

TOOLKIT FOR  
DISCUSSING

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXPLOITATION

WITH  
(FORMER)  
ASYLUM  
SEEKERS



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## Colophon

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# Reader's guide

**Fact sheets: Key Human Trafficking messages per theme ►**

**Checklist for embedding human trafficking information ►**

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## **2 Discussing human trafficking ►**

Concrete tools for discussing human trafficking with migrants; key messages; overview of available materials.

## **3 Human trafficking information per theme ►**

How can you integrate information about human trafficking in existing information provision moments about themes including General safety; Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety; Working in the Netherlands; Future orientation; Targeted information provision about human trafficking.

## **4 Handling a suspicion of human trafficking ►**

How can you handle a suspicion or disclosure of human trafficking: referral options; available help and more information.

## **5 Involving colleagues ►**

Practical tips for promoting this toolkit and increasing awareness of human trafficking among colleagues and partners.

## **6 More information ►**

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# *Factsheets:* **Key Human Trafficking messages per theme**

**Certain standard themes are very suitable for including information about human trafficking. We have incorporated these themes in fact sheets, intended for staff and volunteers working with (former) asylum seekers from the age of 12. You can use these fact sheets during personal conversations or group presentations on one of the following themes:**

1. General Safety
2. Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety
3. Working in the Netherlands
4. Future orientation and irregular stay

Discussing human trafficking can be complicated and requires culture-sensitivity. Please refer to **chapter 2** for tips about conducting conversations.

The fact sheets can also be downloaded and printed from **[www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit)**. Here you will also find the original Dutch text and supporting materials.



# 01 General Safety

*See explanation in paragraph 3.2*

## Relevant key messages

- Do you feel unsafe? **Ask your contact person for help.** Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) can always seek out their mentor and Nidos guardian. Your safety comes first, the information is **treated confidentially** as much as possible.
- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under **bad circumstances**. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- There are **many types** of exploitation: examples include being forced to work in i.e. catering or horticulture, prostitution or begging. We also refer to exploitation when someone is forced to engage in criminal acts (such as stealing or selling drugs), to sell his or her organs, or to work in a household under very bad conditions.
- Someone may seem friendly at first, but then quickly change attitude. If someone **uses the relationship** to put pressure on you to do things you really do not want to do and subsequently profits from this, then that may be exploitation.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone: men, women and children.
- People who do not know the Netherlands well are at **greater risk**, because they do not speak the language, do not have a social network and are looking for ways to earn an income.
- People are sometimes offered help to travel to another country without the right papers (**people smuggling**), but the ultimate intention is actually for them to be exploited over there.
- Have you **spotted warning signs, or are you concerned** about someone? Discuss it with a contact person.
- 1-1-2 is the European **emergency number** for life-threatening situations. No rush: call the police via 0900-8844.
- Victims of a crime (such as exploitation) are entitled to **protection from the police and assistance from a lawyer**. The lawyer is usually free of charge.

## **Recognise the warning signs!**

For example:

- >> An offer for work sounds too good to be true.
- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.
- >> Someone tries to stop you talking to other people.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone else manages your money, you have to hand over your income to someone else, or you have to pay off a debt.
- >> Someone asks you to do things you really do not want to do.

## **Take precautions!**

For example:

- >> Meet in a public place when you are going to meet someone for the first time.
- >> Make sure you know where you are and pass the address on to someone you trust.
- >> Discuss any doubts with someone you trust. You can turn to a contact person with any questions or problems.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Leave or ask for help if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- >> Organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.

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# 02

## Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety

*See explanation in paragraph 3.3*

### Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone **earns money** by forcing someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- Exploitation **occurs in the Netherlands too** and it can literally happen to anyone.
- Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands **under certain conditions**. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.
- No one is allowed to **force** you into a relationship or to have sex. You can always say no.
- Someone may seem friendly at first and give you lots of attention, but may actually have **bad intentions**. If someone puts pressure on you to do things you do not want to do, such as have sex with someone, and is benefiting from this, then this might be exploitation. Even if this happens within a relationship.
- Be careful with sharing **nude images** of yourself. It is very common for people to be blackmailed as a result of naughty images which were only intended for a boy- or girlfriend. Ask for help, possibly from your contact person, if someone tries to put pressure on you like this.
- If an adult makes a **minor** do wrong things, it is usually not the minor's fault.
- Do you feel unsafe? Are you forced to do things you do not want to do? **Ask your contact person for help**. Your safety comes first and information is treated confidentially as much as possible.



**Young people are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and therefore receive extra protection.** Example: anyone below the age of 21 is not allowed to work in the sex industry.

## **Recognise the warning signs!**

For example:

- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.
- >> Someone asks you to do things you really do not want to do.
- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone tries to stop you talking to other people.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone else manages your money, you have to give your income to someone else, or you have to pay off a debt.
- >> The working or living conditions are unsafe or bad.

## **Take precautions!**

For example:

- >> Meet in a public place when you are going to meet someone for the first time.
- >> Make sure you know where you are and pass the address on to someone you trust.
- >> Make sure you know how to use social media safely and pay attention to who you are talking to.
- >> Discuss any doubts with someone you trust. You can turn to a contact person with any questions or problems.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Leave or ask for help if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.





# 03 Working in the Netherlands

*See explanation in paragraph 3.4*

## Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- There are **many types of exploitation**: examples include being forced to work in the catering industry or horticulture.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone. As a migrant you will run an increased risk of violation of your labour rights and labour exploitation, because you are new to the country.
- You have **the same labour rights** as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit. The minimum wage in the Netherlands is 9 euro per hour for adults aged 22 and above. The minimum wage is lower for younger people.
- Take precautions against labour exploitation.
- Know your rights! You may be used to less protection, but the **Dutch standards** apply in the Netherlands. A combination of violations of your rights can be seen as labour exploitation.
- Is your employer treating you badly, are you not getting paid enough and are you being threatened so you will not leave? Know where you can go if your **worker's rights have been violated**. Confide in a contact person.



**Know your labour rights!** For example: the minimum wage in the Netherlands; a working week of a maximum of 45 hours; right to holidays / days off; right to a holiday allowance; right to sick leave.

## Know when your employer is mistreating you!

For example:

- >> Being paid too little or deferred pay.
- >> Working (extremely) long days.
- >> No breaks / days off / holidays.
- >> No protective clothing.
- >> Having to perform hazardous / unhealthy work.
- >> Threat or use of verbal / physical violence or blackmail or coercion.
- >> Being paid informally, not being insured against accidents.
- >> Living on the company premises, or being poorly accommodated in some other way.

## Take precautions!

For example:

- >> Take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.
- >> Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.
- >> Make sure a work contract is in place and have your own copy in a language you understand.
- >> Keep track of the hours you have worked, keep documentation about work arrangements and take photos or videos of the working conditions. This will ensure you have the appropriate evidence to still get what you are entitled to (even if you do not have a contract!) at a later stage.
- >> Organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.



**Even if the working conditions are not yet serious enough to be seen as exploitation, it can still be useful to ask for help.**

For example, if the employer does not comply with payment agreements. FairWork can help to recover any outstanding wages.



**Minors receive even more protection!** You can work for up to 40 hours from the age of 16. You cannot work night shifts or carry out dangerous work if you are under the age of 18.



# 04

## Future orientation and irregular stay

*See explanation in paragraph 3.5*

### Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone. You will particularly run a risk of exploitation if you do not get a residence permit, as you can end up in a vulnerable position when you decide to travel on, or when you are looking for a job.
- You have the **same labour rights** as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit. The minimum wage in the Netherlands is 9 euro per hour for adults aged 22 and above. The minimum wage is lower for younger people.
- Is your employer treating you badly, are you not getting paid enough and are you being threatened so you will not leave? **Confide in a contact person.** Or approach an organisation which can help you, such as CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.
- Travelling on: People are sometimes offered help to travel to another country without the right papers (**people smuggling**), but the ultimate intention is actually for them to be exploited over there.
- Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands **under certain conditions**. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.
- People without residence permits also **have the right to report a crime** to the police without being detained. It is advisable to take someone with you when you go to the police. You can also report a crime anonymously.
- People who are victims of a crime (such as exploitation) are entitled to protection from the **police and assistance from a lawyer**. The lawyer is usually free of charge.
- The European **emergency number** is 1-1-2. No rush: call the police via 0900-8844.

## Recognise the warning signs!

For example:

- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.

## Know when your employer is mistreating you!

For example:

- >> Being paid too little or deferred pay.
- >> Working (extremely) long days.
- >> The working or living conditions are unsafe or bad.
- >> Threat or use of verbal / physical violence or blackmail or coercion.

## Take precautions!

For example:

- >> Take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.
- >> Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Keep track of the hours you have worked, keep documentation about work arrangements and take photos or videos of the working conditions. This will ensure you have the appropriate evidence to still get what you are entitled to (even if you do not have a contract!) at a later stage.
- >> Take contact details with you for organisations you can turn to for help and advice, like CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.



**Even if you do not have a residence permit, you still have certain human rights.** These include labour rights like the minimum wage in the Netherlands and the right to report a crime to the police. See [www.basicrights.nl](http://www.basicrights.nl) for more information about these rights and organisations which can help.

# Checklist

## embedding human trafficking information

Are key messages regarding human trafficking structurally embedded in information sessions and/or conversations with asylum seekers at the location where you work? Use this checklist to verify and to discuss with colleagues and partner organisations. Also consider a possible role for external providers, such as schools (information about loverboys/online safety) or organisations that run activities at your location. The checklist can be printed via [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit).

<i>Key message</i>	<i>Embedded: yes/no</i>	<i>Yes: Who does this?</i>	<i>No: Who is going to do this?</i>
<b>Preventing exploitation</b>			
Explanation of exploitation			
Forms of exploitation			
Methods of human traffickers			
Exploitation is prohibited			
<b>Risk of exploitation</b>			
Exploitation also occurs in the Netherlands and can happen to anyone			
People who do not know the Netherlands well are at greater risk			
If you do not get a residence permit, you will particularly run a risk of exploitation			
People smuggling can turn into exploitation			

<b>Staying safe/preventing exploitation</b>			
Recognise the warning signs (see fact sheets per theme)			
Take precautions (see fact sheets per theme)			
The European emergency number is 1-1-2; No rush: 0900 – 88 44			
<b>Healthy relationships/sexual exploitation</b>			
No one is allowed to force you into a relationship or to have sex. You can always say no.			
Loverboy tactics			
Be careful with sharing nude images of yourself.			
If an adult makes a minor do wrong things, it is usually not the minor's fault.			
Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands under certain conditions. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.			
<b>Labour rights/labour exploitation</b>			
You have the same labour rights (for example, the minimum wage) as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit.			
Minors are entitled to more protection and are not permitted to, for example, work night shifts or carry out dangerous work.			
Looking for a job? Take precautionary measures against labour exploitation.			
The Dutch standards may be different to those in your own country. Know when your employer is mistreating you.			
<b>Help available to victims</b>			
Do you feel unsafe? Are you forced to do things you do not want to do? Is your employer treating you badly? Ask your contact person for help.			
Safe declaration: people without a residence permit are have the right to report a crime to the police. It is advisable to take someone with you.			
People who have been subjected to exploitation are entitled to help and assistance from a lawyer.			

# *Introduction*

## **Why this toolkit?**

Asylum seekers are vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. This applies both to the group who are given asylum status, as well as to the group who have had their applications rejected; and to minors and adults. Insufficient awareness about the risks and rights will increase the vulnerability of (former) asylum seekers<sup>1</sup>. Victims of exploitation often do not know where to go for help.



In this toolkit, we refer to the terms human trafficking and exploitation interchangeably. We advise to avoid the word 'human trafficking' when talking to the target audience ([see paragraph 2.1](#)).

Working directly with migrants in the asylum sector and reception centres, you are in regular contact with residents and young people. This allows you to play an important role in making them more resilient against human trafficking. This toolkit is intended to assist you with this. It includes information and practical guidance to convey the key messages on trafficking. This toolkit is focussed on providing information to residents and young people aged twelve and above. Information specifically intended for minors is indicated with a child icon.

The toolkit is part of the 'STEP' project, a collaboration between the Netherlands Red Cross, Central Agency for the reception of asylum seekers (COA), Refugee Council Netherlands (VWN), CoMensha and Nidos, partly financed by the European Union. The reason for the toolkit was the increased number of signs that asylum seekers fall victim to human trafficking whilst on route to, and after arriving in, the Netherlands. The project partners feel responsible for protecting the people under their care. This can be done by increasing awareness among staff working in the asylum sector, but particularly also among the asylum seekers themselves.

The target audience's information needs are at the basis of this toolkit. In focus groups, asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking discussed how they would have liked to be informed about human trafficking. They indicated that information is required on a structural basis and benefits from repetition. This can be realised by integrating information about exploitation in existing information sessions and personal conversations. By linking to broader themes of interest such as work or (online) safety, the information becomes more relevant to the audience and thus easier to remember. We have therefore developed themed fact sheets which you can use during the conversations.

Human trafficking experts, mentors, guardians, counsellors and volunteers from e.g. COA, Nidos, VWN, UASC reception centres and migrant organisations have all recognised the importance of information provision on human trafficking and have actively contributed to this toolkit. The key messages and materials presented here have been tested with asylum seekers.

The digital toolkit, background information and all information materials can be found here: [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit).

<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter referred to as 'asylum seekers'.





# Human trafficking & asylum

Around a thousand suspected victims of human trafficking are reported in the Netherlands every year. Asylum seekers and other migrants form the largest group. You can inform asylum seekers about human trafficking. This increases their resilience, and helps victims to receive help at an earlier stage.

## 1.1 What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is forced exploitation<sup>2</sup>. Force can consist of (the threat of) violence. Sometimes force may be more subtle: deception, deceit, abuse of power or misuse of a vulnerable position. Other words for human trafficking are: exploitation and (modern) slavery.

<sup>2</sup> The official definition in the Netherlands: "Human trafficking is the recruiting, transporting, transferring, admitting or housing a person, using force (in the broadest sense) with the aim of exploiting that person".



**Please note** Force does not need to be proven to be able to refer to human trafficking when someone is exploiting a minor. It will be assumed that the human trafficker is abusing an unequal power relationship.



### *Human trafficking is not the same as people smuggling*

The terms human trafficking and people smuggling are often confused. Human trafficking refers to forced exploitation, whereas people smuggling involves the illegal transportation of people to another country. Contrary to human trafficking, people smuggling is always transnational. People smuggling usually starts on voluntary basis, when people are looking for opportunities to leave their country.

There are similarities too. Both people smuggling and human trafficking can be life-threatening and can be accompanied by violence. Smuggling can turn into human trafficking. A person can rely on a smuggler, whilst this is actually a human trafficker. In addition, having a large (smuggling) debt can also make someone more vulnerable to being exploited.

**It is important to make the distinction, as victims of human trafficking are legally entitled to special protection.**

## 1.2 Forms of human trafficking

Sexual exploitation takes place in the sex industry, for example when someone involuntarily works for someone else in prostitution. A well-known example are loverboys, who are human traffickers who charm their victims with seduction techniques, manipulation, blackmail and violence.

Labour exploitation is also a form of human trafficking. This occurs, for example, in horticulture, catering and the transport sector. People are forced to work in such bad working conditions that human rights are at stake.

Criminal exploitation is about people being forced to commit punishable crimes, the profits of which go straight to the human trafficker. In addition to theft, this could also include drugs smuggling or fraud. The victim runs the risk of being punished for crimes committed under duress.

There are other forms of human trafficking too. Examples include forced begging, forced organ removal and forced services, such as domestic servitude.

## 1.3 Human trafficking and migration

Human trafficking affects men, women and children. The annual reports published by the Dutch coordination centre for human trafficking, CoMensha, show that approximately a quarter of registered victims are minors. Approximately two thirds of the victims in the Netherlands are from abroad. Migration puts people in a vulnerable position for human trafficking. This can be the result of:

- Little knowledge of the local language and society, and one's own rights
- Not expecting that human trafficking occurs here
- A limited social network and not knowing who to trust
- Having to earn money quickly, for example due to debts or to send to relatives

- No residence permit and/or access to legal work
- Grown up in a vulnerable situation in the country of origin

## 1.4 Human trafficking among asylum seekers

Forced exploitation is a major risk for refugees. The stories about slave markets and exploitation during the journey are well-known. But also in the Netherlands asylum seekers are vulnerable for exploitation.



## 1.5 What can you do?

You can contribute to protecting asylum seekers in two different ways:

- **Identification:** you can identify possible victims of human trafficking and refer them to appropriate (help-providing) authorities. You can do this by being alert to certain signs. You can also establish a local network to share and deal with signs. [See chapter 4.](#)
- **Information provision:** you can provide residents or young people with information about human trafficking and their rights. This toolkit will help you with this.

## 1.6 Why provide information about human trafficking?

Information provision is a way to make people more resilient. It helps residents or young people to protect themselves against exploitation, or to seek help if they are - or have been - a victim. The following information is particularly relevant:

- **Risks:** knowing that human trafficking also happens in the Netherlands and which forms this can take (what it looks like and what the warning signs are).
- **Rights:** knowing what your labour rights are (for example the minimum wage) and what your rights are as a victim of a crime (such as reporting to the police and a lawyer free of charge).
- **Tips for staying safe:** knowing how to reduce the risk of exploitation.
- **Available help:** knowing where to go if you have become or have been a victim.

Interviews with asylum seekers demonstrated that they did not have the above information, but found it to be very relevant. They recommended to structurally inform all asylum seekers on this. How you can do this will be discussed in the next chapters.



# 02

# Discussing human trafficking

This chapter provides practical tips and key messages you can use when discussing exploitation with residents or young people. Use the checklist at the front to determine whether the most important information is being addressed at your location.

## 2.1 In conversation: practical tips

Discussing human trafficking may well sound complicated. For migrants, just like for Dutch people, it is unclear what trafficking is exactly. People smuggling? Slavery? Victims of human trafficking often do not see themselves as victims, for instance because they have still earned a little money, or because they are used to different standards. Perhaps you are worried that discussing exploitation will be emotionally stressful. And finally, prostitution and (homo)sexuality are often sensitive themes. The following tips should help when conducting conversations.

### *Be clear*

- The term human trafficking often results in a great deal of confusion. We recommend to talk about exploitation and to use descriptions such as 'when someone benefits by forcing someone else to do things he or she does not want'.
- Invite people to ask questions and check whether the information has been understood.
- Use images or drawings, examples can found on: [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit).

### *Connect with the person you are talking to*

- Try to link into their experiences as much as possible, especially with younger people.

- Be culture-sensitive, but don't leave out any information. Say you know a subject may well be sensitive and that you will do your best to take this into account.
- Subjects which are seen as taboos will be made easier to discuss by talking in the third person. For example, ask if they know someone who has experienced a certain situation.
- Girls see it as a matter of course not to refuse anything in many patriarchal cultures. It takes time to break through these standards.
- Use a cultural mediator whenever possible, who can help to translate the information.

### *Create a safe space to talk*

- Consider talking to, or providing information to, men and women separately.
- Preferably wait with discussing sensitive subjects until you have built a relationship of trust. Also check to see who is best suited to conduct the conversation: you or your colleague.
- Group information sessions are preferred over individual conversations, unless a specific person shows signs of exploitation. Group sessions ensure the participant remains anonymous, whilst still picking up the required information.
- Make sure there is a quiet environment, where you won't be disturbed. Take plenty of time.
- Prepare your audience: tell them you are going to discuss something which may evoke emotions. Say this is absolutely fine and agree on what to do if this happens (for example, take a break).
- Say that no one needs to share any personal information if they don't want to. He/she can also come back at a later stage to continue talking.
- With groups: agree on basic rules, like having respect for each other's input and confidentiality.
- Check how the information was received afterwards and whether anyone feels the need to continue talking for a while.
- Timing is important. Preferably don't provide information straight after a bad news talk. Don't wait too long either, as someone may then already be out of the picture.



*Please note* People can raise problems of themselves or others after an information session. Make sure you know how to deal with a report of possible human trafficking ([see chapter 4](#)).

## 2.2 General key messages about human trafficking

Which information is most important to give to asylum seekers? And how can you explain human trafficking as simply as possible? We have

developed key messages about human trafficking for this purpose. These key messages include summarised information you can use during conversations and information sessions. Clear, consistent and repeated information from different organisations will promote understanding and ensure the message is remembered more effectively.

We will discuss general key messages here. Information provision per theme will be examined in [chapter 3](#).

The information has been categorized as follows:

- 1 What is exploitation?
- 2 Risk of exploitation
- 3 Staying safe/preventing exploitation
- 4 Healthy relationships/sexual exploitation
- 5 Labour rights/labour exploitation
- 6 Help available to victims

*These messages are sometimes written as to directly address the resident/young person.*

### 1. What is exploitation?



**Explanation** The concept of human trafficking needs to be explained and is often confused with people smuggling.

- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money by forcing someone else to do things under bad circumstances. The victim sees no other option than to accept the situation. The force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation. The official term for this is: human trafficking.
- There are many types of exploitation: examples include being forced to work in i.e. catering or horticulture, prostitution or begging. We also refer to exploitation when someone is forced to engage in criminal acts (such as stealing or selling drugs), to sell his or her organs, or to work in a household under very bad conditions.
- Someone may seem friendly at first, but then quickly change attitude. If someone uses the relationship to put pressure on you to do things you really do not want to do and subsequently profits from this, then that may be exploitation.
- Exploitation is forbidden. Exploiting others is a punishable offence.



## 2. Risk of exploitation



**Explanation** many asylum seekers think human trafficking does not occur in the Netherlands and that they are safe here.

- Exploitation also occurs in the Netherlands and it can literally happen to anyone: men, women and children.
- People who do not know the Netherlands well are at greater risk, because they do not speak the language, do not have a social network and are looking for ways to earn an income.
- Particularly people who do not have a residence permit run a risk of exploitation, as they can end up in a vulnerable position when they decide to travel on, or when they are looking for a job.
- People are sometimes offered help to travel to another country without the right papers (people smuggling), but the ultimate intention is actually for them to be exploited over there.

## 3. Staying safe/preventing exploitation



**Explanation** awareness of warning signs and ways to stay safe will make asylum seekers resilient against human trafficking.

- Know what you can do to stay safe and prevent exploitation.
- Recognise the warning signs and take precautions.
- Examples of warning signs;
  - Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
  - Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.
  - Someone tries to stop you talking to other people.
  - Someone has not returned your passport.
  - Someone else manages your money, you have to hand over your income to someone else, or you have to pay off a debt.
  - Someone asks you to do things you really do not want to do.
- Have you spotted warning signs, or are you concerned about someone? Discuss it with a contact person. Your safety comes first and information is treated confidentially as much as possible.
  - Take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.
  - Meet in a public place when you are going to meet someone for the first time.
  - Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.

- Do not hand over your passport.
- Leave or ask for help if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Know that organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.

*"Many asylum seekers think that human trafficking does not occur in the Netherlands"*



© Eva Schweizer

#### 4. Healthy relationships/sexual exploitation



**Explanation** information provision about loverboy tactics and the right of self-determination will result in more resilience against sexual exploitation.

- You have the right to a safe environment.
- No one is allowed to force you into a relationship or to have sex. You can always say no.
- Someone may seem friendly at first and give you lots of attention, but may actually have bad intentions. If someone puts pressure on you to do things you do not want to do, such as have sex with someone, and is benefiting from this, then this might be exploitation. Even if this happens within a relationship.
- Pay attention to who you are talking to on social media.
- Be careful with sharing nude images of yourself. It is very common for people to be blackmailed as a result of naughty images which were only intended for a boy- or girlfriend. Ask for help, possibly from your contact person, if someone tries to put pressure on you like this.
- If an adult makes a minor do wrong things, it is usually not the minor's fault.
- Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands under certain conditions. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.

## 5. Labour rights/labour exploitation



**Explanation** being familiar with Dutch standards and labour rights will result in more resilience against labour exploitation. It is common for victims of labour exploitation not to see themselves as such, as they are unaware of which rights are applicable in the Netherlands.

- As a migrant you run an increased risk of violation of your labour rights and labour exploitation. Knowing what your rights are is essential to prevent this.
- You have the same labour rights as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit. The minimum wage in the Netherlands is 9 euro per hour for adults aged 22 and above. The minimum wage is lower for younger people.
- Know when your employer is treating you badly. You may be used to less protection, but the Dutch standards apply in the Netherlands.
- Minors receive even more protection. You can work for up to 40 hours from the age of 16. You cannot work night shifts or carry out dangerous work if you are under the age of 18.
- Take precautions against labour exploitation. For example, keep documentation about work arrangements, and take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.

## 6. Help available to victims



**Explanation** it is important for asylum seekers to know where they can go for help, and that this support is also available if they do not have a residential status (if they are undocumented/illegal).

- Do you feel unsafe? Ask your contact person for help. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) can always seek out their mentor and Nidos guardian. Your safety comes first, the information is treated confidentially as much as possible.
- Is your employer treating you badly, are you not getting paid enough and are you being threatened so you will not leave? Know where you can go if your worker's rights have been violated. Confide in a contact person or approach an organisation that can help you.
- People without a residence permit also have the right to report a crime to the police without being detained. It is advisable to take someone with you when you go to the police. You can also report a crime anonymously.

- People who have experienced human trafficking are entitled to help and to assistance of a lawyer. Talk about it with your contact person or someone else you trust.
- People who are victims of a crime (such as exploitation) are entitled to protection from the police and assistance from a lawyer. The lawyer is usually free of charge.
- 1-1-2 is the European emergency number for life-threatening situations. No rush: call the police via 0900-8844.
- Organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.

## 2.3 Checklist embedding human trafficking information at your location

Are key messages about human trafficking structurally embedded in information sessions and/or conversations with asylum seekers at the reception centre where you work? Use the checklist at the front to verify and to discuss matters with colleagues and partner organisations. Also consider a possible role for external providers, such as schools (information about loverboys/online safety) or the Refugee Council.

## 2.4 Overview of information materials

There is plenty of material available for discussing human trafficking and for sharing information. We have put together a collection of brochures, information provision methods and informative videos on [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit). In the following chapter, we will specify which information materials are appropriate for the respective themes.



# Human trafficking information per theme

It is important for all asylum seekers to know what human trafficking is and how they can protect themselves. Some standard information provision moments are perfect for including relevant key messages. In addition to this, you can also organise specific information sessions if you are working with a particularly vulnerable target group. This chapter will help you to embed key messages in the various different information provision moments.

## 3.1 Themes

Many residents and young people already receive information through group sessions or structured conversations which are suited for including messages about human trafficking. These can be clustered in four themes, namely:

- General safety
- Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety
- Working in the Netherlands
- Future orientation & irregular stay

In addition, especially in case of signs of (possible) human trafficking among residents:

- Targeted information provision about human trafficking

Each of these information provision moments offers the opportunity to discuss human trafficking. The advantage of this approach is that information is continuously made relevant to the audience, and will be better remembered due to repetition.



#### No information provision?

There may not be any (group) information provision sessions on the above themes at your location. Consider whether you could possibly organise this, in coordination with other organisations involved. You can also always include key messages about human trafficking in any individual conversations with the residents or young people.

This chapter will address the following per theme: why human trafficking fits in with this theme, when it can be discussed, how it can be discussed and which available materials you can use for this purpose, all to be found on [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit). You will find the fact sheets per theme at the front of this toolkit.

## 3.2 General safety



### *Why*

Informing residents or young people about potential dangers upon arrival will make them more vigilant. It is also important for them to know right from the outset that they can come to you or your colleagues with any problems or concerns.

### *When*

When talking about safety, we would recommend saying something in general terms about human trafficking. Do this as quickly as possible following arrival at the location, or in case of signs of an unsafe situation.

### *How*

During personal discussions or group information provision sessions. As people have only just arrived and need to process a great deal of information, the information about human trafficking will remain concise and general.



#### Information for minors

For UASC it is advisable to include the subject of human trafficking when safety is addressed in the three-way conversation with Nidos and the COA and in the two-way conversation between the mentor and UASC.

### *Available materials*

- [Fact sheet 1: General Safety](#)
- Images ('prompting boards') of migration & human trafficking from the Italian Red Cross
- For at risk minors: ECPAT 'Exploitation/trafficking film: rights of isolated minors or children in danger' (five minutes, ten languages)
- To hand out to minors who are at risk: ECPAT brochure 'Potential child victim of human trafficking' (ten languages)

## **3.3 Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety**



### *Why*

Asylum seekers are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Some have already fallen into the hands of human traffickers during their journey. Others are approached following their arrival, for example with loverboy tactics and via social media. Asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal procedures run a major risk when they try to survive whilst being undocumented (illegal). Sexual exploitation also happens to (often young) men. Relatively often the victims are gay, bisexual or transgender.

### *When*

- Not long after their arrival and definitely for all young people.
- If there are signs that residents are taking risks where intimate relationships are concerned.

### *How*

You can make residents and young people more resilient against exploitation by stimulating healthy sexual development. Relevant themes are resilience, (social) media, standards and values in relationships and information provision regarding sexuality and sexually unacceptable behaviour. Information of this nature is not readily provided in many countries of origin. We would recommend also devoting sufficient attention to this with adults. This could be done as part of group discussions (men and women separately) and in individual discussions.



### **Information for minors**

It is important for all underage asylum seekers to be given tailor-made information about sex education, healthy relationships and online safety from around the age of twelve. Make sure you particularly link into how young people are using social media when you provide them with information. You can do this by first asking them about their experiences and their favourite social media channels.



Information can be organised per location for UASC reception centres (as is already happening at various different locations). You can endeavour to establish collaborations with the school and the GGD for young people. VWN (the Refugee Council) can also organise information provision sessions at some locations.

### *Available materials*

- [Fact sheet 2: Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety](#)
- There are many different information provision methods in relation to loverboys, sex education, healthy relationships and online safety. Some of this information is offered on a regional basis. You can find a complete listing of the methods and suppliers on [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit).

## 3.4 Working in the Netherlands



### *Why*

Many asylum seekers who have just arrived in the Netherlands quickly want to get a job. They want to earn money for their own keep and to send back to their families abroad. There is a huge amount of pressure on them to realise this. Migrants are vulnerable to exploitation, as employers can abuse the fact migrants are not aware of their rights and don't necessarily know what is customary in the Netherlands.

It is therefore important that attention is also devoted to labour rights and the common standards in the Netherlands when the subject of 'work' is addressed.



**We would also recommend discussing this theme with (former) asylum seekers who are not (yet) permitted to work.**

### *When*

Work and labour rights can be discussed at various different times, for example:

- When the resident indicates he or she is looking for work, or if you think a resident wants to earn money quickly, perhaps to pay for a family reunion.
- Within, or following, the COA information provision 'Dutch labour market orientation'.
- If there are signals that the residents are working and that you are worried about the circumstances or working conditions.
- After acquiring residence permit.

- When you suspect a resident won't be able to acquire a residence permit, or has already been denied the status. When the person decides to stay in the Netherlands, it is relevant for him/her to know that undocumented migrants have labour rights too.



### Information for minors

Underage asylum seekers are rarely provided with information about work and labour rights. However, we recommend doing this, as this group is also vulnerable to labour exploitation.

Many young people feel pressurised to quickly earn money for family they have had to leave behind, or to fund a family reunion. It is important for them to be aware of their rights when they start looking for a(n extra) job or work experience and that they know where to go for help when the working conditions are bad.

### How

Personal discussions and group information provision.

### Available materials

- [Fact sheet 3: Working in the Netherlands](#)
- COA: Dutch labour market orientation (ONA)
- Red Cross: group information provision 'Working in the Netherlands'
- FairWork cartoon: 'Your labour rights in the Netherlands' (one minute, sixteen languages)
- FairWork leaflet: 'Working in the Netherlands: how does that work?' (seven languages)

*"Knowing their labour rights makes migrants less vulnerable to exploitation."*



### An example

The COA has incorporated key messages regarding 'Working in the Netherlands' in the standard 'Labour Market Orientation' information provision. This group information provision session is part of the 'Knowledge about Dutch Society' training course for adult asylum seekers. By having done this, a large group of residents now receives information regarding labour rights and the prevention of labour exploitation. As repetition helps to retain information, it's advisable (where relevant) to also include the information in personal discussions about work.

## 3.5 Future orientation & irregular stay



### Why

Asylum seekers who cannot acquire a residence permit and who are travelling on or staying in the Netherlands undocumented (irregular stay), are vulnerable to exploitation. Before they disappear from view, you can provide them with information about the risks associated with human trafficking, as well as tips for staying safe/asking for help. Exploitation is difficult to avoid, as this group can't legally find work and will end up in a dependent position. Interviews with former victims has shown that knowledge about limiting risks, their rights as employees and possibilities in relation to asking for help could most definitely have helped them. Many undocumented migrants think they have no rights when they are staying in the Netherlands illegally. That is incorrect. Important human rights apply to them too.

You could possibly put very vulnerable residents in touch with aid organisations, where they can go after departure. There are organisations per region which can help with shelter and basic necessities, guidance to medical care and/or legal assistance. You can make this group a little more resilient to exploitation by giving them addresses and contact details. If the plan is to continue travelling, there are also organisations to signpost to abroad, such as the Red Cross in the destination country.

### When

- In preparation for a possible negative decision following the asylum application.
- Following a negative decision or disposition.
- If you expect someone is soon going to leave for an unknown destination.

## How

A personal discussion is the best choice, considering the sensitivity of this information. Part of this information can also be embedded in the Future Orientation information provision.



### Information for minors

There are major concerns about the hundreds of minors who leave asylum reception centres for unknown destinations every year. The risk of exploitation remains huge for this group. The early provision of information about human trafficking risks, rights and available help can contribute to reducing vulnerability.

With regard to UASC without a residence permit who can't return to their country of origin, we advise to provide them with information about shelters and/or support points for (young) undocumented migrants well before their eighteenth birthday. Please refer to, for example,

[www.basicrights.nl](http://www.basicrights.nl).

### Available materials

- [Fact sheet 4: Future orientation and irregular stay](#)
- COA: Future orientation method
- VWN: Future training method

### An example

A Nidos guardian talked to a young person who wanted to continue travelling in order to work somewhere else. He shares the following about this: "I discussed part of the information about exploitation with my pupil, and told him what he should specifically look out for: what risks there are and how he can protect himself. This was very helpful to him. He was very cautious and distant in earlier conversations, but he even hugged me after this talk."

## 3.6 Human trafficking: specific information provision

### Why

It is advisable to specifically discuss matters with people who are at greater risk of falling victim to human trafficking. For those who have already experienced trafficking, this can contribute to self-identification and daring to ask for help. It can help people who are vulnerable to exploitation to protect themselves more effectively.

### *When*

If your residents or young people are extra vulnerable to falling victim to human trafficking. This could be minors from high-risk countries and people who are showing signs of possible human trafficking. It may also be useful for everyone at a location where you suspect human traffickers may be active.

### *How*

A personal discussion is the best choice, considering the sensitivity of the information. Specifically discuss the concerns you have. For example, explain you suspect residents and/or young people at the location are being recruited for exploitation, what this looks like and what someone can do if they feel unsafe. The aim is (in addition to information provision) to win people's trust and to let them know anyone experiencing problems can come and see you or your colleague.

### *Available materials*

- [Fact sheet 1: General safety](#). You can supplement this with specific information about human trafficking, which suits the aim of your information provision. Please refer to [chapter 6](#) for possible sources.
- Images ('prompting boards') of migration & human trafficking from the Italian Red Cross.

### **An example**

#### *The context*

Various young people were staying in the POA (UASC process reception centre) in Weert mid-2018, where criminal exploitation was suspected. The youngsters had come into contact with the police several times, were constantly absent for short times for unknown reasons and brought backpacks full of unknown contents upon their return. The human trafficking/people smuggling (HTPS) contact people at the reception centre had reached the conclusion that proactive action was required to guarantee the safety and manageability at and around the location.

#### *The approach*

The HTHS contact people brought the subject of human trafficking to their colleagues' attention, by discussing trends and current affairs about human trafficking during a themed meeting. All employees were informed of their signalling role. The police's Criminal Investigation Team (CIT) were also invited as external speakers. The HTPS contact people compiled a document with information about vulnerabilities per nationality and specific signs which mentors could be alert to. The following motto was

central in this regard: recognise the extraordinary in an ordinary situation. Stay alert!

The HTPS contact people subsequently developed a discussion cycle for colleagues, in order to ensure they conducted conversations about human trafficking with all young people. They described which information the mentors could give and how. The aim of these discussions was to express concern, based on a guiding and informative role. The HTPS contact people asked their colleagues to provide them with feedback regarding the discussions, allowing them to draw up an overall picture. They discussed the signs and peculiarities together with the Nidos contact person and linked up with other partners organisations where necessary.

The general aim was to encourage the young people to dare and be able to talk about human trafficking with their mentors. The young people were also informed about what they could do if they ever felt unsafe.

### ***The result***

The colleague mentors appreciated receiving current and targeted information about human trafficking. The young people mostly responded positively to these conversations. They liked the fact this theme was brought out into the open.

*"It's good to bring the issue of human trafficking out into the open."*



© COA Den Haag



# 04

# Dealing with suspected human trafficking

Discussing human trafficking can lead to (self-) disclosures or signs. This chapter provides a number of tips for dealing with a suspicion or disclosure of human trafficking. In addition, you can also ask your organisation for special training courses in Recognising Human Trafficking. The most important message: always take action when you suspect human trafficking.

## 4.1 Signs of human trafficking

In your work, you can identify cases of human trafficking at different moments. You can come into contact with people who have been a victim in the past, people who are currently victims, or people who could possibly become victims. People may sometimes tell you about their experiences with human trafficking without being prompted. But usually they won't recognise the fact they have been a victim, or don't dare to speak up. It is therefore important to know the signs of human trafficking in order to be able to help victims.



There are many different signals, which can be grouped as follows:



**Curbed freedom of movement**



**Working conditions**



**Force**



**Physical and mental health**



**Signs for minors**



**Other observations regarding possible victims**



**In practical terms, any behaviour which deviates from normal behaviour can be seen as a possible sign.**

## 4.2 Recognising Human Trafficking e-learning module

The COA, VWN, Red Cross and CoMensha together developed the Recognising Human Trafficking e-learning module, especially for employees and volunteers working in the asylum sector. This will enable you to recognise signs of human trafficking and to subsequently adequately deal with this. The e-module only takes thirty minutes and can be found on: [www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel](http://www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel) (available in Dutch).

## 4.3 Action perspective

You may find yourself in a situation where you're worrying about someone, but you're not sure why. You can start with asking a few open questions to check your instincts and to give the person the opportunity to tell you more. What's suitable will depend on the situation. Conduct a conversation like this in a quiet, safe environment and explain how you deal with confidential information.

It is not your task to actually identify cases of human trafficking. The most important thing is that you do something with your instinctive feeling that something isn't right. By following up on this, you can get someone out of a very dire situation.

**Always raise the alarm in case of possible signs.** How and where you do this (the 'action perspective') differs per organisation. Routes have been

worked out for the Red Cross, COA, VWN and 'CoMensha student/other' in the aforementioned e-module.

You will find the action perspectives at the end of this e-module. **In every organisation all possible signals should first be discussed internally with a colleague or manager.** You also have the option of (anonymously) contacting the CoMensha helpdesk to discuss any concerns. In addition to the internal organisational procedures, it's important to realise that human trafficking is included in the 'Domestic Violence and Child Abuse' Reporting Code in the Netherlands.

## 4.4 Help available to victims of human trafficking

It is important for victims to report to the police in order to combat human trafficking. Moreover, victims are entitled to protection and help. Minors have extra rights, which are further discussed at the end of this paragraph. In the Netherlands, the police, the Royal Military Police and the SZW Inspectorate are the bodies which officially determine whether there are indications of human trafficking.

### *Preparatory interview: should or shouldn't I go to the police?*

The decision whether or not to go to the police can be difficult. In many regions a human trafficking care coordinator has been appointed, who can talk to potential victims. He or she can explain the advantages and disadvantages of making a declaration, so someone can make a well-informed decision. CoMensha's helpdesk can provide contact details of care coordinators and can organise telephone advice.

### *Safe declaration*

People without a residence permit can also report a crime (without being detained in a foreign national detection centre). This is referred to as a 'safe declaration' or 'firewall'. As this regulation has only been in place for a few years and is not yet known to everyone, it is advisable for undocumented migrants to take a lawyer or counsellor with them when they go to the police.

### *Intake and filing a report with the police*

An initial intake meeting will take place at the police (or the SZW Inspectorate/Royal Military Police). When there is the slightest indication of human trafficking and if the person doesn't have a legal residence status, the victim will be given a maximum of three months reflection time and shelter to allow things to settle and think about whether or not he/she wants to report the case.

This reflection time generally doesn't apply to migrants in the asylum procedure, as they already have legal residence status and access to facilities. Victims can bring someone with them when filing a report.

### *Legal assistance*

Victims are entitled to a lawyer for the criminal and residence procedures. This is usually free of charge. It's advisable to already enlist the services of a certified human trafficking lawyer before going to the police. Organisations which offer additional legal assistance include the Red Cross for residence proceedings and Slachtofferhulp (Victim Support) for criminal proceedings.

### *Medical assistance*

This also includes psychological help for, for example, trauma processing.

### *Temporary residence permit*

Victims of human trafficking without a right of residence will be issued with a temporary residence permit at the police's request. This is called the B8/3 scheme, or rather the 'human trafficking residence scheme'. This will apply for as long as the police investigation or criminal proceedings are ongoing. Asylum seekers can find themselves in the asylum procedure and the B8 scheme at the same time. In some cases it's possible to be given continued residency based on human trafficking (the 'non-temporary humanitarian permit', or rather the B9/12). The lawyer can provide more information about this.

*"The human trafficking care coordinator can explain the advantages and disadvantages of reporting a case to the police."*



### ***Reception facility***

The victim can stay in a special reception facility during the reflection time and any possible police investigation. A great deal of attention is devoted to safety and specialist help here. People who find themselves in the human trafficking residence scheme (B8/3 or B9/12) and the asylum procedure at the same time, will often stay at the COA location.

### ***Benefits***

Victims can receive benefits based on the B8 scheme. Those staying at the COA location won't receive this, but will be able to keep the living allowance provided by the asylum seekers scheme.

### ***Assistance***

A victim can be assisted by a social worker and the aforementioned regional human trafficking care coordinator.

### ***Compensation***

Victims can try to get financial compensation as a result of physical or mental injury. This could be done, for example, by claiming civil damages in the criminal case against the perpetrator(s), compensation through civil proceedings, or an application to the Violent Offences Compensation Fund (Schadefonds Geweldsmisdrijven). The lawyer can provide more information about this.



### **Additional information for minors**

A number of special regulations and points of attention apply to the support of underage victims.

### ***Protected shelter***

UASC who are (possible) victims of human trafficking are eligible for Protected Shelter at the COA. Nidos indicates an underage foreign national for the protected shelter: this happens with the slightest indication of human trafficking. UASC will stay in the protected shelter until there is no longer a need for protection. They fall under the asylum seekers benefits scheme.

### ***Criminal proceedings***

The 'Aanwijzing Mensenhandel', part of Dutch regulations, states that underage victims require extra protection during the criminal proceedings. For example, if possible, the underage victim will always be questioned by the same people and this questioning will take place in a specially designed or adjusted room or space.

***If reporting the crime isn't possible: harrowing path***

Cooperation with a criminal investigation is generally a condition for being able to access the human trafficking residence scheme. 'Minority' has been added to the list of circumstances under which a residence permit can also be issued without a declaration (the so-called 'harrowing path') since October 2018. The involvement of the police will remain necessary, as this is the body which determines whether there are indications of human trafficking.

***Staying in the Netherlands***

Underage victims of human trafficking without a residence status can make use of the same schemes as adults. Nidos will assist UASC with applying for a residence permit. If the victim is not able to acquire a residence permit, one condition of returning the victim is that adequate support and care is available in the country of origin.

# Involving colleagues

Avoiding and recognising human trafficking isn't something you can do on your own. It's important that colleagues also know what human trafficking is, which key messages they can give to asylum seekers and how they can recognise the signs. This chapter provides a number of tips.

## 5.1 Practical tips

- >> Discuss this toolkit during a meeting or team discussion.
- >> Distribute the 'Recognising Human Trafficking' e-learning module among colleagues, see [www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel](http://www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel).
- >> Fill out the checklist at the front together with colleagues. Discuss how and when human trafficking will be discussed with residents and young people. Who or which organisation will do this? Are there options for including the key messages in (several) structural discussions or information provision sessions?
- >> Organise a themed meeting about human trafficking for colleagues. You can organise this at your own location or regionally/nationally. You can organise it internally, or together with partner organisations.
- >> Invite an external speaker for a themed meeting. This could be, for example, CoMensha, the human trafficking care coordinator, the Alien's Police, Identification and Human Trafficking Department at the regional police, or the Criminal Intelligence Team (CIT).
- >> Discuss the possibility of completing a human trafficking training course. This can be organised internally by contact persons/human trafficking attention officers, or externally, for example via a training course organised by CoMensha or the FairWork Academy.
- >> Make human trafficking a recurring agenda item for intervision meetings or discussions regarding client cases.



# Additional information

## About human trafficking

- Human Trafficking Academy: a special CoMensha website, which provides an overview of the (training) supply in the area of identifying human trafficking, [www.mensenhandelacademy.nl](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl)
- National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings: reports and legislation on human trafficking, [www.dutchrappporteur.nl](http://www.dutchrappporteur.nl)
- CoMensha: advice for care providers and victims and registration of reports, [www.mensenhandel.nl](http://www.mensenhandel.nl)
- FairWork: provide help with labour exploitation of migrants, [www.fairwork.nu/en](http://www.fairwork.nu/en)
- Defence for Children: provide help with exploitation of minors and missing person cases, [www.defenceforchildren.nl](http://www.defenceforchildren.nl)
- Human trafficking web: human trafficking news, [www.mensenhandelweb.nl/en](http://www.mensenhandelweb.nl/en)
- Police: [www.politie.nl/themas/mensenhandel.html](http://www.politie.nl/themas/mensenhandel.html)

## Recognising Human Trafficking e-learning module

- [www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel](http://www.rodekru.is/emodule-mensenhandel)

## For victims of human trafficking

- National Referral Site for Human Trafficking: referral of victims to the right support and to regional human trafficking care coordinators, <https://english.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl/>
- From here on: CoMensha: information about rights and procedures for victims, [www.comensha.nl/pagina/hoenuverder](http://www.comensha.nl/pagina/hoenuverder)

## Contact details per organisation

- COA: [bureauveiligheid@coa.nl](mailto:bureauveiligheid@coa.nl)
- Nidos: [contact@nidos.nl](mailto:contact@nidos.nl)
- VluchtelingenWerk: [helpdesk@vluchtelingenwerk.nl](mailto:helpdesk@vluchtelingenwerk.nl)
- Red Cross: 0031-70 - 44 55 822 or [osm@redcross.nl](mailto:osm@redcross.nl)
- CoMensha: Helpdesk 0031-33 - 448 11 86 or [info@comensha.nl](mailto:info@comensha.nl)



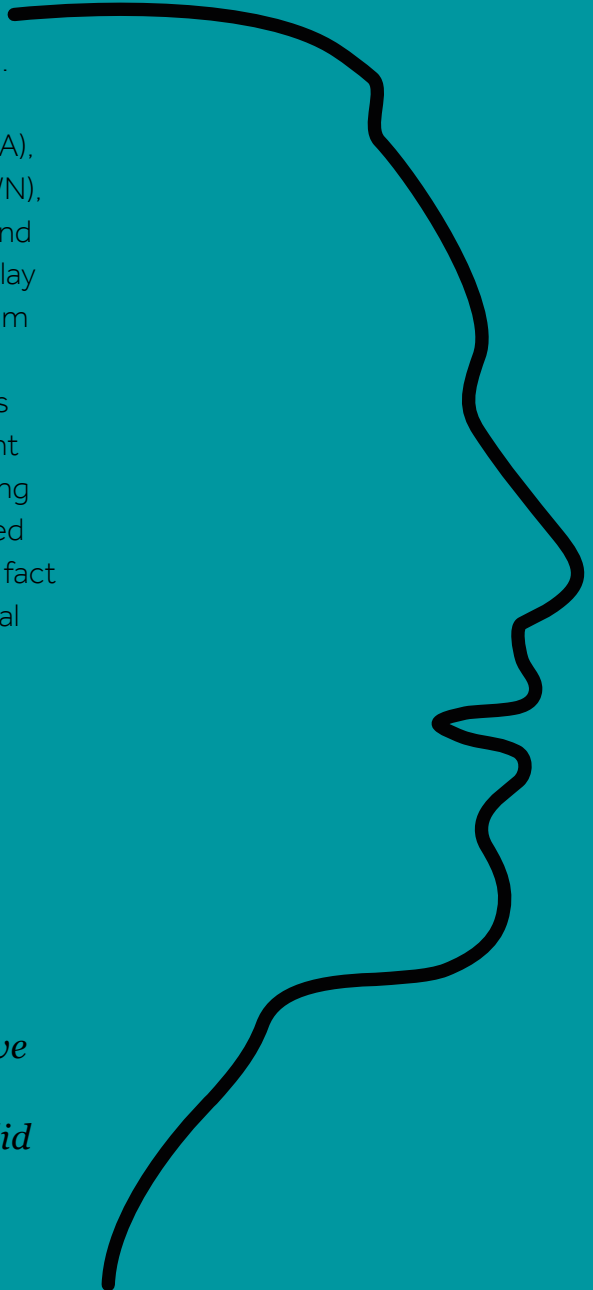


Asylum seekers are vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation. Staff at Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), Refugee Council Netherlands (VWN), guardianship organisation Nidos and the UASC reception centres can play an important role by informing them and making them more resilient. This toolkit contains practical tools for transferring the most important information about human trafficking to residents and young people aged twelve and above. The convenient fact sheets can be used during personal conversations and information provision sessions.



*Every migrant should receive information about human trafficking upon arrival. I did not know this was a risk in the Netherlands."*

Resident of a reception centre





# *Factsheets:* **Key Human Trafficking messages per theme**

**Certain standard themes are very suitable for including information about human trafficking. We have incorporated these themes in fact sheets, intended for staff and volunteers working with (former) asylum seekers from the age of 12. You can use these fact sheets during personal conversations or group presentations on one of the following themes:**

1. General Safety
2. Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety
3. Working in the Netherlands
4. Future orientation and irregular stay

Discussing human trafficking can be complicated and requires culture-sensitivity. Please refer to chapter 2 for tips about conducting conversations.

The fact sheets can also be downloaded and printed from **[www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit](http://www.mensenhandelacademy.nl/asielketen/toolkit)**. Here you will also find the original Dutch text and supporting materials.

*This document is part of the 'Toolkit for discussing human trafficking/ exploitation with (former) asylum seekers', a joint publication by the Netherlands Red Cross, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), Dutch Refugee Council, Nidos and CoMensha.*  
*For more information:*  
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# 01 General Safety

*See explanation in paragraph 3.2*

## Relevant key messages

- Do you feel unsafe? **Ask your contact person for help.** Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) can always seek out their mentor and Nidos guardian. Your safety comes first, the information is **treated confidentially** as much as possible.
- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under **bad circumstances**. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- There are **many types** of exploitation: examples include being forced to work in i.e. catering or horticulture, prostitution or begging. We also refer to exploitation when someone is forced to engage in criminal acts (such as stealing or selling drugs), to sell his or her organs, or to work in a household under very bad conditions.
- Someone may seem friendly at first, but then quickly change attitude. If someone **uses the relationship** to put pressure on you to do things you really do not want to do and subsequently profits from this, then that may be exploitation.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone: men, women and children.
- People who do not know the Netherlands well are at **greater risk**, because they do not speak the language, do not have a social network and are looking for ways to earn an income.
- People are sometimes offered help to travel to another country without the right papers (**people smuggling**), but the ultimate intention is actually for them to be exploited over there.
- Have you **spotted warning signs, or are you concerned** about someone? Discuss it with a contact person.
- 1-1-2 is the European **emergency number** for life-threatening situations. No rush: call the police via 0900-8844.
- Victims of a crime (such as exploitation) are entitled to **protection from the police and assistance from a lawyer**. The lawyer is usually free of charge.

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## **Recognise the warning signs!**

For example:

- >> An offer for work sounds too good to be true.
- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.
- >> Someone tries to stop you talking to other people.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone else manages your money, you have to hand over your income to someone else, or you have to pay off a debt.
- >> Someone asks you to do things you really do not want to do.

## **Take precautions!**

For example:

- >> Meet in a public place when you are going to meet someone for the first time.
- >> Make sure you know where you are and pass the address on to someone you trust.
- >> Discuss any doubts with someone you trust. You can turn to a contact person with any questions or problems.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Leave or ask for help if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- >> Organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.

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# 02 Sex education, healthy relationships and online safety

*See explanation in paragraph 3.3*

## Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone **earns money** by forcing someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- Exploitation **occurs in the Netherlands too** and it can literally happen to anyone.
- Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands **under certain conditions**. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.
- No one is allowed to **force** you into a relationship or to have sex. You can always say no.
- Someone may seem friendly at first and give you lots of attention, but may actually have **bad intentions**. If someone puts pressure on you to do things you do not want to do, such as have sex with someone, and is benefiting from this, then this might be exploitation. Even if this happens within a relationship.
- Be careful with sharing **nude images** of yourself. It is very common for people to be blackmailed as a result of naughty images which were only intended for a boy- or girlfriend. Ask for help, possibly from your contact person, if someone tries to put pressure on you like this.
- If an adult makes a **minor** do wrong things, it is usually not the minor's fault.
- Do you feel unsafe? Are you forced to do things you do not want to do? **Ask your contact person for help.** Your safety comes first and information is treated confidentially as much as possible.

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**Young people are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and therefore receive extra protection.** Example: anyone below the age of 21 is not allowed to work in the sex industry.

## **Recognise the warning signs!**

For example:

- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.
- >> Someone asks you to do things you really do not want to do.
- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone tries to stop you talking to other people.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone else manages your money, you have to give your income to someone else, or you have to pay off a debt.
- >> The working or living conditions are unsafe or bad.

## **Take precautions!**

For example:

- >> Meet in a public place when you are going to meet someone for the first time.
- >> Make sure you know where you are and pass the address on to someone you trust.
- >> Make sure you know how to use social media safely and pay attention to who you are talking to.
- >> Discuss any doubts with someone you trust. You can turn to a contact person with any questions or problems.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Leave or ask for help if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

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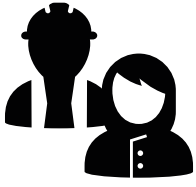
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# 03 Working in the Netherlands

*See explanation in paragraph 3.4*

## Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- There are **many types of exploitation**: examples include being forced to work in the catering industry or horticulture.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone. As a migrant you will run an increased risk of violation of your labour rights and labour exploitation, because you are new to the country.
- You have **the same labour rights** as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit. The minimum wage in the Netherlands is 9 euro per hour for adults aged 22 and above. The minimum wage is lower for younger people.
- Take precautions against labour exploitation.
- Know your rights! You may be used to less protection, but the **Dutch standards** apply in the Netherlands. A combination of violations of your rights can be seen as labour exploitation.
- Is your employer treating you badly, are you not getting paid enough and are you being threatened so you will not leave? Know where you can go if your **worker's rights have been violated**. Confide in a contact person.

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**Know your labour rights!** For example: the minimum wage in the Netherlands; a working week of a maximum of 45 hours; right to holidays / days off; right to a holiday allowance; right to sick leave.

## Know when your employer is mistreating you!

For example:

- >> Being paid too little or deferred pay.
- >> Working (extremely) long days.
- >> No breaks / days off / holidays.
- >> No protective clothing.
- >> Having to perform hazardous / unhealthy work.
- >> Threat or use of verbal / physical violence or blackmail or coercion.
- >> Being paid informally, not being insured against accidents.
- >> Living on the company premises, or being poorly accommodated in some other way.

## Take precautions!

For example:

- >> Take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.
- >> Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.
- >> Make sure a work contract is in place and have your own copy in a language you understand.
- >> Keep track of the hours you have worked, keep documentation about work arrangements and take photos or videos of the working conditions. This will ensure you have the appropriate evidence to still get what you are entitled to (even if you do not have a contract!) at a later stage.
- >> Organisations you can turn to for help and advice are CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.



**Even if the working conditions are not yet serious enough to be seen as exploitation, it can still be useful to ask for help.**

For example, if the employer does not comply with payment agreements. FairWork can help to recover any outstanding wages.



**Minors receive even more protection!** You can work for up to 40 hours from the age of 16. You cannot work night shifts or carry out dangerous work if you are under the age of 18.



# 04 Future orientation and irregular stay

*See explanation in paragraph 3.5*

## Relevant key messages

- Exploitation takes place when someone earns money **by forcing** someone else to do things under bad circumstances. This force can be subtle, like deception, threats or a debt which needs to be repaid. People therefore do not always see themselves as victims of exploitation.
- **Exploitation is forbidden.** Exploiting others is a punishable offence.
- Exploitation **also occurs in the Netherlands** and it can literally happen to anyone. You will particularly run a risk of exploitation if you do not get a residence permit, as you can end up in a vulnerable position when you decide to travel on, or when you are looking for a job.
- You have the **same labour rights** as Dutch citizens, even if you do not have a residence permit. The minimum wage in the Netherlands is 9 euro per hour for adults aged 22 and above. The minimum wage is lower for younger people.
- Is your employer treating you badly, are you not getting paid enough and are you being threatened so you will not leave? **Confide in a contact person.** Or approach an organisation which can help you, such as CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.
- Travelling on: People are sometimes offered help to travel to another country without the right papers (**people smuggling**), but the ultimate intention is actually for them to be exploited over there.
- Prostitution is permitted in the Netherlands **under certain conditions**. But people who force others to work in prostitution, or who incite minors to do so, are punishable.
- People without residence permits also **have the right to report a crime** to the police without being detained. It is advisable to take someone with you when you go to the police. You can also report a crime anonymously.
- People who are victims of a crime (such as exploitation) are entitled to protection from the **police and assistance from a lawyer**. The lawyer is usually free of charge.
- The European **emergency number** is 1-1-2. No rush: call the police via 0900-8844.

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## Recognise the warning signs!

For example:

- >> Someone is being secretive about the content of the work or the place you are going to.
- >> Someone has not returned your passport.
- >> Someone tries to scare you (e.g. for the police) or threatens you.

## Know when your employer is mistreating you!

For example:

- >> Being paid too little or deferred pay.
- >> Working (extremely) long days.
- >> The working or living conditions are unsafe or bad.
- >> Threat or use of verbal / physical violence or blackmail or coercion.

## Take precautions!

For example:

- >> Take someone with you when you are meeting a potential employer for the first time.
- >> Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.
- >> Do not hand over your passport.
- >> Keep track of the hours you have worked, keep documentation about work arrangements and take photos or videos of the working conditions. This will ensure you have the appropriate evidence to still get what you are entitled to (even if you do not have a contract!) at a later stage.
- >> Take contact details with you for organisations you can turn to for help and advice, like CoMensha or (in case of labour exploitation) FairWork.



**Even if you do not have a residence permit, you still have certain human rights.** These include labour rights like the minimum wage in the Netherlands and the right to report a crime to the police. See [www.basicrights.nl](http://www.basicrights.nl) for more information about these rights and organisations which can help.