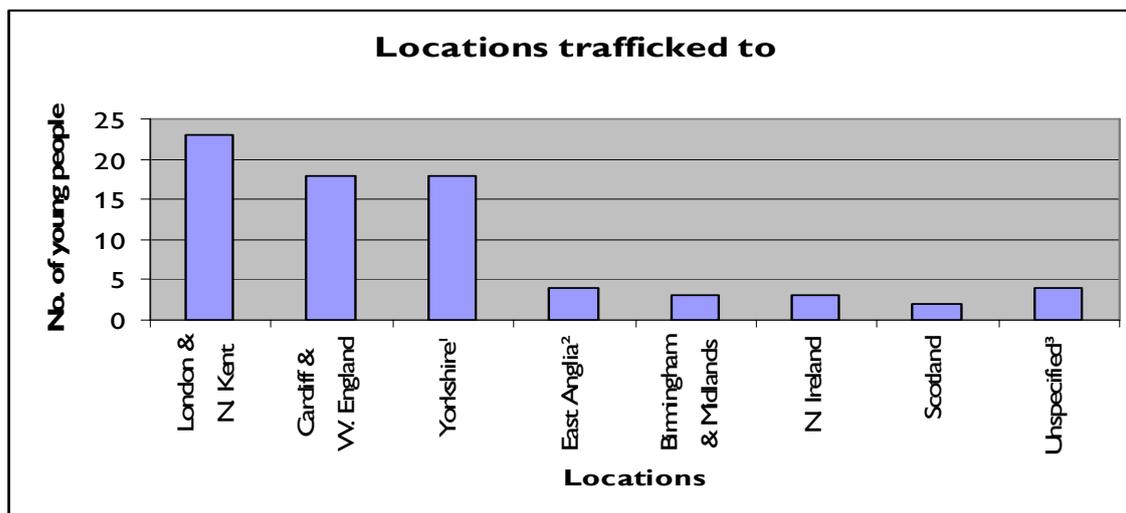
*'There is a complexity in London; the young people often move between boroughs.'*

Barnardo's services identified internal trafficking within Yorkshire and Lancashire, particularly from Hull to Leeds and around Bradford. Sheffield was named as a destination by two services, one of which was the Birmingham service. This service also identified young people being moved short distances from Birmingham to other places in the Midlands.

*'They were all taken from their home area – an eastern suburb of Birmingham, one taken to Coventry, one to Sheffield and one to Derby.'*

Barnardo's services also identified incidents of internal trafficking from within Wales to Cardiff and to nearby English cities of Bristol, Birmingham and Blackpool.

From Middlesbrough to Norwich was the furthest distance that young people had been regularly moved. There was another individual incident of a young person being moved to East Anglia, identified by the service in Merseyside.



<sup>1</sup> Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield were the most regular destinations but a number of young people in this category were possibly also moved to Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester and Oldham.

<sup>2</sup> The young people internally trafficked to Norwich from Middlesbrough were possibly also moved to Bradford and Scarborough, although Norwich was named as the main destination. One young person in this category was moved to Ipswich.

<sup>3</sup> These young people were internally trafficked from Scotland – see below for more details.

Barnardo's services identified close links between Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as identifying young people being moved within each country itself. The general movement was from places in Scotland or the north of England, such as Dunblane, Dundee and Newcastle, to Glasgow, as well as from Glasgow to Edinburgh, London or Belfast and other places in Northern Ireland. Young people were also thought to be moved from Northern Ireland to Scotland by boat.

*'People go by boat from Northern Ireland to Scotland and say that they are going to see the football matches – Celtic and Rangers.'*

Young people were reported to be moved about Belfast to places that they did not know in taxis paid for by older men. One service spoke of the dangers of young people being moved around Belfast,

*'because of the political situation in Northern Ireland there is no reason to go from east to west Belfast.'*

## **B. The nature of internal trafficking**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (sections 58-60) makes it an offence to intentionally arrange or facilitate the movement of a person either across international borders or within the UK for the purposes of committing an offence by:

- Paying for the sexual services of a child (s.49)
- Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography (s.50)
- Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography (s.51)
- Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography (s.52)

The *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000* (sometimes referred to as 'The Palermo Protocol') entered into force on 31 December 2003<sup>9</sup>. It applies to both international and domestic trafficking and provides the following definition of trafficking in persons:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include...the exploitation of the prostitution of the others or other forms of exploitation (Article 3, Page 3).

Barnardo’s services identified instances of internal trafficking by all of these means and examples are outlined below.

### **Trafficking by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion**

Some services reported that the young people were subject to sexual violence and controlled through drugs and alcohol.

*‘[They were subjected to] group sexual assault, and group rape, being locked in premises, picked up by unknown adults, being drugged and left on the street, injured and sometimes OD-ed.’*

*‘They were given drugs and alcohol and raped.’*

*‘They were requiring emergency contraception; they were bruised and had had drugs and alcohol.’*

In some cases rape seems to have been used as an ‘initiation’ after which the young people were sexually exploited.

*‘Some girls went with other girls and got raped and now they are being sexually exploited.’*

### **Trafficking by means of abduction**

Barnardo’s services identified several cases of trafficking by means of abduction. These cases involved the young women being taken to off-street locations, such as private houses or flats, brothels, saunas or massage parlours. In some cases, services described young women being taken in cars or taxis paid for by the perpetrators.

*'She was locked in a room for several days.'*

*'She was taken to a brothel, she wasn't free to leave.'*

*'She escaped by climbing out of a window, she didn't go back but they followed her.'*

Cases that involved the young women being internally trafficked by means of abduction by family members, of at least some of the young women involved, were also reported. These cases involved the young women being taken in cars or taxis paid for by the perpetrators. In one case the perpetrators were thought to work in the police force.

### **Trafficking by means of fraud or deception**

Other young people were internally trafficked by means of fraud or deception. Sometimes this was explicit when the exploiters moved the young people under false pretences.

*'They go to [names City] thinking that they are going to a party and end up being sexually exploited.'*

*'They are asked to meet the boyfriend's relatives or friends; some talked about being raped or gang raped. They were plied with alcohol or drugs and expected to perform all sorts of sexual favours.'*

According to many of Barnardo's services, internal trafficking by means of deception often involves the perpetrators befriending the young people and posing as their boyfriend, in order to groom them for sexual exploitation.

*'They are functioning as their boyfriends; they meet the young people in public places and exchange numbers.'*

*'They were groomed first.'*

*'She was groomed from the age of 13 by a schedule one offender, a known pimp in [names City], for many years.'*

*'Some girls were known to be groomed at a massage parlour in [names City].'*

Nearly all of Barnardo's services thought that the internal traffickers worked in groups, sometimes involved in criminal networks. However, the services that reported a link with crime said that, although the groups were known for criminal offences, these did not include sexual offences such as trafficking or sexual exploitation of a child.

*'Most of the men are known for drugs and guns, they are not known for child sex offences, they are more known for petty crimes, not paying for petrol, shop lifting and drugs.'*

Three services in the south of England spoke of networks of African-Caribbean men, whereas others services described Middle Eastern men from a 'tight asylum seeking community' and an organised group of local Asian men. A lot of the services described the groups of men as 'young' or in their 20s.

Some services knew that the internal traffickers were involved in, or had previously been involved in, exploitative relationships with more than one young woman.

*'They have a relationship with one and are involved with others.'*

*'They have the same abusers.'*

*'They are linked to the same brothel.'*

The exploiters connections with the locations and routes of internal trafficking also point towards this end:

*'They are guys from London who live in [names City] with links to London.'*

Services spoke about internally trafficked young women putting pressure on peers to come with them to locations where they were then raped and possibly sexually exploited.

*'They are coerced by another young woman abused via sexual exploitation - encouraging others [to go to London] who are raped at weekends, on more than one occasion.'*

### **Trafficking by means of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability**

The fact that most of the young people identified by each service were linked shows the internal traffickers practice of 'targeting' a specific group of vulnerable young people. This is the first stage of what Barnardo's has previously identified as 'the grooming process' used by exploiters to exert power and control over young people<sup>vi</sup>. Barnardo's services identified young people being linked because they were 'from children's homes'; 'some go to the same pupil referral unit'; 'three are in psychiatric wards and two are in secure units.'

Although services were not directly asked whether the young people they identified were looked-after, many spoke about this as being the case.

*'The young people we deal with are usually in care so when they go missing, alarm bells don't go off because they go missing all the time, for weeks at a time.'*

*'It is about a ratio of 50:50 young people who are in care, and if they are not in care, once they are identified they are.'*

Another service spoke about their concern for the young people:

*'We are concerned about their sexual vulnerability.'*

Young people often do not recognise that they are being exploited because of the emotional manipulation involved in the grooming process and the power and control exerted over them in order to sexually exploit them. One such method is isolating the young people from their friendship networks in order to increase their dependency on the exploiter. One service outlined such a scenario:

*'He slept with all her friends, so she fell out with her friends.'*

### **Trafficking by means of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person**

A lot of the young people are drawn into, and maintained in, exploitative relationships and situations because of the perceived 'benefits' associated with their relationship with their exploiter. This often begins by the exploiter forming friendships and 'loving relationships' with the young people, giving them significant attention and affection.

*'She loves him...she got pregnant [by him].'*

One service identified that many young people were involved in dealing or consuming drugs, possibly introduced to them by their exploiters as part of the grooming process. Other services spoke of the young people having money or other goods when they returned from being moved.

*'They have unaccounted for goods, electric goods, money or drugs.'*

*'Two young women were offered holidays [abroad].'*

Other times it is other adult men who 'consent' on behalf of the young person for others to have control over them. These adults were described as the young person's 'boyfriend/pimp,' a group of adult men or family members.

*'I surmise their boyfriends are being paid.'*

*'They were marketed by the gang for a variety of sexual favours with the money going to the gang members.'*

*'There was money changing hands – money to the people who brought the children.'*

## **Conclusion**

The Sexual Offences Act (2003) has made trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation an offence punishable with a prison sentence up to 14 years. In their 2000 report Kelly and Regan identified the need for such a crime of sexual exploitation to be created<sup>vii</sup>. However, they also recommended a change in the police response to trafficked women and children.

So far no one has been convicted for internal trafficking in the UK. This is not least because of the unwillingness of internally trafficked victims to come forward and the reliance of the police on responding reactively to the issue when a complaint is

made. Kelly and Regan (2000) outlined a proactive framework, that includes monitoring off-street prostitution and intelligence led investigations, and does not rely on victims to approach the police for protection. This scenario is particularly unlikely in the case of young people being groomed for sexual exploitation, when they consider their abuser to be their 'boyfriend'. Services interviewed for this report identified the internal traffickers as being known to the police for their involvement with local crime but not for child sex offences, which would indicate a need for intelligence gathering in this area.

For this survey, out of 16 Barnardo's services that responded, 9 had direct knowledge and 6 services had indirect knowledge of young people who had experienced internal trafficking. Only 2 Barnardo's services had no knowledge of young people being internally trafficked.

In total, 76 young people were identified as internally trafficked in the past 4 years. Barnardo's services had direct knowledge of 47 young people who had been moved for the purpose of sexual exploitation – 42 of these cases occurred in the last 12 months. Many of the services that responded believed that there were many more young people involved in internal trafficking, connected to their clients.

The examples detailed above show that, according to the definition of the Palermo Protocol, Barnardo's services have identified cases that display the conditions of trafficking by means of –

- the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion;
- abduction;
- fraud or deception;
- the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability;
- the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

It is argued here that the use of the term 'internal trafficking' is therefore appropriate to use to describe sexual exploitation cases such as these.

From the evidence gathered here it appears that the tactic of moving young people from one location to another in the UK through the method of internal trafficking, is a core technique adopted by many adults who seek to sexually exploit children. Much of this behaviour has to be seen within the context of the sexually exploitative relationships that young women in particular are subjected to by men who portray themselves as their 'boyfriends', but who exert significant power and control over them, and, often simultaneously, other young women<sup>viii</sup>. This form of child sexual exploitation has been previously researched and described fully elsewhere by Barnardo's<sup>ix</sup>. However criminal justice action against the perpetrators of internal trafficking continues to be absent or insufficient, despite the legal and policy reforms of recent years in the UK.

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<sup>i</sup>Scott, S. & Skidmore, P. (2006) *Reducing the Risk; Barnardo's support for sexually exploited young people; A two year evaluation* (Barnardo's, Barkingside) – available to download from [www.barnardos.org.uk/reducingtherisk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/reducingtherisk).

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ii There were a smaller number of incidents where young people were moved considerable distances e.g. 100 miles plus, over a longer time period.

iii The authors gratefully acknowledge funding from the European Commission's 'Agis Programme' that enabled this survey to be conducted. An earlier draft version of the findings from this report was made available to the UKHTC through consultation with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service in October 2006.

iv Pearce's (2002) *It's someone taking a part of you; a study of young women and sexual exploitation* (NCB; London) is a notable exception here; the connection between abduction, rape and sexual exploitation is highlighted in the experiences of 16 of the young women who engaged in the research.

v United Nations (2000) *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (Palermo; Italy) under the United Nations Convention Against Organised Crime which came into force on the 23 September 2003. The United Kingdom was a signatory to the Convention but only ratified the Protocol on Trafficking in February 2006.

vi Swann, S. 'A model for understanding abuse through prostitution' in Barnardo's (1998) *Whose Daughter Next?* (Barnardo's; Barkingside)

vii Kelly, L and Regan, L. (2000) *Stopping Traffic: Exploring the extent of, and responses to, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in the UK*, Policy Research Series Paper 125 (Home Office, London).

viii It is important to note that coercive sexually exploitative relationships that target young men in a similar way to those focused on young women, have also been previously identified (see Scott, S. & Skidmore, P. 2006 and Lillywhite, R. & Skidmore, P. 2006 'Boys are not sexually exploited? A challenge to practitioners' *Child Abuse Review* Vol. 15, Issue 5, pp351 - 361.

ix Harper, Z. & Scott, S. (2005) *Meeting the needs of sexually exploited young people in London* (Barnardo's, Barkingside); Scott, S. & Skidmore, P. (2006) *Reducing the Risk; Barnardo's support for sexually exploited young people; A two year evaluation* (Barnardo's, Barkingside).