



MS-CoP Update 23

December 2023

PREVIOUS MS-COP UPDATES

Hello,

Welcome to **Update 23** for the **MSCOS Community of Practice (MS-CoP)**, which focuses on positive outcomes for children and young adults who have experienced trafficking. This is the topic of our forthcoming online expert forum which is conducted via partnership of two outcome set frameworks: **MSCOS** and the [Creating Stable Futures: Implementing a Positive Outcomes Framework \(CSF-POF\)](#), | [Sheffield Hallam University](#).

Thank you to all our contributors for this update, particularly **Patricia Hynes, Professor of Social Justice, Sheffield Hallam University**, who provides information and a current update on the **CSF-POF project**; **Kirsty Thomson, Senior Director of Europe for Kids In Need of Defence (KIND)**, and **Jerome Elam, CEO Trafficking in America task Force; Vice Chair, International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC)**, who converse on the specific needs and risks of children and young adults, reflecting on their international work.

Our expert online forum: Ensuring positive outcomes for the protection, well-being and social inclusion of young adults (age 18-25) who have experienced human trafficking (7 Feb 2024)

FORMAT AND SPEAKERS LIST





Peter Parker,
MSCOS Research Advisory Board

"I am looking forward to speaking at this forum and joining the session to workshop on a practical tool for the **Creating Stable Futures framework**. It could lead us to develop the right tools to shape a young life - and avoid a young life being shaped and exploited by a perpetrator instead. I know that young adults need to be able to trust that they can reach out for help, and that many are too afraid to do so. If they can't ask for help, they can easily turn to the wrong person and become trapped. Focusing on the real, positive core outcomes is the right approach: it is the *visibility of outcomes being achieved* that encourages young people to be identified, to build trust and find confidence in themselves."

WE ARE PUBLISHED!



Sohail Jannesari,
Research Fellow and MSCOS Ethics Advisor

"Our paper details the research process that led to the development of the **Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set (MSCOS)**. It involved comprehensive reviews across multiple databases and direct interviews with survivors to identify a wide range of outcomes. These were then refined through a collaborative consensus process, resulting in our seven core outcomes.

Survivor responses during the consensus process were weighted more heavily than those of other stakeholders. **Survivor Alliance** is an **MSCOS** partner and survivor leaders are **MSCOS** authors, researchers and members of our **Research Advisory Board for the MSCOS project**. We are using our **MSCOS Community of Practice (MS-CoP)** to propose and take forward further academic research projects on survivor leadership."





MSCOS: A Survivor-Driven Consensus on Priority Outcomes for Recovery, Wellbeing, and Reintegration

Look out for: Information from other authors of the **MSCOS** study in forthcoming updates



Dr Sian Oram,
Reader in Women's Mental Health at King's College London

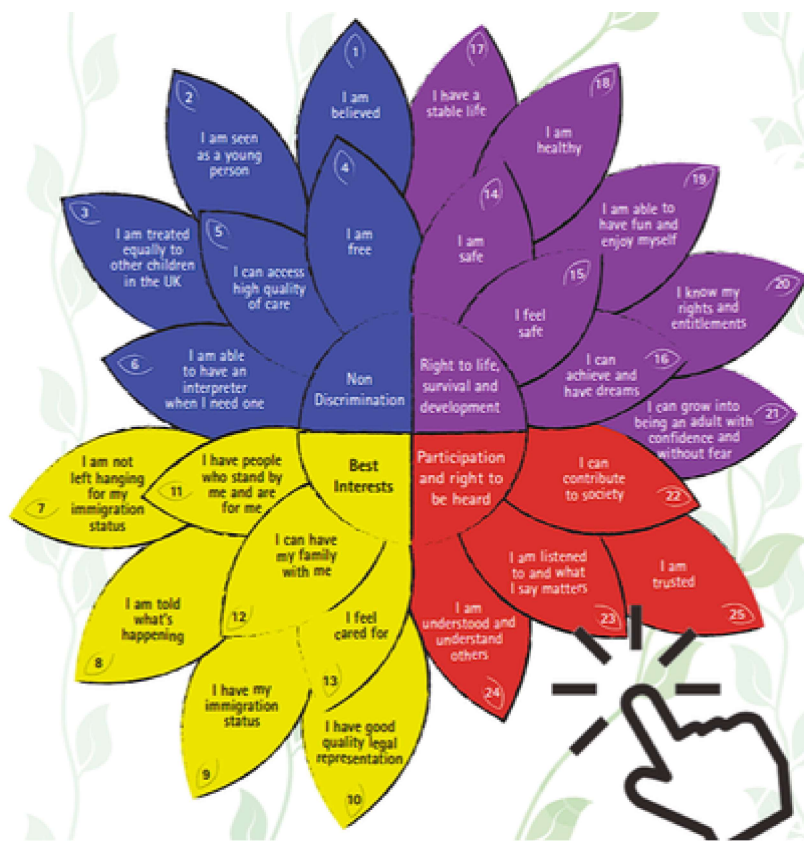
"As the instigator and academic lead for the **MSCOS** project, I am proud that we have not only produced an important published resource for policy, research, and practice but that we also demonstrated that it is possible to take a fully participatory approach to developing a core outcome set.

The thriving **MSCOS Community of Practice** is pivotal in our ongoing efforts to establish consensus on standards, best practices, and measures across the seven **MSCOS** outcome areas. I am glad to be collaborating and learning from this vibrant community!"





Patricia Hynes,
Professor of Social Justice, Sheffield Hallam University



THE CREATING STABLE FUTURES FRAMEWORK

"A follow-up award has now been granted by the **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** for the **Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice** to continue a partnership with **ECPAT UK** to develop and operationalise the **CSF-POF** across the four nations of the UK.

The overarching aim of this follow-up work is to ensure the **CSF-POF** is known and utilised within the safeguarding community. Specific objectives include exploring ways of accessing and using the 25 Outcomes and 86 Indicators detailed in the **CSF-POF** as well as providing a **dis-aggregated and user-friendly practice tool that frontline practitioners can use to work with young people and become tuned in to their specific needs and experiences.** This practice tool is now under development.

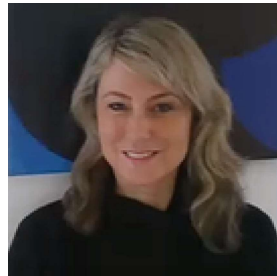


We aim to provide eight **Regional Learning Events** to frontline practitioners, line managers and other professionals across the



subsequently hosted online, with adapted pedagogic techniques for online learning. For details or developments within this follow-on project see: [Creating Stable Futures: Implementing a Positive Outcomes Framework | Sheffield Hallam University \(shu.ac.uk\)](https://www.shu.ac.uk)

MS-CoP FEATURE: POSITIVE CORE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS



Rachel Witkin,
MS-CoP Director

"It was a pleasure to catch up recently with Kirsty Thomson and Jerome Elam. They are key contributors for the [OSCE/ODIHR International NRM Handbook](#), who promote NRMs and advise internationally on protection, individual support and appropriate care for children and young people who have experienced, or are at risk of, human trafficking/modern slavery. They will be contributors for our online expert forum on **Ensuring positive outcomes for the protection, well-being and social inclusion of young adults (age 18-25) who have experienced human trafficking (7 Feb 2024)** and here they share some knowledge and insights and in relation to their work."



Kirsty Thomson, Senior Director of Europe for Kids In Need of Defence (KIND), discusses how to meet the specific needs and risks of children and young adults with multi-disciplinary, inter-agency NRMs. She has expertise in representing children who have been trafficked to, and within, Europe as well as experience in guardianship advocacy programs and child centred NRMs including the [UK NRM Child Pilot](#).

KIND'S WORK AND FOCUS FOR 2024





Jerome Elam, Founder and CEO of Trafficking in America task Force and Vice Chair, International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC), and a US Marine Corps Veteran reflects on his personal experience as a child victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation, and why it is essential to understand, and respond appropriately to the impact of adverse childhoods on the maturity and coping mechanisms of young adult survivors. **Jerome** explains some 'do's' and don'ts of support for children and young adults, informed by his body of work as an international survivor leader; speaker and trainer in the fields of criminal justice, foster care and child protection services. Having become a **US marine** and then a **biotech engineer** he talks about the benefits of support for young adults into education and also vocational training via **US Trade Schools**.

MORE ABOUT TRAFFICKING IN AMERICA TASK FORCE AND ISTAC



What is the impact of trafficking on children and young people?

Kirsty Thompson: Trafficking of children is a human rights violation and also a major child protection issue. Children are inherently more vulnerable than adults, at higher risk, and even less likely to self-identify as having been trafficked.

Jerome Elam: The younger that you are impacted by trauma the more difficult it is – your brain cannot process what is going on so your brain will effectively 'hide' in some place until you are older. When you are eventually able to establish a sense of self, or vestige of self, it can be catastrophic. I know this from my personal experience as a victim of child trafficking.

Traffickers cunningly put the onus on the child for what they are doing to them. This is common in all forms of exploitation: 'Why are you making me do this to you?'; 'You have brought this on yourself'... there are many variations, and a great deal of verbal abuse and insult alongside violence and control.

Imago is an Italian term for the unconscious, idealized mental image of an adult, a parent figure, which influences a person's behaviour – it means the adult defines who you are, like an image. Children and young people will retain the concept that there is something inherently wrong with them; that they could and should have stopped what was happening; that they are to blame, and the trafficking is their fault. I had 25 years of therapeutic care, however it was





If you have been a child victim of abuse and trafficking, anything chaotic that you experience afterwards will recreate the environment of your childhood. Traumatized children and young people may try anything to withdraw from it, disrupt it or escape it. They can behave in ways that force abandonment from adults, because they want to **'beat them to the punch'**. We see this a lot with children in foster care. When I train foster parents and child protection services in the USA, I tell them, *"whatever happens, stay with the child unconditionally – do not give up on them like they have been taught to give up on themselves. No matter how much they may push you away, just stay with them."*

It is especially problematic if NRMs and equivalent systems demonstrate indifference to a young person's individual character, viewpoint and situation. This happens when there is lack of continuity, cohesion and consistency; for example, young people are 'passed around' to different organisations, professionals and forms of piecemeal support. This can be experienced a bit like trafficking and is not conducive to building trust.

Kirsty Thompson: Systems need to be involved with children far earlier to identify them as being at risk and protect them from (re) trafficking: if a child is repeatedly involved in criminal activities; goes missing or is being repeatedly suspended or excluded from school; is engaging in self-harming behaviours; substance abuse or entering into risky or sexual relationships *it is essential that the child is not ever just dismissed as 'difficult and a problem'* but that questions are raised as to whether they may be suffering, or at risk of, abuse, neglect, targeting, recruitment or exploitation in trafficking.

When we fully understand trafficking – the ease with which adult perpetrators can abuse children due to power imbalance, we can instill a much deeper, wider understanding of just how many children, all around us in our communities, are unfortunately at risk.

Jerome Elam: Unconditional love and trust from a caring adult is a vital component of a safe and healthy childhood. This comes from my own personal experience - if you build a car and leave out the engine – if as a child you are not given an emotionally stable environment and you are devoid of love, all of the tools you should be given as a child are not there.

I always had, in my memory, an aunt who loved me in this way, when all other adults around me were chaotic and hostile. She could not save me from the violations of other adults, but this memory and the sense of connection I got from it has supported my recovery throughout my life.

The millions of children and young people who are victims of trafficking and lack any support or therapeutic care and have never had an adult in their lives who loved them unconditionally, have been given nothing at all. They are the most difficult survivors to work with and it is unacceptable that they are often let down and then 'spit out' at 18 by the systems supposedly designed for their protection.

What forms of support do children need?

Jerome Elam: I can say with confidence that consistent guardianship, which also consists of advocacy in the child's best interests and a deep interest in their individual experience and character, is the only form of support and care that works. **PET Scans** of traumatized children show that with the proper care, therapeutic counselling and environment, they can heal. Their overall health improves because the stress children suffer is detrimental to health.

Kirsty Thompson: It is essential that children have a dedicated professional allocated to them individually whom they can trust. Identification requires integral pathways for child protection, care and support which are central to society, ie child protection services. These should apply whatever the immigration status of a child. Effective NRMs for children ensure that every child has a professional with the training, qualifications and skills of a **Guardian Advocate** (or equivalent role) as set out in the **NRM Handbook** so they can build and maintain a relationship of trust from the earliest point possible. For children without safe and appropriate care, a court-appointed parental guardian is also essential.



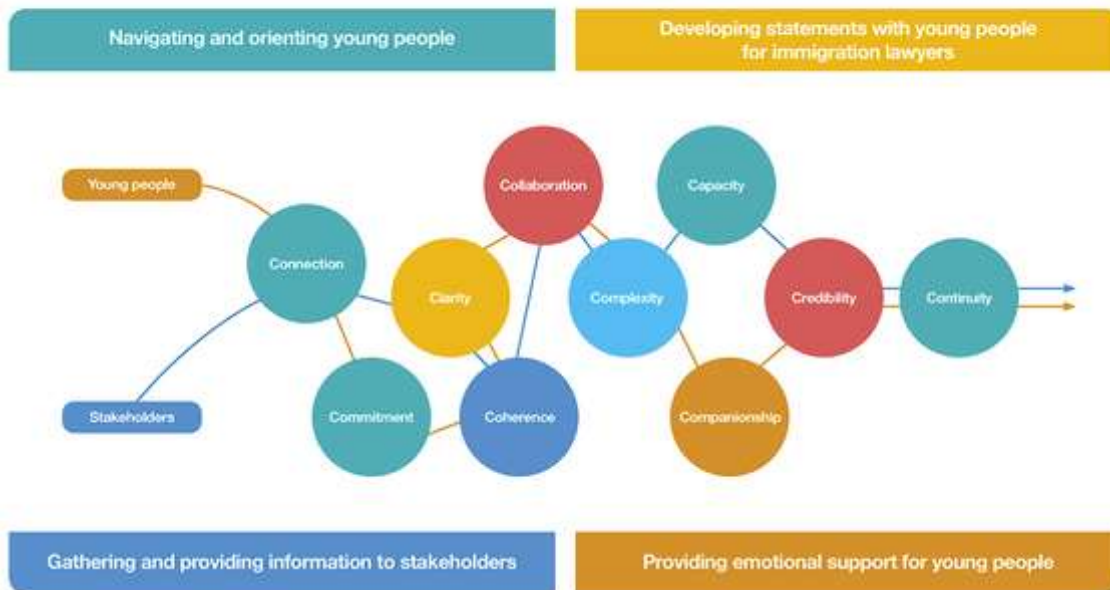


participation. At **KIND**, our aim is to ensure that children and young people have access to specialist legal assistance as a key safeguard to their protection and fulfilment of rights. We also believe that all unaccompanied and separated children, should have a trusted adult alongside them in addition to specialist legal assistance. This accompaniment is a vital function, to help them navigate complex systems and procedures, ensure access to social inclusion and education, to act as a central focal point, advocating for their rights and supporting their participation. We see the importance of this through our international programs including in Europe.

The Guardian Advocacy Programme, Scotland:

I have also seen the benefits of this through the development of the Guardian Advocacy programme in Scotland eleven years ago. This started out as a small pilot but independent evaluations have continued to recognise the added value of this model, including how it complements and supports the provision of legal assistance. The **Human Trafficking (Scotland) Act 2015** placed the service within a legal framework. As a service it is split between the **Scottish Refugee Council** and **Aberlour**. A report issued this year on **Survivor Informed Support for Trafficked Children in Scotland** made recommendations, citing the **NRM Handbook**, that that any NRM should build on existing national child protection systems, where a child’s best interest is at the centre of decision making in line with state obligations under the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. It also notes that continuity and consistency are vital in establishing trusting relationships as a pre-condition for recovery. **The Scottish model of guardianship** provides support for all separated children combined with provision of support post-18 for care-experienced young people.

The four functions and the 10 C's of Guardianship



How does experience of child trafficking impact young adulthood?

Jerome Elam: *When we are talking about 18-25 year olds, we must take into account their adverse childhood experiences and the trauma that this causes, because it can stunt their emotional growth into adulthood. The maturity of a vulnerable young adult who has been victimised by traffickers in childhood, may not have developed in parallel with their age. You could be a 25 year old, and yet see the world - in certain aspects - as a 12 or 13 year old.*

In my experience, you are likely to continue to view some things with the understanding of a child until you are able to get





negative messages you have been told and learn to see yourself as worthy of love and affection and as a valuable person in the world. At the same time, you will be coping, both online and offline, with peers who have or have not had your experience, and of course potential traffickers and perpetrators who offer inducements and threats which you may not be able to manage or fully understand.

Kirsty Thompson: *Throughout the course of my career, I have recommended that specialised individual support is provided for young adults continuing after they turn 18 and transition to adulthood. The systemic transition from being a vulnerable child with little autonomy over your life, to suddenly, overnight, having the status of an adult, without any appropriate support for this transition, puts young people at high risk for multiple reasons, not least because they are a target group for traffickers.*

This creates a big risk gap: as **Jerome** explains, there are clear reasons why young people with histories of abuse and trafficking struggle to manage this sudden, difficult transition which is fraught with obstacles. There is a strong rationale for strengthening our existing systems and professional responses.



In a nutshell:

The **OSCE/ODIHR NRM Handbook** advises that children should have continuous support from their allocated guardian advocate at least until they reach the majority age of 18. Reaching majority age is a transitional time with multiple challenges. Young adults with histories of trafficking and traumatic events may not be mature enough or psychologically prepared to cope with sudden independence that is not appropriately guided or supported. It is rare that all rights and entitlements will have been resolved by this age and the challenge of decision-making, including on legal matters, can continue long after a child's 18th birthday, often **increasing** in complexity after that date.

Jerome Elam: *It is essential to have consistent, trauma informed care all the way through systems for children and young people. There should be no sudden drop of support at 18; children need preparation to transition into early adulthood and young adults need the tools to take care of themselves. It is terrible to see how young victims of trafficking are 'spat out' of the system when they need so much support; many young people that leave foster care do so without an education beyond 9th or 10th grade and are without any tools to survive. If they spiral down and end up homeless, they are at serious risk.*

Overall, the most important thing for both children and adults is access to mental health support – there are so many sudden transitions and continuity of care is critical. The move into adulthood is a huge transition and it must be taken seriously in all countries if young people are not to be left as prime targets for traffickers. As **Kirsty** says, NRMs must be specifically designed for children and young people, not the other way around.

Like any young adult, they need support and access to **education and training which is not 'one size fits all' but is based on their own individual qualities, capacities, needs and choice.** A college education does not suit all young people, and some will prefer **vocational training that can get them swiftly into gainful employment.** I was an intellectually curious 17 year old and a voracious reader. However, I joined the US Marine Corps at 17 to completely





Trade Schools in the USA offer real qualifications for trades: Auto mechanic, refrigeration engineer, plumber, cosmetologist, radiology technician, medical assistant – with counselling and practical advice for young people alongside. It's important to be up to date also on the opportunities that are on the internet for young people – online technologies, really great modalities.



**Arnas Tamasauskas,
MS-CoP Facilitator**

"I recently joined the MSCOS team as Facilitator for the Community of Practice. I find the topic of maturity in young adults particularly interesting as I am also a PhD student in musculoskeletal biology and an accredited member of **British Psychological Society** and **Royal Society of Biology**. For my research, I triangulate qualitative psychological methods with quantitative brain imaging analyses, to better understand four personalised aspects of different health conditions: risk factors, impact of, progression, and future prognosis. Modern slavery survival and survivor outcomes depend on analogous aspects: risks factors for abuse, physical and psychological scars, meeting survivor needs, and working towards self-actualisation.

It is difficult to neurologically define an "adult" as we exhibit neuro-plasticity throughout our lives, but research suggests that most prefrontal cortex connections finish establishing around the age of 21 to 25. What this means practically, is that young people may have some neurological disadvantage on organisational skills, conceptualisation and risk consideration. Adults also experience neurological epigenetic changes as a consequence of life events and their environment. Coupled with more social and cognitive experiences, adults may have the advantage in identifying instances of modern slavery recruitment or abusive relationships that may lead to exploitation, while young people may miss those cues and become vulnerable to abuse."

Arnas has published research in [Mindsum](#) and [Health Action Research Group](#)



Call for Accelerated Action by 2025 to Prevent and End Child Trafficking

ICAT is calling on all States and other relevant stakeholders to undertake the following ten actions by 2025 to prevent and end child trafficking globally:





LOOK OUT FOR:

23rd January HEAL Trafficking/Rights Lab Webinar:

Co-designed instruments and outcomes for Human Trafficking Survivor Services and Research



Providing high quality, effective health care services for Survivors of human trafficking is a priority – but how do we know what is effective and meets Survivor needs?

In this webinar, **HEAL** will explore with three research teams how they have used Survivor-informed research approaches to understand Survivor needs and develop outcomes and instruments for measuring Survivor health and well-being and evaluating services. Following the presentations there will be a Q&A and discussion panel.

The MSCOS Team are speaking! We look forward to seeing you there

Via Zoom 2:00-3:30pm GMT / 9:00-10:30am EST

LIVED EXPERIENCE: OPPORTUNITIES

DID YOU KNOW?

The MS-CoP is a forum for practitioners working in all fields and discipline, **to share perspectives and link practice. If you would like to feature your work or have feedback for us, please do get in touch!** Our criteria for features is based upon delivery of the **Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set (MSCOS)**, which comprises the 7 core outcomes that survivors of human trafficking have told us must be in place for their well-being, recovery and integration. Email us: mscos@kcl.ac.uk.

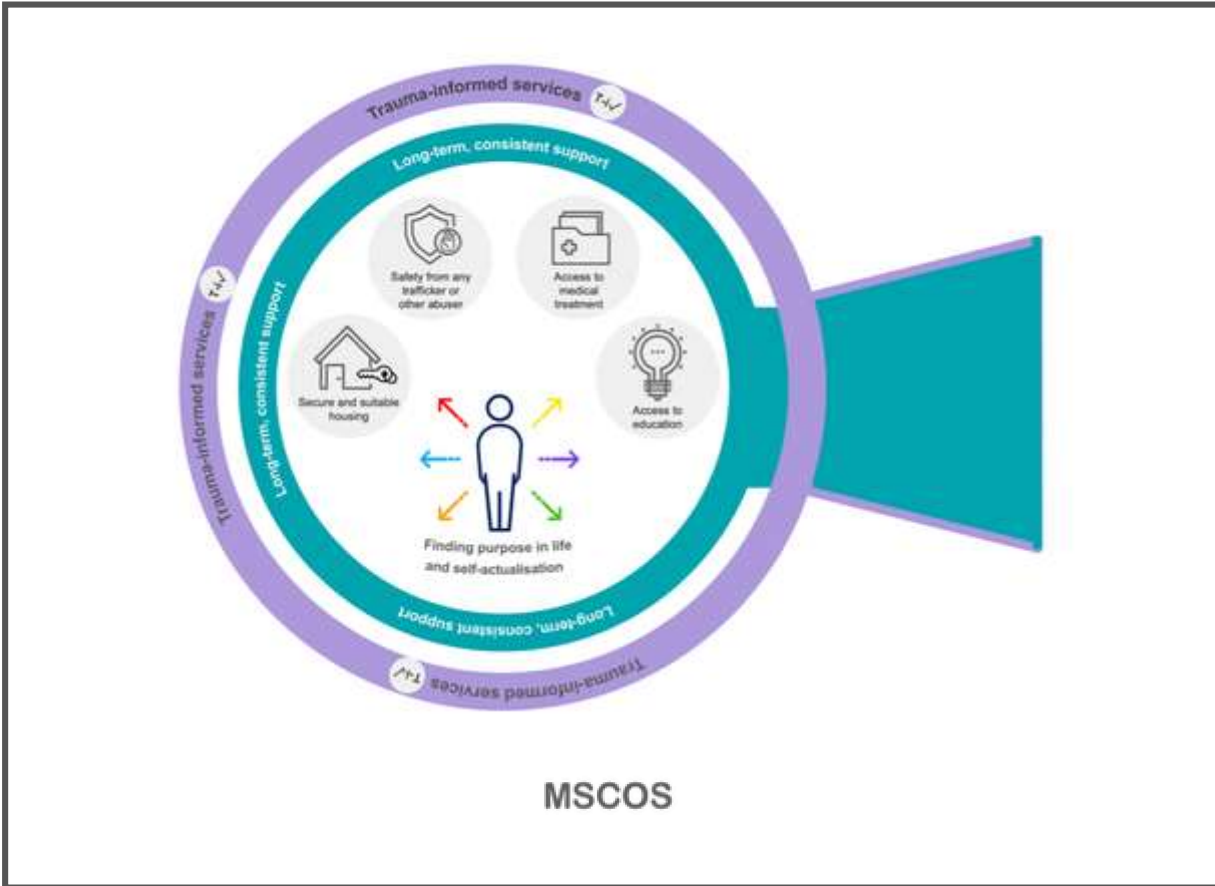


*The **MSCOS Community of Practice** is hosted by the Helen Bamber Foundation and directed by Rachel Witkin in collaboration*



Shanti Papnius, with the MSCOS Research Advisory Board - Bee Daniara, Brook, Juliet Josephi, Keiri Lewis, Mirri Jaimasco, Peter Parker, Ruth Aguele, and Wendy. It was designed, devised and established by Rachel Witkin and Queenie Sit, and is facilitated by Arnas Tamasauskas.

MODERN SLAVERY CORE OUTCOME SET





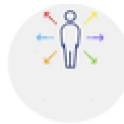
**SAFETY FROM
TRAFFICKERS**



**LONG-TERM,
CONSISTENT
SUPPORT**



**TRAUMA
INFORMED
SERVICES**



**PURPOSE IN LIFE,
SELF-ACTUALISATION**



**ACCESS TO
HEALTHCARE**





ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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