

# Paedo rings exploit our runaway kids



Abuse ... paedophiles target runaway children

Posed by model

By STAFF REPORTER

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**A CHARITY has warned that thousands of young runaway children are being sexually exploited by groups of organised paedophiles.**

Barnardo's warned of the "hidden" problem in which vulnerable youngsters — many of whom are living on the streets — are preyed upon by men.

The vile paedos befriend the children, offering them gifts and food, then persuade the youngsters to have sex with them.

The helpless kids are then often trafficked between towns and cities, where other paedophiles sexually abuse them, the Barnardo's report said today.

## **Exploited**

The charity said more than 1,000 children in London alone had been sexually exploited but the full extent of the problem nationwide was not known.

Martin Narey, chief executive of Barnardo's, revealed: "We alone have worked with over 1,000 children who've been sexually exploited in just 20 of the 209 local authorities.

"We don't know the true extent of this problem. But we know, however hidden from the public eye it might be, it affects many thousands of children.

"We shouldn't have to do this work. But men are not going to stop the predatory sexual abuse of girls and sometimes boys.

"We shall not stop trying to thwart such men and help their victims escape from their clutches."

The paedophiles typically target children who have run away from home and are isolated on the streets.

Mr Narey explained: "One of the trigger points seems to be children who are going missing.

"There are 100,000 children a year who go missing in the UK.

"Most of them go home after a few days, but my workers in this area say the children who repeatedly go missing perhaps may sleep rough on the streets, perhaps (their parents) may be complacent about children going missing for the third or fourth time, that's the point at which they are vulnerable.

"An apparently kind man will buy them food, will buy them drink and give them a mobile phone, and then a few months later they will be isolated and alone, sometimes in a different town and sleeping with that man and his friends."

Mr Narey added that one in six of the sexually exploited kids was moved on from town to town by the paedophiles to increase their isolation.

No national records are kept on the number of children exploited in this way.

Barnardo's is calling for police and authorities across the UK to develop a greater awareness of the problem.

# Girl recalls sex trafficking ordeal

By Liam Creedon, Press Association

## INDEPENDENT

A victim of a predatory paedophile today recalled her disgust after she was repeatedly trafficked around the country and forced to have sex with different men.

The girl, now in her late teens and identified only as Imogen, was just 12 when she was targeted by the man.

After being befriended by him while living in north-east England, she was regularly taken around towns and cities and made to have sex with other paedophiles.

Imogen was taken into care as a youngster after enduring a difficult home life.

She regularly ran away from the institution with friends who would drink and smoke with older men.

She explained: "The girls in the home were all a bit older than me and were going out with older men.

"At first I just tagged along. They gave me drink and smokes - it was a laugh.

"Then one man started to take a special interest in me.

"He was much older, he was protective - I felt looked after, wanted, loved even.

"He gave me everything I wanted and when I was 13 he handed over the keys to a flat and said 'It's yours, use it when you need it'."

But the relationship took on an even more sinister tone when the man asked her to "dress up" and travel to London for a party.

Once there she was told to have sex with different "friends".

She explained: "I didn't have any choice, I felt so guilty. Eventually he'd take me all over the country: Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, London. He'd take me to hotels, some nights two or three.

"I never saw any money change hands. Some men asked 'How old is she?' - some asked 'Have you got any younger?' They were really sick."

As a 13-year-old, Imogen found it difficult to evade the clutches of the older man.

She said: "I wanted to escape, but he just controlled me - it was a mental thing, I was terrified."

But she managed to flee the life of abuse after the man was finally arrested.

She was supported by children's charity Barnardo's and, with its help returned to school. Imogen has now just enrolled at university.

# Thousands of children could be victims of sex exploitation

**Up to 10,000 children a year could be victims of sexual exploitation in the UK, a study by Barnardo's, the children's charity, has signalled.**

TELEGRAPH ONLINE

By [Tom Whitehead](#), Home Affairs Editor

Published: 7:00AM GMT 17 Nov 2009

Hundreds of them are likely to have been trafficked in to the country by criminal gangs, a review suggests.

But less than a fifth of local authorities have any kind of specialist service to spot and deal with youngsters forced in to the sex trade.

The report, *Whose Child Now?*, showed that in just 20 out of 209 local authorities, Barnardo's worked with 1,060 children and young people who had been sexually exploited in the last year.

If that pattern was repeated across country it could mean as many as 10,000 youngsters.

And out of the 609 children the charity is currently working with, 90 – or one in six – were trafficked in to the country.

Yet in England, in 2007 there were only 25 proceedings on the grounds of trafficking for sexual exploitation (which includes adults) with only 15 guilty verdicts.

Martin Narey, Barnardo's chief executive, said: "We don't know the true extent of this problem. But we know, however hidden from the public eye it might be, it affects many thousands of children. We shouldn't have to do this work. But men are not going to stop the predatory sexual abuse of girls and sometimes boys. We shall not stop trying to thwart such men and help their victims escape from their clutches."

The report also found that only 40 of the local authorities with responsibility for producing Children and Young People Plans (CYPPS), provided any type of specialist service.

# Hundreds of British children could be being trafficked, Barnardo's says

Networks of men may be grooming hundreds of British children for sexual exploitation, the charity's latest survey suggests

- **Rachel Williams**
- [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Tuesday 17 November 2009 07.00 GMT
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Martin Narey, chief executive of Barnardo's children's charity. Photograph: Graham Turner

Sophisticated networks of older men may be grooming hundreds of British [children](#) to be trafficked within the UK for sexual exploitation, the charity Barnardo's believes.

Organised criminals are gaining the trust of vulnerable young girls by showering them with gifts and affection, before plying them with alcohol and drugs, according to a report out today. They are then moved from city to city, where they are forced to have sex with numerous other men.

Barnardo's estimates that thousands of British children could be being sold for sex around the country, yet only 20% of local authorities have any specialist services to help them. Many children believe what has happened is their own fault, and are so ashamed that they never speak out about the abuse they suffer, campaigners say.

At the time of a snapshot survey last month by the charity, 21 projects were working with 609 sexually exploited children, around half of whom go missing on a regular basis. Ninety of them – spread over 15 projects – appeared to have been "internally trafficked".

Wendy Shepherd, a service manager for the charity in the north-east, said she believed the total number being trafficked within the UK was likely to be in the hundreds, given that Barnardo's only works on sexual exploitation in 20 of the 209 local authorities in the country.

The report, *Whose Child Now?*, describes how girls are befriended by men who present themselves as boyfriends, offering them drink, presents and sometimes even flats to live in. But eventually they face "payback" time, when they are taken miles from home and told they must have sex with the man's "friends", and threatened with violence if they refuse.

Imogen – not her real name – was 13 when the man she thought was her boyfriend started driving her around the country, taking her to hotels in Leeds, Bradford, Manchester and London for nights at a time.

"Some men asked 'How old is she?'" she told the report's authors. "Some asked 'Have you got any younger?' They were really sick.

"It's really hard to talk about girls being trafficked in this country; no one wants to believe it ... I wanted to escape, but he just controlled me. It was a mental thing – I was terrified."

The chief executive of Barnardo's, former prison service director-general Martin Narey, said spending a night with one of the charity's services recently had left him shaken.

"I don't think I'm easily shocked; I used to run the prison service," he said. "But I was very, very struck by the poverty, desperation and hopelessness of these young girls.

Shepherd said the exploitation was becoming more organised and the abusers more sophisticated. "There are networks of older men grooming and trafficking children within the UK," she said. "It's a growing phenomenon and it's extremely difficult to police."

She added: "The children we work with feel a terrible sense of shame. They've been forced to do awful things by the adults who groom and control them – yet somehow society blames them. A child cannot consent to their own abuse."

In the last year Barnardo's, which next month will launch a TV advertising campaign on sexual exploitation, has worked with 1,060 children and young people who had suffered at the hands of abusers, in 20 local authorities. "We don't know the true extent of this problem," Narey said. "But we know, however hidden from the public eye it might be, that it affects many thousands of children."

## **UK children 'trafficked for sex'**



Girls are often threatened with violence by men who had befriended them

**Children as young as 10 are being moved around the UK to be sexually exploited at parties organised by paedophiles, a charity says.**

Barnardo's says that thousands of girls and boys are at risk of organised trafficking, and accuses councils of failing the victims.

The organisation says the vast majority of local authorities do not provide expert help for such children. It urges councils to commission research and to act on the results.

In its report, *Whose Child Now?*, the charity says that, although there are more than 200 local authorities across the UK, only 40 are known to provide specialist services for the victims of sexual exploitation. Barnardo's runs just over half of those services. In those 21 areas, it works with more than 1,000 children who were sexually exploited in the past year.

**Often threatened**

Lisa Stacey, who wrote the report, told BBC News: "Wherever we have been asked by a council to carry out research we have come across young people who have been exploited.



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Martin Narey, Barnardo's chief exec: "I was horrified by the vulnerability"

