



Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director
Peoples Services
Report author: Kelly Ormond, Deputy Head Of
Service for Early Help Services

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 This report and presentation give an overview of the current performance and actions implemented to support improved outcomes for those Looked After children and young people who go missing and to aim to reduce missing episodes,

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 To ensure those looked after young people in out of authority placements are monitored and supported appropriately in accordance with the missing protocol.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 To have appropriate policies and procedures in place to keep those most vulnerable children safe, and effective use of the missing protocol.
- 3.2 To ensure the effective use of policies and procedures to ensure all looked after children are appropriately safeguarded regarding missing episodes and to ensure every child and young person is receiving adequate support around missing episodes to enable them to achieve the best outcomes.

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 young people involved in when they go missing.
- 4.2 In May 2022 missing was featured within the Ofsted report and received positive feedback by following an effective missing protocol, all young people being offered a return interview for every missing episode, the quality of return interviews and the use of this information gathered to support the holistic view of the case along with the close multi agency partnership working.
- 4.3 It remains that 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.
- 4.4 The work focused by the Missing Strategic Group to look at where young people are going, and this is being linked into the Place Based Risks agenda. We have identified hot spots across the city that have been shared with partners at the monthly missing meeting. These hot spots have remained similar to the last report in March 2022, however there are newer areas identified. This is due to a small number of young people often being found in these areas or requested to be collected from these areas. They are:
 - Bus Station
 - River Gardens
 - Silk Mill Area
 - Derbion
 - Sainsburys (Osmaston Road)
 - Derby Train Station (this is 1 young person placed in Derby by another local authority)

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

- 4.4 Figures for the 3 quarters between January 2022 and August 22 informs us that there was 303 missing episodes for looked after children both placed in Derby by our own Children in Care teams but also other local authorities and those young people we place out of Derby. This is in comparison to 833 missing episodes for the whole of Derby City who are not looked after children for this time frame. The below table demonstrates where the placement of these missing episodes:

| Placement Type | January – March 2022 | April – June 2022 | July – August 2022 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| DCC residential homes | 4 individuals 13 Episodes | 5 individuals 19 Episodes | 3 individuals 13 Episodes |
| Foster Care | 5 individuals 20 Episodes | 4 individuals 11 Episodes | 1 individual 3 Episodes |
| Semi-Independent Living | 10 Individuals 44 Episodes | 14 Individuals 45 Episodes | 6 Individuals 33 Episodes |
| In Independent and Unregulated | 4 individuals 10 Episodes | 1 Individual 13 Episodes | 4 individuals 17 Episodes |
| Placed Outside of the LA | 11 Individuals 13 Episodes | 18 Individuals 27 Episodes | 12 Individuals 22 Episodes |

The semi-independent living young people are a relatively new cohort of young people who have become looked after children under the 16-17 Housing Framework Protocol who had not historically been looked after children.

The number of missing episodes in foster care did increase during the period January – March 2022, however this has significantly reduced based on new placements/ stability of placements and therefore these missing episodes have been greatly reduced.

- 4.6 All young people are offered a return interview, completing return interviews in timescales remain a priority.
- 4.7 2 further audits on return interviews have been completed since March 2022 and they continue to demonstrate a positive progression in quality therefore providing information which can be used to safeguard young people.
- 4.8 Creation of a safety planning tool as a resource to be used with young people to help reduce missing episodes and reduce risks should they go missing is currently being finalised to support all staff in engaging young people in the return interview process or further preventative sessions.
- 4.9 The Long-Term missing meeting template has been updated and is currently being piloted where young people have been missing for more than 3 days. This is to incorporate a strength based and a place-based risk approach.
- 5.0 Started to record data on CRE levels and missing episodes. This is new but felt it was appropriate to explore this data and ensure CRE processes are being followed should a missing episode trigger a CRE concern.

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. Further analysis of missing episodes is to be undertaken to then be

able to support the residential homes and independent homes in discussions and further training on the missing protocol.

- 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 Return interview audits are being completed by partner agencies such as the police and internally by children in care and IRT teams. This has helped gain various perspectives.
- 5.4 Working to complete the missing protocol in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Police.
- 5.5 Holding a missing workshop for independent homes within Derby City in partnership with Derbyshire Police on the 12th October.
- 5.6 Creating a podcast for foster carers around the missing protocol as part of their training and development.

Other options

- 6.1 N/A

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 this report.

9.1 Climate implications

None

Other significant implications

- 10.1 N/A.

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Legal | | |
| Finance | | |
| Service Director(s) | Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care | |
| Report sponsor | Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services | 12/10/2022 |
| Other(s) | | |

| |
|---|
| Background papers: List of appendices: |
|---|