



The Inns of  
Court College  
of Advocacy

The Council of the Inns of Court

## YOUTH JUSTICE

### An Insight Into Child Trafficking

**An interview about Child Trafficking with Laura Duran –  
Head of Training, ECPAT**

**Chapter One - The work of ECPAT and their training**

(transcript of [video](#))

**A** **Lynda Gibbs:** Laura Duran thank you for coming to speak to me today. I want to ask you about your work at ECPAT and if you could just tell me a little bit about your role and what ECPAT does?

**B** **Laura Duran:** Thank you for having me Lynda.

**C** ECPAT stands for Every Child Protected Against Trafficking. We actually started about 22 years ago as a response to the commercial sexual exploitation of children, predominantly in travel and tourism.

**D** We then went on to publish the first piece of research on child trafficking here in the UK, so we've become really well-known as the leading organisation that is dealing with issues that affect child victims of trafficking.

**E** My role within the organisation as head of training is to lead on the capacity-building branch of the organisation; predominantly to ensure that professionals have the ability to identify, support and protect children who are in exploitation.

**F** **Lynda Gibbs:** OK, so during the course of our conversation today I want to ask you about the scale of the problem of trafficked children in the UK, some of the dangers they face and some of the methods that are used to keep them involved in trafficking.

**G** But first of all can I ask you - do you think there's quite a degree of misunderstanding about the meaning of "modern slavery"?

**H** **Laura Duran:** I think that unfortunately - and this I think has to do with a lot of the imagery that has been used in the public sphere, in that the issue is presented with imagery of for example; hands chained, or handcuffs, or other images that suggest limited freedom of movement as a crucial element that constitutes people in exploitation.

**A** But as we see most often that is just not the case; people are controlled in all  
sorts of ways, and even though limited freedom of movement can be an element  
of control, it can also be that the person is free to pop into the shop, or go down  
**B** the road - but that doesn't mean that they are not being exploited.

**Lynda Gibbs:** And why specifically are children trafficked?

**C** **Laura Duran:** Well children will be inherently vulnerable by the sheer fact that  
they are of age of minority, so they will be targeted and recruited for the very  
basis that they're children - so they do present as particularly vulnerable to  
exploitation.

**D** **Lynda Gibbs:** And why are they so useful to the people who are trafficking them?  
What makes them so useful?

**E** **Laura Duran:** I guess not all children, but children in general do have a tendency  
to for example take the path of least resistance or please the adult that they  
have for example identified as being in some sort of authority figure that they  
**F** respect. So, they might be easier to manipulate, easier to fool, or recruit into  
these kinds of situations and easier to maintain them in control so that they  
comply with the kind of exploitation they are trying to subject them to.

**G** **Lynda Gibbs:** And can you give me some examples of those methods of control  
that are used - physical and mental - on these children?

**H** **Laura Duran:** Sure; for example children can be controlled through debt  
bondage, they might be controlled through spiritual or institutional abuse, some  
may be controlled by the use of vindictive sexual abuse images, grooming,  
isolation, giving them a sense of belonging, threats or threats to their loved ones  
or families members - just to name a few.

**A** **Lynda Gibbs:** And I want to ask you specifically about county lines; what does that mean?

**B** **Laura Duran:** So county lines is a term that we have borrowed from policing; it's referring to a new form of organised criminal networks expanding outside of metropolitan areas predominantly into coastal and market towns for the purposes of setting up drug distribution and drug supply enterprises in those towns.

**C** The reason why county lines comes into the sphere of modern slavery is because all their gang members are relying on exploiting children and adults for the purposes of fulfilling this drug distribution enterprise.

**D** The way they do this is by recruiting children to transport drugs and they will often target vulnerable adults in those towns through a method that is known as "cuckooing", in which they will be taking over that vulnerable adult's flat to make it the centre of distribution.

**E** **Lynda Gibbs:** And in your experience is it more likely to be boys or girls who are recruited to do this county lines work?

**F** **Laura Duran:** In terms of drug transportation, we do see that it mostly is boys that are being recruited, but we do see an incidence of girls being recruited for other types of exploitation within the gang.

**G** **Lynda Gibbs:** And the research that we did on behalf of the Inns' College when we were preparing guidance for barristers was that looked-after children are even more vulnerable than others because of their situation about being in care. Can you shed any more light on that situation?

**H** **Laura Duran:** We do see that they are particular situations that can increase a child's vulnerability to recruitment; being a looked-after child can be one of the

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factors that does increase that vulnerability, as can be for example being a young carer, or being around other children who are themselves also being exploited. So there are lots of other factors that can absolutely increase that child's

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vulnerability.

***END***

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