

# ONE MINUTE GUIDE:

## Submitting a referral to the National Referral Mechanism

### What is the National Referral Mechanism?

The [National Referral Mechanism](#) is the national framework for identifying and referring victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. The Single Competent Authority (SCA) administers it, which is part of the Home Office.

### What is a 'First Responder'?

The people who can make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism are known as 'first responders'. Some statutory and non-statutory organisations are designated as 'first responders'. A full list of organisations authorised as 'first responders' can be found [here](#).

You can still report modern slavery if you are not a first responder via the helpline on 0800 0121 700 or [report it online](#) via [modernslaveryhelpline.org](http://modernslaveryhelpline.org)

### When do I notify the Home Office?

If you have 'a reasonable cause to believe that you may have encountered a victim of Modern Slavery' then you must notify the Home Office.

There are two elements to consider:

1. The threshold for acting on concerns that someone may be a victim of Modern Slavery is LOW. You do not need to know, believe, or have evidence - suspicion alone is sufficient.
2. Modern Slavery is a serious crime and victims are likely to suffer or have suffered significant harm. The information in the notification to the Home Office should therefore reflect the gravity of these concerns.

### How do I notify the Home Office?

North Yorkshire and City of York are currently taking part in a pilot of devolved decision Making. This means that decisions about whether a child has been subjected to modern slavery or human trafficking are made locally by a Multi-agency National Referral Mechanism panel. North Yorkshire and York operate their own National Referral Mechanism panels, however both are supported and overseen by joint National Referral Mechanism co-ordinators. North Yorkshire One Minute guide can be viewed [here](#).

(Insert North Yorkshire One minute guide)

## How do I refer a child into the National Referral Mechanism Panel?

If you are a first responder and you suspect you have a child who may have been victim of modern slavery you should speak to your manager and then contact the National Referral Mechanism Coordinator via email at [NRM@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:NRM@northyorks.gov.uk)

The National Referral Mechanism Coordinator will then guide you through the process of taking you through the National Referral Mechanism Panel process. They will also support you in determining whether a referral to the [Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service \(ICTG\)](#), delivered through Barnardo's is required.

### What should I include in the National Referral Mechanism Referral?

A National Referral Mechanism referral maybe the starting point of an investigation of a serious criminal offence by the Police. Time and care should therefore be taken when completing the referral. The NRM Coordinator will help you create the referral. However you should consider:

1. The definition of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking as per the 'Palermo Protocol' below. This is the definition the panel will use to decide if a child is a victim of modern slavery or not.
2. Of note, Part B (The Means) is not relevant to a child's National Referral Mechanism decision making. This is because a child cannot consent to their own exploitation. So, for the purpose of the National Referral Mechanism pilot, the panel only need to consider Part A and Part C.

### Human Trafficking and/or Kidnap for Ransom

The Action (Part A)	The Means (Part B)	The Purpose (Part C)
Recruitment	Fraud	Sexual exploitation
Transportation	Coercion	Forced labour
Transfer	Abduction	Forced criminality
Harbouring	Abuse of power	Removal of organs
Receipt	Threat or use of force	Servitude
	Abuse of a position of vulnerability	Slavery
	Deception etc.	

3. Introduce the child and provide the background and any relevant local context e.g. whether the child is in care, known to smoke cannabis, has previous arrests for shoplifting, or regularly truants from school etc. Setting the scene may highlight vulnerabilities and potential key indicators of exploitation.
4. Clearly articulate your concerns. Remember the National Referral Mechanism panel is about identifying victims of exploitation. If there are gaps in your knowledge, consider whether you need more information before submitting the referral.
5. Provide the rationale to support your concerns. What information leads you to believe the individual is being exploited? Consider indicators of exploitation; relevant Police or Partnership information, disclosures from the child or from 3rd parties; circumstances of any Arrests or incidents.
6. The National Referral Mechanism should be bespoke to the child's circumstances and should only contain cut and paste information when it is directly relevant, clearly contextualised, and appropriately referenced to its original source.
7. Use the full names of other individuals linked to the child. All National Referral Mechanism referrals are passed to the Police for investigation, so full names, addresses etc. are required.

## **What is the City of York National Referral Mechanism Panel?**

The National Referral Mechanism Panel is a fortnightly virtual panel made up of senior managers from a number of key partner agencies including North Yorkshire Police, Children's Social Care, Health, Youth Justice Services, and the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship (ICTG) Service.

The aim of the panel is to ensure there is consistent multi-agency decision-making and robust planning in respect of children who are, or may have been subjected to Modern Slavery.

The panel takes place on a Monday morning usually starting at 10am

Before your referral reached the panel, the National Referral Mechanism panel co-ordinators will screen your referral and submit this to the Single Competent Authority (SCA). The Single Competent Authority will then return the referral back to the local panel for decision making.

The panel may hear the information surrounding what has happened to a child at two points:

1. Stage one: Reasonable Grounds (RG): “*Reasonable grounds to believe that a child is a victim of Human Trafficking, Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour or Kidnap for Ransom*”

As well as decision making about whether an individual is a victim of trafficking, a National Referral Mechanism referral maybe the starting point of an investigation of a serious criminal offence by the Police.

2. Stage Two: Conclusive Grounds (CG) is the second decision the panel is required to make. A Conclusive Grounds decision is made when, ' *On the balance of probabilities*', a child is a victim of modern slavery.

If sufficient information is known at the Reasonable Grounds Decision meeting, both decisions can be made at the same time. If further information is needed, a further National Referral Mechanism meeting will be scheduled to make the final Conclusive Grounds decision.

The Reasonable Grounds decision needs to be made 45 calendar days after the pilot site receives the referral. The Conclusive decision needs to be made 45 calendar days after the Reasonable decision is served (90 days after the referral is received).

\*Decisions made by the panel will be subject to Quality Assurance checks by the Single Competent Authority

## **What does the outcome of the National Referral Mechanism mean for a child/young person?**

### **Stage I – The Reasonable Grounds decision:**

If the National Referral Mechanism Panel reaches a ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision this means that the panel:

“*Suspect but cannot prove that the child is a victim of Human Trafficking, Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour or Kidnap for Ransom*”

If a ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision is reached, there is enough information to investigate.

Once a RG decision has been made, the police force in the area where the crime has been

committed will be contacted by the Single Competent Authority and a crime will be recorded and investigated by the police to establish, whether or not the child is the victim of modern slavery.

*(Remember: the National Referral Mechanism runs alongside established safeguarding processes, it does not replace them)*

The investigating officer will be provided with the contact details of the person who submitted the notification and is expected to liaise with them around how to best engage the young person and obtain any updates that might be helpful for the investigation.

## **Stage 2 – Conclusive Grounds Decision**

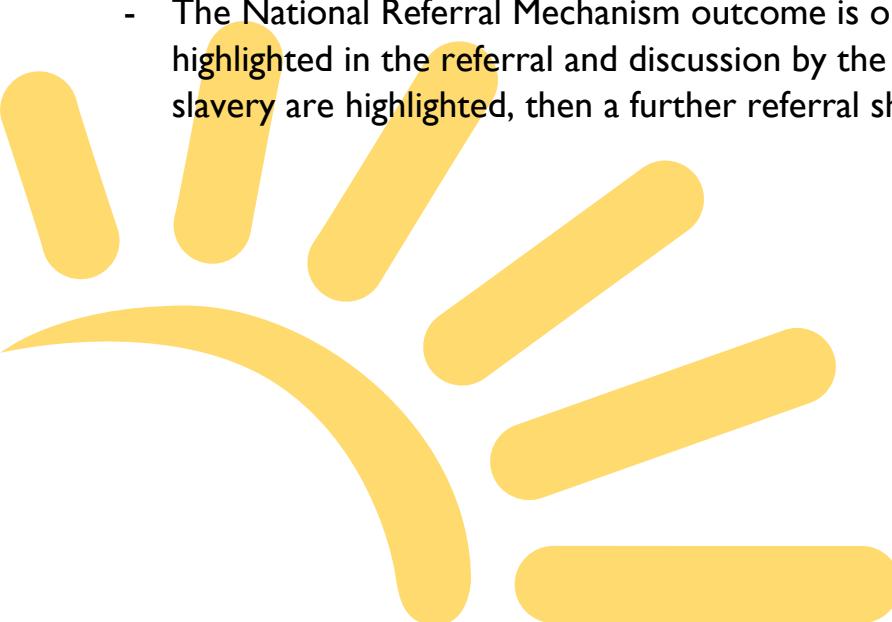
If the panel make a Conclusive Grounds decision, it is decided that '*on the balance of probabilities*', there is sufficient information to decide that the individual is a victim of modern slavery.

A Conclusive Grounds decision provides official recognition (based on the civil burden of proof), that a child is/was a victim of exploitation at that 'moment of time'. It does not confer any other automatic rights or benefits.

If the panel decide within the first meeting that it is possible to make both a Reasonable Grounds and Conclusive Grounds decision, then the Police Force will be contacted by the Single Competent Authority and a crime will be recorded and investigated by the Police to establish, if a crime has been committed.

### **Please note:**

- It is important that the child and their family are informed about the process and any outcome of the National Referral Mechanism.
- The National Referral Mechanism doesn't replace safeguarding referrals or processes but acts to work alongside.
- The National Referral Mechanism outcome is only relevant to the specific incident highlighted in the referral and discussion by the panel. If further concerns about modern slavery are highlighted, then a further referral should be made.



## Where do I go for further information?

Please visit the [\*\*Partnership website\*\*](#) for up to date information and latest news.

Please also sign up to the [\*\*Partnership Newsletter\*\*](#)

