



Haringey Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

Joint meeting of Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee & Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee

TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2011 at 19:00 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Allison, Amin, Brabazon, Corrick, Davies, Hare, Reece, Reith, Rice(Chair), Solomon, Stennett, Stewart and Watson

AGENDA

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair of Corporate Parenting Committee and Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee had previously agreed that they would alternate the responsibility of Chair for the joint meetings. The Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee is due to Chair this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(IF ANY)

3. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of urgent business. (Late items will be considered under the agenda item where they appear. New items will be dealt with at Item 9 below. New items of exempt business will be dealt with at Item 12 below).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest **and** if this interest affects their financial position or the financial position of a person or body as described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct **and/or** if it relates to the determining of any approval, consent, license, permission or registration in relation to them or any person or body described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

To consider any requests received in accordance with Standing Orders.

6. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 6)

To consider and agree the minutes of the Joint meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee held on the 17 March 2011.

7. THE MUNRO REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION: FINAL REPORT - A CHILD-CENTRED SYSTEM (PAGES 7 - 20)

Members will consider a briefing paper which summarises Professor Munro's final report. The Government responded in detail to the report, and a summary of the key points of their response is attached, courtesy of Reconstruct Research Service.

8. CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE AND HOME (PAGES 21 - 108)

This report informs Members about children who go missing from care and missing from home. The report updates them on statutory guidance and responsibility, and further informs them about the local Haringey context and the actions being taken.

9. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items admitted at item 2 above.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 13 as it contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

11. REFERRALS AUDIT JULY 2011 (PAGES 109 - 138)

A programme of audits has been established by the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee in order to monitor practice and performance in Children's Social Care, and identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. The Independent Member of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee was asked to examine new referrals to the safeguarding service in a particular week in July 2011.

12. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

To consider any items admitted under Item 2 above.

13. NEXT MEETING

05 March 2012 7.00pm

David McNulty
Head of Local Democracy and Member Services
5th Floor
River Park House
225 High Road
Wood Green
London N22 8HQ

Ayshe Simsek
Principal Committee Coordinator
Tel: 020 8489 2929
Fax: 020 8489 2660
Email: ayshe.simek@haringey.gov.uk

Monday 03 October 2011

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

Councillors Allison, Amin, Engert, Hare, Peacock, Reith(Chair), Rice, Stennett and Watson

Apologies Councillor Davies, Alexander, and McNamara

Also Present: Councillor Solomon, Peter Lewis, Debbie Haith, Marion Wheeler, Sylvia Chew, Iain Lowe, Chris Chalmers, Attracta Craig,

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
JCCPSC 1	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR The Chair of Corporate Parenting Committee and Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee had discussions, outside the meeting, regarding the appointment of the Chair for these Joint meetings and had agreed that they would alternate this responsibility. The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee would begin this arrangement by chairing this first Joint meeting between these two Cabinet Advisory bodies.	All to note
JCCPSC 2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST None were declared.	
JCCPSC 3	COURT AND LEGAL PROCESS A briefing was provided to the Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice on how children's social care cases are managed through the family courts. The Joint Committee noted that there were: currently 600 looked after children, over 300 children subject to Child protection plans and also over 300 children that were the subject of 156 court proceedings. It was noted that, in the past 18 months, the number of proceedings had increased by over 17%. This had significant cost implications for the Council as the cost per set of proceedings was £4825. The circumstances and procedures for application to court for care and supervision orders were set out in the report. It was explained to the Joint Committee, that a care order would provide the Local Authority with parental responsibility for a child or young person, parents would not lose their parental responsibility and the emphasis was that the local authority would work in partnership with the parents. The thresholds for meeting a care order requirement, which the Local Authority must evidence, were outlined along with the main principles underlying court case management and the overriding objective in public law	

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

proceedings. There was also information on the duties which the courts and the Local Authority had in regard to the timetable for the Child. These guidelines were to ensure that there was due regard given to the significant steps in a child's life, these would include social, health and educational steps. There was also an update on the action being taken by the Local Authority to reduce the delays in the court care proceedings; this included having a dedicated team which had responsibility for children in care proceedings. There were currently proposals for external local performance improvement groups that would be multi agency and linked to local courts to provide a forum to deal with issues which arise locally such as delays in proceedings.

Members sought an understanding on the length of care proceedings, and whether these delays were being experienced solely by the Council. Members asked how the Local Authority could influence the court process to ensure that the children/young people, subject to the court care proceedings, faced as minimal amount of disruption and upheaval as possible. It was noted that the Director of Children and Young People's has been involved in discussions with the Greater London Family Panel (all judges and magistrates across London hearing care cases) and their chair (and Lead Judge for London) HHJ Altman. This has culminated in the Director being invited to join the London Family Justice Panel. This Panel, chaired by HHJ Altman, is the practice body for all London care courts where practice is monitored and new approaches developed to try and improve the work of the courts. The Panel meets quarterly and the Director will join the Panel for the first time in June 2011, though he is involved in work prior to those reviewing proposals by the Panel to the Family Justice Review being undertaken by the Government. The aim of this participation was to be in key position to communicate with principal legal counterparts the impact of delayed care proceedings and be in position to expedite them. There had already been preliminary discussions on reducing the number of court appearances. It was noted that some cases from Haringey would last over 60 weeks. The service was seeking to reduce this to at least 40 weeks. The Committee noted the causes of delays which were the number of independent expert witnesses statements being required and residential assessments. The high number of cases coupled with the delays to proceedings due to requests for extra information was also placing an increased pressure on support services for Children.

In terms of the Local Authority's role in the court process and the submission of evidence, it was noted that it could be more straightforward for the courts to consider evidence which showed physical neglect to a child with reports and photographic evidence, however it could be challenging to prove the detrimental impact of neglect on a child. Although photographic evidence of living conditions and additional reports provided by local authorities was considered, it was often the case that external expert evidence was also again requested. The Committee were assured that the Council's management of cases through the court process was seen to be paramount. The Joint Committee learned that court reports are seen by managers and

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

	<p>Legal Services before submission. The care plan for the child in question would need to be signed off by the Head of Service. The Committee were reminded that the Children's service had been re-organised to enable the formation of a team dedicated to dealing with children's social care proceedings. This team work closely with legal and has a high level of expertise and skill in working with the Court process.</p> <p>The information provided was noted by the Committee.</p>	
<p>JCCPSP 4</p>	<p>SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORT</p> <p>The independent member of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee provided the Committee with information on Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 which set out the regulatory framework which Local authorities were obliged to follow for safeguarding children. There then followed a report on the Safeguarding and Support service which puts into practice these obligations. It was noted that the Safeguarding and Support team is separate to the First Response and Children in Care teams and delivers services to the most vulnerable in the borough. This service will be responsible for children that are subject to Child Protection Plans, Children in Need Plans and Supervision Orders. It was noted that there were 326 children and young people subject to Child Protection plans; this was an increase of 47% from two years ago. There were 141 children under 5 subject to CP Plans in the borough and this was an increase of 50% from Feb 2009. These increases were not dissimilar to those seen by other boroughs.</p> <p>The report set out the procedures and functions followed for Child Protection Conferences, and the Committee noted that according to London Safeguarding Procedures children and young people subject to these plans should be seen every 6 weeks. The Council were ensuring that children were seen every 4 weeks and looking to reduce this further to visits every two weeks. The report went onto explain the duties followed by Social Workers in Child Protection Plans and the additional role of the Safeguarding Panel. It was noted that there were 253 children and young people as at 28 February subject to child protection plans. Although there was no definitive time for a child or young person being subject to a child protection plan, key factors were the timing of services provided and the family's engagement with the process.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that there were 350 children/young people on Children in Need Plans. These children did not meet the criteria for a section 47 safeguarding investigation but would meet the criteria to receive a service from the Children's Social Care through Haringey's Consortium of Need and Intervention.</p> <p>Following the Baby Peter case, understanding was sought by the Joint Committee of the improvements in safeguarding in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Worker numbers and case loads 	

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

- Supervision of Social Workers
- Sharing of Information among agencies
- Legal case work
- Auditing

The Joint Committee noted that there was a significant increase in the number of Social Workers and managers in the service with a majority of them Haringey employees which made a difference to the stability and efficiency of the service. The improvements in information sharing were easily apparent by the knowledge held by Social Workers of the contact points in service areas such as Adults and Housing.

A key issue, which was heavily emphasised by the service, was having a full knowledge of the visitors and residents to a child's home. The audits undertaken on child protection plans would also check the frequency of the visits made to a child's home. The Committee were advised that these audits were designed to identify any issues with working practices and gain an understanding of the themes emerging.

The supervision of Social Workers and practitioners and level of challenge to their work was felt to be correct. The quality working practices of the current Social Workers meant that they were more capable of dealing with challenging families. There had been training sessions around authoritative practices and ensuring that Social Workers were fully aware of the legal responsibilities around their roles. The relationship between Children's Services and Legal was reported to be very good with advice provided at the right time. There was also casework planning meetings between Children's services and Legal to challenge and scrutinise the process. There were good comments noted from new Social Workers on the manageable caseloads.

In regards to families understanding their role in the child protection plan and the expectations of them, Social Workers were trained to be clear in writing in the plan what changes in behaviour were needed from the family. In those cases, where there were issues of neglect, and the circumstances had not changed after a specified period, there would be a child protection conference to agree that care proceedings could be taken forward, this would be either through a legal order or by the family's consent.

Members asked about the proposal to having fortnightly visits to children on child protection plans and whether this would create additional work pressures for Social Workers in the service. In response it was felt, with the improvements made by the service, this would be achievable.

Members enquired about the process after a child/young person ceases to be the subject of a child protection plan and were advised that families are sign posted to universal services. It was noted that information on children and families, that have been subject to child protection plans and children in need plans, is required to be kept on record by the service for the positive reasons, that in the event the family require

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

	<p>more support in the future, there is an understanding of their dynamics . This information may also be required in later years or be required by another borough if the family are moving and require support or signposting to relevant services. There would also be efforts made to obtain the family's views after the plan has ceased to counter against the feelings of stigma at having been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.</p> <p>In relation to Children in Need plans, more clarity was sought on the time period of the plans and the types of issues that would necessitate this plan as opposed to a Common assessment Framework (CAF). It was explained that some families will need a co-ordinated approach to accessing universal services as sign posting will not be sufficient. Therefore a Social worker will be assigned to co-ordinate this access for the family.</p> <p>The report and information received was noted by the committee</p>	
<p>JCCPSP 5</p>	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the items below as they contain exempt information as defined in section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by section 12a of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 1&2; namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
<p>JCCPSP 6</p>	<p>ANALYSIS OF A SAMPLE OF CHILD PROTECTION CASES</p> <p>The independent member of the Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee introduced the report which accompanied the previous report on the Safeguarding and Support services and specifically focused on Child Protection Plans, their challenges and issues. The independent member had examined a small sample of 15 cases starting with referrals and assessment undertaken in the first week of November, examining their case notes in February and looking at their outcomes in the first week of March.</p> <p>The Committee noted and discussed the findings of this qualitative research. It was noted that six of the 15 cases were closed or planned to be closed. Two of the children had a Child in Need plan, two children were in the care system. The remaining 5 children had good child protection plans in place. There was concern communicated about the timescales for holding Initial Child Protection Conferences which were required within 15 working days of strategy discussions and would have helped agencies come to a quicker conclusion on the child's needs. This was attributed to pressures on the conference timetable as the need for an ICPC can only be identified at the end of strategy discussions and therefore arrangements for the conference initiated after this time. It was also important to note, the timing of the audit, which was the lead up to</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2011**

	<p>the OFSTED inspection and also the seasonal time of year for staff leave. There had been previous independent audits commissioned by the Deputy Leader on adherence of the service to quality and timing of assessments which showed good practices in place. These key service area audits had also looked at the initial responses to a referral, strategy discussions and if the child had been seen alone. Because of the good improvement of the service, the audits were now concerned with examining practices in different parts of the services. The service itself also completed a high number of internal audits to continually monitor working practices and adherence to mandatory timescales and this could be an area of work which was reported on to the next Joint Committee meeting.</p> <p>Further to considering this agenda item, the Joint Committee members noted that Members enquiries related to children's services could be sent to Debbie Haith, Deputy Director for Children and Families.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for their attendance and contributions to the Joint meeting. It had been useful and worthwhile for the Committee to explore and discuss the areas of child protection which overlapped between the responsibilities of both Committees. Twice yearly meetings of the Corporate parenting Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee were planned and in the intervening periods the Committees would refer relevant issues to each other.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>All to note</p>
--	--	---------------------------------

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair



Haringey Council

Briefing for:	Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee and Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee	Item number	
Title:	The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report <i>A child-centred system</i>		
Lead Officer:	Hilary Corrick, Independent Member		
Date:	11th October 2011		

1. Introduction

Professor Eileen Munro was commissioned by the Coalition Government to undertake a review of child protection in this country and make recommendations as to how the system could be improved. Members will find attached to this report a briefing paper which summarises Professor Munro's final report. The Government responded in detail to the report, and a summary of the key points of their response is attached, courtesy of Reconstruct Research Service.

2. Background information

The report was commissioned in the light of publicity surrounding a number of child deaths, and professional concern about working within a very prescriptive culture, leaving little room for professional judgment.

3. **Members will note** the recommendations of the report and the increased freedom it advises for local accountability and performance management.



Haringey Council

However, the report and the Government response offers challenges to local safeguarding services, which include:

- How to provide effective and accountable child protection services in the context of reducing budgets and increased demand resulting from cuts to public services and economic recession.
- An emphasis on early intervention and “sufficient provision of early help informed by the local profile of need” while resources are shrinking and partnership arrangements are subject to change;
- The need to rebalance expenditure to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable children with complex needs, while investing in evidence based practice, exploring areas of overlap and duplication with a view to increased joint commissioning where appropriate;
- The recruitment of adequate numbers of well qualified, knowledgeable and resilient social workers and other staff;
- The ‘designation’ of a Principal Child and Family Social Worker;
- A review of the role and responsibilities of the DCS and Lead Member;
- A review of the ways that child and family social work services are delivered locally, taking particular note of models developed in other authorities.

The new DCS, when she takes up her appointment in November, will wish to be at the forefront of shouldering these challenges. It is clear from the Government response to the Munro reports that there is likely to be a significant number of changes to structure, process and joint working arrangements in the next 1 – 2 years.

Briefing Paper
The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report (May 2011)
A child-centred system

This is the final report of a review commissioned by the Government in June 2010. The report proposes changes to the current child protection system which are intended to create the conditions in which professionals can focus on the safety and welfare of children and their families and make the best professional judgments about the help they need.

The first report (*Part One: A Systems Analysis*) described how the current system had evolved, shaped by key driving forces:

- The importance of children and young people's safety and welfare to society as a whole;
- The uncertainty inherent in the work;
- Hindsight bias, which focuses on professional error rather than its causes; and
- The performance management culture which focuses on process and targets rather than outcomes for children and families.

That report sought to analyse why previous reforms had failed to achieve their goals, and concluded that these driving forces had produced a defensive system emphasising procedures and recording at the cost of developing the skills needed to work effectively with families.

The second report (*Part Two: The Child's Journey*) looked at how the system could be reformed to keep a focus on the child's experiences from needing help to receiving it.

This final report's recommendations are based on the following key principles of a good child protection system:

- **System should be child focused** – this means talking to children and young people and their families.
- **The family is usually the best place to bring up children** –sometimes difficult judgments have to be made about the right to protection from abuse and the right to be with the family.
- **Helping children and families involves working with them** - the quality of the relationships between the child, the family and professionals has a direct impact on the effectiveness of help.
- **Early help is better for children;**
- **Children's needs and circumstances are varied so the system should be flexible and offer variety;**
- **Good professional practice is informed by knowledge of the latest theory and research;**
- **Uncertainty and risk are features of the work** - risk management can only reduce risks not eliminate them;
- **The measure of success of child protection systems is whether children receive effective help.**

The review proposes the following areas for reform:

Valuing professional expertise by

- Removing barriers to professional judgment. This means a radical reduction in regulatory prescription – timescales, paperwork, inspection,

performance indicators – to a focus on principles that underpin good practice

- Move away from standardised services to professional judgement and local partnerships
- Move away from a compliance culture to a learning culture with more freedom to use professional expertise and skills.

Clarifying accountabilities and creating a learning system by

- Removing the statutory requirement for Children’s Trust Boards, possibly replacing its function with the new health and wellbeing boards which allow for local variability;
- LSCBs should maintain their scrutiny function and encourage multi-agency training;
- The discrete role of the DCS and Lead Member should be protected
- SCRs should be based on a systems learning methodology rather than a scrutiny model; reports should not be evaluated by Ofsted.

Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help because

- Preventative services do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services;
- Prevention improves children’s life chances as well as reducing abuse and neglect;
- Early help minimises adverse experiences, and damage done is hard to reverse; it’s cost effective compared to the cost of later more serious problems;
- Coordinated services maximise efficiency, and can identify children who need services from children’s social care at an earlier stage.

Developing social work expertise because good practice is not sufficiently widespread. Social workers need formal training and high intelligence to achieve the level of critical reasoning needed to make sound judgments and decisions about complex family situations. The professional skill of developing relationships which facilitate change has been gradually replaced by a focus on collecting information and making plans – the “rational-technical approach”. The requisite expertise for children and family social work is based on

1. Relationship skills;
2. Intuitive understanding and emotional responses; and
3. Using evidence, both from assessment and analysis, information

received, and research.

The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) is developing a Professional Capabilities Framework which will set out what is required in terms of a social worker’s knowledge, skills and capacity, which this review considers must include a sound knowledge base, the ability to undertake critical reflection and analysis, and skills in intervention.

The organisational context: supporting effective social work practice

The ability of social workers to provide effective protection and support for children is significantly dependent on how secure and contained they feel by the organisation. The review considers that organisations should review the way that children’s social work services are delivered locally. The *Reclaiming Social Work* model of Hackney is described as a case study. There is a need for career pathways that keep good practitioners in front-line practice. There should be a Chief Social Worker nationally to advise the Government on social work practice. There is a need to develop a more positive image for social workers.

Implementation of the proposals within the report will come about through the following **recommendations**:

1. *The Government should revise both the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children and The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families and their associated policies.*
2. *The inspection framework should examine the effectiveness of the contributions of all local services, including health, education, police, probation, and the justice system to the protection of children.*
3. *The new inspection framework should examine the child's journey from needing to receiving help, explore how the...experiences of children ...inform and shape the provision of services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided.*
4. *Local authorities and their partners should use a combination of nationally collected and locally published performance information to help benchmark performance, facilitate improvement and promote accountability.*
5. *The existing statutory requirement for LSCBs to publish an annual report... should be amended to require its submission to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, ...local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board.*
6. *..Working Together...should be amended to state that ... LSCBs should...assess the effectiveness of help provided to children and families, including early help services and the effectiveness of multi-agency training...*
7. *Local authorities should give due consideration to protecting the discrete roles and responsibilities of a DCS and Lead Member ... before allocating additional responsibilities to the roles....*
8. *The Government should work collaboratively with (health organisations) and others to research the impact of health reorganisation on effective partnership arrangements and the ability to provide effective help for children.*
9. *The Government should require LSCBs to use systems methodology when undertaking SCRs...*
10. *The Government should place a duty on local authorities and statutory partners to secure the sufficient provision of local early help services for children and their families.*
11. *The SWRB's Professional Capabilities Framework should incorporate capabilities necessary for children and family social work...*
12. *Employers and higher education institutions should work together so that social work students are prepared for the challenges of child protection work.*
13. *Local authorities and their partners shouldreview and redesign the ways in which child and family social work is delivered...*

14. Local authorities should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice...and still actively involved in frontline practice..

15. A Chief Social Worker should be created in Government...

Hilary Corrick
Independent Member

A child-centred system: the Government's response to the Munro review of child protection, July 2011

A summary of key points by Reconstruct Research Service

The government want to build a child-centred system that:

- values professional expertise;
- shares responsibility for the provision of early help;
- develops social work expertise and supports effective social work practice; and
- strengthens accountabilities and promotes learning.

And this means:

- children and young people's **wishes, feelings and experiences are** central and their **feedback** is truly valued and acted on
- the **timeliness, quality and effectiveness** of help given to children, young people and their families is the key aim;
- there is a **range of help and services** to match the variety of needs
- **risk and uncertainty** are features of the system, risk can never be eliminated but it can be managed smarter;
- professionals are trusted to use their **professional judgment** in deciding how to help children, young people and their families;
- **professional expertise** is developed, **continuous learning and improvement means** reflecting critically on practice to identify problems and opportunities

The wider picture:

The Munro recommendations require local authority children's services, the voluntary and community sector, social work, education, police and health services to work together alongside the Children's Improvement Board, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Local Government Group and the DfE.

Health services must continue to improve arrangements for protecting children, with clinical commissioning groups, the NHS Commissioning Board and providers all taking responsibility.

Reforms to promoting effective early intervention are taking place in **the foundation years** where health visitors and children's centres will provide high quality services to build resilience and nurture wellbeing. There will be more two years olds in early education, providing more opportunities to offer timely support and advice for parents when they most need it. All this means greater collaborative working, particularly with health professionals and social workers, increased professional autonomy, and stronger accountability arrangements.

Schools will continue their responsibility to safeguard and promote wellbeing, school nurses will be able to focus on early help for school-aged children.

The National Crime Agency (NCA), a new crime-fighting agency, will lead on serious and organised crime such as child abuse. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) continues to tackle child sexual exploitation and promote education. From 1 July 2011 it takes on the national lead on missing children with a dedicated team.

The **family justice** system is currently the subject of a wide-ranging review, looking at a better system for children and families. The final recommendations of the Family Justice Review are due in the autumn.

Theme 1: Valuing professional expertise - Munro Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4

Recommendation 1

The Government should revise both the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children and The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families and their associated policies.

Government response – Accept: There needs to be a better balance between professional judgment and central prescription. The purpose of assessment is to understand the needs of children, young people and families and to provide timely and effective help to safeguard and promote their welfare.

All local frameworks must demonstrate timeliness, quality of assessment and the effectiveness of help offered, and that the arrangements are clearly understood between partners. Inspections will look for evidence that this is happening.

Timescale: interim amendments to timescales, combining initial/core assessments and the parameters for a good assessment will be made to *Working Together* by December 2011. A revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children and The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* will be issued by July 2012, together with a young person's guide to the statutory guidance.

Recommendation 2

The inspection framework should examine the effectiveness of the contributions of all local services, including health, education, police, probation and the justice system to the protection of children.

Government response – Accept: Inspection will examine the contribution of all relevant local agencies to the protection of children and this will be done on an unannounced basis. The safeguarding of pupils in education will continue to come under the 'leadership and management' theme of the revised school inspection framework.

Timescale: Ofsted intends to have the new framework in place by May 2012

Recommendation 3

The new inspection framework should examine the child's journey from needing to receiving help, explore how the rights, wishes, feelings and experiences of children and young people inform and shape the provision of services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided to children, young people and their families.

Government response – Accept: Inspection will look at the effectiveness of help provided at all stages including initial contact, early help, protection and longer-term help. Safeguarding peer reviews, particularly in relation to self evaluation and external inspection, will be developed further.

Timescale: the new framework to be in place by May 2012.

Recommendation 4

Local authorities and their partners should use a combination of nationally collected and locally published performance information to help benchmark performance, facilitate improvement and promote accountability. It is crucial that performance information is not treated as an unambiguous measure of good or bad performance as performance indicators tend to be.

Government response – Accept: The draft Munro dataset included in the final report provides a good basis for further work on outcomes. The SWRB is already making progress on data collection tools to help with workforce planning and other workforce data collection instruments are also available. Work on the Public Health Outcomes Framework will also be relevant. The Government will work with the Children’s Improvement Board to finalise the draft data set which LSCBs, practitioners and managers will want to consider.

Timescale: The aim is to publish the suite of new nationally collected performance information by May 2012.

Theme 2: Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help - Recommendations 8, 10 and 13

Recommendation 8

The Government should work collaboratively with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Royal College of General Practitioners, local authorities and others to research the impact of health reorganisation on effective partnership arrangements and the ability to provide effective help for children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Government response - Accept in principle: The Government wants to go even further, so the Department of Health will work with the Department for Education, NHS bodies, local authorities, professional bodies and practitioners to agree a co-produced work programme to include:

- A shared understanding of future roles and responsibilities;
- Keeping professional leadership and expertise in the new system, including the continuing key role of designated and named professionals;
- Clarity about the future arrangements for partnership working, including the relationship between LSCBs and health and wellbeing boards;
- Developing clinical commissioning groups;
- How the NHS will contribute to early help;
- Future arrangements for training in safeguarding and child protection;
- The implications for the NHS of the proposed new inspection framework; and
- Learning about systems approaches to improving patient safety from the health sector

Timescale: A joint programme of work will be published by September 2011.

Recommendation 10

The Government should place a duty on local authorities and statutory partners to secure the sufficient provision of local early help services for children, young people and families. The arrangements setting out how they will do this should:

- *specify the range of professional help available to local children, young people and families, through statutory, voluntary and community services, against the local profile of need set out in the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);*

- *specify how they will identify children who are suffering, or who are likely to suffer, significant harm, including the availability of social work expertise to all professionals working with children, young people and families who are not being supported by children's social care services and specify the training available locally to support professionals working at the front line of universal services;*
- *set out the local resourcing of the early help services for children, young people and families; and, most importantly*
- *lead to the identification of the early help that is needed by a particular child and their family, and to the provision of an 'early help offer' where their needs do not meet the criteria for receiving children's social care services.*

Government response - Accept in principle: The State has a duty to protect children from abuse and neglect and help to prevent it happening in the first place.

All professionals working with children, young people and families should know about local arrangements to understand, make assessments of and help families who do not receive social care services, but who do require help.

Common and shared assessment processes should be agreed and established locally among practitioners and agencies. Professional practice should drive the development and implementation of local agreements and processes about helping families early and there should be explicit and clear alignment with arrangements to make referrals to children's social care services.

Practitioners in everyday contact with children; such as teachers in schools; should be able to create an environment in which children feel secure, able to express themselves and know where to turn to for help. They should have the confidence to refer on to skilled social workers any children who cause concern.

Locally each authority should have in place:

- sufficient provision of early help informed by the local profile of need;
- arrangements to identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm;
- access to child protection social work expertise for those professionals providing early help and at the boundary of statutory social care services;
- effective training accessible locally for those professionals providing early help;
- clear resourcing of local arrangements; and
- provision of an 'early help offer' to individual children and families.

Work on this will take account of the health reforms, including the roles and responsibilities of health and wellbeing boards, the work on sector-led improvement, the contributions of public health services and adult services dealing with poor mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse; and the role that universal services such as early years settings and schools should play.

An additional statutory duty to secure early help for children and families may be needed or there may be other, more effective approaches to increase the range and number of preventative services on offer.

Timescale: The Government will work with partners to identify the best way forward by September 2011. Implementation will be dependent on the approach identified.

Guidance on JSNA and joint health and wellbeing strategy to be published once the Health and Social Care Bill gains Royal Assent.

A new inspection framework will be in place from May 2012.

Local partners will decide when early help offer frameworks should be in place locally, with plans quality assured by LSCBs.

Recommendation 13:

Local authorities and their partners should start an ongoing process to review and redesign the ways in which child and family social work is delivered, drawing on evidence of effectiveness of helping methods where appropriate and supporting practice that can implement evidence based ways of working with children and families.

Government response – Accept: Child and family social work will be redesigned to create an environment which values the continuity of relationships with children and families and promotes effective evidence-based social work practice, and where managerial, procedural and bureaucratic processes are limited to those which improve front line practice. This is to be taken forward locally, taking account of the views of service users, with the support of new self-assessment and improvement tools.

Timescale: Changes will be made, at a realistic pace determined locally, and kept continually under review.

Theme 3 – Developing social work expertise and supporting effective practice - Recommendations 11, 12, 14 & 15

Recommendation 11

The Social Work Reform Board's Professional Capabilities Framework should incorporate capabilities necessary for child and family social work. This framework should explicitly inform social work qualification training, postgraduate professional development and performance appraisal.

Government response – Accept: Detailed work now needs to be done with key partners, including the SWRB, the Health Professions Council (HPC); which is expected to take over responsibility for the regulation of social workers in 2012; and the College of Social Work.

Timescale: The SWRB has already developed the Professional Capabilities Framework and is working on a CPD framework. Ownership of both is expected to transfer to the College of Social Work around November 2011 with a view to implementing by autumn 2012.

Recommendation 12

Employers and higher education institutions (HEIs) should work together so that social work students are prepared for the challenges of child protection work. In particular, the review considers that HEIs and employing agencies should work together so that:

- *practice placements are of the highest quality and – in time – only in designated Approved Practice Settings;*
- *employers are able to apply for special 'teaching organisation' status, awarded by the College of Social Work;*

- *the merits of 'student units', which are headed up by a senior social worker are considered; and*
- *placements are of sufficiently high quality, and both employers and HEIs consider if their relationship is working well.*

Government response – Accept: The SWRB is working with HEIs to improve the calibre of entrants to the profession and the quality of the education they receive and new models of social work education such as the 'Step Up to Social Work' employer-led scheme are being explored. The responsibility for setting professional standards for social workers is being transferred to the HPC. The Department of Health has asked the College of Social Work how to make best use of the Education Support Grant. Employers also have a major role to play; realistically this will be done in the medium to longer-term.

Timescale: Partnership arrangements with employers and HEIs should be in place by the end of 2012. Plans for designated approved practice settings, teaching organisation status developed by the College of Social Work and consideration of the merits of student units by summer 2012.

Recommendation 14 *Local authorities should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice in the local authority and who is still actively involved in frontline practice and who can report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management.*

Government response – Accept: Local areas will not necessarily need to construct a new post but designate a professional social worker as practice lead.

The College of Social Work will convey the views and issues of all social workers, including Principal Child and Family Social Workers, to the Chief Social Worker. The College will provide CPD support founded on the Professional Capabilities Framework including a peer mentoring forum to support Principal Child and Family Social Workers in their roles and tasks. We will consider asking the College, with the SWRB, to provide a framework to guide the appointment of Principal Child and Family Social Workers for local authority, voluntary and private sector employers.

Timescale: Most local authorities will designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker by April 2012 and all will have done so by July 2012.

Recommendation 15

A Chief Social Worker should be created in Government, whose duties should include advising the Government on social work practice and informing the Secretary of State's annual report to Parliament on the working of the Children Act 1989.

Government response - Accept in principle: This post will cover children and adults and will report jointly to the Secretaries of State for Education and Health.

The detail needs to be developed including:

- the functions for the Chief Social Worker;
- their links with external bodies (including the College of Social Work); and
- in which Department the post would be located.

Timescale: The Government plans for a Chief Social Worker to be in post by late 2012.

Theme 4: Strengthening accountabilities and creating a learning system - Recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 9

Recommendation 5

The existing statutory requirements for each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to produce and publish an annual report for the Children's Trust Board should be amended, to require its submission instead to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and, subject to the passage of legislation, to the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board.

Government response – Accept: The role and impact of LSCBs should be strengthened and accountability for the safety and welfare of children must start with the most senior strategic local leaders. An annual report from the LSCB about the effectiveness of local early help and protective services is an important part of this. There will be issues to resolve about local health and police leads in the future, but for now, the Chief Officers of Police Authorities and cluster PCT chief executives are considered as those local leaders.

All local leaders will continue to have access to the published reports while the Government identifies a suitable legislative vehicle to amend the requirement to submit the report to the Children's Trust Board.

Timescale: The Government will identify the appropriate legislative vehicle as soon as practicable.

Recommendation 6

The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, should be amended to state that when monitoring and evaluating local arrangements, LSCBs should, taking account of local need, include an assessment of the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families (including the effectiveness and value for money of early help services, including early years provision), and the effectiveness of multi-agency training to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Government response - Accept in principle: LSCBs are a fundamental aspect of local multi-agency arrangements to help and protect children and young people and are in a central position to assess the effectiveness of local help and protective services. It is important that this role is strengthened.

Resources for training, including joint training, and increased monitoring should be made locally available with responsibility equally shared among statutory partners. The role of the LSCB may be extended to provide and monitor specifically tailored child protection services in certain locations or services, for example detention facilities, young offender establishments, ports or airports and refuges.

Timescale: Work will take place over the summer with the national LSCB chairs, ADCS and partner organisations and the Government will publish an amendment (role of LSCBs in monitoring effectiveness of early help and protective services) to *Working Together* by December 2011.

Recommendation 7

Local authorities should give due consideration to protecting the discrete roles and responsibilities of a Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for children's services before allocating any additional functions to individuals occupying such roles. The importance, as envisaged in the Children Act 2004, of appointing

individuals to positions where they have specific responsibilities for children's services should not be undermined. The Government should amend the statutory guidance issued in relation to such roles and establish the principle that, given the importance of individuals in senior positions being responsible for children's services, it should not be considered appropriate to give additional functions (that do not relate to children's services) to Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services unless exceptional circumstances arise.

Government response - Accept in principle: The existing statutory status of the DCSs and the Lead Member for children's services will be retained, and the statutory guidance on the role of the DCS and the Lead Member revised. There will be a local test of 'assurance' so that whole councils and corporate teams can consider the merits and possible risks of planning additional duties on the DCS. Ofsted will also consider the leadership arrangements, the programme of peer challenge and review alongside any redesign of services.

Timescale: The Government will consult formally on the guidance in autumn 2011.

Recommendation 9

The Government should require LSCBs to use systems methodology when undertaking Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and, over the coming year, work with the sector to develop national resources to:

- *provide accredited, skilled and independent reviewers to jointly work with LSCBs on each SCR;*
- *promote the development of a variety of systems-based methodologies to learn from practice;*
- *initiate the development of a typology of the problems that contribute to adverse outcomes to facilitate national learning; and*
- *disseminate learning nationally to improve practice and inform the work of the Chief Social Worker (see chapter seven).*

In the meantime, Ofsted's evaluation of SCRs should end.

Government response - Consider further: The Government agrees that systems review methodology should be used by LSCBs, that there should be a group of accredited reviewers who will contribute to national learning and thematic reviews of practice. The ongoing pilots and other systems review models will inform the way forward.

Further areas for consideration include:

- which organisation(s) would be able to take responsibility for recruiting the reviewers, accrediting their practice and deploying them to local areas;
- to whom the reviewers would be accountable; and
- the resourcing requirements.

Ofsted SCR evaluations should end but it is important to plan the transition carefully.

Timescale: For using systems review during the second half of 2011, for ending the evaluation of SCRs in their current form over the summer.

Reconstruct Research Service



Haringey Council

Report for:	Joint Corporate Parenting and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee	Item number	
--------------------	--	--------------------	--

Title:	<i>Children missing from care and home</i>
---------------	--

Report authorised by :	Debbie Haith Deputy Director Children and Young People's Service
-------------------------------	---

Lead Officer:	Marion Wheeler Assistant Director Safeguarding 0208 489 1912 marion.wheeler@haringey.gov.uk
----------------------	---

Ward(s) affected: all	Report for Information
------------------------------	-------------------------------

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report is to inform members about children who go missing from care and missing from home, update them on statutory guidance and responsibility and inform them about the local Haringey context and actions being taken.

2. Introduction

- 2.1** It is estimated that approximately 100,000 children and young people run away from home or care over night in the UK each year; 1 in 10 of these being under 11 years of age and 8% stating they were harmed whilst they were away. Running is often a clear indicator that something is seriously wrong at home. Research and practice in the UK has shown that significant numbers of young people run away in response to serious problems at home, for example, neglect, abuse or family conflict.



Haringey Council

2.2 Of the estimated 100,000 children and young people who run away from home or care, one in six end up on the streets. A young person might run away from home or care for various reasons, but when they do so it usually means something in their life isn't going right. Furthermore, these young people face the particular range of risks that come from having to find alternative places to stay and the means to survive.

2.3 It is the responsibility of local government and their partners to safeguard the young and vulnerable, including young runaways. This is normally done through the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

Statutory guidance has been developed to help LA's put better systems in place to support young runaways from both home and care. The guidance, *Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care*, emphasises the importance of young runaways being offered a return interview and stresses the importance of information sharing and using common assessment. It also explains the need for a named person to be responsible at a local level.

3. Recommendations

Elected members consider and note the contents of the report

4. Update – The Miss U Project

4.1 The London Investment Programme has brought together a partnership of Aviva, the Railway Children project and Barnardos to make available £300,000 over the next 3 years to 3 London local authorities to improve the quality of preventive and direct work that can be undertaken with children and young people placing themselves at risk by going missing from care or from home.

The local authorities involved in the partnership, to be known as the '**Miss U Project**' will be Islington, Camden and Haringey. The project will fund the set up of a new team of staff employed through Barnardos and based part time in Barnardos and part time in each of the 3 host authorities.

4.2 Haringey has significant numbers of children reported missing each year and this is an important area of our work; these are children in care to Haringey, in care to other local authorities but placed in homes or foster homes in borough and children going missing from home.

A London Steering group has been put in place to oversee the development and implementation of the project; service objectives and outcomes are currently being developed to ensure we achieve maximum



Haringey Council

impact and learning across the 3 local authorities and the third sector partners.

Our Haringey key objectives and outcomes are that we reduce the levels of harm for children who experience a 'missing' episode, that we enable children and young people to develop safety strategies, that we are able to improve parent/ carer/ child relationships and that 'missing' episodes are reduced. The project had a lead in set up time of approximately 3 months and the target date for operation is autumn 2011. The work will include direct outreach work with children and young people, joint work with partner LSCB agencies and outreach and education work to schools.

4.3 The London Miss U Scheme has been developed through the Aviva 'Streets to School' Programme with the 'Railway Children' Charity and Barnardo's who will work with Camden, Islington and Haringey Children's Services to promote and improve the protection of young people who go missing and who may be at risk of harm, by increasing early identification of risk, developing partnerships and securing a co-ordinated inter-agency response. This will include a drop-in service for young people, a prevention education programme and training for professionals to raise awareness.

4.4 A young person missing is difficult to define and often means different things to different people. The Missing Young Person's Scheme defines missing as:-

A child or young person under the age of 18 who is spending time away from their home or placement without the permission of their parent or carer, or has been forced to leave their family home or who does not wish to return. A young person who is absent from their home or placement without permission for any length of time and where their age and experience; background or ability makes their absence a cause for concern.

Not all incidents of being absent from home or care can be categorised as being Missing. Other incidents can include: - unauthorised absence, absconding, abduction.

Haringey is excited to be part of this new Service and will have a Barnardo's worker supporting social workers and managers, located in our First Response Service.

The worker will be part of the multi-agency team Screening Team and will work directly with children and young people who are referred to First Response because of concerns about them going missing.

The worker will:-



Haringey Council

- Help to prevent children and young people from running away
- Safeguard children and young people who go missing
- Educate children and young people on the risks of going missing
- Raise awareness for professionals through training
- Provide a drop-in service/safe space for children and young people who go missing
- Exchange information between Barnardo's and Camden, Islington and Haringey Social Services about children and young people (12-17) who go missing from home and care.

5. Background information

5.1 Overall Haringey context

Police Missing Persons Unit in Haringey confirm that for the 12 months (01/06/10 - 31/05/11) they received 2455 reports for missing children.

A significant proportion of these will be children who are late back from school or an activity and will have been properly notified to police by worried parents.

A second significant number will be those children in the care of other Local authorities who are placed in Haringey private and voluntary care homes or foster placements.

The numbers of children in Haringey care who go missing are set out below at 5.2.

The numbers of children and young people who go missing from home and who do not return within a 24 hour period in Haringey are relatively small but are of concern to agencies engaged in safeguarding. We have received 7 notifications of children missing from home for a 24 hour period in the first 6 months of this year.

5.2 Children missing / absconding from care between April and 19/9/11

Between April and mid September 2011, 51 different children have either gone missing from care (away from care for more than 24 hours without consent) or had periods of unauthorised absence/absconded (on one or more occasions)

22 children were reported as missing from care for more than 24 hours in the period and 3 of these also had several periods of unauthorised absence. 2 are still reported as missing from care. Both are aged 16.

Legal Status of children missing/absconding since April 2011



Haringey Council

Interim Care Order	14
Full Care Order	18
Voluntary Care	18
On Remand	1

Placement of children when they go missing/abscond

Placement type	In Borough	Out of borough
Agency Foster Care	0	12
Haringey Park/Coppetts Road)	11	N/A
Task-Centred foster care	2	0
Placed at home	1	0
Semi-independent	6	5
Residential	4	10

Some reasons why children are reported as 'Unauthorised absence' from care

- Not returned to placement after curfew time set by carers
- Staying with family members where their whereabouts are known but it is inappropriate for them to remain there
- Staying out overnight but considered to be 'low risk'.

Details of children who are still missing from care @ 26/9/11

- Child A – went missing from care in June. She is part of a large extended Roma Gypsy family where other family members have gone missing and returned. Police are still actively trying to locate her.
- Child B – Went missing from care in June. There have been reports that he has tried to leave the country and UKBA have been notified. He is an unaccompanied Minor.

6. Financial Implications

The 'MISS – U' Project is funded through an external partnership with no additional costs to the authority.



Haringey Council

The employees associated with the scheme are employed by Barnardo's and there are therefore no employment issues for the Council when the funding for the project ceases.

7. Legal Implications

This guidance was issued in July 2009 under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which means that except in exceptional circumstances the local authority must act in accordance with it.

The "Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care" serves to safeguard **all** runaways and to redress the imbalance that currently exists between services offered to runaways from the looked after children population and those who run away from home.

The Children's Society report *Stepping Up* found that half of local authorities surveyed had no protocol for managing cases of children missing from home however nearly 93 per cent had protocols for children missing from care.

This statutory guidance is supplementary to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and should be read in conjunction with that statutory guidance because a swift and effective response for when a young person runs away is seen by the government as a key element not just in safeguarding young people but also in the link with work to raise their aspirations and improve their life chances.

8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

Children and young people who go missing are already amongst our most vulnerable and are then at risk of increased vulnerability through going missing. The risks are those of missing out on educational opportunities leading to further disadvantage, increased exposure to drug and alcohol misuse, increased risk of sexual exploitation, increased risk of early or unplanned pregnancy, increased risk of homelessness in older young people, increased risk of involvement in gang and criminal activity. The children who go missing and run are from all sections of our community.

9. Head of Procurement Comments

10. Policy Implications

11. Use of Appendices



Haringey Council

- **Missing from Care Action Plan**
- **First Response Missing Protocol**

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

This page is intentionally left blank

Haringey Missing Young People Action Group – Strategy / Action Plan 2011 - 2013

1. Early identification of Children and Young People at Risk of Running Away			
Task	Action	Lead	Timescale
<p>a) Ensure local preventative strategies in relation to running away are implemented and reviewed</p>	<p>i. Early identification of young people at risk of running away</p> <p>ii. Incentives for young people in residential homes and fostering to reward positive behaviour and discourage running away</p>	<p>i. Wendy Tomlinson and Chris Chalmers (and Perminder Chahal)</p> <p>ii. Cleopatra Showers, Neil Harriott and Janice Darling</p>	<p>i. Ongoing (likely to be done by end June as part of CiC Review) By 30-4-11</p> <p>ii.</p>
			<p>i. Young people are identified at the stage that they are placed. Providers are asked to state how they will manage this before placement is made. CiC Managers promote best practice to staff including (eg) photographs on file and friends details on file. CiC review documentation will include explicit questions about risk of running away and relevant actions for each child</p> <p>ii. Current position is that the homes and carers have means by which they engage young people and encourage them not to run away. The managers responsible for these services will update on the detail. Once this is done, we will</p>

b) To improve management and monitoring of instances of young people missing from home or care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Adhere to Pan London Missing from Home and Care Procedures. iv. Update Haringey LSCB procedures and ensure that these expand upon the PLMHC procedures and highlight responsibilities in risk assessing the difference between 'Missing' and 'Unauthorised Absence'. v. Ensure Children's Home Guidance is in line with locally agreed practice and procedures and updated according to new National Minimum standards due in April 2011. vi. Analyse data regarding missing incidents from Haringey residential homes and foster placements vii. Analyse data from children missing from home viii. Analyse data from children missing from other P&V care homes in the borough ix. Ensure missing from care episodes are correctly recorded on individual case records and care plans revised as necessary x. Ensure care plan includes strategy to minimise running away for those who are repeatedly running away. Placement Information record (PIR) should also be completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Wendy Tomlinson iv. Wendy Tomlinson / all providers. v. Neil Harriott / Cleopatra Showers vi. Wendy Tomlinson (Cleopatra Showers / Neil Harriott) and Met Police Missing Persons Unit vii. TBC by Action Group viii. Rosemary Mate / Wendy Tomlinson and Met Police Missing Persons Unit ix. Chris Chalmers x. Chris Chalmers xi. Chris Chalmers xii. Met Police Missing Persons Unit / CYPS Admin Team and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Completed October 2010. iv. In progress v. By 30-4-11 vi. This is reported on monthly vii. TBC by Action Group viii. This is reported on monthly but needs to be done in a more streamlined way. ix. June 2011 x. June 2011 xi. Ongoing but data review and CiC review will help us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. All providers of Children's Homes within Haringey have stated their current and ongoing commitment to working within the Pan London Procedures. Practice is discussed at 'Missing from Care' meetings with providers. Once these have also been set up with Fostering Providers, we will amalgamate the two. iv. In progress v. Guidance was issued in March 2011 and work is in progress. vi. Monthly report has resulted thus far in helping us (for example) make links that tell us that individuals and groups of individuals are at risk of sexual exploitation. Most outcomes are individualised due to 	expand that conversation to other providers.
--	--	---	--	--	--

<p>c) Ensure submission of data regarding</p>	<p>xi. Multi-agency risk management meeting should take place for those who persistently go missing. xii. Contact with LSCBs responsible for children in care who are placed in Haringey by other Local Authorities.</p>	<p>Performance Management Team.</p>		<p>numbers involved. However, patterns by placement are rare and are usually noticed via vigilant staff rather than data management vii. This data will tell us whether our plan (in place June 2010) to ensure that CAF is considered for every child returned after missing from home, is happening. This will be individualised data. viii. On agenda for Action Group. ix. This is done as a matter of course but needs to be streamlined to ensure that every strategy meeting is timely. The deadline refers to the CiC Review. x. As ix xi. As ix xii. CYPS are routinely informed about young people placed in out borough.</p>
<p>c) Ensure submission of data regarding</p>	<p>Provide analysis reports to: xiii. LSCB QA sub-group</p>	<p>i. Wendy Tomlinson and ? TBC</p>	<p>xiii. Ongoing xiv. Autumn 2011 xv. Autumn 2011</p>	<p>xiii. xiv. xv.</p>

children missing from home and care	<p>xiv. Council members via CPAC</p> <p>xv. Ofsted Inspectors</p> <p>Data analysis will identify specific areas of need</p>	<p>ii. confirmed at Action group in early May. Wendy Tomlinson / Debbie Haith</p> <p>iii. Wendy Tomlinson / Debbie Haith</p>		
d) To provide information and support for teachers and schools regarding children running away	<p>xvi. All schools staff to be aware of the Pan London Procedures.</p> <p>xvii. Also linked will be the supplementary procedures on sexual exploitation</p>	<p>iv. TBC at Action Group in early May Sarah Peel</p>	<p>xvi. Ongoing June 2011</p> <p>xvii.</p>	<p>xvi. This work was done as part of the second point in the last Action Plan. The purpose of it in this plan is simply to revisit to ensure that awareness stays 'live'</p> <p>xvii. London Safeguarding Children Board supplementary procedures on children missing from education; children missing from home and care – all on www.londonscb.gov.uk</p>
e) Consultation with young people about running away	<p>xviii. Consulting with children and young people to inform and enhance data and outcomes</p>	<p>Jennifer James / Chris Chalmers</p>	<p>xviii. Autumn 2011</p>	<p>xviii.</p> <p>xix.</p>
2. Support for children and young people who run away				

<p>a) To develop family based emergency accommodation options</p>	<p>i. To ensure foster-carer placements are available as emergency accommodation for runaways</p>	<p>i. Wendy Tomlinson</p>	<p>i. Ongoing</p>	<p>i. The EDT have a list of available Foster Carers and Residential Providers on any given out of hours duty. For 13-17 year olds, we typically use our internal homes first, hence the focus on them first in this plan. All Foster carers have some out of hours support aside from EDT.</p>
<p>b) To promote Telephone Help Lines for children who have run away or are thinking about running away</p>	<p>ii.</p>			
<p>3. Support for children, young people and their families post running away</p>				
<p>a) To undertake return home / safe and well interviews</p>	<p>i. Runaways should receive timely and sensitive interviews when they return home / to care, to identify any longer term needs</p> <p>ii. Consideration to be given to return interviews being undertaken by an independent person</p> <p>iii. A child or young person who is identified as at risk of significant harm on return to home is to be referred to First Response</p>	<p>Wendy Tomlinson / Chris Chalmers / Care Home managers</p> <p>Chris Chalmers / Jennifer James</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>i. This work is currently done as a matter of routine in the residential placements</p> <p>ii. As a first point, this will be discussed with young people to explore whether it is considered useful.</p>

				iii. Significant work was done in the last action plan to make sure that this happens. It is revisited here to ensure that awareness continues.
b) To improve support to parents / carers of children who run away	iv. Help Lines, consultation			iv.
4. Communication, Training and Practice Guidance for Haringey Agencies				
a) To ensure Local Agencies share information about runaways	i. Ensure a common approach is taken by all agencies when reporting runaways to Children Social Care Services	i. Wendy Tomlinson / Marion Wheeler / Debbie Haith	i. Ongoing	i. This is the purpose of the missing from Care Meetings that are described in 1b iii. It will culminate in a LSCB conference on the subject.
b) Training for all relevant staff regarding runaways	ii. Provide multi-agency awareness-raising sessions regarding runaways, including to children's care home staff and foster carers iii. Partner agencies to ensure relevant staff are trained in relation to addressing the needs of runaways	ii. Wendy Tomlinson / Rosemary Mate / Janice Darling / Neil Harriott / Cleopatra Showers / Chris Chalmers iii. LSCB subgroup.	ii. Ongoing iii.	ii. These are a function of the meetings mentioned in 1b iii. iii.

Missing from Home Protocol

Introduction

It is estimated that approximately 100,000 children and young people run away from home or care over night in the UK each year; 1 in 10 of these being under 11 years of age and 8% stating they were harmed whilst they were away. Running is often a clear indicator that something is seriously wrong at home. Research and practice in the UK has shown that significant numbers of young people run away in response to serious problems at home, for example, neglect abuse or family conflict.

Of the estimated 100,000 children and young people who run away from home or care, one in six end up on the streets. A young person might run away from home or care for various reasons, but when they do so it usually means something in their life isn't going right. Furthermore, these young people face the particular range of risks that come from having to find alternative places to stay and the means to survive.

It is the responsibility of local government and their partners to safeguard the young and vulnerable, including young runaways. This is normally done through the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

Guidance

Statutory guidance has been developed to help LA's put better systems in place to support young runaways from both home and care. The guidance, *Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care*, emphasises the importance of young runaways being offered a return interview and stresses the importance of information sharing and using common assessment. It also explains the need for a named person to be responsible at a local level. The guidance relates to children missing from home and care (Pan London 5.27) and children missing from school (Pan London 2.28)

Referrals

Children are brought to the attention of Children and Families from several sources. The primary source is via the police. All children who have come to the notice of the police as a result of going missing are logged onto a police merlin. These merlins are reviewed by the Police Public Protection Desk, who undertake further research and collate this information into a PAC (Pre Assessment Check). A running log of PAC's is kept by the Public Protection Desk who work closely with CYPS First response to track patterns which may indicate that a child/ YP is at risk.

Children may be reported missing by other agencies notably schools. The procedures are clear that where other agencies report a child/ YP as missing and those with parental responsibility or care of the child have not done so this constitutes significant harm. Children missing from school will be referred to First Response if there is evidence that they

are a victim of crime, if they are the subject of a child protection plan, if they are looked after, privately fostered, subject to an ongoing s47 investigation, are constantly avoiding contact or are they are deemed at risk due to issues such as criminal activity, forced marriage or honour based violence.

Categories

Children coming to notice fall into a number of categories;

- **Children who return home late from school or an arranged day time activity and have been reported missing by their parents. These episodes are defined in the Pan London Child Protection Procedures as 'unauthorised absence.' Pan London CP procedures 5.27.1.**
- **Children/ YP who return home late from an evening activity and have been reported missing by their parents. These may relate to Young People who are pushing boundaries or may be evidence of unhappiness/ at risk at home or in the community including sexual exploitation or gang related activity. The Pan London Procedures advise that the agency first alerted to this episode should discuss with parents whether this constitutes an unauthorised absence of a missing episode. It also recommends that unauthorised absences are monitored to ensure that patterns are not developing which may indicate more serious concerns.**
- **Children who are missing for longer period including over night. The lead agency for these children is the police. (pan London 5.27)**

Quality assurance:

- Framework 1 reporting has been enhanced to include a referral category of ' unauthorised absence' to be used for children over 11 who meet the criterion for a level 1 response (see below). This will allow monitoring of repeat episodes which will be reported on monthly, 3 monthly, 6 monthly and annually to identify patterns of behaviour and determine what level of intervention is required.

Multi agency response

It is essential that the agency response is sensitive to the needs of children and young people, commensurate to the risk and works in partnership with parents and carers.

Child/ Young person is reported as missing or has an unauthorised absence
PPD alert social work teams for children placed in Haringey for other authorities.
Screening team record absences for Haringey Children in care and alert the appropriate service
Screening team record episode for all other allocated children and alert appropriate service
All other reports reviewed by the screening manager

Level one response

- Particulars of the referral to be considered by the screening manager taking into account any historical intervention. Where there are no known additional factors action will be as follows

- Unauthorised absence of YP over 11 who returned home within 4 hours – report will be logged onto the FWI system, NFA

- 3 episodes of going missing/ unauthorised absence – Discussion with Youth Community and Participation (YCP) for early intervention and CAF if required

- Un- authorised absence of a child under 11 where length of missing period is of concern (eg over two hours) or where there are historical concerns – initiate a gathering information episode to screening SW, school and health checks to be undertaken. Screening manager to review matter again to decide whether CAF or an initial assessment are required.

Level Two Response

- where a child /YP has been reported missing and not returned within 4 hours the action will be as follows:

- screening to open up a gathering information episode and assign to screening worker to:
- liaise with police missing persons' officer

- speak to the carer/parent
- gather information from other agencies

- ScreeningTM/FR TM to review on a weekly basis and a strategy meeting to be held at 14 days of the YP has not returned.

- strategy meeting to include YCP/ missU project worker

-Where the child/ YP has returned but there are historical concerns or if the child is under 11

– screening manager to open a gathering information episode as above and manager to review with a view on completion of a CAF or assessment if required.

Level 3 Response

Where the child has returned after a period away from home.

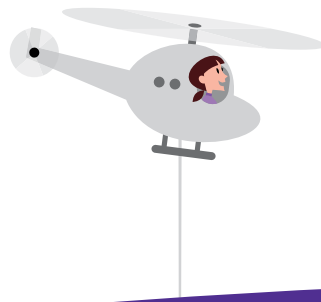
-Professionals/Strategy meeting to be convened to include YCP/ MissU worker/ Police missing person's officer

- strategy meeting to identify named lead professional to undertake the return from missing interview with the YP, develop an action plan and manage delivery of this.

- Core assessment to be completed on all children in the family

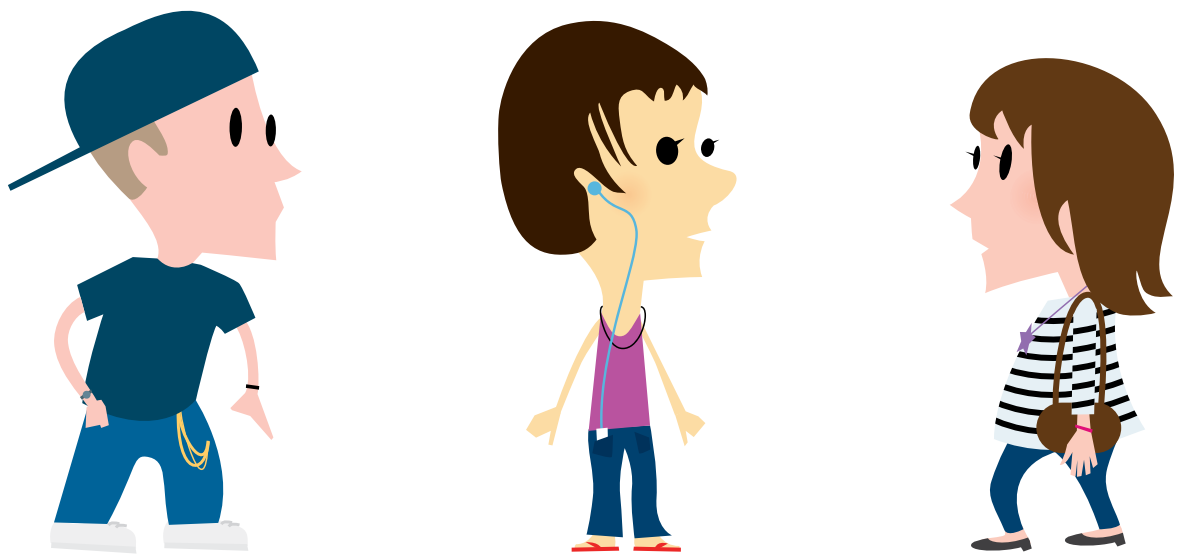
-Consideration to be given for referral to Barnardo's sexual exploitation project if this is an assessed need via Safeguarding Panel

This page is intentionally left blank



Supporting young people who run away or go missing

A briefing for Lead Members for Children's Services



The aim of this DCSF briefing is to help Lead Members for Children's Services (LMCSs) fulfil their political leadership responsibilities in relation to runaway and missing children. A new national indicator on missing from home and care was introduced in April 2009, and new statutory guidance has clearly set out how central government expects local areas to safeguard all children who run away and go missing, and to redress the imbalance that currently exists between services offered to runaways from the looked-after population and those who run away from home. Working proactively to reduce instances of running away, and the number of individuals who repeatedly run away will also have a wider positive impact on young people, reducing absences from school, improving their prospects of being in education, training or employment, and reducing the likelihood that they will engage in other risky behaviours such as committing crime and misusing substances.

Useful links and where to find out more

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/youngrunaways/youngrunaways/

www.npia.police.uk/missingpersons

A key role for LMCs

Lead Members have an important political strategic and community leadership role for their council and can use this effectively to support the drive to improve their local area response to runaway and missing children and young people.

How can LMCs do this?

GET INVOLVED – ensure you and other members have a good understanding of the patterns of running away in your area, and how the statutory and voluntary services are working together to safeguard those children who do run away.

Checklist for LMCs

- ✓ Do you have good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), through the Director of Children's Services, and are you assured that they are monitoring work to improve service provision for young runaways?
- ✓ Are you well briefed on how many young people run away from home and care, the characteristics of those young people and any significant patterns in their behaviour whilst away?
- ✓ Are you and other elected members sufficiently briefed to understand why responding swiftly and effectively when a young person runs away is a key element not just in ensuring the young person is safeguarded, but also why it needs to be linked with work to raise aspirations and improve life chances?

HELP PARTNERS WORK TOGETHER

– get senior level ownership and clear accountability from partners, such as the local police force and Primary Care Trust for the outcomes for young people you are working towards.

- ✓ Are there champions for runaway and missing children at a high level within the council, Primary Care Trust, police force and/or Local Strategic Partnership?
- ✓ Do the relevant sub group of the LSCB have senior representation from all partner agencies and is it linked to other key partnerships (LSP, Children and Young People Strategic Partnerships etc)?
- ✓ Is the statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) being used to prioritise runaway and missing children, and link it to other LAA indicators including safeguarding, educational attainment, emotional and behavioural health of children in care, reducing those not in education, employment or training, substance misuse, and youth offending and re-offending.

MAKE SURE SERVICES ARE EFFECTIVE

– ensure progress on preventing running away, and in particular repeat running is performance managed and that resources are used effectively.

- ✓ Are you using the overview and scrutiny process to bring in other partners and find out what they are doing in relation to running away?
- ✓ Has the council underpinned work to prevent running away, and reduce repeated instances of running away with joint commissioning and partnership funding (such as with the local police force)?

4 Supporting young people who run away or go missing

- ✓ Is there a local action plan in place setting out how improvements in responding to runaway and missing children will be delivered? Has this been reviewed against the self assessment of services that underpins the new national indicator and actions planned to address any weaknesses?

CHAMPION PREVENTION – ensure the prevention of running away underpins the local strategy and is a core element in programmes for young people.

- ✓ Is there strategic leadership of Personal, Social and Health Education to ensure higher priority in all schools and colleges, with clear links to governors; statutory duty on safeguarding and wellbeing?
- ✓ Is running away prevention mainstreamed through Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) and systems that deliver Targeted Youth Support (TYS)?
- ✓ Is work around family mediation, and specific family based issues that can lead to running away included in the parenting strategy?

LISTEN AND SPEAK UP – engage with your local communities, ensuring the local strategy and commissioning of services is informed by the views of young people, parents, carers and community representatives.

- ✓ Are there adequate mechanisms in place to get the views of young people about running away, and their general emotional wellbeing?

Why does running away matter?

Running away is strongly linked with poor outcomes, not just in the short term, but in the long term. Young runaways are far less likely to attend school and be in education and training beyond the age of 16. They are far more likely to

be involved in substance misuse and get involved in criminal activity. Running away matters as it:

- impacts on the most vulnerable young people;
- puts young people at enormous risk of significant harm;
- limits educational opportunities and attainment;
- contributes to worklessness and poverty;
- carries avoidable costs to the police and other public services.

The stark facts

- It is estimated that approximately 100,000 young people run away overnight from their home or care every year.
- 16% of young runaways sleep rough whilst away from home.
- 8% of young runaways say that they were hurt or harmed whilst away.
- 90% of children subjected to sexual grooming go missing at some point.
- 12% resort to survival strategies such as begging and stealing.
- 1 in 10 runaways are under 11.
- Research suggests that running away is not linked to economic deprivation, young people are just as likely to run away in relatively prosperous areas as in the poorest communities.

Who is at risk of running away?

- young people in care;
- young people who have been sexually exploited;
- young people with problems at home, especially:
 - where the relationship between the young person's parents are breaking down; or
 - where there is known conflict with step-parents;

5 Supporting young people who run away or go missing

- young people who have mental health problems;
- young people who are bullied at school; and
- young women from some ethnic minority groups.

What needs to be in place to improve local performance and reduce running away?

High rates of running away are not inevitable, and with effective prevention and early intervention, rates of running, and repeat running can be dramatically reduced. In some local areas, where there are specific projects (both statutory and voluntary) focusing on identifying young people who have run, or are at risk of running, it is estimated that instances of running have fallen by over 70 per cent. Areas, which have been most successful in reducing rate have had the following place:

- senior champions and strong leadership within both the local authority and the local police force;
- joined up working between all statutory and voluntary sector service; with good use of assessment tools such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF);
- good use of local data about running, identifying trends and patterns, to help with assessing need and targeting;
- early intervention and preventative work with at risk groups of young people;
- multi agency workforce training on issues related to running away, such as mental health and sexual exploitation;
- active integrated youth support services in the statutory and voluntary sector; and
- support for parents and carers in managing difficult relationships with their children.

What works in reducing repeated instances of running away?

- ensuring that return interviews are carried out promptly, allowing young people the opportunity to talk about the reasons why they ran; and
- acting on the outcomes of that interview, helping the young person, their family or their carers overcome those problems.

How can work on running away support other LAA priorities and targets?

- **Education:** Action to reduce instances of running away is likely to increase these vulnerable young people's attendance at school and help meet education and NEET targets.
- **Safeguarding:** Young people who run away are at enormous risk of harm, both from themselves and from others. Tackling the problems that lie behind the behaviour can help to reduce instances of self harm, and other injuries, sexual exploitation, and minimise the likelihood that the young person's problems will escalate.

A few words from young people themselves

"No-one runs away for no reason."

Amie, 13, Surrey

"My stepdad used to give me real hidings. At first I slept at friends' houses and once I had to sleep in a shed for three nights. I stopped going to school – I couldn't do any work, I couldn't concentrate, that's why."

Debbie, 14, Dorset

"Sit and talk to them and ask them why they ran away and investigate it."

Kellie, 12, Newcastle



You can download this publication online at:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm

Search using the ref: 00355-2010DOM-EN

PPBHP/(4315)/0310

© Crown Copyright 2010

The text in this document (excluding the Royal Arms and other departmental or agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context.

The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the document specified.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

For any other use of this material please contact the Office of Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or e-mail: licensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk

75% recycled

This publication is printed on 75% recycled paper



When you have finished with this publication please recycle it

Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

Supporting local authorities to meet the requirements of National Indicator 71 – Missing from Home and Care

Issued: July 2009



Contents

Introduction	3
Who should read this document?	5
Acknowledgements	5
Chapter 1	6
Responding to the needs of all children and young people who run away and go missing	
1.1 Definitions	6
1.2 Key principles	8
1.3 Push/pull factors – addressing the causes of running away	9
1.4 Strategic overview	14
1.5 Regional arrangements and cross-border issues	17
1.6 Out-of-hours responses	17
1.7 Actions-to-take checklist	19
Chapter 2	20
Children who run away and go missing from home	
2.1 Working together	20
2.2 Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols	21
2.3 Assessment of need	22
2.4 Risk assessment	23
2.5 Police Safe and Well Check and Return Interviews	24
2.6 Support for 16- and 17-year-olds	26
2.7 Young people missing from home process flowchart	27
2.8 Actions-to-take checklist	28
Chapter 3	29
Children who run away and go missing from local authority care	
3.1 Introduction	29
3.2 Strategy and procedure	30
3.3 Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols	30
3.4 Care planning	32
3.5 Placement matters	33
3.6 Risk assessment	35
3.7 Planning for the return	35
3.8 Looked-after children trafficked from abroad	38
3.9 Support for care staff	39
3.10 Young people missing from care process flowchart	40
3.11 Actions-to-take checklist	42

2 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

Conclusion	44
The law concerning missing or runaway children	45
Signposting – other useful information	46
Annex 1: assessing the risks that looked-after children may go missing	49
Annex 2: glossary of terms	50
Annex 3: national Indicator 71 – Missing from Home and Care criteria	51
Bibliography	60

Introduction

“No-one runs away for no reason.”

Amie, 13, Surrey

- 1) **This document is issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which means that, except in exceptional circumstances, local authorities must act in accordance with this guidance.**
- 2) The Every Child Matters agenda states that children have the right to happy, healthy and safe childhoods that will prepare them for adult life. *The Children's Plan* builds on this by stating that Britain should be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. It sets out a number of goals to achieve this.
- 3) We all have a responsibility to safeguard the young and vulnerable. Chapter 2 of *The Children's Plan – Safe and Sound* – sets out the vision for making children's safety everyone's responsibility. One of the key principles underpinning *The Children's Plan* is that local services need to be shaped by, and responsive to, children, young people and families – not designed around professionals. This is of vital importance when it comes to supporting children and young people who go missing or decide to run away.
- 4) Running away can be symptomatic of wider problems in a child or young person's life, but whatever the reason, one thing is very clear: children who decide to run away are unhappy, vulnerable and in danger. Research from The Children's Society report, *Stepping Up* (2008), states that as many as two-thirds of young people who run away are not reported to the police as missing, and even fewer as having run away.
- 5) As well as short-term risks, there are also long-term implications. Nearly half of sentenced prisoners report having run away as children, and nearly half of homeless young people at Centrepoin ran away as children.¹
- 6) In June 2008, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families published the *Young Runways Action Plan*. The plan was developed after evidence from The Children's Society report *Stepping Up*, and findings from a series of parliamentary hearings led by Helen Southworth MP and other members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children who Run Away or Go Missing, found that more needed to be done to support young people who run away from home.
- 7) The *Action Plan* highlights the Government's commitment to working with local authorities, the police and the voluntary sector to ensure that young people who run away, or who feel they have to leave, are kept safe, and receive the immediate and ongoing support they need.

1. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Young Runaways*.

4 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 8) This guidance replaces the *Missing from Care and Home Guidance* published by the Department of Health in 2002. The Government committed to updating the guidance in the *Young Runaways Action Plan* to reflect recent developments across children's services, in particular the introduction of Targeted Youth Support (TYS), Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the role of the Lead Professional and Team Around the Child (TAC). It also supports local authorities in meeting the requirements of National Indicator 71 – Missing from Home and Care, which began in April 2009.
- 9) The guidance serves to safeguard **all** runaways and to redress the imbalance that currently exists between services offered to runaways from the looked-after population and those who run away from home. The Children's Society report *Stepping Up* found that half of local authorities surveyed had no protocol for managing cases of children missing from home, however nearly 93 per cent had protocols for children missing from care.²
- 10) Establishing strong communication networks between agencies and practitioners in the locality will help ensure risk factors are identified early, and the completion of a CAF where necessary, will identify a child or young person's additional needs and which services are required to address the young person's needs. This document provides supplementary guidance to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006) and should be read in conjunction with that guidance.
- 11) This guidance draws out the particular requirements related to responding to children who run away and go missing from care, as these are overrepresented in missing person's reports³. Local authorities have specific statutory responsibilities towards all looked-after children which they must fulfil. Where there is a possibility that an individual looked-after child might go missing from their care placement, their personal care plan should include strategies to minimise this possibility.
- 12) This revised guidance will help local authorities provide the best possible support for all children who feel they need to run away, wherever they run from, by shining a light on some of the good practice that already exists. The guidance contains case studies covering a range of examples and provides links to other useful information.
- 13) The guidance contains 'Actions to Take' at the end of each chapter, referring back to the relevant sections and making links to the national indicator criteria where appropriate.
- 14) The guidance also addresses the following issues:
 - Roles and responsibilities in a multi-agency response, within and across local authority borders, including strong working with the police and the role the voluntary sector can play in providing independent and non-statutory services to children running away from home and care.
 - The need for local and regional Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols to be in place (referred to in this guidance as RMFHC protocols) especially for out-of-hours referrals.

2. The Children's Society (2008) *Stepping Up*.

3. Wade, J & Biehal N (1998) *Going Missing – Young People Absent from Care*.

- The importance of a return interview for children and young people missing from both home and care to explore the reasons they ran away, referring on, or linking into, care planning as appropriate.
- Recommended characteristics of, and standards for, provision of effective emergency accommodation drawing on the findings of the emergency accommodation review once this has been completed.
- Practices and procedures for gathering information and intelligence on running away in an area, to support the new national indicator and to inform local practice.

Who should read this document?

- 15) All Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and their partners in local areas should take account of this guidance.
- 16) The guidance is primarily aimed at LSCB partners, managers, practitioners and other professionals working with children and young people who go missing or run away from home and care.
- 17) Police forces may also find it useful to use this document in conjunction with the revised guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons which is currently being revised and will be published in late 2009. www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/missing_persons_2005_24x02x05.pdf
- 18) While this guidance is specific to England, the challenges are common across the four countries of the United Kingdom. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will work closely with the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, recognising their particular and varying responsibilities. Each will consider the most appropriate arrangements in those areas for which they have responsibility, to address the issues in ways that meet their own circumstances and needs.

Acknowledgements

- 19) The DCSF would like to thank the group of experts, which included representatives from across national and local government, the police and the voluntary sector, for their time and expertise in helping develop this guidance; as well as the projects and partnerships who have provided links to their protocols, and information for case studies.
- 20) The DCSF would especially like to thank all the young people quoted throughout the document for allowing us to use their experiences.⁴

4. The names of the young people quoted have been changed to protect their identities.

Chapter 1

Responding to the needs of all children and young people who run away and go missing

“I didn’t get on with my stepdad. He used to give us real hidings. At first I slept at friends’ houses and once I had to sleep in a shed for three nights. I stopped going to school – I couldn’t do any work. I couldn’t concentrate, that’s why.”

Debbie, 14, Dorset

1.1 Definitions

- 1) The terms ‘young runaway’ and ‘missing’ in this context refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 who have run away from their home or care placement, have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts is unknown.

Unauthorised absence

- 2) Where a looked-after child’s whereabouts is known or thought to be known but unconfirmed, they are not missing and may instead be considered as absent without authorisation from their placement.
- 3) Categories of unauthorised absences should be agreed between agencies locally. Protocols must ensure that clear actions are set out to address unauthorised absences. The responsible care provider and, where appropriate, the police should work together to ensure the child’s safety. Any unauthorised absence must be carefully monitored as the child may subsequently become a missing child.

Child abduction

- 4) Where a child has been abducted or forcibly removed from their place of residence, this is a ‘crime in action’ and should be reported to the police immediately.
- 5) **For guidance on the following circumstances, please use the links to refer to the dedicated resources available:**

Forced marriage

- 6) Some young people run away because they are at risk of abuse. Forced marriage in particular can lead to young women running away from home. Further guidance and information can be found at: www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/

Children not receiving a suitable education

- 7) Children not receiving a suitable education are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being in school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision.
- 8) Evidence suggests young runaways face more challenges to accessing universal services and may be missing from education. Those with local responsibility for children who run away or go missing from home and care will need to ensure they link up with 'Children Missing Education' officers and those with responsibility for other universal services such as health. Guidance for local authorities on children not receiving a suitable education can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/childrenmissingeducation/

Grooming for potential sexual exploitation

- 9) In some cases, young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them sexually. Evidence suggests that 90 per cent of children subjected to sexual grooming go missing at some point.
- 10) The supply of drugs and alcohol or the offering of gifts may be used to entice and coerce young people into associations with inappropriate adults. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- 11) Looked-after children may also be targeted by those wishing to abuse and sexually exploit them, and encouraging these children to run in order to disrupt their placement is often part of this abuse. Young people living within residential care units are particularly vulnerable to being directly targeted in this way.
- 12) Guidance has been produced to help local agencies identify children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation and take action to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Leicestershire Constabulary: Use of the Child Abduction Act

Several police forces across the country are using harbouring legislation⁵ to tackle incidences where young people run away or go missing and are found with people considered to be inappropriate – for example, because they are much older or they encourage the young person to stay away from their home. It has been particularly useful for young people who are thought to be at risk of sexual exploitation.⁶

Leicestershire Constabulary is one of the police forces successfully using the legislation in this way and, along with the Crown Prosecution Service, have produced a protocol which describes the approach to be used. The aim is to disrupt the relationship in the first instance thereby reducing the risks that the young person may be exposed to. In the longer term it aims to reduce repeat incidences of children going missing from home and care.

5. Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 or section 49 of the Children Act 1989 if under 18 years and in local authority care.

6. In this situation the young person will often say they are content to be in the company of the person in question.

8 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

The process involves the parents/carers informing the child they do not have permission to be away from home or care, making boundaries very clear so the child is in no doubt of their wishes. A statement is taken by the police from the parent/carer to this effect.⁷

The person with whom the child was found is visited and informed of the parent/carer's wishes and that they must take **all** reasonable steps to inform the police if the child comes into their company. They are warned that failure to do this may leave them liable to arrest and prosecution for offences under the relevant legislation. Letters outlining the person's responsibilities and the risk of arrest are formally served⁸. More information can be obtained from: www.leics.police.uk

Child trafficking

- 13) Guidance for practitioners on what to do if they encounter a child who may have been trafficked can be found here: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMG-00994-2007&>

1.2 Key principles

A child-centred approach

- 14) The wishes and feelings of children and young people should be sought and taken into account in reaching any decisions about the provision of services which affect them. However, professionals should be aware that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be, objectively, a situation of risk, or may not feel comfortable talking honestly about the problems in their lives. The particular needs or sensitivities of girls and boys, children from ethnic communities, or those with physical disabilities or learning difficulties should be reflected in provision of services.

The role of professionals in supporting parents

- 15) Parents play the most important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. While professionals will need to take account of family circumstances in assessing and deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or young person, only in exceptional cases should there be compulsory intervention in family life – eg, where this is necessary to safeguard a child from significant harm. Such intervention should – provided this is consistent with the safety and welfare of the child – support families in making their own plans for the welfare and protection of their children.

7. The Act can be used for young people under the age of 16 years or under 18 years for those in Local Authority Care.

8. Police forces should liaise with the CPS over the operational implementation of this Act. Other agencies should contact their local force Missing Persons Unit for further information.

Talk Don't Walk, Warrington – Family Mediation

Talk Don't Walk was set up in 2004 in Warrington, Cheshire and provides a range of services to vulnerable young people and their families, including family mediation and intervention.

Acknowledging that young people don't run away if they are happy and that parenting can be very difficult, it works on a problem-solving approach that rules out blame and enables long-term change.

Young people and their families self-refer into the project or can be referred in by other agencies or individuals. An initial CAF-based assessment is carried out with workers, identifying any other services that may be required, and referring onto these where appropriate.

Each party has a separate worker which helps build trust and ensures a neutral process for the mediation. One-to-one work is carried out with all parties to identify issues and any further support needed. The process involves the identification of coping strategies to help diffuse tense situations, and relationships with siblings are also looked at if they are emulating the behaviour or involved in the issue.

The project's centre in Warrington is used as a neutral venue for sessions to take place and all mediation is carried out by highly-trained and qualified staff.

More information can be found at: www.talkdontwalk.org.uk/

1.3 Push/pull factors – addressing the causes of running away

“I ran away `cos I wanted to be alone. I know if I get too mad with a situation I'll self-harm.”

Joanne, 15, Surrey

- 16) The Children's Society's *Still Running II* (2005) survey estimates that around 100,000 young people under the age of 16 run away from home or care each year across the UK. Many of these young people stay with friends or family members, but there are some who do not have access to these networks of support and end up in harmful situations such as sleeping rough.

Findings of *Still Running II*:

- 52 per cent of young runaways returned to their home or care placement after one night away;
- 1 in 6 young runaways sleeps rough; and
- 1 in 12 young runaways is hurt or harmed while away.

10 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 17) Running away is usually a sign that a crisis point has been reached. It is vital therefore, that local authorities do everything they can to engage children and young people and inform them about the risks of running away and the services available to support them and their families to resolve issues before they decide to run.

Push/pull factors

- 18) Children and young people run away for a variety of reasons, but whatever the reason, running away is often a sign that something is wrong in the child's or young person's life and a response must be made quickly.
- 19) In order to conduct a thorough assessment, it is important to ask the child's or young person the reason why they have run away, as this will inform decisions about the appropriate service intervention or response.
- 20) Research carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit *Young Runaways* (2002), found that the top reasons for running away are:

Push factors

- Problems at home – ranging from arguments with parents to long-term abuse or maltreatment.
- Family break-up – young people drawn into their parents' conflicts are less likely to do well at school and more likely to truant or to run away from home.
- Mental health problems – a disproportionate number of young people who run away from home have mental health problem.
- Bullying – children who are being severely bullied are more likely to run away from school and home or care.
- Teenage pregnancy – some young women run away or are forced to leave home because they become pregnant (or fear that they may be pregnant). They may also be in denial about their pregnancy, meaning that they are not getting the advice they need about pregnancy options. There is also a greater risk of pregnancy when girls run away, and those working with them will need to ensure they have rapid access to confidential contraception and sexual health services to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Pull factors

- Running to be near friends or family – especially when a young person is in care and there are problems in contact arrangements with family and friends.
- Grooming for potential sexual exploitation or child trafficking – young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them.

Government programmes to address push/pull factors

- 21) One of the underlying principles of *The Children's Plan* is that it is better to prevent failure than to tackle a crisis later. There are a number of national programmes in place that will help to address these issues through TYS.
- 22) The Government, in conjunction with The Children's Society (TCS), is developing an online resource pack for schools and youth groups to teach children and young people about the dangers they face if they run away and where they can get help. This will be ready in September 2009 and will be available from The Children's Society website at www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Push factor	Support strategy	Further information
Difficult relationships	The Parenting Early Intervention Programme	The Parenting Early Intervention Programme, provides extra support for parents of children aged 8-13 at risk of negative outcomes. Two parenting advisers are also being funded in every local authority.
	Family Intervention Projects (FIPs)	Family Intervention Projects are a key part of government policy to support families at risk. They involve an intensive key worker-led approach which co-ordinates support around very vulnerable families dealing with the practical and deep-rooted problems they face, eg, substance misuse, domestic violence and poor mental health. The Government made a commitment to extend FIPs to every local authority in England by 2010 in the Youth Crime Action Plan (July 2008) and every local authority has received funding from April 2009.
	Family Pathfinders	Family Pathfinders develop services and systems to improve outcomes for families caught in a cycle of low achievement, including those who are not being effectively engaged and supported by existing services. www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/parents/pathfinders/
	The Parent Know-How programme	The Parent Know-How Programme is designed to ensure parents have access to information they need with a particular emphasis on helping parents with teenage children. www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow/

12 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

Problems at school	Safe to Learn	<p><i>Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools</i> includes over-arching and specific advice on how to tackle bullying on the grounds of race, religion and culture; homophobic bullying; the bullying of children with special educational needs and disabilities; and cyber bullying.</p> <p>www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/</p>
Personal problems	CAMHS Review	<p>An independent review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) has been published by the Government and outlines how services can be improved to better meet the educational, health and social care needs of children and young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, mental health problems.</p> <p>www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSreview/</p>
Teenage pregnancy	Parentline Plus	<p>As part of the teenage pregnancy strategy, the DCSF provides information and support to parents to help them talk to their children early about sex and relationships – which is a protective factor against early and unprotected sex. Parents should be able to access information and support through Families Information Services and local parenting strategies with further advice available through the Parentline Plus helpline and website.</p> <p>www.parentlineplus.org.uk/</p>

Pull factor	Support strategy	Further information
Running to be near friends/family	Care Matters	<p>The <i>Care Matters</i> White Paper includes a wide range of proposals which will transform care services for children and young people. One of the proposals is to ensure that where it is in the interests of the child or young person, they are near their family home.</p> <p>www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/</p>
	Children and Young Persons Act	<p>The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 recently received royal assent. Section 8 of the Act sets out the considerations that local authorities must have regard to when they are considering making a placement for a looked-after child, including giving consideration – as far as is reasonably practicable – to a placement being near a child’s home and within the local authority’s area.</p>

ReRun Dorset

ReRun Dorset offers support to young people and their families across a large rural area through a detached youth work model. Given the large distances staff cover, most work is done on a one-to-one basis somewhere local to the young person. Although the project undertakes return interviews with young people reported as missing to the police, most of the work is undertaken with unreported runaways referred to the service through other routes.

Casework with the young person is needs-led following an assessment, such as the CAF, which identifies what changes the young person wants to make and who is best-placed to support them to achieve their goals.

Many of the young people supported by the service have not engaged with any statutory agencies and most are not committed to education, training or employment. It can take time and persistence for this group of young people to be able to trust a worker. Workers have to be extremely flexible and dedicate a great deal of time to building a positive relationship with the young person. Due to the young people's chaotic lifestyles, this can mean physically tracking them down for appointments or when they have not been in contact.

By providing independent support and a template for a positive relationship with a professional, young people have been supported to engage with statutory agencies, and specialist and universal services such as health professionals; education and social workers; substance misuse staff; and CAMHS workers.

The project receives funds from multiple sources, but is able to run the service according to the needs of its users without prescribed targets for the number of young people worked with. ReRun's independence from statutory services is vital for engagement with young people and also to retain a greater degree of flexibility in how the service is run.

1.4 Strategic overview

- 23) Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm – depends on effective joint-working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, the voluntary sector and other agencies. Where it is decided that a child needs support from several agencies, having a Lead Professional (see section 2.4) will help ensure that the actions identified in the assessment process are fully co-ordinated.
- 24) In order to achieve effective joint-working, there needs to be constructive relationships between individuals in a range of agencies, promoted and supported by:
 - a strong lead from elected or appointed authority members, and the commitment of chief officers in all agencies – in particular, the local authority's Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for children's services, through forums such as the Children's Trust which can bring all agencies together to provide a co-ordinated response to young runaways; and

- effective joint-working by the local authority, health and voluntary sector partners, with monitoring by the LSCB in each area.
- 25) It is vital that those with strategic responsibility in local authorities build up good working relationships with the local police force to agree the level and type of information to be collected to aid individual risk-assessment and for planning purposes.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

- 26) Local Safeguarding Children Boards are charged with ensuring children and young people 'stay safe from harm' (Children Act (2004) Section 11.) It is important that all protocols complement the work of the LSCB and are actively reviewed with ongoing monitoring and reporting.
- 27) Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the Workforce Development Teams for Children and Young People's Services are responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective training is available, particularly in risk assessments and managing return interviews. Some local authorities have chosen to set up sub-groups specifically to deal with the issue of missing or runaway children and find this a helpful way of bringing together representatives from the main statutory and voluntary agencies.
- 28) More details about LSCBs and how to go about setting up a sub-group can be found in Chapter 3 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*.
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board

In September 2007, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board created an additional sub-group of the board with the remit of missing children. This sub-group is a multi-agency group comprising children's services representatives that have a role in identifying, supporting and providing services to runaways and missing children. These include health, education, social care (safeguarding and residential services) police, youth offending, youth services, Connexions, extended schools, immigration and housing, Barnardo's sexual exploitation project, Children's Society projects; LAMP working with children missing from care, and Safe in the City working with runaways from home.

Each agency has a senior management representative identified as a lead officer to champion the runaways and missing children agenda in their own agency. The group has been successful in developing a work plan that is designed around local front-line, multi-agency issues. The primary focus of the group's first three-year plan has been to:

- review policy and procedures for children missing from home and care;
- provide multi-agency training for those responsible for management of, and services to, children missing from local authority care;
- develop services for children missing from home;
- develop the multi-agency data collation and information sharing processes.

For more information visit: www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk

Information Sharing

- 29) If there are concerns about a child's or young person's safety or well-being, it may be necessary to share information with other agencies. The safety and welfare of a child or a young person must be the first consideration when making decisions about sharing information about them.
- 30) Any sharing of information must comply with the law relating to confidentiality, data protection and human rights. The local authority should work within their authority's arrangements for recording information and within any local information-sharing protocols that are in place. These arrangements and protocols must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 – the key provisions of which are summarised in *Information Sharing: Further Guidance on Legal Issues*, a copy of which can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00065/

Collecting and analysing data – informing National Indicator 71: Missing from Home and Care

- 31) Collecting the right data at local level is essential to driving improvements in services for young runaways. April 2009 saw the introduction of a new indicator in the national indicator set called 'Children Missing from Home and Care', which helps the Government and local authorities understand the extent to which Children's Trusts and LSCBs have a picture of 'running' patterns in their area; how this information informs local service provision; and what procedures are in place to respond to the needs of young runaways.
- 32) Data collection and sharing is also important to understand the complete picture in relation to running away. Effective information sharing between agencies identifies criminal activity which is otherwise hidden, and similarly identifies how vulnerable some of these children are when they run away.
- 33) For information sharing to be effective, there is a need to train people in how to record this information to make it usable. This will avoid the frustrations of informing the police of something only to find that nothing can be done, because the way the information was gathered makes it inadmissible. This training can easily be achieved through a partnership with the local police.
- 34) To demonstrate that they have good procedures and protocols in place to respond to the needs of these extremely vulnerable young people, local areas will need to show that information about children who are reported missing (from home as well as care) is shared between the police force, the local authority and, where appropriate, the voluntary sector. Local areas will also need to demonstrate that this information is being used strategically, with patterns of running by individuals or by groups of young people identified, and with local services responding appropriately to reduce and eventually stop instances of running by these young people.

Further information can be found at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00048/

Link to National Indicator 71 requirements: 1 & 2

ContactPoint

- 35) ContactPoint is a database that will make it easier for practitioners working with a child to identify and contact other practitioners working with the same child. This will support early intervention and integrated working to deliver co-ordinated services to children.
- 36) ContactPoint will also show whether the child's needs have been assessed by a professional using the Common Assessment Framework and whether the child has a Lead Professional co-ordinating any support required. Further information on ContactPoint is at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/contactpoint

1.5 Regional arrangements and cross-border issues

- 37) Police force operational areas often cover more than a single local authority area. RMFHC protocols should therefore be agreed by agencies on a regional/sub-regional basis to ensure a consistent approach is taken to safeguard children and young people. This is of particular importance in metropolitan counties where the small geographical areas mean children and young people frequently move between areas.

It is also equally important for those authorities that border Wales and Scotland to have agreed safeguarding protocols and systems in place, with neighbouring areas in the Devolved Administrations.

- 38) Where runaways from one local authority area present themselves in another local authority it is important that the authority where the child is found (also known as the receiving authority) works with the authority where the child usually resides (also known as the home authority) to ensure they get access to the help and support services they need. Responsibility for making safeguarding enquiries rests with the local authority in which the child is found. If this local authority is not the one in which the child normally resides, it may negotiate with the 'home' local authority to continue with these enquires.⁹

1.6 Out-of-hours responses

- 39) Even with strong systems and services that minimise the likelihood of young people running away, some young people will still feel that they have to run. In all circumstances local safeguarding procedures should be followed as set out in the local RMFHC protocol. If there is concern that the child may be at risk if returned home, the child should be referred to children's services' social care to assess their needs and make appropriate arrangements for their accommodation.
- 40) Not all children and young people who run away from home or care are in need of emergency accommodation, but a recent *Children's Society* survey¹⁰ found that 17 per cent of overnight runaways under 16 had either slept rough or with someone they had just met. These young people need somewhere safe to go and need to know how to access that provision, so that they are not put at even greater risk.

9. Children Act 1989 – Section 47.

10. The Children's Society (2005) *Still Running II*.

18 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 41) It is up to local authorities to decide on the most appropriate and effective form of emergency accommodation provision in their area. However, it is important that this accommodation is genuinely available in an emergency, and can be accessed at any time of the day or night. Ten out of 27 police forces who responded to a recent survey¹¹ said they had previously had young people staying in police stations overnight due to a lack of genuine emergency accommodation. Police stations are not an appropriate place to accommodate children, even for a short time, not only because they may not have committed an offence, but because of the adults that they may come in contact with whilst they are there.
- 42) Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation is not an appropriate place for any child to stay unaccompanied and should never be used for unaccompanied children aged 15 or under. No 16- or 17-year-old should be placed in B&B accommodation by housing services or children's services, except in an emergency, where B&B accommodation is the only available alternative to rooflessness. In these exceptional cases, B&B accommodation should be used for the shortest time possible and support must be offered to the young person during their stay.
- 43) Housing services and children's services are expected to adopt a shared strategic approach to the provision of emergency accommodation and housing and support pathways for young people in order to eradicate the use of B&B accommodation.
- 44) The Government is carrying out a review of existing models of emergency accommodation provision, which is due to be completed in late 2009. The review is intended to support the development of local, regional and sub-regional commissioning and provision of emergency accommodation, by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current emergency accommodation models, and identifying perceptions among providers and young people of the adequacy and effectiveness of current emergency accommodation for young runaways.

Helplines

- 45) Helplines offer a clear source of support to young people who have run away, and particularly for those who run 'out of hours' often providing a listening ear, advice and guidance. It is important that all children and young people are made aware of how to access such sources of support.
- 46) Information on helplines available to support young people and families 24 hours a day can be found in the signposting section (page 46).

11. The Children's Society (2008) *Stepping Up*.

Actions-to-take checklist

Issue	Action
Sharing information and collecting and analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures in place for recording and sharing information between the police, children’s services and the voluntary sector. Use information gathered to analyse patterns of running from home and local authority care. <p>Guidance section: 1.4 Link to National Indicator 71 requirements: 1 & 2</p>
Regional arrangements and cross-border issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure RMFHC protocols are linked with protocols in neighbouring local areas and, where relevant, the RMFHC protocols of neighbouring countries. <p>Guidance sections: 1.4 Link to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>
Out of hours response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local authorities should have in place some form of emergency accommodation. This should not be a police cell unless the young person is under arrest. <p>Guidance section: 1.5 Link to National Indicator 71 requirement: 4</p>

Chapter 2

Children who run away and go missing from home

“I stormed out of the house and didn’t go back. I slept in a lorry all night – there were noises and it was cold. I went back next afternoon. I’d had nothing to eat. My parents just ignored me. They started arguing and just blamed me for everything.”

Sian, 13, Dorset

- 1) This section provides local authorities with information on how they should support young people at risk of running away or going missing from home.
- 2) This chapter is also relevant to children who run away or are missing and are living in private fostering arrangements. Children¹² are privately fostered when they are cared for by adults, who are not their parents or a close relative¹³, for a period of 28 days or more. More information about private fostering can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/privatefostering/

2.1 Working together

- 3) Running away should be seen as an indicator of underlying problems which may need further intervention. Some young people who run away from home will be ‘children in need’ and therefore entitled to services provided by the local authority or local voluntary agencies. These might include advice, guidance and counselling for the young person and for their families.
- 4) The police and other partner organisations should have agreed protocols and processes for referring children to the local authority for an assessment of their needs. Agencies working with young runaways will need to be familiar with the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need*.
- 5) All inter-agency protocols should be consistent with the Framework and demonstrate an understanding of the information that a local authority needs to decide whether it is appropriate to make an initial assessment. Local RMFHC protocols and processes should agree a threshold for referrals to social care. For further information see *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/

12. Children under 16 (or 18 if disabled).

13. A close relative is defined as grandparent, brother, sister, step parent or uncle (brother of one’s father or mother, an aunt’s husband) or aunt (sister of one’s father or mother, an uncle’s wife).

2.2 Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols

“It’s nice to have someone you can talk to who actually listens, who doesn’t think – he’s just a kid who doesn’t know anything.”

Ben, 15, Dorset

Missing from home

- 6) Every local authority should develop protocols with partner agencies covering children who run away and go missing from home. It is vital that RMFHC protocols agreed between children’s services, the police, other agencies and relevant voluntary sector agencies define roles and responsibilities when a child goes missing and when they return.
- 7) RMFHC protocols should include:
 - an agreed definition of a missing or runaway child or young person;
 - an agreed inter-agency framework for classifying the degree of risk when a child goes missing from home or when a missing young person comes to agency notice;
 - guidance on the threshold for referrals to social care;
 - details of who should carry out a common assessment (CAF) and how this information should be shared;
 - the basis on which agencies offer ‘Return Interviews’ for children who have run away from home;
 - details of preventative approaches.
- 8) RMFHC protocols should be signed-off by the LSCB with a process agreed for ongoing monitoring and regular review, and should be agreed between all agencies operating within the area. There should also be a named manager within children’s services’ departments whose responsibility it is to monitor policies and performance relating to children who go missing or run away.
- 9) Protocols should agree a threshold for when referrals should be made to children’s services’ social care, for example when:
 - evidence exists that the child has developed a repeated pattern of running;
 - the child has, or is likely to, experience significant harm;
 - the parent appears unable, or unwilling, to work to support and meet the needs of the child.

Link to National Indicator 71 requirements: 3, 5

Examples of Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols:

- Pan-London Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care
www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures/safeguarding_children_missing_from_home_and_care/
- Lancashire Joint Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care
- Merseyside Protocols for Young People Missing from Home and Care
- Birmingham Processes for Young People Missing from Home and Care
www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk
- Manchester Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care
www.manchesterscb.org.uk/prof-specific.asp

2.3 Assessment of need

“I ran away ‘cos I was so wound up. I felt if I went back I would lash out and hit someone and end up in trouble.”

Billy, 14, Surrey

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- 10) The CAF is a consent-based tool for assessing a child in a holistic way to identify their additional needs. There is no need to assess every child using the CAF – and the pre-CAF checklist may be a useful way of determining whether a CAF is necessary. A CAF is particularly useful if the child’s needs are not immediately obvious or if the child has additional needs. In these cases, the CAF can help identify other services that should be involved with the child/parent. The CAF form does not need to be followed robotically because the form is a way recording conversation(s) between the practitioner and the child or young person. The level of detail in each part will vary according to the child’s needs and circumstances.
- 11) If the child has complex needs, they should be referred to the appropriate agency for a more specialist assessment. This specialist assessment will build on the work undertaken in completing the CAF. If there is any protection risk, the usual safeguarding route should be taken immediately.
- 12) The use of the CAF as a means of analysing the child’s needs will enable practitioners to combine their assessment with that of any other professional who might already be working with a child or have completed a specialist assessment for them. With consent from the child (where it is considered they are competent to do so), and in most cases their parents, practitioners from different agencies will be able to share information about a child’s needs, enabling them to work more effectively together, build up a holistic picture and develop a better co-ordinated response.

Lead Professional

- 13) Where it is decided that a child needs support from several agencies, having a Lead Professional should help ensure full co-ordination of the actions identified in the assessment process. The Lead Professional will provide a main point of contact for the child and, where appropriate, their family; and

will help the young person and their family to access services. It is essential that the Lead Professional is able to build up the trust and support necessary to facilitate the delivery of services for the young person.

Information about the CAF and Lead Professional, including examples of emerging good practice can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/integratedworking/

National Indicator 71 requirement: 1

Plymouth Young Runaways Project

Plymouth Young Runaways Project was set up with Neighbourhood Renewal Funding in 2006 as a one-year pilot initially covering two areas of the city. Following success in reducing the number of repeat missing persons (30 per cent reduction since set-up) through undertaking return interviews and ongoing one-to-one work, the project was funded by the local police force and children's services and rolled out across the entire city.

The team is made up of two police officers, one social worker, one education welfare officer, one voluntary sector drug & alcohol worker and one office manager with support from a half-time police sergeant, who also represents the project on the Children's Trust Executive.

The project has evolved a successful model of integrated working that delivers a range of well-co-ordinated services to children and young people based on the CAF and pre-CAF assessments. The project is housed in a children's services office alongside the local Youth Offending Service (YOS) team.

The team undertake joint visits to young runaways and their families and the young people view them as different from the regular police officers and social workers they may otherwise come into contact with. This perceived difference, has a big impact on the level of engagement with the service and the team's ability to build positive relationships with young people. The time invested in problem-solving the issue with the young person and their guardians is key to successful outcomes and positive feedback.

2.4 Risk assessment

- 14) Where an individual needs-assessment indicates the child may be at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care. An evaluation of whether the child is likely to run away from home in the future will be one of the factors that informs the level of risk posed to the child, and the decision as to whether a referral to children's social care is appropriate. The assessment of whether a young person might run away again should be based on information about their:
- individual circumstances, including family circumstances in which the child has gone missing;
 - motivation for running;
 - possible destination; and
 - recent pattern of absences (if any).

24 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 15) When young people missing from home are located but have not been reported missing to the police by their families, further investigation might be warranted. It may be necessary to inquire into whether there are any continuing safeguarding concerns, or whether the young person and their family should be offered family support services.
- 16) Consideration should be given to carrying out a new assessment every time a young person runs away. Repeat runaways should be viewed with as much concern as children who run away for the first time. The persistence of this behaviour would suggest at least that the action following from earlier assessments should be reviewed and alternative options considered.

Links to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3**2.5 Police Safe and Well Check and Return Interviews**

“I’ve run away more than 50 times, first when I was 9, I remember I just wanted to hide from it all.”

Ayesha, 14, Surrey

- 17) Interviewing a child or young person on their return from a missing episode is necessary to understand why the person went missing or ran away in the first place. There are two stages to the process, the Safe and Well Check and the Return Interview. These are known by a variety of names, but for the purpose of this guidance and to achieve some standardisation, will be referred to as such.

Police Safe and Well Check

- 18) This is carried out by the police as soon as possible after the person has returned. Its purpose is to check for any indications that the young person has suffered harm; where and with whom they have been; and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against, them.
- 19) Where a person goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable to see them every time they return. In these cases, a reasonable decision should be taken with regard to the frequency of such checks. This will mainly apply to young people missing from care who are likely to have other people responsible for their welfare to check this. Every effort should be made to visit those young people missing from home on every occasion.

Return Interview

- 20) This is a more in-depth interview and is usually best carried out by an independent person who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge. Many young people who run away or go missing need to build up trust with somebody before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they decided to run away. The interview and actions that follow from it should:
 - identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the Safe and Well Check (his/her medical condition should be discussed and any need for medical attention assessed).

- understand and try to address the reasons why the child or young person ran away.
 - try to prevent it happening again.
- 21) It is good practice that this interview takes place within 72 hours of the young person being located or returning from absence. It is especially important that a Return Interview takes place when a child:
- has been missing for over 24 hours;
 - has been missing on two or more occasions;
 - has engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence;
 - has been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing (or this is believed to have been the case);
 - has known mental health issues;
 - is at known risk of sexual exploitation; and/or
 - has contact with persons posing risk to children.

Links to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3

SCARPA Project, Newcastle

In Newcastle, Return Interviews are undertaken by SCARPA Intensive Support Workers. Having specialised staff who have a dedicated remit to carry out this work means they have the time and capacity to respond when needed, and are able to see the young person every day, or two or three times a day if necessary. It can take multiple visits to undertake one Return Interview thoroughly enough to inform a needs-assessment such as CAF.

SCARPA have developed a self-assessment tool for their young people so that they feel part of the process and don't feel that something is being 'done to them.' This self-assessment is done as part of the CAF process (which is consent-based and fully involves the child), or where cases include complex needs and beyond the scope of CAF, part of what the project call a CAF Plus. This needs-assessment forms the basis of an Action Plan which is reviewed on a regular basis with the young person. Casework usually ends when the young person has achieved the goals detailed in the Action Plan.

In addition to Intensive Support Workers the project has a Family Support Worker and a Sexual Exploitation Worker available for specialist support. Often working as the Lead Professional, the project also works closely with a wide range of other agencies in the city to ensure that all the needs of the young person are met.

The service manager, police, and children's services representatives meet on a regular basis to share intelligence and collectively work out a list of young people to be prioritised for casework based on a range of factors including known history, other agency involvement, number of missing episodes, age and known association with risky addresses or individuals.

2.6 Support for 16- and 17-year-olds

- 22) 16- and 17-year-olds who run away or go missing are not necessarily any less vulnerable than younger children and are equally at risk of not achieving the five Every Child Matters outcomes. They are likely to need just as much support to get their lives on track and make a successful transition into adulthood. However, as 16- and 17-year-olds have greater independence from their parents and carers and can choose to leave home, it may be necessary to involve other services such as housing officers in the assessment of their needs.
- 23) Local authorities must provide accommodation for any “child in need” within their area who meets the criteria in section 20(1) of the Children Act 1989. Local authorities must also provide accommodation for a “child in need” who is over 16 and whose welfare is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide him or her with accommodation (section 20(3)). Any child who is provided with accommodation in these circumstances is a ‘looked-after’ child.
- 24) The homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the *Housing Act 1996*), provides a safety net for the very small number of 16- and 17-year-olds who do not meet the criteria for accommodation as children in need under section 20 of the 1989 Act. By virtue of the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002, these young people have a priority need for accommodation unless they are ‘relevant children’ (care leavers aged 16-17) or children in need owed a duty under s20 of the Children Act 1989. This means that a local housing authority must secure suitable accommodation for them if they are eligible for assistance and have become homeless through no fault of their own. However, in many cases, children who have run away or been forced to leave home will be children-in-need, and authorities should assume that they will require accommodation under s20 of the 1989 Act unless they are able to return home. Local authority children’s services must not seek to pass responsibility to housing authorities and the recent House of Lords decision in the case of *R(G) v London Borough of Southwark* confirmed the earlier decision in the case of *R(M) v London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham* that “local children’s services’ authorities cannot avoid their responsibilities by passing [16- and 17-year-olds] over to the local housing authority”.
- 25) Many authorities are developing protocols for working between housing and children’s services to tackle youth homelessness. Joint guidance published by the DCLG and the DCSF can be accessed at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/goodpracticeguide. This guidance highlights the importance of joint-working, underpinned by clear protocols between housing and children’s services and builds on the s10 duty in the Children Act 2004 for local authorities and their regular partners to co-operate to improve children’s wellbeing. These protocols should be linked with any RMFHC protocols for young runaways to ensure a joined-up approach to supporting vulnerable children and young people. Children’s services’ authorities can use the power in s27 of the Children Act 1989 to seek the help of any housing authority in the exercise of their functions, including their duty to provide accommodation under s20 of the Children Act 1989. In these circumstances, the housing authority must provide the help requested if it is compatible with their own duties, and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of their other functions.

2.7 Young people missing from home process flowchart

Identify child/young person is missing

Parents/carer/responsible adult identify time by which the child should be at the address. Parents/carer/responsible adult should make enquiries to locate the missing young person with relatives/friends. This should include searches of the residence and local area if the child or young person is not located.

Report to police

Parents/carer/responsible adult should telephone police with details of the missing person. **Details required:** child's name/DOB/where, when and who missing with?/what child was last wearing/description of young person/recent photo/medical history/time and location last seen/circumstances of going missing/details of friends and associates.

Officers conduct a risk-assessment forming the basis for resulting proportionate actions

Enquiries are then on-going. Sharing of information between the police, parents and other agencies as appropriate.

Young person is located or returns to home address

When a missing child is located by family or friends etc, it is their responsibility to return the child to the home address. Where a risk is present, a police officer may accompany the family or the police may be requested to collect and return the child/young person to the place of residence only if it is safe to do so. Parents must inform the police when a child returns of their own accord.

The police should conduct an interview known as a Safe and Well Check to establish the young person's well-being and safety, and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing.

If warranted, police should refer child or young person to Children's Services via normal safeguarding channels.

Children's Services or runaway/missing person service to carry out a Return Interview and Assessment of Need

Information established from interview to support assessment of need, to be carried out using the CAF (check whether CAF already exists.) Lead Professional to be appointed.

Young person offered relevant support by either statutory or voluntary services depending on what is available in the local area, CAF to be updated regularly. In some cases, specialist assessment may be required should it appear that the child or young person has complex needs.

2.8 Actions-to-take checklist

Issue	Action
Formal RMFHC protocols	<p>Local Safeguarding Children Boards should develop a set of RMFHC protocols clearly defining roles and responsibilities. Protocols should include a named person responsible for children and young people who go missing or run away and details of preventative measures.</p> <p>Guidance section: 2.2 National Indicator 71 requirements: 3, 5</p>
Assessment of need	<p>Make sure young people who go missing are provided with an Assessment of Need. This should conform to the requirements of the <i>Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need</i>. In many cases, a CAF will be the most appropriate assessment.</p> <p>Guidance section: 2.3 National Indicator 71 requirement: 1</p>
Risk assessment	<p>Where a child is identified as at risk of significant harm, a referral should be made. Children's social care and RMFHC protocols and procedures should agree a threshold for this referral.</p> <p>Guidance section: 2.4 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>
Return interviews	<p>As well as a police Safe and Well Check, young people who have run away should have access to a Return Interview, ideally with an independent person or someone the young person trusts.</p> <p>Guidance section: 2.6 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>

Chapter 3

Children who run away and go missing from local authority care

3.1 Introduction

“Since being in care I don’t run away anymore as I have people to talk to in the unit who listen and help me.”

Ben, 12, London

- 1) Looked-after children¹⁴ depend on the local authority to act as their ‘corporate parent’. The local authority must assess their needs and ensure they receive appropriate services and support. The local authority should have the same interest in the progress and attainments of looked-after children as a reasonable parent would have for their own children.
- 2) Provision of the most suitable placement based on the needs of the individual child is likely to be the most effective way of minimising the likelihood that a child or young person would be motivated to run away. However, it is important to recognise that given the vulnerability of some individual looked-after children, it may be necessary to take additional measures to ensure that they are effectively safeguarded and protected from exploitation.
- 3) Where young people are missing from their care placements, it is essential that the professionals concerned work closely together to respond to the incident in a timely way, and follow the procedures agreed in the RMFHC protocol for the area in which the child is placed, to locate the child as quickly as possible (see section 3.3). Once the child has been located, it will be essential to assess their needs so that they can be referred for appropriate services – which might include independent advocacy and support. It may also be necessary to convene a statutory review chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).¹⁵
- 4) Local authorities, in tandem with police forces and other partner agencies, must analyse missing-from-care incidents and, if they identify trends – for example, patterns of going missing from particular children’s homes or patterns across the local authority – then they must take all necessary steps to minimise the likelihood of children going missing in future.

14. Children who are provided with accommodation under s20 and s21 of the Children’s Act 1989, or who are the subject of a care order or an interim care order, or an emergency protection order, are ‘looked after’ by the local authority within the meaning of s22 of that Act.

15. The Care Matters White Paper includes the commitment that to support the strengthening of the IRO function introduced by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, a requirement will be introduced so that every looked-after child has a specific named IRO to be responsible for reviewing their care plan.

3.2 Strategy and procedure

“If I have a good reason to run away nothing will stop me, but if I feel bad as I have good relationship with staff and don’t want to upset or distress them, this makes me contact them and come back sooner as I know they care and are worried.”

Gracie, 13, London

- 5) A strategic approach is essential to complement high-quality care planning in individual cases, so that looked-after children are effectively safeguarded by minimising the likelihood of missing-from-care incidents.
- 6) The local authority’s approach to managing missing-from-care episodes should be a key element of the authority’s wider strategy to ensure that it is a responsible corporate parent and enables all the children that it looks after to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- 7) A senior manager in the authority’s children’s services department should be responsible for taking the lead in working with partner agencies so that across the authority there is a systematic response whenever a looked-after child goes missing from their care placement.
- 8) The senior manager accountable for the performance of the local authority’s looked-after children’s services must ensure that adequate records are kept. Records should include up-to-date chronologies, which will assist in identifying any concerns about children’s care and any patterns of absence in situations where individual children persistently go missing from their care placement(s).

3.3 Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols

Missing from care

- 9) The authority’s strategy for managing missing-from-care incidents should be set down in RMFHC protocols agreed with the local police and other partner agencies, including any local voluntary services.
- 10) These RMFHC protocols should cover a range of joint-working procedures and systems which will include:
 - agreed categories of absence and definition of missing from local authority care;
 - appropriate responses to children and young people who go missing from care, including arrangements for making missing persons reports to the police;
 - escalating the approach to intervention with individual children to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing;
 - agreed reporting and recording systems for local authorities;
 - effective reporting and information-sharing between the local authority, the police and other agencies;

- prompt follow-up interviews with young people who go missing; and
 - joint-assessment information which should be used to revise and amend care plans and placement information records (see section on Care Planning). This information should also be made available to Ofsted inspectors.
- 11) RMFHC protocols should also set out arrangements for all partner agencies to monitor outcomes and analyse patterns of young people who go missing from care on a regular basis. Issues to be addressed in strategic monitoring reports will include:
- incidence of missing person's episodes;
 - location – are children more likely to be absent from some placements than others;
 - safeguarding implications;
 - actions when children are located (are children generally returned to the placements from which they have run away or gone missing?); and
 - professional practice and procedural issues.
- 12) The RMFHC protocol must also include the details of senior management posts in the local authority and in the police force that will be accountable for ensuring that all the processes agreed as part of the RMFHC protocol are followed.
- 13) Data about children who go missing from their care placements should be included in regular reports to council members, especially to the Lead Member for children's services and in reports by the local authority to Local Children's Safeguarding Boards. These reports should also be made available to Ofsted during inspection or on request. These reports should include information about the numbers of children who were missing from their care placements for more than 24 hours with details as to the child's needs and the circumstances in which they went missing. They must also include information about the measures being taken by the authority to safeguard looked-after children and reduce missing-from-care incidents.

Examples of Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols:

- Pan-London Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures/safeguarding_children_missing_from_home_and_care/
- Lancashire Joint Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care
- Merseyside Protocols for Young People Missing from Home and Care
- Birmingham Processes for Young People Missing from Home and Care www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk
- Manchester Protocol for Young People Missing from Home and Care www.manchesterscb.org.uk/prof-specific.asp

Links to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3,5

3.4 Care planning

- 14) Every looked-after child must have a care plan based on a comprehensive assessment of their needs that takes into account their wishes, feelings and aspirations for their future. The care plan should inform the decision as to which placement (eg, foster care or children's home) will be most suited to meeting the child's needs.¹⁶
- 15) All care plans must be kept under review. The review meeting, chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), should consider the plan for the welfare of the child, monitor the progress of the plan, and make decisions to amend it as necessary in light of changed knowledge and circumstances.
- 16) Where children have gone missing from their placements, then their statutory review will provide an opportunity to check that their care plan has been appropriately amended to address the reasons why the child was absent and includes a strategy to prevent re-occurrence should the child go missing in future. For example, where a child goes missing from their placement to have more contact with their family, then the review provides an opportunity to consider the child's views about how contact might be managed in future. Similarly, where there is evidence that a child is vulnerable to sexual exploitation, it may be necessary to convene a review to consider whether the placement is able to put in place a strategy to minimise any risk to the child, or whether it may be necessary to look for an alternative placement in order to keep the child safe.
- 17) Alongside the care plan, a Placement Information Record (PIR)¹⁷ should be completed between the responsible local authority and the provider of the child's placement. The expectations as to how they will meet the child's needs should be set out in the PIR¹⁸, which must describe how the provider will maintain the child's positive routines as part of their commitment to enable the child to experience a constructive placement, supporting them to achieve their potential.
- 18) It will be particularly important that the PIR includes details about:
 - any specific behaviour-management strategies that the provider is expected to follow;
 - the provider's role in meeting the child's health needs;
 - the provider's role in supporting the child's education; and
 - the provider's role in supporting contact with the child's family, including information about any restrictions of contact.
- 19) The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for fostering services and for children's homes, and the statutory regulations relating to these, require providers to have explicit policies and procedures in place which must be followed whenever a child is missing from their care placement without authority.¹⁹

16. The Integrated Children's System provides a conceptual framework, a method of practice and a business process to support practitioners and managers in undertaking the key tasks of assessment, planning, intervention and review so that they make effective care plans for every looked-after child. For more details www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/integratedchildrenssystem/resources/exemplars/

17. The Placement Information Record exemplar is available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/integratedchildrenssystem/resources/exemplars/?asset=document&id=33983

18. See also Children's Homes Regulations 2001 – 12.

19. Children's Homes Regulations 2001 – 16 and 30; and Fostering Services Regulations 2002-2013.

- 20) This policy must be compatible with the RMFHC protocols established by the police and the local authority that operate in the area where the foster placement or children's home is located. The NMS are in the process of being revised at the time of writing this guidance (2009) and the requirement that the missing-from-care policies operated by children's homes and by fostering services must be compatible with local police RMFHC protocols will be incorporated into these future revised NMS.

Links to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3

Lancashire Street Safe Project, Preston

Lancashire Street Safe Project provides Return Interviews and ongoing support work to young people missing from care. The Return Interviews are undertaken by project staff who work in partnership with police colleagues. The police are able to get timely, updated information about the episodes of missing-from-home, and the project staff can respond immediately to this. The information gathered in the Return Interview informs the development of an Intervention Plan.

The Runaways Project Worker acts as an advocate for the young person to ensure that they are fully involved in their Intervention Plans, getting the young person on board at an early stage so they feel empowered. Young people are advised that their information is vital to ensuring the best services are put into place.

If the young person continues to go missing and five episodes are reached, more senior personnel meet so that relevant interventions and decisions can be agreed and put into place immediately. If the missing episodes reach nine, senior officers in the police and children's services come together to determine further strategies for working with the child/young person. If the child/young person continues to go missing, these senior staff meetings continue to occur.

Tactical meetings are also held within Lancashire County bringing agencies together (police, children's services, health, Street Safe and other partners) to ensure that vulnerable young people are identified, and support provided at an early stage. Cases are discussed at tactical and strategic levels to ensure that remedies are found to reduce episodes of children/young people going missing.

3.5 Placement matters

- 21) The NMS for children's homes and fostering services set out basic expectations about how providers should take into account the needs of the children who rely on their services. Standards concerned with protecting children from abuse and neglect, countering bullying, promotion of leisure opportunities, privacy and confidentiality, access to advocacy, and maintenance of familial contact are likely to be particularly relevant to creating a constructive caring environment in which each child feels individually valued to minimise the likelihood that they might wish to go missing from their placements.

34 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 22) Some children will need to be placed who already have an established pattern of running away. In these circumstances, it will be essential that the assessment of the child's needs takes into account the factors that led to their running away and that the care plan includes a strategy to minimise the likelihood of the child going missing in the future. It will be extremely beneficial for relevant information about the children to be recorded in preparation for filling in a missing person report form. Annex 2 includes information which should be considered in assessing the risk of a child going missing from their care placement.
- 23) This strategy should be discussed and as far as possible agreed with the child concerned. The strategy should include detailed information about the responsibilities of all parties (the child's social worker and other staff in the responsible authority, the placement provider, the child, their parents and other adults involved in the child's family network and other agencies), so that the child is safeguarded and does not run away or go missing in future. It should also set out a consistent plan to be followed with explicit roles and responsibilities assigned to the professionals involved in caring for the child should the child run away again.

Communication

- 24) Whenever a child goes missing from a children's home or foster home, the foster carer or the manager on duty in the children's home must ensure that the following individuals and agencies are informed within the timescales set out in the local RMFHC protocol:
- the local police;
 - the authority responsible for the child's placement – if they have not already been notified prior to the police being informed that the child is absent. Notification is likely to be by phone in the first instance followed up by email/written confirmation. It will not be enough just to notify the child's social worker. The registered manager of the children's home or the fostering service must be responsible for ensuring that the accountable manager in the local authority has received the notification that a looked-after child is missing and has initiated the appropriate actions; and
 - Parents and any other persons with parental responsibility must be informed as soon as possible that their child is missing unless there are good reasons connected with the child's welfare for this to be inappropriate. At the point where the responsible authority is informed, agreement must be reached as to which professional will be responsible for informing the child's parents – this will usually be the child's social worker. A record must be made as to when parents have been informed, and what information has been given to them.

Out of Local Area placements

- 25) For some children, an appropriate placement may be one out of their local authority area. In these cases, the authority responsible for their placement should make sure that they will have access to all the services they need. Providers of care for children living outside their home area have a similar responsibility for making sure that the children they care for are able to make

use of appropriate local services. Information about these services must be recorded in the placement plan²⁰ which should match the information about the child's needs included in their care plan.

- 26) It will be particularly important that the PIR is as detailed as possible in circumstances where children are placed away from their responsible local authority.
- 27) Where children placed out of their local authority go missing, the placement provider will be responsible for following the local RMFHC protocol, but they will also need to ensure that they comply with any other processes that are specified in the RMFHC policy of the local authority which placed the child (also known as the 'placing' or 'responsible' authority). It is possible that the child will return to their home area, so it is essential that the necessary liaison between the police and professionals in the area of placement, and in the responsible authority, is well managed and co-ordinated, so that issues of logistics and/or distance do not delay or interfere in the actions of planning to locate the child. Notification should be made of the placement to the 'host' local authority (where appropriate) and to the local police force.

3.6 Risk assessment

- 28) Where a child goes missing from care, it will be necessary to undertake a risk-assessment and to have in place an agreed procedure for actions to be taken that reflect the level of risk identified. Locally-agreed protocols and procedures will determine when it is appropriate to refer the missing child to the out-of-hours/emergency duty team and to the police. It is good practice to ensure that any local authority risk-assessment tool is agreed and co-ordinated with partners, specifically the police, to streamline information-sharing and decision making.

Annex 1 includes information which should be considered in assessing the risk of a child going missing from their care placement.

3.7 Planning for the return

"Sit and talk to them and ask them why they ran away and investigate it."

Kellie 12, Newcastle

- 29) Where a child has been missing from their care placement, the responsible authority should ensure that plans are in place to respond promptly once the child is located. If the child is located, but the professionals involved are unable to establish meaningful contact with the child, perhaps because they are under duress or being harboured, then the accountable staff in the responsible authority will need to consider whether it is appropriate to apply to the court for a recovery order.

20. Children's Homes Regulation 2001 – Regulation 12 and Children's Homes National Minimum Standards.

36 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 30) Where issues external to the placement are trigger factors in a young person going missing, care staff or foster carers will need to continue to offer them warm and consistent care when they return. In this instance, it will be counter-productive and detrimental to the young person's wellbeing to use their absence as a reason for terminating their placement.
- 31) The need for safe and reliable care may well be particularly significant for a young person who faces pressure to leave their placement as a result of circumstances beyond the control of their carers. In these circumstances, it will be even more important that the child's care plan is kept up-to-date and includes a very clear strategy to reduce the pressure on the child to leave – with explicit actions for professionals to take in situations where they are absent from their placements.
- 32) When the child or young person has been located, the local authority will be responsible for making the decision about whether they should be returned to their placement. This decision is likely to involve consultation with other professionals about the factors that led to the child running away or going missing from their placement. If the assessment is that it will be in the child's interests to be returned to their previous placement, then it will be necessary to make the practical arrangements to return the child. Arrangements should also be made for the child or young person to have an interview on their return.
- 33) Following missing incidents, especially if they lead to moves that will result in significant changes to the child's care plan, a statutory review of the child's care plan should be considered. The police and other relevant agencies should be given the opportunity to contribute to the review, in particular to indicate whether they have any concerns about the quality of care provided to the child and whether this could have influenced the child's decision to run away. As with all other statutory reviews, the child's parents should usually be included in this meeting.
- 34) The responsible local authority must ensure that they have taken full account of the circumstances that led to the child running from their placement to avoid the child being returned to an abusive environment.

Multi-agency meetings

- 36) Where young people run away persistently and/or engage in other risky behaviour, such as frequently leaving their placement to associate with unfamiliar or inappropriate adults, the care provider – in consultation with the authority responsible for them – should convene a multi-agency risk management meeting. The purpose of this will be to develop a strategy with all relevant agencies for managing the identified risks to young people. This strategy should be recorded in detail in the child's care plan.
- 37) This is particularly important where groups of young people run away from their care placement together and are involved in substance misuse, (including alcohol abuse) are being sexually exploited, or are committing offences. The care provider should ensure that risk-management meetings take place regularly to review the strategy until the agencies concerned reach agreement that it has been effective in tackling the targeted concerns.

- 38) The trigger for convening a multi-agency risk management meeting should be agreed locally and specified in the local RMFHC protocol.

Police Safe and Well Check

- 39) A Police Safe and Well Check is carried out as soon as possible after the person has returned. Its purpose is to check for any indications that the young person has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them.
- 40) Where a person goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable to see them every time they return. In these cases a reasonable decision should be taken with regard to the frequency of such checks. This will mainly apply to young people missing from care who are likely to have other key people responsible for their welfare to check this. Every effort should be made to visit those young people missing from home on every occasion.

Return Interview

- 41) The authority responsible for the child's or young person's care should make sure that they have the opportunity of a Return Interview. This is a more in-depth interview that should be carried out by a professional independent of the placement. Where a service is available, the Return Interview might be best provided by a professional from a voluntary agency (which could be an independent advocacy service or specialised runaways project), who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge with the authority responsible for the child's care. Many young people who run away or go missing need to build up trust with somebody before they will respond to an interview and discuss the reasons why they decided to run away. The interview and actions that follow from it should:
- identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered, including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the Police Safe and Well Check (his/her medical condition should be discussed and any need for medical attention assessed);
 - understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away; and
 - try to prevent it happening again.
- 42) It is good practice that this interview takes place within 72 hours of the young person being located or returning from absence. It is especially important that a Return Interview takes place when a child:
- has been missing for over 24 hours;
 - has been missing on two or more occasions;
 - has been engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence;
 - has been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing (or this is believed to have been the case);
 - has known mental health issues;
 - is at known risk of sexual exploitation; and/or
 - has contact with persons posing risk to children.

Links to National Indicator 71 requirement: 3

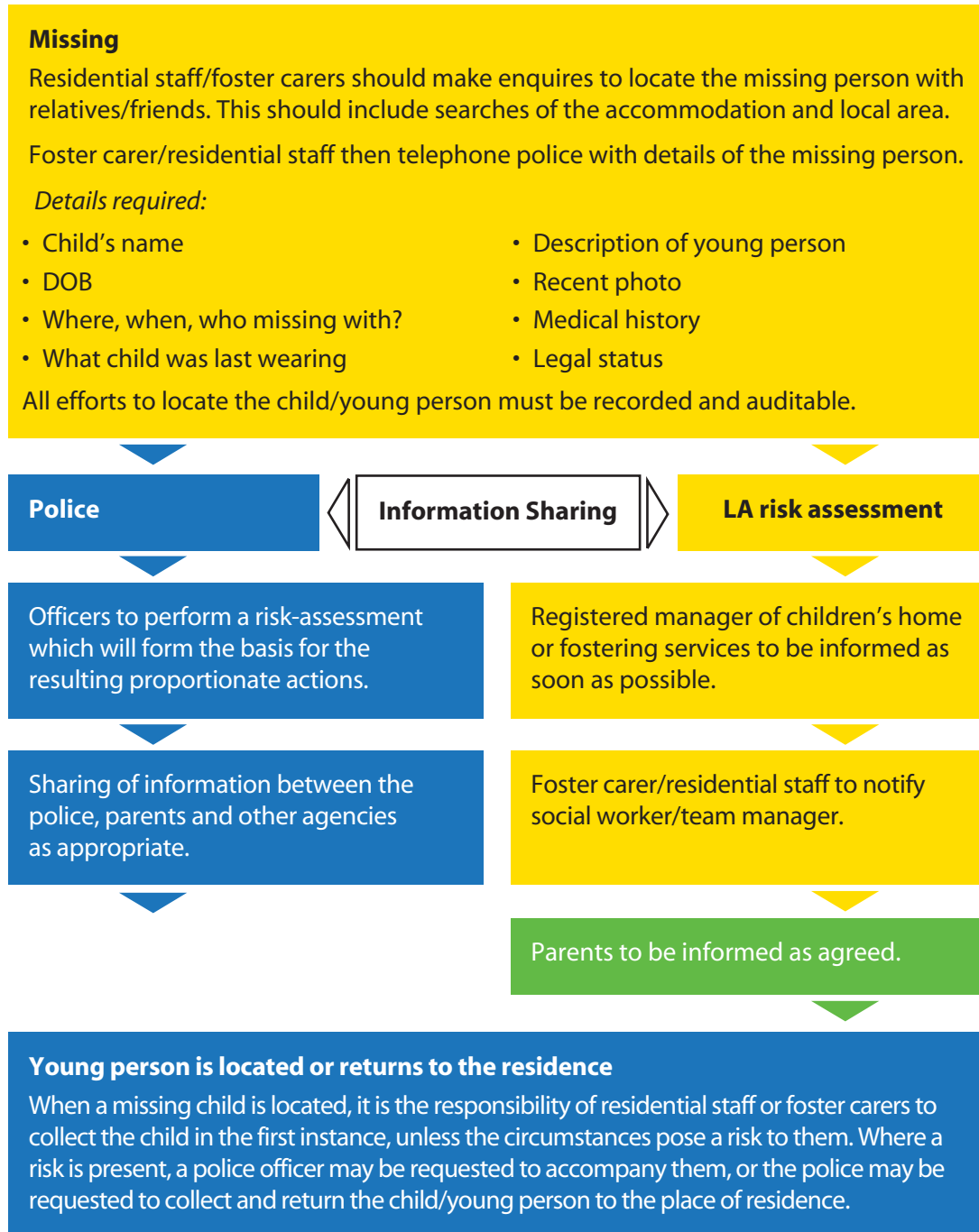
3.8 Looked-after children trafficked from abroad


- 43) Some of the children that a local authority looks after may be unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), and some of this group may have been trafficked into the UK and are likely to remain under the influence of their traffickers, even whilst they are looked after.
- 44) The assessment of need to inform the care plan will be particularly critical in these circumstances. The assessment must seek to establish:
- relevant details about the child's background before they came to the UK;
 - an understanding of the reasons that the child came to the UK; and
 - an analysis of the child's vulnerability to remaining under the influence of traffickers.
- 45) In conducting this assessment it will be necessary for the local authority to work in close co-operation with staff in the UK Border Agency (UKBA) who may be familiar with patterns of trafficking into the UK. UKBA staff should be able to advise on whether information about the individual child suggests that they fit the profile of a potentially trafficked child.
- 46) The care plan should include a risk-assessment as to the likelihood of a UASC going missing in the same way that the care plan might for any other child believed to be at risk of going missing from their care placement. Given the circumstances in which potentially trafficked young people present to local authorities, the process of assessment and related risk-assessments will need to be sensitively managed. Provision may need to be made for the child to be in a safe place before any assessment takes place and for the possibility that they may not be able to disclose full information about their circumstances immediately. The location of the child should not be divulged to any enquirer until their identity and relationship with the child has been established, if necessary with the help of police and immigration services. In these situations the roles and responsibilities of care providers must be fully understood and recorded in the PIR.
- 47) The Government ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings on 17 December 2008, and the Convention came into force in the United Kingdom on 1 April 2009. As part of our improved services for trafficked children under the Convention, the Government has introduced a national referral mechanism, which provides improved procedures for local agencies to earlier identify, refer and support child victims of trafficking, and to prevent them from going missing.
- 48) It will be essential that the local authority continues to share information with the police and UKBA which emerges during the placement of a looked-after child who may have been trafficked, concerning potential crimes against the child, the risk to other children, or other relevant immigration matters. Further information about safeguarding trafficked children is available at: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMG-00994-2007&>

3.9 Support for care staff

- 49) It is important that managers of children's homes and fostering services ensure that those caring for vulnerable young people are offered the support necessary so that they are equipped to deal with the challenges that face them when a child in their care runs away.
- 50) Staff teams in children's homes should be developed so that they can offer a consistent approach to young people's care, including being proactive about strategies to divert young people from running away. All staff must understand the procedures that must be followed if a young person goes missing.
- 51) Supervision and management of foster carers should include information about the fostering services' RMFHC protocols. Social workers will need to provide the foster carers they supervise with support to enable carers to develop the skills to anticipate the possibility of a young person running away, and if possible to divert them from this course of action.
- 52) Children's home staff must also be trained on their services' RMFHC protocol. This might be included in general training about safeguards for looked-after children. The competence and support-needs of care staff in managing missing from care issues should be considered during routine management appraisal and supervision.

3.10 Young people missing from care process flowchart






The police will conduct a Safe and Well Check to establish the missing person's well-being, and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing.




Foster carer/residential staff to:


- provide positive non-judgemental return;
- check young person's medical condition and make necessary arrangements.



Placement staff to inform the social worker and team manager of the young person's return.



Arrangements for Return Interview to be agreed in consultation with the child.
Care plan to be updated.



Consider whether to:

- convene a multi-agency strategy meeting;
- arrange an early looked-after child review;
- review any prevention/support work currently being undertaken with the child.

3.11 Actions-to-take checklist

Issue	Action
RMFHC protocols	<p>Children’s services must work with the police and other partner agencies to draw up procedures and protocols about action to take when children in care go missing.</p> <p>These procedures must be formally agreed by the lead member for children’s services and by the council committee responsible for ‘corporate parenting’.</p> <p>There should be a named person in the local authority responsible for children and young people who go missing or run away.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.3 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3,5</p>
Recording and sharing information	<p>Reports about patterns of absence must be made available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior managers responsible for the quality of fostering and children’s homes services; • commissioning managers in placing authorities; • social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers for looked-after children and their managers; • Ofsted inspectors during the inspection or on request. <p>Missing-from-care incidents must be carefully recorded and highlighted on individual case records and files so that care plans can be revised whenever necessary; and so that, should it be necessary, evidential information can be shared with the police to support criminal investigations.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.6 National Indicator 71 requirement: 1</p>
Care planning	<p>Where children have established a pattern of going absent from placements, their care plan should include a strategy to minimise the likelihood of the child going missing in future, and provide review meetings to check that the placement remains suitable for meeting the child’s needs.</p> <p>Alongside the care plan, a Placement Information Record (PIR) should be completed.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.4 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>

Multi-agency meetings	<p>Where a young person persistently goes missing, the manager responsible for the children's home or fostering service should convene a multi-agency risk management meeting. The trigger for such a meeting should be agreed and specified within the local RMFHC protocol.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.6 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>
Return Interview	<p>As well as a Police Safe and Well Check, young people who have run away should have access to a Return Interview, ideally with an independent person or someone the young person trusts.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.7 National Indicator 71 requirement: 3</p>
Staff support	<p>Children's home staff and foster carers must be offered support, supervision and training so that they understand the importance of following the prescribed RMFHC procedures, and to develop skills to enable them to discourage young people from going missing.</p> <p>Guidance section: 3.8</p>

Conclusion

- 1) The Government recognises that children who run away from home and care are at risk of being hurt, and in many cases resort to crime in order to survive.
- 2) Regardless of whether a child is living with their family, are in a local authority children's home or in foster care, running away should be seen as a sign that something is wrong in their lives. All instances of running away brought to the attention of local authorities must be taken seriously and acted on.
- 3) Early intervention is the best way of preventing young people from running away. Good Targeted Youth Support (TYS) arrangements will help identify cases of running early, and provide the opportunity to address these issues and prevent escalation. However, in some cases even with early intervention support, children will still run away and therefore services and procedures will always be required.
- 4) The 'Actions to Take' sections within the guidance provide local authorities with an indication of the procedures they should put in place to safeguard children who run away from home or care.
- 5) Multi-agency working must be at the core of all procedures and RMFHC protocols. Strong partnerships between children's services, the police, and the voluntary sector – and in the case of looked-after children, care and fostering services – are vital to minimising the chances of children and young people running away again and preventing them coming to harm in the future. The introduction of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional, help support better joined-up working. A prompt response by an appropriate agency has the potential to prevent a problem turning into a crisis.
- 6) A new national indicator specifically about young people who run away from home or care (NI71) was introduced into the National Indicator Set in April 2009. Collecting the right data at local level is essential to improving services for young people who run away.
- 7) This new, updated, guidance puts a much stronger emphasis on the importance of return interviews and highlights the difference between the Police Safe and Well Check and the Return Interview. Once a young person is found or returns to their family home or care placement, local authorities should ensure they have the opportunity to talk about the reasons why they ran away – ideally with an independent person, who understands and tries to address the reasons why the child ran away to prevent it happening again.
- 8) Looked-after children are particularly vulnerable and may be targeted by those wishing to abuse and exploit them. These children depend on the local authority to act as their 'corporate parent'. A care-placement where the child or young person feels safe and secure, and where their concerns are taken seriously, is likely to be the most effective way of reducing the likelihood that they will be motivated to run away. However, it may be necessary to take extra measures to make sure that they are effectively safeguarded and protected from exploitation.

The law concerning missing or runaway children

The legal framework

- The law does not generally regard young people under the age of 16 as being able to live independently away from home.
- Where a child/young person under 16 (or 18 if disabled) stays with a person (other than a person with parental responsibility or a close relative), for 28 days or more, the person caring for them is acting as a 'private foster carer' within the meaning of s66 of the Children Act 1989 and therefore they must notify the local authority that they are privately fostering the child/young person. 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' SI 2005/1533. Failure to notify the local authority may be an offence.
- Anyone who has care of a child without parental responsibility may do what *is reasonable* in all the circumstances to safeguard and promote the child's welfare (Children Act 1989 s3 (5)). It is likely to be 'reasonable' to inform the police, or children's services departments, and, if appropriate, their parents, of the child/young person's safety and whereabouts.
- Anyone who 'takes or detains' a runaway under 16 without lawful authority may be prosecuted under s2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984. The enforcement of this provision might be problematic, however, if the young person has chosen to stay with another adult of his or her own free will.
- Where a young person who has run away is likely to be a child in need within the meaning of s17 of the Children Act 1989, the local authority should consider whether it should provide any services for the child, and in particular, whether the child meets the criteria in s20(1) of the 1989 for accommodation. This will almost always entail undertaking at least an initial assessment of need in accordance with the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* and, in most cases, a full core assessment will be required.
- If the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should also undertake appropriate enquiries to enable them to decide what, if any, action they should take to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Those enquiries must be started as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours.
- A court may make a recovery order concerning a child who is the subject of a care order or an emergency-protection order; or who is the subject of police protection under s46 of the Children Act 1989 Order if there are grounds to believe that he has been unlawfully taken away from the person responsible for his care, or if he has run away or has been missing from care (s50 of the Children Act 1989). The Order acts as a direction for the child to be produced or for disclosure of his whereabouts. It also has the effect of permitting a police officer to enter named premises to search for the child using reasonable force if necessary.
- A person who unlawfully removes, keeps away, assists or otherwise encourages a child to run away or stay away from their care placement may be guilty of an offence and liable to prosecution (s49 of the Children Act 1989.)

46 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- Where it is inappropriate or not immediately possible to seek parental consent, s51 of the Children Act 1989 exempts agencies which provide refuges from charges under s2 of the Abduction Act, referred to previously, and from other charges relating to children missing from care. Young people may only be accommodated under this Section if they appear to be at risk of harm. They may stay in refuge provision for a continuous period of up to 14 days, and for no more than 21 days in a three-month period.

Signposting – other useful information

The following information and guidance may be useful in helping to support children who run away or go missing from home and care:

- The **Young Runaways Action Plan** published in June 2008 outlines the Government's commitments to improving services for young runaways and can be found at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/runaways/
- The *English Coalition for Runaway Children* is open to all those with an interest in the issues of runaway children. More information can be obtained from the organisation's Chairman, Andy McCullough, email: A.McCullough@railwaychildren.org.uk
- In April 2009, a new indicator was introduced into the **National Indicator Set (NIS)** specifically about young people who run away from home or care. The criteria for this indicator can be found in annex 3 of this guidance.
- The **ACPO Guidance on Missing People** can be found at: www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/missing_persons_2005_24x02x05.pdf
- The Department for Children Schools and Families, in conjunction with The Children's Society, has produced a free resource pack for use in schools and youth groups which will be available from September 2009.
- **The Staying Safe Action Plan (2008)** provides more detail on what the Government will do to ensure children and young people are safe, and feel safe. It can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe/
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)** is the main inter-agency guidance on procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/
- The Government published an action plan, setting out detailed responses to the recommendations in Lord Laming's report, **The protection of children in England: A progress report (March 2009)**. This can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/
- The **Stepping Up report** from The Children's Society was the pre-cursor to the *Young Runaways Action Plan*. It is the most up-to-date research on the subject of missing and runaway children. www.childrensociety.org.uk

- The NPIA **Missing Persons Bureau** (MPB) works alongside the police and related organisations to improve the services provided to missing persons investigations: www.npia.police.uk/missingpersons
- **Online grooming** – In April 2006, the Government launched the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) as a national law-enforcement agency focusing on tackling the sexual abuse of children, especially in relation to the internet. CEOP's principal aim is to identify, locate and safeguard children and young people from harm. Further details of about CEOP and their ThinkUknow educational programme can be found here: www.ceop.gov.uk/. CEOP also has a dedicated Child Trafficking Unit focusing on strategic knowledge and awareness-building of the problem in the UK. All reports may be found on the CEOP website.
- **Child trafficking** – Guidance for practitioners on what to do if they encounter a child who may have been trafficked can be found here: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMG-00994-2007&>
Further background information relating to child trafficking can be found here: www.ceop.gov.uk/about/child_trafficking.asp
- **The NSPCC National Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line** (CTAIL) is a new service for anyone with concerns about human trafficking. CTAIL is funded by the Home Office and Comic Relief. The line is based at the NSPCC working in partnership with the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and ECPAT UK (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking). Call free on 0800 107 7057 (lines are open from 9.30am-4.30pm on weekdays) or email ctail@nspcc.org.uk
- Young runaways are particularly vulnerable to drug or alcohol misuse. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* recognises the threat to children of living in households where drugs and alcohol are misused. A number of actions are outlined in the **Drug Strategy (2008)** committing the Government to a new support package for families, including safeguarding children of substance misusing parents www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/substancemisuse/
- Joint guidance published by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department of Children, Schools and Families in May 2008 *Joint working between Housing and Children's Services: Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people* (www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/goodpracticeguide) highlights the importance of developing joint-protocols and working practices to support young homeless people including those who are homeless through running away. This guidance has an emphasis on care leavers and 16- 17-year-olds who are considered some of the most vulnerable groups of young people who are made homeless.

Helplines

Missing People

Missing People provides support for missing children, vulnerable adults and families left in limbo.

Through the **Runaway Helpline**, the charity provides crisis-support to any young person who has run away from home or care, or been forced to leave. The service is 24/7, free, confidential and can be contacted via Freefone 0808 800 7070, by emailing runaway@missingpeople.org.uk and also by texting 80234.

Missing People also helps local authorities to find young people missing from home or care. The charity can provide liaison and publicity opportunities, including national media partners, to aid the safe return of a child.

Missing People accepts referrals from any agency or carer involved with a missing child as long as the case has already been reported to police. A straightforward media consent form will need to be signed by whoever has parental responsibility. To contact Missing People about a missing child, email services@missingpeople.org.uk or call 0871 222 50 55.

Childline

Childline is a free confidential telephone helpline providing counselling service for children and young people run by the NSPCC. The phone number is 0800 1111.

Get Connected

Get Connected is a free, national helpline for any young person under 25 facing any issue, giving each young person the emotional support they need to work out what they want to do about their situation, and the information they need to choose the most appropriate help.

Get Connected holds details of over 13,000 different services and allows the young person to make their own decisions at their own pace. They then connect them, free, to their chosen service.

In the case of a young person who has run away or been thrown out of home, they can explore their accommodation options, including friends, family, social services, refuges/hostels or returning home. If the young person wants to find help with any other issues, Get Connected can also put them in touch with services such as counselling, advice, drop-in centres and practical help.

www.getconnected.org.uk/charity

Phone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm-11pm every day)

Email: help@getconnected.org.uk

Webchat: www.getconnected.org.uk (7pm-10pm every day)

FRANK

FRANK telephone line and website (www.talktofrank.com) is the joint DCSF, Department of Health and Home Office drugs advice and information campaign for young people: 0800 77 66 00.

Annex 1: assessing the risks that looked-after children may go missing

- 1) When children become looked-after, the views and experiences of parents or carers should be taken into consideration during the core assessment of the child's needs. In particular, parents or carers should be asked whether the child has ever run away or stayed in unknown, possibly unsafe, places.
- 2) Where children do run away from their care placement, their needs should be re-assessed and their care plan updated to incorporate a risk-management strategy to minimise missing-from-care incidents.
- 3) The duration of absences should not be taken as the primary indicator of risk. Absences of short duration may be as risky as lengthier ones. Factors to be taken into consideration when a young person goes missing from their placement include:
 - previously-assessed levels of vulnerability;
 - age of child;
 - time of day/night;
 - information specific to the child (eg, previous history of going missing; whether contact issues or family conflict might have influenced them to go missing from their placement);
 - whether or not the child has any physical/learning difficulties or serious health problems (eg, diabetes or epilepsy);
 - the emotional health of the child (eg, whether they have a history of harm or self-injurious behaviour); and
 - suspected associations when the child is missing along with possible areas in which the child might be located.
- 4) Risk assessments should be completed in consultation with parents and those with professional knowledge of the child. Local authorities should consult with the police about the information that would be most helpful in assisting them to locate the child and investigate any possible offences by adults involved in encouraging the child to go missing from their placement. It will be important that data about young people who go missing in one agency is compatible with that used by other agencies with a responsibility for the welfare of missing children.

Annex 2: glossary of terms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
EDS	Emergency Duty Services
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
Looked-after	See 'Definitions' section
Missing	See 'Definitions' section
Runaway	See 'Definitions' section
RMFHC	Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocol
NPIA	National Police Improvement Agency
TYS	Targeted Youth Support
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre
SI	Statutory Instrument
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
PIR	Placement Information Record
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
CTAIL	National Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line
NMS	National Minimum Standards
FIP	Family Intervention Programmes
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
NI	National Indicator
UKBA	UK Border Agency

Annex 3: National Indicator 71 – Missing from Home and Care criteria

Introduction

- 1) The terms ‘young runaway’ and ‘missing’ in this context refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 who have run away from their home or care placement, have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts is unknown.
- 2) These young people face a particular range of risks from having to find alternative places to stay and means to survive. Often, they are extremely vulnerable: we know that 1 in 6 of these young people will sleep rough, and that 1 in 12 will be hurt or harmed whilst away.
- 3) Therefore, this indicator has been introduced to raise local-area awareness to create a focus on the provision of services to this vulnerable group of young people. The indicator will support joint-working between the police and children’s services and other relevant bodies, to support local strategic partnerships and children’s trusts in establishing the scale of running away in their local area, and to put services in place to respond accordingly and effectively.
- 4) The indicator asks local areas to assess whether appropriate systems, procedures and protocols are in place to identify the levels of running in their area, and whether the response to instances of running is appropriate to the needs of young people who run away. The intention is not to ask local areas to provide information about the level of running, or the detail of their service provision, but to provide a picture of the extent to which appropriate services are provided. This information should also be used to assist local Safeguarding Children’s Boards and Children’s Trusts to improve local service provision for runaways, and support them in achieving the five Every Child Matters outcomes.
- 5) It is recognised that this indicator is focused on service provision rather than outcomes for young people. At present, the recording and sharing of data at a local level can be so patchy, that it would be impossible to have an indicator based on this data (as a proxy for outcomes). It is hoped that the improvements in processes and service provision that this indicator will bring about will allow a move to a more outcome-focused indicator in 2011.
- 6) Local areas will have the opportunity to explain why they have given themselves a particular score in the “comment” box. Whilst using this box is not compulsory, local areas may wish to use it to explain why they have given themselves a particular score, especially where failure to meet one or two points in the criteria has prevented them achieving a higher score, where the majority of their provision is at a higher level. They also may wish to use it to set out how they plan to improve their services, and therefore improve their score in the future. This will help DCSF to understand the provision available in the area, and identify how they can support the local area to improve that provision, and consequently their indicator score. Existing inspection procedures will monitor whether evidence supports the awarding of such scores.

52 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- 7) For the purposes of these criteria, we have used the term 'missing' when referring to actions that need to happen to help ensure the immediate safety of a child, when their whereabouts are still unknown, and the reason for the episode of 'missing' may not yet be known. We have used the term 'runaway' when referring to actions that need to happen once a child has been located and returned to a place of safety, and it has been established that they have run away from their home or care placement, or feel they have been forced to leave.
- 8) In some instances, we have indicated where a different response to children missing from home when compared to children missing from care is acceptable to achieve a certain score. Where this has not been made explicit in the criteria, the expectation applies to all children and young people. In these instances you should judge yourselves against the provision in place for children missing from home.

1) Local information about running is gathered

To score 0:

- A notification is not sent by the police to children's services or a representative agent for **all** children missing from home; or in the case of children missing from care, it is not sent to an identified receiving point. No expectation that this will change within the following three months.
- Aggregate data in relation to runaway and missing children is not collated or only collated from certain groups of missing children, and there are no plans in place to change this within the following three months.
- Local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is not able to identify the number²¹ of :
 - incidences of running;
 - individuals who have run; and
 - individuals who have run on two or more occasions;
 and there is no expectation that this will change in the following three months.

To score 1:

- A notification²² is sent by the police to children's services or an appropriate representative agent for **all** children missing from home, and to an identified receiving point for children missing from care. Although there is no written protocol for the timescales of such reports in place.
- Aggregate data about the profile of running in the area is collated and shared on a regular basis between police and children's services.
- Local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is able to identify (or will be able to identify in the next three months) the number of:
 - incidences of running;
 - individuals who have run; and

1. This refers to all instances of running and individuals who have run, not just the relatively small number of children who will have been formally referred to children's social care.

2. Different police forces may already have a system in place, known by one of various guises. Alternative names include a juvenile referral form or a child welfare referral. However, all police forces should have a mechanism in place to alert local authorities when a young person in their area (whether they are looked-after or not) comes to the police's attention. This should be seen as a notification, and IS NOT necessarily a formal referral to children's social care, although in some circumstances it may be appropriate for such a referral to take place.

- individuals who have run on two or more occasions;
but this is not necessarily able to be broken down by the child's age, gender and ethnicity, and whether the child is running from home or care.

Local areas may award themselves a 1 if they meet all but one of the criteria above, and have a clear action plan in place setting out how they will fulfil the remaining criterion within the following three months.

To score 2:

- A notification is sent by the police to children's services or an appropriate representative agent for **all** children missing from home, and to an identified receiving point for children missing from care and there is a written protocol in place setting out the required timescales for such reports to be made enabling services to co-ordinate and act quickly to secure the location and safeguard the child.
- Information is shared, on a regular basis, between the police and children's services enabling them to identify the following patterns where a child has:
 - gone missing or run away on two or more occasions;
 - been missing or run away for more than **48** hours;
 - been involved as a victim or perpetrator of criminal behaviour whilst missing or having run away.
- Referrals from the police are supplemented by information from other statutory partners. Relevant information-sharing protocols are in place to support this.
- Aggregate data about the profile of running in the area is collated between police and children's services and shared.
- From this data the local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is able to identify the number of :
 - incidences of running;
 - individuals who have run; and
 - individuals who have run on two or more occasions;
 This information can be broken down by the child's age and gender, and whether the child is running from home or care.
- Local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is able to identify:
 - children's homes that have particularly high levels of 'missing' reports in relation to other homes in the area;
 - the proportion of young people who are hurt or harmed whilst they are away; and
 - the proportion of young people who have committed an offence whilst they are away.

Local areas may award themselves a 2 if they meet all but one of the criteria above, and have a clear action plan in place setting out how they will fulfil the remaining criterion within the following three months.

54 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

To score 3:

- A notification is sent by the police to children's services or an appropriate representative agent (where there is an identified receiving point) for **all** children missing from home or care and there is a written protocol in place setting out the required timescales for such reports to be made enabling services to co-ordinate and act quickly to secure the location and safeguard the child.
- Information is shared, on a regular basis, between the police and children's services enabling them to identify the following patterns where a child has:
 - gone missing or has run away on two or more occasions;
 - been missing or has run away for more than **24** hours;
 - been involved as a victim or perpetrator of criminal behaviour whilst missing or having run away;
 - known mental health issues;
 - known risk of sexual exploitation;
 - known risk of contact with persons posing risk to children; or
 - incidents that have generated assessment of needs via Common Assessment Framework, s47 or s17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Police information is supplemented by information from other statutory partners, and where appropriate, the voluntary sector. Relevant information-sharing protocols are in place to support this.
- Aggregate data about the profile of running in the area is collated between police, children's services and **other partner** agencies and shared at least every three months.
- From this data, the local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is able to identify:
 - incidences of running;
 - individuals who have run;
 - individuals who have run on two or more occasions;
 - incidents that have generated a case conference; or professionals meeting.

This information can be broken down by the child's age, gender **and ethnicity**, whether the child is running from home or care, and – in the case of children running from care – whether the child is in an out-of-area placement.

- Local area, through the local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Children's Trust Board is able to identify:
 - children's homes that have particularly high levels of 'missing' reports in relation to other homes in the area;
 - areas where missing young people or runaways are frequently located;
 - the proportion of young people who are hurt or harmed whilst they are away; and
 - the proportion of young people who have committed an offence whilst they are away.

2) Local needs analysis-based information gathered about levels or causes of running are in place.

To score 0:

- No procedure is in place for the collecting, sharing, and analysis of data collected by the police and other statutory partners in relation to young people who run away from home or care, and no action is taken as a result.

To score 1:

- Procedure is in place for the collecting and sharing of data collected by the police and children's services (or will be in place in three months), **but** the data is not frequently analysed and reviewed by the local safeguarding children board, or the local Children's Trust Board. This collection and analysis of data may only cover particular wards or areas within the local authority.

To score 2:

- Procedure is in place for the collecting and sharing of data collected by the police, children's services and other partners; the data is frequently analysed and reviewed by this group, informing patterns and trends in practice, but not frequently analysed and reviewed by the local safeguarding children board, or the local Children's Trust Board. This collection and analysis of data covers the whole of the local authority area.

To score 3:

- Procedure is in place for the collecting and sharing of data collected by the police, children's services and other partners; it is frequently analysed and reviewed by the local safeguarding children board, or the local Children's Trust Board, and it is used to inform a proactive response to running and patterns of running in the local area. This collection and analysis of data covers the whole of the local authority area.

3) Local procedures to meet the needs of runaways agreed

To score 0:

- No agreed protocols for responding to all instances of running, and no existing multi-agency response to the needs of runaways in place. No evidence that this will change within the following six months.
- Welfare Return Interviews not offered and a child's welfare assessment is limited to the Police Safe and Well Check. No plans to implement systematic Return Interviews within the following six months
- There is no risk-assessment in place for children who are missing or who have run away from home or care and, as such, all incidents are given the same response.

To score 1:

- Runaways' services are in place, but not necessarily informed by a local needs analysis.
- Risk-assessment tool is not in place, but is planned within the next three months which will enable each incident of running to be assessed, and an appropriate response planned and carried out.

- Procedures for responses to all instances of running are under development with clear plans for them to be reviewed frequently, with outcomes of the review acted upon.
- The protocols and procedures will be reviewed and updated at least every two years.
- Return Interviews (as opposed to Police Safe and Well Checks) are offered for every instance of running where a child has:
 - been missing for over 24 hours;
 - been missing or has runaway on two or more occasions; or
 - engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence.

A score of 1 may be awarded where there is clear evidence that this will happen within the following six months.

- Information gathered as part of Return Interviews is shared with children's services, police and other professionals working with the child. A score of 1 may be awarded where there is clear evidence that this will happen within the following six months.

Local areas may award themselves a 1 if they meet all but one of the criteria above, and have a clear action plan in place setting out how they will fulfil the remaining criterion within the following three months.

To score 2:

- Runaways' services are informed by a local-needs analysis.
- Risk-assessment tool is in place, which enables each incident of running to be assessed, and an appropriate response planned and carried out.
- Procedures for responses to instances of running are in place, implemented and reviewed, with outcomes of the review acted upon.
- The protocols and procedures are reviewed and updated at least every two years.
- Return Interviews (as opposed to Police Safe and Well Checks) are offered for every instance of running where a child has:
 - been missing for over **24** hours;
 - been missing or has run away on two or more occasions; or
 - engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence.
- Information gathered as part of Return Interviews is shared with children's services, police and other professional working with the child. Relevant information-sharing protocols are in place to support this.
- Where the young person has run from local authority care, this information is shared with the independent reviewing officer and is used to inform care planning.

Local areas may award themselves a 2 if they meet all but one of the criteria above, and have a clear action plan in place setting out how they will fulfil the remaining criterion within the following three months.

To score 3:

- Runaways' services are informed by a local-needs analysis.
- Risk-assessment tool is in place, which enables each incident of running to be assessed, and an appropriate response planned and carried out. This risk-assessment is a joint tool for police and children's services.
- Procedures for responses to instances of running are in place, implemented and reviewed, with outcomes of the review acted upon. The protocols and procedures are reviewed and updated at least every two years.
- Return Interviews are offered, where appropriate by independent organisation, for every instance of running where a child has:
 - been missing for over 24 hours;
 - been missing or has runaway on two or more occasions;
 - engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence;
 - been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing (or this is believed to have been the case);
 - known mental health issues; or
 - known risk of sexual exploitation or contact with persons posing risk to children.
- Information gathered as part of Return Interviews is shared with children's services, police and other professionals working with the child. Relevant information-sharing protocols are in place to support this.
- Where there are multiple incidents of running involving a young person, an action plan to bring about behaviour change is put in place and implemented, and is regularly reviewed for its effectiveness.
- In cases where the area has a child running from an out-of-authority placement, the area (as the home authority) calls a professionals' meeting involving the relevant organisations from the host authority, to determine action, and to ensure change.
- When a child who has a history of running is put in an out-of-authority placement, the host authority is informed of the risk, and as part of the placement agreement, appropriate details are shared to support the home authority to manage that risk and inform care planning for the individual child.

4) Protocols for responding to urgent/out-of-hours referrals from the police or other agencies are in place

Out-of-hours referrals, made from the police or other agency to children's services because a child or young person who has run away has been found, or has presented themselves, should be considered to be any referral that takes place outside normal working hours. (So in most cases, referrals that take place before 9am or after 5pm Monday to Friday, and referrals that take place over the weekend.)

To score 0:

- Out-of-hours referrals are not made, or are not made in every instance of a young person being found (or presenting themselves) out of hours, and there is any reason to believe that their home or care setting may not be an appropriate place for them to be returned to.

58 Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care

- No protocols for out-of-hours referrals are in place, or under development, and there are no plans to develop them.
- The number of out-of-hours referrals is not monitored and recorded.
- No assessment of suitability of the emergency accommodation in which young people are placed.
- No onward referral procedures are in place.

To score 1:

- Out-of-hours referrals are made **whenever** any missing young person is found or presents themselves, and there is any reason to believe that their home or care setting may not be an appropriate place for them to be returned to.
- Multi-agency protocols are under development and will be in place within the following three months. These protocols will include a system for monitoring whether each out-of-hours referral is handled in line with the protocols.
- The number of out-of-hours referrals is monitored and recorded, or there are clear plans to do so within three months.
- Young people who need emergency accommodation are placed appropriately, and the location of each placement is recorded. Onward referral procedures are in place.

To score 2:

- Out-of-hours referrals are made **whenever** any missing young person is found or presents themselves, and there is any reason to believe that their home or care setting may not be an appropriate place for them to be returned to.
- Multi-agency protocols for out-of-hours referrals are in place. These protocols include a system for monitoring whether each out-of-hours referral is handled in line with the protocols.
- The number of out-of-hours referrals is monitored and recorded, or there are clear plans to do so within three months.
- Young people who need emergency accommodation are placed appropriately, and the location of each placement is recorded. Onward referral procedures are in place.

To score 3:

- Out-of-hours referrals are made **whenever** any missing young person is found or presents themselves, and there is any reason to believe that their home or care setting may not be an appropriate place for them to be returned to.
- Multi-agency protocols for out-of-hours referrals are in place. These protocols include a system for monitoring whether each out-of-hours referral is handled in line with the protocols, and a way of ensuring that remedial action is instituted following the identification that the protocols have not been followed.
- The number of out-of-hours referrals is monitored and recorded.

- Young people who need emergency accommodation are placed appropriately, and the location of each placement is recorded. Onward referral procedures are in place.

5) Local procedures to support effective prevention and early intervention work

To score 0:

- No prevention or early intervention service in place, and no demonstrable plans for this to change.

To score 1:

- A prevention or early-intervention service is under development that facilitates early intervention working with those young people who have already run, in order to prevent the continuation and escalation of running behaviour.

To score 2:

- A prevention or early-intervention service in place that facilitates prevention of running – working with those young people identified as of risk of running, but who have not run yet; and early intervention working with those young people who have already run, in order to prevent the continuation and escalation of running behaviour. This service will draw on local voluntary-sector expertise.
- A service in place so that those working with young people can refer those who they believe are at risk of running, and this service is well-publicised, known, and available to all those working with young people.
- Clear escalation protocols in place, including referrals into local assessment procedures.
- Young person's family and/or carers are engaged in and, where possible, agree any prevention or early-intervention strategy.

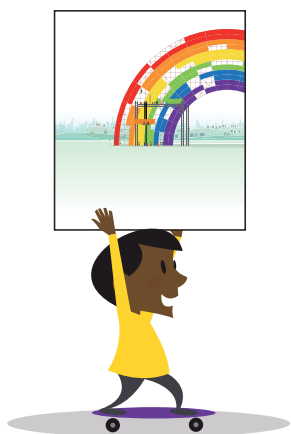
To score 3:

- A service in place that facilitates prevention of running – working with those young people identified as of risk of running, but who have not run yet; and early intervention working with those young people who have already run, to prevent the continuation and escalation of running behaviour. This draws on local-voluntary sector expertise.
- There is a specific referral point to where all those working with young people can make referrals when they believe a young person is likely to run.
- Service is well-publicised, known, and available to all those working with young people.
- Clear escalation protocols in place, including referrals into local assessment procedures.
- Young person's family and/or carers are engaged in and, where possible, agree any prevention or early-intervention strategy.
- Prevention and early-intervention service is reviewed, and effectiveness evaluated every year, gaps identified, and plans made to fill any gaps.

Bibliography

- 1) Children Act, s47 (1989) London: HMSO
- 2) Children's Workforce Development Council (2007) Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: managers' guide. Leeds: CWDC
- 3) Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Statutory Guidance (revised) for Local Authorities in England to Identify Children not Receiving a Suitable Education*. London
- 4) HM Government (2006) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. London: TSO
- 5) HM Government (2007) *Care Matters: Time for Change*. London: TSO
- 6) HM Government (2008) *Children and young people in mind: the final report of the National CAMHS Review*. London
- 7) HM Government (2008) *Young Runaways Action Plan*. London: HMSO
- 8) HM Government (2008) *Youth Crime Action Plan*. London: COI
- 9) Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Young Runaways*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- 10) The Children's Society (2005) *Still Running II*. London
- 11) The Children's Society (2008) *Stepping Up*. London
- 12) Wade, J & Biehal N (1998) *Going Missing – Young People Absent from Care*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

A commitment from
The Children's Plan



You can download this publication or order copies
online at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm
Search using the ref: DCSF-00670-2009

Please quote ref 00670-2009DOM-EN
ISBN: 978-1-84775-477-6

PPD35(4132)/0709

© Crown Copyright 2009
Published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for
non-commercial research, education or training purposes
on the condition that the source is acknowledged. For any
other use please contact licensing@opsi.gov.uk

75% recycled
This publication is printed
on 75% recycled paper

 **recycle**
When you have finished with
this publication please recycle it

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is exempt

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is exempt

This page is intentionally left blank