



Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director
Peoples Services

Report author: Fiona Colton, Head of Service
Early Help and Children's Safeguarding and
Kelly Ormond, Principal Services Manager Early
Help and Children's Safeguarding

ITEM 10

Update Report on Children in Care Missing

Purpose

- 1.1 It is important to ensure there is regular monitoring of all children and young people who go missing. The Early Help Service holds the strategic responsibility within the council to manage and report.
- 1.2 Reports on the Missing agenda feed into the Corporate Parenting Board and the Vulnerable Young Peoples Group which is a sub-group of the Safeguarding Board. To ensure there is a good oversight of those most vulnerable young people who choose to have Missing episodes. Information on the number of instances that young people go missing are recorded and what actions are taken. This report and presentation inform all on what action we are taking to support and prevent missing episodes.
- 1.3 This report gives an overview of the direction of travel to monitor and support improved outcomes for those children and young people who go missing.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To acknowledge progress made and actions to be completed for future direction of travel
- 2.2 To explore how we can reduce the number of missing episodes with young people placed in Derby City Council residential homes.
- 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 the most vulnerable children safe

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 are complemented by a range of other professionals who work with young people including Derbyshire Constabulary (Vulnerability Unit has a close working relationship with the Local Authority), the 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 Monthly Missing Young Peoples Meetings continue to be held and identified staff also attend the regional monthly CRE (At risk of Criminal exploitation) Missing meeting led by the police.

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 Liquid Logic including return interviews is now fully operational This hasn't been without some challenge as the format of the return interview is lengthy and where a young person continues to regularly go missing a form needs to be completed each time. We are currently revising the return interview to ensure it has the correct information but is more straight forward to complete.
- 4.5 There are a high percentage of Missing episodes by Young People in our own Residential Services. This is often a small number of young people with frequent episodes and a detailed work plan is in place to try to reduce this.
- 4.6 The quarterly Missing Strategic Group are focusing on developing a better understanding of why young people go missing and where they go? These actions will align with the Concordat arrangements in place.
- 4.7 There has also been a focus on chasing individual workers to ensure they complete the Return interviews within the timescales, and we hope to see a continued improvement when the new revised form is on the system.
- 4.8 The table below gives an overview of the numbers of Looked After Children placed both in the city and out of area who have missing episodes. This data covers April through to September 2020.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|
| Total Number of Missing Episodes | 450 | 346 LAC in the city 94 Placed out of the authority |
| Number of Individuals | 54 | 26 In Derby City placements 28 Placed out of authority |

| | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Number of return interviews completed | 196 | Less than 50% (often due to the number of incidents for one individual) |
| Top 5 young people account for | 290 | 3 in Derby City Council Residential 2 in Independent Residential |
| 1 | 93 | |
| 2 | 75 | |
| 3 | 51 | |
| 4 | 47 | |
| 5 | 24 | |
| LAC Requiring Strategy Discussion Missing for more than 72 hours | 1 | 1 individual, 1 episode. |

Looked After Children represent 55.3% of all the overall recorded Missing episodes in the city. Currently there are no young people in Foster placements who are going missing regularly. Often it is young people who are more difficult to place due to challenging behaviour with Missing episodes a key part of this.

As you can see those top 5 young people in residential care account for 65.4% of the missing episodes and there is a need for some continued focused work with Residential Services to improve this.

Overall the number of Missing episodes has remained consistent despite COVID 19 and Lockdown and this could increase as there has been a move towards more freedom within society.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 There have been regular meetings between the police, CIC 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 MPMG following partner consultation at the Missing Strategic Meeting have agreed to change the structure of the MPMG to take into account elements of contextual Safeguarding and Disruptive strategies to measure the direction of travel of these young people.
- 5.3 The Missing Strategic Meeting has relaunched and over this reporting quarter has met twice and agreed new terms of references and will be pivotal in completing the Missing Action Plan for 2020/2021.
- 5.4 Key partner agencies are actively involved in the Return Interview Audit process.

Other options

6.1

6.2

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 N/A.

Other significant implications

9.1 N/A.

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| Legal | Olu Idowu, Head of Service, Legal | |
| Finance | Alison Parkin, Head of Finance CYP | |
| Service Director(s) | Suanne Lim, Service Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care | |
| Report sponsor | Andy Smith, Strategic Director of Peoples Services | 19.10.20 |
| Other(s) | | |

Background papers:
List of appendices: