



Derby City Council

**Corporate Parenting Sub Board**  
**20 August 2013**

# ITEM 6

Report of the Strategic Director of Children and  
Young People's Department

## Children Missing from Care

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The local authority has a duty to ensure that all children who are reported as missing from either their homes or care are monitored to ensure that the appropriate support service are in place to support parents and children when these episodes occur.

To ensure the local authority is meeting its legal obligations as well as all current Ofsted and safeguarding requirements we have established a group of professionals to monitor the planned interventions for missing children.

A monthly meeting takes place every third Thursday of each month to review all children who have been reported as missing to Derbyshire Police.

- 1.2 A monthly meeting takes place every third Thursday of each month to review all children who have been reported as missing to Derbyshire Police

This is a multi-agency meeting with representatives from Children and Young People's Department, Connexions, Derby Homes, Representatives from DCC Children's Homes, Health, Safe and Sound, Runaways staff, Derbyshire Police and the Youth Offending Service. The meeting ensures that all of the requirements of the missing children protocol are followed by all agencies.

- 1.3 The meeting discusses and risk assess every child who has been reported to the police during the preceding month, all children in care are firstly assessed, this includes all children reported missing from DCC homes, children in foster care and also children living in Independent Children's Homes in the city.

- 1.4 The group is called the Missing Children MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the overview and scrutiny committee are welcome to attend one of these meetings to see the work that takes place within our agencies to ensure children who go missing are located and preventative work is planned to help reduce future missing episodes

- 2.2 To examine ongoing data regarding missing children to ensure that all children receive the appropriate service.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members of the scrutiny and overview group can ensure that all agencies involved in the Missing Children MARAC are fulfilling their responsibilities towards looked after children
- 3.2 By receiving regular information on numbers of missing children from care the group can be reassured that the appropriate actions to safeguard children are being taken and that they are continually fulfilling their corporate parenting responsibilities.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council Cabinet and the Derby Safeguarding Children Board have both recently approved a city wide protocol for all agencies to ensure that all children who go missing from either home or care will have their needs met (attached at Appendix 2).
- 4.2 Return interviews are held with every child who has been reported as missing to the Police, these are facilitated by identified lead professionals or staff from the Runaways teams from localities. The information from these interviews are shared with staff from the child abuse unit from Derbyshire Police to ensure that all intelligence gathered is analysed and correctly assessed.
- 4.3 A dedicated officer from the child abuse unit has regular daily contact with the HoS who chairs the missing Children MARAC to discuss any concerns the Police may have about children who have been reported as missing, this does allow a swifter response
- 4.4 Some of the presenting issues that cause some of our children to go missing from our homes are;
- 1, Sexual exploitation
  - 2, Unhappiness at being in care and close proximity near to their parents homes.
  - 3, Not wanting to adhere to boundaries that are placed within our children's homes
  - 4, peer pressure from other young people living in children's homes as well as push and pull factors from within communities.
  - 5, normal teenage behaviour associated with adolescence

- 4.5 Data from January 2013 to June 2013;
- | Children missing from DCC homes | Foster Care | Independent Children's Homes |   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|---|
| January                         | 7           | 2                            | 1 |
| February                        | 4           | 2                            | 1 |
| March                           | 8           | 3                            | 5 |
| April                           | 7           | 1                            | 0 |
| May                             | 3           | 1                            | 1 |
| June                            | 5           | 2                            | 2 |

- 4.6 New guidance from the DfE is being published later in September which will ensure that children who are placed outside of the authority by DCC (and other authorities placing children in Derby to independent children's homes) will have a more robust procedure to ensure that missing episodes will be monitored more effectively and that appropriate actions will be taken when missing episodes occur. Derby already has a citywide protocol that covers much of the proposed draft guidance and will be amended to reflect any proposed changes in the new guidance.

#### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None, by not having these regular meeting and collecting and analysing data we could not fulfil our corporate parenting obligations

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Mark Barratt Kevin Murphy
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Kevin Murphy 01332 641442 kevin.murphy@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Multi Agency Response to Children Missing From Home or Care

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The meetings are value for money as we share the responsibility to ensure all of our LAC children who go missing receive a multi agency response to support them and reduce risks associated with going missing

**Legal**

- 2.1 N/A

**Personnel**

- 3.1 N/A

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 N/A

**Health and Safety**

- 5.1 N/A

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1 N/A

**Property and Asset Management**

- 7.1 N/A

**Risk Management**

- 8.1 By ensuring we monitor and respond to missing episodes we manage the risk to both the child and also the organisation.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9.1 The Missing Children MARAC ensures that council objective's to keep children safe and also promote learning are fully met.

