



National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK, Quarter 3 2019 – July to September

This statistical bulletin gives a summary of the number of **potential** victims of modern slavery referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from 1 July to 30 September 2019 (Quarter 3).

Key results

Between 1 July and 30 September 2019, 2,808 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM; a **21% increase** from the previous quarter and a 61% increase from the same quarter in 2018.

The 2,808 potential victims were of 91 different nationalities with individuals from the UK, Albania and Vietnam being the three most common nationalities referred, as in the previous quarter.

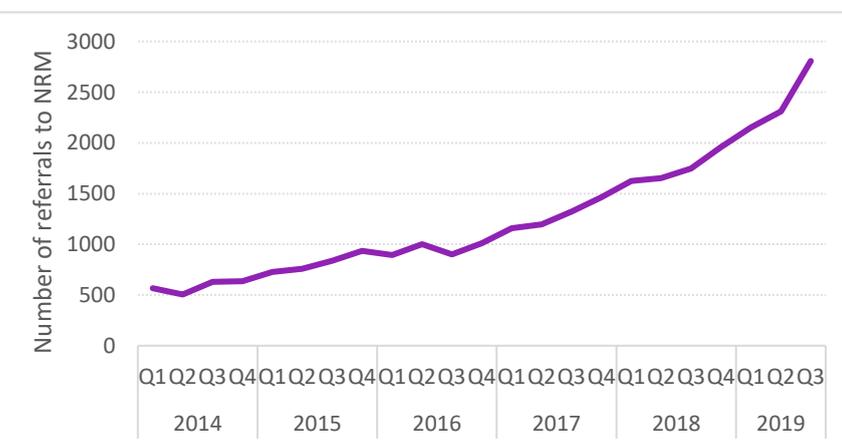
Around 60% (1,633) of referrals were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as adults, with the remainder (1,175) claiming they were exploited as minors.

The most common type of exploitation for both adults and minors was labour exploitation. This category includes criminal exploitation.

Of the 2,808 potential victims, 620 referred during this period claimed that the exploitation took place overseas only, whilst 1,831 claimed that it occurred in the UK only. A small number (176) were referred for exploitation in both the UK and overseas, whilst 181 had no location of exploitation identified.

Around 90% (2,548) of referrals were transferred to police forces in England for investigation. Police Scotland received 150 referrals, Welsh police forces received 96 and the Police Service of Northern Ireland received 14.

Number of quarterly NRM referrals from 2014 to 2019



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1 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 exploited as minors but who are now adults.

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 nine 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

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 October 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

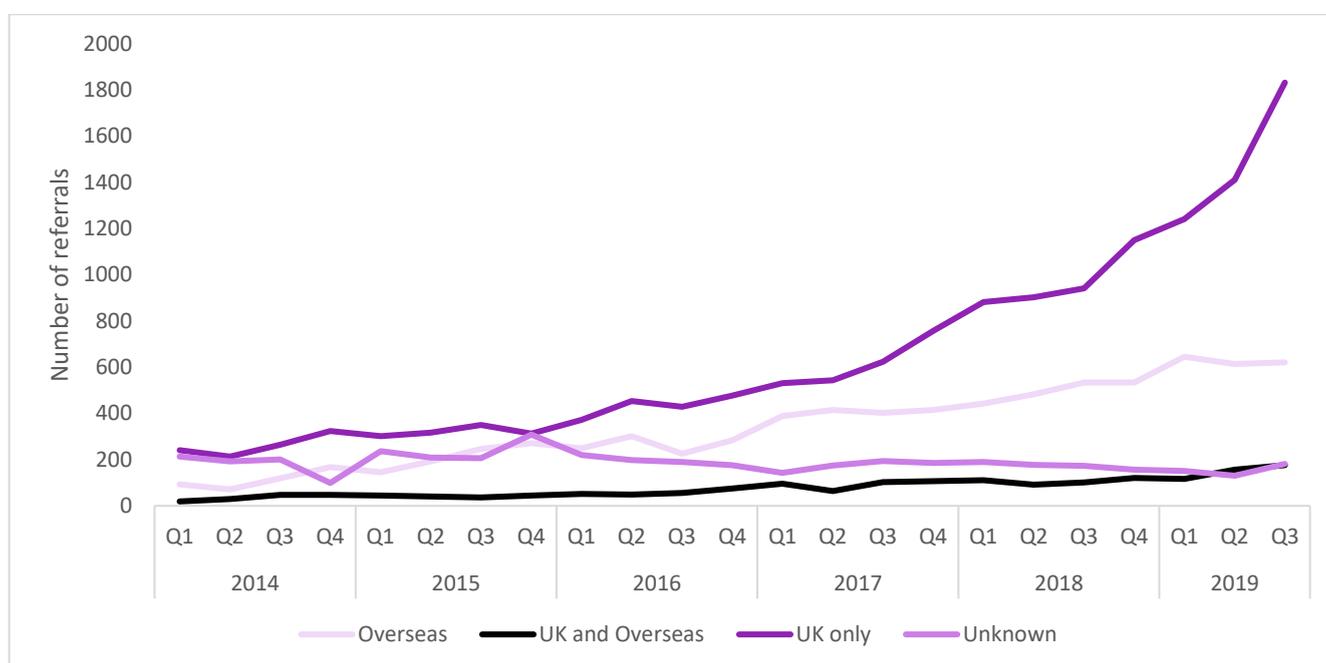
As part of the NRM Reform Programme, a new digital system for the NRM is being rolled out. The online referral form was launched with all first responders at the end of August 2019, and the case management system for the NRM is set to be introduced soon. As such, the format of future NRM data and associated publications is subject to change to adapt to the new digital system. Additionally, following the transfer of the responsibility for publishing the NRM statistics from the National Crime Agency (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.

2 National Referral Mechanism Statistics

In the third quarter of 2019, the NRM received 2,808 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery. This represents a 21% increase in referrals compared with the previous quarter of 2019 (1 April to 30 June 2019)¹ and a 61% increase from the same quarter the previous year (1 July to 30 September). This continues the upward trend in referrals since the third quarter of 2016 (reference Table 1), which is thought to be a result of increased awareness of modern slavery and the NRM process.

The majority (1,831) of individuals referred to the NRM claimed they were exploited in the UK only, whilst 22% (620) claimed to have been exploited overseas only (reference Table 2; Figure 1). The increase in NRM referrals is largely driven by the continued rise in identification of potential victims that were exploited in the UK only.

Figure 1: Number of quarterly NRM referrals by location of exploitation, 2014 to 2019



Source: Single Competent Authority

Notes: Excludes data pre-2014.

EXPLOITATION TYPE

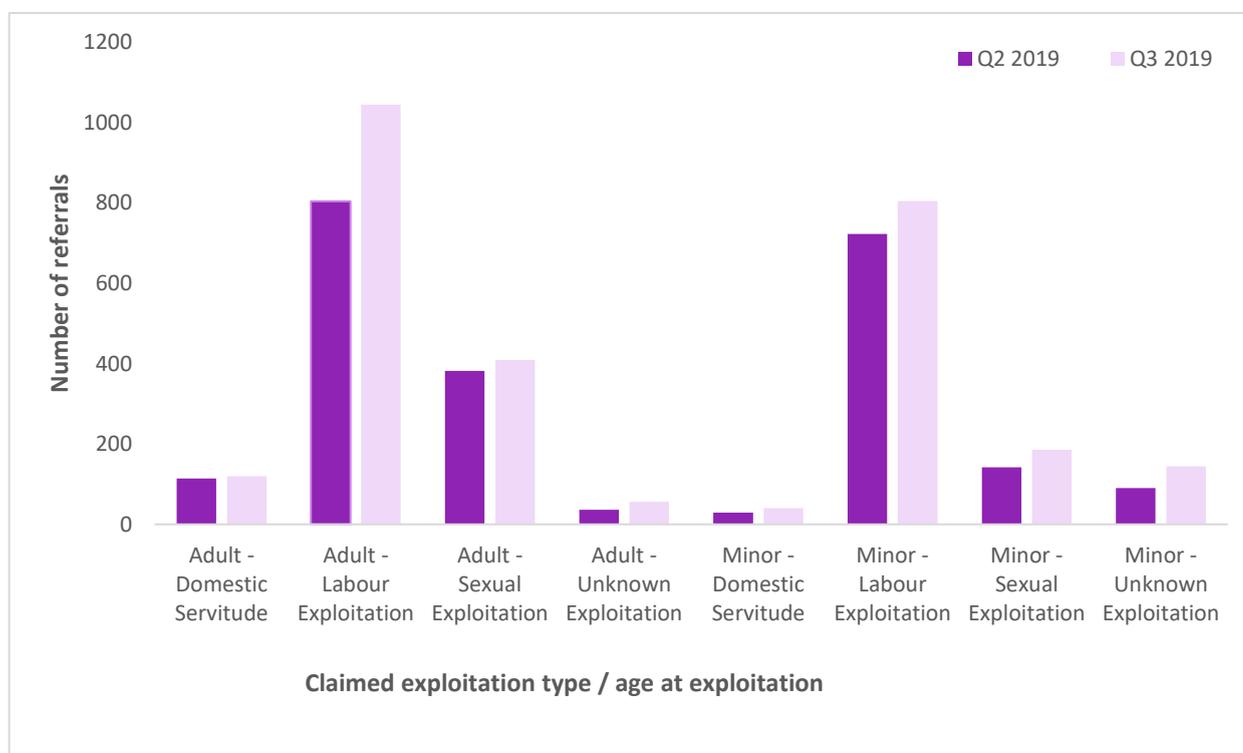
Of the 2,808 individuals referred to the NRM, around one-third were female (851), two-thirds were male (1,956) and one referral was for a transgender individual. Around 60% (1,633) of the referrals were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as adults, with the remainder (1,175) claiming to have been exploited as minors (reference Table 3).

As in the previous quarter, the most common form of exploitation for both adults and minors was labour (Figure 2, reference Table 3). This quarter, there were three referrals for potential victims of organ harvesting. Further information on types of exploitation can be found [here](#). The increase in the number of referrals from the previous quarter of 2019 was driven by an increase in the identification of labour exploitation. For those exploited as

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

minors, this was thought to be driven by an increase in the identification of ‘county lines’ cases.²

Figure 2: Number of NRM cases by claimed exploitation type, exploited as adults or minors, Q2 and Q3 2019.³



NATIONALITY OF NRM REFERRALS

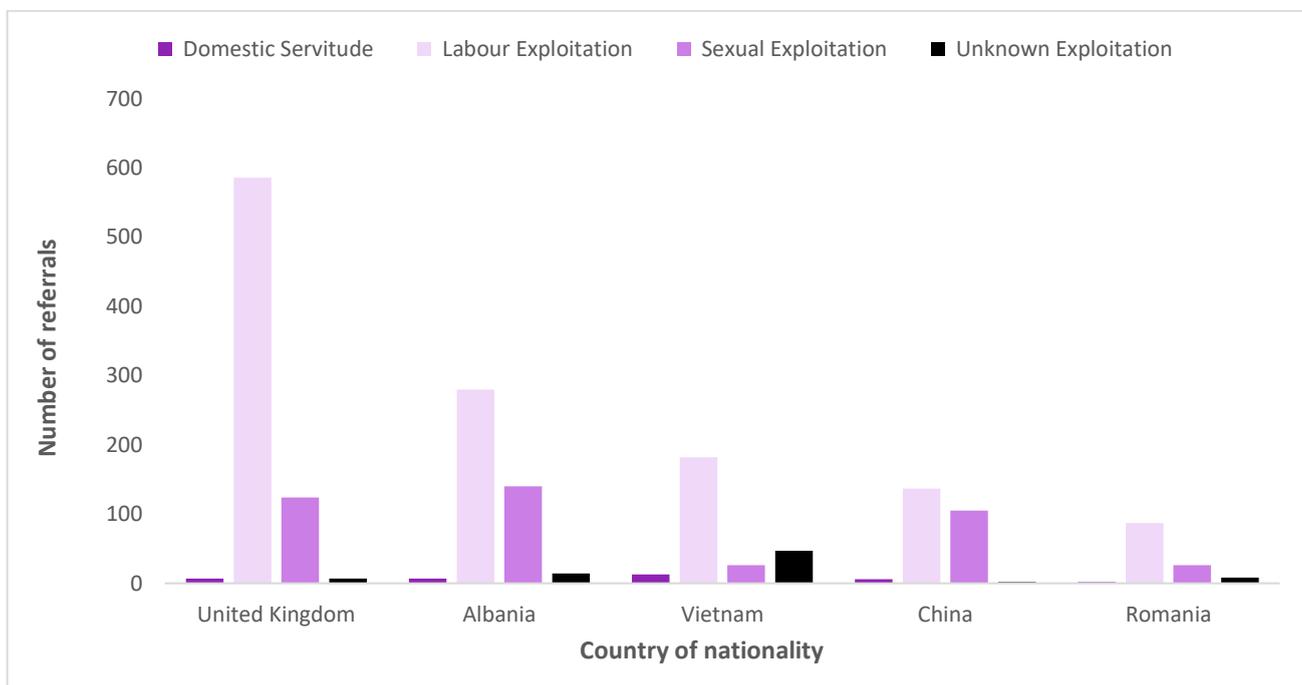
The potential victims of modern slavery were reported to be of 91 different nationalities.⁴ The most common nationality of all referrals was UK nationals, which accounted for 26% (724) of all potential victims (Figure 3 and reference Tables 4 to 6).

² ‘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>

³ 3 referrals for organ harvesting in adults in Q3 2019 are not shown.

⁴ Two individuals did not have a nationality recorded and the nationality of 15 individuals was not known.

Figure 3: Number of NRM referrals for the most common nationalities of potential victims in Q3 2019 (UK, Albania, Vietnam, China and Romania account for 64% of referrals).⁵



LOCATION OF CRIME INVESTIGATION

Most (91%) of the 2,808 NRM referrals were sent to police forces in England (2,548); 5% (150) were sent to Police Scotland, 3% (96) were sent to Welsh police forces and <1% (14) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (reference Table 7).

The data presented in reference Tables 8 and 13 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 2 of this bulletin. Almost one-third (847) were sent to the Metropolitan Police Service.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Around 43% (1,205) of referrals into the NRM came from government agencies. Of these, most came from UK Visas and Immigration (595) and Home Office Immigration Enforcement (537; a 129% increase to the 235 referrals in Q2). Police accounted for 26% (727) of NRM referrals, NGO/Third-sector organisations accounted for 8% (236) and local authorities 23% (640), the majority of which were for minors. See reference Table 9.⁶

⁵ Referrals for two potential victims of organ harvesting (Vietnamese and Romanian nationalities) are not shown.

⁶ A breakdown of local authority referrals was not initially provided in the previous quarter (Q2) pending a data disclosure review. This review has now been completed, concluding that the risk of disclosure was minimal. As such, data on referrals by local authorities have now been provided.

3 Further information

Data presented in this publication were previously published by the NCA, prior to transfer of NRM decision-making responsibilities to SCA in April 2019, as part of the NRM Reform Programme. Publications prior to July 2019 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.

Data tables for further analysis can be found at [National Referral Mechanism statistics quarter 3 2019: July to September: data tables](#).

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.

Other related publications

National Referral Mechanism Statistics Quarter 2 2019 – April to June

Feedback and enquiries

We welcome feedback on statistics releases. If you have any feedback or enquiries about this publication, please contact NRMStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk.

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