



Home Office

# **Understanding the NRM: A guide for Primary School Aged Children**

January 2026



**Common terms you will see in this leaflet:**

<b>Home Office</b>	This is the part of the government that ensures you have access to the right support and is involved in making your NRM decisions.
<b>National Referral Mechanism (NRM)</b>	The NRM is a way to identify potential victims of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, and make sure proper support is in place for you.
<b>First Responder</b>	This is a professional (such as a police officer, social worker or charity worker) who is concerned that you have been taken advantage of and referred you into the NRM.
<b>Reasonable Grounds Decision</b>	This is a decision the Government makes on whether it is reasonable to think you may have been a victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.
<b>Conclusive Grounds Decision</b>	This is a decision the Government makes on whether it is more likely than not that you have been a victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.
<b>Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG)</b>	This is an independent support worker who can help you stay safe and supported.

**You may see content throughout this leaflet that makes you feel uncomfortable. It is okay to feel uncomfortable and support providers can offer more assistance at the end of the leaflet.**

**Throughout this pack, you may see the term ‘victim’ being used. When we say ‘victim’, we mean people who are victims of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.**

**Don’t worry if you don’t know what this means, this booklet will help explain what exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery is, and how we can help you.**

## What is Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery:

It sounds complicated. Here are some questions to help.

1



Has anyone ever asked you to look after, carry, or sell things like drugs, stolen items, packages, or anything illegal for them?

2



Has anyone ever asked you to do something with your body in a way that made you feel uncomfortable, they may have offered you a gift for this?

3



Has anyone ever asked you to do something wrong or illegal for them, like stealing?

4



Have you ever been made to work or do housework when you should have been at school?

5



Has anyone ever taken you to somewhere, like on a trip or to a new place, and then made you do things you did not want to do, or did not let you talk to the people you trust?

**If you answered yes to any of the above or have had any other similar experiences where you felt scared and told to do something you didn't want to, or felt uncomfortable doing, you might be a victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.**

**There are people who want to help you. If you think you, or someone you know (child or adult), might be a victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, you should tell a trusted professional (such as a teacher, social worker, or the police).**

If you have any questions about anything you see in this leaflet, you can share this with a trusted professional and they can help answer any questions you may have.

### What is the National Referral Mechanism



The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) finds and helps children and adults who might be victims of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. It keeps them safe and helps them get the support they need.

### Why am I being referred to the National Referral Mechanism



A trusted professional has referred you to the NRM because they were worried about you and part of their role is to share these concerns by making a NRM referral.

This does not mean you have done anything wrong, it just means that adults care about you, are trying to help and want to understand what has happened.

## Sam's story

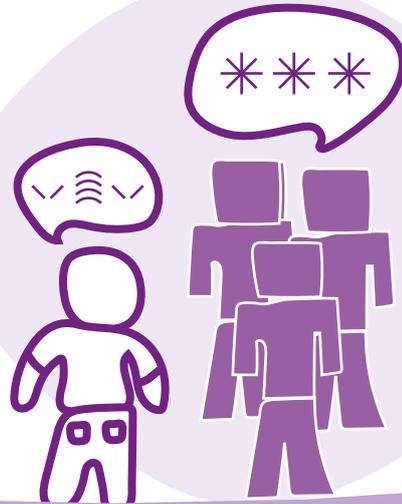
1

This is Sam. Sam is 11.



2

Sam likes going to the park. Sometimes older boys speak to him there. He thinks this is cool.



3

One day one of the older boys asks Sam to take a package to a house near the park.



4

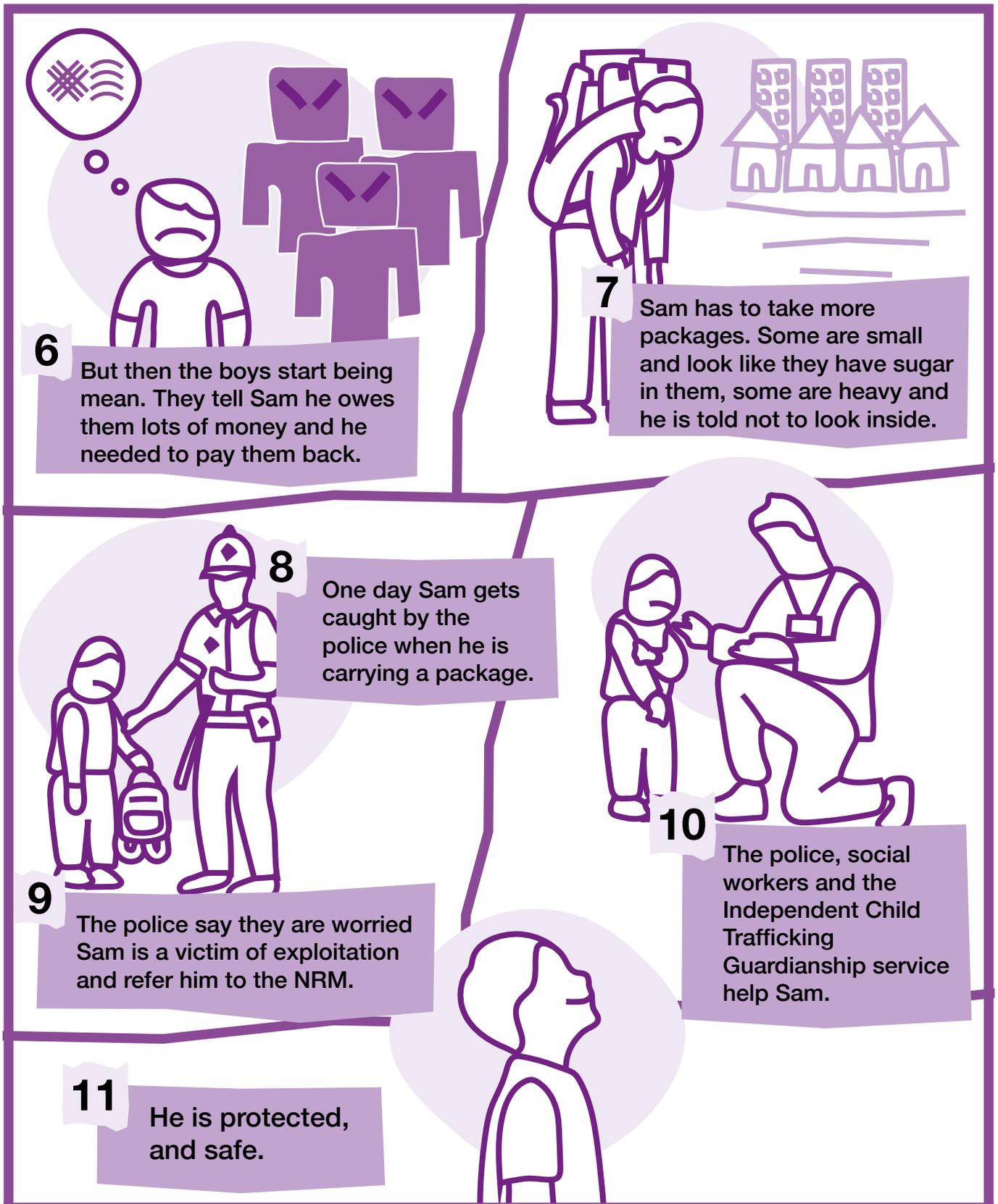
Sam doesn't know what is in the package, but he says okay because he likes the older boys and they give him sweets for doing it.



5

Sam does this more and more. The older boys buy him magazines and even new trainers for doing it.



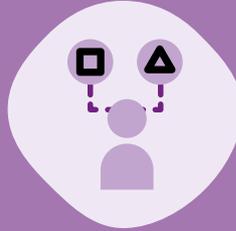


This is one story of exploitation, but there are many other ways it could happen. **Speak to an adult if you are worried about yourself or a friend.**

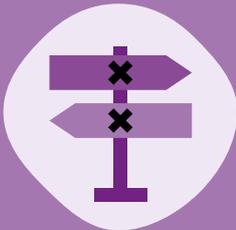
## What Happens Next:



The Home Office will look at your information and decide if they think you are a potential victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.



There are two decisions to make: a reasonable grounds decision and a conclusive grounds decision.



If either of these decisions are negative, it does not always mean that you are not a victim. It may be that the Home Office did not have enough information to make the decision. Your trusted adult will support you.

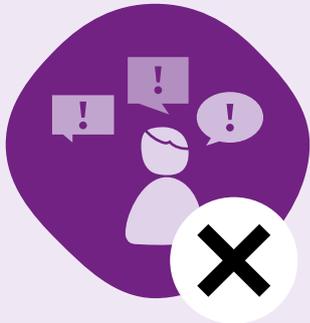


If both decisions are positive, it means the Home Office think you are more than likely a victim. You can continue to get support.



You may also get extra support from an ICTG if you live in some parts of England and Wales. They do not work for the Home Office and are not social workers. They will make sure your voice is listened to.

**Remember:**



**You are not  
in trouble.**



**You are not  
to blame.**



**You have the  
right to be safe  
and supported.**

**Why Are These  
Decisions Important?**



These decisions help make sure that children who have been hurt or treated unfairly get the help they need.

- They are not tests, and you don't have to do anything scary.
- You need to be honest and talk to the adults who are helping you.
- They'll explain things and make sure you understand what's happening.

**How the NRM  
Can Help You:**



- 😊 You're treated like someone who needs help, not someone in trouble.
- 😊 You get support from kind adults who understand what you've been through.
- 😊 You're protected by the law if someone made you do something illegal.
- 😊 The people who hurt you might be stopped by the police.
- 😊 You can feel safer and start to feel better.

## Common NRM Myths:

<b>I am British so I am not a victim of exploitation, human trafficking or modern slavery.</b>	Anyone can be a victim of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery. The NRM supports all nationalities, including British victims and those not from Britain
<b>Asylum and the NRM are the same thing.</b>	<p>Claiming Asylum is not the same as being referred into the NRM. Some people may be in both processes.</p> <p>You should only ask for asylum (also called international protection) if you were born outside of the UK and are scared to go back to your home country.</p> <p>Please speak to a trusted adult if you have any questions on asylum.</p>



## Who else can support me:

If you would like to speak to anyone other than a trusted adult about anything you have read, the organisations below offer support to children.

### England and Wales Support Providers:

#### **Barnardo's – National Counter Trafficking Centre:**

Barnardo's runs the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service in England and Wales. They provide specialist support to child victims of exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, helping them understand their situation, access services, and advocate for their rights with social care, police, and immigration authorities.

Phone Number: 0800 043 4303

Email: [countertrafficking@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:countertrafficking@barnardos.org.uk)

Website: <https://nctc.org.uk>

### **Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline (Unseen):**

Unseen run the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline and work with individuals & potential victims to stamp out slavery for good.

Phone Number: 08000 121 700 (24/7 helpline that is free, confidential and available in over 200 languages)

Website: [modernslaveryhelpline.org](https://modernslaveryhelpline.org)

### **Childline:**

Childline provides free confidential support for children under the age of 19 to talk about any issues they may be going through. The Helpline is free and confidential and available 24/7.

Phone Number: 0800 1111

Website: [childline.org.uk](https://childline.org.uk)

### **NSPCC – Child Trafficking Advice Centre:**

The NSPCC provides advice and support for professionals and families concerned about child trafficking. Their Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) offers free guidance and training to help safeguard children at risk.

Phone Number: 0808 800 5000

Email: [ctac@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:ctac@nspcc.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ctac>

### **Northern Ireland support providers:**

#### **Barnardo's independent child trafficking guardian service:**

They provide specialist support to trafficked children, helping them understand their situation, access services, and advocate for their rights with social care, police, and immigration authorities.

Phone Number: 028 90658105

Email: [ReceptionNI@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:ReceptionNI@barnardos.org.uk)

### **Scotland support providers:**

#### **Guardianship Scotland:**

Statutory Independent Child Trafficking Guardian service. Only for unaccompanied and separated children.

Phone Number: 0141 445 8659

E-mail: [guardianship@aberlour.org.uk](mailto:guardianship@aberlour.org.uk)

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