



## Sharing our knowledge and experience

The asphaleia care team were very honoured to be invited by ECPAT UK (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) to attend, and present, at a Roundtable event on *Safe accommodation for victims of child trafficking*.

ECPAT UK held this roundtable because of growing concerns about the fact that known or suspected child victims of trafficking, some of the most vulnerable people in the UK, are continuing to go missing from care because they are often not being provided with the necessary safe and secure accommodation and support that addresses their particular vulnerabilities and needs.

Those attending the event included many of the UK's leading children's charities (e.g. Barnardos, action for children, the NSPCC) and numerous county councils and agencies such as Metropolitan police, missing person's bureau and trauma and recovery centre together.

Worthing care team leader Davina Fuller presented the 24hr safety program for child victims of trafficking that our service uses and the added safety measures we have in place to ensure their safety.

"I was asked to present from two main points," explains Davina. "What makes trafficked children feel safe in accommodation and what makes accommodation safe for trafficked children.

"This was a unique opportunity to share what we had learnt from years of experience of accommodating those most vulnerable and how vital working closely together with social services and the police has been in our success.

"I found it invaluable to be part of event like this, giving a perspective from our experience to those other councils that have only just a come to the realisation that trafficking is an issue and it's on their doorstep. The experience I have had supporting child victims of trafficking and seeing what an effect it can have on such a young and vulnerable lives, has made me passionate to positively impact and see change happen for such a deceptive and damaging crime," Davina concludes.

## Background to [ECPAT UK](#)

ECPAT UK has been aware of this issue for several years. In 2007, they published a report entitled *Missing Out: A Study of Child Trafficking in the North-West, North-East and West Midlands*. A disturbing and significant finding that emerged from this study was the high number of separated children going missing from local authority care and never being found. Of the 80 reported cases of known or suspected child victims of trafficking identified in the report, 52 children (64%) went missing from social services, of which only four were located.

Another key finding of the report was that when children went missing, it tended to be within the first seven days of being within local authority care, with specific instances of children going missing within 24-72 hours.

In the light of these findings, ECPAT UK launched its *Three Small Steps* campaign to protect child victims of trafficking in late 2009, with a call to government and local authorities to ensure that these children are provided with safe and supported accommodation. As part of this campaign, ECPAT UK undertook face-to-face interviews with professionals during 2010 and early 2011 to explore what makes accommodation safe for trafficked children.

If you want any information on asphaleia care's specialist services, please call us on 01903 236522 or visit our website [www.asphaleia.co.uk](http://www.asphaleia.co.uk).