



# MECPATHS

CHILD TRAFFICKING  
KNOW IT | SEE IT | SAY IT

# General Indicators of Child Trafficking

## Children who have been trafficked may:

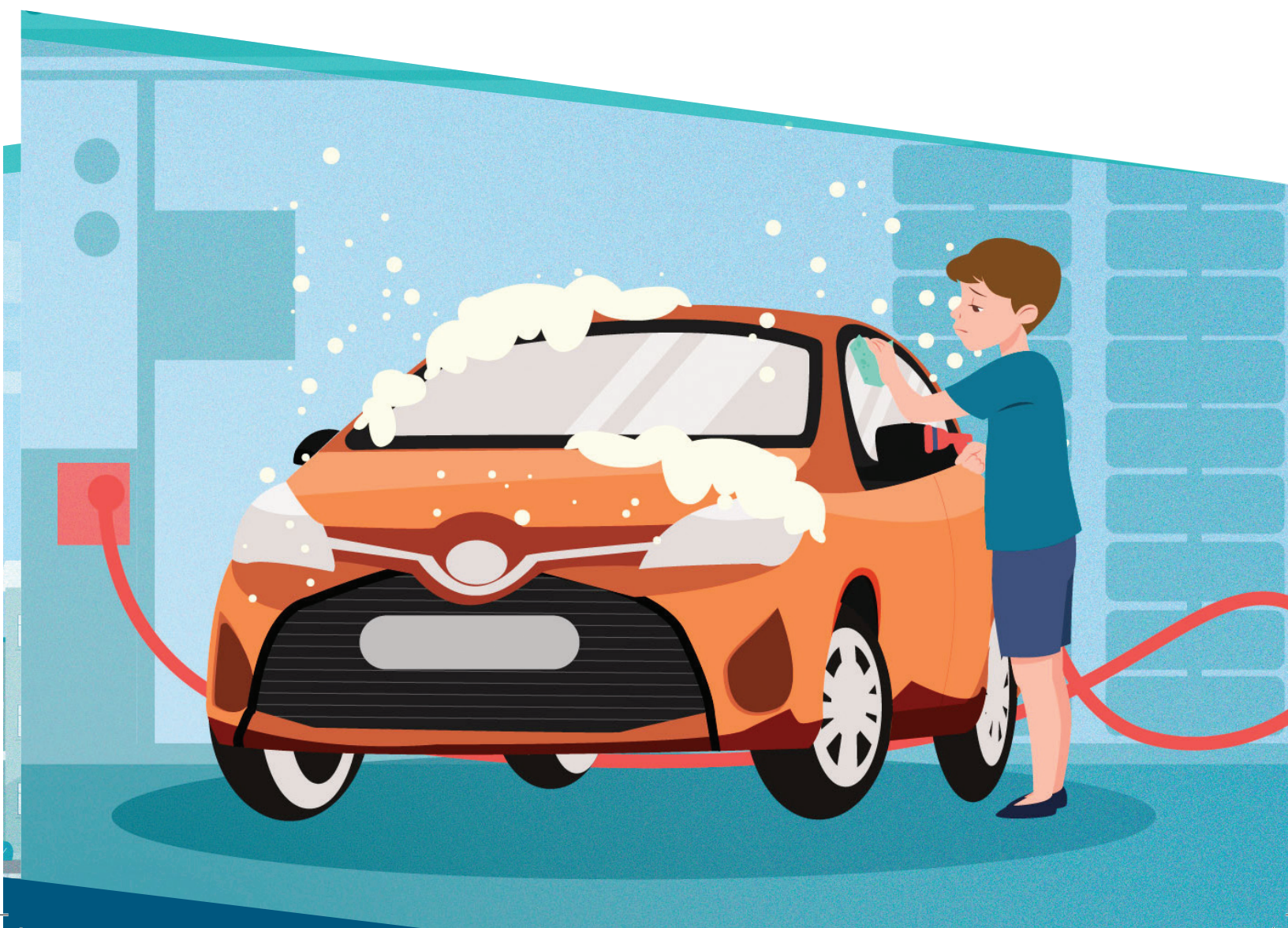
- Have no contact with or access to their parents or guardians
- Look intimidated and behave in a way that does not correspond with behaviour typical of children their age
- Be unable to communicate freely with others
- Have no friends of their own age
- Have no access to education or medical care
- Have no time for playing or have limited or no social interaction with other children
- Live apart from other children and in substandard accommodations
- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Eat apart from other members of the “family”
- Travel unaccompanied by adults or in groups with adults other than family members / guardians
- Be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- Be “found” as an unaccompanied child



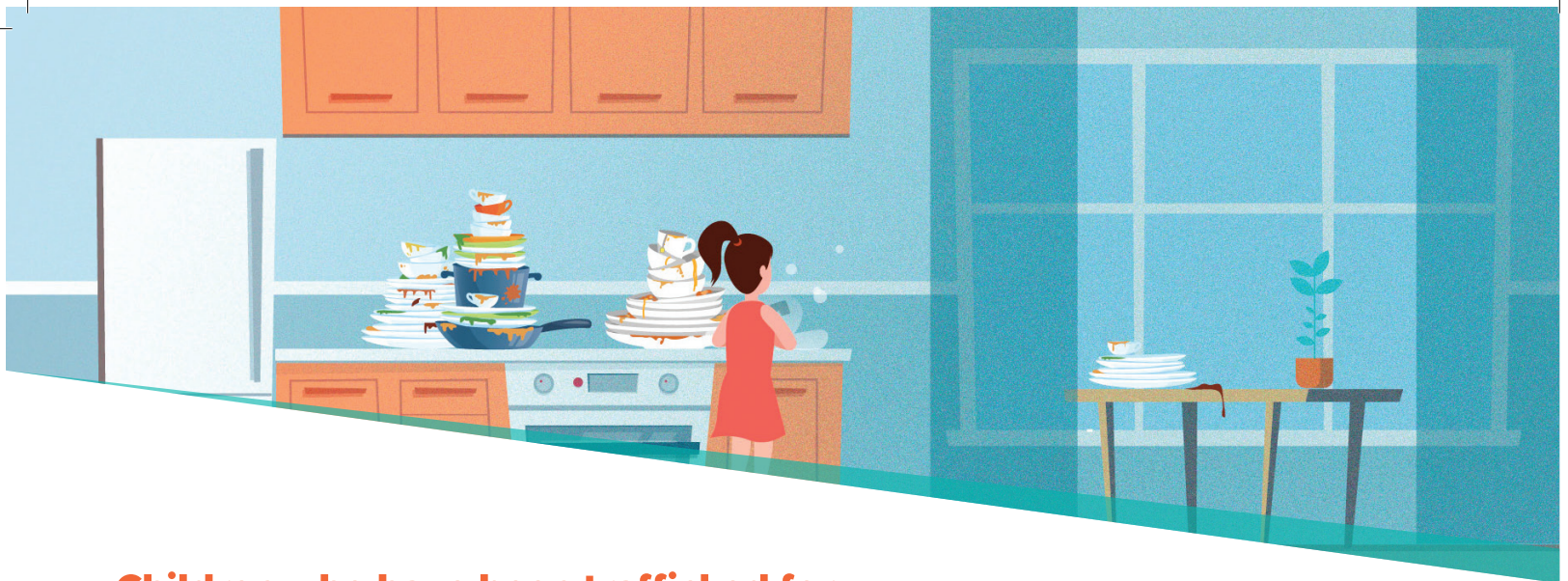


## Children who have been trafficked for forced labour and/or labour exploitation may:

- Believe that they must work against their will
- Be forced to work under inappropriate conditions
- Be unable to or feel that they cannot leave the work environment
- Show signs that their movements are being controlled
- Show fear or anxiety
- Be subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault
- Suffer injuries or impairments typical of certain jobs or control measures
- Be distrustful of the authorities or be threatened with being handed over to the authorities
- Not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, as those documents are being held by someone other than their parents or guardians
- Have false identity or travel documents
- Not know their home address
- Allow others to speak for them when addressed directly
- Act as if they are being instructed by someone else
- Be made work excessively long hours over long periods

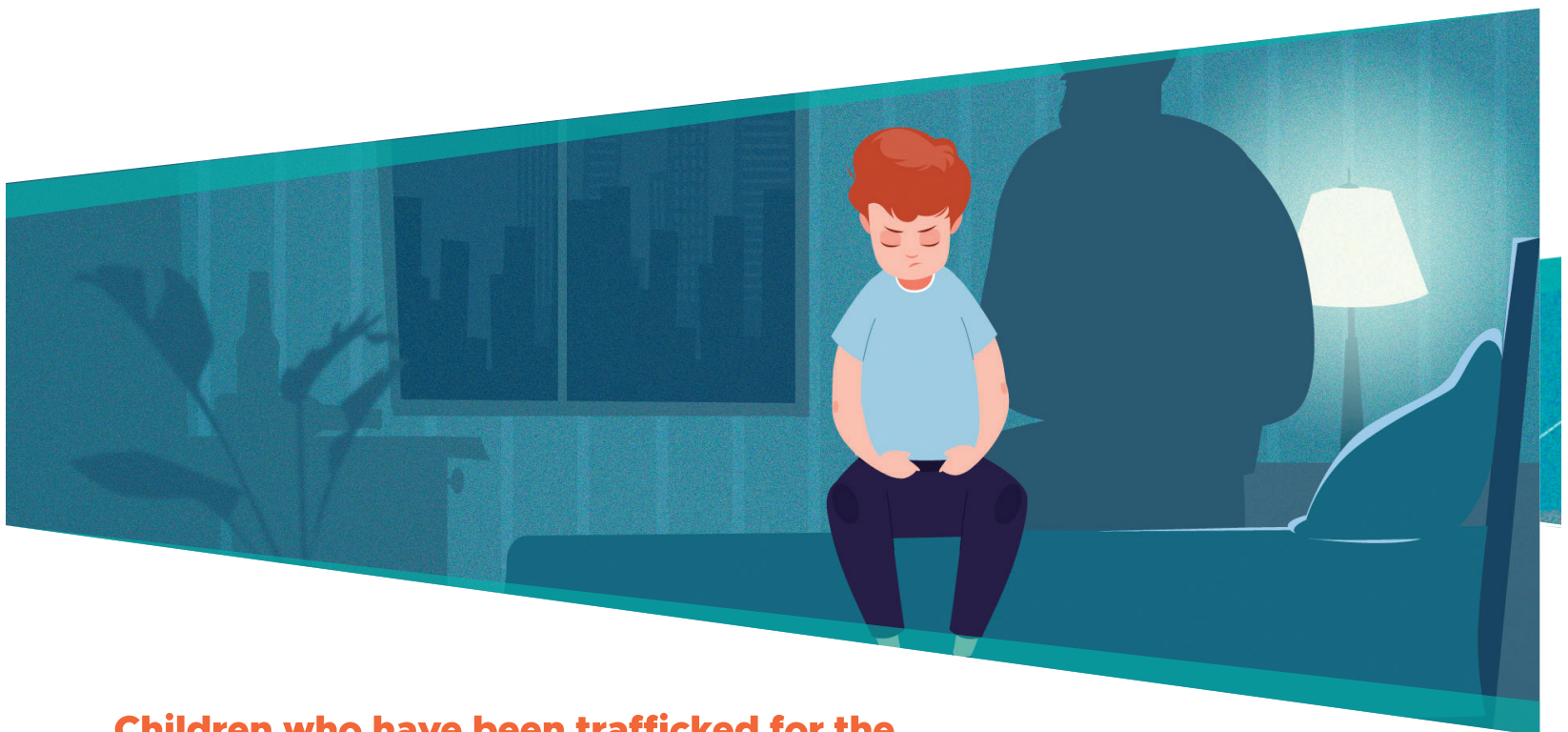






### **Children who have been trafficked for domestic servitude may:**

- Live with a family not of origin
- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Not eat with the rest of the household
- Sleep in an inappropriate space
- Never or rarely leave the house
- Be subjected to insults, abuse, threats or violence



### **Children who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation may:**

- Have unexplained gifts or possess items such as phones or jewellery which they couldn't afford to buy themselves
- Display changes in mood or become emotionally volatile





- Go missing, stay out late or stay out all night
- Be secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Show a lack of interest in activities and hobbies
- Miss school
- Present with sudden changes in their appearance and wear more revealing clothes
- Use sexual language that wouldn't be typically used by them
- Engage less with their usual friends
- Appear controlled by their phone
- Switch to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Be associated with a gang
- Become estranged from family
- Become involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
- Associate with older men and women, particularly if they go missing and are being defensive about where they are and what they're doing
- Have more than one, or a secret phone
- Be constantly moved from one location to the next, harboured (kept) or received
- Be escorted whenever they go to and return from outside activities
- Have tattoos or other marks indicating "ownership"
- Only have very few items of age-appropriate clothing
- Only know how to say sex-related words in the local language
- Evidence of physical assault/disclosure of sexual abuse and/or exploitation



**Children who have been trafficked for the purpose of forced begging or forced criminality may:**

- Persistently go missing from school or home and/or be found out-of-area
- Be in excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Spend more time online or on their devices
- Use more than one phone
- Suddenly acquire expensive gifts such as items of clothing, money, bicycles / scooters, mobile phones, jewellery – even drugs – and not be able to explain how they got them



- Have hotel cards or keys to unknown places
- Be secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Have relationships with controlling older individuals or groups
- Leave home/care without explanation
- Have unexplained absences from school
- Return home unusually late or stay out all night
- Come home looking dishevelled
- Exhibit signs of physical assault or unexplained injuries
- Carry weapons
- Start or increase alcohol / drug use, or be found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Lose interest in school and show a significant decline in performance
- Use sexual, gang, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Meet with unfamiliar people or associate with a gang
- Become isolated from peers or social networks
- Induce self-harm
- Exhibit significant changes in emotional well-being
- Have sudden changes in lifestyle
- Exhibit increasingly disruptive or violent behaviour
- Get into trouble with the police
- Be recruited to carry and/or sell illicit drugs
- Move daily in large groups, over considerable distances, for the purpose of forced begging and criminality
- Be punished if they do not collect, carry, sell, or steal enough



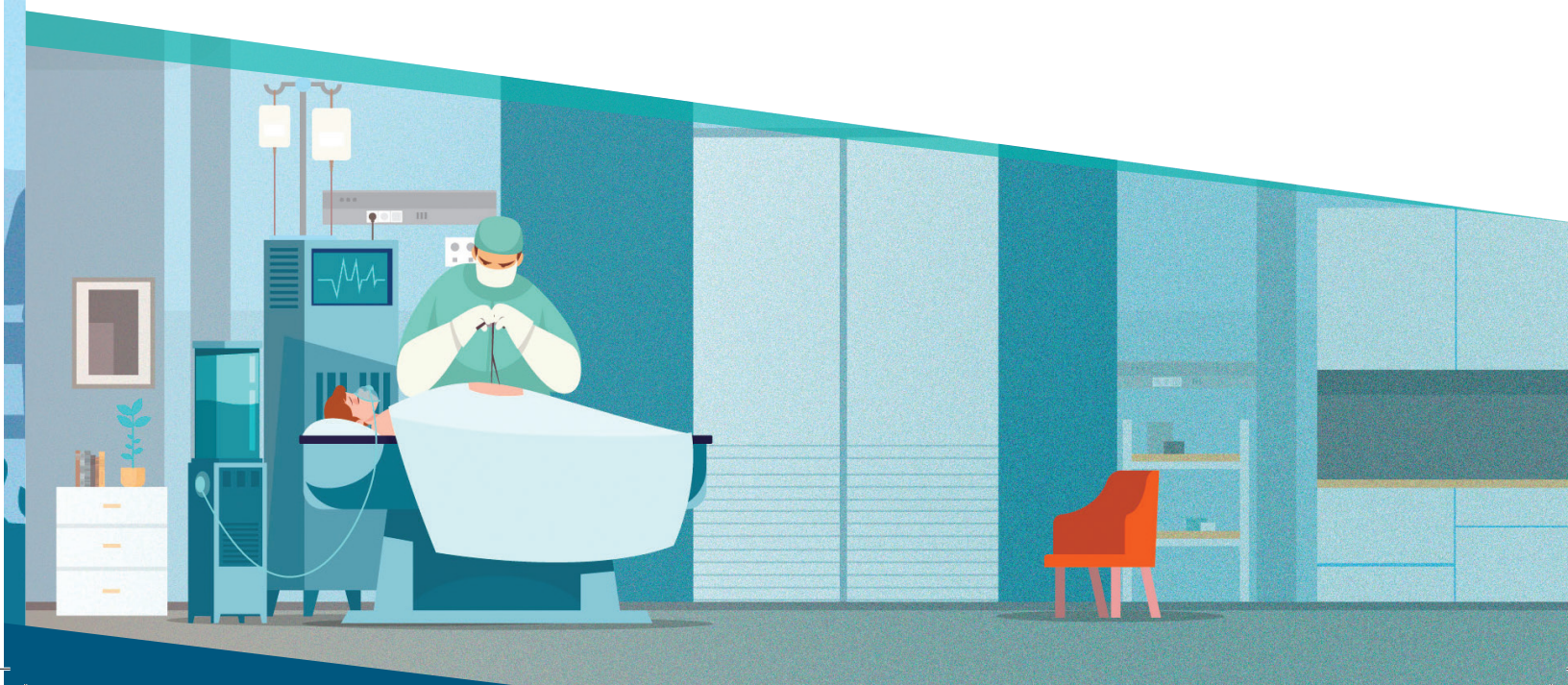


## Children who have been trafficked for forced marriage may:

- Come from a community where Forced Marriage and 'Honour' is culturally embedded
- Announce engagement to a stranger not previously mentioned
- Child may be removed from education, preventing further education or extra-curricular activities
- Exhibit noticeable levels of absenteeism, lateness – school, college or employment
- Feel like an element of 'surveillance' and control by their family or community members
- Display significant personality changes and appear depressed, withdrawn, anxious or suicidal. There may be noticeable deterioration in the victim's self-esteem and appearance
- Run away, go missing from home or have a fear of returning home
- Talk about a family holiday abroad and may seem anxious about this
- Fail to return home from a visit to the family's country of origin
- Present with early and/or unwanted pregnancy
- Self-harm or attempt suicide, particularly in the early stages of marriage
- Report domestic incidents or crimes at the family home. The fact that a victim was forced to marry may only reveal itself years after the marriage has taken place
- Appear to be dominated – subject to financial control, no access to mobile phone, internet etc.

## Children who have been trafficked for organ harvesting:

- **There have been no cases of trafficking for organ harvesting documented in the Republic of Ireland**



# CHILD TRAFFICKING

is any act of...



Recruitment



Transport



Transfer



Harbouring



Receipt

...of a child

for the purpose of...



Forced  
Criminality



Sexual  
Exploitation



Domestic  
Servitude



Forced  
Begging



Forced  
Labour



Forced  
Marriage



Organ  
Harvesting

## What to do

Please do not take any of these indicators on their own to mean that someone may be a victim of trafficking.

If there are a number of signs present and you feel that something is just not right, please report your suspicions.

## How should you respond?

**Emergency:**  
Telephone 999/112

**Suspicious:**  
Telephone Local Garda Station

**Anonymously:**  
Telephone 1800 666 111 or email  
[blueblindfold@garda.ie](mailto:blueblindfold@garda.ie)



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