



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 Two - ECPAT's report – 'Heading Back to Harm'

(transcript of [video](#))

A **Lynda Gibbs:** I want to ask you now if I may about a report that ECPAT produced called "Heading Back to Harm", which dealt with children going missing and children being criminalised, children who were in care to start with.

B And the key issues that appear to arise from that study is:

- C**
- A lack of awareness
 - A problem with data collection
 - And the unnecessary criminalisation of children

D Now is it right that British children are the most prominent nationality in terms of trafficked children?

E **Laura Duran:** That's correct in that the most identified group of children in the last year's reported statistics was British children who were reported to have been predominantly exploited for sexual exploitation, followed then by Vietnamese and Albanian children becoming in the statistics at the same amount of referrals.

F **Lynda Gibbs:** OK, now one of the recommendations from that report relates to independent child trafficking advocates and guardians, who are there to protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of trafficked, unaccompanied and separated children - what do you hope that that initiative will achieve?

G **Laura Duran:** Well ECPAT has been campaigning for guardianship for many years now, and we greatly welcome the fact that through the modern slavery act the government saw the importance of giving independent advocates for children who are victims of trafficking a statutory footing.

H Unfortunately that scheme has not yet been rolled out in all of England, it is only in the earlier adopter sights in Hampshire, Greater Manchester and Wales, through Barnardo's who is the provider. That role is incredibly important to

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protect child victims of trafficking as they may present with highly complex needs in very specialised, different areas of law.

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Lynda Gibbs: Do you think it's important there are specialist advocates to deal with range of complex issues affecting children?

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Laura Duran: Absolutely; I think that advocates need to keep in mind that what other concurrent litigation the child may be facing and they need to understand how those decisions may affect the way they will face prosecution within the realm of the criminal justice system.

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One of the most common scenarios we see in a lot of cases of children who are exploited in criminality is low awareness amongst other professionals in the criminal justice system as to the legal framework for child victims of trafficking.

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So many for example will be advised to plead guilty to offenses that they are not necessarily guilty of because those offences were committed as a direct consequence of their exploitation.

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Lynda Gibbs: And what are the common offences that advocates need to be aware of when they're doing this kind of work?

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Laura Duran: Some of the most common offenses that we see children being prosecuted for are for example cannabis cultivation, or drug transportation, the possession of offensive weapons, carrying false or fake identity documents, theft, burglary, pickpocketing, or offenses relating to that sphere of criminality such as forced begging.

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Lynda Gibbs: And in terms of that area of work, is there any data collection or areas of research that you think are really important that should be happening right now?

A **Laura Duran:** So unfortunately the National Crime Agency (NCA) published very helpful statistics every year on the amount of people who are referred as potential victims of trafficking, but they do not currently desegregate the

B statistics between forced labour and forced criminality. So we cannot really gauge the amount of children who are being identified for this type of exploitation.

C The other area that I feel there is substantial need for further research, particularly on evidence-based approaches into early or mid-range interventions to really assist young people to exit exploitation.

D ***END***

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