



Risk Indicator Checklist and Guidance

Purpose: This checklist that accompanies the Iranian Cultural Awareness Guide, does not provide investigative tactics. Instead, it supports officers to:

- Ask questions that are culturally neutral and non-assumptive, recognise when reluctance may stem from fear, not deception.
- Be attentive to language barriers and indirect communication styles.
- Understand how such concerns as family abroad, views on authority, financial pressures may be sensitive topics.
- Identify potential indicators of smuggling, coercion, or organised immigration crime
- Decide when further safeguarding or specialist referral is required

The checklist must not be used:

- To determine credibility on its own
- As a substitute for professional judgement

Cultural awareness strengthens interview quality by improving accuracy, rapport, and safeguarding outcomes, while reducing misinterpretation of behaviour or intent.

When to use the checklist:

- Initial encounters, welfare checks, or screening
- Interviews where an Iranian national is encountered during migration related or safeguarding contexts
- Situations involving undocumented status or irregular entry.

It can be used before, during, or after an interview.

How to use the checklist:

- Explain Your Role
- Explain confidentiality and its limits
- Do not read the checklist aloud, but use it to inform your questioning and capture the responses (refer to interviewing prompts within the Iranian Cultural Awareness Guide), for example: “Can you tell me how your journey was arranged?”



- Tick indicators that are present and only what is observed, disclosed, or reasonably inferred.
- Do not speculate or “fill gaps”.
- Multiple indicators increase concern, even if each appears minor alone.
- There is no numerical pass/fail ‘score’.

Risk Level

Possible low/isolated risk: One or two indicators (e.g. unclear route, general nervousness)

- No disclosures of threats, debt, or third-party control.
- Suggested action: Continue routine engagement but remain alert.

Multiple or Patterned Indicators

- Indicators across journey with control apparent
- Signs of debt, coaching, fear of specific individuals, or loss of autonomy
- Suggested action: Multiple indicators should prompt protective/safeguarding action or referral.

Safeguarding concerns/referrals

If there are indicators of coercion, threats, or exploitation:

- Prioritise safety over questioning.
- Separate the individual from anyone who may exert control.
- Avoid contacting named individuals or community members mentioned.
- Use a professional interpreter not connected to the same local community, if fear is expressed.
- Any safeguarding referral should be made in line with force policy (e.g. adult safeguarding, modern slavery, trafficking pathways).
- Notify relevant specialist teams (OIC, MSHT, intelligence units) as appropriate.



Risk Indicator Checklist

For Smuggling & Organised Immigration Crime routes from Iran

Tick items that apply. Multiple indicators strengthen concern.

A. Journey & Transit Indicators

- ☐ Travel arranged by a third party unknown to the migrant
- ☐ Multiple payments made at different stages
- ☐ Documents or phone confiscated during travel
- ☐ Travel through known smuggling hubs (Van, Urmia, Istanbul, Balkans, Calais)
- ☐ Migrant cannot explain route or logistics clearly (possible coached narrative)

B. Coercion, Control, or Exploitation Indicators

- ☐ Debt owed to individuals or groups (“kafil”, “sponsor”)
- ☐ Threats to family in Iran or diaspora
- ☐ Fear of specific community members in the UK
- ☐ Signs of trauma, fear, or reluctance to speak
- ☐ Migrant reports being told what to say to authorities

C. UK-Based Network Indicators

- ☐ Told to contact a specific person on arrival
- ☐ Someone has already contacted them demanding money
- ☐ Staying in overcrowded or controlled accommodation
- ☐ No control over their own phone or movements
- ☐ Working informally for someone who arranged travel

D. Community Indicators

- ☐ Fear of interpreters from certain ethnic groups
- ☐ Avoidance of certain ethnic community members
- ☐ Mention of diaspora “enforcers” or “collectors”
- ☐ Concern about information reaching Iran

E. Behavioural Indicators

- ☐ Hyper-vigilance or fear of uniformed officers
- ☐ Reluctance to discuss journey despite reassurance
- ☐ Inconsistent story that changes when others are present
- ☐ Over-rehearsed or identical narrative to others in a group