



**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee; 30 April 2012	<b>Item number</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Scrutiny Review – Missing from Care and from Home		
<b>Report authorised by :</b>	Councillor Alexander, Chair of Review Panel		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Robert Mack, Senior Policy Officer 020 8489 2921 <a href="mailto:rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk">rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk</a>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decision:</b>		
ALL			

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

The Committee is requested to approve the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Children Missing from Care and from Home.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

N.A.

**3. Recommendations**

That the final report of the Scrutiny Review on Children Missing from Care and from Home be approved.

**4. Other options considered**

These are included in the Panel's report

**5. Background information**



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The review was set up in the light of a recommendation of the Scrutiny Review of Corporate Parenting in response to concerns that were raised in respect of missing children during the course of the review. It focused on each of the three specific categories of missing children and young people referred:

- Children missing from the Council's care
- Children missing from the care of other local authorities who have been placed in Haringey
- Children missing from home.

## **6. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Implications**

It appears that most of the recommendations from this scrutiny review are possible to achieve through more effective use of existing resources and consequent efficiency of the services.

The exception to this is recommendation 11 which calls for an extension to the existing Return Home Interviews (RHI) for 'all children who have gone missing (para. 8.15). This review has identified that around 30 RHI are currently provided at no cost to the Council by Aviva/ Railway Children (para. 8.12). The review has not considered what the additional cost of an extension to this service might be.

The Children's Services management response to this scrutiny review should make it clear, the additional cost, whether it is proposing to pursue such an extension and, if so, the funding source. As part of this response the expected benefits and any 'cashable' savings, such as those in paragraph 8.18, should also be fully identified

## **7. Head of Legal Services and Legal Implications**

The "statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care has been developed to help Local Authorities put better systems in place to support young runaways from both home and care.

It 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 statutory guidance 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.

This guidance was issued in July 2009 under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which means that except in



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exceptional circumstances the local authority must act in accordance with it.

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 the statutory guidance "*Working Together to Safeguard Children*" a guide to inter agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children" and should be read in conjunction with that other 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**

A significant number of children and young people who go missing are looked after children, who suffer significantly poorer outcomes than other children. In particular, they have lower levels of educational attainment and higher rates of unemployment, poor mental health, imprisonment and teenage pregnancy.

## **9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

These are listed in Appendix 2 of the report.