

# 2 Warning signs of exploitation

## *Undocumented Migrants*

Human trafficking is more common than most people realise. Many victims are stuck in a situation of exploitation for a long time and are not able to or cannot risk asking for help. This applies all the more to victims who are undocumented. You can help by identifying signs of human trafficking and taking appropriate action.

### What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. One specific characteristic of human trafficking is that the victim does not feel free to leave the situation.



**Please note!** Proof of the use of force or coercion is not necessary when a minor is being exploited!

**Types of human trafficking:** sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation and forced organ trade.

**Human trafficking is not the same as people smuggling:** the aim of people smuggling is to illegally transport people across national borders. The aim of human trafficking is exploitation.

### Signs of human trafficking

Circumstances that put undocumented migrants in an extra vulnerable position to be exploited include:

- Unlawful residence in the Netherlands
- Not having access to a Dutch bank account
- Informal payment

There are usually additional signs in cases of human trafficking/exploitation. You will see a number of common examples on the next page.



It is important for you to remain alert if you have recognised one or several of these signs. The absence of these signs does not necessarily mean that the person is not a victim. **Always follow your gut instinct!**



### Restriction of freedom/independence

- >> Is constantly accompanied by someone, not allowed to speak for themselves
- >> Does not have access to own money
- >> Mobile phone has been taken from them or is being used to exercise control
- >> Does not have access to their own passport
- >> Does not know own work or residential address
- >> Has limited contact with the outside world
- >> Has debts with the employer or smuggler
- >> Did not need to pay for the journey to Europe/ the Netherlands



### Coercion

- >> Was misled about the working conditions/brought to the Netherlands under false pretences
- >> Is being mistreated, blackmailed, forced
- >> Is being threatened, for example with being reported to the police, or with homelessness
- >> Family is being threatened
- >> Is forced to carry out assigned activities as a result of their vulnerable or dependent position
- >> Sex work: is not allowed to refuse customers



### Labour conditions

- >> Receives little or no salary
- >> Works all the time, but never has any money
- >> Has to do criminal jobs and hand over money
- >> Sleeps at the workplace in substandard conditions
- >> Has to work or be available to work for many hours a week
- >> Has to conduct dangerous or unhealthy work
- >> No protective clothing for unsafe activities



### Minors

- >> Found in prostitution, criminality, labour, begging or service provision
- >> Is skipping classes or not attending school at all
- >> Has to earn money. It is unclear why, how and for whom
- >> An accompanying adult claims to be family, but is not able to prove this
- >> Receives phone calls from unknown callers/numbers
- >> Family members are dependent on the minor's income
- >> Tells a seemingly rehearsed story
- >> Suddenly looks provocative or sexy
- >> Forced to work until late at night
- >> Is secretive about (a) new friend(s)



### Physical/mental health

- >> Signs of abuse or self-injury
- >> Uncared for and/or malnourished
- >> Injuries due to heavy work
- >> Is not permitted to receive medical assistance
- >> Mental health problems
- >> Anxious, worried
- >> Striking tattoos (especially women)
- >> Indications of sexual abuse; STD, abortion
- >> Scar indicative of organ removal
- >> Addicted to drugs provided by employer
- >> Sexual intimidation by employer



### Other observations

- >> Unexplained changes in behaviour
- >> Suddenly has lots of money or expensive things
- >> Is often gone without anyone knowing where
- >> Is picked up by an unfamiliar van (eg. to go to work)
- >> Has multiples phones or a disposable phone
- >> Suspicions of criminal behaviour such as drug dealing, hemp cutting, theft