



Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director
Peoples Services
Report author: Fiona Colton Head of Service
and Kelly Ormond Principal Services Manager
Early Help and Children's Safeguarding

ITEM 06

Update Report on Children in Care Missing

Purpose

- 1.1 The Early Help Service holds the strategic responsibility within the council to manage and report the regular monitoring of all children and young people who go missing.
- 1.2 To ensure there is a comprehensive oversight of those most vulnerable young people who have missing episodes, the Early Help Service also report the Missing agenda to the Exploitation and Vulnerable Young Peoples Group which is a sub-group of the Derby and Derbyshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership.
- 1.3 This report gives an overview of the current performance and actions implemented to support improved outcomes for those Looked After children and young people who go missing.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To acknowledge progress made and actions to be completed.
- 2.2 To explore the additional actions to support the reduction in the number of missing episodes for young people placed in Derby City Council Residential Homes and Foster Care in the City.
- 2.3 To ensure those looked after young people in out of authority placements are monitored and supported appropriately

Reason(s)

- 3.1 To ensure Early Help and Safeguarding services maintain the profile of missing.
- 3.2 To have correct policies and procedures in place to keep those most vulnerable children safe and effective use of the Missing Young Peoples Protocol.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The People's Directorate in Derby City is committed to ensuring missing children remains a priority area of practice due to the risks associated both to young people involved in this behaviour and the department.
- 4.2 The arrangements for delivering the Missing Protocol sit across the partnership and there is a well-established good working relationship with Derbyshire Constabulary Vulnerability Unit, there is a wide membership on the Missing Person's strategic group which includes Youth Offending Service, Voluntary sector organisations such as Catch 22 and Safe and Sound, Children in Care Service, Child Protection Managers and locality Social Care Teams.
- 4.3 Data is collected on every missing episode reported via the Missing Performance and Tracking Co-ordinator on a weekly basis in preparation for the MPMG (Missing Person's Monitoring Group) to ensure that numbers and frequency of episodes is well monitored and processes where there are high risk young people can be implemented. The Police are also notified, and this data informs their high-level meeting.
- 4.4 The system of recording data on to the service's case management system including return interviews is now fully operational and the return interview form has been revised to ensure increased effectiveness. There has also been a focus on how staff are supported to complete return interviews and what additional capacity for the Children in Care Team is needed to ensure completion within the required timescales. There is now additional emphasis on the why and where young people are going.
- 4.5 There is a higher percentage of Missing episodes by young people from our own Residential Children Homes. This is often a small number of young people with frequent episodes. The lead officer for missing supports the Concordat and there is now a presence at all enhanced case management meetings to further understand why and where young people go.
- 4.6 The work has been focused in the Missing Strategic Group to look at where young people are going, and this is being linked into the Place Based Risks agenda. We are in the process of generating location maps and have identified seven hot spots across the City that have been shared with partners. They are:
 - Aldi Alvaston, Blue Peter Public House, Lidl Alvaston, Spider bridge Island
 - Derby Bus Station, Assembly Rooms Carpark
 - Markeaton Park

This knowledge will support the Place Based Risk agenda and provide information to Team around the School and Community meetings Residential Case Management meetings.

- 4.7 Figures tell us that during the period from January 2021 to the end of June 2021 there have been a total of 245 Missing episodes for children in care of which 180 are for 11 young people living in our own residential Children's Homes, of which 164 of the 245 episodes are related to 5 young people. 6 episodes were for 2 young people in Foster care provision, 43 are for 9 young people who are looked after and in supported accommodation from the Housing Framework. The remainder are for 3

young people in Independent and unregulated provision. Most persistently missing young people were those placed in Derby City Council residential homes and have multiple vulnerability factors and are well known to services.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 There have been regular meetings between the police, Children in Care and the missing team around how we can best support our young people and colleagues in residential homes. A Missing Best Practice Forum is to be held by the end of the year. and this will be exploring case studies of missing young people provided by the police, balancing risk with care plans and steps that homes can undertake before reporting a young person as missing.
- 5.2 The Missing Person's Monitoring Group following consultation with partners has included elements of Place based Risk and Disruptive strategies to best measure the direction of travel of these young people.
- 5.3 The Missing Strategic Meeting has self -evaluated its performance And strategy against a tool to examine our base line and this has been pivotal in completing the Missing Action Plan for 2021/22.
- 5.4 We continue with partners to audit the quality and process of Return Interviews.

Other options

- 6.1 The Local Authority have a duty to report, collect data and ensure that those young people who have missing episodes are safeguarded.
- 6.2 The Local Authority could commission a third-party provider to manage Missing episodes of young people

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 Increased numbers of missing episodes which require return interviews impacts on the capacity of frontline staff.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None directly arising from the report beyond noting that consideration of the report by the Board helps to demonstrate oversight and governance arrangements exist.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None

Other significant implications

- 10.1 N/A

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal Services	13 th August 2021
Finance	Janice Hadfield, Head of Finance, Peoples Services	11 th August 2021
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care	24 th August 2021
Report sponsor	Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services	26 th August 2021
Other(s)		

Background papers:

List of appendices: