

## The impact of trauma summary

**13.1.** Victims' early accounts may be affected by the impact of trauma. This can result in delayed disclosure, difficulty recalling facts, or symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Victims may also be reluctant to self-identify for a number of other reasons that can make understanding their experiences challenging.

### Trauma-informed practice

**13.2.** Those working with victims should consider the fact that victims have been through traumatic events when approaching how they work with them. Trauma-informed methods of working are based upon an understanding of the harmful effects of traumatic experiences together with fundamental principles of compassion and respect. Any form of professional interaction with a person who has suffered human trafficking or slavery should be treated as an opportunity to help them to progress towards a long-term situation of safety, stability and well-being.

**13.3.** The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct for All Professionals Working with Survivors of Human Trafficking and Slavery (TiCC) by Rachel Witkin and Dr Katy Robjant, published by the Helen Bamber Foundation is designed to enable professionals in all fields of discipline, and in any working context to:

- Establish and maintain a mutual relationship of trust with victims in any working context or environment
- Impart a consistent sense of calm, security and safety throughout the course of their work
- Increase the confidence of victims and minimise the risks of causing distress and re-traumatisation
- Remain safe and well in the course of their work, avoiding secondary traumatisation and professional 'burnout'

### The Trauma-Informed Code of Conduct contains advice on how professionals can:

- Understand victims' presentation
- Focus on current and future safety
- Establish a mutual relationship of trust and for sensitive personal information
- Communicate a sense of safety and provide a calm, consistent and welcoming environment, referring back to the 'here and now'
- Vet other people who accompany victims

- Explain professionals' identity, role and duties
- Work with interpreters
- Refer to instil calm
- Work with parents who are with children and babies
- Use names correctly
- Maintain Awareness of communication in all forms
- Set realistic goals and objectives
- Support victims in giving a full account of their trafficking or slavery background
- Work with victims to enable disclosure of instilled beliefs and fears about exploiters, including exploiters' use of existing belief systems and ritualised violence as a form of control

**13.4.** Annex 1 of the [Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards](#) offers practical guidance on working with victims and provides further guidance on good practice for working with people who have experienced traumatic events.

**Note:** All information in this guidance sheet is lifted from the statutory guidance available [here](#).