

CANNABIS CULTIVATION

DEFINITION:

Trafficking for cannabis cultivation means that victims are moved, usually by criminal networks, across borders and/or within European countries and made to work in cannabis farms set up in commercial or industrial properties, or private residential dwellings.

FACTS:

Evidence of high numbers of children, largely from South East Asia, who are being trafficked into the UK for the purpose of working in cannabis cultivation.

Made to work in 'cannabis factories' by organised criminal gangs, robbed of their freedom and subjected to extremely hazardous conditions.

Victims can be deprived of basic needs and made to stay indoors to regulate temperatures and lighting and water the plants.

These gangs may also use debt bondage and the threat of criminalisation and prosecution / imprisonment against the children and their families to prevent them from trying to escape.

The UK is now providing 90% of its own cannabis instead of importing from other countries.

QUOTE:

"The men locked me in and threatened me that I would be very sorry if anything happened to the plants. I only had an old mattress to sleep on and was brought food once a week."

TIP:

More useful information on how organised crime gangs are using trafficked children to cultivate cannabis - including a short radio interview by Stephen Nolan - can be found at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10998421>

