



Making every child matter ... everywhere

# Hidden Children

The trafficking and exploitation  
of children within the home

2011

## Executive summary

The trafficking and exploitation of children can take many forms, both commercial and non-commercial. To date, however, there has been comparatively little focus on hidden children in the UK who are exploited on a non-commercial basis, in domestic servitude. This can be attributed to the fact these crimes are indeed hidden and the number of cases known to law enforcement is limited. In this 'Hidden Children' report, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre identifies examples of modus operandi and techniques used by offenders in this form of exploitation. The report also outlines, identifies and profiles the trends and characteristics of this form of abuse, which has resulted in the development of recommendations with UK-wide significance.

CEOP's 'Hidden Children' report demonstrates that instances of child abuse through domestic servitude occur throughout the UK, with case studies used to illustrate the nature of the abuse. The report also shows that, in some instances, domestic servitude can occur in tandem with the commercial and economic exploitation of that child. This can take the form of forced labour, begging and pretty crime, and sexual exploitation.

Overall, however, what is not clear is the extent of this form of abuse, leading to claims that 'the very lack of information is itself a cause for concern' (ECPAT, 2009: 46).

Through the case studies collected, it has been identified that hidden children are often brought, predominantly from African and Asian countries, to the UK by adults claiming to be an 'aunt' or 'uncle', though evidence suggests that often these adults are not biologically related to the child.

In the majority of cases, contact with state authorities will be limited – thus the 'hidden' nature of the abuse – with victims unlikely to attend school or have access to other children outside of the home. A deliberate attempt to keep the victim hidden reduces the risk to the abuser of being identified. It is therefore plausible to suggest

that victims of domestic servitude are more likely to have contact with private sector individuals such as shop workers or other members of the public encountered as they carry out their domestic chores. Members of the public may prove effective in identifying unknown victims. Through raising the awareness of domestic servitude in the consciousness of the general public and providing details of the services where they can report suspected abuse, unknown victims may be located in a more effective manner.

The data and analysis in this report demonstrates that this type of child abuse can be found in the UK, although the 'hidden' nature makes it difficult to quantify the true extent and scale of domestic servitude. The recommendations in the 'Hidden Children' report are intended to both assist in the identification of further cases and in the safeguarding of child victims.

## Definition of 'hidden children'

For the purpose of this report 'hidden children' shall refer to children trafficked into or within the UK who are exploited in a private residence for non-commercial purposes.

## Exploitation of children within the home

The trafficking and exploitation of children can take many forms, both commercial and non-commercial, though to date there has been comparatively little focus on hidden children in the UK who are exploited on a non-commercial basis. This can be attributed to the fact these crimes are indeed hidden and the number of cases known to law enforcement is limited. In this report, examples of modus operandi and techniques used by offenders in this form of exploitation have been identified – allowing for the development of recommendations with UK-wide significance.

CEOP has identified that sexual abuse, domestic servitude, and benefit fraud<sup>1</sup> are common exploitation types within a home environment. Other types of exploitation include forced marriage, illegal adoption and exploitation of a child for residency purposes. Through the case studies used in this report, it will be demonstrated that the abuse of 'hidden children' may not be restricted to one type of exploitation.

Assessing the level and frequency of exploitation of 'hidden children' is dependent on victims coming to the attention of, or reporting to, local authorities, schools, police, or voluntary bodies. The hidden nature of this form of exploitation means that victims are often denied contact with those outside of the domestic setting. It is therefore highly likely that many other victims go unidentified.

Several common elements have been observed in the victims identified in this report. Abusers utilise a range of psychological and physical methods to ensure their victim's compliance (CEOP, 2009; NSPCC, 2009: 9) including threats of abandonment, threats of deportation, exposure to violence or threats of violence, deprivation of liberty, deprivation of food and other necessities. Victims are subject

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<sup>1</sup> See CEOP (2010) The trafficking of children into and within the UK for benefit fraud purposes, [http://www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/CEOPChild\\_trafficking\\_for\\_Benefit\\_Fraud\\_Assessment\\_Oct2010.pdf](http://www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/CEOPChild_trafficking_for_Benefit_Fraud_Assessment_Oct2010.pdf)

to emotional abuse, ranging from being told by their abusers they should be grateful for their situation to being threatened with abandonment or being sent back to their home country. There are also reports of victims being discouraged from contacting the very authorities that could help them, with offenders stating that police and immigration would send them back or punish them because of their lack of immigration status (The Children's Society, 2010).

The 2009-2010 CEOP *Strategic Threat Assessment on Child Trafficking in the UK* states a total of 287 children from 47 countries were identified as potential victims of trafficking. Where type of exploitation was identified (219 cases), 35% of children (76) were sexually exploited, most of whom were female. 18% (39) were exploited for cannabis cultivation, 11% (25) were exploited for domestic servitude, 11% (23) for benefit fraud, 9% (19) for labour exploitation, 9% (20) for street crime, 4% (8) for servile marriage, 2% (4) for illegal adoption and 2% (5) for various other types of exploitation. 80% of those identified as having been trafficked for non-commercial domestic servitude were female. UNICEF (2009) also supports this view, stating that 'girls in particular are trafficked into child domestic labour'. The CEOP *Strategic Threat Assessment on Child Trafficking in the UK* also identifies that those in domestic servitude are often also victims of sexual exploitation within the home (CEOP, 2010). Although the majority of victims of trafficking for domestic servitude are female, it has been demonstrated elsewhere that the majority of victims trafficked into the UK for other types of forced labour, such as working in cannabis farms, are male (CEOP, 2010). The preference towards females for domestic servitude may be reflective of the cultural values of the abuser (Scottish Government, 2009). However, it must also be considered that male victims of forced labour (both commercial and non-commercial) have been found to be less likely to report their exploitation as they 'may not feel they are being exploited, as they would often be expected to work back home in the same way' (CEOP, 2009: NSPCC, 2009: 66).

### Private fostering arrangements

Fostering does not always take place at the request of local authorities. Private fostering arrangements (PFA) exist when children are cared for by someone other than a close relative for 28 days or more. These arrangements serve many different and diverse purposes, largely with legitimate aims, such as allowing the child to have

a break from their family as a result of parental illness or family breakdown. In the case of overseas children in particular, these arrangements allow parents to send their children to the UK to access education opportunities, and a 'better life', than can be otherwise provided.

That said, the system has the potential for abuse. The Children's Act 1989 states that private fosterers must register their arrangement with their local authority as soon as possible so the local authority can inspect the home to ensure it is a safe environment for the child. At present, the responsibility for registering a PFA lies with those involved in the care of the child, rather than the local authority. As a consequence, many of these arrangements go unregistered. It is unclear to what extent this is due to a lack of awareness surrounding the law and what proportion of these are intentional exploitation cases. The charity Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB) estimates there are 10,000 unregistered PFAs in the UK, with 4,000 of the children involved in these arrangements originating from outside of the UK (CFAB, 2010). With such high numbers, it is imperative that local authorities take steps to identify unregistered arrangements and ensure the welfare of the children concerned.

One local authority is currently undertaking an audit of children currently enrolled in schools in their borough in order to identify unregistered fostering arrangements. This approach has already identified several previously unknown PFAs, thus enabling appropriate action and safeguarding to take place. However, this approach is resource-intensive as it requires physical checking of records and investigation by under-resourced local authorities. The success of the schools audit demonstrates the need for schools to be aware of the potential for PFA abuse. Given that schools have a unique position where they see both the child and parent/guardian at regular intervals (such as collecting the child at the end of the school day or parents' evenings) and the safeguarding responsibilities held by schools, there is the potential for these institutions to take a pro-active approach to this problem. For example, when an adult attends the school to collect the child or attend a meeting, action should be taken to identify and confirm the legitimacy of the relationship between adult and child, especially if there are different adults appearing at the school

claiming guardianship of the child. Where there are a number of different adults, who are not the blood parents or legal guardian of the child, suspicions should be raised and action should be taken to ensure the child is not a victim of domestic servitude or other form of child exploitation.

Similarly teachers should be aware of any signs of physical violence and emotional abuse, being inflicted on the child in the home environment. Evidence of violence and abuse could be an indicator of the methods used by offenders to maintain control of their victims and ensure compliance. That said, in line with the safeguarding responsibilities of schools, any signs of physical or emotional abuse should always be reported to the appropriate agency such as social services or police.

Again both of these points are only applicable if the child has been allowed to attend school by their abuser. In the many cases where the child is not enrolled in education, other methods of detection should be considered. It should also be considered that even if the child victim is denied the right to attend school by their abuser, they may still be responsible for the taking and collection from school of other children in the household where they are exploited. As such, teachers and other school staff should be aware of the possibility that a young person collecting other young persons from school, in place of an adult, could be doing so under duress. Any suspicions or actions should be referred to the appropriate authorities, such as police or social services.

Whilst child victims may not be allowed to attend school, there are other instances where the victim may come into contact with professionals, such as faith bodies or those in the medical profession. The Children's Society (2010) report - *Hidden Children: Separated Children at Risk* – identified several cases where children trafficked for domestic servitude made disclosures of their abuse to faith leaders with mixed results. The wider implementation of awareness training for faith leaders would have the potential to identify further victims. Consideration should also be given to cascading this awareness to their congregation. This would raise community awareness of this form of abuse, facilitating the identification of further

child victims. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) is an organisation that provides training to church leaders on child protection issues and AFRUCA, an NGO focussing on African victims of child abuse, also offers training to faith leaders.

There are loopholes in the legislation surrounding PFAs which potentially allow abuse to continue. Once a child reaches the age of 16 (18 if the child suffers from a disability), the monitoring of PFAs by local authorities end. This is despite the fact that the young person is still considered a child in the eyes of the law. Also, at the age of 16, child benefit payments cease. It is a possibility that those children exploited for the purposes of domestic servitude and benefit fraud may be abandoned by their abusers as they are no longer a source of financial benefit. This highlights two key issues with PFAs, as follows.

- Whilst it is difficult enough to ensure children in PFAs are registered with local authorities and therefore offered monitoring and protection, these protections cease before the child reaches the age of majority, therefore leaving the child with very little protection against further abuse and exploitation.
- Victims of domestic servitude and abuse who are abandoned are very vulnerable and can be susceptible to further abuse by others in the form of emotional and sexual exploitation.

### Collection of data

Between 2 August 2010 and 10 September 2010, a qualitative data collection exercise was conducted by the CEOP Strategic Intelligence Unit. A request was sent to contacts in police forces across the UK, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), UK Border Agency (UKBA), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), and other relevant government departments for intelligence held on this crime, obtained from intelligence reports and cases. The request also contained the specific terms of reference and intelligence requirements for the project to assist recipients in providing appropriate data.

The terms of reference and niche focus of this report proved a limited success. The majority of respondents were either unable to identify any case examples which met the specific terms of reference, or provided case examples focussing on commercial exploitation. As the focus of this report is exploitation of a non-commercial nature, that data was not included. Due to the differences in intelligence databases used by police forces and availability of resources, it is possible that further cases exist but where not readily extractable. However, many detailed case studies were obtained from several police forces across the UK and the UKBA. The wide geographical distribution of case examples helps offset the limited number of case studies available.

This report should therefore not be taken as a complete assessment of the scale of non-commercial child exploitation in the UK due to the limited data available. The findings and conclusions should be understood as a guide to the nature of non-commercial child exploitation in private residences in the UK.

### Findings and analysis – law enforcement

The following case studies were obtained from several police forces spread across the UK. The original intelligence received has been sanitised with identifiable information removed to conceal the victims' identities. However, the information which has been retained clearly identifies trends and characteristics associated with this crime type. The case studies below represent interactions with law enforcement and as such are detailed in explaining the methodology of the abusers.

#### **Case Study 1**

*Joel lived with his grandmother and an uncle following the death of his parents. When his grandmother died, Joel states that his uncle did not want to look after him and he was taken to live in the capita by another 'uncle'. Joel had only met this 'uncle' on two or three occasions previously and was not a blood relative.*

*After a month Joel and the 'uncle' travelled to the UK and resided in the 'uncle's' residence along with two other African males. After a week Joel was prevented from leaving the house and was instructed to cook and clean for the three adults. Joel was told by his 'uncle' that he*

*was to attend to cooking or cleaning or he would be beaten. Joel stated that the two males used a white powder drug which they tried to get Joel to use. When he refused they assaulted him.*

*Joel stated that he was sexually assaulted by his 'uncle' on two occasions whilst residing with him. Joel stated that he was able to throw him off and sustained no physical injury as a result.*

*On a second occasion, several days later, the same scenario occurred. However, after fending off his 'uncle', Joel ran from the house to a nearby church. The leader of this church then took Joel to the local social work office and contacted the UKBA.*

*When interviewed by police, Joel was reluctant to disclose information about his 'uncle' and was unable to identify the location where he was held. He further intimated that he did not wish to make a formal complaint of indecent assault and declined to provide a formal statement. Joel stated it was in the past and that he wished to move forward with his life.*

This example highlights the use of violence and coercive methods to ensure compliance. It is unclear whether the attempt to introduce Joel to the 'white powder', presumably an illegal drug, was circumstantial or an attempt to achieve control over Joel through a drug addiction. Such use of narcotics is more commonly seen in sexual exploitation. The presence of sexual abuse in this case also demonstrates that offenders do not limit themselves to one method of abuse.

The available data would suggest that the victim fled the house and sought the assistance of outsiders following the introduction of sexual abuse. This may support the view that the victim did not see his forced domestic labour as exploitation (see *CEOP Strategic Threat Assessment on Child Trafficking in the UK, 2009*)

The unwillingness on the part of the victim to register a complaint may also reflect previous research findings that indicate a level of shame and embarrassment, possibly due to the sexual assault by a male. Cultural attitudes towards same sex relationships in the African country of origin should also be considered as a reason for the lack of complaint. Further to this, it should be noted that the victim sought asylum in the UK rather than return to his blood uncle in his country of origin.

## Case Study 2

*Patricia lived with her maternal grandmother. When her grandmother died, she was taken in by her aunt. One day her aunt took her to a 'government establishment' and was told her to call her 'mum'. Patricia indicated that aunt kept her passport during the entire journey.*

*Upon entering the UK, Patricia and her aunt moved to live with her uncle, nieces and another aunt. Patricia was allowed to attend secondary school.*

*After a short time the family moved house and her second aunt left the residence. At this time Patricia reports she was treated differently from the other children and was made to take over her departed aunt's duties. These included looking after the children, cooking and cleaning.*

*Patricia states that she believes she was brought to the UK to take over the domestic duties from her aunt. She was kept up late at night serving food and looking after children of guests that attended parties at the home. Patricia states that some men attended these parties and they kissed, sexually assaulted and attempted to rape her. She reported these things to her aunt and uncle but they were dismissive and Patricia was told that she was lucky they had taken her in and that she could have ended up as a prostitute on the streets. She was physically abused for reporting to teachers that she could not do her homework due to domestic duties.*

*After a period of time, Patricia was removed by social services and placed in the care of another aunt [No further information available]. However this relationship quickly deteriorated to mirror her previous situation. In January 2010, she was told by her aunt that she was no longer welcome and to move out. At school she disclosed to a school teacher what was happening but later that day fainted and was hospitalised.*

*At the time she advised she had not eaten breakfast. Through ongoing police contact with Patricia, she has advised having regular fainting fits. She stated these were not due to lack of food but stress and tiredness. She stated at both aunts' residences she had been solely responsible for all the cleaning and cooking. She advised she was also responsible for the care of a five year living in the house and whilst she had very strict curfews placed upon her,*

*her cousins were allowed to come and go and did not have to contribute to any household chores. Patricia stated she was 'like a slave'.*

*Patricia advised during early contact with police that she had no friend's outside of school and did not see her school friends out with school time.*

This case study demonstrates many of the common trails of this type of abuse. The victim was told by her (initial) abuser to call her 'mum' rather than her aunt when taken to the 'government establishment'. Although not contained within the intelligence report, it could be speculated that this 'government establishment' could have been an embassy or visa processing centre and the aunt may have believed a mother/daughter relationship would be more successful for obtaining a visa to the UK.

Unlike many hidden children, the victim in this case was allowed to attend secondary school. This increases the risk to the abuser of being discovered through disclosures made to teachers by the victim or through teachers identifying victims and making a referral to authorities. Teachers are increasingly being trained, by both government agencies (such as CEOP, police forces and the Department for Education) and NGOs (such as AFRUCA, CFAB and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) in child protection issues and how to spot a potentially trafficked child. The NSPCC has set up a dedicated Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL) staffed by qualified social workers and a police liaison officer, that professionals can call for advice if they think a child has been trafficked (NSPCC, 2010).

During the travel from the African country of origin to the UK, the victim also stated that her aunt retained possession of her passport. The retention of travel and identification documents by abusers is a well documented method used to ensure the compliance of their victims (Home Office, 2009: 5). Once settled in the UK, the victim reported that she was responsible for domestic duties in the home and was treated differently from the other children in the residence. The fact that the victim was the only one of the children to be given domestic duties following her aunt's departure shows a clear favouritism and supports the victim's assertion that she was brought into the home for that specific reason.

When the victim complained about her treatment, her abusers informed her she was lucky to be cared for by them and 'she could have ended up as a prostitute on the streets'. This response by the abusers has two purposes. Firstly, it attempts to convince the victim that her abuse is a small price to pay as the alternatives could be much worse and secondly, reference to being abandoned on the streets acts as a warning to the victim to ensure compliance.

### **Case Study 3**

*In May 2009, a Pakistani girl was brought to the UK having been issued a Domestic Worker Visa by the British High Commission in Islamabad. The girl was to work as a cleaner for a Pakistani family and be paid £60 per month. The High Commission received a copy of an employment contract 'signed' by the victim.*

*In October 2009, police were contacted by a complainant stating that her 'servant' had taken the children to school and not returned. The complainant advised that a quantity of cash, jewellery and passports had been taken (including the document belonging to the 'servant'). The 'servant' was reported as 'missing from home' and an official complaint of theft was made.*

*A police officer attended the complainant's residence and obtained a witness statement, in which she stated that 'servant' cannot speak English, only Urdu/Punjabi and was very poorly educated; and that the 'servant' receives no payment as she was given board and lodging in return for looking after the children.*

*On the same date, the victim/'servant' approached a newspaper kiosk in a bus station, located in a neighbouring police force area, and told the employee that she was from Pakistan and somebody was forcing her to 'do too much work'. The employee reported this to police.*

*Police then attended the location and ascertained, through translation, that the victim was 14 years old and had been brought over from Pakistan to work approximately two months previously. It was further understood that the victim's mother did not know she was in the UK and that the victim had been brought to the UK using a passport of another Pakistani national. The victim also made allegations of being beaten, on several occasions, by the male she was living with. The victim also stated her passport had been taken from her upon arrival in the UK.*

*During interview at a police station the victim stated that she had come from Pakistan to the United Kingdom as a cleaner for a family she had been working for in Pakistan. She stated that her real name is different from the name on the passport and complained that she was being threatened by the people who brought her over. She made an allegation that she had been assaulted by them.*

*At this time interviewing officers were not aware that she had been reported missing by a neighbouring police force. The victim was then placed into foster care.*

*Several days later the victim was interviewed again during which she stated that she carried out domestic work for the family in Pakistan for five years and came over to the UK when the husband came to get her. She knew she was going to the UK.*

*The victim confirmed she was given papers to sign by the family and did so without knowing their content; as she could not speak or read English and was taught to sign her name by the wife. The victim also stated that the identification documents were not in her name but one of the children in the family.*

*The victim stated she was never paid for her work and was made to sleep on the floor by the family.*

*The husband and wife were then arrested for offences under the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004. The husband stated during interview he paid the victim around £60 per month. He confirmed that he does not pay her minimum wage.*

*He stated he has not paid her as yet, claiming when she was offered the money, she told him to keep it until she returned to Pakistan as she did need it whilst in the UK. He did not pay tax for her as it was under the threshold and has never enquired about National Insurance. The wife stated the victim wanted to come to the UK to work for them. Both the husband and wife denied any assault took place.*

*The British High Commission in Islamabad were able to track down the victim's mother, who states she had been deceived by the family and did not know her daughter was going to be taken to the UK.*

This case study is atypical as the abusers have maintained fairly open contact with UK authorities in connection with the victim. Firstly, there was extensive contact with the British High Commission (BHC) with regards to obtaining a valid visa for the victim to come to the UK. Putting aside from any failings on the part of BHC process (identity documents concerns and a work contract paying less than minimum wage),

the offenders were willing to expose themselves to authorities and provide documentation to validate the status of the domestic worker.

Secondly, one of the abusers actively sought out the police to report the victim for theft. This either shows a naïveté on the part of the abuser, who later claimed her husband handed the employment details, or arrogance that her role in the exploitation would not be discovered, as the victim later told police it was this abuser who taught the victim to sign a contract she could not read.

A willingness to engage with authorities and divulge the reason for coming to the UK shows a marked difference when compared to the previous case study, where the offenders have actively attempt to conceal the exploitation under the guise of family bonds.

This example does, however, repeat several aspects of the previous case study. The victim in this case suffered physical violence and neglect at the hands of her abusers, stating she was treated 'like a slave'. The use of verbal threats to ensure compliance can also be seen in this case, with the abusers using the accusation that the victim stole from them in Pakistan and as a result could end up in jail. By threatening to report her to the police, the abusers were able to maintain control over the victim. Alienating victims from UK authority figures, such as teachers, social workers and police, is an identified characteristic of this form of abuse; this compounds the fact that many exploited children, brought from overseas, may already have a distrust of authority figures based on their experiences in their own country. Children trafficked from outside of the UK are often also not aware of their rights. This further erodes the trust in authority figures and consequently increases the power held by the abusers. This characteristic has also been identified by charities and NGOs in the sector, including CFAB.

The UK Border Agency (UKBA), responsible for immigration control at UK border points, has a record of detecting trafficked children at ports. Through effective questioning, UKBA officers have been able to make appropriate referrals to local authorities to ensure the children are safeguarded. It is known, however, that many

of these children go 'missing' from local authority care shortly after placement. The UKBA report interceptions of a variety of nationalities with a trend towards children from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Romania being brought to the UK for domestic servitude. Children from a wider range of countries, including many African and South-East Asian countries, were brought to the UK for predominately commercial exploitation, but still suffered abuse through domestic servitude. It is likely however, and supported by the case studies, that many more children go undetected by the UKBA.

UKBA officers, as the first point of interaction, have opportunities to encounter and safeguard trafficked children. However, in order to increase their chances of entry to the UK, abusers have a tendency to travel under the guise of a family group. Officials are more likely to question children and adults who are unrelated to each other, as this may seem suspicious. Asking the correct questions can correctly identify trafficked children who are travelling as a family. It has been demonstrated that children are frequently taught to refer to their abuser as 'mum', 'aunt' or 'uncle' (NSPCC, 2009: 65). If the relationship is further probed it could be possible to identify inconsistencies in stories. If adult and child give differing accounts of how they are related and why they are travelling together, it could raise enough suspicion for further enquires to be undertaken.

An example of successful law enforcement investigation and prosecution can be seen in the case of Lucy Adeniji. Operation Paladin, a joint Metropolitan Police Service and UK Border Agency team, began investigating Adeniji as a result of an allegation of domestic exploitation against her. The victim of this exploitation stated that she was brought to the UK from Nigeria to provide childcare for Adeniji's four children. During this time the victim suffered many of the effects of domestic servitude; the victim was not enrolled in school or registered with a doctor, denied friends and regularly verbally abused and beaten. Further investigation by police revealed two additional children within the household who were subject to domestic servitude. Following investigation and prosecution, Adeniji was charged with was charged with 11 offences: actual bodily harm, neglect, facilitating illegal immigration

and eight offences of obtaining property by deception in the form of British passports.

### Findings and analysis – local authorities

One case was identified in the dataset that raised questions about the thoroughness of child protection and safeguarding checks. The local authority was investigating a family whose child had not been seen for some time. The family stated that the child was now with relatives, although this was never confirmed. Whilst on a visit to their house they found a young girl living there whom the authorities had no awareness of. The child was not registered with a doctor, did not attend school and her relationship to the adults could not be established. Concerns were raised and after registering the child with a school and general practitioners, the parents were allowed to retain custody.

When the girl turned 14 she made a complaint to her teacher that she was living with a family not related to her, who beat her, neglected her and made her carry out domestic chores at home. Police were called in and she confirmed what she had disclosed to her teacher stating she had been living with the family for six or seven years. The child was taken in by social services and parental responsibility applied for as both adult members were established as having no relation to her, nor any identity documents for her. They both gave differing accounts of how and when she was brought to the UK. On completing an arrest enquiry at the family address a seven year old girl, unknown to the authorities, of no blood relation to the family and not in education was identified. The family had no identity documents for her and adult family members again gave different accounts regarding how she came into the UK. Enquiries are currently ongoing.

This example demonstrates the wide range of services involved in child protection and reinforces the need for effective communication and training of all parties involved. In this example, there were a number of possible intervention points where agencies could have intervened to safeguard the child and this confirms the need for training and support to child protection professionals. This will be examined later in the paper.

## Findings and analysis – non-governmental organisations

The following case studies were obtained from Children and Families Across Borders and (CFAB) and represent the anonymised testimony of victims who were subject to abuse whilst in PFAs. Several other NGOs reported cases of domestic servitude suitable for this report; however the NGOs were unable to provide further information on these cases. These selected examples show the varying extent to which a victim is hidden and serves to highlight the broad nature of this abuse. The names of the victims have been changed by CFAB to protect their identities and prevent re-victimisation.

### **Case Study 1**

*My name is Bola. I am now 11 years old. I think I was born in America in 1996. My mother is Nigerian and lives in Nigeria. I have an American passport.*

*I came to the UK via Ireland and America and lived with my aunt in London. Then a few years later she took me to live with her friend. I called her aunty. I go to school.*

*In 2010 I was placed in care because my new aunty did not want to look after me and I had nowhere to live. I am now living with foster carers. My social worker told me that I am subject to Section.20 of the children act. This means I am abandoned or somebody with parental responsibility has given consent for me to be in foster care.*

*My mother does not want me back. My new aunty did not notify social services she was caring for somebody else's child.*

*I do not know what is going to happen to me.*

### **Case Study 2**

*My name is Della. I am from the Ivory Coast. Social services have been involved with me and my sister Paulina. I am now 15 years old.*

*We were happily living with our mother in the Midlands. We were going to school and living a normal life. I was granted citizenship in 2004. I learnt I was unaccompanied.*

*Then, things began to change and my mother and I did not get along. She used to hit me and treat me like a servant. Then one day my mother threw me out. I contacted social services in 2005 and told them about what was happening to me.*

*They put me and my sister in care. They investigated and we were all made to do DNA tests. This lady was not our mother. She said she was our aunt. She confessed to this.*

*She was prosecuted for the abuse against me.*

*We have remained in care for many years now. I am not sure what will happen to us. The social worker is trying to find out where our mother is and contact the agencies overseas to establish the true relationship of this lady with my mother.*

### **Case Study 3**

*My name is Marcus. I was born in Zimbabwe in 1995. I came to the UK with my mother when I was about eight years old. She left me with her friend in London and told me I would stay with her and go to school here. I am nearly 11 years old.*

*I have had some problems. There were allegations against me about abusing a five year old. I have two social workers, one from the youth offending team and another from the children's team. My mother's friend said she could not cope. She abandoned me. I now live with foster carers.*

*I have learnt that my mother's friend should have told social services she was caring for me. I have also learnt that I may not be able to live here. I do not know where my mother is. The social worker is trying to trace her to find out whether I can return to Zimbabwe in her care.*

*I do not know what will happen to me and who will decide.*

### **Case Study 4**

*My name is Tohbecky. I was born in Nigeria and came to the UK when I was 11 years old. I came to the UK on a visitor's visa. My mother sent me to live with my aunty and go to school here.*

*I lived with my aunty and her husband and did to go to school near their house. I used to do all the housework. They made me do this.*

*My aunty's new husband raped me twice when I was 15years old. He told me what would happen if I told anyone. He talked about Voodoo and I was frightened. One day I could not keep quiet any longer and told my teacher.*

*The social worker took me out of the care of my aunty. Her husband is in hiding somewhere and is wanted by the police.*

*My mother is in Nigeria. She does not believe me and has said I am troublesome. She does not want me back. My aunty does not want me back. I have nobody here.*

*I do not know what is going to happen to me. I will be 16 years old soon.*

### **Case Study 5**

*My name is Trupti. I was born in Bangladesh in 1998. When I was young I was came over to the UK with my mother to live with my uncle in the UK. I have not seen her since.*

*I stayed with my uncle, he used to make me do household chores. Once he got really angry and said he would strangle me if I did not do what he said. He tried to hurt my neck. I used to go to school.*

*Then one day he sent me to live with a woman I had never met before. I had to call her aunty.*

*I lived with her for a while.*

*One day I was suddenly taken by the police who came to aunty's house.*

*I now live with foster carers. I have been living with them for some time now. I like it here.*

*I learnt that I came to the UK on a plane, but do not remember this. The aunty who was looking after me was a known prostitute and the police raided the premises and found me there. They were concerned about me and that's why I was taken away from her.*

*I have been told I need to return to Bangladesh. I don't know where my mother and father live. The social worker has tried to call her and speak with her over the telephone. He has not been successful.*

*I do not know what is going to happen to me now. I do not want to live in Bangladesh. I do not know what it is like there and I speak English not Bengali.*

Trauma suffered as a result of abusive PFAs can be two-fold for the victim, as follows:

- the abuse suffered during the arrangement can be both physically and emotionally damaging; and
- as demonstrated in the CFAB case studies, the uncertainty the young person faces once extracted from the abusive situation can also be traumatic.

As the case studies show, victims face an unknown and worrying future and this can be linked to factors such as unfamiliar immigration status and unwillingness to return to their country of birth. In some circumstances there is a risk of danger to the young person if they are returned to their birth parents who were responsible for their trafficking in the first instance. They may face re-trafficking back into an abusive situation in the UK or a third country.

The testimony from the above victims reinforces themes present in the case studies identified by law enforcement. The common, though not exhaustive, traits identified in domestic servitude abuse outlined in the law enforcement examples, such as manual labour exploitation and coercion through violence, are mirrored in the statements from the victims themselves.

It is clear that the aftermath of abuse can be just as disturbing as the abuse itself. Social services need to be mindful of the aftercare requirements that victims require. Training in child trafficking issues and the needs of abuse victims must be provided

to social workers on a more comprehensive basis. Information on the NSPCC's 24 hour Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL), UKHTC (including a service offering 24-hour consultation with a tactical advisor for police), and other specialised charities, should be widely distributed to all frontline staff.

### Indicators of domestic servitude

On the basis of previous research findings and the data collected in this report, the following list has been devised which identifies potential indicators of domestic servitude:

- The child is in an unregistered Private Fostering Arrangement
- The child does not regularly attend school or is not registered at school
- The child attends a school to drop off other children but does not enter themselves
- The child has no friends or contact with other children outside of the home
- The child is not registered with a GP or other health professional
- The child attends a medical 'walk-in' centre and is unable or unwilling to provide details of a GP
- The child has restricted movements outside the home
- The child has no passport or means of identification; possibly retained by abuser
- The child has false identity documentation; possibly retained by abuser
- The child does not know their immigration status
- The child is unfamiliar with the English language
- The child suffers threats, physical, and/or emotional abuse within the home environment
- The child is deprived of food or is malnourished
- The child lacks clean or appropriate clothing
- The child suffers from a lack of sleep; possibly falling asleep in class

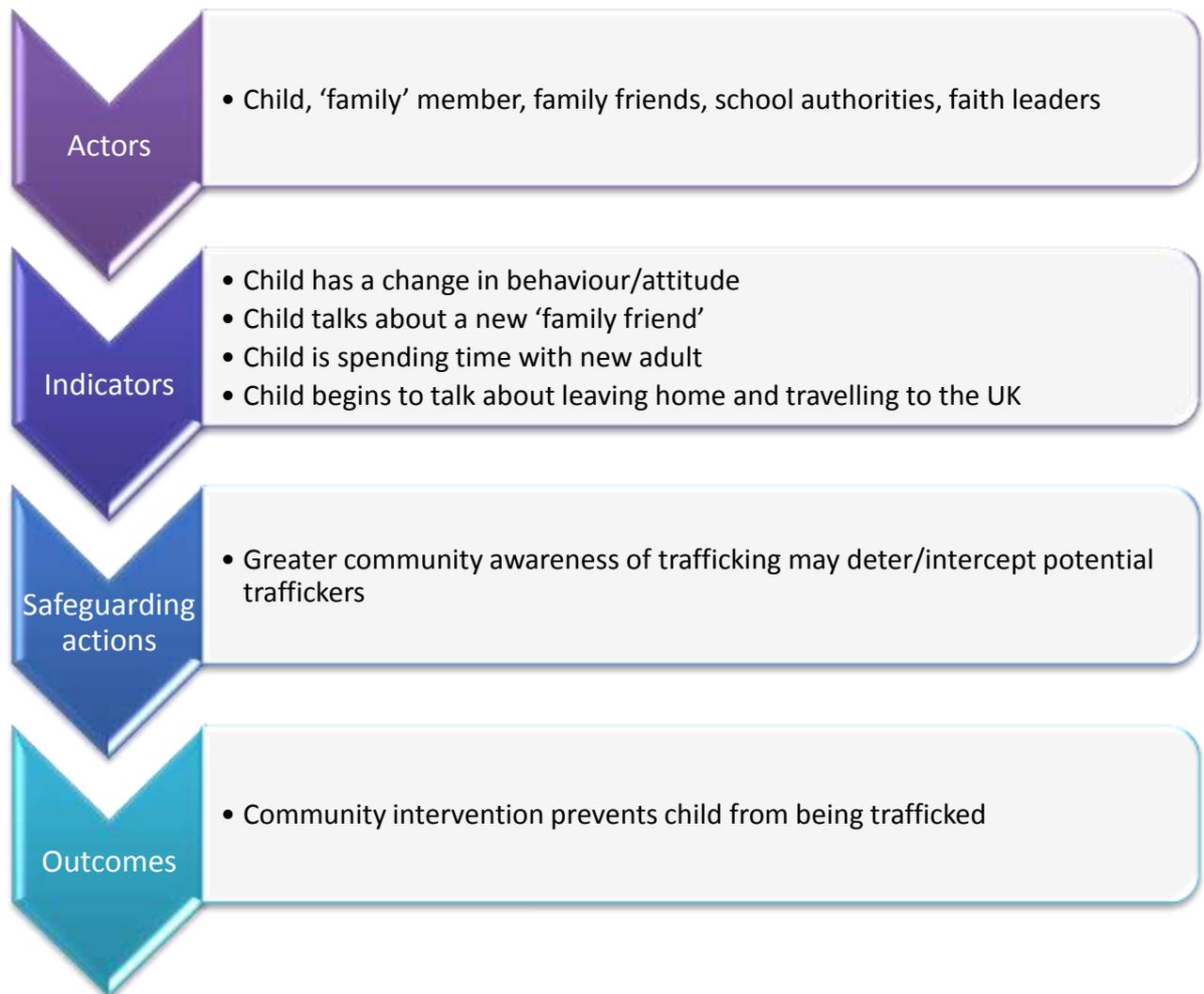
- There is a lack of bond with their ‘guardian’
- The child is withdrawn, refuses to talk, or is afraid of talking to people in authority.

It must be noted that this list is not exhaustive but is representative of many of the control and coercion techniques used by abusers to achieve and maintain the compliance of the child. If a child is identified as a victim of domestic servitude or there is a suspicion of abuse, then a referral must be made to the appropriate authority or further advice sought from specialist helplines such as the NSPCC’s Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL).

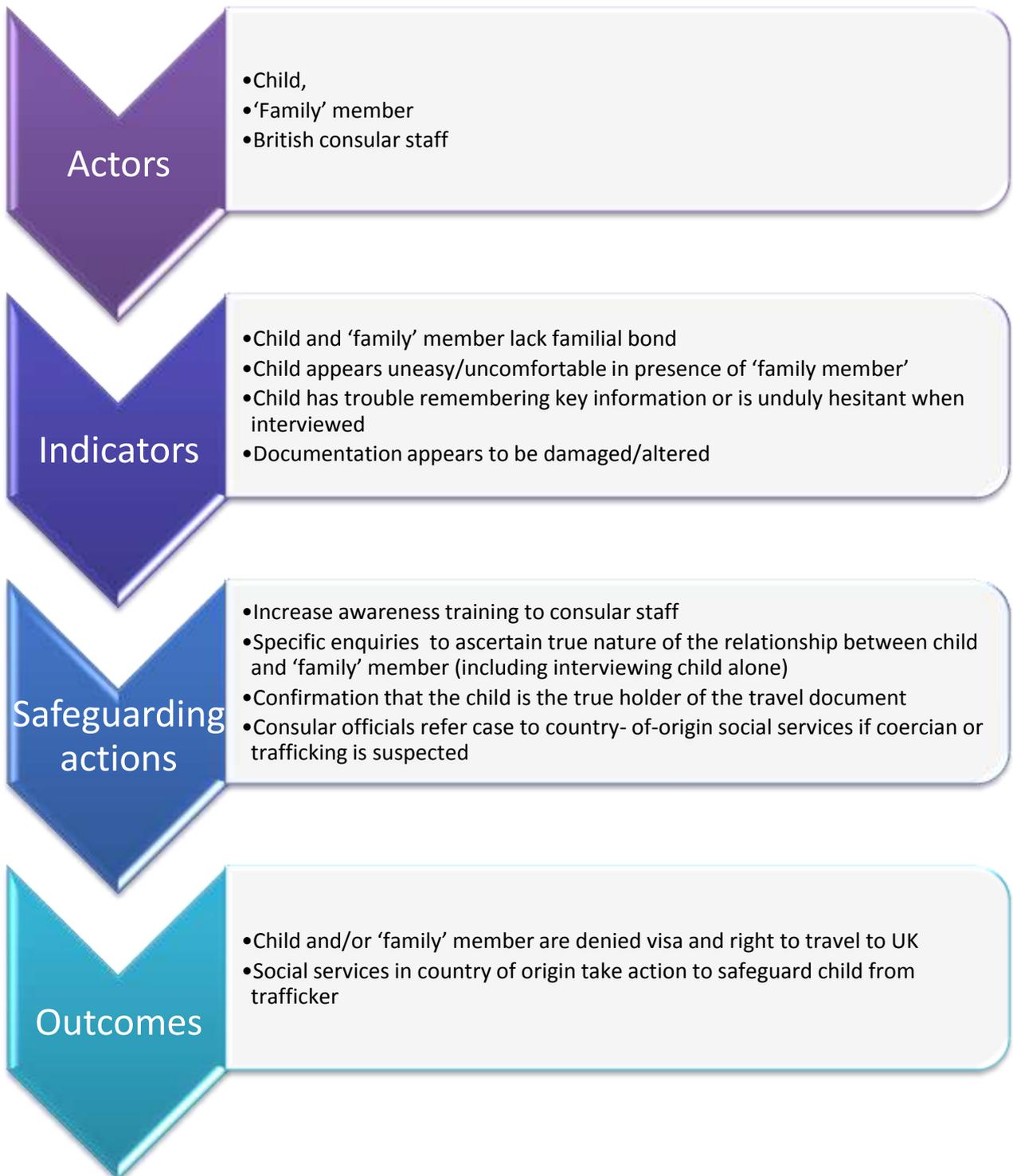
### Trafficking process map

Based on published literature and the data collected for this report, the following process map has been devised. This table outlines the various stages that a child subject to trafficking for domestic servitude will go through; beginning with the initial approaches to the child by the abuser through to the end stage of domestic servitude. At each stage, possible intervention actions are described along with the outcome of such action.

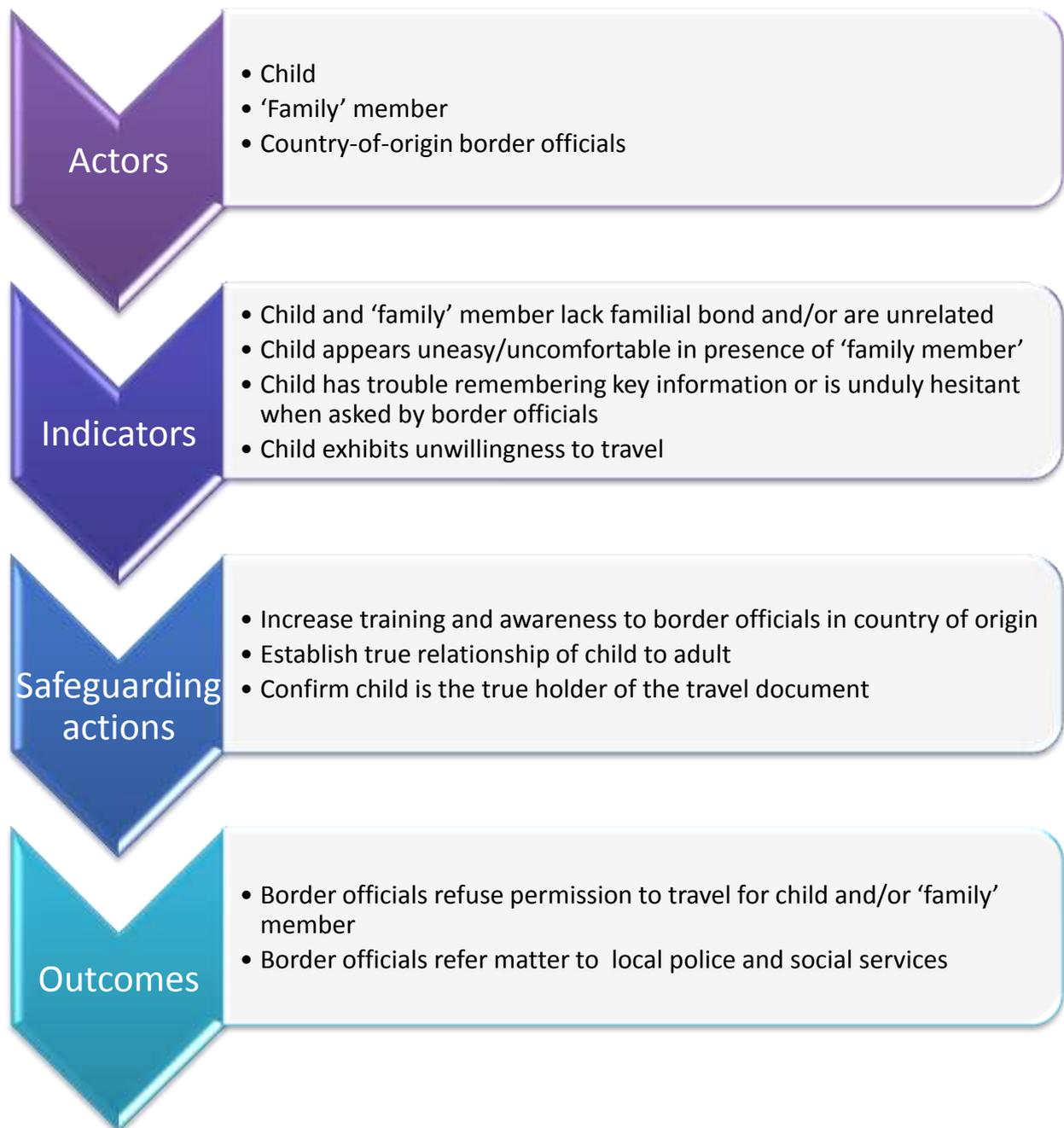
**STAGE ONE ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child is groomed in country of origin to travel to the UK with 'family' member***



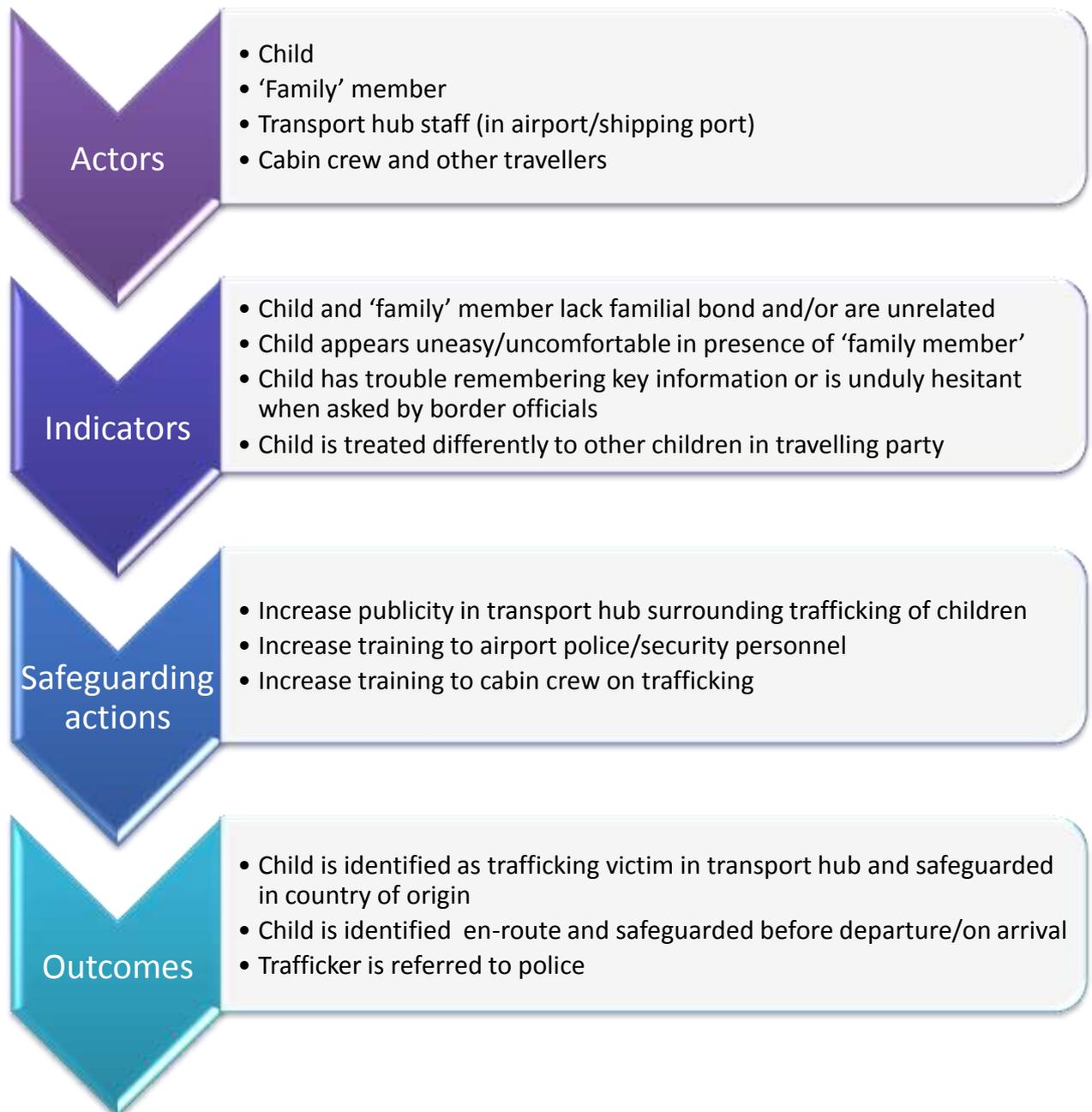
**STAGE TWO ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child and ‘family’ member attend British Embassy/High Commission in country of origin to obtain visa***



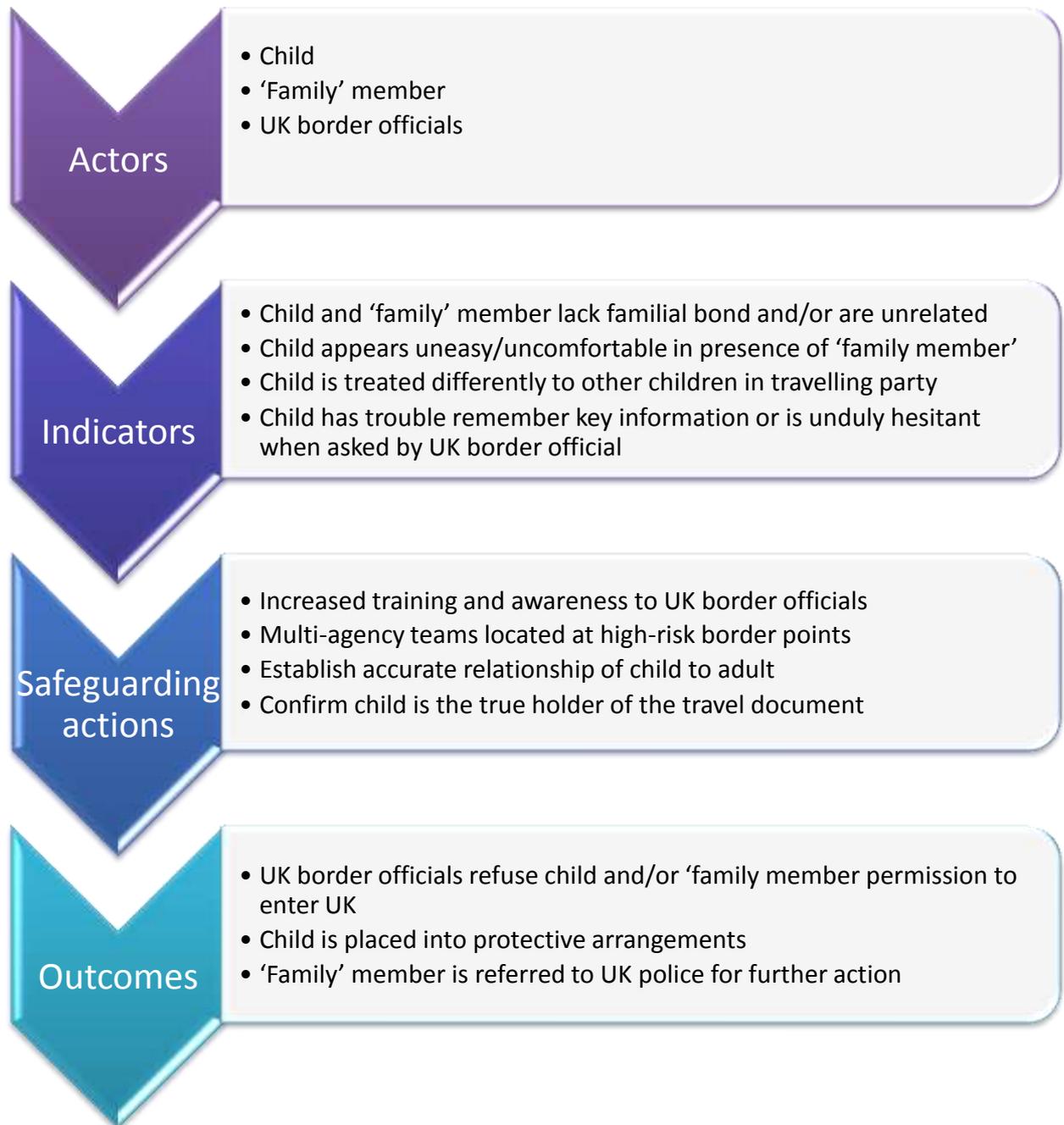
**STAGE THREE ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child and ‘family’ member present at country- of-origin border controls***



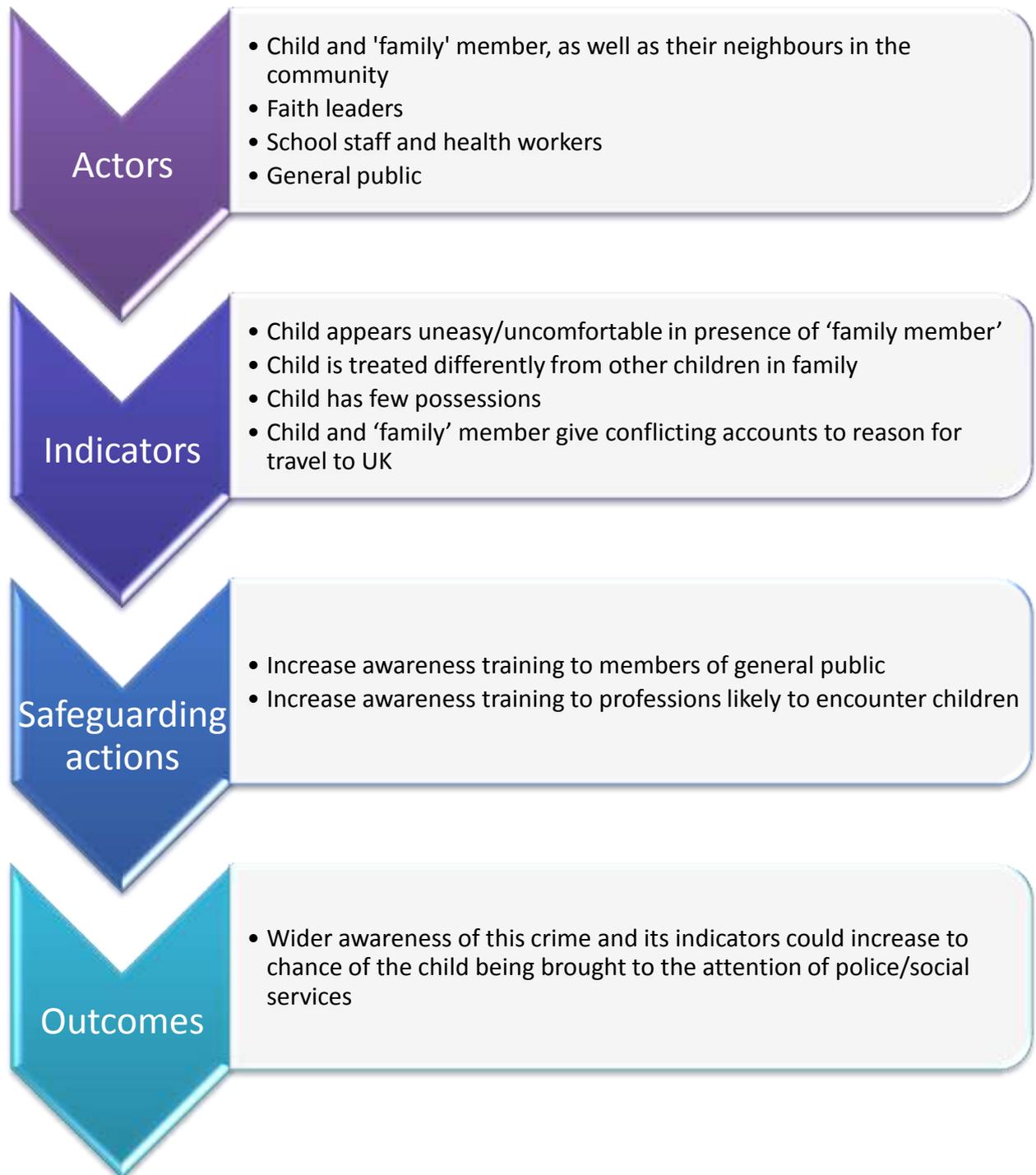
**STAGE FOUR ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child and ‘family’ member are in transit to UK***



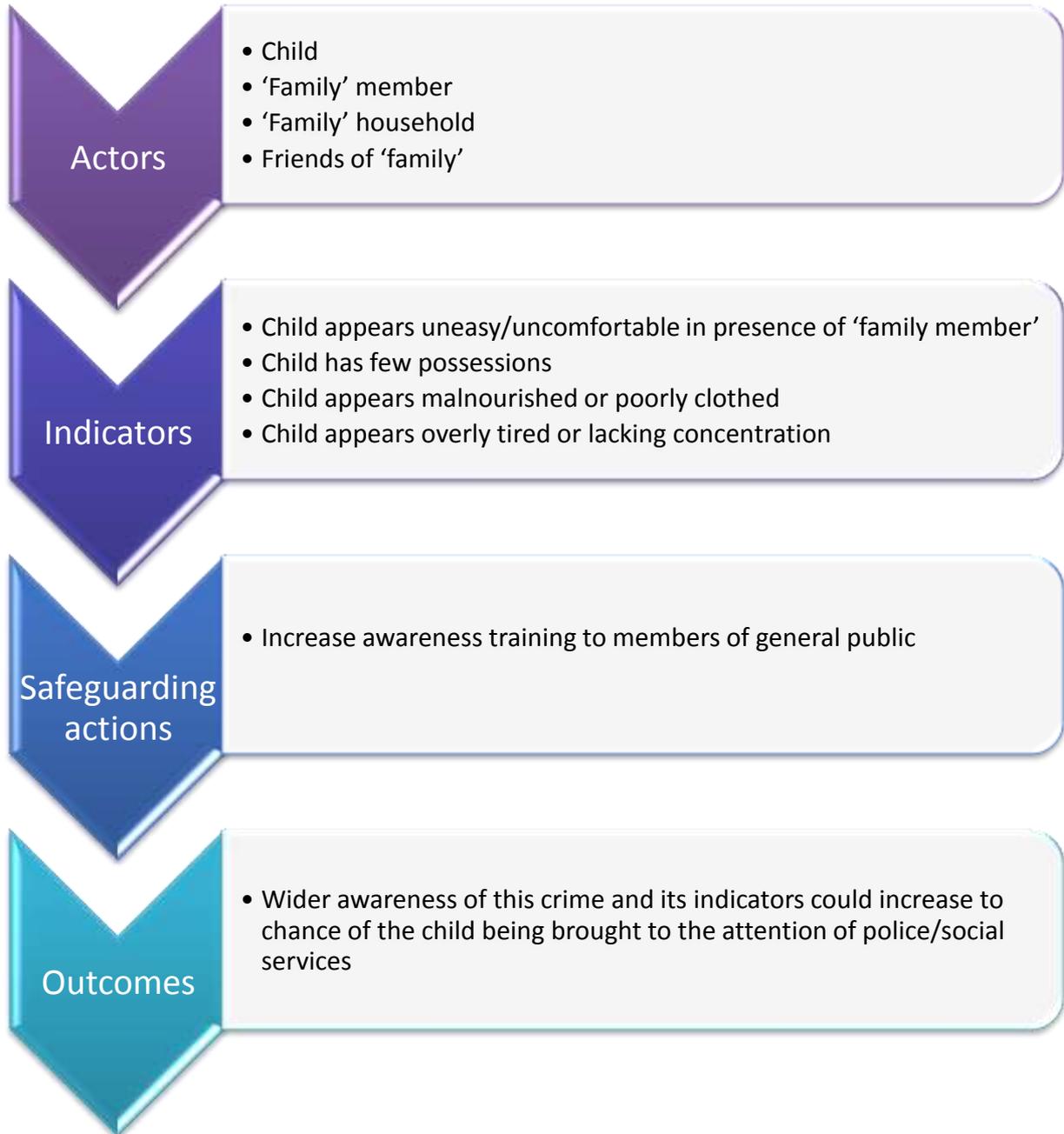
**STAGE FIVE ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child and ‘family’ member present at UK border controls***



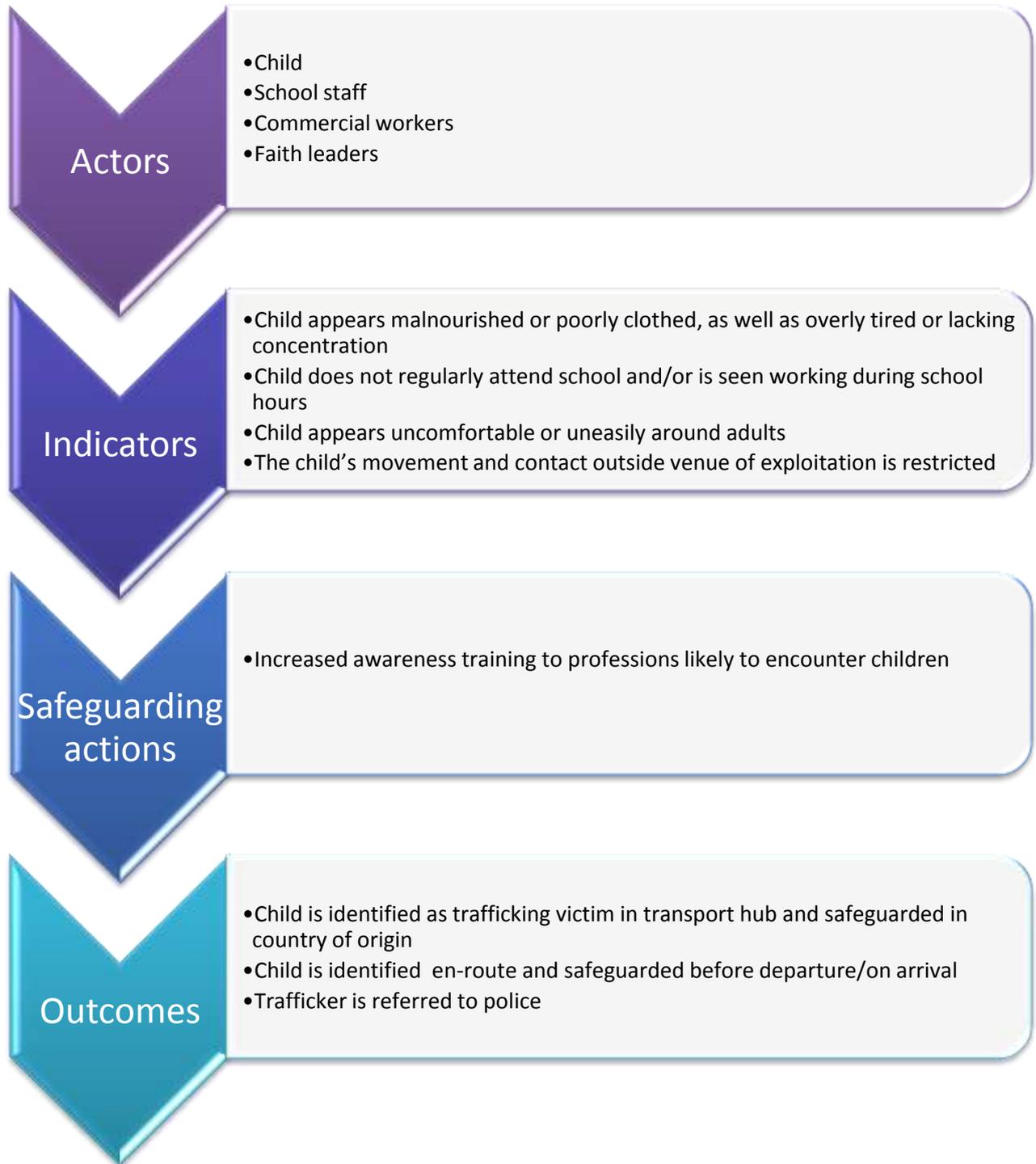
**STAGE SIX ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child and 'family' member arrive in local community***



**STAGE SEVEN ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child is placed in domestic servitude***



**STAGE EIGHT ACTIVITY: *vulnerable child has limited social engagement***



## Conclusion

The report has demonstrated that the non-commercial exploitation of children in a residential setting does occur. However the inability of law enforcement to identify such cases makes it difficult to assess the extent to which the crime takes place. From the responses received from police forces and other partners it is clear that, in some instances, domestic servitude can also occur in tandem with the commercial and economic exploitation of that child. This can take the form of forced labour, begging and pretty crime, and sexual exploitation.

On the basis of the case studies presented, it is clear that instances of child abuse through domestic servitude occur throughout the UK, with identified cases presented in this report spanning the length of the country (although specific locations have been removed from the case studies to protect the identity of the victim). However what is not clear is the extent of this form of abuse, leading to claims that 'the very lack of information is itself a cause for concern' (ECPAT, 2009: 46).

During the data collection phase, many of the responses obtained from law enforcement and NGOs had to be excluded as they referred to cases of a commercial nature or where the domestic servitude element of the abuse was secondary to commercial exploitation. However, as demonstrated throughout this paper, many content-rich examples of domestic servitude abuse were supplied by respondents which allowed for trends and characteristics of this form of abuse to be identified and profiled.

Through the case studies collected, it has been identified that hidden children are often brought, predominantly from African and Asian countries, to the UK by adults claiming to be an 'aunt' or 'uncle', though evidence suggests that often these adults are not biologically related to the child. Despite this, the child has been briefed to describe the relationship as such, if questioned by an authority figure such as an immigration official or local authority staff.

Before, and during, the journey to the UK the child may be under the impression they are coming to the UK for a 'better life' or better education, though many cases have been identified where the victim was aware they were coming to the UK to

legitimately work in the home. Once they arrive in the UK, however, the victim will be made to carry out domestic chores within the abuser's household, including (but not limited to) cooking, cleaning, and taking care of other children in the home. Often the child will be aware they are treated differently than the other children and that they are being exploited but feel powerless to act as they do not understand their rights in the UK. This fact is often compounded by misinformation given by the abusers who may claim they will be deported or arrested if they tell anyone of their abuse. Should this prove ineffective, violence against the victim may be used to ensure compliance.

Alternatively victims may not believe they are being exploited in this manner as they would be expected to carry out domestic chores if they were back in their own country. This may also prove a factor is dissuading victims from reporting to authorities.

In the majority of cases, contact with state authorities will be limited – thus the 'hidden' nature of the abuse – with victims unlikely to attend school or have access to other children outside of the home. A deliberate attempt to keep the victim hidden reduces the risk to the abuser of being identified. It is therefore plausible to suggest that victims of domestic servitude are more likely to have contact with private sector individuals such as shop workers or other members of the public encountered as they carry out their domestic chores. Members of the public may prove effective in identifying unknown victims. Through raising the awareness of domestic servitude in the consciousness of the general public and providing details of the services where they can report suspected abuse, unknown victims may be located in a more effective manner.

The data and analysis in this report demonstrates that this type of child abuse can be found in the UK, although the 'hidden' nature makes it difficult to quantify the true extent and scale of domestic servitude. The following recommendations are intended to both assist in the identification of further cases and in the safeguarding of child victims.

## Recommendations

- As identified in this report, the availability of data relating to domestic servitude cases is limited. A specific classification/category of 'domestic servitude' should be designed into the intelligence systems of law enforcement agencies to order to allow the collation and recording of data in a more coordinated manner.
- Given the often limited exposure to state authorities/ services, an awareness campaign, aimed at members of the public and faith/community leaders, should be devised highlighting the issue of exploitation within the home. Whilst the state may have limited contact with a hidden child, there will be adults (family friends, acquaintances, shop workers) who come into contact with victims in the course of their domestic servitude.
- Increased training should be provided to law enforcement and social services outlining the characteristics and 'telltale' signs of non-commercial child abuse – this is aimed at redressing the bias toward commercial exploitation.
- Social workers and other local authority staff must be aware of the emotional needs of rescued child victims and conscious of the distress caused to the victim based on fear and uncertainty.
- The existence of dedicated child trafficking resources, such as CTAIL, should be disseminated to law enforcement and local authority staff to ensure they are aware of the expert resources available.
- The legislation and management of Private Fostering Arrangements requires further examination as the current system places too much emphasis on the fosterer rather than the local authority to register these arrangements. Increased awareness and penalties for non-registration should be considered.
- Whilst not suitable in identifying all cases of domestic servitude, an audit of school registers, as trialled in one local authority area, has been successful in

identifying previously unregistered Private Fostering Arrangements. Further evaluation of this method should be undertaken with a view to rolling out to additional council areas.

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**Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre**  
33 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1V 2WG  
[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)