

**September 2019**

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## **About the RCPCH**

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) is responsible for training and examining paediatricians. The College has over 19,500 members in the UK and internationally and sets standards for professional and postgraduate education. We work to transform child health through knowledge, research and expertise, to improve the health and wellbeing of infants, children and young people across the world.

As RCPCH Scotland's expertise lies in child health, the areas that we are able to respond to in this consultation are limited therefore the following statement is focused on Area 2 the Duty to notify in regards to children.

## **Our position**

All those involved in the care of children and young people have a duty to protect and support vulnerable children. Therefore all services that provide a paediatric service must employ those who have the required competencies in identification, assessment, and both multi-disciplinary and multiagency management of all forms of child maltreatment. The multidisciplinary competencies required for all health care staff at all levels are defined in an intercollegiate competencies document, available from <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/safeguarding-children-young-people-roles-competencies>.

Human trafficking is a form of child abuse<sup>i</sup> and as a result all professionals should follow existing child protection procedures. It is key that the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act 2015 is closely aligned to current procedures for child protection, including in determining the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals. Reporting of possible trafficked children, following these procedures, would take the form of an Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD). IRD's are based on information sharing principles, and each agency (Police, social work and healthcare professionals) meets in order to support the assessment of whether a child under the age of 18 is at risk of or suffering harm, in this case from Human trafficking. We recommend that this is included as part of the duty to notify procedure.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The process for identification and reporting child human trafficking should be closely aligned to existing child protection procedure.
2. Guidance published alongside the bill should include a link to the RCPCH refugee and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people webpage, available from <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/improving-child-health/child-protection/refugee-and-unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-cyp/refugee-and-una>. This includes information and support for paediatricians in the assessment and management of children and young people of refugee background, with links to key external information and resources.

3. Guidance should also include a link to <http://www.uaschealth.org/> which includes key documents, templates, tools and clinical guidance used to support the health needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children population. Many of these resources have been developed by subject matter experts.



**Dr Marianne Cochrane**  
**Chair of RCPCH Child Protection Scotland Committee**

For further information about any aspect of this consultation response, please contact Louise Slorance, RCPCH Scotland at [louise.slorange@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:louise.slorange@rcpch.ac.uk)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/>