



Home Office

National Referral Mechanism Statistics

Quarter 2 2019 – April to June

Statistical Bulletin HOSB 16/19

August 2019

Further Information

This statistical bulletin gives a summary of the number of **potential** victims of modern slavery referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from the 1 April to 30 June 2019 (Quarter 2).

Data presented in this publication were previously published by the National Crime Agency (NCA), prior to transfer of NRM decision-making responsibilities to the Home Office Single Competent Authority (SCA) in April 2019, as part of the [NRM Reform Programme](#). Previous publications can be accessed via the NCA [website](#). With this transfer of responsibility, these data are now designated as official statistics and produced in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The NRM statistics publication and other Home Office statistical releases are available from the [Statistics at Home Office](#) pages on the GOV.UK website.

The dates of forthcoming publications are pre-announced and can be found via the [GOV.UK statistical release calendar](#).

Enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at NRMStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk

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This statistical bulletin is produced to the highest professional standards and is free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Crime and Policing Analysis Unit in accordance with the Home Office's [Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#), which covers Home Office policy on revisions and other matters. The Chief Statistician, as Head of Profession, reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office National Statistics products with respect to the [Code](#), being responsible for their timing, content and methodology.

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Introduction

Potential victims of modern slavery in the UK that come to the attention of authorised 'first responder' organisations are referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Authorised 'first responder' organisations include local authorities, specified non-governmental organisations (NGOs), police forces and specified government agencies.

Adults (aged 18 or above) must consent to being referred to the NRM, whilst minors under the age of 18 do not need to give consent to be referred. NRM referrals can also be made for individuals who are adults but were exploited as minors.

Once referred to the NRM, the Single Competent Authority (SCA) within the Home Office is responsible for making a 'reasonable grounds' decision on whether or not an individual could be a victim of modern slavery. Adults who are given a positive 'reasonable grounds' decision have access to support (including accommodation, subsistence, legal aid and counselling) until a 'conclusive grounds' decision on their case is made. Minors are supported by local authorities. Adults with a positive 'conclusive grounds' decision are currently entitled to a further 45 days of support to allow them to 'move on' from NRM support whilst those with a negative decision receive 9 days of support. Several improvements to the NRM have been committed to as part of the [NRM Reform Programme](#) and are in the process of being implemented.

Further information regarding the NRM process can be found [here](#).

Data presentation

Data tables supporting this publication are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-2-2019-april-to-june>

All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point.

It is important to note that the statistics presented in this publication relate to the number of **potential** victims of modern slavery that have been referred to the NRM.

The statistics provided are taken from a live management information system and based on the situation as at 12 July 2019 when an extract was taken from the system. The NRM data used in this report are subject to change and should be **considered as provisional** as not all cases will have been concluded. The figures presented here may differ from previous or future reports as new information comes to light and cases are updated accordingly.

Police force data provided in associated reference tables are based on the location of the police force that received the NRM referral. Each referral is screened against the criteria

below to identify the responsible geographic police force. Once identified, the referral is transmitted within one working day to the relevant Force Intelligence Bureau, or stipulated point of receipt within the force for action.

Criteria applied to identify the relevant police force:

- The force has acted as first responder, or the referral indicates that the force is already involved in the recording/investigation of the potential modern slavery human trafficking offences; **or**
- the potential victim has been exploited within the force area; **or**
- the potential victim has been exploited abroad, or at an unknown location and the victim's address at time of referral is within the force area; **or**
- the potential victim has been exploited abroad or at an unknown location and they have presented to another first responder within the force area.

Consultation on future NRM statistical publications

As part of the [NRM Reform Programme](#), a new digital case management system for the NRM is set to be introduced in autumn 2019. As such, the format of future NRM data and associated publications is subject to change to adapt to the new digital case management system. Additionally, following the transfer of the responsibility for publishing the NRM statistics from the NCA to the Home Office, we are looking to gather views and opinions on how the publication of future NRM statistics could be improved and adapted to best meet user needs. Interested parties can register their interest in this consultation by emailing: NRMStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Key statistics

- Between 1 April and 30 June 2019, 2,320 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM; an 8% increase from the previous quarter and a 40% increase from the same quarter in 2018.
- The 2,320 potential victims were of 84 different nationalities with individuals from the UK, Albania and Vietnam being the three most common nationalities referred.
- Around 6 in 10 (1,336) of referrals were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as adults, with the remainder (984) claiming they were exploited as minors.
- The most common type of exploitation for both adults and minors was labour. This category includes criminal exploitation.
- 622 of the potential victims referred during this period claimed that the exploitation took place overseas only, whilst 1,419 claimed that it occurred in the UK. A small number (146) were referred for exploitation in both the UK and overseas, whilst 133 had no location of exploitation identified.
- Around 9 in 10 (2,102) referrals were transferred to police forces in England for investigation. Police Scotland received 106 referrals, 85 were received by Welsh police forces and the Police Service of Northern Ireland received 27 referrals.

National Referral Mechanism Statistics

In the second quarter of 2019 (1 April to 30 June), the NRM received 2,320 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery. This represents an 8% increase in referrals compared with the previous quarter of 2019¹ (1 January to 31 March) and a 40% increase from the same quarter (1 April to 30 June 2018) the previous year. This continues the upward trend in referrals since the third quarter of 2016 (Figure 1, reference Table 1), which is thought to be a result of increased awareness of the NRM process.

The majority (1,419) of individuals referred to the NRM claimed they were exploited in the UK only, whilst 27% (622) claimed to have been exploited overseas only (reference Table 2).

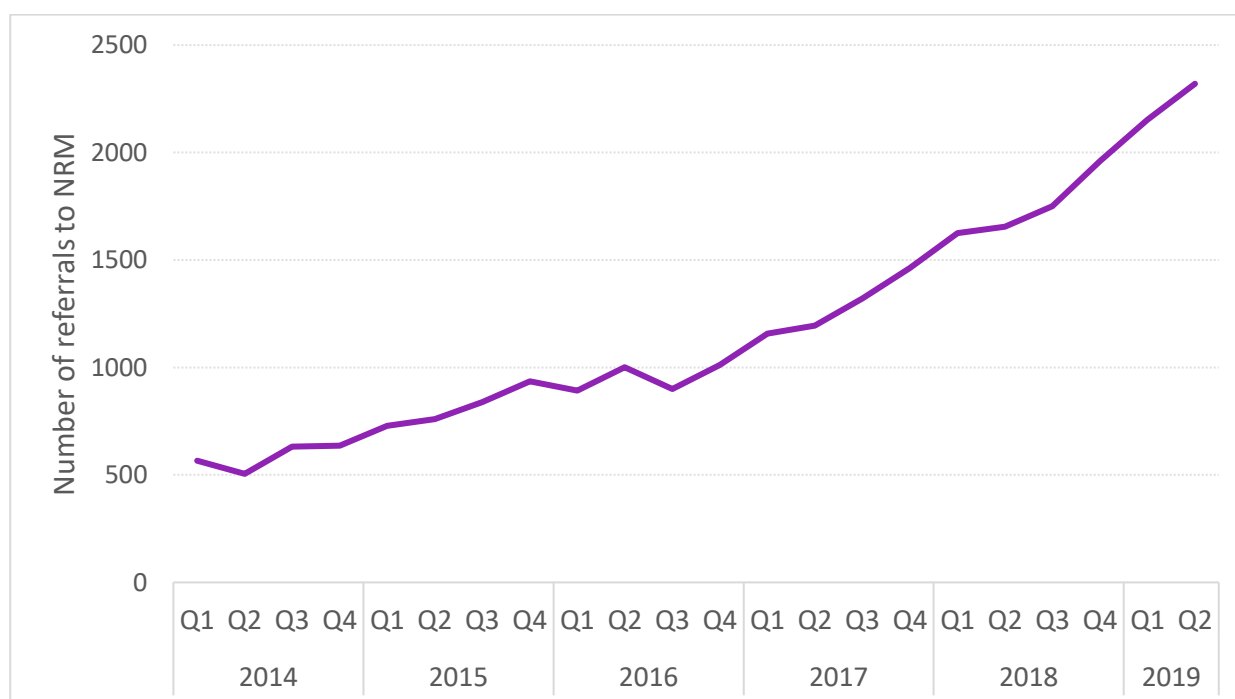


Figure 1: Number of NRM referrals per quarter

As reported in the previous quarterly publication by the NCA, *National Referral Mechanism Statistics Quarter 1 2019 – January to March 2019*, the new Single Competent Authority (SCA) within the Home Office was established to handle all NRM referrals from 29 April 2019 onwards. From this date, the SCA replaced the competent authorities in the NCA Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and Immigration Enforcement. As such, of the 2,320 referrals received in the second quarter of 2019, the majority (1,801) were dealt with by the SCA (Figure 2, reference Table 3).

¹ Values may differ slightly from previous publications due to the identification of duplicate referrals.

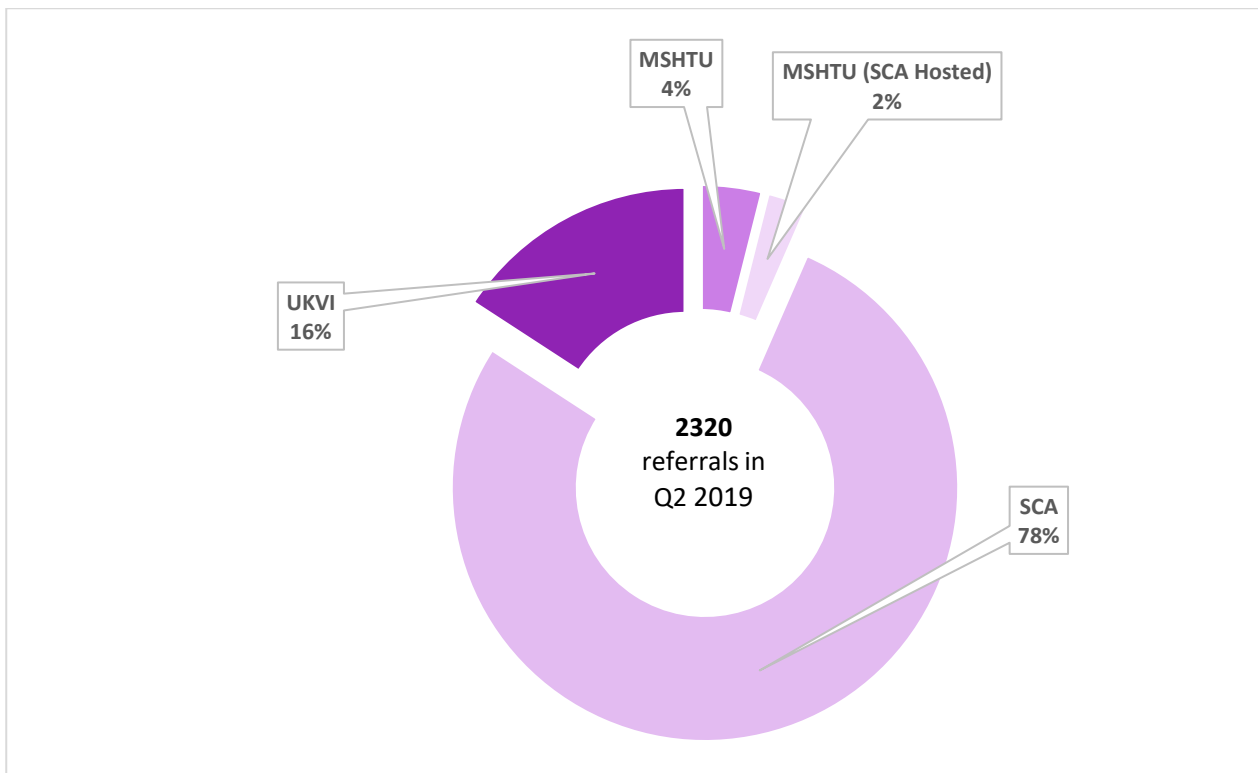


Figure 2: Competent authorities handling NRM referrals²

Exploitation type

Of the 2,320 individuals referred to the NRM, 1 in 3 (757) were female and 2 in 3 (1,562) male.³ There were no referrals of transgender individuals this quarter. Around 6 in 10 (1,336) of the referrals were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as adults, with the remainder (984) claiming they had been exploited as minors (reference Table 4).

In terms of exploitation type, as in the previous quarter, the most common form of exploitation for both adults and minors was labour (Figure 3, reference Table 4). Further information on types of exploitation can be found [here](#).⁴ The increase in the number of referrals overall from the previous quarter of 2019 was driven by an increase in labour exploitation. For those exploited as minors, this was thought to be driven by an increase in 'county lines'⁵ cases.

² MSHTU (Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit), SCA (Single Competent Authority), UKVI (United Kingdom Visas and Immigration). SCA Hosted refers to cases which were transferred from MSHTU to the SCA Shadow team for reasonable grounds decision making, before being returned to MSHTU for the conclusive grounds decision. UKVI includes immigration enforcement referrals.

³ One referral did not have a gender recorded.

⁴ Note that for NRM purposes, criminal exploitation is included in the labour exploitation category.

⁵ 'County lines' is used to describe drug gangs in large cities expanding their reach to small towns. In many cases, vulnerable individuals are exploited to transport substances and mobile phone 'lines' are used to communicate drug orders. Further information: <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

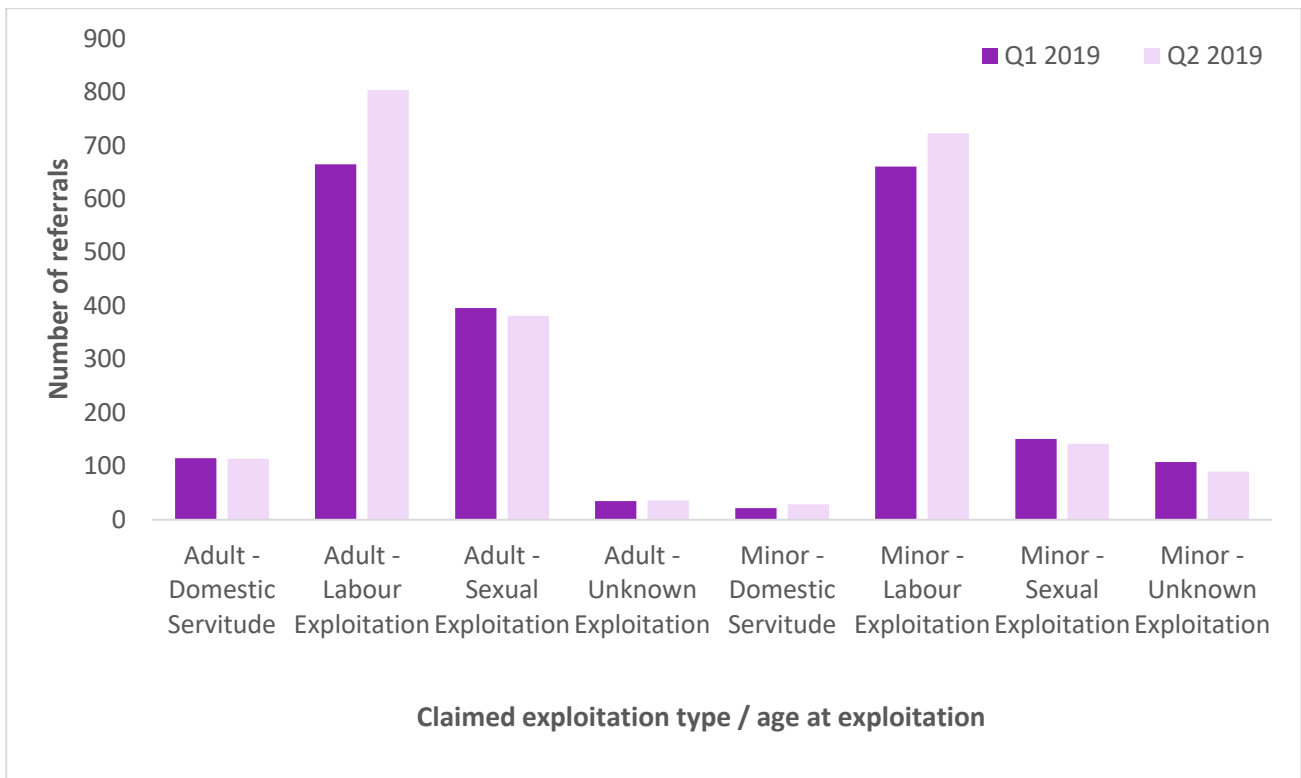


Figure 3: Number of NRM cases by claimed exploitation type, exploited as adults or minors

Nationality of NRM referrals

The potential victims of modern slavery were reported to be of 84 different nationalities.⁶ The most common nationality of all referrals was UK nationals, which accounted for 28% (658) of referrals (Figure 4 and reference Tables 5 to 7).

⁶ One individual did not have their nationality recorded and the nationalities of 10 individuals were classed as unknown.



Figure 4: Number of NRM referrals for the most common nationalities of potential victims (UK, Albania, Vietnam, China and Eritrea account for 64% of referrals)

Location of crime investigation

Most (91%) of the 2,320 NRM referrals were sent to police forces in England (2,102 referrals); 5% (106) were sent to Police Scotland, 4% (85) to police forces in Wales, and 1% (27) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (reference Table 8).

The data presented in reference Table 9 summarise the police force to which the NRM referral passed to support the investigation of criminal activity as appropriate, based on the criteria outlined on page 5 of this bulletin. Almost a third (697) were sent to the Metropolitan Police Service.

Referring agencies

Most referrals into the NRM came from government agencies, which accounted for 41% (959) of all referrals. Of the government agency referrals, most came from UKVI (685) and Home Office Immigration Enforcement (235). Police accounted for 26% (593) of NRM referrals, NGO/third-sector organisations accounted for 10% (242), and local authorities for 23% (526), the majority of which were for minors. See reference Tables 10 to 15, 18, 21, 24 and 27.

Statistical Bulletins are prepared by staff in Home Office Statistics under the National Statistics Code of Practice and can be downloaded from GOV.UK:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics

ISBN: 978-1-78655-882-4

ISSN: 1759-7005



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