

BEYOND BORDERS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING FROM NIGERIA TO THE UK

REPORT

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PROBABLY IF I WAS AWARE OF TRAFFICKING AND THE PROBLEMS WITH IT, I THINK I STILL WOULD HAVE COME, TO BE HONEST, BECAUSE MY SITUATION IN NIGERIA AT THAT TIME WAS JUST REALLY BAD. POVERTY AND I WAS HAVING ALL THESE PROBLEMS WITH FAMILY AND THINGS LIKE THAT. SO YEAH, I WOULD HAVE STILL COME – THERE'S NOT ANY LEAFLET OR FLAG OR ANY AWARENESS SAYING PLEASE STOP THE TRAFFIC ... THE CHILDREN WILL GO AND SAY, PLEASE I WANT TO BE TRAFFICKED BECAUSE I'M TIRED OF THIS COUNTRY – EVEN IF WE SHOULD GET THE TOWN CRIER TO RUN AROUND THE WHOLE OF NIGERIA TO RING A BELL THAT ... TELLING THE PARENTS DON'T SEND YOUR KIDS, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LISTEN – IT'S RARE FOR A POOR PERSON TO SEND A RICH PERSON AWAY AND SAY 'NO, DON'T HELP MY FAMILY' – WHEN SOMEBODY JUST GOT IN THIS COUNTRY MAYBE, OR MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, YOU'RE HERE ILLEGALLY IT IS VERY VERY HARD FOR PEOPLE TO JUST WALK INTO THE POLICE STATION ... IT'S LIKE GIVING YOURSELF UP – WHEN THEY KNOW YOU ARE ILLEGAL, YOU ARE LIVING HERE ILLEGALLY, THEY TAKE ADVANTAGE BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T SHOUT, YOU CAN'T GO TO THE POLICE ... WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO DEAL WITH? THE FIRST THING THE POLICE WILL DEAL WITH IS YOUR STATUS – I TRIED TO RUN AWAY BUT I WAS QUICKLY FOUND AND BROUGHT TO THE HOUSE. I WAS BEATEN UP QUITE BADLY THAT DAY

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

'Beyond irregularity' is a major international project led by IPPR which focuses on irregular and transit migration from sub-Saharan Africa through Morocco to the European Union. The project has five partners: Sussex Centre for Migration Research at Sussex University, UK; Eaves Housing for Women Ltd, UK; Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Belgium; the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad (CCME), Morocco; and the Development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) in Nigeria.

For more, please visit <http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/7143/beyond-irregularity-towards-a-sustainable-approach-to-dealing-with-irregular-migration-from-sub-saharan-africa-to-europe>

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Glossary

ATMG	Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group	NACTAL	Network of CSOs Against Child Trafficking Abuse and Labour
CCME	Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad	NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	NCA	National Crime Agency
COSUDOW	Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women	NGI	Nongovernmental individual
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation	NRM	National Referral Mechanism
CTAIL	Child Trafficking and Information Line	NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
DfID	Department for International Development	PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland)	RALON	Risk and Liaison Overseas Network
dPRC	development Research and Projects Centre	SCD9	Human Exploitation and Organised Crime Command (Metropolitan Police)
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking	SOCA	Serious and Organised Crime Agency
GPI	Girl Power Initiative	TIP	Trafficking in Persons
IdMG	Interdepartmental ministerial group	UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	UKHTC	United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
MARACs	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences	WOTCLEF	Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of studies have examined the effectiveness of UK anti-trafficking policy but few have examined how the UK can address trafficking using an end-to-end approach that takes account of the complex range of factors that drive trafficking in source, transit and destination countries. This report is part of a wider programme of research on irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb to Europe. It aims to identify areas for action and opportunities for collaboration on trafficking by adopting a transnational perspective focusing on trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, and is based on research carried out between IPPR, Eaves and the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC).¹ Although some of the recommendations put forward in this report are specific to Nigeria and the UK, others have wider implications for dealing with trafficking in general from sending, transit and receiving country perspectives.

This research brings together an ambitious range of qualitative and quantitative methods. These have included: in-depth qualitative interviews with 40 trafficked people from Nigeria to the UK; a representative poll of the Nigerian population; over 50 interviews with stakeholders in both countries; and a review of the available literature and policy documentation.

The problem

Human trafficking is a relatively recent legal term. It is used to describe the act of the acquisition or transportation of a person from where they live through the use of violence, coercion or deception, for the purposes of exploitation. Trafficking therefore has three key elements: the act of acquisition or movement (international or within a country), the means (coercion, whether by force, the abuse of power, or deception) and the purpose (exploitation). Much is made in UK policy debates of the migration aspects of trafficking. However, coercion and exploitation are also at the core of what trafficking is and are the key distinctive elements that differentiate human trafficking from people smuggling or irregular immigration.

Beyond this definition, trafficking is a diverse and complex phenomenon. It can involve international or internal migration; men, women and children; exploitation in hidden sectors, such as prostitution, and in otherwise legal spaces, such as domestic work. It is an issue that extends beyond boundaries and jurisdictions, and tackling it requires coordinated and integrated action between different actors. It encompasses issues of irregular migration, gender discrimination, low-wage work and organised crime.

Tackling human trafficking

Our research identified that there is currently a lack of clarity in the policy debate about what trafficking is, and what the priorities are for policy and practical responses. Within Nigeria, trafficking is often understood to be related to prostitution and sexual exploitation, sometimes at the exclusion of other types of trafficking, such as for domestic work or forced labour. The UK policy debate often focuses on the irregular migration aspects of trafficking and on organised crime, but the movement of trafficked people can be within the country and can involve legal migration routes. Organised crime is not a feature of all trafficking.

¹ Beyond Irregularity is a project funded by the European Commission and led by IPPR in partnership with: the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad (CCME), dRPC, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Eaves, and Sussex University. For more information about the project, see <http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/7143/beyond-irregularity-towards-a-sustainable-approach-to-dealing-with-irregular-migration-from-sub-saharan-africa-to-europe>

Sometimes, the objectives of trafficking policy are also left unclear. Different agencies bring different priorities to the table, but these are not always made explicit. For example, does trafficking need to be addressed as a conduit for irregular migration, because it supports an illegal sex industry, because it involves organised criminal gangs, or because it leads to the violation of people's human rights? While these objectives may not be mutually exclusive, their relative prioritisation affects the nature of the policy and practical response, as well as the 'types' of trafficking that are addressed.

Due in part to this confusion, knowledge about the scale and character of trafficking to the UK and from Nigeria is incomplete. What is known is that trafficking to the UK increasingly involves a range of nationalities, ages, genders and types of exploitation that do not necessarily fit the conventional images of trafficking. As for Nigeria, it has been named by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as one of the top eight countries of origin for human trafficking globally.

Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK has its own particular characteristics and patterns. It involves both adults and children, but particularly women and girls. Unlike trafficking from Nigeria to other European countries such as Italy or the Netherlands, sexual exploitation does not appear to be the dominant form of exploitation in the UK; instead, domestic servitude is more common. In such cases, victims are trafficked to undertake household duties such as cleaning, childcare and cooking. Working hours are long, with no formal breaks and low or no pay. As well as exploitative, victims' experiences can be highly physically and psychologically abusive. Trafficking of this kind is hidden, often taking place in private households rather than in on-street premises or known massage parlours. Understanding these dimensions is important, as they affect the response needed.

Policy to date

The most developed responses to trafficking in the UK are reactive, designed to deal with the consequences of trafficking – irregular migration and victims in need of protection – rather than its root causes. While there is a strong political will to prevent trafficking, current preventative responses are piecemeal and uncoordinated.

A new UK anti-trafficking strategy launched in 2011 provides hope for the changes needed. With its emphasis on addressing trafficking 'at source', adopting an 'end-to-end' approach and using the language of prevention, the strategy opens up the possibility of a much more strategic approach. It is impossible at this stage to discern fully how the policy programme will develop and to evaluate its future impact. It is clear that the strategy has placed an increased emphasis on addressing trafficking 'upstream', before 'the threat of trafficking reaches UK shores' (Home Office 2011b). This is currently largely through improving the UK's border capacity overseas, to reduce irregular migration, as well as stepping up efforts against known organised criminal networks (ibid).

However, a step change in the way that we understand and respond to human trafficking is needed. Rather than seeing trafficking as an issue primarily of migration, it needs to be understood as a wider issue of exploitation. Rather than perceiving it as an issue dominated by organised criminal networks, it must be understood as a crime often perpetrated by people known to or, in many cases, related to the victims who may otherwise live their lives in an outwardly respectable way. Rather than imagining source and destination countries as altogether separate, they must both be seen as important actors in a joined-up response to addressing trafficking. Rather than focus on international enforcement work it must be understood as one that takes place among specific local areas and requires specific local responses.

Preventing trafficking

Preventing recruitment: the myth of 'better life syndrome'

Many existing analyses of trafficking from Nigeria stress the impact of a belief among young people of a perceived 'better life' available in Europe. Many existing awareness campaigns are predicated on the notion that trafficking is caused by people making decisions from a position of ignorance, based on an overestimation of the opportunities and rewards available from a life in Europe. However our research shows that, rather than

general misinformation and a lack of opportunity, the mechanisms that cause people to be vulnerable to trafficking are specific to certain at-risk groups, in particular, women and young people who are already experiencing high levels of deprivation and vulnerability.

The lives of the trafficked people in our sample were diverse but were commonly marked by a trigger or childhood experience, such as being orphaned, which led to them being without family or community support. Due to limited access to education, employment or safe refuge from violence, they were unable to support themselves and were vulnerable to offers of 'help' provided by traffickers. While victims did sometimes go with traffickers in search of better life opportunities, in the cases of our 40 interviewees, this was not motivated by greed but by the need for basic support and to escape from a life dominated by fear and violence.

Crucially, due to their vulnerable position, few victims were in a position to play a role in the decision to accept a (misrepresented) offer to travel to Europe. Thirty-two of our sample of 40 (80 per cent) were unable to play a part in the decision to travel abroad. Most were compelled to go with the trafficker by a parent or other family member.

For many of our respondents, being trafficked to the UK was a continuation of their experiences in Nigeria. Some were even brought to the UK to be exploited by the same people who had exploited them in Nigeria or were sent by them to others who then held them in similar conditions. There is a strong relationship between internal trafficking and international trafficking. More than a quarter of victims (28 per cent) in our sample appeared to have been internally trafficked in Nigeria as children. Work to address internal trafficking is therefore an important part of addressing international trafficking. Our research shows that addressing poverty and social exclusion is essential to addressing trafficking. Wider social policies such as education must be part of an anti-trafficking response.

Preventing trafficking networks: the myth of organised crime

Nigerian trafficking is highly complex, involving a large and diverse range of people. The narrative on human trafficking is often one of organised criminal networks run by gangs of profiteering criminals involved in other forms of organised border crime such as drug smuggling or gun running. Some people in our sample were trafficked by 'professionals' operating as part of a criminal operation. But most trafficking was undertaken through informal arrangements and done by individuals known to and, in many cases, related to the trafficking victims and their life in Nigeria or were part of their immediate family (such as a parent or husband). Just under three-quarters (72 per cent) of victims were recruited by someone they or their family knew well.

Preventing trafficking en route: the myth of the role of borders

The journey between Nigeria and the UK appears to present a space to address trafficking. As trafficking is so hidden in the UK, the border appears to provide a window of opportunity to infiltrate and address trafficking activity. However, there are many challenges to addressing trafficking this way. Identifying indicators of trafficking as well as facilitating cooperation from the trafficked person is very challenging at this stage. Rather than physical force or abduction, control over a victim is often gained through deception. This means that they have very limited awareness or information about the exploitation that they will face in the UK at the point of arrival. While border control may prevent an individual from coming into an exploitative environment in the UK, it does little to address the pre-existing exploitation or abuse that individuals have faced in Nigeria or their vulnerability to being trafficked elsewhere, and fails to address the demand for exploitative labour that may well be filled by other vulnerable migrants (or others) already in the UK. Borders provide an opportunity to address international trafficking and current responses should be maintained. However this should be but one aspect of the trafficking response.

Preventing trafficking at source: the myth of work 'upstream'

For the UK, addressing trafficking from Nigeria 'at source' may seem like a difficult objective, fraught with expense and complex diplomatic manoeuvres. But there are other ways of preventing trafficking before it occurs. This research has demonstrated the importance of

factors in the UK in causing trafficking on the 'demand side'. Shifting policy towards a more demand-side focus through stronger measures against domestic crime such as prostitution or domestic servitude would help weaken the drive for human trafficking into the UK as well as offer a more immediate, accessible policy programme for the UK to pursue.

In many senses, the mechanisms of control facilitating trafficking are not always directly a result of the work of the trafficker but are also a product of a fertile environment in the UK. Trafficking victims may spend months or years in a situation of exploitation before attempting escape. Our research shows that underpinning control is often a lack of awareness of (alternative) support on the part of victims and a fear that they would not be supported if they left their trafficking situation: a belief on the part of victims that their choice is either to stay with their trafficker or to be removed back to their previous life of abuse (and face possible retribution from their trafficker) in Nigeria. A lack of action against exploitation by those encountering trafficked victims, whether through complicity (in the case of a sex work client, for example) or out of a sense that they could help the victim best by not reporting the situation to the authorities, shuts down an important escape route for trafficked people.

While there may be a disconnection between the trafficked person's understanding of the support available to them and the reality, the lack of accessible or appropriate support for people exiting a trafficking situation is an important factor in allowing trafficking to take place in the UK. Our research suggests that even after people leave their trafficking situation, the lack of access to adequate protection (whether due to ignorance about support pathways or barriers to provision) leads to many entering into further exploitation and being re trafficked within the UK. The existence of individuals and groups in the UK willing to exploit vulnerable individuals once they have left their trafficking situation again throws doubt on a strategy that sees the prevention of trafficking from Nigeria to the UK as exclusively an 'upstream' issue involving Nigeria. The importance of addressing environments conducive to trafficking means that work to protect trafficked people has a crucial role to play, not only in supporting victims of crime and abuse but in preventing trafficking and re trafficking.

Preventing trafficking: recommendations

Our research shows that addressing poverty and social exclusion is essential to addressing trafficking. Work aiming to prevent trafficking has often focused on raising the awareness of potential victims about its dangers. Our research has demonstrated that awareness-raising should not be the only focus of a trafficking strategy but that, done well, it could have an impact. Awareness of 'trafficking' is high in Nigeria; however awareness of the nuances of trafficking is not. This can provide an enabling environment for trafficking. People have a strong sense of personal resilience that is not necessarily born out in reality. **Future awareness-raising campaigns should target vulnerable groups and the people around them who may facilitate trafficking, and should involve people who have previously been trafficked.** However, this should be only in cases or in ways where safeguarding can be ensured. In addition to this, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) in Nigeria, in collaboration with NGOs, should **run a sustained campaign on trafficking for domestic work.** This campaign should have three target groups: the parents, young people and potential traffickers. Besides raising the levels of awareness about the risks associated with this type of trafficking, the aim is to also initiate a debate about the illegality and exploitative nature of trafficking for domestic work as well as the consequences for people caught trafficking for these purposes. Such a debate will contribute towards challenging the 'normalisation' of trafficking for domestic work in Nigeria.

Our research findings also emphasise the need for prevention to go beyond awareness-raising, which may be particularly ineffective for groups that are vulnerable to trafficking, for examples orphans or children in private fostering arrangements. **Policy in Nigeria that seeks to prevent trafficking should address poverty and exclusion from support as well as migration intentions. The relationship between internal and international trafficking should be recognised and drivers of internal trafficking should be addressed, such as weak child protection protocols.** International

agencies brought into this work should not just be focused on crime and migration. Other international agencies also have a role to play here. Engaging with the work of other social development focused bodies such as UNICEF should be an important feature of anti-trafficking work.

The UK's anti-trafficking work in Nigeria focuses on strengthening borders and preventing irregular migration between Nigeria and the UK. While the work that is in place to do this should be continued (reducing irregular migration is a laudable aim) it should not be seen as or extended as a way of addressing trafficking. Rather than build capacity around the borders, **the UK should focus on supporting Nigerian institutions to build child protection protocols in order to address the vulnerability and internal trafficking that leads to international trafficking.** The UK should also start to mainstream anti-trafficking work within wider development policy and programming in Nigeria where appropriate.

Critically, prevention activities should not just be 'upstream'. As this study demonstrates, trafficking is driven by factors in the UK too, and policy should target demand and conducive environments for exploitation in the UK. **This is in part about the general enforcement of laws around child protection, vulnerable employment and sex work.** More specifically, on a local level, **greater efforts should be made to communicate messages about the law in the UK, what constitutes trafficking and the consequences of being caught to individuals and communities who may come into contact with trafficked people.** This could be achieved through further awareness-raising by community organisations and religious institutions.

Stringent immigration policies are not only often ineffective at addressing trafficking; they can also increase the opportunities for exploitation. In order to address this, **the government should re-establish the domestic worker visa route that allows people to change employer and extend it to diplomatic households.** Under new rules, domestic workers are granted a six-month visit visa, with no employment rights and no right to change employers, greatly increasing the risk of exploitation and the likelihood of trafficking.

Protecting trafficked people

Under the current system, victims of trafficking are often not able to access protection that is open, targeted, supportive and transformational, whether in the UK or Nigeria. After escaping from their trafficking situation, many victims in our sample continued to face vulnerability, fear and uncertainty, and in some cases further abuse and exploitation which lasted over a number of years before they were formally identified by authorities. They then underwent a prolonged and traumatic process of interrogation, legal proceedings and even detention before they accessed support. The short-term nature of support available led to a significant degree of uncertainty, and to dependency on voluntary sector services that are vulnerable to funding pressures.

As noted above, protection is important not only for its own sake, but also to prevent trafficking and re-trafficking. Support provision should therefore have two aims. The first is to encourage victims to leave their trafficking situation, and prevent the continuation of exploitation and re-trafficking in the UK. The second is to ensure that trafficked people are protected and supported to restart and transform their lives (either in the UK or in Nigeria, depending on circumstances). In practice, this means that the decision-making process by which victims are identified must be efficient and trusted, that appropriate support services must be available in the UK, and that the system of returning victims to Nigeria (where that is appropriate) and providing support there must be effective and alert to risk of re-trafficking, abuse and ongoing vulnerability.

Identifying victims

The current system does not include a key group for a protection response, members of the public and people in community environments like churches. On exiting a trafficking situation, most people in our sample sought support from members of the public or in identifiable Nigerian community settings such as churches. Few fled to the police or other statutory authorities. Indeed, many actively avoided engaging with the police. As such it

does not provide a pathway between those who trafficked people seek support from and those who can actually provide support. This creates an important gap.

Many respondents described intimidating and acrimonious encounters with official agencies that led them to shrink away from revealing their experiences or seeking support. These negative experiences seemed to have a scarring effect that influenced the ways that victims engaged with the authorities over time. Even when people reported a violent crime, frontline services often focused on their immigration status instead.

In order to be identified as a victim of trafficking individuals must enter a formal system. Under the current system, anyone who is referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)² by one of the designated 'first responders'³ and who is believed to by the 'competent authorities' to have 'reasonable grounds' for being trafficked is entitled to a 45-day reflection and recovery period. During this period they can access services including housing and medical care. Decisions about who is a victim of trafficking are then made by designated competent authorities. In the UK these are the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and the UK Border Agency (UKBA), the latter for those victims of trafficking who have made an asylum or immigration application. The dominance of agencies with an immigration focus in determining trafficking cases is problematic here. Victims of trafficking and their advocates have low trust in the decisions made (perhaps with some justification) which potentially reduces the likelihood of them escaping trafficking situations and seeking support.

UKBA is perceived as having a vested interest in declining people's applications for formal recognition as trafficking victims, given that its priority is to enforce immigration control. Our research suggests that this approach is not only distressing but also obstructs clear and confident disclosure by victims. There are also limited opportunities for wider collaboration around decisions, including limited mechanisms to ensure that trafficked people can draw on the support of trafficking experts (such as lawyers) when referrals are made. This is further complicated by the limited scope for decisions to be reconsidered and the lack of a formal appeals mechanism.

Decisions on trafficking cases are also limited by the narrow definition used by the NRM as it misses out some trafficked people. In order for someone to be recognised as trafficked, they must be in a trafficking situation when recognised, or in a situation as a direct result of trafficking experiences. An individual can have had an experience that meets the definition of trafficking but still receive a decision that they are not a victim of trafficking because the experience occurred in the past. Our research identified that this set-up can lead to serious protection gaps for people who have been victims of trafficking.

Provision of support in the UK

Supporting trafficked people once they have been identified is an important part of an anti-trafficking strategy. While the government's latest human trafficking strategy reiterated clearly the UK's commitment to protecting victims, it does so within the context of significant pressure on government not to be seen to be creating avenues of support for 'irregular migrants' in general. Support should be transformational and allow people to move towards resilience. The current support available is provided as a crisis intervention rather than a long-term path to independence, justice, and recovery.

Support, when it was provided, was often inappropriate. The quality of safe and anonymous housing was of particular concern. Many victims were in a state of high vulnerability but were placed in basic hostels with no security, surrounded by people in chaotic circumstances. The absence of a formal body to ensure that people were referred appropriately between different agencies for support leads to important accountability gaps. While changes to support provision mean that there is additional coordination of

2 The NRM is a decision-making device, operational since 2009, through which people identified as possible victims of trafficking can be referred to a competent authority to judge their case and eligibility for care and support.

3 First responders include: SOCA/UKHTC; local authorities; UKBA; Poppy Project; TARA Project (Scotland); Migrant Helpline; Kalayaan; Medaille Trust; Salvation Army; Gangmasters Licensing Authority; UK police forces; NSPCC/Child Trafficking and Information Line (CTAIL); local authority children's services; Barnardo's; Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

support provided to those during the 45-day recovery and reflection period, for those outside of this, support can be minimal. Research findings reveal that often the problem was not merely signposting and referrals but required advocates to challenge support providers to allow a trafficked person to be able to access their services. Access to good quality legal advice is currently further limited by funding constraints.

Return and support in Nigeria

Return to Nigeria may be the right outcome for many people who have been trafficked. While support gaps in Nigeria remain the primary responsibility of the Nigerian government, it is the responsibility of the UK government to ascertain that victims returned will be protected and supported. It is not in the UK's interests to return people to a situation where they are likely to be re trafficked.

Our research demonstrates that return needs to be carried out in a sensitive way with clear information sharing. Former victims of trafficking face significant vulnerability in Nigeria. The close relationship between traffickers and the communities that trafficked people originate from, or their families, causes particular difficulties. Even where the risk of re trafficking can be avoided, the prospects of former trafficking victims remain poor: as well as returning with possible health problems and broken social networks, the social stigmatisation of former trafficking victims is high.

The capacity of support organisations in Nigeria is low, with support frequently constrained by lack of funding and poor coordination. While some services are highly professional and proficient, this is not the case across the board. Victims' support too often lacks therapeutic value and is unsafe. 'Safe' houses are known targets of traffickers. Some services presume the ultimate outcome to be family reunification, but this is often inappropriate. Vulnerability to traffickers often started as a result of individuals fleeing a violent or abusive family situation. In other cases, family members were complicit in the trafficking or relatives were at risk of reprisals.

There is no integrated referral system between the UK and Nigeria. While risk assessments are carried out on returnees going through a programme of voluntary return, this is at the discretion of the organisation with the tender for return rather than a uniform position of public policy. Forced returnees may not be seen by support providers who may be able to recognise signs of trafficking and put necessary support pathways in place. In our sample, this resulted in some people being met at the airport by traffickers rather than support providers and others being detained. While support services in Nigeria remain underdeveloped, it may make sense for support to focus on delivering pathways to independence in the UK, while considering how responses can be strengthened in Nigeria.

Protecting trafficking victims: recommendations

Protection must be structured so that trafficked people can and will access it. **Policy should acknowledge that state solutions are unlikely to deliver a full and effective response alone.** Whether due to experiences in Nigeria or the threats of traffickers, people interviewed were afraid and unwilling to seek support from agencies such as the police. **Trafficking solutions must acknowledge that trafficked people are more likely to seek support from members of the public, particularly people who they perceive to be Nigerian.**

People in the community who are most likely to come into contact with trafficked people should be able to identify trafficking and refer victims to support services. This includes frontline workers in the police, schools and health services. Efforts are being made to respond to this challenge. A number of training courses in recognising trafficked people are now provided to frontline police forces and to those undertaking social work training. Issues particular to Nigerian trafficking are appearing in official texts. For example, updated guidance for prosecutors on victims of trafficking produced by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in May 2011 makes reference to the impact that 'juju'⁴ or fears of retribution against the families of trafficking victims has on traffickers' ability to exert control. There is a need to ensure that this **recognition of the diversity of trafficked people, how they may behave and how they are controlled, is also referenced in other agencies' documents**

4 See the boxed text on p42 for a definition of 'juju'.

and training packages. Alongside this, **services need to act appropriately to ensure that trafficked people are able to disclose their experiences by following guidelines developed for working with people reporting violent crimes.**

Community and voluntary agencies have a clear role to play. They have the potential to act as effective mediators between trafficked people and statutory services. However, in the current situation members of the public or community groups are unable to respond appropriately, unaware of referral pathways and uncertain of whether to refer people to untrusted statutory agencies and systems of support. Some agencies do valuable work here however funding and geographic reach may limit their current capacity.

In the community at large, the first step is to raise awareness about referral pathways as well as the law on trafficking in the UK and to encourage debate and disclosure about instances of exploitation and abuse within the Nigerian community. **Local authorities should appoint community liaison officers from the Nigerian community to lead training sessions as well as providing points of contact for anyone wishing to disclose trafficking experiences.**

The decision-making procedure (in the UK's case, the NRM) is at the heart of the support system for trafficked people. Its role is to define whether or not somebody has been a victim of the crime of trafficking. This decision should be distinct from an immigration decision. A trafficking decision determines if somebody's past experiences fit the criteria of trafficking. An asylum or immigration decision determines an individual's future risk and/or immigration status. The assessment as to whether somebody has been trafficked should not be concerned with somebody's right to reside in the UK; a trafficking referral should never be declined on the basis of immigration concerns. Similarly, it should be clear that a formal recognition that someone is or has been a victim of trafficking does not give them an automatic right to remain in the UK (although this might play a role in determining a future asylum or other immigration application).

Critically, whether the NRM is functioning well or not in its present form, it is likely to remain untrusted while it is so entwined with UKBA. The low level of trust between trafficked people (and trafficked people's support workers) and the NRM is an issue of real concern. It has a critical impact on whether trafficked people are willing to come forward to see if they are eligible for support as well as how agencies can work together to support trafficked people. **The NRM should be an independent decision-making body for trafficking, separate from UKBA, tasked solely with trafficking decision-making.**

In addition to an independent NRM, other mechanisms must be conducive to fair decision-making. This means **training for officials, access to advocacy support for interviewees, an appeals mechanism and the use of criteria that reflect the accepted definition of trafficking.** If the decision-making mechanism is independent and functions well it should be trusted to make fair decisions. This will mean that some people will be found not to meet the criteria for support. It is important that NGOs and support providers work with statutory agencies to ensure both that the mechanism functions well and that the decisions are respected.

Once our interviewees had their trafficking status recognised, many struggled to access the support they were entitled to. Those who had accessed an effective voluntary sector advocate were able to confidently engage with statutory services (such as the police) and access services that they were entitled to. Therefore, in order to ensure that trafficked people can be linked into support at a local level, anti-trafficking policy should make use of structures for coordinating support already established for people exiting other violent situations. **Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are already established in each local authority. Trafficked people should be referred into these to ensure that they can access the services they need.**

While support gaps in Nigeria remain the primary responsibility of the Nigerian government, it is the responsibility of the UK government to ascertain that victims will be protected and supported if they are returned to Nigeria. As a start, **the UK should ensure that all people returned to Nigeria are assessed for their vulnerability to trafficking and that the support that is needed is in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing.**

Prosecuting traffickers

The prosecution of traffickers not only safeguards the victim by removing the threat that their trafficker poses to them, it also acknowledges the victim's suffering and gives them justice. But given the scale of trafficking in the UK, prosecution of offenders is still rare. The poor prosecution rates for trafficking are partly due to the nature of the crime itself, in particular the widespread reluctance of victims to report or testify against their exploiters. The 'hidden' nature of trafficking can make it very difficult to secure the corroborating evidence necessary to prosecute.

The low number of prosecutions for trafficking, as well as for related offences such as forced labour, assault or controlling for gain also reveal a system that is not currently fit for purpose. The current prosecution framework is heavily focused on areas that may not capture Nigerian trafficking. Indeed, the focus on prosecution addressing 'organised criminal networks' misses a key constituent of Nigerian trafficking: ordinary individuals living otherwise normal and legal lives alongside their role as traffickers and exploiters. In addition to this, our research demonstrates that the emphasis of prosecution and enforcement is still on the victims, rather than their exploiters. While our research brought to light numerous reports of hostile and inquisitorial treatment from authorities – most strikingly, in their accounts of detention centres like Yarlswood – not one of the traffickers of those in our sample appeared to have been successfully convicted at the time of interview.

In Nigeria, the number of prosecutions is also low. Rather than a lack of legislation, several respondents reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity with traffickers on the part of the authorities when victims or their families notified police about their situation. While in theory the penalties for trafficking are appropriate, this is undermined by the option for some offenders to pay a fine in place of serving a prison term. Prosecutions also focus heavily on trafficking for sexual exploitation rather than other common forms of labour exploitation. The perceived impunity of traffickers is a major contributing factor to trafficking continuing as well as to trafficked people feeling unable to seek help.

Prosecuting traffickers: recommendations

Rather than focusing exclusively on international criminal networks, prosecutions can be better facilitated through a more victim-focused response. As noted above, more protection of victims is needed to allow them to disclose safely and confidently. This is difficult to achieve while victims are treated as criminal suspects themselves. As one informant put it, 'You're not going to get successful prosecutions unless you can get the victim's cooperation – and they're not going to cooperate unless there's that distance from the immigration system.'

So far, the focus of prosecution on addressing organised criminal networks misses a key constituent of Nigerian trafficking. To strengthen prosecution then, enforcement agencies such as **UKHTC must place a greater emphasis on outreach and communication with local communities, particularly among the Nigerian diaspora in London and other cities across the country.** The close relationships between traffickers and trafficked people mean that securing prosecutions requires protecting victims and encouraging them to disclose safely and confidently.

Recently launched guidance by the CPS (2011) has marked a change in the guidance issued to prosecutors working with victims of trafficking. The guidance provides a nuanced guide to recognising victims of trafficking. It even provides information specific to Nigerian victims. This is an important step forward so that professionals can avoid criminalising individuals who have been trafficked. Information about these guidelines and the importance of applying them should be further disseminated to local agencies.

One way of facilitating prosecutions here is to provide greater opportunities for trafficked people to pursue civil cases as well as criminal cases. In civil cases, the burden of proof is lowered and the financial penalties can be a deterrent to traffickers, particularly small-scale or individual traffickers. Civil cases can also deliver meaningful justice to trafficked people. **Reform of the employment tribunal system is an important step to facilitate**

this. However, in order to make it a reality, **temporary residence permits should be issued to people who need to stay in the UK to pursue a civil case in the same way they are issued to those who have to stay in the UK to pursue a criminal case.**

In Nigeria, the perceived impunity of traffickers is a major contributing factor to trafficking continuing as well as to trafficked people feeling unable to seek help or to return to Nigeria. **Tariffs in Nigeria should be increased for trafficking** so that legal consequences act as an effective deterrent.

Cooperation

Trafficking is an issue that exists in between the gaps of regulation, welfare, service delivery and border control. More than that, however, it exists in between the gaps of support provided by families and communities. This is an issue to which multiple agencies must provide a coordinated response. Cooperation between agencies in Nigeria, between agencies in the UK and between the two countries is underdeveloped.

In the UK, cooperation between different stakeholders is ad hoc, ranging from brilliant examples of good practice to areas of real concern. While the UK has two specialist agencies doing work on human trafficking, the UKHTC and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), the work of both to facilitate cooperation is limited by their capacity, their focus on organised crime as well as their location within crime-fighting agencies that can inhibit information sharing. While there are positive examples of collaboration within civil society, it is by no means routine. There is limited engagement between trafficking agencies and specialist organisations and African diaspora institutions such as churches. Efforts within government to link up relevant departments through an interdepartmental ministerial group (IdMG) on human trafficking have fallen flat.

Similarly, in Nigeria there are many agencies active in addressing trafficking at national, local and community levels who have developed a range of innovative responses to trafficking. In some ways, Nigeria is ahead of the UK in facilitating cooperation to address trafficking. NAPTIP in particular, provides an excellent model, but with some important limitations, according to some stakeholder interviewees. For example, civil society can be vulnerable to political pressures and can be reliant on senior political support rather than grassroots activism. Many NGOs also felt unsupported by NAPTIP. Without cooperation the response to trafficking lacks a clear strategic approach that draws on all available resources.

Despite bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and the UK on a number of issues, there has been limited cooperation between the UK and Nigeria on trafficking. In 2004, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together to address trafficking and to support the safe return and reintegration of people trafficked to the UK back to Nigeria. While a useful start to a cooperative relationship, work to further develop the MoU has been limited. Where cooperation has occurred, it has in the most part been through UK agencies with a border or crime mandate and has represented a continuation of the UK's 'responsive' rather than preventative attitude towards addressing trafficking.

Stakeholders on both sides found it difficult to engage with one another. It is difficult to ensure that lines of communication are open. Each set of stakeholders raised the question of a lack of adequate information about the existence and capacity of agencies within each country. Stakeholders in Nigeria reported that they struggled to know how to engage with the UK on trafficking due to the multiplicity of organisations and departments, none of which seemed to have the capacity to work across borders, to engage on issues of public policy, or to work on a broad range of issues. Governance structures in the UK are not particularly well developed to facilitate collaboration. The trafficking portfolio sits within a department (the Home Office) with a domestic remit and a tight focus on immigration issues. Departments with an international remit (such as the Foreign Office) are insufficiently engaged with trafficking and other relevant agencies have a tight remit (such as CEOP) or lack resources to tackle this issue (such as the Metropolitan Police).

Cooperation: recommendations

In order to ensure a strategic and efficient response to trafficking, **the UK should designate the UKHTC as an independent agency with oversight of trafficking work.** This would give other countries, including Nigeria, a single point of contact that they can engage with. It will also allow the UK to engage more fully with Europe in order to build multilateral responses to Nigerian trafficking that address the criminal aspects of trafficking as well as more structural factors. Importantly, it would be able to support local efforts for collaboration by acting as a repository of good practice and information.

The UK should appoint an independent anti-trafficking rapporteur. As an independent agency, it would be able to build consensus about the trafficking problem in the UK. It would also provide critical scrutiny on policy to ensure that there is meaningful cooperation within government and that the trafficking response is effective and evidence-led.

While there is limited cooperation between British and Nigerian statutory and voluntary organisations, there is significant scope for development here. The existence of a bilateral MoU provides an opportunity for developing better working relationships in the many areas where a cooperative response is needed. As well as the return of trafficked people from the UK to Nigeria, the MoU provides a starting point for cooperation on work to prevent trafficking. The MoU needs to be refined and made more relevant. **A working party made up of designated individuals from the UK and Nigeria should be convened to take this work forward.**

In Nigeria, NAPTIP should work to facilitate the work of NGOs and other government agencies to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental drivers of trafficking. Many actors lack resources and as a result struggle to work together due to funding pressures. NGOs also lack networking capacity. In order to make the response to trafficking effective and efficient, **NAPTIP should regain its collaborative mandate and work to facilitate the work of other NGOs and other government agencies to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental drivers of trafficking.**

With the work of NAPTIP focusing more on enforcement, it is critical that NGOs and other agencies are able to come to the fore to ensure that responses develop across a range of areas. **NAPTIP should formalise their working agreement with the Network of CSOs Against Child Trafficking Abuse and Labour (NACTAL)** in order to raise the profile of anti-trafficking work done by the many actors in Nigeria and ensure there is dialogue between the two organisations.

Ways forward: a summary of the actions needed

To tackle trafficking from Nigeria to the UK more effectively, action by a range of actors is needed.

UK government and agencies

- The UK should designate the UKHTC as an independent agency with oversight of trafficking work. The UK should identify an independent point of contact for trafficking work, similar to a rapporteur.
- In addition to its work liaising with statutory agencies and nongovernmental agencies, an independent UKHTC must place a greater emphasis on outreach and communication with local communities, particularly among the Nigerian diaspora in London and other cities across the country.
- The UK should designate individuals (particularly from the UKHTC but also other agencies) to form part of a working party made up of individuals from the UK and Nigeria in order to ensure the development of the MoU and provide a point of collaboration for strategic anti-trafficking responses between the two countries.
- Agencies including the police, UKBA and social services should incorporate information on the diversity of trafficked people, how they may behave and how they are controlled, including features of Nigerian trafficking, in training packages for workers who may come into contact with trafficked people. Training must also stress the importance of not just identifying trafficked people but of supporting disclosure by following guidelines developed for working with people reporting violent crimes.

- The trafficking decision-making device should be reformed. It should be made by an independent decision-making body for trafficking, separate from UKBA, tasked solely with trafficking decision-making. The body must adopt mechanisms that are conducive to fair decision-making. This means ongoing training for officials, access to advocacy support for interviewees, an appeals mechanism and the use of criteria that reflect the accepted definition of trafficking.
- Temporary residence permits should be issued to people who need to stay in the UK to pursue a civil case in the same way they are issued to those who have to stay in the UK to pursue a criminal case.
- The UK should ensure that all people returned to Nigeria are assessed for their vulnerability to trafficking and that the support that is needed is in place to ensure their safety.
- The UK should re-establish the domestic worker visa route that allows people to change their employer, and extend this visa and the protection it affords to diplomatic households.
- UK development agencies should conduct an audit of the impact of their development work in Nigeria on trafficking as well as opportunities to develop further work focusing on gender empowerment through education, access to employment and safety.
- UK agencies' capacity building in Nigeria should focus on supporting Nigerian institutions to build child protection protocols in order to address the vulnerability and internal trafficking that leads to international trafficking.

UK local authorities

- Trafficked people should be referred to MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences).
- Local authorities should establish community liaison officers for particular nationalities including Nigeria. This should be done in partnership with established NGOs. The role would be to build relationships between statutory services and community settings (people in churches, other community groups) and to lead training sessions to share information about indications of trafficking and referral pathways as well as providing points of contact for anyone wishing to disclose trafficking experiences.

UK NGOs

- UK organisations should run a campaign for those who may come into contact with trafficked persons about the definition of trafficking, the law in the UK, what constitutes trafficking and the consequences as well as support pathways for referral.
- UK organisations should work with local authorities and statutory agencies to ensure that trafficked people are able to access support pathways through supporting community liaison officers and information on them.
- UK organisations, including community organisations should engage with an independent UKHTC to ensure that information is shared. Different agencies must attempt to work towards a position where consensus is reached on the scale and character of trafficking, the objectives of trafficking policy and necessary direction of policy.
- UK organisations should support the understanding of trafficking and the identity of trafficked people through considering opportunities to promote a range of trafficking experiences through their advocacy and media work.

Nigerian government agencies including NAPTIP

- NAPTIP should regain its collaborative mandate. Its role should be formalised as a collaborative one working to address the root causes of trafficking. Workstreams should be developed to facilitate the work of NGOs and other government agencies at a local and federal level to mainstream anti-trafficking work. This is to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental social and economic drivers of trafficking. The relationship between internal and international trafficking should also be recognised and the drivers of internal trafficking should be addressed by NAPTIP.
- Nigeria should designate individuals to form part of a working party made up of individuals from the UK and Nigeria in order to ensure the development of the MoU and provide a point of collaboration for strategic anti-trafficking responses between the two countries.

- NAPTIP should formalise their working agreement with NACTAL in order to support the anti-trafficking work done by the many actors in Nigeria and ensure there is dialogue between the two organisations.
- Tariffs for trafficking in Nigeria should be increased.

Nigerian NGOs

- Nigerian NGOs should deliver campaigns that are evidence based to:
 - target vulnerable groups and those that facilitate trafficking and have a role in decision-making such as parents and community leaders
 - address trafficking for domestic work
 - involve people who have previously been trafficked (in cases where safeguarding can be ensured) or consider ways to use the testimony of people who have previously been trafficked.
- Collaboration efforts such as NACTAL should be supported by mature nongovernmental anti-trafficking organisations in order to provide a platform to bring in smaller organisations working on a range of related issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

Like many victims of trafficking, as a child Gigi had high hopes for the future. ‘When I was younger, I wanted to do well in school and make my parents proud and get a good job.’ However, her life was changed by a sudden destabilizing event: the death, aged 12, of her parents in a religious riot. Crucially, this tragic event also heightened her vulnerability. Months later, now orphaned, a stranger appeared claiming to be a relative of the girl. ‘I had never seen her before but initially I believed this. She told me she would look after me as no one could find my family.’ Instead, she was soon forced by her ‘aunty’ into domestic servitude and her education was abruptly ended.

Though sudden, the move abroad was in many ways a continuation of her situation in Nigeria. Having relocated to London with her exploiter to join the rest of the family, the workload became even worse, and her isolation more complete. ‘I was kept locked in the house for approximately six years. I never left the house from 2003 until 2009. I had to look after the children all day and also at night. I had to prepare their food every two hours and make sure that their nappies were dry. I had to sleep on the floor in the children’s room. I hardly slept and was never given enough food.’ Physical and psychological abuse from her trafficker was a daily reality. ‘Aunty used to beat me regularly. She would use different things: her hand, a belt, wooden cooking spoon, the pipe of the Hoover. I had to kneel down in front of her and she would often slap me and beat me on my back.’

Gigi escaped and sought support at a hairdresser. However, this was not the end of her experience of vulnerability. She was afraid to go the police: ‘Aunty said they would arrest me and beat me.’ She drifted between staying with different people she met on the street and in church, but this was unsustainable. ‘There was no room in her house – she was trying to help but I couldn’t stay there.’ She was left homeless and slept out on the streets for six months.

Since receiving support, Gigi has had to rebuild her life slowly after years of trauma and lack of access to education or healthcare. Now her focus is on finally completing the education she was denied for so long, and potentially helping other victims like herself to rebuild their lives. ‘I would like to finish my education and probably get a job and be able to look after myself. And maybe one day [I would like to work] around trafficking, with women who travel back to Nigeria.’ For now, she is awaiting a decision as to whether she can stay in the UK. Her trafficker has not been arrested.

1.1 Understanding human trafficking

Gigi is one of 40 people we interviewed as part of our research with people who had been trafficked from Nigeria to the UK.

Some of Gigi’s experiences fit the definition of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a relatively recent term and is used to describe the act of the acquisition or transportation of a person away from the community in which they live through the use of violence, coercion or deception for the purposes of exploiting them. In the case of children, their vulnerability is a fact and means that coercion does not have to be present. A widely accepted definition is given in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children:

‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, or

of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include at a minimum the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.'

Thus trafficking has three key elements: the act of acquisition or movement (international or internal), the means (coercion, whether by force, the abuse of power, or deception) and the purpose (exploitation).

Much is made in UK policy debates of the migration aspects of trafficking. Migration is undoubtedly an important part of the story, but it is coercion and exploitation that lie at the core of what trafficking is. Coercion and exploitation also (importantly) differentiate trafficking from people smuggling. Smuggling provides financial benefit to the smuggler through the facilitation of unlawful border crossing for an individual. By contrast, the financial benefit to a trafficker lies in the commodification or subsequent exploitation of the individual being procured. While a trafficker may facilitate someone's entry into a country (including by smuggling or other illegal means), the relationship does not end on arrival. It often goes on to involve the trafficker selling the victim to another individual or exploiting them themselves.

Trafficking is often discussed in connection with irregular migration, but it is a complex phenomenon and can also involve migration that is legal (for example within the EU), or movement within a country. A recent UK example is provided by the conviction of six men in Rochdale for the trafficking of British girls for sexual exploitation (BBC 2012). While international trafficking is the main focus of this study, it is a subset of trafficking more broadly.

Trafficking is also often understood primarily in relation to sex work but can also occur for a range of exploitative activities including domestic servitude, forced labour, forced begging, or criminal activities such as pickpocketing and the exploitation of children for benefit fraud. Although trafficking is often associated with the work of organised criminal gangs, recent convictions for trafficking in the UK demonstrate that it can also be carried out by individuals, sometimes known to the victim (BBC 2012). Similar to other forms of private, domestic abuse, the cooperation of the victim can be gained not only through force or abduction. Psychological means of control such as threats of violence are an important component.

Human trafficking is an issue that captures the public and political imagination. Both the UK and Nigeria are committed to addressing it. This report aims to present new data to support stakeholders in the UK and in Nigeria to find a way forward.

1.2 Methods

This research has been carried out in the UK and Nigeria between IPPR, Eaves and the dRPC. It brings together an ambitious range of qualitative and quantitative methods. These include:

- indepth qualitative interviews with 40 people (39 women and one man) that had been trafficked from Nigeria to the UK⁵
- 27 interviews conducted with stakeholders in the UK, including a range of representatives from the voluntary sector, statutory services, government officials and trafficking experts
- 29 interviews conducted with stakeholders in Nigeria, including a range of representatives from the voluntary sector, statutory services, government officials and trafficking experts
- a representative poll (n=1036) of the Nigerian population on awareness of trafficking and attitudes towards it
- a review of available literature and policy documents.

5 All had been judged to have been trafficked according to the Palermo Protocol 2003 by legal experts, not all had entered the NRM.

By engaging stakeholders from both Nigeria and the UK, we have been able to build a much more meaningful understanding of the policy context in each country, the opportunities for developing a response and for building collaboration between stakeholders.

The use of indepth qualitative interviews with a large number of trafficked people from Nigeria has allowed us to go beyond an analysis of the lawfulness of the system or of the perceived quality of the services. Instead, it has enabled us to build an understanding of how to rethink trafficking policy based on motivations and lived experiences. It has also enabled us to involve a group rarely brought into the policy debate and to ensure that the development of policy is advised by their experiences and their views.

Numerous initiatives and awareness campaigns designed to address trafficking have been established in Nigeria yet knowledge of trafficking understanding in the country, beyond supposition, has been limited. By carrying out a representative poll of the Nigerian population we have data that for the first time establishes the level of knowledge of trafficking among different age groups in Nigeria.

As in all research projects, some limitations of the study must be acknowledged.

- All of our interviewees had to come into contact with a service that recognised them as trafficked. While it would have been challenging, if not impossible, to have talked to participants that had not accessed support, this does introduce some bias into our sample, as the latter were not included. We have taken this into account in the analysis.
- For ethical reasons, we interviewed adults rather than children. However, half of the participants in the research were trafficked as children.
- For some of the interviewees, policy and practice may have moved on since they accessed support. We have tried to be sensitive to this in our analysis by considering whether their experiences may have changed as a result of changed practice.
- Given the importance of testimony for a trafficked person, it is possible that some interviewees felt unable to be wholly candid. We took steps in order to mitigate this effect by ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of their testimony. When selecting interviewees, a conscious effort was made to select participants from a range of locations across the UK in order to attempt to mitigate a London bias.

1.3 The study

1.3.1 Why a transnational study?

Many studies have examined the effectiveness of UK trafficking policy (see ATMG 2010, ATMG 2012, GRETA 2012). Some studies have examined cooperation between countries (see Chandran 2011). However few have examined how trafficking can be addressed internationally or assessed the effectiveness of current policy addressing trafficking between two particular countries. This is a significant knowledge gap. In order to address trafficking comprehensively, it must be tackled holistically, confronting the factors that cause trafficking in the round. This may include the factors that cause people to become vulnerable to trafficking, the demand for exploitation or criminals operating transnationally. Protection for those caught up in trafficking is a vital part of a trafficking response. When the crime occurs across borders, the policy coordination and resource allocation required to do this is much more challenging. This research takes a transnational perspective to identify the best areas for action and opportunities for collaboration.

It is also important to acknowledge that ‘trafficking’ can be a quite different phenomenon depending on the areas of the world involved. Trafficking methods, profiles of trafficked persons, types of exploitation can all differ. Concurrently, the particular challenges of addressing trafficking or supporting trafficked people differ across nationalities. Rightly or wrongly, in the UK policy currently responds differently to trafficking victims from different countries.⁶ In order to address trafficking effectively, it is critical that the diversity of experiences and needs of trafficked people are recognised and understood. It is also essential that responses are situated within an understanding of the appropriate policy and political context. The narrow focus of this project is an attempt to do this.

⁶ For example, the different routes for assessment of trafficking status.

1.3.2 Why Nigeria?

Nigeria is the subject of this study for a number of reasons. Data from the NRM and NGOs in the sector suggests that Nigeria is one of the top sending countries for people trafficked to the UK. As a result, Nigeria has been made one of the government's nine 'priority countries' for work to gather intelligence, develop lines of cooperation and address trafficking. As this research will demonstrate, trafficking from Nigeria can be a complex process involving multiple trafficking experiences, irregular immigration and distinctive methods of coercion and control. In initial conversations, stakeholders and project partners expressed concerns that current policy responses are not addressing these complexities.

There have been a number of studies looking at trafficking from Nigeria. However, in the main these have focused on trafficking to southern or northern Europe rather than the UK. Trafficking from Nigeria to Italy or Norway has very different characteristics to trafficking to the UK. While these studies are useful, effective policy cannot be formed using lessons from this research.

1.3.3 Why now?

Now is a critical time to reconfigure trafficking policy in the UK. In recent years, the UK's anti-trafficking work has come under criticism from a range of actors. In 2011, a report by a group of academics from across Europe ranked the UK's response to human trafficking as low, below countries such as Vietnam and Albania. The UK's response to protecting victims of trafficking was found to be particularly weak (LSE 2011). In addition to its response to victims of trafficking, recent research has criticised the UK's attempt to prevent trafficking. Research by the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG) found responses to be piecemeal with limited coordination, focused on particular areas of response, such as raising awareness, with limited evaluations carried out into their effectiveness (ATMG 2012). Research has also identified areas where the UK's anti-trafficking measures may be in breach of its international obligations (ATMG 2010).

Politically too, trafficking policy is currently undergoing a rethink. Last year, the UK signed a new European directive on trafficking. The directive commits the UK to adopting a rights-based and multidisciplinary approach to addressing trafficking and will require the implementation of changes in order to harmonise policy with the requirements of the instrument such as the creation of a body to monitor and critique trafficking policy (Europa 2010).

The UK human trafficking strategy was also revised in 2011. The strategy is now based around four areas:

- strengthening work with countries where criminal gangs are based
- improving the coordination of policing efforts in the UK to tackle trafficking
- using the new national crime agency with its border policing responsibilities to improve security and provide a stronger deterrent at the border
- working with professionals to improve help for victims of trafficking.

This revision has given trafficking work much stronger focus on strengthening international collaboration and working to address trafficking 'upstream' in countries of origin and transit. In theory, the renewed emphasis on addressing the causes of trafficking as well as looking to do so within a framework of international collaboration is a very welcome step forward.

This rethink, however, marks a break with current and previous policy frameworks. In order to ensure that this can be done effectively and can be sustained there is a need for fresh policy approaches. These must draw on evidence and international best practice in two key areas.

- How can trafficking be addressed holistically so that policy addresses the causes of trafficking rather than continues to manage the effects?
- How can this be achieved through collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination?

A reconfiguration of trafficking policy is timely in Nigeria too. The response to trafficking, long a trailblazer internationally and particularly in the West African region, is coming under international criticism. Each year, the US State Department monitors the effectiveness of each country's response to trafficking and rates it according to their compliance with the US Trafficked Victims Protection Act minimum standard. Countries graded as 'tier one' are seen as responding to trafficking in the most comprehensive and successful way. In June 2012, the US State Department downgraded Nigeria's 'rating' from tier one to tier two. This was in recognition of the low number of prosecutions brought about by their state anti-trafficking organisation, NAPTIP, as well as the low capacity to care for trafficked victims (US State Department 2012).

The responsibilities of NAPTIP are comprehensive. They include the enforcement and prosecution of traffickers, the coordination of support for trafficking victims and managing projects to prevent trafficking, such as awareness campaigns. The range of NAPTIP's responsibilities include (NAPTIP 2007):

- enforcement and due administration of laws in relation to human trafficking and related offences
- undertaking actions to eradicate human trafficking as well as actions that address the root causes of trafficking
- enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement agents to prevent trafficking
- strengthening international cooperation on preventing trafficking
- supervising and coordinating the rehabilitation of trafficked persons.

Trafficking policy in Nigeria is also in a state of flux. An amendment passing through the Nigerian parliament will have a number of effects on the work and focus of NAPTIP. The organisation, as a result, will have a stronger enforcement role and reduced social role. For example, the requirement to provide shelters for victims of trafficking will be removed. This is an important time for the Nigerian government to reflect on whether this change is the right one. It is also a time to reflect on how NAPTIP could change in order to better address trafficking from, within and to Nigeria. Finally, now is also an important time for NGOs to reflect on how they can return to the vanguard of anti-trafficking work in Nigeria, as well as international actors, like the UK or its European partners, to consider how they can and should respond to this changing environment.

1.4 A way forward: aims and objectives

1.4.1 A progressive trafficking policy: what should the UK be aiming to achieve?

A UK policy response to trafficking must be consonant with a number of instruments on trafficking that the country is signatory to. Some of these are trafficking-specific: the UN declaration on human trafficking, 2003, known as the Palermo Protocol, requires signatories to pledge to address trafficking in three ways: preventing trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting offenders. The European Council Convention on Trafficking (ratified in 2008) and European directive on trafficking require the UK to take a human rights approach to addressing trafficking as well as to implement a number of basic provisions.

Others are less trafficking-specific, however they still have a bearing on work here. These include the convention to eliminate discrimination and violence against women or the convention on the rights of the child. As a member of the Council of Europe, the UK has an international obligation to follow the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. While the European Convention on Human Rights has no specific reference to trafficking, case law has found member states to have a duty to care and protect victims of trafficking. Beyond this, however, before looking to move trafficking policy forward, it is important to reflect on the issue at hand and what the clear objectives and priorities for action must be.

1.4.2 What is it that we are trying to address?

Most readers of Gigi's story would regard these experiences as policy failure. What is less clear, and often ignored, is exactly why this is. In itself, 'human trafficking' is a relatively modern, obscure legal concept. However, underneath this term lie a series

of social problems and a lack of clarity in the policy debate. As shown below, different agencies and actors involved in the attempt to stop trafficking may be attempting to stop trafficking for very different reasons.

An examination of reports and policy documents published by different agencies and NGOs over the last few years demonstrates the multiplicity of motivations for addressing trafficking. When different actors speak of 'addressing trafficking' they may refer to a number of issues including: an avenue for criminality (Home Office 2003), violence against women (Eaves 2008), the anomaly and shame of slavery in a modern society (Anti-Slavery 2008), a cause of physical and emotional harm (Zimmerman 2003), child abuse (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking [ECPAT]), and irregular immigration (Serious and Organised Crime Agency [SOCA]). Not only do we need to be clear about what trafficking is, in order to devise an effective policy framework there also needs to be clarity around what we want to ultimately achieve by stopping trafficking.

In the process of addressing trafficking there will be trade-offs and compromises, and without a sense of the end goal the processes of policy could undermine the outcome. For example, a policy agenda that prioritised reducing irregular immigration may have prioritised strict border checks. One that prioritised reducing abuse may find that policies that kept irregular migrants out of the UK did nothing to address the exploitation of those able to cross the border using legal means or who were already within the UK. The lack of clarity within the policy debate means that conflicting aims and objectives are not made explicit.

1.4.3 The objectives of anti-trafficking policy

The key feature of trafficking that marks it out as a distinct phenomenon, different to people smuggling, is the commodification and abuse of individuals. Commodification and abuse lie behind the international concern for trafficking (UNODC 2010) as well as political support for tackling it in the UK (Cabinet Office 2010). A progressive strategy to address trafficking should also aim to address the exploitation of people against their will. Addressing exploitation itself may have many ancillary benefits. For example addressing exploitation may help to improve unregulated and low-paid work, prevent illegal immigration and reduce gender-based violence. These are all key objectives for policy. However, while addressing trafficking may help confront these issues, this is distinct from addressing trafficking *by* addressing these issues.

Policy should prioritise the prevention of exploitation and ensure that human rights are upheld. The long-term goal is the absolute prevention of all trafficking from Nigeria to the UK. While our aspiration must be to eliminate trafficking completely, the objective of policy in this area must to *dramatically reduce* the incidence of trafficking.

The protection of people who are victims of trafficking and supporting them into resilience remains key to trafficking policy. Similarly, justice for these victims is an important component, requiring a functioning system for the prosecution of traffickers. In order to have a more effective anti-trafficking policy, a more holistic approach needs to be taken. Without adequate protection, trafficked people are vulnerable to re-trafficking. Without adequate engagement with victims to learn from their experiences, prevention efforts will be at risk of failure. Without access to safe support, victims will be less likely to pursue prosecutions of traffickers (Jarwad 2011).

Trafficking is a phenomenon caused by large and complex forces, including global inequality, gender inequality and the demand for exploitable labour; however, individual actors cannot resolve these in the medium term. Tackling crime, reducing social exclusion and rehabilitating vulnerable people are also challenging tasks. Trafficking policy involves all three. Nigerian trafficking lends an international dimension. Any response to trafficking must be sensitive to all these factors. Policy should start by focusing on the mechanisms available to confront trafficking, as well as examining work done in the field.

This report draws on new research into trafficking from Nigeria to the UK to make recommendations for a revised policy framework responsive to these diverse challenges and objectives.

1.5 The structure of the report

The report is structured through the narratives of those caught up in trafficking: their recruitment, their journeys, their experiences and escapes, and their attempts to access support. Trafficking experiences, as will be shown, are rarely as linear as this might suggest. People may move in and out of a number of exploitative situations, some of which may come under the definition of trafficking. Many people will never seek support or will not be identified as needing support. However, structuring the report in this way allows us to understand how the issue of trafficking extends beyond borders and to identify points of maximum impact. It also allows us to explore the key areas of policy response: preventing trafficking, protecting people who have been victims of trafficking, ensuring that traffickers are prosecuted, and finally engendering a comprehensive response through facilitating collaboration.

2. BACKGROUND: TRAFFICKING FROM NIGERIA TO THE UK

Trafficking between Nigeria and the UK is a complex and multifaceted issue. This chapter will explore the complexity of international trafficking. First we explore the scale and characteristics of all trafficking from Nigeria, then all trafficking to the UK, and finally we present what is known about trafficking between Nigeria and the UK.

2.1 An introduction to the Nigerian situation

Located in West Africa and bordering Niger, Chad, Cameroon and the Republic of Benin, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with an estimated population of 150 million and over 250 ethnic groups. Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960. Following a period of instability, Nigeria has been a democracy since 1999. Across the last decade Nigeria has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2001 and 2008, Nigeria sustained an average annual growth rate of six per cent (UNDP 2011). Nigeria is becoming increasingly recognised in countries both within Africa and Europe as a vibrant centre for art, music and culture.

Despite many significant steps forward, the country still faces ongoing challenges. Wider measures of human development have not kept pace with improvements in growth. A lack of universal access to education and high levels of unemployment have persisted. Inequality among social groups, particularly gender inequality remains an issue. According to the latest figures, 61 per cent of Nigerians or 112.519 million people live in absolute poverty (National Bureau of Statistics 2011). The country also faces many other challenges in its transition to democracy. Corruption is reported as a problem across many government departments (Transparency International 2011). The country is ranked in the bottom quartile across many of the World Bank's governance indicators, including rule of law, control of corruption and political stability (Kaufman et al 2010).

Insecurity, poverty and free movement around the ECOWAS area in West Africa have all contributed to a range of long-term migration challenges in Nigeria. Millions have been internally displaced, particularly in cities across the north, due to religious and ethnic conflicts. This insecurity also accounts for the many Nigerian people seeking refuge and asylum each year. According to UNHCR, Nigeria was the seventh highest country of origin in the world for refugees, just below Iraq and Afghanistan (UNHCR 2009). 'Brain drain' is also a problem, with large numbers of educated Nigerians choosing to emigrate elsewhere to seek out better opportunities.

This well-established history of migration, combined with other facilitating factors such as inequality and instability, has led to concerns around the instances of trafficking in persons from Nigeria. Due in part as well to the large size of Nigeria's population, the country has been named by the UNODC as one of the top eight countries of origin for human trafficking, alongside Thailand, China, Albania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Figures are hard to come by and difficult to use. According to the Swedish Institute, an estimated 40,000–50,000 women were trafficked from Nigeria between 1990 and 2005 (Swedish Institute 2010). Nigeria's prominence as a source country, as well as the particular characteristics of its trafficking, make it a critical area of study for governments, human rights groups and communities committed to eradicating the practice both within Nigeria and in the many destination countries where victims are exploited.

Box 2.1 The desire to migrate

Data from our nationwide survey highlights how widespread the desire to migrate and travel is among ordinary Nigerians. Sixty-eight per cent stated that they would like to go to Europe to study or work, with only a slightly smaller proportion (63 per cent) believing that they would do so in the future. Furthermore, a sizeable proportion (36 per cent) reported that they thought it would be worth trying to get to Europe, despite the risks involved. This finding suggests that policies designed to stop migration, such as awareness-raising campaigns, will be difficult and will not necessarily deter all potential victims.

A lack of legal routes alongside a high demand for migration may make some people more vulnerable to some sorts of trafficking.

2.2 Trafficking from Nigeria

A major focus of this research, and other programmes designed to alleviate trafficking, is on international trafficking from Nigeria. However, although Nigeria is a major country of origin for people trafficked to other regions, it is also a significant country of transit and of destination, particularly from countries in the West African region such as Mali.

Critically, a much greater proportion of trafficking from Nigeria occurs within its borders. Internal trafficking in Nigeria is felt to have increased in recent years, particularly from rural communities in certain states in the south east, south west, south and middle belt to Lagos, Abeokuta and other cities (UNESCO 2006). There is a significant level of internal trafficking in persons for prostitution, domestic servitude, forced labour, street begging and organ harvesting (Okojie 2009). In many cases, this may serve as a prelude to a victim being trafficked out of Nigeria.

While girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, boys are frequently trafficked for forced labour in mines, quarries and farms, as well as street vending or forced begging (US State Department 2009). It has been estimated that 15 million young people are in situations of child labour in Nigeria, 40 per cent of whom, around 6 million children, are estimated to be at risk of internal or external trafficking (FSO/ILO 2003).

One of the most important aspects of internal trafficking is a form of child fostering. This is a subversion of the common and widespread practice of children from poorer households being sent to work in more stable households of extended relatives or employers as a house boy or house girl. This will be in exchange for the promise of education, a wage or board and lodging. These well-established customs can be exploitative with hard work demanded with limited pay or opportunities given. The treatment of cared-for children is commonly distinct from that of other children in the household.

Nigerian trafficking is also part of a well-developed globalised market with a wide international reach. While Europe is a major destination region of people trafficked from Nigeria it is by no means the only area. The majority of people trafficked to Nigeria are trafficked on to other West African countries such as Ghana. Incidences of people being trafficked from Nigeria to North Africa including Morocco (MSF 2011), the Middle East (including Gulf States such as Dubai), and Central Asia, have also been reported. Trafficking methods and routes continuously evolve in response to immigration controls and anti-trafficking initiatives.

Despite the scale and volume of human trafficking originating from Nigeria, it should not be understood simply as a 'national' phenomenon: in reality, it is highly localised. The incidence of human trafficking varies considerably across different regions and the nature of the trafficking and destination country is also strongly determined by the specific context. In particular, research has identified that trafficking victims who come to Europe disproportionately originate from the state of Edo in the south-central part of the country and the Niger Delta (Attoh 2009, Buker 2007). Benin City, the capital of Edo state, is widely regarded as the central hub of Nigeria's trafficking, particularly to Europe. There

is also evidence to suggest that women are trafficked from some of the other big cities in Nigeria such as Lagos, Ibadan, Sapele and Warri (Buker 2007). Trafficking from the northern, largely Muslim part of the country, is carried out particularly between Nigeria and Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia (UNESCO 2006) under the cover of 'pilgrimage'. This has been used to traffic girls for sexual exploitation, men for labour exploitation and children for a range of reasons. People living in border regions such as Sokoto are also overrepresented in incidences of trafficking. Furthermore, trafficked victims are more likely to be recruited from rural rather than urban areas, where residents have greater access to education and employment and where traditionalist structures are less determinist. The targeting of rural areas is felt to have increased as awareness has risen in urban areas (Okojie 2009, Carling 2006).

Trafficking from Nigeria is typically both local and global in nature. Networks are built through both parochial social networks of blood or community and international connections between people resident in Nigeria and diaspora populations. There are correlations between the geographic origin of victims and their destination. These often reflect established migration patterns that include or have transformed into trafficking. For example, the large majority of women trafficked to Italy for sexual exploitation come from Benin City (US Department of State 2012). Another example of localised international trafficking includes flows from Shaki, Oyo state to Guinea, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire (UNESCO 2006).

Box 2.2 Recognition of the problem of trafficking

While the majority (59 per cent) of Nigerian respondents in our nationwide survey agreed or strongly agreed that trafficking was a problem in Nigeria, a small minority (27 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, a smaller proportion (32 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that it was a problem in their own home state, while just over half (51 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed; this disparity could be a reflection of the uneven distribution of trafficking cases in Nigeria, though it may also reflect a view of trafficking as something practised 'elsewhere'.

Positively, the large majority (94 per cent) of respondents stated that they believed individuals and communities had a responsibility to identify and report instances of trafficking. However, it is clear that the problem is not universally understood: 37 per cent stated that they did not understand what trafficking in persons was (and even this may overstate the level of understanding and knowledge of the problem).

2.2.1 Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe

Nigeria may be a key country of origin for trafficking to the UK but the UK is by no means the major European country of destination for trafficking from Nigeria. The most common destination for Nigerians who have been trafficked to Europe is Italy. Nigeria's connections with Italy originate from established trade networks between Edo and Italy in exported goods such as gold and clothing. These networks led to significant numbers of migrant labourers travelling to work in Italy's informal economy from the late 1980s (Naijafed 2009). As these jobs were replaced by migrants from elsewhere in Europe, work opportunities tightened and led to people moving into unskilled labour and then prostitution. These connections have sustained and led to trafficking networks. Other significant destinations include the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Belgium and the UK (UNODC 2011, US State Department 2012). There is also evidence of trafficking to the Czech Republic and France (Okojie 2009), and emerging concerns in Norway, where Nigerians make up the majority of identified trafficking victims (US Department of State 2012). These flows have often developed alongside more general patterns of economic migration.

Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe can involve a number of countries other than Nigeria and the European destination country. A number of routes between Nigeria and North Africa are known to be used by traffickers: for instance, from Lagos people can pass through Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire to Mali, Niger, Algeria, Morocco or

Libya (Okojie 2009). From there, people may spend years in North Africa before crossing into Europe. Frequent routes across the Mediterranean are between Morocco and Spain (ibid) or from the Western Sahara, Dakar or the Cape Verde to the Canary Islands (Carling 2006). These journeys can take months and even years (UNESCO 2006). In these cases, physical abuse or sexual exploitation by traffickers or opportunists may begin during the journey (Okojie 2009). Many also end up stranded in (so-called) 'transit' countries (Carling 2006). Trafficking to Europe, particularly if carried out using overland routes can involve sustained periods of abuse and exploitation before trafficked victims even arrive in Europe.

Air routes are can also involve prolonged 'journeys' of exploitation between different countries. Traffickers frequently employ circuitous flight routes to the country of destination, based on the perceived ease and low visibility. For instance, victims may be flown directly from Nigeria to Moscow, Istanbul or other eastern European countries, and then smuggled across the border into western Europe. Another route for women, *en route* to Italy, is from West Africa (most commonly Ghana) to Paris, Amsterdam or London, and from there to Italy by train (Carling, 2006). Victims are brought from Italy or Spain to Nordic countries (Okojie 2009).

2.3 Trafficking to the UK

There is limited evidence of the scale and character of trafficking to the UK, and quantifying the scale of trafficking here is a significant challenge. Trafficking is a hidden issue: it involves criminal behaviour, hidden work sectors and sometimes individuals who are fearful of authorities due to their irregular immigration status. Myths about trafficking and how a victim is perceived have been found to prevent the identification of victims (ATMG 2010). On the other hand, for some nationalities, being identified as a victim of trafficking may support a claim for asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK, giving an incentive to make (and in some cases) fabricate claims. Estimates of the numbers of people trafficked to the UK have unsurprisingly varied widely from a few hundred to tens of thousands (see Home Office 2009, ACPO 2010, Davies 2009). In a 2009 response to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee, the government of the time found that 'no one was able to give us even a rough estimate of the scale of trafficking in the UK'.

A lack of comprehensive data is widely identified as a major limitation as well as one not unique to the UK (ATMG 2012). Our research, particularly our interviews with UK stakeholders, highlighted that a major challenge that those working in this area face is the lack of shared understanding on the scale and character of trafficking to the UK. Many publications, as well as most interviewees, were in agreement that there was a significant undercounting due to the hidden nature of trafficking as set out above (see also ATMG 2010). Others were sceptical, as one stakeholder argued: 'The problem is, we are incredibly aware that this is a good way of people getting leave to remain.' Some expressed the view that the trafficking sector has organisations with 'vested interests' promoting a scale or character of trafficking that meets their organisational interests. There have also been accusations of a 'moral panic' around trafficking and suggestions that 'the public's concern for victims of trafficking is being exploited to promote a crusade against prostitution' (Mai 2011, Davies 2009). While some of these accusations may be groundless, they demonstrate that the lack of data has created opportunities for a clouded debate on the scale of trafficking.

The character of trafficking to the UK is also contested. Stakeholder interviewees shared a frustration that the image and understanding of trafficking by policymakers and operational agencies did not appear to meet their experiences. Internal trafficking within the UK was felt to be particularly missed from the image of trafficking portrayed by government, particularly through their human trafficking strategy that states in its preface that 'all trafficked people have to cross the UK border'. The incidence of Nigerian trafficking was also contested with some stakeholders arguing that some agencies did not have Nigerian trafficking on their radar: 'They are absolutely in denial about Nigerian trafficking. They will tell you we just don't have a problem.'

Within this context, the most reliable figures on the scale and character of trafficking to the UK can be gathered from referrals to the NRM, a decision-making device operational since 2009, where people identified as possible victims of trafficking can be referred to a competent authority to judge their case. NRM figures still provide only a limited picture of trafficking and are, in all likelihood, a significant underestimate: by definition they record only victims who are identified and referred to the authorities. Nevertheless referral data, alongside police intelligence, data collected by NGOs, and a picture developed through research can be used to produce a sketch of the nature of trafficking to the UK.

Referral data does demonstrate the very real incidence of trafficking to this country: From 1 April 2009 (when the NRM was established) to 30 June 2012, there were 2,737 referrals to the NRM of people suspected of having been trafficked. Of these, 911 were subsequently formally recognised as ‘victims of trafficking’ by the time this data was released. While there is only limited knowledge about the extent and character of trafficking to the UK, what is becoming increasingly clear is that trafficking involves a range of nationalities, ages, genders and types of exploitation that do not necessarily fit the conventional images of trafficking. As a clearer picture emerges, old notions of the ‘typical’ victim of trafficking in the UK have been undermined.

While the UK is usually considered solely as a destination country, NRM data and recent prosecutions also confirm that the UK should also be considered a source and transit country. As discussed in Cherti et al (2012), internal trafficking within the UK is significant. The UK is also a country of transit for trafficking with individuals being brought into the country, held for a short period before being transferred on, often to other European countries (ibid). Trafficking to the UK is a gendered phenomenon with more women trafficked than men. People are trafficked to the UK from a broad range of countries. Rather than referrals being dominated by people from Europe or the EU, the top three countries – Nigeria (483 referrals), China (282) and Vietnam (224) – are all outside of Europe. The sixth-ranked source of referrals in the UK was the UK itself (IdMG 2012). By matching NRM data with data from support groups, a trend among the nationality of identified trafficking victims can be observed. The main sending country for (female) victims identified by the Poppy Project, which supported female victims of trafficking under contract from the Ministry of Justice from 2003 until 2011, was Lithuania (from 2003 to 2007), with other countries from eastern Europe as the next major nationalities represented. From 2007 onwards, the most common nationality of referred victims was from Nigeria.

While the total number of registered potential victims from Nigeria and other non-European countries has increased in recent years, it is important to recognise that this could be a reflection of improved identification, rather than a rise in the actual volume of trafficked persons from these areas. As one UK stakeholder reflected:

‘Social workers, police officers, health visitors, those types of people have had their awareness raised generally about what trafficking means and enough of that has been designed to deconstruct myths about what a victim of trafficking looks like. So they’re no longer only looking for an eastern European woman trafficked into street prostitution in Soho.’

Trafficking in the UK is carried out for a range of exploitation types including in illegal and otherwise legal work environments. Trafficking is carried out for sexual exploitation, forced labour, and domestic servitude; forced begging and benefit fraud have all been identified. Trafficking support providers have recently highlighted the first case to have been formally identified of trafficking for organ harvesting. Research by the migrant workers support group Kalayaan identifies some disturbing trends about the experiences of migrant domestic workers in general. They found that about half of the workers who registered with them between January 2008 and December 2010 were subject to psychological abuse from their employer, while close to 20 per cent experienced physical abuse. Approximately five per cent of workers also reported being sexually abused or harassed by their employer. The true figure is likely to be higher, since many prefer not to report such experiences. In the same period, 65 per cent of workers registered with Kalayaan

described working seven days a week with no day off or significant rest period, and 57 per cent stated that they received a wage of £50 a week or less. Nearly 64 per cent of respondents had their passport withheld. Whilst these experiences do not translate as trafficking they reveal in some ways a more worrying trend of wider abuse and exploitation among vulnerable migrants and other vulnerable groups. This suggests both the likelihood that trafficking is at a wider scale than captured in the available figures, as well as the existence of a wider group for policy to be concerned with.

The trafficking of children is a significant aspect of trafficking to the UK. Children made up a quarter of all referrals to the NRM. Children are known to be trafficked to the UK for a range of reasons, including for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, cannabis cultivation, forced criminal activities and benefit fraud (Cherti et al 2012). In a review published last year, the Children's Commissioner for England (2010) has estimated that up to 10,000 children may be being sexually exploited in the UK.

2.3.1 Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK

Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK is a subset of trafficking to the UK and a subset of trafficking from Nigeria to Europe. It has its own particular characteristics and patterns. Understanding the dynamics of trafficking between Nigeria and the UK is critical to tackling the problem. Yet despite its scale, there has been relatively little research on this. Even the most comprehensive studies on Nigerian trafficking have focussed on trafficking between Nigeria and mainland European countries such as Italy or the Netherlands (see UNICEF 2008, Carling 2006).

Scale and location

Little is still known about the characteristics of Nigerian trafficking in the UK. Yet in recent years, improved data collection has highlighted the very high proportion of Nigerians among victims. As stated above, Nigeria is now ranked as the top sending country to the UK according to NRM data. Of the 2,737 potential victims referred to the NRM between April 2009 and June 2012, 483 (18 per cent) were Nigerian. While the total number of registered potential victims from Nigeria has increased in recent years, this could be a reflection of improved identification, rather than a rise in the actual volume of trafficked persons.

Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK involves both adults and children, and particularly women and girls. Analysis of NRM figures for Nigerian referrals over the last year demonstrate a number of characteristics of Nigerian people seeking support for trafficking situations in the UK. Consistent with other countries, over three quarters of those referred to the NRM were adults at the time of their exploitation. Even more than other nationalities, trafficking from Nigeria is highly gendered. Over 90 per cent of Nigerian people referred into the NRM were women (UKHTC 2011). Fifty per cent of referrals to the NRM were adults at the time of exploitation.

Exploitation is concentrated in London and to a lesser extent other major British cities. Where the location of exploitation was known, the vast majority (23) were situated in and around Greater London and four were exploited in locations in Essex or Kent. Four were exploited in Manchester. This in part is because the demand for prostitution is higher in areas of greater population density. It also reflects the location of Nigerian diaspora communities both as people involved in trafficking and areas where Nigerian trafficking victims are thought to blend in more easily. The UK's Nigerian population is in fact one of the largest in the world. Census figures from 2001 show that there were 88,000 people with Nigerian nationality in the UK, concentrated mainly in London (70 per cent) and in other cities including Manchester and Leeds. The high number of arrivals over the last decade and existence of significant number of irregular migrants who may not be reflected in official statistics means that the size of this population is likely to be much higher (IOM 2008).

The UK is also a transit country for people trafficked from Nigeria to other European countries. This is a real and disturbing phenomenon that requires a linked up and strong response by the UK to support the work of European partners. Our study is primarily looking at the trafficking of people from Nigeria to the UK, where the UK is a country of destination as well as transit.

Experiences of exploitation

Our research revealed clearly that in many instances the types of exploitation overlap. For example, among the respondents interviewed for this study, five cases of victims of domestic servitude were also sexually abused and exploited. In one case, one victim was forced into domestic servitude, forced to undergo fertility treatment in order to donate eggs (organ harvesting), sexually abused and pimped into forced prostitution (sexual exploitation) and forced to work in a factory job for no pay (labour exploitation).

Examining NRM data, extant research and our research, a number of features of the reality of trafficking can be elucidated. There are two main types of exploitation among Nigerian victims in the UK: sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. From NRM figures and our interviews, adult women are trafficked primarily to be exploited sexually, and a small number were engaged in domestic servitude or experienced both forms of exploitation. Children, mostly girls, are primarily trafficked for domestic work, although a significant number were sexually exploited.

Figure 2.1
Exploitation type among
interviewees exploited as
adults

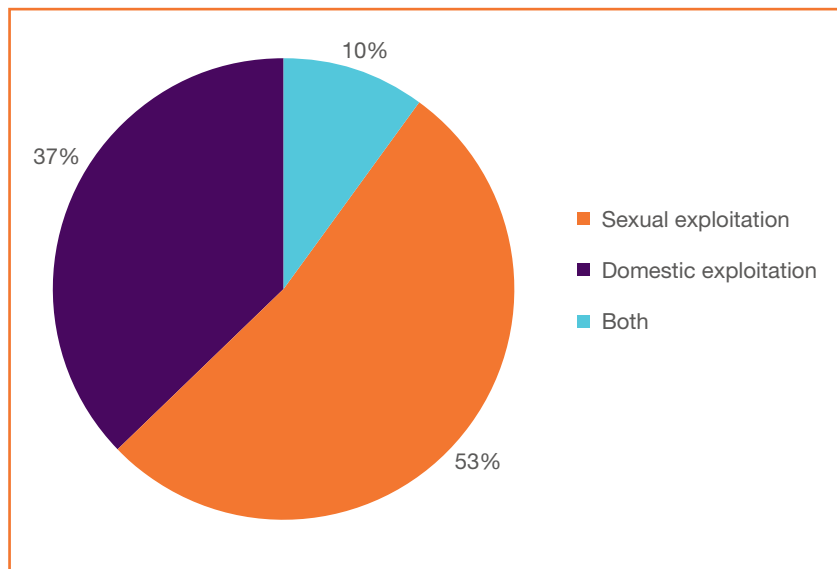
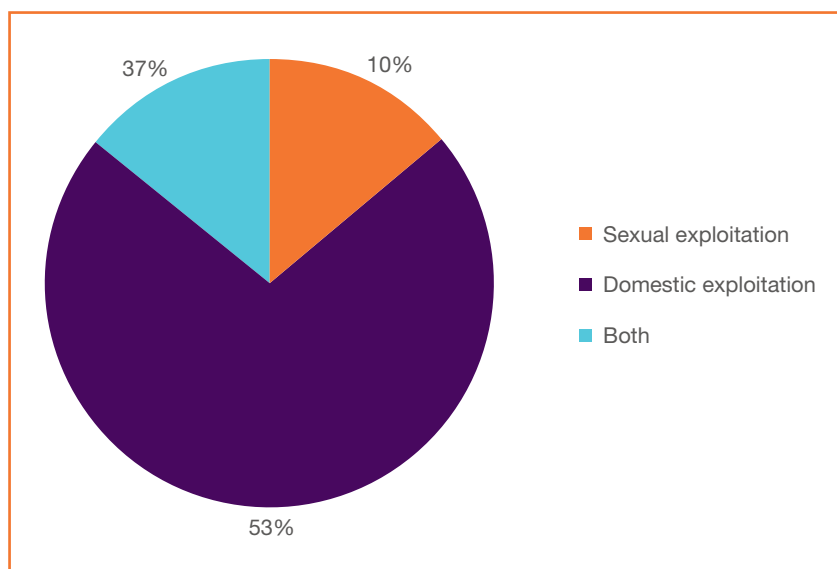


Figure 2.2
Exploitation type among
interviewees exploited as
children



Sexual exploitation

Besides the constant backdrop of intimidation, this form of exploitation typically involves long hours with no time to rest and regular rapes or assaults by clients and exploiters. There were instances of forced drug taking, forced watching of pornography as well

as forced anal and masochistic sex acts. In some cases there was little in the way of protection from clients. As well as the risk of physical violence, condoms may not be used. This puts victims at a high risk of contracting potentially damaging or life-threatening sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV. The situations all involved extreme abuse and could in no way be mistaken for sex work entered into by choice.

‘I think that I was in that situation in the house, being forced to have sex with about seven men a day, for about three to four months. I had no control over condom use. I fell pregnant and was forced to abort by drinking lots of whisky and taking tablets.’

Female victim, 24

Though in some cases sexual exploitation occurred within organised structures such as brothels (some victims reported working in a brothel with other girls and women) exploitation was more commonly undertaken in a much smaller, more hidden way, with the victim kept and exploited within a private space such as a residential flat. These spaces are much more anonymous than a sauna or massage parlour and largely hidden from the wider public and enforcement or support agencies.

This was the case for many of our interviewees. In a typical instance, the victim was sexually exploited by a male exploiter and participants who appeared to be their friends or contacts only. In some cases this was in addition to a situation of domestic servitude. Nigerian traffickers in Europe are thought to rely on violence less frequently than eastern European gangs (Carling 2006), although extreme violence and abuse, as well as threats to the victim regarding their family, are nevertheless common. Almost unanimously, victims were constrained in their movement and locked inside the house or brothel. Many did not leave the flat where they are being exploited for months or years.

Victims had little or no external contacts besides ‘punters’ although importantly, some did have contact with statutory services during their exploitation (for example, health services to receive abortions or police during an enforcement raid on a brothel).

Domestic servitude

Unlike trafficking from Nigeria to other European countries like Italy or the Netherlands, sexual exploitation does not appear to be the dominant form of exploitation in the UK. Domestic servitude is, however, a very common form of exploitation. Domestic servitude covers a broad range of situations with varying degrees of physical, psychological or sexual abuse. In this scenario, victims are trafficked into the households of a relative, family contact or an associate of their employer to undertake household duties such as cleaning, child care and cooking. In many cases victims are young, children and young adolescents. Some domestic workers are older in their 30s and 40s. Unlike some forms of forced labour where the victims are part of a group of exploited people, the victims live in the homes of their exploiters. They may appear as an abused ‘part’ of the family.

Working hours were long, typically six am to midnight, seven days a week with no formal breaks. The victims rarely had space to themselves, sleeping in shared spaces or children’s rooms. A number of victims reported being denied access to basic medical care, education (even when that was explicitly promised to them before leaving Nigeria), wages or even sufficient food.

A large proportion of victims are children, and may completely miss out on education during their years of exploitation. While victims of domestic servitude may agree to undertake general household duties before being trafficked, this does not align with the realities of their situation once they reach the UK.

‘When we arrived, she showed me around the house and told me she had three children and that I would be looking after them. She introduced me to them as their cousin ... Life became harder than in Nigeria. I was treated like a slave ... When Aunty had guests she used to lock me up in the bathroom or the children’s room upstairs for the whole

night so they could not see or hear me ... Auntie told me that if I hurt myself or die[d] she [would] bury me in the garden.'

Female victim, 23

As well as exploitative, experiences could be highly physically and psychologically abusive:

'I was occasionally assaulted, for example my head was pushed against the wall so that I hit it hard. They also told me repeatedly that my real family did not want me and did not care about me, and that I had no option but to stay with them. This left me feeling dispossessed and neglected, and I felt as though my freedom had been curtailed.'

Female victim, 18

While psychological and physical violence are very common, with the added risk of sexual violence, cases of domestic servitude are also usually characterised by the extreme isolation of the victim. Movement was frequently restricted, with victims only leaving the home with their exploiter or even being locked in for years without ever leaving the house; in the case of one respondent, six years of absolute confinement.

Organ harvesting

A less frequent occurrence in trafficking that is nevertheless receiving more attention now is the use of victims for organ harvesting. Though more rare, organ harvesting represents the endpoint of the cold logic of trafficking: that the bodies of others can be bought and sold, commoditised and exploited. There was one case among interviewed victims of a woman being used as an egg farm, in addition to domestic servitude:

'Mr and Mrs B took me to a private clinic. The doctor in the clinic gave me a large box of medication. Mr and Mrs B forced me to have injections against my will. During this process I was beaten up many times by Mr and Mrs B. I was taken back to the clinic and given an [anaesthetic] and seven of my eggs were removed.'

Female victim, 35

2.3.2 Understanding Nigerian trafficking to the UK

An appreciation of the particular characteristics of Nigerian trafficking in the UK is essential to effectively tackle the issue.

Nigeria is not merely a country of origin for trafficking. It is also a country of transit and of destination, in particular for victims from other West African countries. An often overlooked, although major aspect of trafficking is the internal trafficking of Nigerian people within Nigeria. Similarly, the UK is a country of transit and origin as well as a country of destination. Trafficking to the UK involves a range of countries and a range of different criminal practices.

Like all forms of trafficking, that from Nigeria to the UK involves three specific acts: the recruitment of people by traffickers through use of coercion or deception; the movement of these people from Nigeria to the UK; and the exploitation of those people. Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK has some distinctive characteristics. For example, the trafficking of men to the UK, primarily for labour exploitation, is increasingly understood and therefore much more widely recognised than it has been in the past. However, data and research on Nigerian trafficking reveals that it is still a very feminised phenomenon. Exploitation is hidden: it takes place in closed and unmarked environments, such as private homes rather than massage parlours; trafficked people have their movement constrained and experience profound abuse. While violence is a key component, traffickers did not always use or rely on physical forms of control. This was felt by contributors to have been less than in other cases of trafficking.

These differences should not be overstated. Nigerian trafficking to the UK still reflects many of the patterns and symptoms typical of trafficking in general. Nevertheless, given the scale of the problem, it is important to acknowledge its unique characteristics, and document and understand its differences in order to tailor policy.

The next chapter of the report will draw on the fresh data we have collected to build a deep understanding of the processes and circumstances underpinning trafficking in order to develop the responses needed to address it.

3. UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING TRAFFICKING

As outlined above, we believe that prevention should be the focus of an anti-trafficking strategy in as far as it is practicably possible. Some work is already developed in this area.

A range of NGOs, national statutory agencies and international bodies are engaged in anti-trafficking work designed to prevent international trafficking from Nigeria. A cohort of specialist NGOs have pioneered work in this area including the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), who helped to establish early trafficking legislation, the Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW), a faith-based organisation in the south of Nigeria, and Idia Renaissance, an advocacy, campaigning and skills-building organisation. In 2003, the government established a dedicated agency, NAPTIP, to act as a coordination point and implement a wide range of anti-trafficking activities. These include the protection of victims, the prosecution of traffickers and critically, action to tackle and prevent international trafficking. Nigeria is the sole country in the West African region with a dedicated anti-trafficking organisation. Work in Nigeria is also bolstered by international partnerships led by organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

While prevention work in the UK is perhaps less developed than other areas of trafficking responses to date, the UK government has been explicit in their commitment to a strategy that is preventative in nature. Their latest strategy states that it is 'committed to tackling trafficking from end to end: from recruitment to exploitation' and as one assessment has noted, 'draws heavily on the language of prevention throughout' (ATMG 2012). As discussed, this is reflected in the specific aim of addressing trafficking 'upstream' in order to prevent trafficking 'at source'. Several NGOs have also developed a range of prevention practices both in the UK and internationally. Work between the UK and Nigeria to prevent trafficking is at early stages. However, both countries and international partners have developed coordinated action, such as in a recent UNODC initiative that brought together stakeholders across European countries and Nigeria (UNODC 2011).

In the case of both countries, to date, trafficking prevention work has had a strong focus on awareness-raising. This has focused on potential migrants (the dangers of irregular migration) and the wider public (on the existence of trafficking and exploitation). Examples include the Blue Blindfold campaign carried out by the UKHTC, and the IOM's Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. Beyond awareness-raising, a particular focus of prevention work developed by the UK to date focuses on preventing irregular migration through tightening border security to prevent trafficking and address organised crime. These early developments have not been without criticism. Anti-trafficking organisations have emphasised the importance of addressing the underlying socio-economic causes of trafficking. Given the complex wide-ranging forces that lie behind and influence trafficking, it can be difficult to ascertain where to start. How to translate a need for global change into practice can also appear an insurmountable challenge.

Through our interviews with 40 people who have been trafficked from Nigeria, our poll, and interviews with over 50 stakeholders in Nigeria and the UK, we have been able to explore the whole trafficking experience, build a deep understanding of the processes, individuals and circumstances underpinning trafficking and the responses needed to address it in countries of origin, transit and destination. Through deconstructing the trafficking process, the mechanisms of trafficking, the push-and-pull factors and also the wider dynamics that explain why it occurs in both Nigeria and the UK, we are able to propose more nuanced solutions to addressing it.

A very crude understanding of the journey of a trafficked person has three parts: a person is recruited in Nigeria, moved between Nigeria and the UK, and exploited. Our research demonstrates the challenge of responding to trafficking through this linear narrative. Beyond this lies a much more amorphous web of decisions and structural forces that guide trafficked people's experiences and facilitate crime. Policy must respond to the structural forces that facilitate this crime as well as the full range of actors who play a role in supporting or facilitating trafficking. Our research also demonstrates that preventing trafficking through addressing trafficking 'at source' does not just mean addressing trafficking at the start of an individual's journey in Nigeria. While Nigeria may be the country of origin for the trafficked person, the 'sources' of trafficking are the individuals involved in the recruitment, transaction and exploitation, as well as the environment that causes individuals to become vulnerable to being trafficked out of Nigeria and into the UK in the first place, that facilitates exploitation and abuse. In this sense, the UK, through providing a conducive environment for trafficking, can be as much a 'source' of trafficking as the environment in Nigeria.

This section follows this three-part structure. We start by presenting what drives trafficking from Nigeria including what causes people to become vulnerable to trafficking and the key people involved. We then move on to assess how people are able to travel between the two countries and finally how exploitation is able to occur in the UK.

3.1 What are the driving forces behind trafficking in Nigeria?

One major factor stated in many analyses of trafficking from Nigeria (and we include opinions given by some stakeholders consulted for this research) was the impact of a belief among young people of a perceived 'better life' available in Europe. In the various analyses, this could be influenced by one or both of the two notions of 'poverty' and 'greed'. The phenomenon is often referred to as 'better life syndrome'. As Attoh (2009) suggests, the pronounced social and economic gulf between southern countries like Nigeria and developed countries such as the UK has made many Nigerians willing to emigrate to access the perceived freedom and opportunities available. The favourable view of 'going abroad' means that people prefer to think of the employment or educational opportunities this might bring (Carling 2006) rather than the harsh realities of trafficking. This desire for a better life was not always looked on favourably by our respondents, who characterised it as a 'grass is greener' attitude:

'Some will say 'I am suffering', they want to [leave] for the proverbial greener pasture. Some go and come back disappointed ... Some of them are [holders of master's degrees] so why should they make themselves available to traffickers, is it really poverty? It looks more [like] greed that account[s] for this illegal migration.'

Nigerian stakeholder

However, our interviews with trafficked people revealed that attributing 'greed' to the victims of trafficking is simplistic and unhelpful. Overly optimistic visions of the west as a 'promised land' are also inextricably connected with the very real privation and insecurity of their lives in Nigeria. In the small number of cases where the individual did play a part in the decision to travel abroad or to take a job opportunity, the desire not just to survive, but also to have a better life and to secure education or employment opportunities for themselves and their families was present. However the 'better life' that they sought was not one marked by grand opportunity, but one free from abuse and violence. The hope for a better future and the desire to achieve a good quality education were basic desires that their lives until then had failed to deliver and which, given their prospects, had no hope of materialising in Nigeria.

Similarly, while a perception of poverty and global inequality between Nigeria and the UK is an important element, it only provides a very partial understanding of the driving forces behind trafficking. Edo state, for example, the place in the country most strongly associated with the practice, in fact has lower poverty levels than most Nigerian states. Poverty and the desire for greener pastures are important; however, in reality they are only part of a wider cycle of disempowerment, being both the cause and (particularly) the effect

of certain practices and wider inequalities between rural and urban areas, and between genders especially.

3.1.1 Social exclusion: factors of Individual vulnerability

Our research demonstrates that people are vulnerable to trafficking for reasons which are distinct from greed or any narrow understanding of poverty. Rather, trafficking results from compound situations of exclusion, deprivation and inability to access services. Our research is clear that to prevent trafficking these social forces must be addressed.

Protracted vulnerability is a critical element in the life histories of many trafficked persons. In general, it is possible to discern a continuum of subjugation, violence, abuse or instability between their childhood experiences and their subsequent exploitation abroad. In addition to prolonged poverty or insecure employment, there is often also a sudden destabilising episode (such as a death or divorce in the family) that serves to push the victim from chronic insecurity towards a crisis of vulnerability. Among respondents the chronology of these triggers varied and was often inchoate, with no direct association between the event and the later experience of being trafficked. Violence was a common catalyst, forcing victims to escape their home or community, heightening victims' isolation and so raising their risk of exploitation. Others may be widowed, sometimes with a child to look after, and have little in the way of wider support. Other triggers include forced marriage, unstable or exploitative households, homelessness, and debt. These then can lead them, directly or indirectly, into being trafficked. The trigger may have a long term impact or be immediate in its effect: for example, a recently orphaned child being picked up on the street by the trafficker. What distinguishes triggers from elements of vulnerability, though there is substantial overlap between them, is that they contribute directly to the immediate decision or recruitment of the victim. What this highlights is the influence between vulnerability to trafficking and the absence of a wider protective framework.

For many of our respondents, the trauma of being trafficked to the UK was a continuation of their suffering in Nigeria. Some were even brought to the UK to be exploited by the same people that had exploited them in Nigeria or sent by them to others that held them in similar conditions.

Box 3.1 Indicators of childhood vulnerability among interviewed trafficking victims

- **Fifteen (38 per cent)** were orphaned as children, while **one (3 per cent)** lost a mother, **eight (20 per cent)** lost a father. Two of these were subsequently abandoned by their mothers.
- **Twenty-eight (70 per cent)** lived outside their nuclear family as children.
- **Twenty (71 per cent)** of those outside their nuclear families were subjected to abuse or exploitation.
- **Eleven (28 per cent)** had experiences that were consonant with internal trafficking while in Nigeria.
- **Four (10 per cent)** were accused of witchcraft.
- **Nineteen (48 per cent)** were trafficked to UK as children.

Experiences of violence and coercion often start early in childhood. Over one-third of our respondents had been orphaned, others were separated from parents as children when they were sent to an extended family member or an associate while one or both of the parents were still alive (typically described as an 'aunt' or 'uncle', though this did not always imply an immediate blood relative). In these cases, the host was generally 'richer' and therefore perceived as better able to provide the children with employment or education. In some of these cases, the children were from large or unstable families struggling to support themselves financially. A very high proportion (71 per cent) experienced some form of abuse in these situations, such as domestic servitude, sexual exploitation or forced marriage.

With little monitoring or protective safeguards, this 'fostering' arrangement can easily blur into trafficking. This often not only exploits the child in the immediate term, but also

undermines their future by barring them from a full education, making them even more vulnerable later on. More than a quarter (28 per cent) of respondents appeared to have been internally trafficked⁷ as children. Commonly this took the form of children being sent to other households to undertake exploitative work with long hours, physical and sexual abuse with no access to education, or without pay. Besides violent beatings and rape, many experienced other forms of extreme abuse such as witchcraft accusations or enforced prostitution.

Overall, stakeholders felt that policy did little to address the issue of internal trafficking:

‘In Nigeria we want to address international trafficking as the world is watching us on that; it threatens our image abroad. Internal trafficking feels like it’s less of a concern: that’s our dirty laundry, it’s made less of a priority.’

Nigerian stakeholder

Work to address internal trafficking is an important aspect of addressing trafficking in the round. It is also a vital part of a response to international trafficking.

Child protection frameworks in Nigeria, while recognised in national legislation, are in practice weak. Children outside of their family household, even ones in formal state or voluntary institutions such as orphanages or in one case a prison could be a target for traffickers.

People also become vulnerable to trafficking due to limited access to education (educational levels among respondents were generally low), employment, or safe support from violence. In need of support, they are vulnerable to offers of ‘help’ provided by traffickers. In this regard, the absence of effective protection in Nigeria is key.

3.1.2 Social exclusion: wider factors of vulnerability

The triggers that make people more susceptible to trafficking arise from broad social issues. While poverty provides some explanation, it does not necessarily capture the complex dimensions that have contributed to making certain groups more susceptible to trafficking (Sesay 2004). Wider exclusion is also significant, particularly gender inequality. Most victims are either women or children, and many times both (Okojie 2009). Traditional gender roles, gender inequality (UNDP 2011) and customs such as polygamy and (as above) child fostering increase these groups’ vulnerability (Carling 2006). These not only provide the factors that drive irregular migration in general, but also the added dimensions of coercion and exploitation that distinguish trafficking.

Gender is one of the primary dimensions of vulnerability to trafficking. Unemployment is especially high among women, with labour markets tightly structured around gender hierarchies (Truong 2006). Gender discrimination is widespread (UNDP 2011) and this results in many women being highly dependent on others, in particular men, and sometimes entering into sexual relationships with them (Carling 2006). It also leads to objectification, domestic violence and the lower status of girls within a family, generally the first to be removed from education if money is tight (UNESCO 2006, Okojie 2009, Attoh 2009). Well-established patterns of violence can permeate women’s lives from early childhood (for example, female genital mutilation) and extend well into their adult lives (in particular, through enforced marriages to older men, at times in a polygamous arrangement).

Box 3.2 Indicators of gender-related vulnerability among respondents

- **Six (15 per cent)** were coerced into or threatened with forced marriage.
- **Four (10 per cent)** underwent and **two (five per cent)** escaped from female genital mutilation.
- **Thirteen (33 per cent)** were sexually assaulted in Nigeria by relatives, associates, strangers or traffickers.

⁷ Internal trafficking is where people are moved from one city to another within one country for the purpose of exploitation.

Children, like women, are also highly vulnerable to trafficking. The practice of polygamy, as well as a lack of information and access to family planning, can result in multinucleated families with large numbers of children that the women remain responsible for if the families break down (Okojie 2009, Attoh 2009). As stated above, the death of a parent or carer is also a frequent trigger of childhood vulnerability, particularly as Nigeria has a markedly low life expectancy of 52 years for men and 53 years for women (United Nations Statistics Division). Children who are orphaned, especially those with HIV/AIDS, are particularly susceptible to trafficking (UNESCO 2006).

Many interviewees stressed the influence upon them of traditional hierarchies of social obligations, that meant that as children they had limited control over their lives. As one interviewee explained:

‘Even if the children know and they said they don’t want to do it but ... the parents say “You have to do this, I’m your mother or your father”; they ... say “This is who you live with”, and you have to obey them.’

The vulnerabilities of certain groups such as women and children are compounded by the limited access to official protection and support from the police and other agencies.

Many of the initiatives seeking to address trafficking in Nigeria funded by NAPTIP, independent NGOs and particularly by foreign governments and international bodies have aimed to tackle a perceived information gap. They are premised on the logical basis that a lack of knowledge of the reality of life in Europe and of criminal methods of traffickers makes victims more susceptible to offers of employment, education, marriage or travel.

Box 3.3 The limits of awareness

The result of our survey highlighted troubling knowledge gaps among the Nigerian population about trafficking. While 78 per cent of respondents had heard of the term ‘trafficking in persons’, only 59 per cent understood what it meant, with 37 per cent stating that they did not. Furthermore, while almost all (94 per cent) of those who had been exposed to an awareness-raising message reported that the information had been useful, a significant minority (27 per cent) reported that they had never seen or heard one.

Thirty-four per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy for a Nigerian person to find work and have a good life in Europe, while 45 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Yet among the 18 per cent of respondents who claimed to know someone who had been trafficked to Europe, this belief was surprisingly more common. There may be a number of dimensions to this – for example, the acceptance of trafficking as a practice within a particular group or a wider conflation of trafficking with irregular migration in general – but it perhaps also suggests that the worst experiences of victims, as opposed to the supposed ‘success stories’, are not being communicated effectively.

Importantly, few of our respondents had heard about trafficking as a distinct concept or of negative experiences in Europe. Those who did generally had a poor understanding of what trafficking was or could be. They associated it with prostitution in Italy and with related dimensions such as juju rites. Consequently, those travelling to the UK without experiencing any juju prior to the journey did not realise that they too might be in danger. Even with relative strangers, there did not appear to be much mistrust of their motives. Most felt that, had they had more prior exposure to information, they would not have come. However, many acknowledged that they may have struggled to truly comprehend the situation that they faced in the UK.

As the next section will demonstrate, our respondents’ actual role in the decision around whether to take a job opportunity or to travel to Europe was very limited. Rather, low general awareness of the reality of life in Europe and the accepted belief in some

communities that travel abroad is a good route out of destitution, often driven by stories of success among returnees, provides an important enabling environment. Many interviewees reported that it was difficult to turn down an offer of work or travel as it was accepted within their family and community that this was an opportunity that could not be refused. This final component is critical to understanding why trafficking is concentrated in some areas and not in others, and why poverty is not the only factor determining trafficking.

3.2 People involved

3.2.1 Identity of traffickers

A common narrative on human trafficking is one of organised criminal networks run by gangs of profiteering criminals, often involved in other forms of organised border crime such as drug smuggling or gun running as this image from Dr Helga Konrad, head of trafficking at the OSCE, depicts:

‘People are abused as commodities by a transnational criminal industry – the profits of which have been found to be so high that some of the criminals are moving away from drug trafficking into this modern form of slave trade or profit even further by using the trafficked persons as manpower for other criminal purposes, such as trafficking or selling drugs or weapons.’

OSCE 2005

Organised criminal networks are well developed and certainly play a role in many trafficking cases from Nigeria to the UK. However a very clear distinguishing feature from our research is the role of social, familial and other ‘normal’ associations, instead of (or in addition to) criminal networks usually associated with human trafficking.

Rather than an image of a ‘typical trafficker’ emerging from reports, there appear to be three types of trafficker. The first of these represents the type most commonly associated with trafficking: ‘professionals’ operating as part of a criminal operation. Outside of this however most trafficking was undertaken through informal arrangements and by individuals closely related to the individuals and their life in Nigeria. An important group are ‘personal’ traffickers such as family members or guardians. At times, the boundaries between these different categories was blurred. It is also possible for a victim to be trafficked through the collaboration of multiple parties, for example family members working with professional gangs who may have been posing as concerned friends of the family.

1. Professional traffickers: Typically, these approach victims or their family with offers of facilitating travel abroad. In many cases they are strangers, unknown to the family, and are able to link in with networks or exploiters in Europe. In this scenario, when the victim or their family is approached by a stranger, there may be no direct social link. Rather than trafficking in an opportune way, preying on someone within their social network to exploit them for their own gain, there was evidence of people targeting vulnerable people. For example, recently orphaned girls, through schools, homeless shelters, on the streets or directly from prison. Sensing the desperation of the victim, they would then promise them the possibility of employment or education in Europe.

‘I was under the bridge where people beg for money for a few weeks before I met him ... He asked me to follow him to his house. I followed him. I told him my story. When I told him my story he said he was going to [take] me out of the country.’

Female victim, 15

2. ‘Personal’ traffickers (parents, family contacts or employers): Many people, particularly those trafficked for domestic servitude, were trafficked by someone intimately known to them. These traffickers appeared not to be responsible for trafficking multiple victims; rather they would be involved in the trafficking of one person. The mechanisms for this could vary: several respondents gave accounts of the relative of their employer in Nigeria sending a request back for a domestic worker, or of an associate visiting the family household and promising to take the victim to a better life in the UK. These traffickers were mainly involved in trafficking for domestic servitude.

3. ‘Personal’ linking traffickers (family friends, relatives or associates): In a small number of cases personal traffickers would appear to be involved along with others. Friends or relatives would be involved at the stage of recruitment and migration, however the exploiter would be unknown to the victim. Even in these cases, the number of people involved appears to be small and the work of the trafficker to be opportune (taking the opportunity to exploit a relative's need for support) rather than systematic or a pattern of repeat behaviour. Among respondents, these included not only relatives but also in at least in one instance old school friends, possibly former victims who had moved on to recruitment themselves.

‘When uncle came to visit my family he said he wanted to help us as he saw that we were struggling to survive. He gave my family money and told my mother that he would take me to London to further my education. My mother was very happy with this as she was not able to support me and wanted me to continue my education ... I also felt that if I went with uncle I would be one less mouth to feed for my mother and I could get a better life.’

Female victim, 22

Traffickers typically have various degrees of familiarity with victims. Some had close ties, for example, some people were trafficked by a parent, others by a husband. Some people were approached by strangers.

Among our respondents, some 15 per cent were directly recruited by a family member, a partner or an associate (for example, a former school friend). In addition, a further 18 per cent were trafficked by an employer or guardian. Twenty two per cent were recruited by an associate of their family and a further 17 per cent were recruited by a contact of a family friend or associate (in one instance, someone known to the local pastor). Finally, just over a quarter (28 per cent) of victims were approached by strangers. Even here in one case, the victim ‘knew of’ the person locally and their personal wealth.

Trafficking is not only facilitated by criminals and shadow networks, but also normality, loyalty and institutional practice. Trafficking is not the exclusive arena of professional criminals, but also involves a multitude of people operating as an extension of their other employment. Traffickers were often well-placed and respected community members. Encounters, far from being clandestine, often occurred in public spaces such as churches. There were also accounts of church members, even a pastor, facilitating ‘introductions’ to professional traffickers. Women as well as men were involved. A number of respondents reported their first point of contact had been a friendly female, willing to ‘help’ at a moment of crisis.

Even when traffickers were strangers to the trafficked person themselves, in many cases, they were people who were once part of the community but who had migrated to other cities or countries and have returned with wealth. Connections to the community – for example, having parents known within certain faith or community groups – were a key way of them gaining trust and acceptance from victims, especially when the victim is desperate like the respondent below, who was regularly accused of being a witch by her uncle:

‘About six months after my parents died I was on a street when a lady driving by stopped her car and talked to me ... I had not met her before but I knew who she was when she told me her name as I had heard about her as she had a nice big house near my uncle’s house and I had heard she lived in Spain and had money. I had not heard anything bad about her.’

Female victim, 23

It is important not to be naïve about the operation of criminal networks. However, our analysis shows that trafficking involves a wide range of people. It can occur between households with people being recruited and exploited directly by a contact of their employer or family.

3.2.2 People involved in a decision

In discussions of trafficking in general, not only of Nigerians, there has been debate about whether trafficking represents a choice for some victims. Some commentators have emphasised the degree of agency among some trafficking victims and the importance of economic incentives (Weitzer 2012). Given the particular characteristics of ‘trafficking’, it is difficult to discuss the degree of volition among adult victims when, for a situation to be considered as trafficking, there is a requirement of coercion (whether through force or deception) to be present. For children, no meaningful choice can be seen to have been made. Victims of trafficking like any individual should not be assumed to be passive. It is demeaning to the trafficked person for vulnerability and a lack of individual agency to be assumed to be a ‘normal’ state. Many campaigns and awareness-raising projects are predicated on the assumption that trafficked people will be able to play some part in a ‘decision’ to go with traffickers (although one based on misinformation and misunderstanding).

Box 3.4 The stigma of ‘choice’

Among respondents of our national survey in Nigeria, a high proportion (45 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that people trafficked to Europe who end up working in prostitution know that there is a risk this will be the case before they leave, compared to 34 per cent who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

From the interview sample, only half (20) of the respondents could be said to have played a part in the decision to travel or accept a (false) job offer from a trafficker. Of this number, six of the trafficked people were children at the time of trafficking, removing any sense of agency. This means that only 14 played a part in the decision, or one-third. The remainder were instructed to go with the trafficker by a parent, sibling or other family member. Fourteen of these interviewees said that they felt they did not feel able to go against these orders. Of these, seven interviewees stated that they actively expressed to those around them that they did not want to travel.

Even in cases where women or men do accept or even seek opportunities – for example, those respondents independently recruited with promises of education or employment – it should be emphasised again that what they are ‘agreeing’ to is generally very different to the exploitation they face in the UK. The sexually exploited victims we interviewed in the UK had no idea before they left that this would happen. The role of partners, family, their community or congregation was also decisive in guiding the decision of many respondents. Some reported feeling apprehensive about the offer, but succumbed to pressure from others. Those who had already been exploited in Nigeria and were aware that this might continue were forcibly coerced into leaving for the UK. In short, those with the knowledge typically lacked the agency, while those with the agency typically lacked the knowledge. The role of others in the ‘decision’ to move or to accept a work or travel ‘offer’ means that a response should not just focus on the trafficker and trafficking victim.

Besides traffickers, there is also a diverse cast of individuals who help facilitate the many different stages of the journey. This may include transporters, receivers, brothelkeepers, forgers of documentation but also corrupt border guards and embassy officials. Trafficking also uses well-established structures and services such as travel agencies and money transfer services (Okojie 2009). Importantly, this may also include senior and well-respected people within their known community. These include local faith leaders who may help to set up contacts and bring people together, while other community members would perform juju rituals bonding the trafficked person to their exploiter.

The widespread involvement of parents in particular is one of the most troubling aspects of the phenomenon in Nigeria. The extent to which parents are aware of what trafficking entails can vary. However, as this account of an awareness-raising campaign in Benin illustrates, ignorance may also involve a strong element of denial:

‘The market women started throwing stones at us because they felt we were trying to discourage their children from helping them out of their

helpless situation. Their mentality is that the easiest way to make it is to travel abroad, not knowing what the children are going through.'

Nigerian stakeholder

Box 3.5 Parents and the demand to send children abroad

Data from our nationwide survey identifies the widespread willingness of parents to send their children to Europe, with 60 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would send their children to Europe if they had the opportunity, compared to 28 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Though the question asked about migration in general it did highlight the intense demand among parents for opportunities to send their children abroad, which is a decisive factor in Nigerian trafficking.

Parents and guardians may traffic dependents from a variety of vantage points, from greed and self-interest to pragmatism and naivety. Some victims were trafficked to richer relatives or associates in the UK in the apparent belief that there would be better opportunities for them there. This ignorance of the dangers they faced was a clear dynamic. It was clear from respondents' accounts, that the degree of involvement and knowledge could vary. Many felt that parents did not know the exploitation they faced. In some cases, there were strong cases of this being the case. Parents were unable to contact their children in the UK due to the trafficker severing contact. They were threatened when their children escaped.

However some were more complicit. There were examples of parents who forced their children back into their situation of exploitation when they returned to Nigeria. This may have been influenced by ongoing disbelief of the dangers they face, the need for the support they bring, or fear of repercussions. The broader context of Nigeria's well-established patterns of migration and the visible success of many of its diaspora is critical.

Alongside this, the normalisation of aspects of trafficking is significant. Despite being depicted as a seedy underworld of organised crime and dark arts, the practices that together lead into extreme abusive crimes can appear to be regular. Trafficking is an exploitative end of normal behaviours. For example, for those who are exploiting someone who had been destitute may reconcile their actions with themselves due to the 'support' they provide. Finally, many stakeholders felt that increasing pressure to succeed financially had led to trafficking becoming accepted, even respected, for its economic returns. Previous research has identified that some parents treat having a child working abroad as a status symbol even if it is clear that they are in a situation of trafficking and exploitation (Okojie 2009, Carling 2006).

3.3 Methods of coercion

Traffickers in Nigeria have a range of methods to recruit and retain victims, ranging from more visible and recognisable techniques of coercion to subtler forms of obligation, deception and intimidation.

Violence, or the threat of it, may play a role in the victim's recruitment. However among our respondents, the majority experienced violence and intimidation from their trafficker only once they had reached the UK or, at the very least had already left with the trafficker.

The abuse of a position of vulnerability was the major form of coercion. As half of respondents were trafficked as children they were not able to consent to the movement or offer of work, education or support. A few others had played an active part in the 'decision' to migrate and were coerced into their situation by the trafficker or those around them who had an unequal power relationship with them.

In the case of many respondents, deception – of them and also of family members that facilitated trafficking – was a critical method of coercion deployed. The traffickers presented them with a compelling offer, in general, the opportunity of sanctuary, education and (in a small number of cases) employment as a child minder or hairdresser. This was

the most common dimension of the recruitment process. While a number of respondents were subjected to high levels of physical and sexual violence by their exploiters, the majority did not experience this in Nigeria. Traffickers seemed pleasant and supportive until victims reached the destination country and most respondents only became aware of the exploitation awaiting them once they had arrived. Deception in other cases involved partial information, such as pay packages that, while attractive in Nigeria, were exploitative in the UK. Traffickers typically secured the trust of their victims by tapping into local perceptions of status and success.

‘M would come into the school compound during break time ... He had a car, a Mercedes Benz ... He would talk to us individually, so not at the same time ... He would show me books about scholarships and he said that he had helped many people. He said that the college abroad would pay for the course (like a scholarship) and that he would pay for the journey abroad. He was a rich man, I could tell this by his car, the way he dressed, so I assumed he could afford to pay for me and that he wanted to help me.’

Female victim, 22

Facets of trafficking that gain in importance after the person has arrived in a situation of exploitation can have their roots in experiences at the beginning of their encounters with a trafficker. The impact of debt and of other forms of control such as violence or threats of violence are a feature of Nigerian trafficking, however only appear once the person is in the UK. A form of control that is applied before the person leaves Nigeria is the taking of oaths of secrecy and commitment to bind the trafficked person to the trafficker. While there is evidence that in the past this may have been a legal document with legal consequences, these have been formally outlawed. Now a common feature of trafficking is forcing the trafficked person to undergo a formal ritual by a juju priest. Juju beliefs are prevalent, particularly in rural parts of Nigeria (Kara 2009).

Box 3.6 A definition of juju

‘Juju’ or ‘ju-ju’ is a word of West African origin, derived from the French ‘joujou’ (toy). The word refers to the invisible realm of gods and spirits which is as ‘real’ as the material universe. The two worlds are interconnected through the operation of spiritual power, accessed through prayer and ritual. ‘Juju’ is the West African term for one such ritual practice. Objects, words and gestures are imbued with supernatural power through incantations and sacrifice to bring about a desired result. Pre-trafficking rituals, often carried out by a specialist, can be terrifying. They usually involve collection of items thought to embody the victims’ own vital force, such as their blood, pubic hair, nail clippings or underwear. Young women may be cut with razors and made to drink or wash in foul concoctions. The power now thought to control them knows no geographical boundaries; its influence can persist through time and space. Although the terms juju and witchcraft are often used interchangeably, witchcraft refers to the exercise of a person’s own innate power in order to harm others. Accusations of being a witch can result in ostracism and persecution of the suspect.

There are many documented examples of traffickers using juju beliefs to facilitate trafficking. Rituals are used to bind victims to their traffickers (Carling 2006, Okojie 2009, Kara 2009). Trafficking victims are made to pledge an oath that they will obey their trafficker and to not disclose their experiences. They are told that if they break this oath, they will suffer horrific and violent consequences from spirits.

‘The ‘herbalist’ placed substances on my head and made small cuts into my scalp and chest, and my blood was collected, as was some of my body hair. I was ordered to drink a ‘concoction’ ... The herbalist told me that what I experienced ... was going to continue and that I had to accept it,

again threatening that if I did not I would suffer consequences, including ‘going mad’. After this I became extremely fearful and felt completely helpless ... that there was no way for me to escape from these things.’

Female victim, 33

The narrative on Nigerian trafficking that pushes the impact of juju to the fore has been criticised as reductionist (Carling 2006). Our research emphasised the complex intersection of poverty, inequality, vulnerability, powerlessness and deception as being essential to understanding how people enter trafficking situations. Juju in Nigeria generally occurred in situations where the victim was already powerless (for example, in a pre-existing situation of exploitation).

Our research did find that the prevalence and potency of juju as a coercive tool was clear.

Box 3.7 The use of juju

- **Eleven (28 per cent)** had directly experienced juju, the majority in Nigeria, but two (eight per cent) in Europe.
- **Three (eight per cent)** had experienced other oaths or rituals in Nigeria, not all related directly to being trafficked.
- **Two others (five per cent)** had also been threatened with it in the UK.

The presence of juju demonstrates the importance of the threat of violence on trafficked people. This should not reduce the importance of understanding the limited choice the trafficked person has and the role of deception used to gain the trust of trafficking victims. Juju may not always be experienced at the time as an instrument of intimidation and control among respondents as it was mostly threatened once they were in a situation of exploitation. Rather juju was a ‘secondary’ form of coercion. It was experienced by people who had already entered situations of trafficking. It did facilitate the journey as well as facilitate trafficking in the UK.

The means of coercion demonstrate the low importance of ‘physical coercion’ in Nigerian trafficking. Rather than physical force or abduction, the majority of trafficking is facilitated either by an abuse of power – people being trafficked against their will who are unable to resist their traffickers either because of their young age, or lesser power relationship, or deception – the individual being promised a job or life very different to the exploitation that they faced. These types of coercion may make trafficked people feel (and certainly appear) to be in league with the trafficker, with them both having the same objectives to get to Europe. Critically also, once people had been recruited the sorts of violence they faced was rarely overtly physical. The use of a power relationship may make people feel that this is something they could never escape. The use of juju rites to instil a fear of violence or physical harm is also a form of coercion that does not require traffickers to have an *actual* physical hold over the trafficked person. The importance of these non-physical means of control are critical to understand and respond to in order to break trafficking in Nigeria. They are also important to understand for strategies that aim to address trafficking, as the UK is committed to doing, on the border.

3.4 Border crossings: how is travel facilitated?

3.4.1 Trafficking routes

The literature on trafficking routes between Nigeria and various destination countries in Europe has highlighted the variety of routes employed, particularly over land and sea, as air routes have become increasingly constrained by security controls (UNESCO 2006). However, our own research suggests that flights, direct or indirect, play a significant role in the trafficking of Nigerian people to the UK. Sometimes this is via other countries in Europe such as Italy, Spain and France.

Routes may change as traffickers leverage any weak points in border control. In the case of air travel, some British stakeholders stated that major airports were now being

sidelined in favour of regional airports and ferry terminals where capacity was perceived to be lower.

Box 3.8 Means and routes of trafficking among respondents

- **A very small number, three (eight per cent)**, arrived in the UK by bus and boat only. Journeys took weeks and passed through Morocco and Libya before heading on through France or Ireland. One victim did not know the exact route that they took.
- **The vast majority, 28 (70 per cent)** flew to the UK in a single journey, either directly or via a change in another European country. Domestic servitude victims were almost all sent directly to the UK, rather than multiple destinations across Europe.
- **Seven (18 per cent)** flew to other European destinations before travelling on to the UK, by plane or by boat, bus or train; sometimes via other countries, either temporarily or for extended periods. Some returned to Nigeria before being trafficked back elsewhere. These cases typically involved sexual exploitation.

3.4.2 Methods behind the trafficking journey

The route undertaken is only one of the parts of the journey that is useful to understand in order to address trafficking. It is also important to address the methods used to facilitate movement. Nigeria has some of the longest borders in Africa leading to many opportunities for border crossings at unmonitored locations. ‘We have so many unofficial borders,’ said one Nigerian informant. Even at official crossings, the permeability of the borders between Nigeria and its neighbours facilitates undocumented migration within the region. Economic liberalisation under ECOWAS such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods has resulted in increased crossborder mobility (Okojie 2009). ‘A Nigerian can move around ... West Africa ... without tendering any document, it is only when you go through the airport that you need to show your international passport,’ said another Nigerian respondent. ‘Apart from facilitating trade, it has also increased trafficking because it has made trafficking less cumbersome.’ Migrating through transit countries from Nigeria before setting off for Europe is perceived to attract less attention (Carling 2006).

Low capacity of border control

Migration is also facilitated by the ready availability of false, doctored or improperly procured documentation with which victims are trafficked, as well as the weakness of border control. One victim reported that her employers, who were not family members, had managed to register her as a relative. Many others used false papers to pass through immigration control, including passports with a different name and date of birth as well as ones that they knew not to be Nigerian passports. One female victim was even disguised as a boy. There was some evidence of bribery and corruption among border guards and immigration officials that may also have facilitated the victim’s journey.

‘We arrived at the airport in Lagos and it seemed that he was well known there. He was greeted by many of the officials. We handed over our papers and everything was stamped and no one asked any questions.’

Female victim, 24

Most were unaware of how they managed to cross border controls, as this was dealt with by the trafficker or escort.

Weaknesses in UK immigration control

It was clear from many respondent accounts that victims are passing through immigration without substantive questioning by officials. The victims themselves frequently had little or no understanding about the process, showing how readily official processes can be navigated without the substantive involvement of the victim.

'I have no idea in what capacity I entered the United Kingdom ... I believe that I was travelling on a passport which had some sort of visa which allowed me to enter the UK because I did not encounter problems when I went through immigration. ... To my knowledge I have never applied for a passport.'

Female victim, 17

Our research identified some instances where people were able to travel on genuine visas; however, these had been procured on the trafficked person's behalf, with their involvement being only limited. It is essential that these processes continue to be tightened.

Among respondents, there were also two clear instances of victims being refused or deported by UK immigration on entry from France, but then transferred to another country (in both cases, Spain) and trafficked in from there. A number of respondents articulated the feeling that the UK immigration system had failed them by letting them in. It is known that the UK is used as a country of transit for victims of trafficking being moved from Nigeria to other parts of Europe. As all of the interviewees for this study sought help in the UK this was not a feature of trafficking that we explored through our interviews. The lack of fully operational exit checks were felt to facilitate this. As one stakeholder stated: 'It's impossible to track people.'

Control and deception of victims

Among our respondents, most had almost no involvement in their border and immigration processes between Nigeria and the destination country. Traffickers took charge of their passport for the duration of the journey and only returned it briefly during inspection. Trafficked persons were accompanied on their journey.

The victim's lack of suspicion towards the trafficker was key. Certain indicators of trafficking – for example, forged documentation – may be regarded as normal due to limited knowledge about travel practices. As has been detailed above, due to the forms of coercion used most respondents had no sense until they reached the end of their journey in the UK that they were entering a situation of exploitation. Consequently, they trusted their trafficker, did not ask questions and cooperated during the journey.

'I did not have a passport. I don't know what documents "uncle" used throughout the journey as I was never in possession or saw a passport myself. I didn't ask "uncle" any questions about our travel arrangements or the UK, I trusted him completely ... I can't remember if I spoke to any officials or immigration authorities throughout the journey but I don't think I did. I think "uncle" spoke to them, he dealt with everything.'

Female victim, 20

This is by no means the case with all victims, of course. Some of our respondents had already suffered extreme physical and sexual abuse before leaving Nigeria and knew that further exploitation awaited them in the UK. Here, however, the traffickers leveraged the fear of their disoriented victims, not only of them, but also of the police and other authorities. This preceded a form of control that as we will show was very strong component of the trafficking experience in the UK.

'I travelled with S by plane via another country, I don't know where. We arrived in London, but I don't know which airport. When we arrived S told me to watch the other people and to do as they did. He told me that the white people would kill me if I caused a disturbance. At immigration they stamped my passport and let me through.'

Female victim, 24

The journey between Nigeria and the UK appears to present a golden opportunity to interrupt the process of trafficking. The UK border appears to present a focused space for practitioners to use to address trafficking from Nigeria. However, our study casts doubt on this assumption.

Interviews revealed the ability for traffickers to bring people into the UK on legal routes without the individual in question being questioned about the job offer they had received or provided with information about the visa they are being provided with or their rights in the UK. Procedures should be better designed so they are clearly intelligible to the victim and require their active participation to provide them with a greater degree of protection from coercion at this important first stage. There were many instances of children travelling with people who were not their parents who were able to elude checks by using falsified papers or rudimentary disguises. These were not identified or queried. However if they were, this may have led to trafficking being disrupted.

These weaknesses as well as wider factors show the limitations of a border-led anti-trafficking strategy. The lack of knowledge among victims of the exploitation that they face in the UK is a clear finding. The deception of trafficking victims leads them to trust absolutely in their trafficker at this stage. The use of deception also produces a limited awareness about the exploitation that they face in the UK. This makes identifying indicators of trafficking as well as facilitating cooperation from the trafficked person very challenging. For the small numbers that are aware of the exploitation they face, they are likely to be terrified of authorities and the power that the trafficker has over them. This is particularly true for trafficked people who may have undertaken a juju ritual binding them to obey their trafficker. Even if people were stopped at the border it would take many days, even months of dedicated and intensive work by supportive specialists in a trustworthy environment to encourage trafficking victims to disclose what they know about their trafficker and the situation they are would face in the UK. Trafficked people can be hidden once they enter the UK. In this context, border control can seem like an effective point at which to capitalise on them coming into contact with the authorities. It is important that where opportunities are present, they are taken and that people suspected of being trafficked are safeguarded. However, in many senses, trafficked people remain as hidden and difficult to identify at this point as they do in the UK or Nigeria.

There is a further issue with an anti-trafficking strategy addressing trafficking at the border. While it does prevent an individual from coming into the UK, it neither addresses the pre-existing exploitation or abuse that individuals have faced in Nigeria nor their vulnerability to being trafficked elsewhere in Nigeria, in West Africa or to one of the many other destinations in Europe, the Gulf or North Africa where exploitation occurs.

Nor does it address the demand for exploitative labour that may well be filled by the stock of other vulnerable migrants already in the UK. It is the importance of addressing the situation in the UK in order to prevent trafficking to which we will now turn.

3.5 What in the UK drives trafficking from Nigeria?

3.5.1 Features of trafficking in the UK

Domestic servitude

Many exploiters of trafficked persons are related to individuals involved in trafficking in Nigeria. A striking proportion of exploiters in the UK appear to be ordinary citizens rather than professional criminals. In cases of domestic servitude, exploiters are overwhelmingly also Nigerian.

In other cases, the trafficker might be an existing employer, emigrating from Nigeria, or a relative based in or relocating to the UK. There were instances where the victim was transferred from one country to the other to be exploited by the same family, showing the importance of mobile diaspora networks in the practice. In these cases, when the sender was not a parent but an employer in Nigeria or a 'friend' of an orphaned victim, the nature of the trafficking seemed to be a more opportunistic transaction between them and the receiver in the UK, or one born out of a specific economic circumstance or immediate need at that time, rather than a pattern of trafficking and abuse.

Victims of domestic servitude were typically recruited by an 'uncle' or 'aunty' of the family, though this did not necessarily indicate an actual blood tie, with promises of education and a better life in the UK. These 'relatives' either recruited them directly in Nigeria or

remotely, usually with the involvement of the parents. For example a child accompanied by their mother to visit a friend and then left there, sometimes without warning.

‘My mother told me that we would be going on a holiday to the UK to visit my father’s sister. I was surprised by this as I had never heard of this aunt and my mother had never spoken about going on a trip before ... Some days after we arrived in London, my mother told me that she was going to visit an old friend and would be back in a few days. I did not think anything of this and stayed with my aunt. My mother never returned.’

Female victim, 19

The experiences of victims of domestic servitude generally involve a challenging intersection of extreme abuse with apparent normality. Exploiters in the UK may be apparently respected members of the community, employed in a professional capacity, including in our sample people employed as an embassy worker, social worker or teacher, locally known and with strong ties to respected institutions such as the neighbourhood church.

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation can involve a wider network involving pimps and madams. Some victims reported working in a brothel-style set-up with other young women, in the majority of cases the victim was either exploited informally by a man and his friends or sold to other men alone from a flat or the trafficker’s home. While many punters may be British and other nationalities, the pimp or madam was often, although not exclusively, from the expatriate Nigerian community or someone who was a British national but also part of the Nigerian community.

Strangers, often ‘professional’ traffickers, played a much larger role among respondents in recruitment for sexual exploitation. Having accompanied victims to the UK, the trafficker would typically either exploit the victim directly themselves or leave them with a partner who would then manage the victim. At this point, their behaviour would suddenly change.

‘J called me and said that he had paid lots of money to bring me to the UK and that I would have to pay him back. He stated that if I refused to work in prostitution, he would come to the flat and kill me and if I tried to run away, the police would find me out, [send] me to prison and deport me back to Nigeria.’

Female victim, 20

Whether these traffickers were working alone or as part of a broader criminal organisation is not easy to discern. There were signs of integration and coordination between people in the two countries: This included attacks on family members or returned victims. There were also incidents of victims being transferred to another exploiter or sent and received by different traffickers in Nigeria and the UK. Rather than necessarily suggesting a ‘trafficking’ production line’, the existence of criminal networks beholden to the trafficker could also be because the trafficker was seen to be powerful. Many victims of sexual exploitation met only one or two traffickers throughout their exploitation. One British informant contrasted this with the large, well-developed and extensive eastern European trafficking networks. In many cases the location of their exploitation was the trafficker’s home or an apartment, suggesting a small mode of operation. There were instances where the victim was trafficked by their family or a family friend, leveraging either trust or pre-established patterns of abuse and control. In these cases, the victim might be exploited by the person themselves or sent to a ‘friend’ in the UK, as happened with one respondent trafficked by her husband.

3.5.2 Why do people stay in trafficking circumstances?

Trafficking victims may spend months or years in a situation of exploitation before attempting to escape. It is important in these situations to recognize the reality of the control that they are held within in order to break trafficking in an effective way.

Physical restraint, violence and threats had a significant role in many trafficking situations. Many respondents reported regular beatings, assaults, sexual assaults, humiliation and rape by their exploiters, even to the point of hospitalization. The threat of violence was even more common. Importantly, these are often directed not only at the victims but also at their families in Nigeria, who may even have been part of the decision to go with the trafficker, have subsidised the victim's journey, and be in close contact with the trafficker. In some cases here these threats were actualized, with relatives of respondents murdered in Nigeria.

Physical control could also be achieved through restricted movement or isolation. Others had their movement heavily restricted, being locked in rooms and not allowed out without strict chaperoning. In other cases, victims appeared to be a 'secret' and had to hide when visitors came to the house. Many victims also had their passport confiscated and were unable to communicate even with their families in Nigeria. Public services such as healthcare were in general either restricted or entirely absent. Few had contact with other people besides traffickers and 'punters'. When they did engage with other people, these would generally be the friends or family of their exploiter.

'After I'd been there for two years she started to invite her friends around to the house and got me to braid their hair. Any money they gave for this, she kept.'

Female victim, 20

However, while physical violence was widely employed on our respondents, particularly victims of sexual exploitation, it was not the major form of control on most victims. Some were able to leave their traffickers homes to run errands or to attend church (with their exploiter). Subtler forms of constraint are often at work that may in some cases be more effective in controlling the victim than direct physical violence, as well as harder for enforcement agencies to detect. The role that invisibility and isolation play in the coercion and exploitation of many victims, whether in domestic servitude or prostitution is critical to understand. Many are children, compounding their vulnerability.

While the treatment of victims in domestic servitude is frequently abusive, even violent, with victims sometimes not leaving the confines of the household for years, constraints such as absolute restriction of movement – for example through doors and windows being barred – are not necessarily in place. There were cases of victims, having fled their exploiters, returning either out of desperation and a sense of loyalty or sent back by their parents, or at the behest of their parents or relatives. These cases also highlight important enabling contexts, such as the vulnerability of the victim and exploitation of the trafficker's authority, the age of the victim making them unable to consent to their situation, family expectations, and a feeling of obligation and deferred promises. For instance, one respondent was abused constantly by her host, yet when the victim asked to be taken back to Nigeria, the exploiter did so, yet after discussions with her family, the victim was made to beg forgiveness and was then sent back to the UK.

Victims' inaction, far from signaling 'cooperation' with their exploiters and some sort of 'passive agency', reflects the widespread powerlessness, violence and dislocation that keep many victims locked in their trafficking situations for years. This is particularly important to bear in mind when a significant portion of victims may not be visibly restricted in their movements, and are sometimes even embedded in the community; they may attend church, enrol in school or undertake low-skilled employment. Nevertheless, they are generally still bound by less tangible forces of coercion and obligation. Even when victims are not physically restricted, the barriers to escape can be overwhelming.

Another powerful impact that has an effect similar to the threat of physical violence, is the impact of a juju ritual. Victims of trafficking who have undergone a juju ritual in Nigeria were terrified of its effects. One victim also reported a juju ceremony being performed on her while she was in the UK, while another two were threatened with it.

‘He said to me that he had lots of connections in Nigeria and in the UK and that if I ever tried to run away he would find me and punish me. He talked about juju. I do believe in it and it is something that frightens me a lot. He said if I ran away he would find me and cut me into pieces and sell me in Jankara market in Lagos, Nigeria.’

Female victim, 22

This can be a crucial element in their decision to remain with traffickers or to disclose to police after their escape. ‘Women can often be unwilling to discuss juju because often ... one of the rules [is] not violating the oath itself ...,’ according to one British stakeholder. ‘We have women who have been with us for years who have long escaped and the slightest thing happens, they stub their toe, they get a cold, their asylum decision is refused, whatever, it’s the juju.’ The fear of violent repercussions maintained a strong hold on the victims, in the same way that a victim under a straightforward threat of violence would feel unable to leave their trafficking situation. The effect of juju was more powerful in some senses as for the victim, the threat of violence and physical harm remained even if they were to escape from the physical proximity of the trafficker.

‘You’ll get decisions that say things like ‘but the doors and windows weren’t locked’. So there’s no real appreciation [of] something like the power that taking an oath might have over someone in terms of their actual ability to extricate themselves from a situation ... You know, they could have been standing in the middle of an open field and not run.’

British stakeholder

For victims who had not been involved in taking a juju oath, close relationship between traffickers and their families and communities had a powerful hold over them. Though the physical threat may not be actualised on themselves, it may be over their family.

This use of the psychological pressures was also important. Debt-bondage was a common method of control adopted by traffickers. The idea that they were in debt to the trafficker was almost always introduced once they arrived. Victims were informed that they would have to repay this through exploitative work. In general, even when victims are informed about the debt in advance, they may not necessarily be aware of what it means – for example, the difference between naira (Nigerian currency) and euros – this would only be explained once they reached the UK. There were cases of victims escaping back to Nigeria and then being re trafficked due to their family’s debt to the exploiter. In one case a trafficked person escaped from ‘direct’ control by her trafficker and worked elsewhere yet felt compelled to continue to give him the money she earned in order to pay off a ‘debt’.

In this traumatised and deprived state of affairs, the relationships between trafficker and victim can appear ambiguous; particularly when the traffickers are relatives or ‘friends’, and when the trafficked person perceives that the trafficker has allowed them to escape a worse situation in Nigeria and thinks that without them they would not be supported. For example, one respondent had worked for eight years in forced domestic servitude with her trafficker and yet hesitated to disclose the crimes that had been committed by her trafficker, not only out of fear, but also a more subtle sense of obligation:

‘I felt that I owed the employer some loyalty and some labour as she was paying for me to go through university. She had always said that if I complained to others she would ensure that I could not continue my studies, and after being deprived of education for so long I did not want to jeopardise the progress that I had managed to make. I was torn.’

Female victim, 27

Underpinning control was a lack of awareness of (alternative) support and an all-consuming fear that they would not be supported if they left their trafficking situation. Trafficking victims may have a limited understanding of the illegality of their experiences, even when recognising that they are being exploited, few were aware that they were being ‘trafficked’,

or that this is a legal violation for which they were able to access official support. The fear was that there would be no alternative support provision for them and their choice was to stay with their trafficker or to be removed to their previous life of abuse in Nigeria.

A common fear among respondents was that the response to them from the UK police force would be similar to that of the Nigerian police, a combination of indifference and intimidation. This mindset is critical to why many victims of trafficking do not go to the police or other agencies. In some cases traffickers reinforced this perception by telling victims that the police would arrest and deport them. For many, fear of deportation was central in maintaining their exploitation, often linked to the destitution, violence and abuse they had experienced in their life in Nigeria, or a fear of future violence having accrued a 'debt' to their trafficker. After prolonged trauma, sexual abuse, physical violence and exploitation by those around them, in many cases since childhood, some trafficking victims may not be inclined to seek external support or put their trust in others.

'They don't understand the idea of being a free person. One of the victims said: "Do you own me now? Are you going to sell me?"... Some have never been free since they were children. Simple acts of kindness throw them. They think you want something in return.'

British stakeholder

While there may be a disconnection between the trafficked person's understanding of the support available to them and the reality, an important element in the victim's ongoing exploitation in the UK is the lack of effective protection. For example, while this report has focused in detail on the contribution that child vulnerability plays in Nigeria, it is worth emphasising the significant shortfalls in knowledge and practice in the UK with regards to child protection. The police have been criticised for limited training and awareness on child protection and human trafficking (ECPAT 2010). Even once suspected child trafficking victims are supposedly under official protection, their vulnerability remains high. For instance, of 330 trafficked children identified by CEOP in 2008, it was found that 183 (55 per cent) had subsequently gone missing from care (CEOP 2008). This point was emphasised by a number of respondents who felt that the British agencies had failed to effectively identify and also to protect suspected victims.

A related problem, especially when victims have some degree of broader engagement, is unawareness or even acceptance about trafficking arrangements among members of the local trafficker's community. One respondent highlighted that though she was able to have some contact outside of her trafficking situation, these contacts also exploited her:

'Sometimes ... late at night A would wake me to serve her and her friends. A's sister who lived in London would also bring laundry to the house and tell me to wash [it]. A's sister from Nigeria also visited and stayed in the house, I had to wash her clothes and cook for her also. My male employer's cousin would also bring their three children to the house for me to care for. This happened about two times a month. A's friend would also bring her two children for me to care for [while she] and A went out.'

Female victim, 32

Along with collaboration were signs of behaviour that was well motivated. People would turn a blind eye, feeling that exploitation might be better than the detention and deportation that the authorities have to offer. As will be explored below, a lack of action against exploitation among some of the individuals encountering trafficked victims, whether through complicity (in the case of a punter for example) or out of a sense that they could help them best by not reporting the situation to the authorities, shut down an important escape route for trafficked people.

3.5.3 Why do people exploit?

As the previous section demonstrates, trafficking does not just occur in a vacuum where the control that traffickers are able to hold over their victims is the only dynamic.

Although this may appear a strange question to pose, it is important to identify the opportunities that traffickers use to exploit people in the UK. It is also a question that little research has addressed. Whilst our research has allowed us to understand the decisions, information, individuals, experiences and motivations guiding trafficked peoples experiences, it is important to develop a specific understanding of traffickers and those that facilitate trafficking.

This context for exploitation may be initiated by predatory and criminal individuals but is clearly facilitated by a broader context of acceptance. The UK provides a 'fertile' environment for trafficking to take place. The normalization of the sex industry and demand for paid-for sex in the UK is key. The steady stream of punters using brothels or hotel services involving trafficked people is an important factor encouraging traffickers to bring them from Nigeria and to feel able to exploit them in the UK. Abusive attitudes towards the women were also clear. There was evidence of people coming into contact with trafficked people who were knowingly complicit in their rape and sexual exploitation. Many interviewees reported experiences where they were clear with punters in the UK that they were selling sex through coercion and did not consent to their actions.

Similarly, trafficking occurs in the UK due to a market for exploitable domestic workers. Here, challenges of affordable childcare and low wages intersect. Critically, the 'normalisation' of exploitative domestic work among small sections of the population in the UK is key. For respondents exploited in closed domestic settings, a number appeared to have had some form of wider engagement, for example carrying out chores at parties, caring for other families' children or attending church, without being identified as trafficking victims; a fact that seems to suggest unawareness but in cases could demonstrate acceptance of situations that would classify as trafficking in UK law. Some stakeholders felt that there was a reticence to acknowledge that the exploitation of people, particularly in domestic settings, needed to be addressed among small sections of (particularly, but by no means exclusively) British-Nigerian society:

'A problem is there is negativity from the Nigerian community as well ... it's trying to build awareness while battling denial ... There is an acceptance that exploitation goes on. Some don't see it as exploitation and trafficking.'

British stakeholder

This may be due to an unwillingness to go to the police due to their own irregular immigration status or because they fear that the person who is being exploited will not be helped but will be detained or removed from the UK as much as because exploitation isn't recognised.

This unwillingness to act was also felt to be replicated by statutory agencies that came into contact with victims of trafficking. Stakeholders reported a reticence by social workers, schools or other agencies to investigate possible signs of abuse due to a wariness of engaging with behaviour they ascribed as 'cultural' or because they feared that tackling it would lead to accusations of racism.

As the next chapter shows, one of the most important dynamics allowing trafficking to take place in the UK is the lack of accessible or appropriate support for people exiting a trafficking situation. A lack of knowledge about, or a lack of confidence in, the statutory support and protection available is likely to be an important driver behind this unwillingness of some members of the public to take action against situations where they suspect exploitation. Importantly, as the next chapter will show, even after people had left their trafficking situation, the lack of access to adequate protection led to many trafficked people entering into further exploitation and being re trafficked within the UK. Work to protect trafficked people has a crucial role to play, not only in supporting victims of crime and abuse but in preventing trafficking itself.

3.6 Preventing trafficking from Nigeria to the UK: conclusions and recommendations

Our findings show that trafficking is perpetrated and facilitated by a multitude of people. It is difficult to address and is driven by circumstances in countries of origin, transit and destination. While there are challenges, some ways forward can be found.

Work aiming to prevent trafficking has often focused on raising the awareness of potential victims about its dangers. Our research has demonstrated that awareness-raising should not be the only focus of a trafficking strategy but that, done well, it could have an impact. Awareness of 'trafficking' is high in Nigeria; however awareness of the nuances of trafficking is not. People have a strong sense of personal resilience that is not necessarily born out in reality. **Future awareness-raising campaigns should target vulnerable groups and the people around them who may facilitate trafficking, and should involve people who have previously been trafficked** (however only in cases or in ways where safeguarding can be ensured). In addition to this, NAPTIP in collaboration with NGOs should **run a sustained campaign on trafficking for domestic work**. This campaign should have three target groups: the parents, young people and potential traffickers. Besides raising the levels of awareness about the risks associated with this type of trafficking, the aim is to also initiate a debate about the illegality and exploitative nature of trafficking for domestic work as well as the consequences for people caught trafficking for these purposes. Such a debate will contribute towards challenging the 'normalisation' of trafficking for domestic work in Nigeria.

Our research findings also emphasise the need for prevention to go beyond awareness-raising, which may be particularly ineffective for groups that are vulnerable to trafficking, for examples orphans or children in private fostering arrangements. **Policy in Nigeria that seeks to prevent trafficking should address poverty and exclusion from support as well as migration intentions. The relationship between internal and international trafficking should be recognised and drivers of internal trafficking should be addressed, such as weak child protection protocols.**

The UK's anti-trafficking work in Nigeria focuses on strengthening borders and preventing irregular migration between Nigeria and the UK. Our research shows that addressing poverty and social exclusion is essential to addressing trafficking. Wider social policies such as education must be part of an anti-trafficking response. While the work that is in place to do this should be continued (reducing irregular migration is a laudable aim) it should not be seen as or extended as a way of addressing trafficking. Rather than build capacity around the borders, **the UK should focus on supporting Nigerian institutions to build child protection protocols in order to address the vulnerability and internal trafficking that leads to international trafficking.** The UK should also start to mainstream anti-trafficking work within wider development policy and programming in Nigeria where appropriate.

Critically, prevention activities should not just be 'upstream'. As this study demonstrates, trafficking is driven by factors in the UK too, and policy should target demand and conducive environments for exploitation in the UK. **This is in part about the general enforcement of laws around child protection, vulnerable employment and sex work.** More specifically, at a local level, **greater efforts should be made to communicate messages about the law in the UK, what constitutes trafficking and the consequences of being caught to individuals and communities who may come into contact with trafficked people.** This could be achieved through further awareness-raising by community organisations and religious institutions.

Stringent immigration policies are not only often ineffective at addressing trafficking; they can also increase the opportunities for exploitation. In order to address this, **the Government should re-establish the domestic worker visa route that allows people to change their employer and extend it to diplomatic households.** Under the previous visa arrangement, domestic workers were allowed to change employer but under the new rule, employees are granted a six-month visit visa, with no employment rights and no right to change employers, greatly increasing the risk of exploitation and the likelihood of trafficking.

4. ONCE TRAFFICKING HAPPENS: PROTECTION

By its nature, as a crime against an individual, the act of trafficking produces an identifiable victim or victims (CPS 2011). A primary objective of policy should be to prevent trafficking occurring. However, protection for those caught up in trafficking, the deceived and commodified, is a crucial aspect of a holistic response.

The rationale for this chapter starts from the proposition that the UK has a responsibility to protect victims of crime, particular victims of violent crime, and that victims of trafficking fall within this designation. Where trafficked people are children, the UK has an even more obvious duty of care. This is due both to the need for the UK to meet international legal commitments and to its intrinsic importance. The physical and psychological health impacts of trafficking can require intensive support (Zimmerman 2006); the value of a trafficked person to an exploiter can necessitate careful secure protection. There are also instrumental reasons why the protection of trafficked people is important to an anti-trafficking strategy. Protection of trafficked people is crucial to preventing trafficking and securing prosecutions of traffickers. Without adequate protection, trafficked people are vulnerable to further exploitation and abuse as well as vulnerable to being trafficked again. Without effective engagement with victims, agencies will not be able to translate their experience into effective prevention strategies. Without access to safe support, victims will be less likely to feel confident to pursue the prosecution of traffickers.

However, it must be acknowledged that protecting trafficked people requires the UK to navigate a number of political and practical challenges. There is significant political space to provide support to victims of trafficking. The government's latest human trafficking strategy reiterated clearly the UK's commitment to protecting victims: '[V]ictims of trafficking have been deceived and exploited. They will undoubtedly be frightened and vulnerable. We must therefore do all we can to support them as they try to rebuild their lives' (Home Office 2011). However, support for the protection of victims of trafficking sits within the context of significant pressure on government to not be seen to be creating avenues of support for 'irregular migrants'. This is due to concerns that support may encourage further irregular migration and hostility to the provision of support to migrants more widely. These themselves are concerns, both to those advocating reduced immigration per se, as well as those concerned that the provision of support would encourage people to take greater risks to migrate to the UK (making them more vulnerable to trafficking). Navigating this is a challenge.

There are also practical challenges to providing support to victims of trafficking. The UK authorities cannot be certain that everyone presenting for protection is entitled to support. In particular circumstances being found to have been a victim of trafficking may help an individual's claim for asylum or humanitarian protection, although we did not uncover evidence of this. This creates an incentive for some people to claim they have experienced trafficking even when they have not. Furthermore, trafficking victims come into contact with and access support from a range of voluntary, community and statutory agencies. With such a large number of agencies involved, it is a challenge to ensure that a response is effective without being impractical. Responses must avoid the temptation to say 'everyone must do everything'. Reduced budgets across all services to support vulnerable people with high support needs, including victims of violence and abuse (Women's Aid 2011), make the political argument for prioritisation of support for this group even harder to make; the practical realities of enabling this support are tougher still. The UK (including through specific measures developed by the devolved regions) already has a multimillion-pound response designed to protect victims of trafficking. It is important to ensure this money is effectively spent.

These issues need consideration: the duty to people who are victims of crime and the duty to safeguard people whose lives are in danger; the risk of encouraging irregular migration and the practical ability to provide this support must influence our response.

4.1 What should protection achieve?

Within this framework, support provision should have two objectives. The first is to ensure that trafficked people are encouraged to leave their trafficking situation and seek support. The second aim is that, after they seek support, trafficked people are recognised as such, are able to access the support they are entitled to and that they need in order to be safe, and are able to move on with their lives. Overall, support provision should be accessible, targeted, supportive and transformational.

- **Accessible:** Support should be accessible so that victims are able to exit trafficking situations as early as possible, to seek help and be referred into support pathways. Due to the hidden nature of trafficking, it is essential that the accessibility of support for victims is prioritised.
- **Targeted:** Support should be targeted so that it is provided to those who need assistance, but also to maintain public confidence that the support pathways provided to victims of trafficking are being provided to people genuinely in need of support, rather than those looking to game a system.
- **Supportive:** Support should be meaningful and provide protection. It should meet the needs of trafficking victims.
- **Transformational:** Support should focus on pathways that facilitate long-term and lasting rehabilitation. This does not necessarily involve the individual staying within the UK or Europe. Support should facilitate an individual being able to return to Nigeria wherever this is safe and possible to do.

4.2 Are current responses adequate?

Our research, consonant with other studies (see ATMG 2010, Lalani 2011), suggests that after trafficking happens victims are not always able to access adequate protection, that is, protection that meets a threshold of care that is accessible, targeted, supportive and transformational, whether in the UK or Nigeria.

In fact, it is often problematic to talk of people in a 'post-trafficking' situation. In so many cases the issues that had affected their lives during (and even before) their trafficking continued after their initial escape. It is difficult to generalise about the experience of trafficking victims. However, for the majority of respondents, the consequences of their exploitation still impact very tangibly on their lives long after its formal 'end'. Their lives continued to be informed by vulnerability, fear and uncertainty, and in many cases by further abuse and exploitation that in some cases lasted over a number of years, before they were formally identified by authorities. They then underwent a prolonged and traumatic process of interrogation, legal proceedings and even detention before they accessed support. At the time of our interview, a large proportion were still uncertain about their future. In important ways, their status as victims did not end with their escape.

The next section explores the challenges in seeking support facing people who have been trafficked from Nigeria to the UK, the inadequacies in the systems designed to support them, and the changes needed to provide support to victims of trafficking within a practical framework.

4.3 Escaping trafficking

4.3.1 Escape

As detailed in the previous chapter, there are a number of barriers preventing trafficked people from leaving their trafficking situation. The circumstances of escape were influenced by these barriers. Escape itself was undertaken, broadly, in three ways: on their own, with intervention from a formal source, or with intervention from an informal source. However, the hidden nature of their exploitation meant that escape was rarely facilitated by outside help.

For the majority of interviewees, escape was undertaken alone and attempted spontaneously; for example, when they were presented with an opportunity such as an unlocked door or after a catalysing event (for example, a particularly violent assault).

‘I tried to get downstairs to call for help. It was past 12am. I fell down the flight of steps to the floor below. It was loud and so another tenant came out of their room. They saw me and called the ambulance and police.’

Female victim, 22

A smaller number left their trafficking situation using outside assistance from an informal source. This included contacts made outside of their situation including teachers or shop workers. However, in the great majority of cases, this was somebody intimately linked to their exploitation, such as clients of their brothel.

‘I escaped through the help of one of the men who came to the house ... I had seen him five times before. He offered to help me escape.’

Female victim, 33

A very small number left their trafficking situation with some form of outside intervention from a formal source. This included an enforcement action either by police raiding a brothel or an immigration raid on the house they were staying in. This was never explicitly under the auspices of a raid aiming to free them from a trafficking situation.

4.3.2 Encounters post-trafficking

The first points of contact outside of trafficking were in all but a few cases with members of the public. Rather than attempt to make contact with the police, trafficked victims sought support from the public. Often they sought out other Nigerian people, for instance through approaching churches or someone who they thought appeared Nigerian, or who was speaking a Nigerian language.

‘I met a lady from Nigeria and after explaining my situation to her she gave me the address of a church ... When I went to the church I met the pastor. He called the church women and explained the situation to the women in the church and solicited help.’

Female victim, 42

‘Community based support ... for a lot of women is actually their first port of call, particularly if they escape under their own steam rather than in some sort of brothel raid or immigration raid ... So if they escape by themselves, it’s entirely likely that they will wander around until they hear someone speaking Yoruba. Or ... they go to the market or ... to the church or [other] community [locations] where they try to find support.’

British stakeholder

‘When I escaped I ran out of the house, I fled into the street. I climbed up the stairs in the tower block and I could hear people speaking [Pigin] English. I thought they might be Nigerian. I knocked on the door.’

Female victim, 24

Those who had used the support of clients to escape continued to draw on that support.

Unless they had been removed from a trafficking situation by enforcement action, very few approached the authorities following their escape. A number described actively avoiding them:

‘Until I met them (the police) [I was so scared] and now I know that they are good, they want to help. If I [saw] them coming towards me. I ran away, I hid.’

4.3.3 Experiences post-trafficking

The length of time between initial escape and their identification and referral into sustainable support pathways was substantial. In most cases, the support they received during this time was not only minimal with regular periods of destitution and difficulty but actively harmful. While some respondents secured some positive support during this time, many experienced further exploitation or entered abusive relationships where they continued to be subjected to physical violence.

Escaping from an initial trafficking situation was not the end of their experiences of exploitation. Some victims were caught by their former trafficker after escaping and returned. More commonly, some were 'rescued' from one situation of exploitation to then be 'pimped' or re-trafficked into another.

Others entered into a situation of abuse or exploitation that although not 're-trafficking' under the three-part definition, was still highly abusive and exploitative. This included abusive relationships or arrangements where they were obliged to offer sex or servitude to their 'host' in return for board and lodging. For some this offer of work was arranged genuinely as a route out of their predicament. However, even when initial assistance appeared to be sincere and disinterested, the vulnerability of the victim of trafficking meant that the dynamic could change. One respondent recounted how, after disclosing her situation to a Nigerian friend in the UK, she was urged to leave her exploiters and come and stay with her friend. After at first being welcomed, the situation changed:

'Sweeping, dusting, clean[ing] the kitchen, mopping the floors and making the bed ... After some time I started to feel that I was being exploited again. I was too afraid to go to the police for help and I did not know where else to turn ... I had to follow her rules: I was not to go out, I would not be provided with any keys, I must complete all tasks to Ms L's standards, I must not talk to her guests ... Ms L began to threaten me, telling me that I was illegal and that I had no passport and that she could report me to the authorities if I did not comply with her demands. I felt completely helpless.'

Female victim, 33

This blurring of support and exploitation could also be sexual. One respondent, rescued by an older man, was initially assisted but over time the nature of their relationship again changed:

'He let me live with him in his house for two to three months. He said he would ask his church friends if they could find me a job but nothing came of this ... After one month he made it clear that in order to stay I would have to have sex with him. I felt like I had no option so I did as I was told ... This was very difficult because he was old enough to be my grandfather.'

Female victim, 20

Sometimes work was exploitative. However their feelings about it were different due to the degree of improvement from their past situation.

'B lived in a shared house where there was a woman who agreed that I could live in the house in return for caring for her child. I looked after the child while the woman worked in full-time employment. I slept in a store cupboard. I was grateful that I was no longer being forced to have sex with men.'

Female victim, 22

Even when support did not result in further exploitation, support was often transitory in nature. Even after their escape, many victims fluctuated between temporary stays and homelessness. In a number of cases, their vulnerability was heightened by having children to care for as well. Many entered into violent or abusive relationships. Some victims felt forced to support themselves through survival prostitution.

In general, the lives of victims in post-trafficking situations were highly abusive and governed by improvisation. Even though some developed relationships and had children, it was not always clear how much choice the victim had in their domestic arrangements. They lacked access to support services.

4.3.4 Accessing support from formal services

At some point, most did come into contact with authorities that had a duty to identify trafficking victims. Many interviewees accessed multiple services such as school or medical care without being identified as having been trafficked. A very small number left their trafficking situation with some form of outside intervention from a formal source. This included an enforcement action either by police raiding a brothel or an immigration raid on the house they were staying in.

Rarely was trafficking identified. Although some, albeit a small number of interviewees, were removed from a situation of trafficking with help from the authorities, none were able to benefit from this encounter. In no cases did this lead to victims being identified as trafficked or referred into specialist support to be assessed and aided. For example one respondent, a victim of sexual exploitation, gave details of her experiences to police after she had been arrested for prostitution yet was not offered the opportunity to prosecute her traffickers or to be referred into trafficking support:

'I explain[ed] everything to them, the way I came to this country and the way people rescued me ... I explain[ed] everything to them, and they took me to Yarlswood.'

Female victim, 20

The same lack of identification occurred when victims approached the authorities themselves. One woman who had been sexually exploited and in a situation of domestic servitude escaped from the house and sought support from someone in a tower block nearby. After telling them about her situation she was eventually encouraged to contact the police:

'It was that lady's daughter who helped me to ring the police. Unfortunately they did not help me that first day. I was arrested and spent the night in custody. The next day I was left on the streets with nowhere to go.'

Female victim, 24

These experiences were also confirmed by practitioners. Many stakeholders reported encountering people who had received support from multiple agencies for many months without having ever been identified as a potential victim of trafficking.

'You just think – how has this happened?'

British stakeholder

Further to this, not only were victims not recognised as trafficked and referred into support for trafficked people, they were not supported or safeguarded as victims of the much more recognisable crimes they were reporting, including assault, rape or sexual abuse. For example, one woman who reported being raped by her trafficker was simply advised to stay away from him. Another respondent, exploited in domestic servitude as a child, went to police after escaping but after being put in a cell overnight was released without any support:

'When I told them that I was homeless, they didn't care. That was really terrible. I don't ... it was really terrible. I don't know if, you know ... there should be something better that they could do. Not just let a young girl at 17 to, you know, walk around the [street]. It was really terrible.'

Female victim, 19

In these cases, the victims were potentially left exposed to further abuse and exploitation.

The lack of assistance meant that some victims ended up between support agencies. At worst, this could leave victims with little choice but to return to their exploiters.

‘The police ... gave me an address but I only knew the area around the O’s house and didn’t know how to get there. I went back to the O’s house ... They both were very angry with me and told me that if I ever put them in trouble in the UK again, they would make sure I regretted being born ... After this I did not think about seeking help as I feared the consequences if they found out.’

Female victim, 21

Rather than being referred into support, many victims were identified and referred on as illegal immigrants. When contact was made with authorities, for a significant number of respondents, the primary focus was on their own infringement (such as illegal documentation) rather than any wider consideration of their possible circumstances. Previous research confirms that trafficked women are routinely detained in immigration detention centres or prison (Stephen-Smith et al 2008). Overall, in total, more than a quarter of all respondents were detained; eight in immigration detention, and three imprisoned. More spent time in police custody.

4.4 Making support accessible

The long continuum of abuse and disempowerment after trafficking, along with difficulties accessing support, was a consistent finding. It represents very real problems in the care of trafficked people, and adds further evidence to a growing body of research (ATMG 2010). Our interviews were able to untangle the latent dynamics behind this continuum. The reasons are three-fold: the current system does not encourage trafficked people to seek support; the current system does not prioritise services and other agencies which provide support; and the current system ignores a major barrier to the most important route into support, a lack of a sympathetic community environment for trafficked people.

4.4.1 Lack of trust in support among trafficked people

The mechanisms of control that kept people in trafficking situations also made trafficked people reticent to engage with authorities. Fear and uncertainty in the support that was available to them was key.

‘When I was with my uncle I didn’t know that I could get help if I [ran] away from that place. I didn’t know at all. I didn’t know. That’s why ... that was one of the reasons why I stayed there. Till, you know I stayed there for a while. I stayed there for long. Because I didn’t know I could get help ... I was just thinking that, oh, if I go to the police I will get arrested. I will be taken back to Nigeria and I don’t have [anybody] there, you get me and stuff. So ... and then I was scared about, you know, all the things. I was just thinking that everything is finished. That I have no hope. You know?’

Female victim, 33

The fear that support would not give them the protection they needed, particularly that it would lead to them being removed to Nigeria was a strong deterrent against seeking help and a major factor in people’s decision to stay away from formal support. No one felt that it was safe for them to return to Nigeria. This was because of the risk of retaliation from traffickers or the family or community members who had facilitated their journey.

‘Because if you escape that situation you are threatened, yeah, and whoever that you’re giving that money to before will like ... he or she will do anything. Anything to like, kill you. Or like, you know, to make you stop, not to [say] anything to involve them, to get to the police or anything.’

Female victim, 35

Fear that support available would not protect them against the threats they face or rather might make these threats more powerful also prevented interviewees from disclosing their

experiences to authorities. Even if trafficked people did meet members of the authorities, fear of reprisals made them afraid to implicate their trafficker.

In some cases this was due to threats against their family. For others it could be linked to fear of the power of a juju ritual they had been part of.

‘She [took] my hair, there and cut my hair. And [drew] my blood, you understand? And said whenever I decide not to pay or [if I] involve her in everything, she’s going to use this against me. Then with that, I end up like, being scared.’

Female victim, 25

Not only did they fear that the support provided would be inadequate, they also feared that it might be harmful and abusive. Fear of the police was also a significant factor preventing trafficked people from seeking support with authorities such as the police or immigration officials. Due to negative experiences with the police in Nigeria many feared that they would receive harsh treatment.

‘I didn’t want to go to the police as I thought they would be like the Nigerian police.’

Female victim, 22

‘A told me that I needed to go to the police to tell them what was happening. I was very frightened of this because of what [the trafficker] had [told] me. I did not believe that the police would help me.’

Female victim, 27

4.4.2 Lack of trust in support among communities

A lack of knowledge and trust in the support available among victims was not the only barrier preventing victims from engaging with authorities. Another influencing factor was the lack of knowledge and lack of trust in the support available to victims of trafficking among the people that trafficked people seek support from.

Community groups and individuals had limited knowledge of trafficking and referral pathways as well as low trust in the support available.

‘If you go to the police – they aren’t going to help these girls – they’ll send them straight to the Home Office.’

British stakeholder

Other informants emphasised that a reluctance to refer might also reflect a perception that victims were better protected outside the system.

‘Most of the people who are accessing community support, and who do that in a sort of long-term way, won’t go into one of those processes because they will probably be told by their community that it’s not a good idea and that it will be better and safer for them to kind of live off grid and to try to keep their head down. And you know – in many ways that may be true.’

British stakeholder

This attitude was also shown among more specialist support providers and NGOs who also lacked trust in the system. As one key informant from an organisation specialising in trafficking described:

‘We just can’t say to [community groups], refer to the police, refer to UKHTC, because we can’t hand on heart say that they’ll give them a fair assessment.’

British stakeholder

This had an impact on the diffusion of information among key groups as well as the likelihood of these groups referring trafficking victims into support.

4.4.3 Lack of trust confirmed: Experience of authorities

As well as low knowledge and low confidence in support, trafficked people's experience of authorities also undermined their willingness to seek support. Many respondents described intimidating and acrimonious encounters that led them to shrink away from revealing their experiences or seeking support.

'The police continued to ask me questions; they shouted at me saying I would be deported or arrested if I didn't tell the officers R's address, or any address they could take me to. I didn't know any address to be taken to and could not recognise R's house. The police officers then brought me to [the] police station where I was questioned again and arrested.'

Female victim, 23

These negative experiences seemed to have a scarring effect that influenced the ways that victims engaged with the authorities over time. As one respondent explained:

'I found my experience of the police very upsetting and [this] made me not trust the police in the UK. It [made] me scared. If that lady [had not] called me back [perhaps] I [would not seek official help] again. Then I [would] go and start working in the street again.'

Female victim, 27

Responses to a trafficked person that corroborate a trafficker's threats, or their own fears about the uncaring nature of the authorities towards them, were particularly damaging. This has the effect of confirming not only their original fears, but the veracity of the trafficker's other threats as well as their sense of their trafficker's power.

4.4.4 Lack of understanding of trafficking

As well as trafficking victims' reticence to seek support, protection is often not given due to support providers being unable to encourage or to identify trafficked people when they do engage with the authorities.

While many people are unlikely to disclose their experiences out of fear of their traffickers or the police, the onus falls on the police and other frontline agencies to proactively identify them. There are obvious difficulties involved in 'sensing' someone is a trafficking victim if the person in question is reluctant or unable to provide the supporting information themselves. These questions seemed to be confounded by the problem that, except in the case of referrals, victims will initially encounter non-specialist staff with little in the way of trafficking-specific training. As one British stakeholder argued:

'Trafficking isn't mentioned as part of social work training pre- or post-qualifying, so social workers wouldn't recognise a trafficked child if it hit them. So they're not going to identify anyone.'

A low understanding of the nuances of trafficking was particularly felt to be a problem for Nigerian trafficking victims. Practitioners described how due to fear and lack of trust in authorities, Nigerian people can appear unwilling to be helped, headstrong and resilient, rather than as a vulnerable victim. An interviewee's reticence to speak to authorities or to implicate their trafficker may make the authorities suspicious of them. Support workers and statutory services found the impact of juju beliefs on victims very difficult to deal with even after experience and training. They stressed the disbelief of its importance in how a person behaves in those encountering it for the first time (such as judges or competent authority officials).

An added challenge, particularly in the case of domestic servitude, can be the nature of the situation presented. The use of familial terms such as 'aunty', common terms of respect in Nigeria (even for exploiters with no relation to the victim) may be misunderstood in the UK and mean that trafficking could appear at first like an abusive domestic situation within a family or partner relationship rather than one of employer-employee.

Despite these concerns, a couple of UK stakeholders reported an improved level of awareness within the police force and instances where a multi-agency approach had been adopted in enforcement actions. In recent years expert units such as the Human Exploitation and Organised Crime Command (SCD9) have been set up to address this knowledge gap. While this is an encouraging sign of what might be possible with better training and collaboration there are clearly challenges to the diffusion of this knowledge to all frontline workers.

‘The trouble is the UK is covered by 47 different police agencies ... In London we’ve been blessed with a full-time human trafficking team ... therefore our knowledge here is more in-depth ... To spread to detectives, frontline workers, [and] police recruits on top of having to learn the Theft Act, dealing with rape cases, [and] domestic violence; it is just too much to have [a wide] knowledge [on] different areas.’

British stakeholder

Our research found that the identification and protection of trafficked people has been helped enormously by the involvement of community and voluntary organisations. Interviewees felt more confident to engage with the authorities and the authorities felt better able to identify instances of trafficking, work with trafficked people and secure prosecutions. While there has been some positive work, voluntary organisations may have limited funding and limited geographical reach.

4.4.5 Emphasis on irregular immigration: Impact of a hostile environment

Without a detailed knowledge of the specifics of trafficking, the ‘symptom’ of the exploitation – for example, prostitution or grievous work conditions – can conceal the fundamental condition of trafficking, especially when victims are themselves reluctant to disclose. In a substantial number of cases the persons in question did not directly seek protection as a trafficking victim (possibly because of a lack of knowledge that their experiences amounted to trafficking) but instead sought support in relation to an immediate ‘symptom’ of their situation – an urgent need (such as accommodation or healthcare), a physical threat (such as violent abuse by a trafficker, boyfriend or ‘rescuer’) or a request for asylum.

However, even when people reported a violent crime, frontline services focused on their immigration status and processed them thus. This frequently resulted in their detention. Whether or not people are able to identify trafficking, the lack of support for other needs demonstrates a further factor causing failure to protect.

‘I was driven around the Hackney area with the police as they thought this was the area [where R lived, because of] the directions on the piece of paper C had given me when I escaped. I could not recognise any houses in the area. The police continued to ask me questions, they shouted at me saying I would be deported or arrested if I didn’t tell the officers R’s address, or any address they could take me to.’

Female victim, 23

Creating a ‘hostile environment’ to irregular migration by ensuring that frontline services report people without status in the UK to UKBA, also prevents trafficked people reporting instances of crime, seeking support and being given the support they need when they report.

4.4.6 Context of exploitation: a wider hostile environment

These experiences demonstrate the need for us to confront a broader context of abuse and exploitation in the UK. While support from the public is in many cases a crucial safety net for victims, the fundamental flaw is that it relies on unmonitored and unaccountable ‘friends’, associates and strangers. Particularly given the general vulnerability of victims, the ‘support’ received can often be ambiguous or even exploitative. **Retrafficking and further exploitation of trafficked people were carried out by people from many nationalities. As discussed above, this can be influenced by a lack of knowledge**

about or fear about the statutory support and protection available. In some cases, it requires us to confront the reality of a broader context of exploitation and coercion in the UK. It also requires us to acknowledge that the exploitation of Nigerian people in the UK is not always driven by traffickers or recruiters based in Nigeria, nor involves the crossing of borders. The existence of individuals and groups willing to exploit vulnerable individuals once they have left their trafficking situation again throws doubt on a strategy that targets just trafficking and just traffickers, as well as one that sees the problems of trafficking from Nigeria to the UK as always involving Nigeria. It is clear from these accounts that addressing trafficking ‘at source’ does not always mean addressing it in Nigeria.

Ultimately a lack of confidence in support reported by trafficked people and their advocates, and a lack of capacity among stretched frontline workers and in the support that might be able to build trust between trafficked people and the authorities together leads to inaccessible protection. Finally however, this is not a straightforward tale of state inaction and policy failure. The willingness of individuals and groups to prey on people whose vulnerability has already been exploited and the complicity of others should be a major concern for the UK. Our findings demonstrate the need for a much stronger attitude towards people that exploit people’s need for support as well as a much stronger commitment to ensuring that the vulnerable can access support. The trade-offs for the effectiveness of the UK’s work to address irregular immigration must be taken into account when considering the impact that the ‘hostile environment’ approach is having on the safety of trafficking victims.

4.5 Targeting support: recognising trafficking status

Once victims of trafficking are identified as such it is important that a process is put in place to ensure that those who have been trafficked are able to access targeted support. This procedure is important to monitor the incidence of trafficking to the UK, maintain public confidence that support is reaching those it is designed to help, and to establish a pathway into transformational support. For a victim of trafficking, the recognition that they have been a victim of this crime is vital to achieve both the support that they need in the short term as well as meet long-term needs. It is vital to know whether someone has been a victim of trafficking in the past to properly assess the risks associated with their return or ongoing support needs.

Box 4.1 Assessment for support in the UK

In the UK, the mechanism set up to identify trafficking victims, and ensure they get the support they need, is called the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). People suspected of being trafficked are referred to ‘first responders’ who are able to judge whether the person has indicators of having been trafficked and who refer the case to one of two agencies designated as ‘competent authorities’ (UKHTC or UKBA).

In addition to this, trafficking support for under-18s is provided by local authority social services teams. In order to assess victims’ eligibility for this support, individuals are ‘age assessed’ by a worker from a local authority’s social work team.

The introduction of an official mechanism in 2009 has had a number of positive impacts. Having a mechanism that assesses a person’s trafficked status ensures that victims of trafficking are offered specialist support to recover from their experiences and to gain justice against their traffickers and exploiters. Having a mechanism that documents the incidences of trafficking allows for the development of an intelligence base that develops much greater awareness and understanding of the exploitation and criminality in the UK. For example, before the NRM was introduced, it was felt by our respondents that Nigerian people who had been trafficked were directed into the asylum system. This led to a low understanding of the reality of trafficking from Nigeria and a low impetus to address it as a distinct issue. The existence of a formal mechanism has been critical to flagging up concerns here.

While the introduction of the NRM has had a number of benefits for policy it is also highly flawed. The flaws with the current process have been documented previously (ATMG 2010, Cherti et al 2012). Our research identifies a process in need of reform, unable to fully meet its purpose of ensuring that people that need and are entitled to support, receive it. Concerns were also raised by respondents and informants about the strength of age assessments.

As one police officer stated:

‘We found a victim, social services had age assessed her as 20. She was in prison – an adult prison. I took one look at her and said: That is a child. It was so obvious. She must have been about 14 and she’d been in this adult prison.’

The operation of the two decision-making pathways was heavily criticised. While the existence of any system to tackle trafficking is a positive development, especially as some European countries lack a similar mechanism to the NRM (Cherti et al 2012), the function of the system does not effectively target support. While it may be argued that while we have a system we may as well use it, we would further state that while we have a support system we may as well target where and whom it needs to support. There are a number of key areas for reform.

4.5.1 Targeting support appropriately

The system misses people out through being inaccessible and basing decisions on criteria that are unhelpfully narrow. For those that do enter, decisions can be imperfect due to the structure and functioning of the system.

Low trust in the decision-making device (NRM)

For people from outside of the EU, the decision as to whether they are considered trafficked sits within UKBA. From our interviews, this impacted on whether trafficked people were willing to come forward to see if they were eligible for support. Critically, the position of the NRM also impacted on the trust that advocates had in the system. Trafficking status may have an impact on a trafficked persons claim to regularise their immigration status such as their claim for asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK. A number of stakeholders were wary about the impact of having the same agency managing immigration control and enforcement, as well as victim protection. The dual role was perceived to give UKBA a vested interest in taking a ‘guilty until proven innocent’ approach to trafficking victims, given that its priority was to manage and enforce immigration control. This low trust was demonstrated by one key informant who said:

‘Their job is to keep the immigration figures down, that’s the “be all and end all” of UKBA, and everything else is secondary to that.’

As with immigration, identification of a trafficking victim as a child may go against the vested interests of the assessing authority. One British stakeholder suggested that this impacted on the response of local authorities and their willingness to identify victims:

‘What we find time and time again is that any kind of referral to the local authority is met with a stone wall. Either they are very reluctant to come and do an assessment, or they’ll say we’ll do an assessment within three days, and you’ve got this period where sometimes we’ll end up putting the person up in a [bed and breakfast hotel] ... The system doesn’t really lend itself, or centre itself around the needs of the individual. It seems to be about not spending money, that’s the main driver.’

British stakeholder

Delays in decision-making have a major impact on an operating agency’s core business are risky at best and ought to be avoided. The impact on trafficking decision-making of UKBA’s dual role is difficult to discern. However the pressure of internal targets in any decision-making body can be strong. Importantly, the low trust it elicits should not be

dismissed as a minor factor. That this decision should be collaborative and done in the spirit of cooperation is vital to its success. For this, the procedure needs to be trusted by all the agencies involved.

Use of a narrow definition of trafficking

A further issue is the definition of trafficking adopted by the NRM. The definition of trafficking used is narrow. It is criticised by immigration lawyers as even 'legally dubious' (ATMG 2010). In order for someone to be recognised as trafficked they must be in a trafficking situation when recognised or in a situation as a direct result of the trafficking experiences. The narrow definition of trafficking means that an individual can have had an experience that meets the definition of trafficking and this could be recognised in correspondence. However the victim of trafficking might still receive a negative NRM decision because the experience occurred in the past. As one stakeholder pointed out:

'They will say "Seeing as you escaped six months ago, you no longer meet the definition of trafficking, because you may have been a victim of trafficking at one point but your current circumstances do not give rise to protection" ... That means that no one is a victim of trafficking any more the minute that they go to the police, the minute that they go to a lawyer, the minute that they come here, because they're not controlled anymore.'

British stakeholder

Decisions such as these are striking when contextualised against the treatment of another victim of crime. While somebody reporting another crime such as a burglary that occurred over a year ago would possibly be told that there were limited avenues for prosecution, as the evidence police would be able to collect would be limited, the reality of the crime would not be denied.

Yet being recognised as a victim of trafficking can be vital to achieve both the support that trafficked people need in the short term as well as meet long-term needs. Whether someone has been a victim of trafficking in the past is vital to know to properly assess any risks of their potential return to Nigeria, or ongoing support needs, as well as to recognise that a crime has occurred.

Hostile disclosure environment

For those that do not lose out as a result of the system's configuration, decisions can be faulty. The lack of understanding about trafficking among the designers of the NRM or among staff running it was frequently cited by interviewed victims as inhibiting their disclosure. As discussed earlier, disclosure of trafficking experiences is rarely straightforward (Chandran 2011). This is for number of reasons, including fear of retribution from traffickers, or in a small number of cases from a ritual, or due to the impact of trauma on memory. 'Trauma has huge impacts on people's memory and ability to recount their experience,' said one British stakeholder. 'What's needed is a system that works with people to overcome their trauma and tell their experiences so that the support they need can be understood and accessed.'

Trafficking can be complex processes involving internal trafficking in Nigeria, the complicity of family members and multiple experiences of exploitation in the UK, some of which may not fit the traditional definition of trafficking. Besides their obvious trauma, many victims struggle to provide the necessary details simply because they have little or no information to provide.

'There's a real onus of truth placed on women to prove their experiences and often we find women don't often know too much about their trafficking experiences – they might know someone's first name but it's not their real name, they won't know addresses. And because they can't provide consistent clear information there's a tendency for them not to be believed.'

British stakeholder

Interviews were stressful, intimidating and insensitive to this. By provoking extreme emotional discomfort and fear, this approach was not only distressing but also obstructed clear and confident disclosure.

‘The way they are asking questions. They make you feel like you’re a criminal ... We don’t care if you are crying, that is not our problem ... Sometimes I get confused. If you ask me this, I say that. If you ask me that, I start [forgetting] people’s names ... To somebody that has been traumatised, you know, they should know how to ... [The object should not be to] scare the person but ask the person questions, try to find out, not asking the person questions with [a] harsh voice.’

Female victim, 26

There are also a number of small features that could facilitate disclosure that are not being considered. A number of respondents emphasised how difficult it was to disclose when gender and ethnicity were added barriers between themselves and immigration officials.

‘I didn’t say much because it was too intimidating. Besides I [had] a [male] interviewer. I didn’t say much. Because it was a man they gave me ... Because it’s really intimidating. And the way they talk to you as well when you’re going to an interview, you’ll really be scared of everything.’

Female victim, 29

It was also clear from a number of accounts that some victims who did disclose still struggled to have their stories accepted. This culture of routine disbelief was often reinforced by limited knowledge of Nigeria, its national context and the related dynamics of trafficking.

‘The lady ... was attending to me as if [was] an animal. I started crying, [and] she just ignored me. She asked me again, where are you from? I said I’m from Calabar. She said: “There’s no place existing like Calabar ... you are not from that place” ... I said: “Yes”, I started speaking my language to her ... She said: “It’s a lie! You are lying ... There is no tribe ... like that [on] the map.”’

Female victim, 34

Lack of opportunity for outside input

Further undermining the expertise brought to bear on a trafficking decision are the limited opportunities for wider collaboration around decisions. Unlike many of the frontline staff, NGO workers also had a good understanding of trafficking issues and the specific challenges of victims. This could be crucial in identifying victims of trafficking and helping them articulate their situation to official agencies:

‘The Poppy Project came in to interview me and I was able to let them know everything that I was going through, because the Home Office, they didn’t ask me everything I told Poppy ... They didn’t really know [that] I [experienced] all these problems. So when I [told] everything to Poppy, they let them know that this is what [I have been] through. When the Home Office read [the transcript], they now find that [my story] was true.’

Female victim, 27

There are, however, limited mechanisms to ensure that trafficked people can draw on the support of trafficking experts such as lawyers when referrals are made. Given the complex nature of asylum decisions it is also surprising that there is only limited scope for decisions to be reconsidered. The NRM provides no formal avenue for appeal. A trafficked person wishing to dispute their initial decision is reliant on the willingness of the competent authority to reconsider, or to resort to extreme and costly options such as appeal to the High Court through judicial review.

To ensure that support is targeted at those who need it, it is essential that the UK implements a decision-making system that makes reliable decisions. These decisions have a bearing on justice, the fundamental protection of human rights and the delivery of state services. It is a crucial factor in recovery. To live through the trauma of trafficking, to survive it, and to undertake the painful process of disclosure, only then to find the reality of that experience officially discredited could be immensely isolating for victims.

‘That kills me more, that make[s] me feel like OK I want to die. There is nothing to live for, you understand? ... Because ... if I come to you, I tell you my story, you don’t believe me, you’re pushing me. You’re telling me to like, oh you can go and [be] retraffic[ked], you can go and do what you want to do, I don’t care.’

Female victim, 27

The current system does not fulfil its purpose. The process is flawed, undertaken by underqualified officials in a hostile environment that doesn’t encourage disclosure. Critically the decision seems to be neither a way of reviewing whether somebody has been a victim of the crime of trafficking – the definition of trafficking used is narrow to the point of being ‘legally dubious’ (ATMG 2010) – nor is it an assessment of the level of support needed. It is also not an immigration decision.

What’s needed is a system that makes a properly trusted decision in the best circumstances about a person’s trafficking status. It should aid the detection of crimes, the construction of an intelligence picture as well as ensure that people are able to gain the support they are entitled to whether in the UK or on return.

4.6 Support to recover

Trafficked people’s experience of the support system was one of the most negative findings of the research. After exiting a dangerous, violent and traumatising experience, experiences of authorities whether when trying to access support, or when receiving support, were often retraumatising.

A frequent complaint was the difficulty of securing support that they were entitled to. When trafficking victims initially present themselves their requirements are often highly complex: typically a combination of immediate basic needs (such as accommodation and medical treatment) together with other forms of support to alleviate the deeper effects of trauma (like therapy) (Zimmerman 2003) and reverse their long-term vulnerability (for example, education and training opportunities). One respondent, despite encountering some difficulties, nevertheless affirmed the extraordinary healing effect that a holistic package of support services such as healthcare and counselling could have:

‘NHS doctors, [the] community mental health team, they are so nice. They are helping people to put their life back. Especially [the] community mental health people. If you are depressed, you need them more than any other medical aspect ... If something’s not right in [your] head, someone needs to put it right.’

Female victim, 27

However, many respondents were only able to access support after a lengthy and laborious journey. There were many cases of highly vulnerable persons being lost in service gaps due to technicalities or poor institutional coordination. It was not unusual for victims to be without access to services such as healthcare or accommodation for a protracted period, during which their state of vulnerability could potentially increase. One male victim of long-term sexual abuse, trafficked as a young child, contacted social services but his age was discounted. Consequently he spent another four years on the street before finally being granted asylum support. ‘I just feel that they just ruin[ed] my life,’ he said. ‘There’s a couple of things that affect[ed] my life, you know – social services was one of them.’

From some accounts, there also did not appear to be a firm understanding among frontline staff of the statutory rights of victims to healthcare. For example, one respondent was billed for her initial health treatment and then subsequently barred from essential services from a major London hospital. Consequently she discharged herself in the immediate aftermath of a caesarean section out of fear that she would be caught.

It was also evident that the replication of multiple NGOs and agencies could also be problematic. For trafficking victims, orienting oneself through this maze of semiautonomous or independent support services could be deeply demoralising. One respondent's account of her circuitous path to the support she needed for her and her baby illustrates this vividly:

'When I called Poppy I told them my story ... Just because I've been here 11 years ... they can't help me ... I was so frustrated ... I went to Brixton ... Refugee Council ... They said my case was like under Article 3 ... I'm not entitled. OK. Let's see again. I went to Lewisham Refugee Network ... So they gave me this number for Mind ... I called Mind. Mind was OK, I'm not in their borough. They[ve] now referred me to Family Services ... She referred me to Lewisham Refugee Network ...'

Female victim, 26

Support, when it was provided, could be piecemeal or inappropriate. Safe and anonymous housing is therefore essential not only for trafficking victims' wellbeing, but also their physical security, particularly as many continue to be at risk from their traffickers or other exploiters long after their escape. Yet secure accommodation is one of the most frequent protection shortfalls in victim support. For example, one respondent who had fled her trafficking situation had initially gone to stay with her sister, but her trafficker then appeared and assaulted her brother-in-law. Nevertheless, despite repeated requests from social services to be housed elsewhere for her own and her sister's family's safety, months passed before she was provided with alternative accommodation. The quality of housing support was of particular concern. Many trafficking victims were still in a state of high vulnerability when they were transferred into these lodgings. Yet a number of women, some recovering from recent sexual or physical abuse, reported being placed in hostels with no security and surrounded by people in similar chaotic circumstances. Others were housed unsuitably in farms, hostels or bed and breakfast hotels. From some accounts, these arrangements came across as indiscriminate warehousing and attempts to keep down costs.

'They just keep you in the house. People are violent there. They just put drug addicts and normal people together, which is not supposed to be, because they can easily hurt them. Especially when you're coming from a place when you've been through horrible stuff and [then] still face some more bad stuff.'

Female victim, 22

Other research has identified the recurring issue of children identified as at risk of trafficking going missing after being housed in insecure children's homes without protocols being initiated to prevent them returning to traffickers (CEOP 2008, ECPAT 2011). While there are innovative projects being piloted to look after young people at risk of exploitation, these are small scale and in a small number of areas.

4.6.1 Support that protects

Coordination

The absence of an overarching body to ensure that people were referred between different bodies for support led to important accountability gaps. A significant number of respondents found themselves directed by one organisation to another, only to be refused due to their age, status or some other constraint, and so redirected elsewhere. The large number of agencies, bodies and organisations delivering support, often with highly specialised spheres of activity didn't help this. However respondents who had received help from a guide or advocate to orient them through this institutional maze felt positively about their support pathway.

Services were usually autonomous, each with their own particular spheres of activity, operational codes and limited cooperation between them; something that a large number of stakeholders acknowledged themselves.

‘All people involved in counter-trafficking in [the] UK [do] not really coordinate their services with each other. It’s more like each NGO will try to provide as many services as possible. It would be so much better if they could specialise and concentrate on the quality of their services rather than the quantity and really get together and work together.’

British stakeholder

The introduction of a coordination role in the new support system run by the Salvation Army is a very positive step forward. It is essential that this coordination is extended to all victims of trafficking and that coordination between services is maintained until the trafficked person is no longer in need of intensive support.

Advocacy support

It was clear from the accounts of a number of respondents that legal support, or (at a lower level) advocacy support could make a very substantial difference to their experience with authorities. In particular, it minimised their uncertainty and disorientation during their long journey through official bureaucracy. However access to good quality legal advice is constrained. Some respondents stated that they had not received legal representation for a protracted period or at critical moments such as the interview to determine their trafficked status. A substantial number of those who did receive some form of legal assistance also found this impacted by funding cuts or administrative disruptions. Access to publicly funded legal aid is available, but is increasingly limited by funding constraints and the availability of professionals with a background in trafficking. The restructuring of legal aid as well as impact of funding cuts, had led to a greatly reduced number of practitioners and services as some organisations have gone into insolvency and others had moved away from working in the area.

Without official legal support, trafficking victims might find themselves obliged to fall back on dubious legal providers, where professional accountability was lower.

‘The private solicitor, that one eats money and will not do ... According to [an alternative not-for-profit legal provider], they said he did nothing ... he doesn’t really know anything about child trafficking, [he] just collected the money and did rubbish and they refused it.’

Female victim, 26

Other victims had received advice from solicitors who were not well versed in trafficking law and this had compromised their position, including several instances where they were advised not to give details of their trafficking experiences to immigration authorities. One respondent who, on the advice of her solicitor, did not disclose to police now believed that, had she done so, she might have avoided being imprisoned:

‘The criminal solicitor ... told me to say [to] them, “No comment, no comment”; that if the police come to me and the police ask me anything, that if I tell them that ... Later when I [came] to Poppy, that’s when I realised that if I could have [told] the police everything about my life, [perhaps I would not have] the problem, I [would not have gone] to prison.’

Female victim, 20

Beyond basic needs – relational support

In a number of cases, it was clear that specialist voluntary agencies had been central in restoring a critical sense of personal agency to their lives. In contrast to immigration, police and social services, organisations such as the Poppy Project provided victims with a platform to share their grievances and concerns without fear of judgement or deportation. For these respondents, many of them with minimal knowledge of the UK and

little in the way of a social network to rely on, the appearance of a friendly contact point, advocate and guide had a transformative effect:

‘With the help of Poppy and others, my life was changed. Even though I don’t think I can even see my children anymore, but with the help of them ... They gave me a house, and then today I have [peace] of mind. Then I [will] have my children with me, now they are going to school, no problem, nothing. So I’m happy.’

Female victim, 22

While the UK has made support available for trafficked people, there are concerns about the quality and suitability of provision made. Our research demonstrated that good quality support as well as access to the services that people needed and were entitled to was still a challenge. Access to good quality legal advice and advocates is a critical issue here. While changes to support provision means that there is additional coordination of support provided to those during the 45-day reflection period, for those outside of this support can be minimal. The importance of support that is transformational and allows people to move towards resilience is critical both to protect trafficked people and to prevent re-trafficking. It is to this issue that we will now turn

4.7 Transformational support

For support to be sustainable and long term, there needs to be a clear pathway for this support in the UK or Nigeria. After exiting their trafficking situation, many people will require intensive psycho-social care to deal with the long-term impact of trauma and will sometimes have profound healthcare needs (Zimmerman 2003) before they are able to rebuild their lives. Beyond this, they will need the opportunity to refocus their lives and move back into self-sufficiency. Education and employment were both mentioned by a significant number of respondents as essential to preventing victims from again becoming vulnerable in the future. Both education and employment represent positive changes after protracted periods of vulnerability and exploitation. Both offer the possibility of a better life as well as guarding against benefit dependency, and could have a potentially transformative effect. Many people were brought to the UK at an early age and will have no skills or nonexploitative work experience to be able to draw on to move into work. Support here needs to be tailored and intensive. On a lesser level, providing victims with opportunities to socialise, build confidence and keep themselves meaningfully occupied is essential for long-term self-sufficiency.

The current support available for trafficked people offers access to services and a short period of reflection, but very little in the way of follow-on support. The current response emphasises rescuing and protecting trafficked people rather than empowering victims. Support is provided as a crisis intervention rather than a long-term path to independence, recovery and autonomy. It lacks pathways to independence and justice.

4.7.1 Pathways to independence

The UK: limited support

The support provided to victims of trafficking is short. Independent medical research has estimated that for victims of sexual exploitation a minimum period of 90 days is essential to begin recovery (Zimmerman 2003). The UK’s provision of 45 days of support, coupled with the misnomer of referring to this as a ‘reflection period’ when trafficked people are required to undertake a number of interviews to confirm their trafficking status and facilitate prosecutions, does not enable people to access the full range of support they may need or to have the breathing space to consider their future options fully.

Beyond this, support to move from reflection into recovery is limited. Those outside of the 45 days of support (whether staying in the UK to await the finalisation of an asylum claim or once they had secured their immigration status) faced many difficulties accessing education or employment and faced a long period of inaction. Access to education and employment services was limited. NGOs were required to provide these services outside of formal support yet cuts to voluntary sector agencies had led to service closure. Those claiming asylum face a protracted wait before they can begin working. People who

had been brought to the UK legally as a domestic worker were able formerly to change employer and continue working again. Changes to this visa announced in March 2012 mean that domestic workers that now want to move on into fair alternative work will not have this option.

There were recurrent complaints among many interviewed victims about the often lengthy administrative limbo while waiting for their asylum or other immigration cases to be progressed. Many found the uncertainty of these extended waiting periods unbearable. This was exacerbated when authorities failed to keep victims updated on the progress of their case.

'I really feel dumped, like there I'm sad ... Just thinking like, I don't know what's going to happen next, you understand? ... Maybe they will just come, they will just say OK, we don't believe you anyway, you're going to go back to your country and, you know ... die ... Nothing at all ... I wish they would just write a letter, like, we still remember you are existing or something.'

Female victim, 27

Support towards self-sufficiency is a crucial aspect of working with trafficked people. Our interviews revealed that beyond a short period there were limited provisions and limited focus on making support transformational. The lack of focus here means that support to protect people is not complete. It is significant that people became vulnerable to trafficking due to having support needs. Failing to address these needs leaves people highly vulnerable to future exploitation or abuse. At best it leaves people in a state of dependency on support and welfare benefits, unable to move on with their life to the detriment of themselves and possibly also for their children.

4.7.2 A safe future: return or legal status in the UK

All interviewees wanted to stay in the UK. Some people may feel that after spending a significant length of time in the UK, for many their whole adult life, they have little in the way of networks or opportunities to return to in Nigeria. Others fear returning to the same situation that left them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. For other people their experiences in the UK as well as a continued threat from traffickers here may make return seem like a safer option. Within both these groups will be people who need to stay in the UK and others who (with the right support pathway) can return to Nigeria.

People found to have been trafficked are not automatically granted the right to remain indefinitely in the UK. Whether people are returned to Nigeria will be based on one of two considerations: do they need to stay in the UK and do they need to stay out of Nigeria? Some people will be offered the opportunity to stay in the UK for a short period; in the most part this is to support a prosecution. Others will be offered the opportunity to stay in the UK if it can be shown that they cannot return to Nigeria. For those who cannot return to Nigeria, they may be able to apply for leave to remain in the UK through renewing their visa or through claiming asylum.

Whether people stay or go, decisions need to be effective; return needs to be sustainable and reintegration meaningful. The duty on the UK to do this is clear. The Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Nigeria on Cooperation to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons signed between the Nigerian and UK governments in 2004 is particularly pertinent with regards to return. Among its provisions, the MoU provides that, 'the participants will not subject any victim of trafficking in persons to degrading or inhumane treatment and will to the extent, that they are legally bound to do so provide for the physical safety of victims of trafficking in persons in their respective jurisdictions.' Also that, 'the participant repatriating a victim of trafficking in persons will have regard to the safety, human rights and wellbeing of such a victim' (NAPTIP 2004).

This agreement places the responsibility to provide victims with holistic rehabilitative support on the Nigerian side. However, a central assumption to this agreement is that the UK does have a duty of care to the victims it repatriates and should be confident of

their safety once they return to Nigeria. There is a strong degree of responsibility on the UK side to ensure the victim is not returning to a situation where they may be harmed or re trafficked.

This view was held strongly by respondents and Nigerian stakeholders. Among respondents, the belief that the UK should be responsible for supporting victims and do more to ensure returning victims were protected and supported was stated repeatedly. Echoing a sentiment raised by many, one stated:

‘Yeah, I think the government should do more. Everything, all the trafficking all the abuse, it happened to me here.’

Many Nigerian stakeholders also expressed the view that while the trafficked people may have come from Nigeria, the violence and trauma they had experienced had been perpetrated in the UK.

This aligns with the broader logic of an effective and lasting anti-trafficking strategy. ‘The most important thing,’ said one British informant, ‘is that we’re protecting the people who are already found to be victims, so that they’re not susceptible to that situation again – or that same situation is very likely to happen again.’ Repatriation is a decision that should be taken carefully.

Support for returnees needs to be tailored to meet the needs of individual returnees. This includes protection from those who were involved in their trafficking and exploitation, the ability to meet physical and mental health needs and, critically, support that allows people to move into independence. IPPR is currently undertaking follow-up research on the issue of return in Nigeria as part of the ‘Beyond Irregularity’ project. Lessons for the support needed will be further developed and published later this year. In the interim, there are lessons that can be taken from this research process.

4.7.3 Return or legal status in the UK

Need for support to overcome significant vulnerability

For some people, returning to Nigeria will be an option. Our research to date has found that return is often high risk. Former victims of trafficking faced significant vulnerability and as a result had intensive support needs.

In terms of physical protection, victims appear to be in serious risk from violence or re trafficking. The close relationship between traffickers and the communities that trafficked people or their families originate from appears to cause specific difficulties. This is particularly the case if the victim or their family are still perceived to be in debt bondage to the trafficker. A few had returned to Nigeria. Among our respondents was a woman who after escaping domestic servitude and returning to Nigeria was found by the trafficking network there and her house burnt down. Another ‘agreed’ to go back with a trafficker after she and her family had received threats on returning home. Many interviewees were aware that after leaving their trafficking situation, their family had received threats. In some cases, the trafficker had killed family members of the victim.

For others, while they may not face threats of violence and retribution, if the fundamental issues of vulnerability which contributed to their original exploitation are unresolved, then their prospects remain poor. In many cases their prospects may be worse. As well as returning with possible health problems and broken social networks, the social stigmatisation of former trafficking victims is high.

‘They come back empty, as people who are just starting life. They have wasted so many years being exploited with nothing to show for it. Even those who have made something [of their lives], because the stigma is there, they [are not regarded] as human beings again.’

Nigerian stakeholder

Widely held negative attitudes towards returned victims of trafficking within Nigeria including accusations of greed and culpability were also clear, both in interviews with

stakeholders as well as polling with the public. In large part because of this vulnerability, re-trafficking between Nigeria specifically and Europe has been identified as a significant issue (GAATW 2010).

Low capacity of support

A range of organisations offer support to returnees in Nigeria, such as shelters. These include the statutory agency NAPTIP as well as a number of voluntary and faith-based organisations (WOTCLEF, Save the Children, COSUDOW). In theory, there are a number of places that people who do not need to stay in the UK can seek support from before building a sustainable life for themselves in Nigeria. Stakeholders emphasised the wide and holistic range of services that these organisations provided to victims.

‘We give them a lot of support, we give them temporary shelter, we give them a lot of counselling ... We give them food, we give them clothing, we give them education and skills – both life skills and also economic skills – so that they can establish [themselves] on their own ... We have a lot of skills ...we have tailoring, hairdressing. We do a lot of bead making.’

Nigerian stakeholder

Yet at the same time, support in these areas is frequently constrained by funding and poor coordination. Nigerian stakeholders were critical of the support available to people who had returned:

‘People say oh they’ll provide support – but there’s no money, there’s no shelter. We have to be really careful that the organisations who make these promises are NGOs (nongovernmental organisations) and not NGIs (nongovernmental individuals) ... it’s done with the best of intentions but it can be very harmful.’

While some services were highly professional, this was not across the board. Other informants who had witnessed the available services were even more scathing. Victim support lacked therapeutic value and was unsafe:

‘They’re like prisons with bars on the window. Everyone knows that the buildings house victims of trafficking. It’s common knowledge that these are people that will be wanted by traffickers, shunned by their families etcetera and that they’ll be likely to accept offers of support to get them out of there so that they won’t have to stay or go back to their family ... or their traffickers. It makes them very vulnerable to exploitation.’

Female victim, 33

There were also concerns about the sustainability of the support offered:

‘Some they’ll teach to be hairdressers and bead makers and painters, but there’s only so many you can have. They’ll talk about money provided to set up businesses and I’m sure they’ll be a few successes but it’s so difficult and I don’t know if the full support mechanisms are there and that’s one of the things ... There are no social service support networks that you’d see in Europe.’

British stakeholder

A further issue raised was the widespread reliance on informal and social networks, in particular family, for support. In fact many services presume that the best outcome is family reunification. ‘Even when we make referrals now,’ one British stakeholder reported, ‘one of the first questions will be “Doesn’t she have family with whom she can stay?” There seems to be an accepted tradition of relying on the family for social support, rather than the state.’

However, as this study has demonstrated, this is often inappropriate. Vulnerability to traffickers often started as a result of individuals fleeing a violent or abusive family situation. In other cases family members can be complicit in the trafficking, or relatives are often at

risk of reprisals. Among our respondents, there were cases of victims returning to families but then being forced to return to the UK, as well as families in Nigeria being threatened or attacked by traffickers, with the clear implication that the victim would be next.

However, the alternative to returning a victim to their local community – that is, internal relocation within Nigeria – is also problematic and may heighten their vulnerability.

‘You’re talking about young single women who still don’t have the education or employment opportunities that they didn’t have in the first place, who now don’t have any kind of social structure, who may be HIV positive or suffering from other impacts of sexual violence, which will make them much more of a social pariah and much less likely to be taken in by a partner or anyone else. In the absence of that type of social support or network, they’re really left with recourse to very little other than probably further exploitation, whether that’s back into some type of sexual exploitation or retrafficking.’

British stakeholder

It is understandable why, in the absence of any meaningful rehabilitation or support, the majority of victims are extremely reluctant to return. ‘When somebody goes and promises them “I will give you a scholarship or settle you in school (or vocational training or capital to start something)”, that is when they start thinking of coming back,’ said one Nigerian informant. ‘Otherwise, there is nothing to come back to.’

Lack of complete pathway

In order to ensure that when support is available there can be a smooth transition from the UK to Nigeria, organisations from the two countries need to have an integrated referral system. In many cases the process falls far short of these standards.

Links between British NGOs, agencies and NGOs in Nigeria were limited. Voluntary organisations in the UK reported finding it very difficult to link up with NAPTIP or with NGOs.

‘The phone just rings and rings. We don’t know if anyone’s there. And we don’t know anything about who these organisations are, their capacity to support or what they’ll do with our service users when they meet them ... or if they’ll meet them. But often it’s the only option because they’re told they’ll be removed and it’s up to us to find someone, anyone who can help them even to leave the airport.’

British stakeholder

Similarly, Nigerian service delivery organisations had not developed relationships with UK-based statutory or voluntary organisations. The results, predictably, were often unsuccessful. Some respondents who had been returned to Nigeria arrived at the airport with no one to meet them and could not contact the organisation that they had been given the details of. In this case the respondent ended up in detention in Nigeria.

Unclear assessments

For people who perceive that they cannot return to Nigeria, the routes available for them to stay in the UK are limited. One of the few routes open to victims of trafficking is the asylum route. However, this is not designed for protecting trafficked people. Whether asylum is granted hinges on the evidence that the person in question fears persecution in their country of origin. This process of assessment does not adequately capture the very specific vulnerabilities that victims typically face. Even if danger is perceived, asylum or other protection decisions routinely decline Nigerian applications on the grounds that an individual can internally relocate. As discussed above, this is often not appropriate for people who have been trafficked. Tribal and religious difference across the country, the concentration of services in areas where trafficked people typically originate from and the stigma of trafficking can preclude successful reintegration, particularly of somebody with high support needs.

In the last two years the UK has returned few people found to be ‘victims of trafficking’ through the decision-making device of the NRM. Hopefully this demonstrates an understanding of the dangers faced by people who have been trafficked from their country of origin. It probably also reflects the number of people recognised as trafficked who have the right to residency in the UK or go on to secure this through a parallel claim for asylum or humanitarian protection. However, as our research demonstrates, people identified as trafficked by independent experts (although not necessarily the NRM) are being returned. As long as the decision-making device (the NRM) is inaccessible to victims, making uncertain decisions as well as failing to give status to people who, it acknowledges, have been trafficked in the past, trafficked people will be returned to dangerous situations in Nigeria. This again demonstrates the importance of an effective decision-making device in order to ensure that trafficked people get the support they need. In order for return to be an option, the decision-making device must make secure, reliable and useful decisions.

Under the current circumstances, a key area for the UK is for all returnees to be assessed for risks associated with their potential return. Whilst risk assessments are carried out on returnees going through a programme of voluntary return, this is at the discretion of the organisation with the tender for return rather than a position of public policy. As interviews with respondents demonstrated, few are confident that they will be able to receive the support they need from service providers or protection they require from the police in Nigeria. This makes many returns forced and means that the trafficked person may not be seen by support providers who may be able to recognise signs of trafficking and put necessary or even rudimentary support pathways in place.

While support gaps in Nigeria remain the primary responsibility of the Nigerian government, it is the responsibility of the UK government to ascertain that victims returned will be protected and supported. They also have a vested interest in ensuring that victims are successfully rehabilitated so as to avoid re-trafficking. Return may be an option for many people who have been trafficked. Our research demonstrates that return would have to be carried out in a sensitive way with clear information sharing. While this is undeveloped it may make sense for support to focus on delivering pathways to independence in the UK, as well as to consider how responses can be strengthened in Nigeria.

4.8 Protecting trafficking victims: conclusions and recommendations

Protection must be structured so that trafficked people can and will access it. **Policy should acknowledge that state solutions are unlikely to deliver a full and effective response alone.** Due to the hidden nature of exploitation, people are less likely to be uncovered in an enforcement ‘raid’. Whether due to experiences in Nigeria or the threats of traffickers, people interviewed were afraid and unwilling to seek support from agencies such as the police. **Trafficking solutions must acknowledge that trafficked people are more likely to seek support from members of the public, particularly people who they perceive to be Nigerian.**

People ‘in the community’ who are most likely to come into contact with trafficked people should be able to identify trafficking and refer victims to support services. This includes frontline workers in the police, schools and health services. Efforts are being made to respond to this challenge. A number of training courses in recognising trafficked people are now provided to frontline police forces and to those undertaking social work training. Issues particular to Nigerian trafficking are appearing in official texts. For example, updated guidance for prosecutors on victims of trafficking produced by the CPS in May 2011 makes reference to the impact that juju or fears of retribution against the families of trafficking victims has on traffickers’ ability to exert control. There is a need to ensure that this **recognition of the diversity of trafficked people, how they may behave and how they are controlled is also referenced in other agencies’ documents and training packages.** Alongside this, **services need to act appropriately to ensure that trafficked people are able to disclose their experiences by following guidelines developed for working with people reporting violent crimes.**

Community and voluntary agencies have a clear role to play. They have the potential to act as effective mediators between trafficked people and statutory services. However, in the current situation many members of the public or community groups are unable to respond appropriately, unaware of referral pathways and uncertain of whether to refer people to untrusted statutory agencies and systems of support.

Devising community support needs to be done with care. Agencies need to be mindful of the dangers of individuals' connections with traffickers. Similarly, it must not place members of the public in danger.

In the community at large, the first step is to raise awareness about referral pathways as well as the law on trafficking in the UK and to encourage debate and disclosure about instances of exploitation and abuse within the Nigerian community. **Local authorities should appoint community liaison officers from the Nigerian diaspora to lead training sessions as well as providing points of contact for anyone wishing to disclose trafficking experiences.** These individuals must be vetted and trusted. Where there are organisations already established with the knowledge and expertise to deliver this role, they may provide a way to establish this model. In whichever way this is done, it must be recognised as an important part of the trafficking support system and resourced as such.

The decision-making procedure (in the UK's case, the NRM) is at the heart of the support system for trafficked people. Its role is to define whether or not somebody has been a victim of the crime of trafficking. This decision should be distinct from an immigration decision. A trafficking decision determines if somebody's past experiences fit the criteria of trafficking. An asylum or immigration decision determines an individual's future risk or immigration status. The assessment as to whether somebody has been trafficked should not be concerned with their right to reside in the UK; a trafficking referral should never be declined on the basis of immigration concerns. Similarly, it should be clear that a formal recognition that someone is or has been a victim of trafficking does not give them an automatic right to remain in the UK (although this might play a role in determining a future asylum or other immigration application).

Critically, whether the NRM is functioning well or not in its present form, while it is so entwined with UKBA it is likely to remain untrusted. The low level of trust between trafficked people (and trafficked people's support workers) and the NRM is an issue of real concern. It has a critical impact on whether trafficked people are willing to come forward to see if they are eligible for support as well as how agencies can work together to support them. **The NRM should be an independent decision-making body for trafficking, separate from UKBA, tasked solely with trafficking decision-making.**

In addition to an independent NRM, the mechanisms must be conducive to fair decision-making. This means **training for officials, access to advocacy support for interviewees, an appeals mechanism and the use of criteria that reflect the accepted definition of trafficking.** If the decision-making mechanism is independent and functions well it should be trusted to make fair decisions. This will mean that some people will be found not to meet the criteria for support. It is important that NGOs and support providers work with statutory agents to ensure both that the mechanism functions well and that the decisions are respected.

Once our interviewees had had their trafficking status recognised, many struggled to access the support they were entitled to. Those who had accessed an effective voluntary sector advocate were able to confidently engage with statutory services (such as the police) and access services. Therefore, in order to ensure that trafficked people can be linked into support at a local level, anti-trafficking policy should make use of structures for coordinating support already established for people exiting other violent situations. **MARACs are already established in each local authority. Trafficked people should be referred into these to ensure that they can access the services they need.**

While support gaps in Nigeria remain the primary responsibility of the Nigerian government, it is the responsibility of the UK government to ascertain that victims will be protected and supported when they are returned to Nigeria. As a start, **the UK should ensure that all people returned to Nigeria are assessed for trafficking indicators and that support that is needed is in place to ensure their safety.**

5. BREAKING THE CYCLE: PROSECUTING TRAFFICKERS

5.1 Prosecution of traffickers in the UK

A further way of enabling trafficked people to move into self-sufficiency is the prosecution of traffickers. The prosecution of traffickers not only safeguards the victim by removing the threat that their trafficker poses to them, it also acknowledges the victim's suffering and gives them a sense of justice. The prosecution of traffickers through the civil courts can also enable victims to move on in a practical sense. Considering the scale of trafficking in the UK, prosecution of offenders is still rare. In 2011, only eight prosecutions for trafficking were served (IdMG 2012).

The relative impunity of perpetrators in the UK not only represents a distressing shortfall in victim protection, but also serves as an important stimulus to the market. Without a clear message that trafficking has serious consequences for traffickers, the practice will continue.

The poor prosecution rates for trafficking are partly due to the nature of the crime itself, in particular the widespread reluctance of victims to report or testify against their exploiters. The lack of trust between the authorities on the one hand and trafficking victims on the other, often encouraged by traffickers and even well-meaning members of the public, community organisations and support services, is a major obstacle in this regard. As discussed in earlier chapters a compelling barrier to exiting a trafficking situation as well as seeking support from the authorities is fear of the traffickers themselves, both in the UK and Nigeria. Victims may also fear for their own lives and the lives of their families if they prosecute their traffickers. Among our respondents, several had been told that they or their family members would be killed if they disclosed their experiences. In other cases, the family themselves may be the threat. One respondent, for example, disclosed to police following an assault but would not press charges as her traffickers – in this case, her aunt and grandmother in Nigeria – had threatened to kill her if she did so.

Victims of trafficking, in the aftermath of their exploitation, are also often coping with a range of challenges: at best beginning the slow process of rebuilding their lives, but more frequently caught in a legal, social and financial limbo. In these circumstances, prosecuting their exploiters may not always be their first and most immediate priority, as articulated by one respondent:

‘So ... at the end of it all, I just decided, [to] forget about everything they did to me. Because since now I’ve got leave to remain. So forget about it, to let life go on.’

Female victim, 32

Another problem, however, is that the ‘hidden’ nature of trafficking can make it very difficult to secure the corroborating information necessary to prosecute. One respondent went to the police three times without her exploiters ever being charged, in part because the traffickers were able to protect themselves with the testimony of their friends and associates while the victim, being alone and isolated, had no one to corroborate her story. This was in fact what her traffickers had told her would happen when she was still in her situation of exploitation:

‘Because I [didn’t] have somebody to say “Oh, this is what happened” ... they couldn’t take the case forward. So if that continues to happen, [people are going to] take more advantage, [to think] “OK, since we know that ... she doesn’t have anybody to defend her, we can do

anything we want,” ... that’s what [the traffickers] were saying when I was with them. That even if I take them to [the] police, to court, anywhere, that they can defend themselves because I don’t ... because they’re [more powerful than me].’

Some respondents suggested that the absence of convictions was a reflection of the low prioritisation of trafficking crimes within the police force. However, often the issue may be simply that the police lack the resources, training or institutional mandate to proceed further with their investigations. As one British stakeholder put it, ‘There’s not enough people working in the business; if you don’t have a drugs squad you don’t have a drugs problem.’ Though there are specialist units, such as the SCD9, specifically trained to identify and respond to trafficking, these are limited in number and understanding of the issues among frontline staff is often inadequate.

‘Although I had told everything that had happened to the police, they did not take it seriously and did not pursue an investigation. Since I have been with [the] Poppy [Project my case] has been discussed with specialist trafficking police who have advised [me] that they believe the police did not recognise what had happened to me as trafficking and domestic servitude due to limited staff training.’

Female victim, 19

More resources to pursue trafficking convictions, better training and clear local leadership are vital to improving capacity. Our research suggests additional ways that the response can be improved. Substantial resources are invested in gathering intelligence on organised crime, for example through SOCA and the UKHTC, and on enforcement measures that favour the standard procedures adopted against organised criminal networks. Yet while these may be appropriate in some instances, this report has demonstrated that in many instances trafficking occurs through small-scale associations and social contacts that elude this approach.

A further area is a need for greater opportunities for trafficked people to bring civil cases against their exploiters. Here the burden of proof is lowered and while not leading to traffickers being taken off the streets, the financial penalties can be a deterrent to traffickers, particularly small-scale or individual traffickers. The prosecution of traffickers through the civil courts can also bring justice in a meaningful sense for victims as well as enable them to move on in a practical sense through the awarding of compensation. Both the Organized Crime Convention (arts 14 and 25(2)) and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol (art 6(6)) make specific reference to, and provide an international legal basis for, compensation of trafficking victims and international cooperation in returning confiscated proceeds for the purpose of compensation.

Under current arrangements there are a number of barriers for prosecuting traffickers in this way. For victims of forced labour or domestic servitude, employment tribunals are a possible arena for this. However they can provide an inappropriate environment for a victim of trafficking. If traffickers choose to represent themselves, trafficked people may face a situation, as one of our respondents did, where their traffickers cross-examine them. When compensation is awarded it is frequently not paid. A major barrier is the limited scope for victims of trafficking to stay in the UK to pursue a compensation claim against their trafficker (Anti-Slavery 2008).

Finally, if the power imbalance between perpetrators and victims is to not be continued in the judicial arena, it is important that trafficked people are able to draw on legal support.

5.2 Prosecution of traffickers in Nigeria

Nigeria has made many positive developments in its ability to prosecute traffickers. Nigeria is one of the few countries in Africa to have passed a national law against trafficking – the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 – and has ratified a number of relevant international agreements, including child protection frameworks. Furthermore, it hosts the only national anti-trafficking agency

in the region, NAPTIP, with a mandate to detect, investigate, prosecute and convict perpetrators of trafficking. According to NAPTIP's data, conviction rates have risen steadily since its establishment, from just one in 2004 to 50 in 2011. As of May 2012, there have been 166 convictions for human trafficking offences (NAPTIP 2012).

However, despite general progress over the last decade, there have in fact been very few cases of arrest and incarceration for trafficking compared to the size and scale of the problem. The gap is not so much in converting prosecutions into convictions, but the shortfall in the progressing of investigations into prosecutions. This is particularly true of labour trafficking. While 386 victims of forced labour were identified during the 2011/2012 TIP reporting period, there were only two successful convictions (US Department of State 2012).

The problem of trafficker impunity in Nigeria is still acute. Consequently, many offenders are able to operate with little risk of prosecution (Okojie 2009). Nigeria's weak rule of law, coupled with at times the indifference and even, according to our stakeholder respondents, the active involvement of police and other officials, has led to low penalties and prosecution rates for trafficking. Low prosecution rates for violent crimes such as sexual assault as well as low tariffs for those convicted are also an issue. This is in part because, outside NAPTIP itself, knowledge and concern about trafficking among officials and police is perceived to be generally low. NAPTIP has been making some efforts to address this, for example through educational outreach with federal and state judges on the particular complexities of trafficking crimes (US Department of State 2012). At the same time, it seems that until the fundamental issues of corruption and malpractice among police and other officials are effectively addressed, these initiatives will have only a limited impact. Several respondents reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity when victims or their families notified police about their situation, only to be told it was a 'private' matter. In at least one case, the families were subsequently murdered. In another, the victim appeared to have been handed over directly from custody by police to a stranger, who then trafficked her into sexual exploitation.

One of the stated reasons for the US government's recent downgrade of Nigeria in its Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report to tier 2 status was the poor prosecution rates of traffickers in Nigeria (US Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria 2012). Yet as the report acknowledged, the legislative framework and the penalties for trafficking are in themselves not the problem. The challenge lies in implementing this in practice against the backdrop of Nigeria's compromised rule of law. Though NAPTIP has had some successes and was explicitly set up to counter the wider context of corruption in Nigeria's enforcement agencies, its ability to undermine the country's well-established trafficking is inevitably constrained. The non-implementation of existing anti-slavery laws, weak rule of law and corruption mean that traffickers face low risk of arrest or prosecution.

However, NAPTIP itself suffers from capacity and funding constraints that impact on its ability to successfully prosecute perpetrators of trafficking. According to a statement by the US Department of State, 'while the National Agency for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is doing well, it cannot be done without increased support and resources from the Nigerian government ... The Nigerian government has been urged among other remedial measures to ensure the activities of NAPTIP are funded sufficiently, particularly for prosecuting trafficking offenders' (US Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria 2012).

While in theory the penalties for trafficking were appropriate, even where prosecutions could be brought, this was undermined by the option for some offenders to pay a fine in place of serving a prison term. Of the 23 offenders convicted in the 2011/2012 period, eight were offered fines in lieu of a prison sentence, ranging from US\$63 to US\$316 (US Department of State 2012). These reflect neither the severity of trafficking as a crime nor its high profitability. At the same time, alongside the impunity of many traffickers, victims often have little recourse to official protection themselves. 'If the victim is concerned that she is being sold as a slave,' said one British stakeholder, '[she] can't go to the police as there's a very good chance [the trafficker] is being paid by criminals. They are in a no-win situation as not only will it not help, but it might get back to traffickers.'

This view was also echoed by many respondents:

‘The police there they cannot help you ... If I was in Nigeria and I [ran] away like I did, the police, what the police would do, even the college, they wouldn’t help me. They’ll say you have to go back or they’ll call the [traffickers] themselves or they’ll report you to the police, the [traffickers] will bribe them; and the police, they’ll help them to beat you or send you back to the [traffickers].’

Female victim, 21

This creates a potent enabling context for human trafficking. For the professional gangs, as well as the many ‘ordinary’ people such as family members who collaborate in the recruitment and exploitation of the victim, the incentives are not only the large and lucrative demand for trafficked persons but also the high levels of impunity. Trafficking is still regarded as a low-risk activity compared to its profit (UNESCO 2006). ‘Trafficking is one of the booming businesses which traffickers earn a lot of money from,’ said one Nigerian informant. ‘The risk involved in trafficking is not as much as that of drug or arms trafficking, because a trafficker can recruit a victim, maybe from one particular point, with a minimum of amount of money.’

5.3 Prosecuting traffickers: conclusions and recommendations

Prosecution efforts in the UK and Nigeria are inhibited by a range of factors. Many of these are challenges caused by the crime itself or the justice system that these prosecutions sit within. They are difficult to address in the short term. Our research does demonstrate an area where work could be moved forward. The narrow focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation within Nigeria and trafficking involving organised criminal networks in the UK means that some opportunities to prosecute traffickers are being missed.

In the UK, rather than focusing exclusively on international criminal networks, prosecutions can be better facilitated through a more victim-focused response. As noted above, more protection of victims to allow them to disclose safely and confidently is needed. This is difficult to achieve while victims are treated as suspects themselves. As one informant put it: ‘You’re not going to get successful prosecutions unless you can get the victim’s cooperation – and they’re not going to cooperate unless there’s that distance.’

Recently launched guidance by the CPS (2011) has marked a change in the guidance issued to prosecutors working with victims of trafficking. The guidance provides a nuanced guide to recognising victims of trafficking. It even provides information specific to Nigerian victims. This is an important step forward so that professionals can avoid criminalising individuals who have been trafficked. Information about these guidelines and the importance of applying them should be further disseminated to local agencies.

So far, the focus of prosecution on addressing ‘organised criminal networks’ misses a key constituent of Nigerian trafficking. To strengthen prosecution, then, enforcement agencies **must place a greater emphasis on outreach and communication with local communities, particularly among the Nigerian diaspora in London and other cities across the country.** The close relationships between traffickers and trafficked people mean that securing prosecutions requires protecting victims and encouraging them to disclose safely and confidently.

One way of facilitating prosecutions here is to provide greater opportunities for trafficked people to pursue civil cases as well as criminal cases. In civil cases the burden of proof is lowered and the financial penalties can be a deterrent to traffickers, particularly small-scale or individual traffickers. Civil cases can also deliver meaningful justice to trafficked people. **Reform of the employment tribunal system is an important step to facilitate this.** But in order to make it a reality, **temporary residence permits should be issued to people who need to stay in the UK to pursue a civil case in the same way they are issued to those who have to stay in the UK to pursue a criminal case.**

In Nigeria, the perceived impunity of traffickers is a major contributing factor to trafficking continuing, as well as trafficked people feeling unable to seek help or to return to Nigeria. NAPTIP needs to continue to work to build relationships, knowledge and capacity of the police in this area, rather than attempt to pursue this agenda alone. When prosecutions are achieved, **tariffs in Nigeria should be increased for trafficking** so that legal consequences act as an effective deterrent.

6. COOPERATION: CREATING AN END-TO-END RESPONSE

Trafficking is an issue that exists in the gaps of regulation, welfare, service delivery and border control. More than that however, it exists in the gaps of support provided by families and community relationships. This is an issue that multiple agencies must provide a coordinated response to.

Doing so is a challenge. Trafficking requires a joined-up response that brings together different government departments, local agencies and disparate community figures. In the case of Nigerian trafficking it also requires work across internal and international borders to link countries of origin, transit and destination to ensure that problems are not pushed across boundaries and that policy works together to address criminality and end abuse.

However work between agencies in Nigeria, between agencies in the UK and between the two countries is underdeveloped. There is a long way to go to facilitate the collaboration that is needed to address this issue. Before concluding the study, this chapter will examine all of these areas in turn. In each case it will start by demonstrating areas where further collaboration is needed and go on to draw lessons for policy.

6.1 Within the UK

There are a number of outstanding issues that need to be addressed through better collaboration in the UK. There is a clear lack of a shared understanding or belief in the scale and character of trafficking between the different agencies in the UK. Estimates of the number of people trafficked to the UK have varied widely from a few hundreds to the tens of thousands (Home Office 2009, ACPO 2010, Davies 2009). While trafficking is led by individual agencies, there are limited opportunities to develop an acceptance of the policy problem.

Another key issue is the vulnerability of trafficking policy response without a point of coordination. Currently trafficking policy is comprised of a number of initiatives identified as ‘trafficking policy’ and a much larger body of initiatives that though not directly targeted at addressing trafficking can nonetheless have a significant impact on trafficking and trafficked people. The decision in March 2012 to scrap the domestic worker’s visa and replace it with a ‘route’ that entitles domestic workers to enter the UK for a stay of six months only and no right to change employers represents a small technocratic change to low-skilled immigration policy that is designed to harmonise this area of policy as much as to address the scale of low-skilled immigration. However it threatens to have a severe impact on trafficking for domestic servitude. Without the ability to change employers, domestic workers are far less empowered against exploitative employers. The ability for domestic workers to switch employers also enabled victims of trafficking who had come on a domestic worker’s visa to enter into sustainable work after leaving their trafficking situation, reducing their dependency on the state and enabling them to move on with their lives. Critical oversight is needed to ensure that trafficking policy is joined up across government to ensure that unintended consequences do not threaten the UK’s response. Beyond government, a multitude of actors are engaged in anti-trafficking work. While there is a strong will to address these issues, there is limited oversight to ensure that work is linked and undertaken strategically.

6.1.1 Statutory agencies

Multiple statutory agencies are involved with trafficking. Local authorities, particularly social services departments are involved with safeguarding child victims, the police (including the one specialist trafficking unit SCD9 based with the Metropolitan Police) are involved with identifying victims and pursuing prosecutions, and the health services are key to provision of healthcare and identifying trafficking victims.

The UK has two specialist agencies on human trafficking, UKHTC and CEOP. The UKHTC was created in 2006 as a multi-agency point for the development of 'expertise and strategic and operational coordination in respect of all forms of trafficking of human beings'. The aim of the UKHTC is to work with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders in the UK and abroad to collate intelligence on trafficking, support the coordination of the provision of care offered to victims and provide advice and expertise to a range of agencies. CEOP has a wider remit than child trafficking, but has a dedicated Child Trafficking Unit, charged with providing a 'specialist, child-focused and protective approach' to child trafficking⁸ through research, intelligence gathering and the provision of advice to agencies. The existence of these two agencies represents a significant opportunity for the coordination of trafficking policy and a real opportunity for the development of independent expertise and oversight of responses.

Their effectiveness, however, is affected by both resources and structure. The work of both agencies has shrunk in recent years. Both the UKHTC and CEOP have seen significant reductions in staffing levels. There was a sense among stakeholders that the potential of both has not yet been met. One stakeholder criticised the effects of restructuring and budget cuts on CEOP. 'It's a shadow of what it was, [a] shame, as it was [the] best unit of its kind in the world.'

In addition to their lack of capacity, the structure of both organisations also limits their impact. Both the UKHTC and CEOP are now part of SOCA and will become part of the National Crime Agency (NCA). The position of these bodies within these agencies brings advantages in terms of the sharing of sensitive intelligence between secure agencies. However, the focus on addressing serious and organised crime risks narrowing the focus of the work that the agencies do onto a specific subset of the incidences of trafficking involving organised criminal networks.

Our research identified that the focus may lead to less ability to bring people together to foster effective networking between different agencies, the identification of trafficking problems and the oversight of responses. The highly secure nature of SOCA and the NCA makes accessing and sharing information between these agencies and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies tricky. While the UKHTC have been effective in hosting a number of multi-agency forums and working groups that engage with a range of agencies, many stakeholders however felt that they were not equal partners. Stakeholders were uncertain about how any information they shared would be used or whether they would be able to draw collated intelligence from the agency. This precludes the cooperation needed to build an accurate picture of trafficking to build consensus for action.

6.1.2 The voluntary sector

The UK has a developed NGO sector specialising in preventing trafficking, supporting victims and advocating change. Like all 'healthy' examples of civil society, there are fissures and factions. The multiplicity of interest groups within human trafficking (migrants' rights, children's rights, workers' rights, those campaigning against prostitution or focused on violence against women) does not provide a cohesive framework. However, from the interviewees involved in this study there were clear examples of divisions that may have negative impacts on trafficking response. This includes levels of suspicion about other organisations' analysis of the problem of trafficking: 'Feminists will tell you it's only women: we see plenty of male victims,' or the analysis of the solution: 'Some organisations think we just need to get stuck in and put people up in people's spare rooms. It's harmful and it's dangerous.' Many observers raised the issue of duplication and specialism by NGOs.

However, there are some strong examples of collaboration in this area. The formation of ATMG, a partnership between different organisations to scrutinise the UK government's implementation of the European Council Convention on Trafficking, and wider trafficking policy among NGOs, has provided a platform for the sharing of experiences and

⁸ <http://ceop.police.uk/About-Us/Child-Trafficking/>

concerns, and production of reports and policy papers evaluating the UK's progress across a number of areas. While there are positive examples of collaboration within civil society this is not across the board.

A number of stakeholders interviewed for this study reported concern about changing collaboration between government and the voluntary sector. Consultation, both through unofficial and official means, has changed with a reduced number of organisations invited to form a voluntary sector advisory panel as well as the discontinuation of a highly regarded NGO stakeholders group from May 2010 onwards (ATMG 2012). Consultation around recent major changes such as changes to the support tender as well as latest anti-trafficking strategy were seen as minimal by a number of informants. There are clear needs as well as clear opportunities for improved collaboration in this area.

6.1.3 Community organisations

Some work is being undertaken by voluntary and statutory agencies to facilitate cooperation between specialist organisations and African community spaces such as churches. Past examples have included voluntary organisations such as Stop the Traffik holding community workshops to raise awareness about trafficking and support smaller organisations to engage with this issue. The charity AFRUCA (Africans Unite against Child Abuse) has been active in the UK and Nigeria to raise awareness among community organisations through seminars, training days and through short information films shown on African news channels. Staff members have also participated in training frontline workers and police officers. Evaluations of these efforts found that they have received many reports of trafficking from members of the Nigerian community as well as increased the ability of statutory professionals to recognise and respond to Nigerian trafficking (Desmond 2011).

Stakeholders from statutory agencies, but also from voluntary agencies, found building trust and building dialogue with these organisations could be challenging. There was felt to be a reticence to engage with some of the issues around trafficking as well as unwillingness to engage with the authorities:

'I went to an event and everyone was saying "Oh the police they don't do anything about this – they don't care" ... and I stood up and said "You don't tell us anything like this is going on!"'

British stakeholder

6.1.4 Within government

Within government the UK has formed an IdMG on human trafficking. The group is formed of ministers from sixteen government departments⁹ and is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the government's strategy and monitoring policy on human trafficking. Other countries have appointed independent bodies referred to as a national rapporteur to scrutinise trafficking policy. The government has said that it feels that the IdMG provides a 'similar mechanism' to this model (Parliament Library 2012). The model of the IdMG is an effective one. The group creates an impetus for each department to consider their role in addressing trafficking. It also creates a point of communication and of collaboration between departments, encouraging cross-departmental working through the building of relationships.

However, the operation of the IdMG on human trafficking is less positive. The infrequency of meetings mitigates against the development of expertise within departments, the development of relationships between officials as well as forming an effective mechanism for communication and delivery. This model is also limited in its function as a national rapporteur. Due to being within government rather than outside of it, it cannot provide a useful arena for independent scrutiny nor the leadership needed to drive change.

⁹ Home Office; Solicitor General; Department for Education; Ministry of Justice; Department of Health, Communities and Local Government; Scotland Office; Wales Office; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Department for International Development; Government Equalities Office; Business, Innovation and Skills; Department for Work and Pensions; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Executive; Welsh Assembly Government.

6.1.5 A local way forward

In the UK, collaboration between different stakeholders is ad hoc, ranging from brilliant examples of good practice to areas for concern. The UKHTC runs three multi-agency working subgroups. In November 2011, the Home Office created five new stakeholder groups. At a local level, the formation of local coalitions such as the Bristol Anti-Trafficking Coalition provide an ideal forum to share intelligence and coordinate responses. There have also been examples of statutory and voluntary organisations coming together to coordinate responses in response to a particular event or time period; an example of this is the London 2012 Human Trafficking Group.

Local forums allow agencies to share information and develop responses that acknowledge local patterns of trafficking and the resources available to local stakeholders. They also provide a point of information for smaller organisations and other stakeholders such as housing providers and health teams. New local police structures also provide opportunities for action on trafficking.

6.2 Within Nigeria

Nigeria is a large country with a diverse population and a wide-ranging structure of local, federal and national government. There are many agents active in addressing trafficking at a national, local and community level. International organisations are also active in this area. In Nigeria, collaboration is essential in order to address human trafficking as well as to ensure that the many initiatives have the strongest and most sustainable impact.

In many senses Nigeria is ahead of the UK in facilitating cooperation to address trafficking. Nigeria is the only country in the ECOWAS area to have established its own national agency with responsibility for trafficking (NAPTIP, established in 2003). In 2009, the Nigerian government pledged over US\$7 million in annual funds for NAPTIP's operation (US State Department 2010).

Nigeria also has many NGOs working on the issue of human trafficking. Prior to the setting up of NAPTIP, NGOs were in the vanguard of the work here. Early established NGOs include the Girl Power Initiative (GPI), WOTCLEF, and Idia Renaissance in Edo state. There is lots of innovative work being done by civil society to support victims, raise awareness and support people vulnerable to trafficking.

NAPTIP provides an excellent model to build collaboration around trafficking. It has a presence at the local and federal level, and its independent status should enable good links with NGOs, activists, and local government to raise the profile of trafficking work and to facilitate coordination. However, there was a sense among some stakeholders that NAPTIP didn't deliver the opportunity for coordination that its structure would suggest. NGOs felt unsupported by NAPTIP. The organisation was perceived to wish to dominate all anti-trafficking work, to raise their own profile and lead the agenda on trafficking. They can especially crowd out NGOs. As one Nigerian stakeholder argued:

'Addressing trafficking is a difficult issue: NAPTIP cannot do it alone. They need to admit that they need to bring in other partners, civil society, other government agencies, [and] international development partners. They want the credit. But at the end of the day they're never going to get it if they don't work with other agents.'

Our research identified that many organisations engaged in anti-trafficking within civil society can be vulnerable to political pressures and be reliant on senior political support rather than grassroots activism. Many actors lack resources and as a result struggle to work together due to funding pressures. NAPTIP did not provide a developed role to capture best practice nor encourage collaboration between different NGOs. As a result of this, efforts to address trafficking were carried out by multiple agents with limited strategic link up and the likelihood of duplicated efforts. Rather than provide a nuanced narrative about trafficking, what causes it and what needs to be done about it, NAPTIP's work focuses largely on issues of sex trafficking, to the detriment of other areas.

Like in the UK, a local approach provides a way forward. Many of the drivers to trafficking in Nigeria identified by this research need wider social responses that go beyond the narrow focus of most anti-trafficking work and go beyond the work of NAPTIP. In order to address trafficking, mainstream local actors who are engaged in social development work such as education need to be engaged. NAPTIP cannot and should not be expected to carry out the trafficking response alone. It needs to use its role at a local level to provide spaces to develop learning and to disseminate information. It needs to build the capacity of NGOs so as to engage them as partners. There are some emerging networks of collaboration for NGOs and these should be developed. NACTAL is one such network, and while it has been established for some time and has struggled to have an impact, this could be a model to develop. Stakeholders who were involved with NACTAL felt that the relationship with NAPTIP was not as developed as they would have liked. They had not been invited to be involved with NAPTIP's NGO forums. Recent work by the IOM and by other international organisations has also developed networks of cooperation between frontline agencies in local areas (IOM 2011).

6.3 Between Nigeria and the UK

An integrated cooperative approach is also needed between countries in order to build a complementary response in each country. However, despite bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and the UK on a number of issues there has been limited collaboration between the UK and Nigeria on trafficking.

6.3.1 UK–Nigeria government

Where collaboration has occurred it has been at quite a low level. In 2004, one year after the establishment of NAPTIP, the UK and Nigeria signed an MoU to work together to address trafficking and to support the safe return and reintegration of people trafficked to the UK back to Nigeria. The MoU has many positive features. Both countries reiterate a commitment to addressing trafficking as well as take a victim-centred approach, in line with the human rights treaties that they are both signatories to. However, while a useful start to a collaborative relationship, the agreement is very generic: signatories pledge to 'establish mutual cooperation in order to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons'. Other commitments are non-binding: 'participants agree within their available funding capacities and in line with acceptable procedures of funding to assist each other'. On its own it does very little to initiate change and meaningful collaboration.

Yet while the MoU has had an important role in facilitating the return of trafficked people from the UK to Nigeria, work to develop the MoU beyond this use has been limited. Despite commitments to initiate research or intelligence sharing and to support capacity building around prevention, support for victims and law enforcement, there has been limited work to do this.

Nigerian stakeholders were unhappy with the lack of process to initiate change. For example, one minor provision in the MoU demands that each party notify the other of the name and address of a single point of contact for arranging cooperation under the terms of the MoU. Yet Nigerian stakeholders related times when even this contact was unclear. The absence of a working group around the MoU or a clear point of contact was felt to prohibit the establishment of new methods of collaboration.

6.3.2 UK–Nigeria agencies

The limited level of collaboration between the UK and Nigeria has led to limited collaboration between UK and Nigerian agencies. However, following the publication of its strategy, the UK has a stated commitment to collaborate with agencies in countries of origin to develop responses that prevent trafficking 'upstream'.

Where collaboration has occurred, it has in the most part been through UK agencies with a border or crime mandate. Engaging through these agencies necessarily focuses work on the borders or organised crime aspects of trafficking. One such example is through a programme run by UNODC. Another is through relationships built through the police in the UK with Nigerian counterparts. Collaboration with agents in Nigeria is also done through those with a border or crime mandate. In the most part this is a continuation

of work done in a range of countries to manage migration and address irregular migration. For example, UKBA are developing a schema of work in Nigeria through their international Risk and Liaison Overseas Network (RALON) officers. This includes capacity-building training with Nigerian immigration officials on indicators of trafficking such as ‘miracle babies’ and building networks with NAPTIP officials. SOCA has a liaison officer based in Lagos who has built a network of scenario responses with NAPTIP.

Despite the large amount invested by the Department for International Development (DfID) in Nigeria every year, DfID are not engaged in the response to trafficking in Nigeria in a significant way. At the present there is limited work to introduce an explicit anti-trafficking element into this work and limited collaboration built between the UK and Nigeria on these issues through DfID.

Anti-trafficking work appears to start at the border. There is an argument as to whether this represents the UK’s best opportunity to work with Nigeria. Borders are a shared area of policy therefore there are potentially less diplomatic challenges to work here. However, the significant amount of development aid spending by the UK in Nigeria, somewhat undermines this position.

6.3.3 UK–Nigeria civil society

There are limited relationships between Nigerian and UK NGOs. A few stakeholders interviewed had built links with organisations in corresponding countries. British NGOs AFRUCA, Hibiscus and Stepping Stones all work closely with Nigerian NGOs on the issue of child rights and human trafficking. In the case of AFRUCA and Stepping Stones, this is with Nigerian sister organisations. International development organisations including Action Aid have a presence in Nigeria and some of their development-focused work is related to trafficking prevention. The long-term relationships between these countries, both through diaspora groups and more formal charities, could be a source of strength to anti-trafficking efforts, yet these remain largely underdeveloped. The majority of specialist trafficking organisations interviewed had no relationship with Nigerian organisations, aside from a small number who had engaged with NAPTIP.

6.3.4 Facilitating collaboration between Nigeria and the UK

Low trust

Stakeholders on both sides found it difficult to engage one another. The challenge of building working relationships with Nigerian counterparts was raised frequently by UK stakeholders and voluntary organisations who had attempted some contact, who said they found it very difficult to link up with NAPTIP or with NGOs. Key challenges that were repeated were the often slow responses to a problem that needed an immediate answer.

‘The trouble is, communication with Nigeria is very difficult. Six months to get a reply ... I know that certain documents of mine were found on a guy linked to corruption, so you think “Hmm” ... When you’re dealing with people’s lives, it’s difficult to feel comfortable sharing information when you know corruption is there, you’re not going to do it. You’re not going to want to give certain details of (say) family members of victims of trafficking. I don’t want to be responsible for people getting their heads cut off.’

British stakeholder

‘The phone just rings and rings. We don’t know if anyone’s there. And we don’t know anything about these organisations, their capacity to support or what they do.’

Related to this is a lack of adequate information about the existence and capacity of agencies within each country. Stakeholders struggled to know whether the information they had through documents such as the US State Department’s TIP reports covered all legislative change or legislative change that had been fully translated into practice. Many NGOs in Nigeria were funded on a programme-by-programme basis and so lacked consistency in the services they could provide or the personnel involved with whom contact could be made. Information dates quickly.

No UK point of contact

The challenge of communication was not just an issue for the UK. Nigerian stakeholders who had attempted to engage with UK organisations reported many difficulties doing so. Stakeholders in Nigeria reported that they struggled to know how to engage with the UK on trafficking due to the multiplicity of organisations and departments, none of which seemed to have the capacity to work across borders, to engage on issues of public policy or to work on a broad range of issues. UKHTC were understood as having a limited intelligence-gathering role.

One stakeholder highlighted the confusion of engaging with many different agencies:

‘One day the Metropolitan Police rang me, then I met someone from UKHTC. The one agency that seemed to be a useful contact was CEOP – they had the research, the links and the operation – but they’re very small and only focus on children.’

Rather than through formal methods of collaboration between state agencies, stakeholders who had worked with UK organisations reported building their best working relationships through community organisations. As one stakeholder said:

‘The MoU was signed in 2004, but there was nothing on this until 2008 when I was approached not by the government but by AFRUCA. That’s how I built networks with people and continued this work.’

While this is an example of the different methods that can be used to facilitate collaboration, it demonstrates the lack of progress and of avenues for developing the trust relationships needed.

Governance structures in the UK are particularly lacking where the facilitation of collaboration is concerned. The trafficking portfolio sits within a department with a domestic remit and a tight focus on immigration issues. Departments with an international remit are not engaged with trafficking and other agencies have a tight remit (Metropolitan Police, CEOP) or are lack resources.

Lack of shared understanding

In order to build a way forward in this area a final hurdle must be overcome: the profound differences in the understanding of trafficking between Nigeria and the UK.

Despite the UK looking to work with Nigeria in its status as a country of origin for trafficking, this is not how Nigeria perceives itself. Trafficking from Nigeria is a small part of trafficking to, within and from Nigeria. While the UK is keen to engage with Nigeria primarily as a country of origin for trafficking, Nigeria regards itself as a country of destination, especially from other countries in West Africa as well as a country of transit. Allied to this, trafficking to Europe is a small part of trafficking from Nigeria. Trafficking from Nigeria occurs to other locations in West Africa, and to countries in the Gulf region. When trafficking to Europe is considered, it is associated with southern European countries, particularly Italy and Spain. Trafficking from Nigeria to Italy has been recognised as an issue for longer than trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, particularly the microphenomenon of the trafficking of women from the state of Benin in the south west of Nigeria to work in prostitution in Italy. How trafficking to Europe is conceived, as well as how mechanisms for responding to trafficking to Europe are configured, is led by this understanding.

Trafficking is understood as trafficking for sexual exploitation. This was clear in interviews undertaken with stakeholders in Nigeria and was an issue that many stakeholders made us aware of. Nigerian stakeholders felt that there was a real ‘blind spot’ on trafficking for domestic servitude and that while this falls within NAPTIP’s remit they do limited work here. This foreclosure is due to a historical understanding of trafficking in Nigeria. It is also due to the fact that many of the stakeholders engaged in this work are motivated by the importance of addressing sexual exploitation (for example, organisations also working to end prostitution). As in the UK, stakeholders also suggested that there are cultural barriers to building an understanding of domestic servitude as something illegal.

According to Nigerian stakeholders, many people see poor children or adults being offered an opportunity to work at a richer person's house in exchange for support as being a charitable rather than exploitative act. Therefore changing these attitudes as to what trafficking is and what needs to be addressed is a challenge.

Challenging nature of the issue

Finally a further issue precluding collaboration is the difficulty perceived by British stakeholders of addressing this issue in Nigeria. The causes of trafficking were thought to be large, structural and require wider development solutions that were not realistic or achievable through smaller programmes:

'The issues are so huge. The poverty, it's not like anything here. Really without addressing that you're going nowhere in addressing trafficking.'

British stakeholder

It was felt that work to address trafficking that had been carried out between the UK and other countries was not possible in Nigeria. For example, the fact that Nigeria was a mainly cash-based society precluded collaborative work to trace the proceeds of crime. The fact that trafficking was not just caused by deeply entrenched social and economic factors but that many key actors were perceived to have a vested interest in not addressing it was also key to making that work very difficult.

'It's the government, it's the police, it's the families, it's the spiritual leaders: everyone's benefiting from trafficking – it is in so many powerful people's interest for this to continue.'

British stakeholder

This sense of hopelessness and challenge, whether from experience or perception, seemed to influence the type of work undertaken and willingness to begin any large, collaborative projects.

Ultimately this work must be taken forward in small steps. This means pursuing opportunities with UN partners and European organisations. A way forward may be found through engaging with partners and developing work in areas where trafficking is concentrated. Work undertaken by the UKHTC and others to gather intelligence and map instances of trafficking is a useful start here. This information needs to be disseminated so as to support the development of further collaborative work by NGOs and others.

6.4 Cooperation: conclusions and recommendations

In order to ensure a strategic and efficient response to trafficking, **the UK should designate the UKHTC as an independent agency with oversight of trafficking work.** As an independent agency, it would be able to build consensus about the trafficking problem in the UK. It would also provide critical scrutiny to policy to ensure that there is meaningful cooperation within government and that the trafficking response is effective and evidence-led. Critically, this would also give other countries, including Nigeria, a single point of contact that they can engage with. It will also allow the UK to engage more fully with Europe in order to build multilateral responses to Nigerian trafficking that address the criminal aspects of trafficking as well as more structural factors.

While there is limited cooperation between British and Nigerian statutory and voluntary organisations, there is significant scope for development here. The existence of a bilateral MoU provides an opportunity for developing better working relationships in the many areas where a cooperative response is needed. As well as the return of trafficked people from the UK to Nigeria, the MoU provides a starting point for cooperation on work to prevent trafficking. The MoU needs to be refined and made more relevant. **A working party made up of designated individuals from the UK and Nigeria should be convened to take this work forward.**

In Nigeria, NAPTIP should work to facilitate the work of NGOs and other government agencies to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental drivers of

trafficking. Many actors lack resources and as a result struggle to work together due to funding pressures. NGOs also lack networking capacity. In order to make the response to trafficking effective and efficient, **NAPTIP should regain its collaborative mandate and work to facilitate the work of NGOs and other government agencies to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental drivers of trafficking.**

With the work of NAPTIP looking to become more enforcement-focused, it is critical that NGOs and other agencies are able to come to the fore in order that responses develop across a range of areas. **NAPTIP should formalise their working agreement with NACTAL** in order to raise the profile of anti-trafficking work done by the many actors in Nigeria and ensure that there is dialogue between the two organisations.

7. CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES TO ENACT CHANGE

The prevention of trafficking and protection of its victims should be the ultimate aim of a country's trafficking strategy. Studying the mechanisms and drivers of trafficking from an end-to-end perspective has demonstrated a number of areas where a new response is needed.

In order to address trafficking we need to build towards a nuanced and shared understanding of what the problem is that we are trying to address through trafficking policy, both in concept and in scale. Trafficking is a diverse phenomenon. It involves men as well as women, children as well as adults; internal as well as international movement and labour as well as sexual exploitation. Experiences of people trafficked to the UK are complex. Trafficking from Nigeria can be distinct from other forms of trafficking into the UK. The prevalence of domestic servitude and the use of juju, social obligation, and other methods of retention and coercion require a tailored response.

However, data on the character and scale of trafficking from Nigeria and to the UK is hard to find. In part, this is due to the hidden and irregular nature of the issue. However neither country makes the collection of intelligence on this issue as easy as they might. For example, in the UK the structure of the NRM leads to an incomplete collection of trafficking data. This not only leads to poor strategies to address trafficking, it prevents effective collaboration and leads to reticence and uncertainty about the approach needed. The location within government of scrutiny of the trafficking response means that the picture of trafficking presented is not always trusted. In Nigeria, work to address trafficking for sexual exploitation can crowd out work on trafficking for other exploitation types.

While the policy debate around trafficking is focused on it as an aspect of irregular migration, it is the abuse and exploitation of victims of trafficking that are its key distinguishing features. In order to develop an effective response it is important to start by developing a shared understanding of trafficking as a problem of abuse and exploitation rather than migration.

The causes of trafficking from Nigeria are complex. Many people are involved, not all of whom fit the persona of an 'evil' trafficker. Trafficking networks may involve people in multiple countries, however the nature of these connections is often different to the complex, corporate structure of organised criminal networks. Trafficking from Nigeria can be carried out at a household level. Trafficker and exploiter are often friends, relatives or associates, and are frequently also connected to some degree with the victims. While traffickers in Nigeria are often family friends or extended relatives, even parents and boyfriends, receiving traffickers in the UK may also have some degree of association with the victim. The role of organised criminal networks should not be underplayed, particularly with respect to sexual exploitation. It is important that the influence of otherwise law-abiding people and actions that are at the extreme end of otherwise normalised behaviour is acknowledged.

International enforcement bodies have a role to play, however they are not the only important actors. Trafficking is an issue that exists in the gaps of law enforcement, employment regulation, welfare service delivery and border control. More than that, however, trafficking exists in the gaps of support provided by families and communities. At the heart of these trafficking experiences is the reality that a lack of resilience and formal or family support makes victims vulnerable to private individuals perceived to offer the support they need yet couldn't access; support for a better life and education but equally for sanctuary or food. As such, it is an issue that must have a response from state actors, working along-

side voluntary and community groups, particularly at a local level. Policy and practical responses that address only one aspect of the problem are bound to fail. A holistic approach built on collaboration (between agencies, countries, and regions) is essential.

By focusing the policy response to trafficking as a form of irregular immigration that can be addressed with stronger border controls there is a risk that UK policy ignores the factors that makes people vulnerable to trafficking as well as the causes of the exploitation that they then suffer. The response currently in place threatens to displace trafficking rather than address it.

Attempting to address trafficking at international borders is difficult and too late. Our research demonstrates that vulnerability to trafficking as well as exploitation and abuse starts well before trafficked people come close to a border. In Gigi's case, and in common with many trafficked people, trafficking experiences were one part of a continuum of abuse and exploitation that had defined her childhood, her life in Nigeria and her life in the UK, both before and after seeking help from the authorities. The 'part' of the experience that comes under the definition of trafficking to the UK can be as one small section of a longer period of abuse and exploitation. Anti-trafficking work needs to go beyond borders to address the vulnerability and power imbalances that drive trafficking in Nigeria, and the demand for exploitative labour and lack of exit strategies that drive trafficking in the UK.

In Nigeria also, policy responses to trafficking are again too narrow and are not sensitive to the wider socio-political-economic situation that they sit within. A clear example of this is the common prevention strategy of raising awareness about the dangers of trafficking. This is a useful and valid strategy. Our nationwide poll in Nigeria found low awareness among some vulnerable groups. However, it is important that a programme of work that seeks to raise awareness of trafficking acknowledges the power dynamics between people vulnerable to trafficking and others in their wider network. It must also be acknowledged that trafficking does not go on purely or even largely due to a lack of awareness. People become vulnerable to trafficking when fleeing violence or abuse and are unable to access support through family, relationships, employment or formal support services.

Access to education, access to employment, and access to support for people fleeing situations of abuse and exploitation are all essential elements of an effective trafficking response. In the UK, work should address the opportunities for exploitable labour and coercion to occur.

In the UK, responses to prevent trafficking should go beyond migration. In Nigeria they should go beyond trafficking. Rather than seek to address trafficking in a targeted way, responses should be broader. For trafficking policy to be effective rather than marginal it needs to be 'mainstreamed' into development, education, action on children's rights, welfare and crime policy in both the UK and Nigeria. In order to ensure that these wider responses are not vulnerable to changing priorities in these wider areas, a point of coordination is needed.

The protection of trafficked people in the UK and in Nigeria has many shortfalls. In the UK it is inaccessible, not provided to those who are entitled to it, short term and, in many ways, retraumatising. In Nigeria, the low capacity of organisations offering support means that support can be unreliable, lack therapeutic value, and be unable to provide the specialist support that victims of trafficking require. The presumption of family reunification as the end goal of a support pathway threatens to aggravate recovery and cause further violence, abuse and re-trafficking.

We need to ensure that protection for victims of trafficking is both accessible and long term. Victims of trafficking attempted to survive for a long period of time before seeking or receiving specialist support. This led to them entering into situations of extreme vulnerability and in some cases further exploitation. Support should be designed to accommodate the fears and barriers that trafficked people have about leaving their situation of exploitation and seeking support. This includes engaging with the people that trafficked people seek help from, as well as members of the public and community spaces.

The provision of 45 days of support to trafficked people is important. Many trafficked people have chronic health and social care needs. However, beyond this, support is piecemeal and uncoordinated. Support to ensure that, when possible, trafficked people are able to become self-sufficient is an important, final piece.

Prosecution strategies, like prevention strategies, that focus on organised structures, are not always suited to detecting and addressing trafficking from Nigeria. Organised criminal networks are well-developed and certainly play a role in many trafficking cases. However, policy responses designed to crack organised criminal networks are likely to provide too blunt an instrument here.

The importance of collaboration is written throughout the UK's latest human trafficking strategy and defines a central reason for the establishment of NAPTIP, Nigeria's dedicated anti-trafficking agency. To date this is something that the UK and Nigeria have been doing with mixed success. In the UK there needs to be better local link-up between agencies. In Nigeria, the role of NAPTIP needs to refocus on building platforms of collaboration between key agencies.

7.1 Ways forward: agents of change

In order to plot a way forward, it is important to understand who the agents of change in this area are and therefore who is placed to take the action needed. This section will set out who it is who is placed to move this work forward before setting out our recommendations for a reconfigured response.

7.1.1 Individuals vulnerable to trafficking or formally trafficked people

The people involved in the act of trafficking are the closest to it and may be most able to tackle the issue. For example, victims of trafficking can help to stop the work of serial traffickers as well as send a clear message on the consequences of trafficking to other people involved in trafficking and exploiting by pursuing prosecutions of their traffickers. Formally trafficked people are an important source of information on how trafficking happens as well as the information and programmes that will help those in a situation similar to themselves to avoid being trafficked.

Our research identifies some of the current limits to people vulnerable to being trafficked or formally trafficked people's involvement in anti-trafficking work. Despite many awareness campaigns targeting people vulnerable to trafficking, as well as a strong sense from many stakeholders interviewed in Nigeria particularly that trafficked people enter into a trafficking situation by choice and with a strong sense of agency, our research demonstrates that they often have a limited role in the decision to accept a job or travel opportunity. For trafficked people to participate in prosecutions they require adequate protection and intensive support that is often hard to access. For trafficking policy to succeed it should begin by acknowledging current constraints and the lack of opportunity for individuals vulnerable to trafficking to tackle the issue. Responses should look to bolster individual agency so that they can be active in addressing trafficking. This could be by either providing support to people fleeing violence, or addressing inequalities in access to education or employment between genders in Nigeria, empowering migrant workers through routes out of uncertain immigration status in the UK, or through ensuring access to protection for people exiting a trafficking situation.

7.1.2 Local and community level: parents, schools, community leaders

In this current context, it is the people around individuals vulnerable to trafficking or who have been trafficked who are best placed to take action and can potentially make the most impact. Parents and community leaders play an important part, often unknowingly in facilitating trafficking. Similarly, shared beliefs held by communities about opportunities abroad and support for vulnerable children can facilitate trafficking through normalising components of it. In the UK, trafficked people have limited contact with others. However some have contact with exploiters' friends, contact with church, healthcare and schools. Similarly, after leaving a situation of trafficking, most people seek support from the public, particularly from people they feel may be Nigerian or who are in 'Nigerian' community settings such as churches or hairdressers. In order to address trafficking it is critical to acknowledge the impact that can be made by local communities.

Trafficking is an issue that affects particular communities and not whole countries. Rather than seeing trafficking as something that comes from Nigeria to the UK we should understand it as something that happens from particular communities in Nigeria to particular communities in the UK. While international collaboration is key work, it needs to be done on a local as well as international level. Addressing the aspects of life in particular places that make people vulnerable to trafficking requires local action to address complex issues. It requires a response that goes beyond trafficking and addresses wider factors such as access to education, employment and safety from violence. These responses require engagement with mainstream work done in these areas by local actors outside of specialist trafficking streams of work.

While this approach stresses the importance of an approach led by local individuals, NGOs and agencies, this does not equate to an approach that hands over responsibility for action to these actors. Trafficking must be addressed this way as it is a route to an effective response. However, it must be done in concert with appropriate funding and mechanisms of accountability. Work at a national level is still an important part of a trafficking response

7.1.3 National level

In order to support this local response, work needs to be carried out at a national level in order to articulate a clear and consistent analysis of the problem, recognition of responsibility for action and a strategy for coordinated action. This needs to be supplemented with coordination and scrutiny of policy needed so work is complementary and is not undone by competing priorities. Work at a national level should be one of coordination not response. National institutions and actors should be calibrated so as to support and facilitate anti-trafficking work by local frontline agencies but also innovative work by grassroots NGOs. An issue that is so diverse, so locally dependent and so changeable requires a response led by local actors. The need for responses to be mainstreamed into wider work means that the response to trafficking cannot be carried out by anti-trafficking organisations alone. This requires national agencies that are open to collaboration as well as able to build trusted relationships with a range of partners. Independence as well as adequate communication is crucial for work to be done here.

Crucially, a strong national lead is critical to ensure that international collaboration can easily be facilitated. The ad hoc nature of collaboration being done between agencies in Nigeria and the UK to date leads to work being non-strategic and incomplete as agencies feel unable to take a strong lead, make autonomous decisions and work across boundaries.

7.1.4 International level

Working at a global level through agencies such as Interpol, the IOM or a UN body, or at a regional level through Europol or a European body brings many opportunities to address trafficking. And collaborative projects can lead to long-term collaborative relationships. Most of the initiatives to date have been by UNODC or the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). Such programmes, included **Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Minors and Young Women from Nigeria to Italy**, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, carried out by UNICRI in cooperation with UNODC, Nigerian institutions and NGOs from March 2008 to April 2010.

7.2 Ways forward: summary of action needed

To tackle trafficking from Nigeria to the UK more effectively, action by a range of actors is needed.

7.2.1 UK government and agencies

- The UK should designate the UKHTC as an independent agency with oversight of trafficking work. The UK should identify an independent point of contact for trafficking work, similar to a rapporteur.
- In addition to its work liaising with statutory agencies and nongovernmental agencies an independent UKHTC must place a greater emphasis on outreach and communication with local communities, particularly among the Nigerian diaspora in London and other cities across the country.

- The UK should designate individuals (particularly from the UKHTC but also other agencies) to form part of a working party made up of individuals from the UK and Nigeria in order to ensure the development of the MoU and provide a point of collaboration for strategic anti-trafficking responses between the two countries.
- Agencies including the police, UKBA and social services should incorporate information on the diversity of trafficked people, how they may behave and how they are controlled, including features of Nigerian trafficking, in training packages for workers who may come into contact with trafficked people. Training must also stress the importance of not just identifying trafficked people but of supporting disclosure by following guidelines developed for working with people reporting violent crimes.
- The trafficking decision-making device should be reformed. Decisions should be made by an independent body for trafficking, separate from UKBA, tasked solely with trafficking decision-making. The body must adopt mechanisms that are conducive to fair decision-making. This means ongoing training for officials, access to advocacy support for interviewees, an appeals mechanism and the use of criteria that reflect the accepted definition of trafficking.
- Temporary residence permits should be issued to people who need to stay in the UK to pursue a civil case in the same way they are issued to those who have to stay in the UK to pursue a criminal case.
- The UK should ensure that all people returned to Nigeria are assessed for trafficking indicators and that the support that is needed is in place to ensure their safety.
- The UK should re-establish the domestic worker visa route that allows people to change their employer and extend this visa and the protection it affords to diplomatic households.
- UK development agencies should conduct an audit of the impact of their development work in Nigeria on trafficking as well as opportunities to develop further work focusing on gender empowerment through education, access to employment and safety.
- UK agencies' capacity building in Nigeria should focus on supporting Nigerian institutions to build child protection protocols in order to address the vulnerability and internal trafficking that leads to international trafficking.

7.2.2 UK local authorities

- Trafficked people should be referred to MARACs.
- Local authorities should establish community liaison officers for particular nationalities including Nigerians. This should be done in partnership with established NGOs. The role would be to build relationships between statutory services and community settings (people in churches, community groups and spaces) and to lead training sessions to share information about indications of trafficking and referral pathways, as well as providing points of contact for anyone wishing to disclose trafficking experiences.

7.2.3 UK NGOs

- UK organisations should run a campaign with people who may come into contact with trafficked people about the definition of trafficking, the law in the UK, what constitutes trafficking and the consequences as well as support pathways for referral of trafficked people. This should be delivered to individuals and communities who may come into contact with trafficked people.
- UK organisations should work with local authorities and statutory agencies to ensure that trafficked people are able to access support pathways through supporting community liaison officers and information on them.
- UK organisations, including community organisations should engage with an independent UKHTC to ensure that information is shared. Different agencies must attempt to work towards a position where consensus is reached on the scale and character of trafficking, the objectives of trafficking policy and necessary direction of policy.
- UK organisations should support the understanding of trafficking and the identity of trafficked people through considering opportunities to promote a range of trafficking experiences through their advocacy and media work.

7.2.4 Nigerian government agencies including NAPTIP

- NAPTIP should regain its collaborative mandate. Its role should be formalised as a collaborative one working to address the root causes of trafficking. Work streams should be developed to facilitate the work of other NGOs and other government agencies at a local and federal level to mainstream anti-trafficking work into their wider work. This is to ensure that the response to trafficking addresses the fundamental social and economic drivers of trafficking. The relationship between internal and international trafficking should be recognised and drivers of internal trafficking should be addressed by NAPTIP's work.
- Nigeria should designate individuals to form part of a working party made up of individuals from the UK and Nigeria to ensure the development of the MoU and provide a point of collaboration for strategic anti-trafficking responses between the two countries.
- NAPTIP should formalise their working agreement with NACTAL in order to support the anti-trafficking work done by the many actors in Nigeria and ensure there is dialogue between the two organisations.
- Tariffs for trafficking in Nigeria should be increased.

7.2.5 Nigerian NGOs

- Nigerian NGOs should deliver campaigns that are evidence-led to:
 - target vulnerable groups and those that facilitate trafficking and have a role in decision-making such as parents and community leaders
 - address trafficking for domestic work
 - involve people who have previously been trafficked (in cases where safeguarding can be ensured) or consider ways to use the testimony of people who have previously been trafficked.
- Collaboration efforts such as NACTAL should be supported by mature nongovernmental anti-trafficking organisations in order to provide a platform to bring in smaller organisations working on a range of related issues.

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