

RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR
THOSE WHO CAN'T...

Child Trafficking

Hospitality Sector voices respond to an International Challenge: A study.

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"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"
(Martin Luther King).

Children caught in worlds of abuse, human trafficking and sexual exploitation, matter. They mattered yesterday, they matter today and they will matter even more tomorrow. Children, globally, are our greatest resource, we remain their only hope.

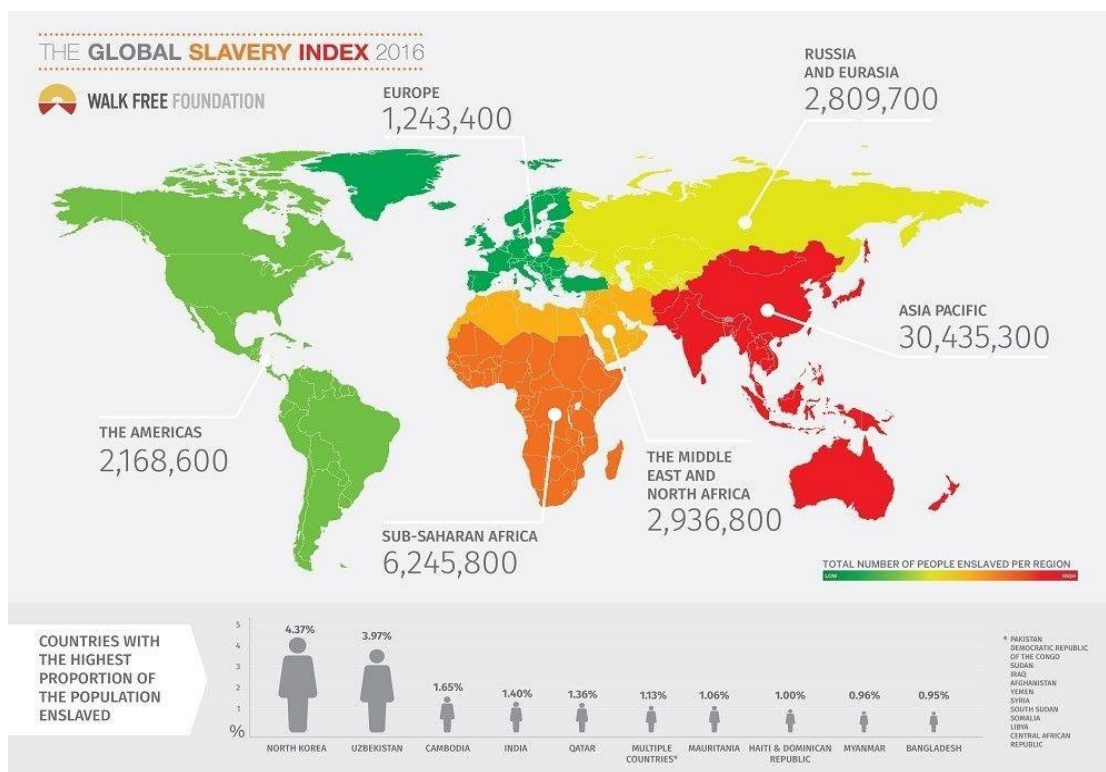
Introduction to MECPATHS

An opportunity to attend a United Nations conference on the Status of Women in New York in 2013 was presented to two members of The Congregation of The Sisters of Mercy. Their learnings throughout the conference raised flags, rang alarm bells and challenged their understandings of the world around them. Exploring the experiences of many whose lives had been so damaged, fractured and changed by the external forces of Human Trafficking, a clear call to respond developed with a particular focus on the hospitality sector and networks of hotels whose properties were being used as thoroughfares for the vulnerable. "We knew we had to do something to respond. The hotel sector seemed the most obvious. We were aware that hotels were being used around the world as temporary locations to hide children. We wanted to do something in Ireland to help prevent this." (Sr. Mary Ryan, co-founder, MECPATHS).

'Mercy Efforts to Counter Child Prostitution and Trafficking in the Hospitality Sector' (MECPATHS) was founded in early 2013 as this response. As the project advanced and strengthened partnerships evolved, as the project scope further-developed and learnings increased, it was arrived upon that the term 'child prostitution' was not suitable, as it suggested the presence of consent, from children, to be engaged in prostitution. This is not and can never be accepted as a reality. Children do not have a choice to enter prostitution and so the term does not exist in reality. Additionally, the core team, through exploration of international experience, felt that the phrase 'Trafficking in the Hospitality Sector', suggested the direct involvement of the hospitality sector in the act of trafficking. This was not demonstrated to be the case, particularly in Ireland, where MECPATHS' work takes

place, and where many positive relationships had been forged with the hospitality sector to counter child trafficking. Therefore, in 2017, the acronym MECPATHS was reworked to its current-day meaning and a wider focus on a child protection and prevention Mercy Efforts for Child Protection Against Trafficking with the Hospitality Sector.

Modern-day slavery defined, delivers us to darkened corners of the world where individuals find themselves trapped in environments of abuse, isolation, control and capital-gains where an estimated \$151 Billion is generated annually through the sale and purchase of human life. A world where human life has developed as a commodity and underground illicitness has delivered the cost of purchasing another human to a mere \$90 (Saheed, 2017). In 2018 we explore a constructed, modern world where every 30 seconds, an individual victim is lead into the world of modern day slavery and one which has an estimated global population of 45 million people (Global Slavery Index, 2016).



(Source: Global Slavery Index, 2016)

Slavery began in the early centuries, influenced by trade and the demand for manual labour where individuals were moved by force with emerging contributory factors including civil war, economic malaise, inequality and climate change (Shelley and Lee, 2007). The first modern legal definition of slavery appeared in the 1926 League of Nations Slavery Convention as the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised (Allain, 2009).

As the 21st Century unfolds, we find ourselves more deeply entrenched in worlds of slavery and modern day abuses. The very definitions of slavery expand with shifting boundaries, borders and newer, daily examples of exploitations emerge. These abuses which affect the wider world have come to be defined by internationally to include:

- “ownership or control over another's life, coercion and the restriction of movement and by the fact that someone is not free to leave” (UNESCO, 2017)
- “traditional practices of forced labour, such as vestiges of slavery or slave-like practices, and various forms of debt bondage, as well as new forms of forced labour that have emerged in recent decades, such as human trafficking” (ILO, 2012, ILC.101/III/1B, para. 272).

Forms of modern day slavery include, but are not limited to; Forced Labour, Bonded Labour, Domestic Servitude, Sex Trafficking, Forced Marriage and Child Labour.

While global leaders emerge with regular and, often conflicting, definitions, it has been suggested that “the greatest key global challenge to countering modern day slavery rests with the failure of policy makers to identify individual and differing forms of slavery (Efrat, 2015) but instead to consider all forms, to be as one.

As we locate ourselves in a modern Ireland, public perception continues to be guided by an out of date understanding that modern slavery is a phenomenon which occurs elsewhere, in

worlds where daily life is underpinned by extreme poverty, common at home in majority world countries and a lasting concern for communities overseas. Modern day slavery is at home in Ireland, many of us encounter it on a daily basis. It is quite simply, hidden in plain sight. It is not 'a far-away' phenomenon. We cannot pretend it is, any longer. Between 2009 and 2016 alone, 512 victims of Human Trafficking were identified in Ireland. 143 were children (AHTU, 2018) with 52% trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Challenges resting with all statistics in relation to Human Trafficking, differ no less in Ireland- under-reporting clouds statistics, the transient nature of those being trafficked lessens safeguarding and fear amongst those rescued reduces prosecutions.

As we move to determine the definition of child trafficking in a global context, we are fixed to remember the internationally accepted age of a child is 'under 18 years of age'. Whilst this legally regarded age does fluctuate according to country of origin, for the purposes of our discussion here, it shall remain as 18 and under.

A child is considered having been trafficked if they have been moved within a country, across borders, by force or not, with the sole intent and purpose, to exploit the child (UNICEF, 2017). Whilst movement is considered integral to the action of trafficking, the length of distance or the inclusion of a border crossing is not. Any movement of a child for the purpose of exploitation is an act of trafficking. It is widely recognised that any person, child or adult, who has played a part in the movement of another individual, for the purpose of exploitation is regarded as a trafficker. Debate rests around consent offered by adults who have been trafficked and whether or not their movement is considered trafficking if they were made aware of their destination and purpose upon arrival. A child, under duress, is not in a position to offer informed consent, in any country, in any regard.

The Department of Justice, USA (2017) defines Child Trafficking as the recruitment, harbouring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a minor... and offenders of this crime who are commonly referred to as traffickers or pimps who target vulnerable children and gain control over them using a variety of manipulative methods.

Methods of manipulation extend far beyond the text-book, Hollywood-developed, environment of family.

Despite comprehensive legislation and initiatives by the Irish government, there is a great need for wider community awareness in Ireland on the issue of human trafficking as a form of modern-day slavery. With the publication of the 2nd National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland (Dept. Justice, 2016) a detailed overview of awareness raising efforts was outlined, with a concerted effort to increase understanding and wider awareness within professional bodies exemplified by the Gardaí and the NGO sector who have invested considerable resources focused on educating young people within school networks and community groups. A survey conducted by the network of Soroptomist Ireland (2016) suggested that 65% of those engaged with were of the opinion that human trafficking is “fairly” widespread in Ireland today, with 93% advising their awareness of safe reporting procedures through the Gardaí. There, however, remains a lack of clarity and understanding amongst members of the public and wider community which needs immediate addressing.

The focus of this report is to explore Modern Day Slavery, Internationally and Nationally, to offer an overview of Human Trafficking, with a particular focus on the exploitation of children and to explore the international landscape of Trafficking which can take place through hotel and private accommodations internationally. It will also offer an insight into the vulnerabilities which exist in relation to the causation of Human Trafficking and will guide the reader through opportunities to support awareness raising whilst exploring direct feedback from the staff of Irish and International Hospitality networks.

The Irish response:

- The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 commenced operation on 7 June 2008 which made it illegal to recruit, transfer, transport another person into/out of the state for the purposes of trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation. It also made the removal of organs illegal. The law provides for penalties up to life in prison and also a fine for persons who traffic or attempt to traffick for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation.
- The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking Amendment Act) 2013 was enacted on 9th July 2013 to facilitate full compliance with the measure set out in Directive 2011/36/EU of The European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA by criminalising trafficking for the purpose of forced begging and trafficking for other criminal activities. It also contains provisions to “better facilitate children giving evidence in criminal prosecutions by increasing from 14 to 18 years the upper age threshold for out-of-court video recording of a complainant’s evidence and by making provision for video recording the evidence of a child (other than an accused) who is under the age of 18 years” (Dept. Justice, 2016)
- The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 makes it an offence to organise or knowingly facilitate the entry into, transit through, or exit from Ireland of a child for the purpose of the child’s sexual Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland - 12 - exploitation or to provide accommodation for the child for such a purpose while in Ireland. It is also an offence to take, detain or restrict the personal liberty of a child for the purpose of the child’s sexual exploitation, to use a child for such purpose or to organise or knowingly facilitate such taking, detaining, restricting or use.
- Section 1 of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act (2008) amends the 1998 Act by extending the definition of a child from a person under the age of 17 years to a person under the age of 18 years. The maximum penalty on conviction is raised from 14 years to life imprisonment.

- Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act (2000) make it an offence for a person to organise or knowingly facilitate the entry into Ireland of another person whom that person knows or has reasonable cause to believe is an illegal immigrant. The penalty on conviction on indictment for this offence is a maximum of 10 years imprisonment or an unlimited fine or both. This Act is used to prosecute offences which occurred before the enactment of the 2008 Act.
- Sexual Offences (Jurisdiction) Act (1996) allows for the prosecution of an Irish citizen, or a person ordinarily resident in the State, who commits an act in another country which is a sexual offence against a child in that other country and if done within the State, would constitute a sexual offence against a child in the State. The penalties, on conviction on indictment, are a maximum fine of £10,000, a maximum of 5 years imprisonment, or both.
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 delivered a shift in the existing legislative provisions. In March 2017, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act came into force in Ireland. The Act's most important focus was on child exploitation, with Part 4 criminalising the purchase of sex while decriminalising the sale of sex.
- Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011/Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 as amended
The Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 amends the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995, and allows the Legal Aid Board to provide victims with legal advice in criminal matters and in particular all through the criminal justice process to ensure that the victim is protected and advised of his/her role as witness. (The 1995 Act permits the Legal Aid Board to give advice in relation to civil matters.) Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland - 13 -
- International Protection Act (2015) was signed into law on 30 December 2015. The new law is a reforming measure and arises from a Government commitment to 'fast track' the enactment of the 'Protection' part of the previously published Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill. The principal purpose of the Act is to reform the system for examining and determining applications for international protection in Ireland through the introduction of a single application procedure. Under the single procedure, an applicant will make only one application, and will have all grounds for seeking international protection permission to remain in the

State examined and determined in one process. The single procedure will replace the current multi-layered and sequential protection application system and is intended to achieve the desired balance in treating asylum seekers with humanity and respect, whilst also ensuring that we have more efficient asylum and immigration procedures and safeguards in place. This reform will simplify and streamline existing arrangements and provide applicants with a final decision on their protection application in a more straightforward and timely fashion. It will also, as a consequence, reduce the length of time that applicants spend in the direct provision system.

The Act is in compliance with the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and with the related EU Directives on asylum procedures and qualification, which Ireland has opted into. The 2015 Act repeals the Refugee Act 1996, as significantly amended, and contains a small number of key amendments to the Immigration Acts of 1999, 2003 and 2004. The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner is replaced by an International Protection Office within the Department of Justice and Equality and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal is replaced by a newly constituted and independent appeals body to be known as the International Protection Appeals Tribunal. Work on preparing for the implementation of the new Act is continuing. Administrative Immigration Arrangements for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking In circumstances in which persons have no legal basis to remain in the State, protection may be granted under the Administrative Immigration Arrangements for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking through the granting of a 60 day recovery and reflection period and/or 6 month renewable temporary residence Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland - 14 - permission, where the trafficked person wishes to assist An Garda Síochána or other relevant authorities in any investigation or prosecution in relation to the alleged trafficking. The Administrative Arrangements were established in June 2008 to coincide with the enactment of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008. These will be put on a statutory basis in future Immigration and Residence legislation (Department of Justice, 2016, pp.15-16).

The Hospitality Sector

According to the World Tourism Organization the number of Global travellers has increased from 25 million in 1950 to 806 million in the mid 2000's. With an increasing ease of access to travel routes, to low cost carriers and less expensive accommodation, it has never been an easier time to travel. As the numbers travelling, availing of accommodation and experiences increase, so too do the challenges which service providers encounter.

As service providers increase their marketing foci, their outreach and their income, their awareness around the trafficking of individuals, through their services, is at a global-low. The transparent nature of those who traffick adults and children is not at the fore and those trapped in worlds of human trafficking are not in a position to raise their own voices to draw attention to themselves. Hoteliers and accommodation providers are involved, consciously or unconsciously, in the world of trafficking and exploitation. From direct research in Ireland, conducted here, accommodation service providers demonstrate themselves to be very unaware of the international relationships between the hospitality sector and traffickers, for exploitation. There remains a clear lack of understanding amongst the hotel sector as to how individuals reach their accommodation services (Carolyn, Lindsay and Victor, 2015).

The US Department of State (2012) has defined sex-trafficking, MECPATHS' focus, to be "the recruitment, harbouring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act" with The International Labour Union identifying 98% of global victims as female.

When we explore the victim of sex-trafficking, globally, we are drawn upon to remember that traffickers prey on the vulnerabilities of those in their environs. They identify key characteristics which make children particularly vulnerable- isolation from responsible adults, poverty, accessibility online, homelessness and cyclical abuse within their own families. It is estimated that the average age a child is accessed for the purposes of trafficking, and sexual exploitation is between 12 and 14 years of age (Barnardos, 2015).

Across The United States, between 2007 and 2015, just 1,434 cases of human trafficking in hotels and motels were recorded. These incidences were recorded by Polaris Hotline, a direct response of which is the provision of Hospitality-wide training to 16,000 members of The Asian American Hotel Owners (Polaris, 2016). The reporting of these experiences, are once again, considered to be a fraction of the reality with hotel staff and management uncertain of the indicators and safe reporting procedures.

In Europe alone, it is estimated that there are over 110,000 individuals trapped in worlds of Modern Day Slavery, within the hotel sector: 93,500 of whom are being exploited sexually, per annum (Shiva Foundation, 2018). These individuals are moved across countries regularly to avoid detection. Their names are altered, their personal documents removed and held by those in charge of the sex-trafficking operations and their final destinations are unknown. These individuals, including children, are exploited daily and for the purpose of sexual gratification. They are landing on Irish shores.

Carolin et al. (2015, p.2) have outlined that “in New York City, 45% of commercially exploited victims were exploited in hotels” and furthermore that “every part of the world, except Antarctica, experiences sex tourism”. With an increased availability of cheap flights and cheap accommodation, as well as online access to the vulnerable, sex tourism has become a ‘holiday of choice’ with 250,000 tourists visiting Asia each year for the purpose of sexually exploiting a child (World Vision Australia, 2009).

-Ireland is not immune-

Who are the Traffickers?

It is widely recognised that those who traffick adults and children fall under four categories: Groups/Organised Gangs, Family Members, Partners/Boyfriends and Pimps. Angelika Molnar (2014), EUROPOL, has described the management of International Crime Gangs in their acquisition of individuals across Europe for the purposes of Human Trafficking,

Internationally “The victims are lured with false promises of a well-paid jobs and it’s only upon arrival that they are told there is no work available and they have to be engaged in marriages. They are kept under control by the traffickers and are exploited as domestic service by the husband but also raped and sexually exploited by fellow nationals of the traffickers.”

Family members whose lives are steeped in abject poverty are recognised as being at high-risk of selling their children into lives of abject poverty and onwardly towards lives in organised sex-trafficking. A study undertaken by Halderchak Chetna Welfare Society (2018) claimed that “parents are selling their children. They are so deep in poverty that they believe they are doing the children a favour for a better life, a better future and a life outside of the village and poverty into which they were born”.

The study further revealed there to be a correlation with the emergence of Western-style Television shows such as ‘The XFactor’ and ‘The Voice’ where children are recruited as part of these shows. The children attend auditions where they are progressed to the next audition which is away from their homes. Receiving parental consent for the children to attend, the children are taken. There is no TV show, there is no bright future ahead but instead, lives in brothels where they are forced to be sexually exploited by hundreds and thousands of men (Halderchak Chetna Welfare Society, 2018).

With the emergence of online dating and relationship apps, the challenge of ‘true identity’ remains a critical cause for concern. Meeting with strangers who demonstrate themselves to be the perfect partner initially is quickly emerging as a very quick, very easy method of identifying a vulnerable member of society and trafficking them for sexual exploitation “traffickers and pimps bait women, by initially making themselves out to be the perfect ‘boyfriend’, and eventually tricking them into the trade. In these cases, traffickers and pimps will say and do all the right things until girls and young women who believe they are in a love with become dependent on their trafficker or pimp, and feel that though they owe them something.” (Webwise, 2017). This method of Trafficking travels through four stages of ‘recruitment; Luring, The Honeymoon Stage, The Coercion and The Exploitation. It is

founded on the reality that people fall in love, that they build positive and strong relationships and following the stage of trust building, the victim is coerced into following the lead of the partner/boyfriend. They are encouraged to engage in activity to demonstrate their love and they find themselves in a full environment of sexual exploitation with “Self-esteem broken... manipulation... threats... isolation..... No one to turn to...” (Das Roy, 2008, p. 2).

With a glorification of ‘Pimp culture’ in the widespread media, it is suggested that pimps perceive the underground sex economy as a low-risk, high-reward enterprise. Pimps and traffickers reported incomes from \$5,000 to \$32,833 a week. (Withers, M., 2017). Pimps feed into the emerging cultural acceptance that ‘boys will be boys’ and that the terminology of ‘pimp’ has been diluted through film, television and online cultural appropriateness. Pimps use their connected communities to exploit men, women and children, globally and their elusive presence amongst communities ensure they evade detection. Pimps are known members of communities who prey on vulnerabilities including homelessness and isolation.

Whilst we may find it difficult to rationalise the idea that parents can be involved in the abuse of their own children, 2018 has already demonstrated this to be a clear reality in Ireland. In March 2018, 6 men and 5 women were arrested for allegedly facilitating access to, and the familial abuse of their own children, and grandchildren (Hurly, D., 2018). Whilst the traditional perception of those involved in the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, remained steadfast as the male predator, this can no longer be accepted as a given. Women are involved in the exploitation of the most vulnerable also. Children who find themselves trapped within worlds of human trafficking for sexual exploitation are often taken/lured away under false promises, promises of better lives, more positive futures, gainful employment and often to ease the burden on their families, surviving within abject poverty. Both men and women facilitate this movement.

Exploring the act of trafficking, Reid (2012) highlights three stages of trafficking: origin, transit and destination. With a clear need for a transit location which offers privacy, anonymity and relative security, the hospitality sector can find itself being exploited as it offers these three facets of service, to all of its guests.

Internationally, child sex tourism continues to grow. It's once dark, hidden away nature, has dissolved and it can be seen very much alive on streets across Asia as men walk hand-in-hand with underage children whose lives are blemished and irreparable. As a Social Work practitioner, I have worked directly with children, and young adults, whose lives have been damaged by sex-tourists. I have listened to children's stories, children as young as 5 years of age who have been sold into worlds of sexual exploitation by their parents, by their neighbours, their teachers and their friends. With the promise of better futures, the children are lead away and find themselves in brothels, visited numerous times per day by adults from other countries. Glover (2006) estimates that there are over 800,000 children in Thailand being trafficked for sex, 400,000 in India, 60,000 children in The Philippines and 20,000 in Sri Lanka.

With Ireland, as mentioned, the figures presented by The Anti Human Trafficking Unit, of children who are identified remain relatively low and are referred to across the sector as the tip of the iceberg. The Gardaí raise a number of key challenging concerns for us as a nation. We need to be aware that we are not immune from this global concern, we are however in a challenging environment where we need to increase awareness on reporting, on identifying those at risk and our national levels of awareness on Human Trafficking remain low. Prosecution, without identification, and proof, is impossible.

The hospitality sector, in Ireland, primarily the hotel industry, can play a large role in preventing the development of Ireland as a sex-tourist capital. Their keen identification of children at risk is of paramount importance. Their openness in managing and maintaining dialogue with The Gardaí is key. Only with the identification of the vulnerable, and the consistent reporting, will children be kept safe. MECPATHS has developed a clear set of

Indicators which support hotel staff and management to increase their awareness and support the identification of vulnerable children. It is important to note that each of these suggested indicators should not be taken in isolation and hotel staff and management should operate a keen level of discretion when reporting suspicions to The Gardaí.

GENERAL INDICATORS OF TRAFFICKING		
✓ Signs of physical abuse, restraint, distress, fear, anxiety, submission or nervousness.		✓ No knowledge of current and/or past whereabouts.
✓ Signs of disassociation or avoidance of interaction with others. Avoidance or reluctance to give personal information, answer questions about themselves.		✓ No freedom of movement or being constantly monitored.
✓ Restricted, mediated, or controlled communication.		✓ Treated in a demeaning or aggressive manner.
FRONT OF HOUSE		
✓ Guest checking into room appears coerced.	✓ Guest occupying a room with a minor that they did not register with originally.	✓ Non-registered guests visiting a particular room with high frequency.
✓ Room paid for with card not bearing the guest's name.	✓ Guest checking into room has no identification or does not subsequently occupy the room.	✓ Guest has few or no personal possessions for a prolonged stay.
✓ Guest not forthcoming about full names, home address, or vehicle information when registering.		✓ Guest dressed inappropriately given the weather and/or his/her age.
HOUSEKEEPING AND ROOM SERVICE		
✓ Excessive foot travel to and from a room by non-registered guests at unusual hours.	✓ Excessive requests for additional towels, new sheets and restocking of fridge.	✓ Minors left alone in room for a prolonged period of time without the supervision of an adult.
✓ Refusal of cleaning services for multiple successive days.	✓ Non-registered guests loitering in private guest areas.	✓ Children's items or clothing but no child registered with the room.
✓ Constant use of "do not disturb" sign, despite frequent visitors to the room.	✓ Presence of unusual amount of computers, mobile phones, credit card machines or other technology.	✓ Large amounts of alcohol or presence of drugs in rooms where children are present.

Research with the hospitality sector in Ireland (January 2018)

Research was conducted in order to gain a clearer understanding of awareness levels amongst hotel stakeholders in Ireland as well as an insight into the direct response of those engaged in social work training and professional practitioners. A quantitative research methodology was employed.

Perspectives were sought on understandings of human trafficking, child exploitation, identification methods in place, if any, and the future of safeguarding children who may be identified of being at-risk of human trafficking. This study concluded that very few of the respondents were aware of exactly what human trafficking is, that training within the hospitality sector in Ireland is much needed in order to safeguard and support the rescue of children and that Social Work professionals raised emerging concerns around children at-risk need immediate attention.

When asked, 90% of respondents were unaware of their responsibility to report any act of suspected harm against a child to the Gardaí, under Children First. The movement of Tusla to work in closer partnership with the hospitality sector in the coming months will work to support a wider awareness of child protection training amongst hotel staff and management. With children's clubs, leisure centres and baby-sitting services available within the hospitality sector as services for guests, this is necessary to ensure the safety of all.

One respondent had received anti-trafficking training as part of their initial workplace induction but had since changed their workplace stating "it was part of a training we received in a hotel I worked in, in The UK. It was different to usual induction but it was good to learn about".

15% of respondents referred to adult prostitution taking place on their hotel premises regularly and had reported it to their manager. This was prior to the implementation of The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 and 100% of respondents were not aware of the change in law which has made the purchaser of sex liable for prosecution.

During the research, it became apparent that the majority of respondents were not aware that child trafficking takes place in Ireland with 95% confirming "trafficking of children takes place in countries with lower incomes and high levels of poverty, not in Ireland". This supported my underlying hypothesis that the Irish population are not aware that trafficking occurs in Ireland or aware of the need for community-wide education and more open dialogue. Each member of the adult-community in Ireland holds a responsibility to be aware and vigilant of child trafficking.

Exploring the respondents definition of future needs for those working within the hospitality sector, 80% identified the need for training on child trafficking during their induction period whilst 5% did not believe it necessary. 15% were undecided about the need for its inclusion.

One respondent suggested that “while there is adult prostitution in our hotel a lot and we report it, we don’t know anything about child prostitution, it hasn’t really been part of the conversation, it isn’t an issue in Ireland”.

A respondent also commented “but is it our responsibility? Our responsibility is to ensure guests have a good time, it is not our job to police corridors”. However, under Children First, a mandated person is recognised to include a (I) safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children; (Schedule 2.15.i). Hotels which offer kids clubs, leisure centre facilities etc. to children are therefore mandated persons.

Focusing on the Irish context, the 35 respondents explored their own experience of working directly within the hospitality sector in Ireland, in hotels across 12 counties. The respondents, with roles including front of house, house-keeping, security and management confirmed the lack of awareness which exists in relation to children who may be at risk of being exploited within hotel networks.

Wider Awareness and its need were explored in-depth with the respondents, many of whom shared an overview of its great need but its lack of existence:

- “We haven’t received any information about child trafficking or adult trafficking in hotels. We learn about health and safety things but not about this. It would be good to know some information on it. A lot of children come to stay with their parents”. [ER12]
- “We don’t learn about child trafficking. We do have a lot of training about food safety and health and safety and HR things but not about children. I know someone who I work with has worked before as a child safety officer in another hotel but not in the hotel I am in at the moment. We just worry about children falling over things

and making sure they are ok when they are in the swimming pool and use the playground. We don't have training for other safety". [ER08]

- "I don't know if it is very important for our work. I clean rooms. I do see some strange things in the rooms but when you see these things over and over again, you ignore them. It would be good to be able to learn more about it. If it helps a child to be safe, then it would be useful".[ER11]
- "I worked in hotels in Asia when I was training. I know these things happen there but I don't see them in Ireland. I didn't think that this was a problem in Ireland. It would not be normal in this country".[ER10]
- "My friend works for a big hotel chain. They do training on this when they start work. She said it is good to know about all the guests who stay and I think she is correct. If it was something we learned about, it would help any children who might need help".[ER28]
- "I did not think that child trafficking was an issue in Ireland but then you see the news and the adults abusing children are not outside of Ireland. People who use hotels can abuse people as easily as the people who rent houses". [ER03]
- "It would be very useful to learn more. Sometimes I see things that are not correct. I wonder what to do but I am told my job is to clean hotel rooms, not to worry about things that are not my job".[ER04]
- "When you have to clean a lot of rooms in a short time, you do not have time to investigate things like this. This is the job for the manager". [ER29]

Whilst child trafficking was not something many of the respondents were aware of, the ongoing presence of adult prostitution on-site was something which they were aware of. The challenges presented by this during their work was explored and also concerns related to this were deemed concerning enough to be represented in their responses:

- "There have been times where young people have come to the hotel. A few times, I have seen young girls coming by taxi and when they meet their friend in the reception, you can tell they are not adults. They dress up to look older but they are

not adults. The guest takes them to their room. We do not know what to do so we don't do anything. They leave again soon after". [ER04]

- "We have had cases where a lot of prostitution happens. Sometimes we will ask for identification if the guest comes late at night but they never give it and when the person who rents the room tells us to let the person in, we have to. They are paying for the room and are our guests".[ER31]
- "We were told by our front of house manager not to let anyone who is not on the guest list into the hotel after midnight. Sometimes the guest gets angry and starts shouting so we allow them in. Sometimes you can see that the guest is with someone who maybe is not an adult. It makes our job very difficult as we have no training and do not know what to do".[ER33]
- "In my old hotel, prostitution was visible every day. We were used to it. We got to know the girls who came in the evening. We were told not to do anything, that these are adults". [ER28]
- "There was a man visiting one time with a child. They had no luggage, paid in cash only and stayed for two days. My manager told us to keep an eye on them to see if anything was happening but they did not leave the room. I did think something was wrong but we have no training". [ER001.1]
- "We have never experienced any type of prostitution at our hotel. The manager does not allow it. We were told to call the police if anything happened".

The purpose of this short research piece was to explore the validity of the work of MECPATHS, to examine the need and to explore if there is a desire amongst hotel staff and management to avail of our work:

- "Training on child trafficking would be helpful for us. In my home country, this is something which happens a lot. It is normal. When I was a trainee, I told my boss about a man taking a child to his room. My boss told me it is not my business and the man is a good hotel customer. I did not say anything again. In Ireland I have not seen this but I would like to learn more about it so I can report it if it happens". [TER1]

- “I would welcome this training. If other hotels are using it, we should also use it. We don’t have a reporting in place if we suspect something. I think we maybe just call the police”. [TER2]
- “We can always do more to help our guests and if that includes protecting children then we should definitely do it”. [TER3]
- “I think it would be great. My wife is a Social Worker and she asks now and again if we have any cases of children being brought to the hotel in strange circumstances”. [TER4]
- “We have a lot of families living in our hotel at the moment so this type of training would be great for us. We don’t really know how to interact with the children when they stay”. [TER5]

Exploring the concept of child-trafficking awareness with a group of 3 newly qualified social workers, the discussion focused very clearly on the lack of curriculum materials on the issue and a distinct lack of clarity about its prevalence in Ireland. A respondent suggested “it is almost like it is taboo. When you graduate, you end up in child protection with huge caseloads and little support. I would not know what to do if I came across a case of child trafficking. I didn’t hear anything about it during the training”. A further respondent suggested “you learn a lot more on placement than in the classroom, when you are standing in front of a vulnerable person, you have to learn quickly. I would not have a clue about human trafficking to be honest. It is not something I have had to work with yet”.

Exploring Human and Child Trafficking with hotel management, a respondent [HM1] clearly recalls an experience she had whilst on duty in an International hotel “I was at front of house doing paperwork. A man arrived with a child, aged maybe 10 or 11. He was checking in when the front of house manager asked him for identification for himself and the young person. He said he was travelling without any identification so my colleague told him he would need to find some if he wanted to check-in. He offered my colleague a cash-tip if there was another way to deal with the problem and my colleague said he would need to call the police. The man left with the child. They had no luggage. I felt there was something terribly wrong with the situation. We called the police but they didn’t come to the hotel”.

Furthermore, the respondent suggests “If we had a protocol, an awareness, any information at all, we would have been able to respond better but we didn’t. We had nothing at all in place, just human instinct”.

Respondent HM2 “Our hotel is part of a large, international chain. We have anti human trafficking training in place. All of our staff receive the information at their induction and from our colleagues experience in the states, it works. They have had experience of children being found on their premises who are in danger. We have had this training in Ireland for quite some time but thankfully we haven’t had to use it yet. We get a lot of business guests and yes, sometimes there are prostitutes visiting but never children. Our staff know what to look out for”.

An Irish Social Work respondent whose work in South Asia with survivors of child sexual exploitation relayed the following during research, “I sat in a hotel in Asia, in the reception area, I was having coffee and was with a friend. I noticed a 7 year old child coming through the doors of the hotel with a male, a tourist. I knew her, she was one of the children with whom I worked. I called her by name, I leapt from my seat, I asked her what she was doing... her response was “I am earning food to pay for my [swear] dinner Jane*”. She went to the man’s bedroom. I was in shock. I went to the reception and asked for the manager who appeared and said “So? Her choice? Mr. X is a good customer, he is a nice man”. Jane* further explored her shock at this direct experience and spoke of her return to “safe Ireland” where child sexual exploitation “takes place on a daily basis, it happens every day, it is Irish children, it is Irish predators. It may not openly happen in hotels but it is happening behind closed doors, somewhere, not just in cities, it is happening everywhere”.

When we explore the role of Social Workers in Ireland in keeping children safe, roles are much defined and resources are clearly limited. “As a Social Work graduate, I was not introduced to the concept of child trafficking, it was simply not on the radar, though Child Protection was always at the fore. We need to do something before it becomes an uncontrollable epidemic. We cannot find ourselves fire-fighting in a few years. Now is the

time, we can clearly see that this is a huge global concern. Ireland is never immune from such problems” respondent 3SW.

The respondents clearly identify a need for an increased awareness and outreach of structural support. The challenges identified by the respondents suggest a deep lack of awareness amongst those who participated in the study. Whilst an awareness exists around the exploitation of adults through prostitution, there exists a clear, void of information in relation to vulnerable children. With concerted efforts by The Gardaí to keep children safe, the reporting mechanisms and procedures to marry these efforts needs to be addressed.

How Hotels respond:

The Marriott International has realised the challenge which can be faced by the hotel and hospitality sector with their properties potential exploitation at the hands of traffickers. On January 1st 2017, the company introduced anti trafficking training mandatory for all of its staff and have rolled out their training to 160,000 associates with a target of 675,000 staff members. They will reach over 6,000 hotels in 125 countries across 30 of their brands.

PREM Hotel Group with their HR head office in Dublin, Ireland responded by partnering with MECPATHS in 2017, designing a bespoke learning platform for their staff and management and rolling it out to over 500 of their staff in Ireland. The training will be further delivered to their European staff across the coming months.

Spotlights for the vulnerable:

Linh was 15, when her father discovered that he had cancer. He decided that Linh should be adopted by a woman he had met in Taiwan, who said that she would look after her. But this woman held Linh's travel documents and flew her to Thailand, to Russia, and on to Europe. She was held in a house in Germany with other Vietnamese people. Linh was told that this was a prostitution business, and that she owed them £10,000 for the cost of being

transported from Vietnam. She saw tired-looking young women being brought in and out of the house, and she witnessed an older women being tied down and raped. After some time, Linh was illegally transported to the UK in the back of a truck. She was abused by two men en-route, and contracted a sexually transmitted infection as a result. When she arrived in England she was taken to a house and told she had to work as a prostitute to pay back what she 'owed'. One day Linh managed to escape, by stealing some money and getting on a bus. She was eventually noticed looking very distressed in a bus shelter, and was taken to social services. (Barnardos, 2017)

Karla says she was abused for as long as she can remember and felt rejected by her mother. "I came from a dysfunctional family. I was sexually abused and mistreated from the age of 5 by a relative," she says. When she was 12 she was targeted by a trafficker who lured her away using kind words and a fast car. She says she was waiting for some friends near a subway station in Mexico City, when a little boy selling sweets came up to her, telling her somebody was sending her a piece of candy as a gift. Five minutes later, Karla says, an older man was talking to her, telling her that he was a used car salesman. The initial awkwardness disappeared as soon as the man started telling her that he was also abused as a boy. He was also very affectionate and quite a gentleman, she says. They exchanged phone numbers and when he called a week later, Karla says she got excited. He asked her to go on a trip to nearby Puebla with him and dazzled her by showing up driving a bright red Firebird Trans Am. "When I saw the car I couldn't believe it. I was very impressed by such a big car. It was exciting for me. He asked me to get in the car to go places," she says. It didn't take long for the man, who at 22 was 10 years older than Karla, to convince her to leave with him, especially after Karla's mother didn't open the door one night when she came home a little too late. "The following day I left with him. I lived with him for three months during which he treated me very well. He loved me, he bought me clothes, gave me attention, bought me shoes, flowers, chocolates, everything was beautiful," Karla says. Karla says her boyfriend would leave her by herself for a week in their apartment. His cousins would show up with new girls every week. When she finally mustered the courage to ask what business they were in, he told her the truth. "They're pimps," he said. "A few days later he started telling me everything I had to do;

the positions, how much I need to charge, the things I had to do with the client and for how long, how I was to treat them and how I had to talk to them so that they would give me more money," Karla says. One day, when she was working at a hotel known for prostitution, police showed up. They kicked out of all of the customers, Karla says, and shut down the hotel. She thought it was her lucky day -- a police operation to rescue her and the other girls. Her relief turned quickly to horror when the officers, about 30 she says, took the girls to several rooms and started shooting video of them in compromising positions. The girls were told the videos would be sent to their families if they didn't do everything they asked. "I thought they were disgusting. They knew we were minors. We were not even developed. We had sad faces. There were girls who were only 10 years old. There were girls who were crying. They told the officers they were minors and nobody paid attention," Karla says. She was 13 years old at the time. In her nightmare world even a pregnancy was cause for horror not joy. Karla gave birth at 15 to a girl -- a baby fathered by the pimp who would use the daughter to tighten the noose around her neck: if she didn't fulfil his every wish, he would either harm or kill the baby. He took the baby away from her a month after the baby was born, and she was not allowed to see her again until the girl was more than a year old. Karla Jacinto was finally rescued in 2008 during an anti-trafficking operation in Mexico City. Her ordeal lasted four very long and tormenting years. She was still a minor, only 16, when it ended -- but she has endured a lifetime of horror that will stay with her as long as she lives. "These minors are being abducted, lured, and yanked away from their families. Don't just listen to me. You need to learn about what happened to me and take the blindfold off your eyes." "Doing nothing, she says, puts countless girls at risk of being trafficked for years and raped tens of thousands of times, just like she was." (United Against Human Trafficking, 2016).

Emma was 14 when she met her first 'boyfriend'. He – in his 30s – bought her presents, picked her up in his car, told her he loved her. But he soon changed. He became violent and before long was forcing her to have sex with his friends. Then, like a toy, Emma was passed on, shipped around the country and raped by countless men. "I got taken to flats. I don't know where they were and men would be brought to me," she said. "I was never given any names and I don't remember their faces." (Barnardos, 2017)

Children in spotlights are real victims and survivors of child trafficking. They are everyday people, born to everyday places, into everyday worlds. They are not unique by vulnerability. They were children. There are thousands of children closing their eyes in darkness this evening. Our response is vital.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Throughout my research, it was very apparent that Ireland, as a country is clearly underprepared to respond to the increasing challenges which present themselves in the form of trafficked persons. Our conversations, within the third sector are at times fragmented and our collective national discourse is one of scattered silence.

Ireland's historical experience of child protection, of challenged outcomes and of troubled legacies are delivering us to a present time phenomenon where children are located across and around the country in heightened fragility. Our expanding populations, our age of digital nomadism, our state of growing isolation and individuality are presenting us with key opportunities to explore the locations of our fractured citizenship. We are presenting ourselves ahead of a curve with time resources to act and respond- we are in plain sight of challenges and we owe it to the children of Ireland, and our global communities to unite and respond. Let us not reflect in the coming years on an opportunity we were afforded in 2018 to help those caught in worlds of trafficking.

Some key recommendations for Ireland, 2018:

- The Irish Hospitality Sector is underprepared for the challenges which lie ahead in terms of countering child trafficking through their networks. Drawing on international trends and the experience of our global neighbours, it is time to respond and react to the challenges which lie on our horizons.
- Public awareness and understanding of the reality of Human Trafficking is lacking. A fuller implementation of awareness programmes needs to be undertaken. These

programmes need to be undertaken under the leadership of our National Anti-Trafficking Unit, in collaboration with government and non-governmental agencies in a collaborative manner to ensure cost and resource effectiveness.

- Our preparations to protect children, globally, are still short of the mark and we need to invest further resources to ensure the fuller protection of all children in our communities. The identification of individuals within communities needs to be more clearly outlined to families, vulnerable adults and children across Ireland.
- Families who are living below poverty lines should be linked with community resources, including NGO's, to minimise the likelihood of their children being drawn into worlds of trafficking. Awareness programmes for safe digital dwelling need to be made available and the challenges affecting young people online, more widely addressed and spoken about.
- The hotel industry could make an invaluable contribution by rolling out awareness training to staff on the indicators of child trafficking. Awareness and education programmes not only support vulnerable children but provide a strengthened core for all businesses, reducing financial implications for all.
- Hotel Staff need to be made better aware of the legislations which impact on their work and receive wide support from management to ensure its full implementation.
- A clearer national protocol for the public to report suspicions must be implemented. A more open and clearer dialogue between all stakeholders needs to be explored. Silos of expertise exist, grown and fostered by funding preservation. This cannot be facilitated when children's lives are at risk, daily.

As 2018 comes to a close, we are afforded an extremely valuable opportunity to open 2019 with our eyes more widely opened and with key learning opportunities more readily available to us to educate ourselves, our networks, our communities and our places of employment about human trafficking. We are strengthened by a willingness here in Ireland to act against those who traffick the vulnerable and we owe it to the children of Ireland to raise our voices for those who can't. Let us not reflect in 20 years with an air of disappointment or ever, as adults in modern day Ireland, regret we did not act.

“You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.”

— William Wilberforce —

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