



Home Office

# Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA)

Version 1.0

This document provides background and guidance on the use of the RNA for confirmed victims of modern slavery.

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# About this guidance

This guidance is for staff at the Single Competent Authority (SCA), relevant employees of the Prime Contractor and support workers for confirmed victims of modern slavery who need to understand how to carry out the Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) for those who have received a positive conclusive grounds (CG) decision through the [National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#). It provides guidance on how to complete the RNA form, guidance on when victims' recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences may require continued support through the Home Office's Victim Care Contract (VCC) and guidance on where they should be met through alternative services.

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you, or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email (content removed).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **1.0**
- published on **27 September 2019**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

This is new guidance and will be updated on a regular basis as required.

### Related content

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# Introduction

## Purpose of instruction

This guidance explains the policy, process and procedure which must be followed when completing a RNA for a confirmed victim of modern slavery. It explains the issues for consideration for support workers in developing recommendations for ongoing support for victims with recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences, whether through the Victim Care Contract (VCC) or alternative services. It also details those issues for consideration for Single Competent Authority (SCA) decision makers when deciding on those recommendations. It applies to all staff dealing with the RNA and covers:

- the process for conducting the RNA
- how to complete the RNA form
- how to consider whether the victim has ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences
- how to consider whether ongoing VCC support is required or whether alternative services can meet any such recovery needs

## Background to modern slavery

Modern slavery is a serious crime in which people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. The true extent of modern slavery in the UK, and indeed globally, is unknown. Modern slavery is an international problem and victims (who may be European Economic Area (EEA) or non-EEA nationals) may have entered the UK legally, on forged documentation or clandestinely, or they may be British citizens living in the UK.

Modern slavery includes human trafficking and/or slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation takes a number of forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude, and victims come from all walks of life.

Victims may be unwilling to come forward to law enforcement or public protection agencies, not seeing themselves as victims, or fearing further reprisals from their abusers. Victims may also not always be recognised as such by those who come into contact with them.

### Related content

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# Recovery Needs Assessment Process

## Background to the Recovery Needs Assessment

This section provides information on the wider context in which the RNA operates.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's system for identifying and providing access to support to potential victims of modern slavery. The aim of the NRM is to lift victims out of a situation of exploitation, provide them with a period of intensive support to assist with their recovery, and get them to a position where they can begin to re-build their life. If required, the NRM can provide (through the Victim Care Contract (VCC) for adult victims in England and Wales): safe and secure accommodation, financial support and an allocated support worker who advocates for the victim as necessary.

Potential victims have their individual support needs assessed on entry to the NRM and through contact with their support worker while they remain in the system awaiting a conclusive grounds (CG) decision. The RNA, which is conducted after a positive CG, will allow support workers to work with victims in developing recommendations for support where they have ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences whether through the VCC or other services. Elements of VCC support will be assessed separately to ensure that the overall package of support is specific to the individual's ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences.

## Assessing Recovery Needs

The RNA enables support workers to consider whether a victim has any ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences following the Recovery period and positive CG decision and if so, whether continued VCC support is required to meet these needs. If the support worker proposes the continuation of elements of VCC support, they should also detail their recommendation(s) for its duration on the RNA form. The SCA will then decide the outcome of these recommendations. VCC support is only available for recovery needs arising from a victim's modern slavery experiences.

## The NRM Process

This section should be read in conjunction with the section "key steps in the NRM process in the [Victims of modern slavery – Competent Authority guidance](#).

**Following a positive RG decision, a victim will receive a minimum 45-day Recovery and Reflection period (Recovery Period) in England and Wales unless grounds of public order prevent it, or it is found that victim status was claimed improperly.**

At the beginning of the Recovery period, Support Providers are required to carry out a detailed needs-based assessment to identify what support the potential victim will require during the Recovery period, as well as any potential safeguarding issues that may affect that support.

Support during this period relates to the immediate and ongoing needs of the potential victim while the Single Competent Authority (SCA) makes a substantive CG decision. This support is offered until the potential victim receives a CG decision.

If a victim receives a negative RG decision they will not enter VCC support and will exit emergency support within 9 days if this has been provided.

### **Following a positive RG decision, the SCA will make a CG decision.**

The SCA determines whether, ‘on the balance of probabilities’, there are sufficient grounds to decide that the individual being considered is a victim of human trafficking or slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour.

The expectation is that the CG decision will be made as soon as possible after the 45 calendar days Recovery period.

See the ‘Making a conclusive grounds decision’ section of the [Victims of modern slavery – Competent Authority guidance](#) for more information.

## **Recovery Needs Assessment – process overview**

The Recovery Needs Assessment is to be conducted for every confirmed victim receiving VCC support as soon as possible following receipt by the victim of a positive CG decision ([Figure 1](#)). A minimum of **45 calendar days** of VCC ‘move-on’ support will be maintained for confirmed victims following their receipt of a positive CG decision in order to facilitate, where possible, their transition into alternative services.

The RNA includes a tailored transition plan for each confirmed victim, with the aim of ensuring that VCC services continue, in part or in full, until other services are able to meet any ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences or until the victim has no such ongoing recovery needs.

All RNAs and transition plans will be completed by the support workers who are working with the victim. All RNAs and transition plans will be received by the Prime Contractor which will carry out a quality assurance function before passing the assessment on to the SCA which will check that the transition plan has been developed in line with this guidance. The SCA will make the decision on the support worker’s recommendations as to whether the victim has ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences which can only be met through the VCC and for how long.

The support worker should complete the RNA and transition plan and submit to the Prime Contractor following the victim’s receipt of a positive CG decision ([Figure 1](#)).

The Prime Contractor should quality assure the RNA and transition plan and submit to the SCA for a decision. The SCA will make a decision on the ongoing support provision based on the recommendations provided by the support worker in light of the information provided through the RNA and any supporting evidence.

Confirmed victims will continue to receive a **guaranteed minimum period of 45 calendar days** VCC support **from their receipt of a positive CG decision**. Where the SCA has not made and communicated a decision on any recommendations for ongoing VCC support within this 45-day period, confirmed victims will remain in VCC support at least until this decision has been made and communicated, and transition arrangements are in place. The recovery Needs Assessment process will apply to all confirmed victims who are already receiving VCC support following a CG decision but who have not yet had an RNA and transition plan completed.



Figure 1 - RNA process map

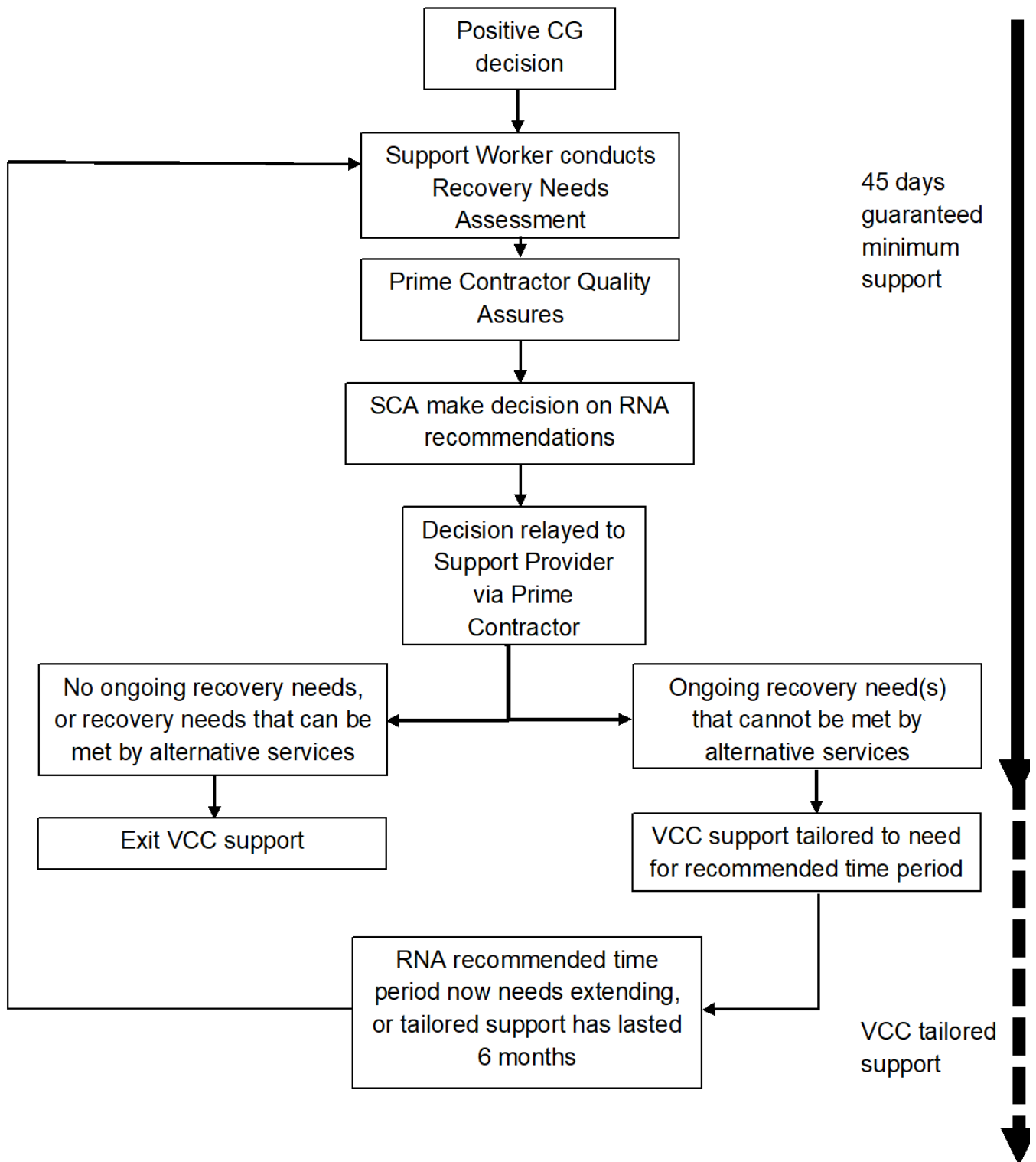
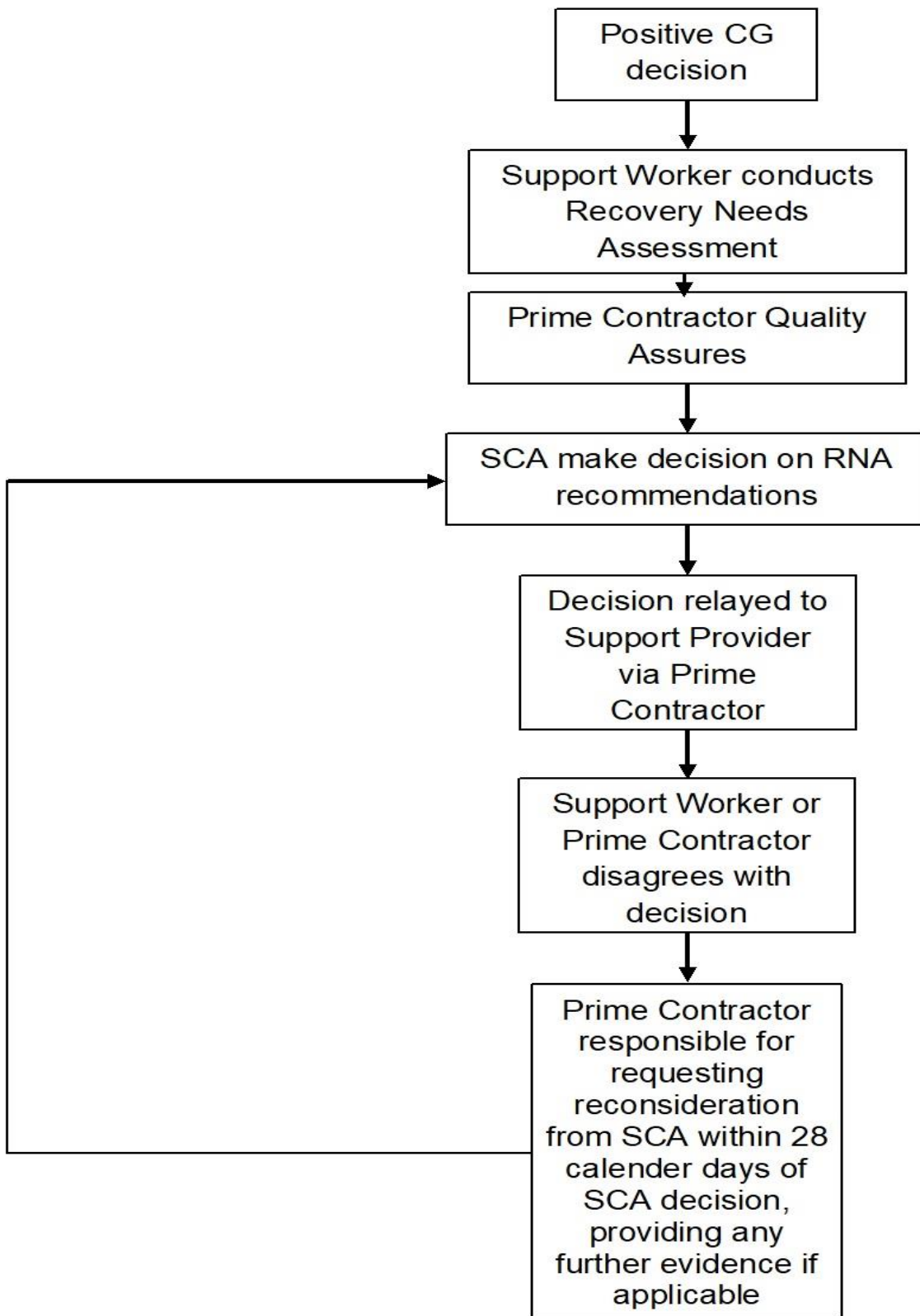


Figure 2 - RNA reconsideration process map



## Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved with completing and signing off the RNA. This includes:

- the support worker
- the Prime Contractor
- the Single Competent Authority (SCA)

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of **first responders and first responder organisations; public authorities that are first responders and other public authorities** [can be found on GOV.UK](#).

### The support worker:

The role of the support worker is to carry out the RNA following the victim's receipt of a positive conclusive grounds (CG) decision. The support worker should work with the victim to identify any ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences; identify the appropriate support service to meet these needs; and make recommendations as to whether the victim requires Victim Care Contract (VCC) support beyond the 45 day post-positive CG minimum provision or whether alternative services can meet these needs (and within what anticipated timeframe).

The objective of the support worker should be integrating or reintegrating victims into a community and establishing longer-term stability in a timely manner by helping victims to transition into alternative services outside of the VCC, where possible.

### The Prime Contractor:

The role of the Prime Contractor is to quality assure the RNA carried out by support workers, and to then pass this on to the SCA for a decision.

For quality assurance, the Prime Contractor should ensure that:

- all relevant sections of the RNA form have been filled out
- the RNA contains clear recommendations for ongoing support, based upon the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences, for each relevant section of the RNA (see Section 3 of this guidance for further details on what should be included)
- the recommendations for ongoing support are consistent with this guidance
- the support worker has provided [supporting evidence](#), dated within the last three calendar months, where relevant

Where RNA forms have not been filled in to the required standard or relevant supporting evidence has not been provided as set out above, the form must be returned to the support worker for revision and returned to the Prime Contractor for quality assurance.

## The SCA:

The role of the SCA is:

- to act as the decision maker in each case
- to determine whether or not the support worker's recommendations for any continuation of VCC support are appropriate and reasonable, based upon all the available evidence, and should be implemented

### **Related content**

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# Conducting the Recovery Needs Assessment

## How to use the RNA form

The support worker will engage with the victim to conduct the RNA and use it to identify any ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences, whether Victim Care Contract (VCC) support should continue while arrangements are made for the victim to access alternative services which are considered sufficient to meet these needs where possible, and how long this is projected to take.

The support worker must complete and return the form and transition plan to the Prime Contractor, which will quality assure the documentation before submitting to the Single Competent Authority (SCA) at (content removed) for the decision on ongoing support provision to meet the victim's recovery needs.

The RNA form consists of five main sections:

### Victim information

This section collects basic information to identify the victim (such as name, nationality, and immigration status) and key monitoring data (such as RNA date, RNA Version Number etc).

### Details of current support provision

This section collects background information on provision of support to date, including details of the support provider, key worker and date of entry to the VCC.

### Personal circumstances

This section establishes key information about the victim's circumstances, which may impact on their access to alternative services and the level of support that they may require.

This includes questions about immigration status, recourse to public funds, asylum claims, voluntary returns to country of origin, pregnancy and/or dependents and ongoing criminal proceedings.

Answers within this section should inform the recommendations made by the support worker regarding the victim's transition from the VCC. The decision maker must take these circumstances into account when assessing ongoing recovery need for VCC support.

## Ongoing recovery needs assessment

This section asks the victim's support worker to assess whether or not the victim has an ongoing recovery need arising from their modern slavery experiences, for each element of support offered by the VCC for:

- [accommodation](#)
- [financial support](#)
- [support worker contact](#)

## Questions

The questions within this section of the RNA seek to establish:

### **Is there an ongoing recovery need arising from their modern slavery experiences for this type of support?**

The aim of the RNA is to identify if there are ongoing needs arising from their modern slavery experiences and provide tailored support to victims to meet these. Each element of support will therefore be assessed separately, to ensure that the overall package of support is specific to the individual.

### **Can the identified recovery need arising from their modern slavery experiences be adequately addressed by services other than the VCC?**

These questions seek to establish whether other types of suitable support can be accessed by the victim, for example local authority housing; mainstream benefits; asylum support and social services under the Care Act 2004. The VCC is designed to provide intensive short-term support; this should only be maintained after the 45-day minimum, post-positive CG, while arrangements are made for the victim to access alternative services where possible, or where the victim has recovery needs which cannot yet be adequately supported by other services. The victim should exit VCC support as soon as other sufficient services are in place.

All questions of the RNA form should be completed by the support worker, unless the form directs otherwise.

## Recommendation sections

Following each set of questions, the RNA asks support workers to provide recommendations for any ongoing VCC support and/or move-on planning, based upon any recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences identified in that section of the form. The RNA then asks support workers to summarise all recommendations at the bottom of the form, alongside the victim's estimated service exit date.

The support worker will be responsible for putting in place a detailed transition plan to ensure that the victim can continue to access support for any ongoing recovery

needs arising from their modern slavery experiences while they transition out of the VCC (where transition is possible). Where there is a need for continued VCC support, the support worker will use their assessment of the victim's individual circumstances and their knowledge about timescales for applications to access other services to make recommendations on the projected timescales for continuation of that support.

Given that the victim's ability to transition to alternative services may be contingent on third party action (e.g. immigration decisions by the Home Office, local authority housing allocation), the support worker will estimate the service exit date based on their knowledge of the victim's individual circumstances and their experience of the timeliness of external processes. Support workers should estimate the earliest exit date possible. If the SCA decides to agree this exit date and if the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences cannot be met outside the VCC before the agreed exit date, the support worker should undertake a further RNA in accordance with this guidance and submit it with revised estimated minimum timescales for VCC support, together with any supporting evidence, before the agreed exit date. Victims will remain in VCC support at least until a decision on these recommendations has been made by the SCA and communicated to them.

Support workers can make recommendations seeking up to a maximum of six months continued VCC support at a time. If the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences cannot be met outside the VCC at the end of that six-month period, the support worker should undertake a further RNA in accordance with this guidance and submit it with revised estimated minimum timescales for VCC support, together with any supporting evidence, before the end of the previous six-month period.

Recommendations for each set of questions must include:

- details of any ongoing VCC support required and the reasons for it
- [supporting evidence](#)
- transition plan detailing next steps for meeting recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences and facilitating move-on – for example, support worker X to contact local authority for update on housing application by X month 20XX

Recommendations in the summary section must include:

- details of any ongoing VCC support required
- the [estimated service exit date](#) given transition plan timescales (see i. below)
- the estimated reassessment date, if applicable
- whether or not those ongoing needs identified in the body of the form are caused by delays to the process of applying for move on support with alternative services

Recommendations for ongoing VCC support **must** be accompanied by an estimated service exit date required to put other support in place, where necessary, which allows the victim to exit the VCC. This timescale will not always represent an end

date for the provision of VCC support, but a further RNA will need to be submitted if it is deemed that the victim will require support beyond this date (see [Figure 1](#) above and [‘Decision Making’ section below](#)). Victims will remain in VCC support at least until a further RNA is undertaken and a decision on its recommendations has been made by the SCA and communicated to them.

The support worker should submit any relevant documentation and/or supporting evidence alongside the RNA and transition plan. This will help the SCA to decide whether any recommendation of continued VCC support is necessary to assist with the victim’s recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences. Supporting evidence may include, for example:

- medical reports
- correspondence regarding immigration applications
- correspondence from local authority on housing applications
- correspondence about benefits applications
- information from local authorities about waiting times for social housing
- bank statements

Evidence should be dated within the last three calendar months preceding the RNA, wherever possible. Where no evidence is available or obtaining evidence is not possible, support workers should provide a clear explanation of the reasons for this. Clear and legible photocopies of documents will be accepted.

## Decision recording section

For the support worker this section will include:

- confirmation from the support worker that they have undertaken the RNA in line with this guidance
- confirmation from the support worker that the victim has had the RNA process explained to them in a language they understand
- confirmation from the Prime Contractor that it has reviewed and quality assured the RNA

For the SCA this section will include a section for the decision maker to record details of decision.

## How to assess recovery need arising from a victim’s modern slavery experiences

### Accommodation

The VCC provides accommodation for those victims who require a high level of security and access to support workers. The provision of such accommodation may be necessary for a victim’s recovery where the purpose is, for example:



- an ongoing need to safeguard victims from exploitation reoccurring
- to provide a secure base from which victims can start to rebuild their lives and become more self-sufficient following exploitation; a stepping stone to longer term stability
- to facilitate access to other services to assist with recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences

The support worker must consider all accommodation options which could be accessed by the victim outside of the VCC and its suitability for that individual in light of any ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences. Victims should only continue to be supported in VCC accommodation while arrangements are made for them to transition to other suitable accommodation where possible.

Questions 4(a)(i-iv) of the RNA seek to establish what accommodation options are **available and accessible** to the victim. The following accommodation pathways outside of the VCC may be sufficient:

- Asylum Support standard accommodation for victims who are also claiming asylum
- local authority housing options (including temporary housing while awaiting permanent placement) for victims with recourse to public funds
- housing with friends or family, where there is no known risk to the individual's safety or security
- private rented accommodation, where there is no known risk to the individual's safety or security

A victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences may lead to particular accommodation requirements, for example: disability adaptations; single sex accommodation. Question 4(a)(v) establishes whether the support worker has ensured that the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences are reflected in any applications for accommodation made to a third party. The support worker should advocate for the victim's individual requirements to be taken into account through the internal processes of the housing provider, such as Asylum Support or the local authority.

It will only be appropriate for a victim to remain in VCC accommodation where this is necessary to meet a recovery need arising from their modern slavery experiences which cannot be adequately addressed through other accommodation options e.g. a secure VCC safehouse is necessary to keep the victim safe from re-exploitation.

If the support worker makes a recommendation for ongoing VCC accommodation, the recommendation must include:

- full details of the VCC accommodation need, including why the victim is not able to live in alternative accommodation
- full details of steps taken to secure alternative housing

- if alternative housing is available but not considered secure and/or suitable, full details of the rationale behind the consideration
- full details of minimum time that VCC accommodation is needed for, including estimated time for completing applications such as Discretionary Leave
- local authority or Asylum Support applications

The victim should not be exited from VCC support until alternative accommodation has been secured to avoid any gaps in support. However, in cases where a victim refuses to sign paperwork which would facilitate a move out of VCC support, the Support Provider would not be obliged to continue to accommodate them.

## Financial support

A victim of modern slavery may need financial support:

- to ensure they are able to meet their essential living costs to assist recovery
- to facilitate access to services that will assist with those recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences

The current rate of financial support payable by the Home Office to potential victims or victims of modern slavery receiving NRM support depends on the accommodation they are in. The current rates are as follows:

- £65 per week for those in self-catered VCC accommodation
- £35 per week for those in catered VCC accommodation
- £35 per week for those receiving outreach support in other accommodation

Subject to the below, child dependants of potential victims will also receive financial support from the VCC, £20.50 for the first child dependant, and £13.55 for all subsequent child dependants.

The payment rates will be adjusted if the potential victim or victim of modern slavery receiving NRM support is also an asylum seeker or failed asylum seeker receiving financial support under sections 95, 98 or section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (“asylum support”). In these circumstances, the individual will receive £65 per week, made up of payments from asylum support and a further payment from the VCC to take the total payment to £65 per week. Potential victims or victims of modern slavery receiving NRM support who are receiving asylum support will not receive any financial support through the VCC in respect of any dependants, as their needs will be met through the asylum support system.

The RNA assesses whether the victim has financial recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences and whether other sources of financial assistance outside of the VCC are available and able to meet those needs. The support worker must consider the victim’s ability to access other sources of financial support.

Questions (b)(i) asks whether the victim is currently receiving Asylum Support payments. Victims of modern slavery may also be seeking asylum in the UK. If the victim has an asylum claim, full details should be provided, including:

- date the application was submitted
- current stage in the process
- date and type of leave granted if applicable – for example, asylum granted on DD/MM/YYYY
- whether the victim is currently in receipt of Asylum Support
- any other relevant information

Question (b)(ii) asks whether the victim is receiving/eligible for benefits through recourse to public funds. If the victim has recourse to public funds, they may be eligible to apply for benefits. Further information on [benefits can be found on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/benefits).

Support workers should ensure that there is no gap in the provision of financial support to victims whilst they await the outcome of benefit applications.

Question (b)(iii) asks whether the victim has access to any other sources of income. Details of the source, frequency and level of the income should be provided.

If the support worker makes a recommendation for ongoing VCC financial support, the recommendation must include:

- full details of why the victim is not able to obtain alternative financial support
- full details of any steps taken to secure alternative financial assistance to meet the victim's ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences
- full details of the minimum time that VCC financial support is needed for, including estimated time for concluding benefit applications

Examples of items for which it would not be appropriate for VCC financial support to be provided include, but are not limited to:

- recreational drugs and alcohol
- gambling

## Support worker contact

The support worker should help the victim to access support services which can assist in meeting their individual recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences through services outside the VCC, where this is possible. Where the victim has continuing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences which cannot be met elsewhere, temporary support from a support worker to assist with these needs can be maintained through the VCC.

## Access to health and mental health care services

All confirmed and suspected victims of modern slavery will have access to free emergency medical treatment regardless of their immigration status. The NHS Charging Regulations exempts victims and suspected victims of modern slavery from charges for specified NHS hospital treatment.

Questions 4(c)(i) of the RNA asks the support worker to establish whether or not the victim has any ongoing health needs arising from their modern slavery experiences. This includes both physical health needs (e.g. temporary conditions such as broken bones, or chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart conditions etc.) and mental health needs (e.g. depression; anxiety; personality disorders etc.). The support worker will defer to the advice of trained medical professionals for both diagnosis and recommended treatment.

The existence of a health or mental health condition will not alone necessitate continued support through the VCC. The support worker must also consider, as part of the RNA, whether or not the victim has access to NHS medical services to facilitate the ongoing treatment of any ongoing physical or mental health needs in the community.

Health needs arising from a victim's modern slavery experiences will generally be considered to have been met outside of the VCC where the support worker has:

- ensured that the victim has been referred to the appropriate medical services for any treatment required
- ensured that the victim has been made aware of their ongoing entitlements to NHS treatments and how to access services

As part of this, the support worker should ensure that the victim:

- is registered with a GP (including temporary registration) and understands the appointment scheduling process to access treatment
- has been referred or signposted to other relevant NHS services and how to access them - this may include, for example, dentists, sexual health services, mental health services or substance abuse services
- where eligible, has applied for a HC2 certificate to provide ongoing support for health-related costs, such as prescription fees or travel to and from appointments

It will generally be sufficient for the victim to be placed on a waiting list for NHS treatment, through GP/medical referral, to meet ongoing health needs that do not require emergency treatment.

For example, a victim may be placed on a waiting list for counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to treat ongoing mental health conditions and assist with longer term recovery outside of the VCC. Placement on a waiting list will not generally necessitate ongoing VCC support

In certain circumstances, there may be grounds for ongoing VCC support on the basis of acute health or mental health needs. This is generally limited to cases where there is high safeguarding risk to the life or health of the victim, if they were to exit support before accessing or completing their medical treatment.

Any change in a victim's health condition must first be referred to a trained medical practitioner for advice on appropriate emergency support services, such as crisis mental health support.

## Social care services

The role of the VCC support worker is distinct to that of a social worker. The support worker's role is to advocate on behalf of the victim to meet their *recovery* needs arising from their modern slavery experiences (see Glossary definition). This may include access to social services for support under the Care Act 2014, which provides support for those unable to meet their basic living needs (e.g. managing own nutrition; washing; dressing).

Question 4(c)(iv) of the RNA asks whether or not the victim is able to meet their basic living needs themselves, or whether they require further support from a carer.

Where the support worker considers the victim to have difficulty with day-to-day functioning or to have high interpersonal needs (e.g. unable to meet their basic living needs such as feeding themselves or managing their toilet needs) the support worker should request a local authority assessment under the Care Act 2014 for eligible victims.

The victim's ability to meet basic living needs, as defined by the Care Act 2014, must be assessed and met by the local authority.

Continued support worker contact must be linked to the progression of the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences (as defined in the Glossary) or transition plan. Reasons that may constitute ongoing need for support worker contact include, but are not limited to:

- support completing and progressing applications for Local Authority housing or for benefit payments
- support completing and progressing applications for immigration status
- support completing and progressing victim compensation claims
- support accessing health care

## Legal advice and support

The support worker must signpost the victim to information regarding their legal rights, entitlements and services available to them in relation to their recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences. Where necessary, the support worker should facilitate access to a legal representative for support relating to ongoing

criminal proceedings, compensation claims, immigration advice etc. Generally, the victim will have been provided with this information by the support worker at the earlier stages of the NRM process.

Question 4(c)(vii) seeks to establish whether the victim has an ongoing need for legal advocacy or advice. If an ongoing need for professional legal advice or support is identified, the victim should be referred to the appropriate service by the support worker.

Once the victim has been provided a relevant legal adviser or signposted to the appropriate legal advice service, continued support worker contact for these purposes will **not** generally be required, unless the provision of [interpretation/translation services](#) is required for the victim to understand this advice.

Where the victim is assisting a criminal investigation or proceedings, the support worker should facilitate the provision of an appropriate adult where required (under terms of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for vulnerable adults and those under 18) to assist the victim during interview. Where a trained appropriate adult is assigned to a victim, continued support worker contact for this purpose will no longer be required.

## **Access to translation and interpretation services**

Where the victim does not have sufficient proficiency in either the English or Welsh languages, the support worker must ensure that the victim has access to interpretation or translation services in a language they can understand to access all services provided through the VCC and other services where appropriate interpretation and translation assistance is not offered.

Question 4(c)(viii) of the RNA establishes whether there is an ongoing recovery need for interpretation or translation services provided through the VCC.

To be eligible for continued interpretation and translation services through the VCC the support worker will consider the following:

### **The purpose of the interpretation or translation service requested**

The service must be for the purpose of meeting the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences or progressing their move on plan. For example, this may include interpretation for key meetings with a GP, lawyer, Local Authority housing officer etc.

### **Other interpretation or translation services available through other support services.**

Where translation of information or interpreters are provided by other services such as the NHS, police, or Local Authorities, interpretation or translation services will generally **not** be provided through the VCC.

## Community and social recovery needs

Question 4(c)(ix) of the RNA seeks to establish whether the victim has any ongoing social recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences which require continued contact with a VCC support worker.

Social recovery needs may include, but are not limited to:

- making use of facilities and services in the local community
- developing and maintaining personal relationships

To facilitate social recovery, it is expected that the support worker will have signposted the victim to local groups such as:

- community groups
- religious and faith groups
- sports and recreational activities
- libraries
- charities and NGOs offering social activities

Engagement with these organisations may not necessarily mean the victim no longer needs access to a support worker.

## Local Authority Pilots

The Local Authority (LA) Victim Pathways pilot schemes offer support to eligible victims transitioning out of VCC support using locally based advocates to continue to support the victim on their journey towards independence. Because the RNA also seeks to support the transition of those victims whose needs can be met by alternative services, the pilot project is a natural companion to it and the support worker should always consider whether the victim is eligible for, and would benefit from, taking part.

The pilots aim to test how best to support victims to transition out of VCC support and into local communities, where their ongoing recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences can be met by alternative services.

If it is agreed between the support worker, the victim, and the relevant LA pilot lead that the victim's needs can be met by one of the LA pilots, and the victim wants to move on to one of the pilots, they should be able to move into this provision.

To be eligible for the LA pilot project, the individual:

- must have a positive CG decision
- must be either exiting VCC support (whether accommodation or outreach) or exiting asylum support (having previously received VCC support)



- should have recourse to public funds, such as UK citizens, individuals with refugee status, and those granted discretionary leave or other form of leave to remain or immigration status

Thereafter, it is at the discretion of the LA pilot lead whether to accept the referral based on the specific circumstances of the case. LA pilots may consider referrals from any source (person or organisation).

To refer a victim to a pilot scheme project, support workers should contact the pilot leads directly. The pilot leads will be able to provide more information on the services they offer and discuss what support they could potentially provide to the individual in question.

Acceptance onto the pilot scheme is subject to availability within each locality and the decision of the local authority, which has discretion whether or not to accept the referral against the above eligibility criteria.

## Timescales and review

As previously stated, all recommendations for ongoing VCC support **must** be accompanied by an estimated minimum timescale required to put other support in place, where necessary, which allows the victim to exit the VCC. This timescale will not always represent an end date for the provision of VCC support, but a further RNA will need to be submitted if it is deemed that the victim will require support beyond this date. It is the responsibility of the support worker to ensure that a further RNA is undertaken in accordance with this guidance and submitted with revised estimated minimum timescales for VCC support, together with any supporting evidence, in advance of the previous end date.

Support workers can make recommendations seeking up to a maximum of six months continued VCC support at a time. If the victim's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences cannot be met outside the VCC at the end of that six-month period, the support worker should undertake a further RNA in accordance with this guidance and submit it with revised estimated minimum timescales for VCC support, together with any supporting evidence, before the end of the previous six-month period.

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# Decision Making

## Role of the Single Competent Authority

SCA decision makers will make the decision on whether the recommendations in the RNA and transition plan are appropriate and reasonable in light of the evidence provided through the RNA form and transition plan, and any supporting evidence.

The decision by the SCA will be made following receipt of the RNA, transition plan and evidence.

In order to reach the decision, an SCA decision maker will assess a range of relevant information including the support worker's recommendation, any evidence supporting the recommendation, the status of the individual victim, appropriate Home Office checks, and knowledge of the available support provision.

The decision maker will record their decision as either:

- Recommendation FULLY agreed
- Recommendation NOT agreed
- Recommendation PARTIALLY agreed:
  - the SCA may return a decision which differs from the recommendation provided. For example, a decision maker may agree to the type of support recommended but disagree with the duration recommended

If further information and/or specific evidence is required in order to reach a decision, the decision maker will return a request for this information to the Prime Contractor before proceeding.

Non-compliance with requests for necessary information will result in the SCA delivering a "Recommendation NOT agreed" decision. The victim will remain in VCC support until the Prime Contractor provides the necessary information and the SCA has taken a decision on any recommendations for continued VCC support in light of this information.

The SCA will then pass its decision, including rationale, back to the Prime Contractor for implementation.

## Reconsiderations

The SCA's decision is final; the only ground for reconsideration is when material new evidence/information comes to light, which was not available at the time of the original recommendation.

Only the Prime Contractor can request a reconsideration of the SCA's decision. This request can be on the behalf of the support worker.

A reconsideration request must be received by the SCA within 28 calendar days of the original SCA RNA decision notification to the Prime Contractor.

Upon receiving a request for reconsideration, the SCA will first decide whether material new information has indeed been presented to trigger a reconsideration of the original decision. The SCA will only consider new information received via the Prime Contractor, and will consider whether the offered information is:

- new (not existing at the time of the original decision)
- specifically relating to the individual's recovery needs arising from their modern slavery experiences

If it is decided that material new information has been presented by the Prime Contractor the SCA will then follow the decision-making process outlined above, including any new information available, and return a new decision to the Prime Contractor.

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# Voluntary Returns Service

Victims may wish to return to their country of origin and this should be reflected in the recommendations and transition plans developed by the support worker and submitted to the SCA.

Voluntary and assisted returns may be either at public expense or at the expense of the individual.

Available: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Telephone: 0300 004 0202

Website (GOV.UK): [Get help to return home if you're a migrant in the UK](#)

For further information, see guidance on voluntary and assisted returns.

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# Glossary

In this guidance:

**“Adult”** is any person aged 18 or over where there are no reasonable grounds to believe that person may be under 18;

**“Alternative services”** refers to services that are available outside of the VCC including NHS services;

**“Competent Authority”** is the competent authority for making decisions regarding modern slavery cases; in the UK this is the Single Competent Authority (see below);

**“Conclusive Grounds decision (CG)”** is a decision taken by the Single Competent Authority as to whether, on the balance of probabilities, there are sufficient grounds to decide that the individual being considered is a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking or slavery, servitude, or forced or compulsory labour);

**“Confirmed victim”** is an individual who has received a conclusive grounds decision from the Single Competent Authority;

**“Mainstream benefits”** refers to benefits, tax credits or housing that are usually available through recourse to public funds;

**“Modern Slavery”** unless otherwise specified, refers to both human trafficking and slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour;

**“Move-on support”** refers to the support provided after a conclusive grounds decision. This period lasts for at least 45 calendar days from the date of a positive decision or 9 working days from the date of a negative decision;

**“National Referral Mechanism (‘NRM’)”** refers to the UK’s framework for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. It is one means of ensuring that adult victims receive the necessary support and assistance in the period immediately after their identification as a potential victim;

**“Potential victim”** is an individual who is suspected of being a victim of modern slavery. They may have received a positive reasonable grounds decision but will not yet have received a conclusive grounds decision from the Single Competent Authority;

**“Prime Contractor”** is the Prime Supplier of the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Coordination Contract (“the Victim Care Contract” – see below). In some cases, the Prime Contractor may subcontract other service providers to discharge specific parts of the contract;

**“Reasonable Grounds decision” (RG)** is a decision taken by the Single Competent Authority as to whether the decision maker suspects but cannot prove that the individual being considered is a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking or slavery, servitude, or forced or compulsory labour);

**“Recourse to public funds”** refers to a condition that enables individuals to claim most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance that are paid by the state;

**“Recovery and Reflection Period (‘Recovery Period’)**” refers to the period from the date of a positive Reasonable Grounds decision until a Conclusive Grounds decision is made which will be at least 45 days;

**“Recovery need”** refers to a specific need that a confirmed victim may have as a result of their modern slavery experiences and is essential to their recovery;

**“Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA)”** refers to the process for assessing and making recommendations for ongoing support to be provided to confirmed victims, whether through the VCC or other services;

**“Single Competent Authority (‘SCA’)**” refers to the UK’s decision-making body that is responsible for making reasonable grounds decisions and conclusive grounds decisions regarding individuals referred as potential victims of modern slavery. This replaces the two competent authorities that existed prior to April 2019;

**“Support Provider”** refers to a body which is employed or engaged pursuant to the Victim Care Contract to provide care and coordination services for victims, including by way of a sub-contract;

**“Support worker”** refers to Support Provider personnel who provide support to victims of modern slavery;

**“Transition plan”** refers to the completed RNA form detailing a recommended package of support which facilitates a confirmed victim’s transition from the VCC, where possible, as decided by the SCA;

**“Victim Care Contract (VCC)”** refers to the Home Office contract to provide care to adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales;

**“Voluntary Returns Service (VRS)”** refers to a Home Office service that supports individuals in returning to their country of origin either through financial means or support in kind.

Different definitions may apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

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