



Children Missing from Home and Care Inquiry Evidence Pack

Item No.		Pages
1	The Children's Society	1
2	West Midlands Police	21
3	Internal Fostering and Residential Team, Birmingham City Council	35
4	Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board	38

The Children's Society



Birmingham Scrutiny Enquiry - Missing Children

21st of October 2015

Contents

Item	Focus	Page Number
1.	Introduction	3
2.	What is Missing from Home or Care	3
3.	National context	4
4.	Background in Birmingham 2004 - 2012	5
5.	Summary of performance 2013 - 2014	6
6.	Summary of performance 2014 - 2015	8
7.	Key issues for the future	19

1.	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Children’s Society (TCS) helps change children’s stories, working towards a country where all children are free from disadvantage.</p> <p>We’ve been trusted for over a century to drive change locally and nationally and provide support where it’s needed most. We base this vital work on the experiences of every child we help and the solid evidence we gather.</p> <p>Every year, we work directly with more and more of the most disadvantaged children. We do this through our extensive network of frontline services, supported by an army of volunteers. Together we tackle child poverty and neglect head on. Our services range from helping families trapped in debt, child runaways and young carers, to stopping child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>We focus on helping young people aged 10-18 who are most marginalised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at risk of, or affected by, sexual exploitation; • missing from care or home; • affected by poor emotional wellbeing or poor mental health; • impacted by involvement with the care system; • substance misusers or who are affected by parental substance misuse. <p>TCS’s commitment to supporting children at risk is more relevant now than ever. We have a vision of a country where children are free from disadvantage. Our mission states that we fight for change and support disadvantaged children to have better lives.</p> <p>We both target the specific issues that lead children and young people to go missing from care and respond to the wider challenges that they face in life. Workers follow best practice in relation to engaging young people – through use of creative, persistent and flexible engagement techniques (Warrington & Shuker, University of Bedfordshire; May 2015).</p>
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2.	<p>What is Missing from Home or Care</p> <p><i>ACPO Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons</i> (2013) uses the following definitions (as used by the police):</p> <p>Missing: ‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another’</p> <p>Absent: ‘A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be’</p> <p><i>Statutory Guidance On Children Who Run Away Or Go Missing From Home Or Care</i> (January 2014) uses the following definitions:</p>
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Away from Placement without Authorisation:	A Looked After child whose whereabouts are known but who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police.
Young Runaway:	A child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.
Missing Child:	A child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.
Missing from Care:	A Looked After child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts are not known.

The police classification of a person as 'Missing' or 'Absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. Note that **Absent** within the police definition would not include those defined as **Away from Placement Without Authorisation** above: a child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'Missing' or 'Absent' under the police definitions.

Children represented approximately two thirds of the estimated 360,000 missing person incidents in 2009 - 2010 (*Missing persons: data and analysis 2009 - 2010*, National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010). The reasons for running away are varied, complex and unique to individual children. The most frequent reason given is 'problems at home'. Physical abuse from adults, mental health and substance misuse problems, and involvement in criminality are commonly associated with children running away.

Missing children are at high risk of physical and sexual abuse, criminality and homelessness. Persistent running away is increasingly understood to be an indicator that a child may be a victim of sexual exploitation (*Report from the joint inquiry into children who go missing from care*, The All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care leavers, 2012). Each locality delivering services to young people and children missing from home or care has a local awareness of this link. This highlights TCS's commitment to open up new referral pathways via assertive engagement in order to identify all young people in need of a service.

3. **National context**

For over 25 years TCS has campaigned to protect young runaways through our policy and practice work. TCS has produced 3 major research reports (Still Running I; II and III) and campaigns focused on missing young people leading to lasting policy and practice change with the publication of the Guidance on Runaways and Missing from Home and Care (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009).

The current statutory guidance defines a missing child or a young runaway as 'children up to the age of 18 who have run away from their home or care placement, have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts are unknown' (*Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009). This guidance makes it a requirement for Local Authorities to prepare local Runaways and Missing

from Home and Care protocols and offer all children that run away or go missing from home or care an independent return interview.

A national strategy to reduce the number of children and vulnerable adults who go missing from home or care was published by the Home Office in December 2011 (Missing Children and Adults: A Cross Government Strategy, Home Office, 2011). The action plan sets out how local and central government should respond to the problem, including plans for preventative work, education and early intervention.

The strategy followed an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) inquiry into the support for families of missing people in July 2011, which made the overarching recommendation that there should be a cross-government outcomes policy framework for missing persons.

The evidence base for this intervention includes:

- Ofsted (2013), *Missing Children*.¹
- The Children's Society (2007), *Stepping up – the future of runaways services*.²
- The Children's Society (2011), *Still Running 3: early findings from our third national survey of runaways*.³
- The APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2012), *Report from the joint inquiry into children who go missing from care*.⁴

4.

Local Context

Our work in Birmingham 2004 - 2012

In 2004 The Children's Society and Birmingham City Council Social Care and Health joined together to establish a project providing an independent visit to children and young people who went missing from care. The project was named LAMP (Looked After Missing Persons).

In 2005 - 2006 LAMP employed a part time Programme Manager and two part time project workers. The Children's Society put in additional income to allow the project to move the Programme Manager from part time to full time and to provide seven hours of administrative support.

In 2006 - 2007, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership funded an Enhanced Visit Programme for Persistent Runaways. The Pilot Programme was devised by the LAMP Project to respond to issues affecting young people who persistently abscond or run away from Local Authority care. The Pilot Programme sessions were based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes and the Self Development Model used by the Foyer Foundation. This Programme was designed to help the young people consider what is happening in their lives, the risks

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419144/Missing_children.pdf

2 http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/research_docs/Stepping%20up%20-%20The%20future%20of%20runaways%20services.pdf

3 http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/still_running_3_full_report_final.pdf

4 http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_-_report...pdf

they are taking, their attitudes and behaviour, relationships and how they see their future.

In 2007 - 2008 we re-launched as Safe in the City Birmingham, bringing together LAMP and the new Birmingham Young Runaways Initiative.

During 2007, the Community Safety Partnership funded The Children's Society for a 6-month pilot project to look at the issue of young people missing from home across two police Operational Command Units (OCU).

Funding from the Big Lottery for 3 years (from September 2007) enabled The Children's Society to expand this initial pilot and work across Birmingham, providing an independent return visit to young people known to police or other agencies to be missing. The Birmingham Young Runaways Initiative (BYRI) was the result. This return visit looked at reasons why the child had run away; where they had been, with whom, and whether there were safeguarding issues that needed addressing. As part of this work, the project worker reported to the Missing Children and Young People's sub-group to feed into strategic processes for the City.

In addition, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership funded us to develop support for persistent runaways, following the Enhanced Visit Pilot.

In 2008 - 2009, we set up The Safe Friends Scheme to run alongside the Birmingham Young Runaways Initiative – a dedicated volunteer mentoring and befriending service for young runaways, offering consistent and long term support from adult volunteers. Our Persistent Runaways work was developed into The Game Plan, a 10 session intensive programme, allowing young people to define their goals and assess their progress throughout. Together, The Game Plan and the Safe Friends Scheme offered a long term (up to 2 years) package of intensive development and support work for young people who run away.

In 2009 - 2010, we opened the Building Bridges Project, a partnership between The Children's Society and Spurgeons, funded by the Parenting Fund for two years. Our work through BYRI had highlighted the needs of the parents of children and young people who run away from home, many of whom were in need of parenting advice and support which simply was not available for the parents of older children and teenagers. Building Bridges offered individual and group support to parents, using the Triple P and Strengthening Communities programmes.

In addition, we were commissioned by Birmingham City Council to convene and chair strategy meetings for children and young people who had been missing for more than 72 hours.

In 2010 - 2011, with the Big Lottery funding for BYRI ending, we published 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' a report on running away from home.

During this year, Safe in the City Birmingham took on management of staff at Dudley Circles Restorative Justice project, and work began on Restorative Justice in Birmingham Children's Homes, funded by Birmingham City Council.

In December 2010, Birmingham decommissioned our work on 72hr meetings and Persistent Runaways (The Game Plan).

In 2011 - 2012, the Safe in the City Birmingham team was restructured, and we were

successful in obtaining funding from The Children's Society nationally to continue direct work with runaways in Birmingham, in addition to the ongoing funding for LAMP. The programme hosted the Birmingham launch of the Make Runaways Safe campaign with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 2012 - 2013, we received funding from Birmingham City Council for LAMP and for the first time for Missing from Home for our work with children and young people who go missing in Birmingham. Most of our direct work with young runaways was funded by The Children's Society, through an allocation of unrestricted funds, which allowed us to maintain our intensive work, support for families, and work with volunteers where external funding had come to an end.

5. **Our work in Birmingham 2013 - 2014**

The funding in Birmingham was £35,000 from the City Council and about £75,000 funding from the Children's Society. Towards the end of the year the Birmingham Children's Safeguarding officers awarded TCS some £45,000 to work with intensive cases for a 12 month period.

In 2013 the Birmingham runaways project (Safe in the City/LAMP) and the Coventry CSE project (Streetwise) were amalgamated into the 'Streetwise Birmingham and Coventry' service.

Over 2013 - 2014 the Streetwise service has reached just over 8,000 children and young people in Birmingham and Coventry to talk to them about these issues, risks and behaviours. This has been achieved through the provision of advice, return visits, 1:1 sessions, assemblies and group school sessions.

In 2013 - 2014 Streetwise Birmingham received **1181** referrals **584** of these referrals were children and young people (CYP) missing from care.

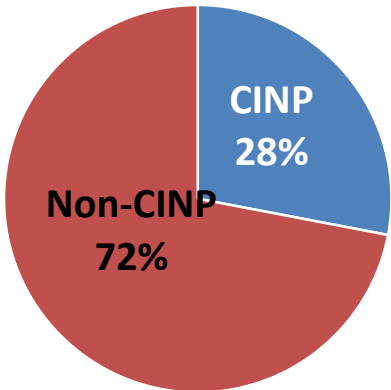
The RAG system (Red, Amber, Green) continues to be used to triage each referral or missing and found report. The RAG rating is dependent on the level of risk identified within each referral (number of missing episodes, associates, CSE, places visited, length of missing episode etc).

Green referrals have less than 2 missing episodes and few or no risk factors. The parent/carer and young person each receive a letter and leaflet offering advice around running away.

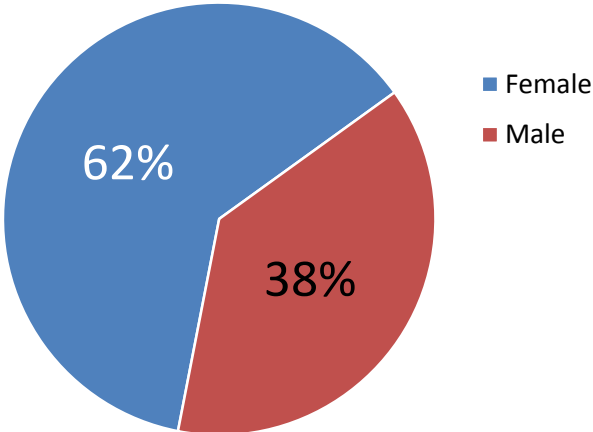
Amber referrals require further information from agencies, young people or families, with the possibility that a return interview may be needed due to risk factors.

Red referrals require a return interview due to identified risk factors. These include (but are not exclusive to) more than 2 missing episodes, associates, places visited, length of missing episode, substance misuse, domestic violence, learning difficulty, troubled family.

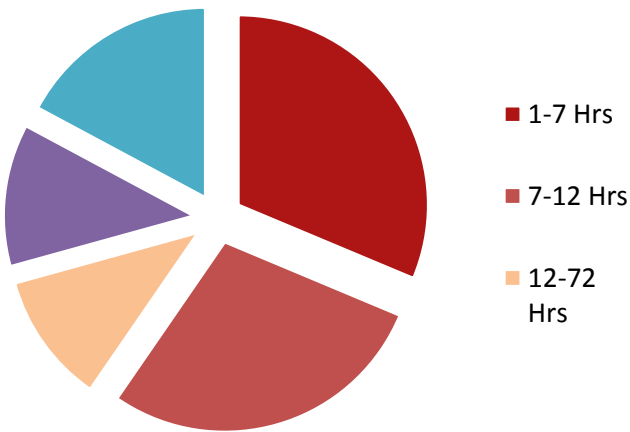
Ratio of CYP Requiring CINP Referrals



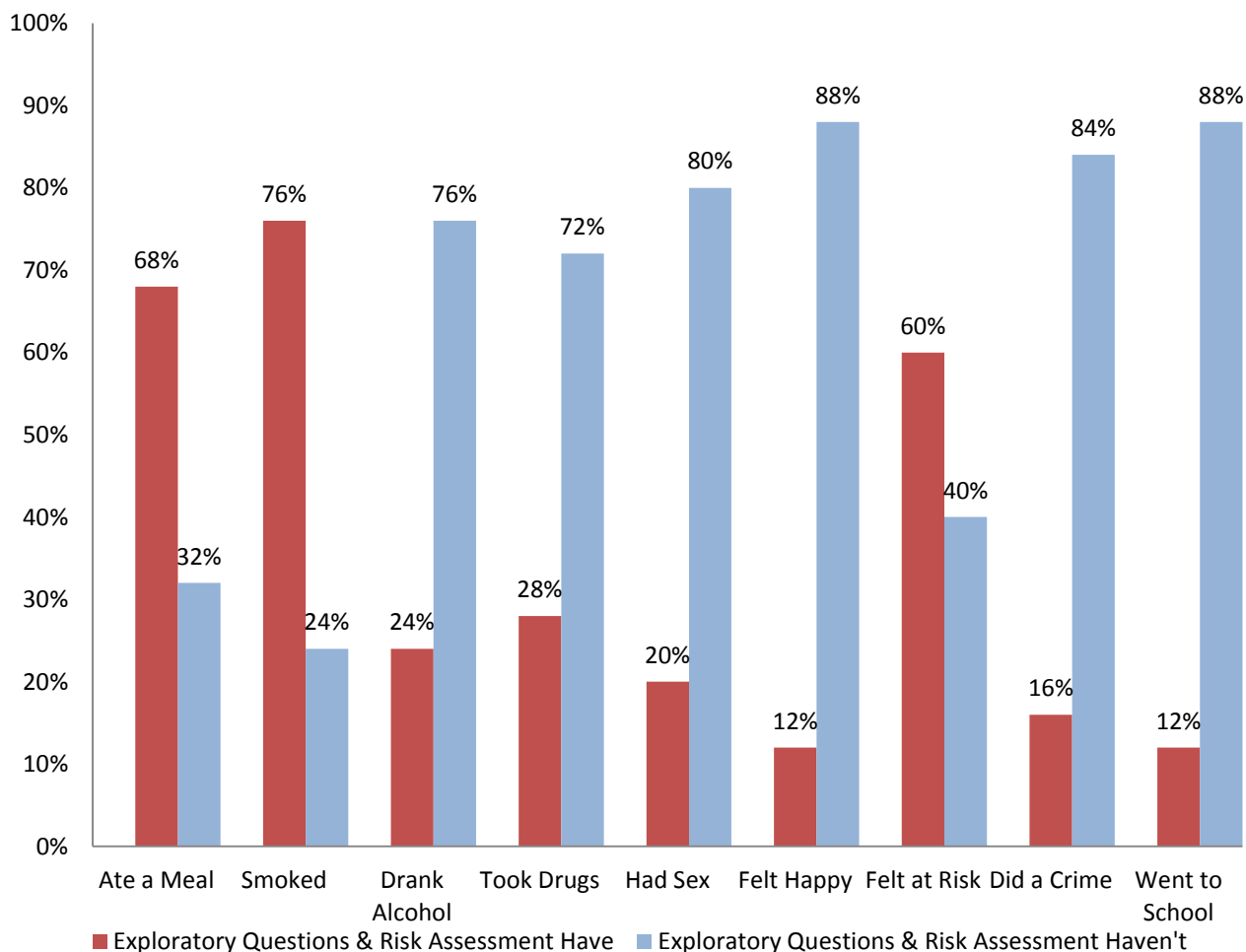
Sex Ratio of CYP Return Interviews



Time Missing



Exploratory Questions & Risk Assessment



6. **Our work in Birmingham 2014 – 2015**

The work in this year was significantly different in the second six months of the year.

April 2014 – September 2015

From April 2014 The Children’s Society continued to provide Return Home Interviews as best as possible given the resources available.

Funding at the start of this year consisted of some £35,000 from Birmingham City Council, the £45,000 funding brought forward from 2013 - 2014 from the Safeguarding Board for intensive support cases and about £75,000 funding from The Children’s Society. However our activities were continuing to be constrained by demand being significantly greater than our staff capacity to respond.

The Children’s Society approached the City Council in September 2014 with an urgent request for further resources – which were made available within a matter of days. This was a six month grant for some £83,000 that enabled additional staff to be recruited and deployed.

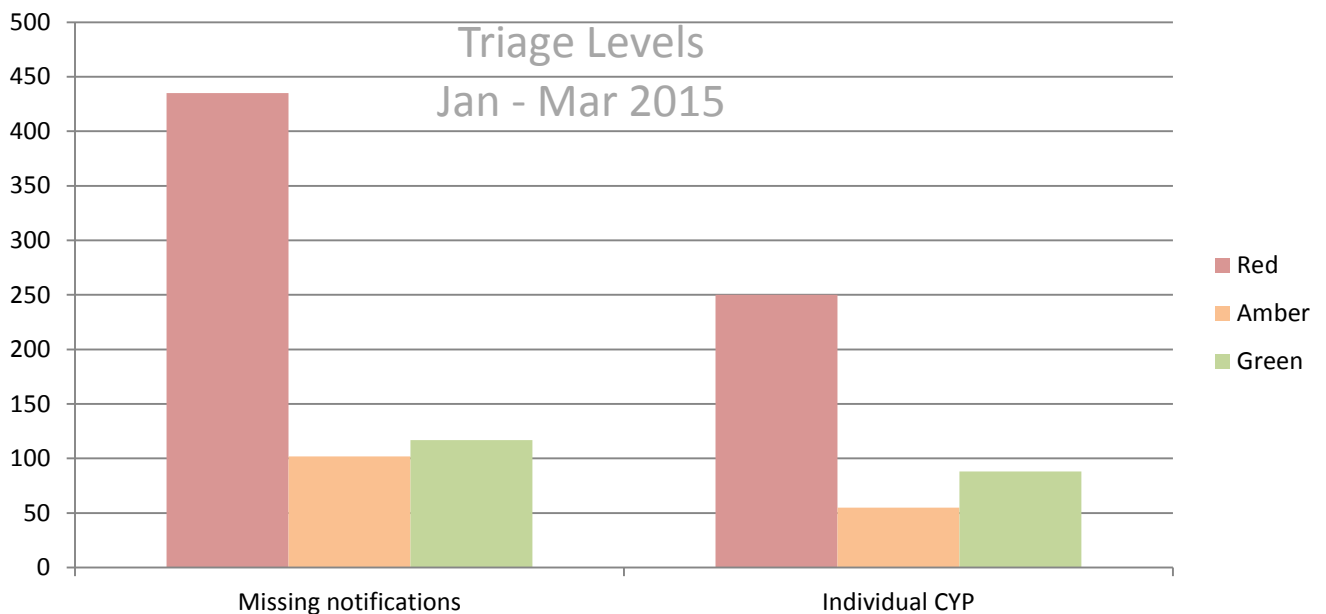
October 2014 – March 2015

During October 2014 – March 2015 Streetwise Birmingham dealt with 654 missing episodes (equating to 1308 missing and found notifications) for 393 children and young people (CYP).

100% of these young people were contacted by Streetwise (this was by phone or letter).

In addition, we have been able to analyse the West Midlands Police absent statistics for the same period and the implications this has for managing missing episodes.

The number of CYP classed as Red has increased from the October – December 2014 figures (54.8%):



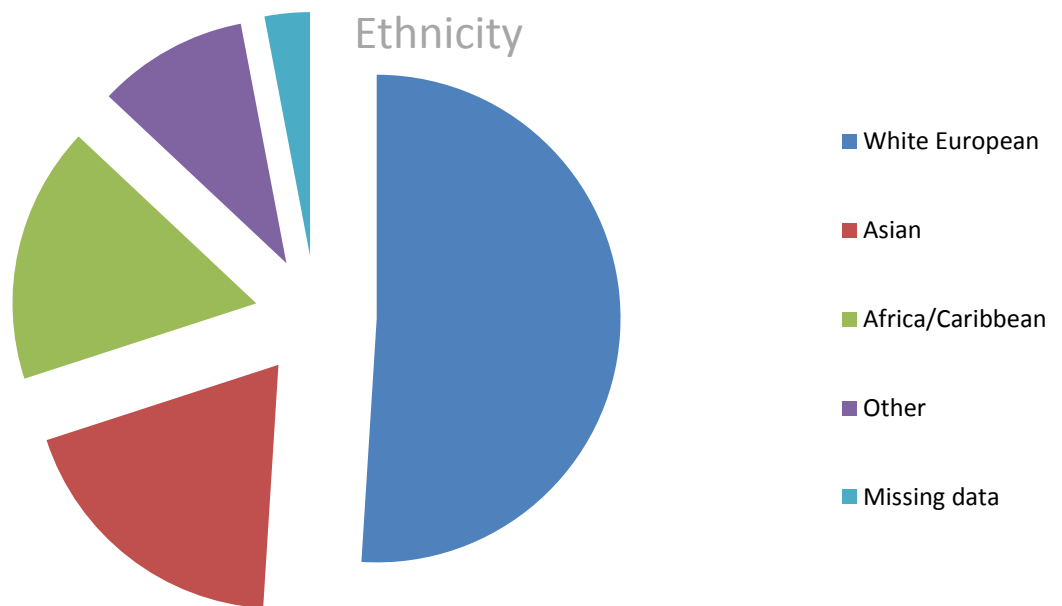
Gender

The proportion of boys to girls referred remains constant across the whole period at about 74% girls and 26% boys. In our interim report we did not analyse how many from each gender were triaged as red. However, in the period from January 2015 we found that of the 146 girls referred, 79% were triaged as red compared to 61% of boys. It is difficult to say with certainty why this is because it could be due to a number of factors:

- The information provided on the police compact sheets/referrers does not highlight risk as often with boys
- A general societal attitude that boys are not as much at risk as girls
- Bias by Streetwise in assessing risk

Ethnicity

- White European - 51%
- Asian - 19%
- Africa/Caribbean - 17%
- Other - 10%
- Missing data - 3%



Thus 46% of missing CYP are from BAME communities.

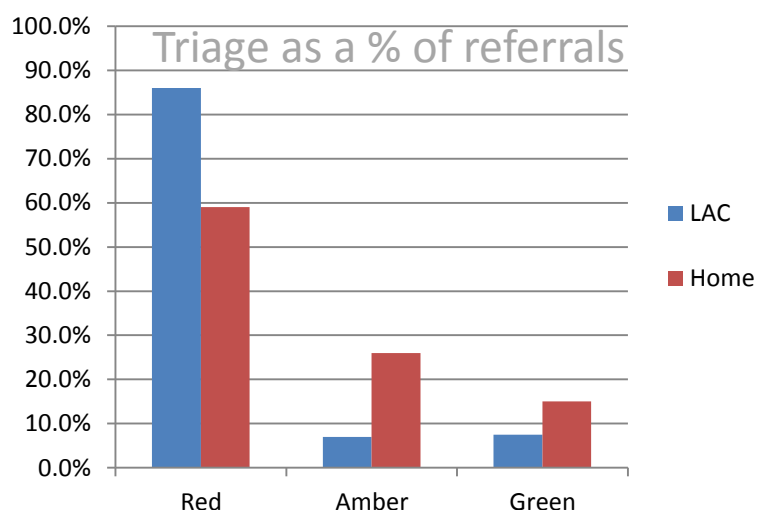
Home or Care?

In our interim report we found that the number of referrals for young people in care (51%) was slightly more than those from home (49%). From January 2015 until April the figures were significantly different:

Of the 185 CYP **119 (64%)** were in care and **66 (35%)** were living at home.

Of those CYP referred who were in care:

- **86% (102)** of them were offered return interviews i.e. triaged as red,
- **7% (8)** were classified as amber i.e. requiring more information, and
- **7.5% (9)** classified as green and thus received a letter informing them of where to go to



for advice and information.

Of those that lived at home:

- **59% (39)** were classified as red
- **26% (17)** as amber
- **15% (10)** as green.

It has been reported that return interviews weren't being done on CYP in care but these figures show that in fact Streetwise offered proportionately more return interviews to CYP in care than to those living at home. This is to be expected if one assumes that those CYP in care are more likely to exhibit concerning behaviour. The gap in perception could be due to:

- More CYP in care refusing a return interview when offered
- A misunderstanding by care staff of what constitutes a return interview vis-à-vis a police safe and well check, and whether all CYP in care get a safe and well check
- A misunderstanding by care staff of whether incidents are being classified as absent rather than missing and so not requiring a return interview.

Comprehensive Data Analysis

This information is based on the young people who were triaged as red and offered return interviews.

At the point of the interim report 86% of red triaged CYP were offered a return interview. From January to April this figure went down to 46%. This is due to:

- A protracted period of funding uncertainty leading to a number of staffing issues that impacted our ability to deliver outputs and outcomes: redundancy notifications; staff vacancies; low staff morale; project wind-down. This issue emphasises the need to secure medium term funding in order to prevent funding uncertainty affecting the outputs.
- An increase in the need to offer intensive support work impacted on the team's capacity to carry out additional return interviews between January and March. This was exacerbated by the staffing issues mentioned above.

However, between October 2014 and April 2015, 160 young people were offered a return interview and 65% accepted and completed an interview. Given the high levels of disengagement by this group of young people this is a high success rate.

Of the 56 CYP's who did not undertake a return interview, approximately 24% (39) refused and the remainder were added to the waiting list.

In addition between January and April Streetwise has completed Intensive Support Work with 53 individual CYP's. This has been follow up work identified as needed through the initial return interview. Topics covered within these sessions include (but are not exclusive to) the risks of running away and going missing, healthy relationships, grooming, sex and the law, identity, confidence and self-esteem, CSE, internet safety.

Missing From Locations

East: 48% of referrals

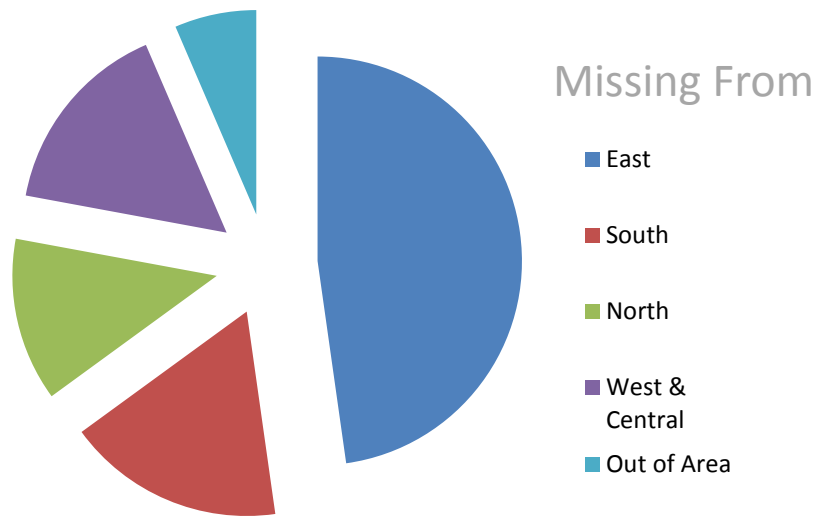
South: 17.3% of referrals

North: 13% of referrals

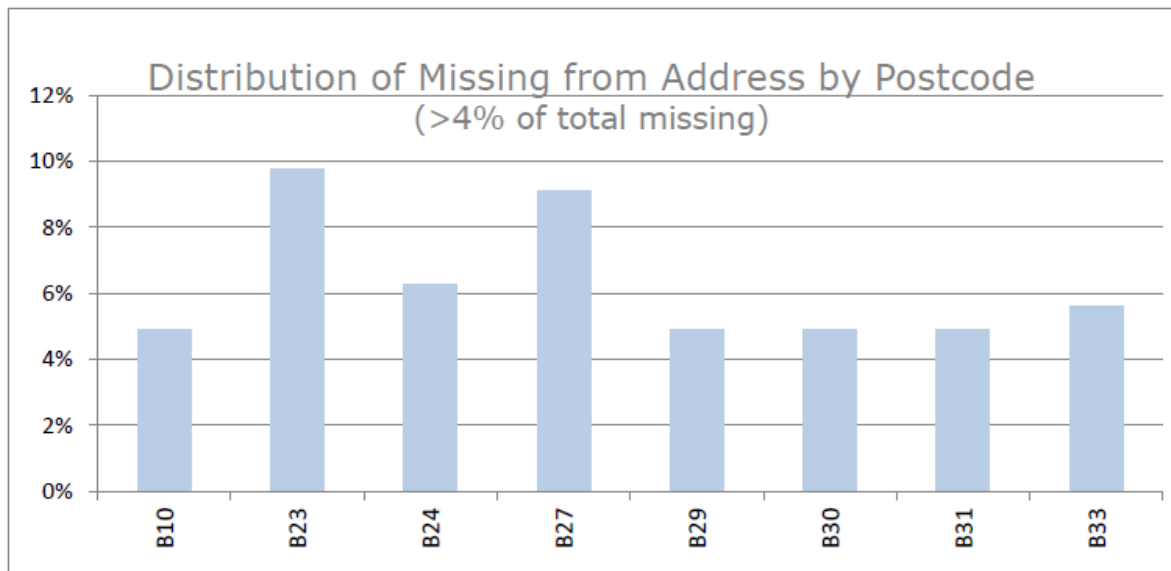
West & Central: 15.7% of referrals

Out of Area*: 6.5% of referrals

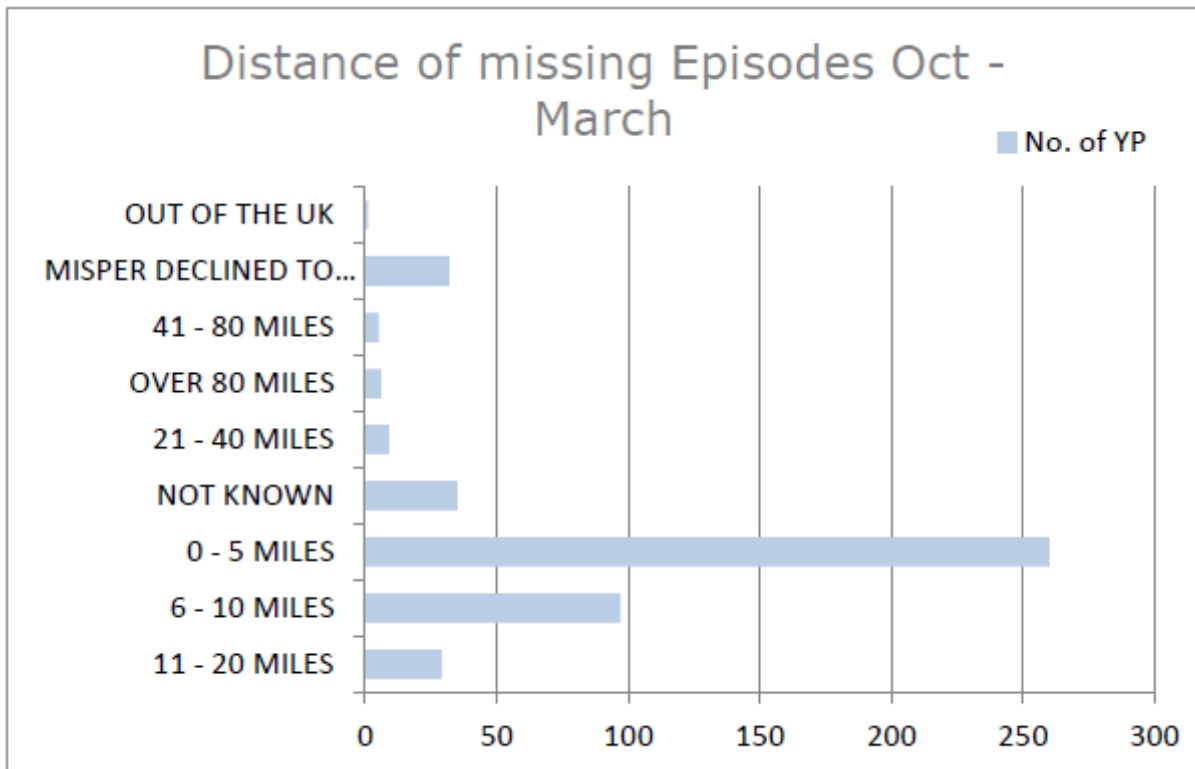
**Out of area young people who do not reside in Birmingham*



The following chart shows that approximately 10% of missing episodes in the city between November and April were from the B23 postcode (Erdington, Stockland Green, Short Heath, Perry Common) and 9% of missing episodes were generated by the B27 Postcode area of the city (Acocks Green). These are the two areas of the city young people are most likely to run from.



How far did young people run to?

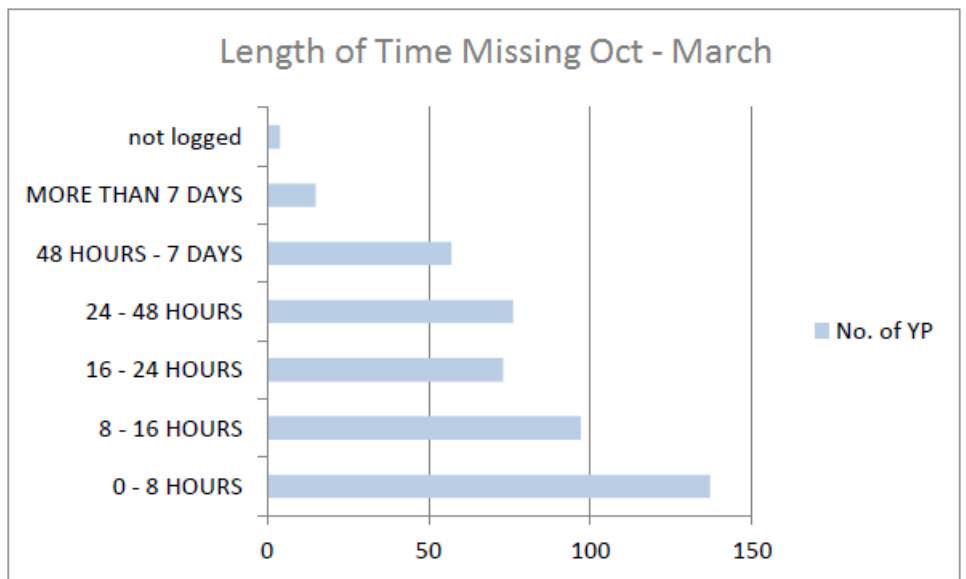


- **59%** of CYP were found between 0–5 miles from their home
- **22%** were found between 6-10 miles
On the whole these will be CYP found within Birmingham – a total of 81%
- **6.6%** were found between 10-20 miles
- **2%** were found 21-40 miles
These CYP would be mainly found in the West Midlands region – nearly 9%
- **1.1%** were found between 41- 80 miles
- **1.3%** were found over 80 miles way
These will be found in other UK regions – 2.4%
- **7.3%** CYP declined to give information.

Thus 89% are likely not to have travelled outside the West Midlands region when they were found.

Length of time missing

0 – 8 hrs	30%
8 – 16 hrs	21%
16 – 24 hrs	16%
24 – 48 hrs	16.5%
2 – 7 days	12%
7+ days	3%
Missing Data	0.8%



Thus whilst **51%** of CYP are not missing for longer than 16 hrs, we don't have the data to say whether this was overnight, although it is likely that this will usually be the case. What is of additional concern are the percentage that went missing for 24–48 hrs, and in total 21.5% were missing for more than 24 hrs and that the numbers of CYP who were missing for more than two days stands at **15%**.

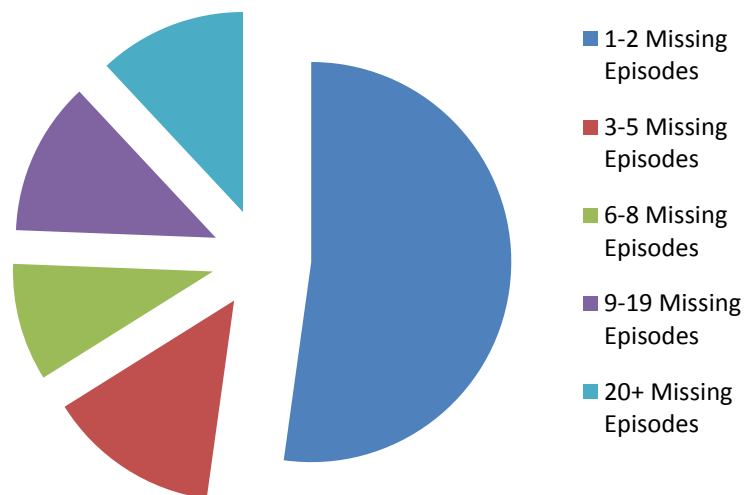
Persistent Missing

Streetwise classify a persistent missing person as someone who has more than 3 missing episodes.

November – April Figures:

1-2 missing episodes:	214 (52%)
3-5 missing episodes:	57 (14%)
6-8 missing episodes:	39 (9.5%)
9-19 missing episodes:	51 (12.4%)
20+ missing episodes:	49 (12%)

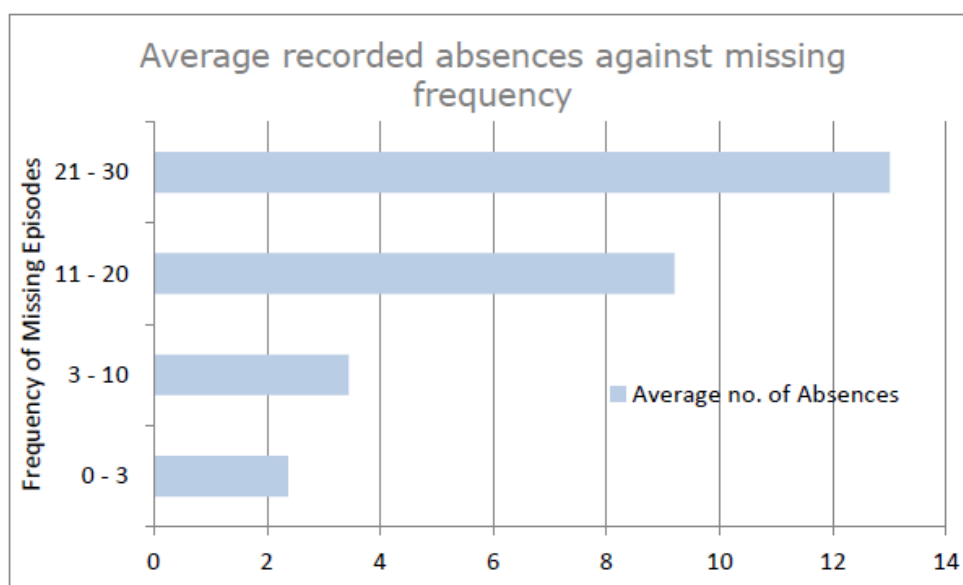
Frequency of missing episodes per young person



The top three persistent runaways for the period January – March 2015 are all from care and together have a total of 34 missing episodes between them.

In the period from January to March 2015 there was a significant increase in the number of CYP who had more than 9 missing episodes. From October to December 13.4% of CYP had more than 9 missing episodes whereas after January 2015 this went up to 38.9%. This may go

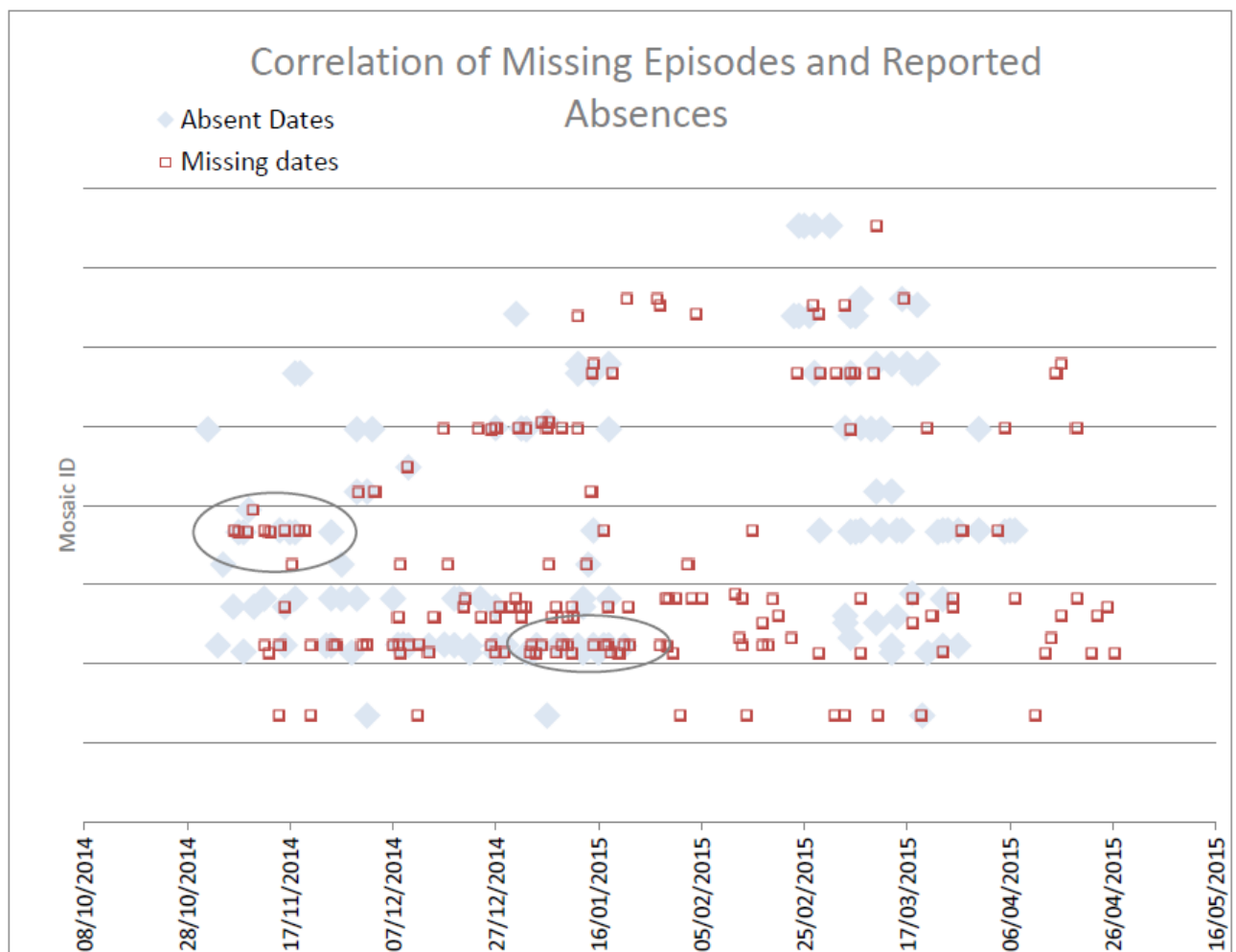
some way to account for the drop in numbers of return interviews completed in the second period – it is not possible to complete a return interview if the CYP is missing at the time. Additionally it may also explain why we have done more intensive support work with young people as the vulnerabilities and risks increase. Alternatively it may also be a result in the drop in return interviews delivered in the second period due to the funding uncertainties, as Streetwise were unable to intervene as early as a backlog built up. This explanation would also fit with the drop in CYP who went missing 1-2 times (68.8% October – December; 52% from January - March) as we were unable to intervene earlier, the CYP went on to go missing more times.



In addition to the missing episodes, we can look at how many ‘absences’ were also recorded for young people classed as missing.

The chart previous correlates the two measures and shows that a young person who went missing between 21-30 times also, on average, had 13 recorded absences *in addition* to the missing episodes.

Similarly to our previous report, we can identify that persistent missing young people are often simultaneously categorised as absent and missing as demonstrated by the following chart. On the following chart each horizontal line represents an individual with their missing and absent plotted in date order.



The blue diamonds indicate when an individual has been classified as absent, whilst the red squares indicate a single missing episode. Where the dots coincide (examples circled) one individual has been classed as 'absent' at the same or very similar time as being classified as missing.

There have been instances where a missing young person whom we would consider high risk has simultaneously had several incidents characterised as absent. Absences carry a default lower risk rating within the Police service. Streetwise is increasingly concerned about a failure to correlate missing and absent for individuals. This is leading to procedural mis-diagnosis of risk levels for the most vulnerable.

Streetwise triages its missing referrals by examining the number of missing episodes, absences, and other risk factors. There have been instances, before absence data was made available to us, where we've assessed a young person as low risk without the contextual intelligence of 5 or more absent incidents attributable to that young person. This intelligence catapults the young person into a red risk category requiring a return interview. We have seen that early intervention works better than later trouble shooting. Correlating the missing and absent together from the start allows us to spot problems and intervene earlier to prevent escalation of issues and entrenchment of behaviours. We would recommend that others in this field also correlate data to have more complete context when assessing risk.

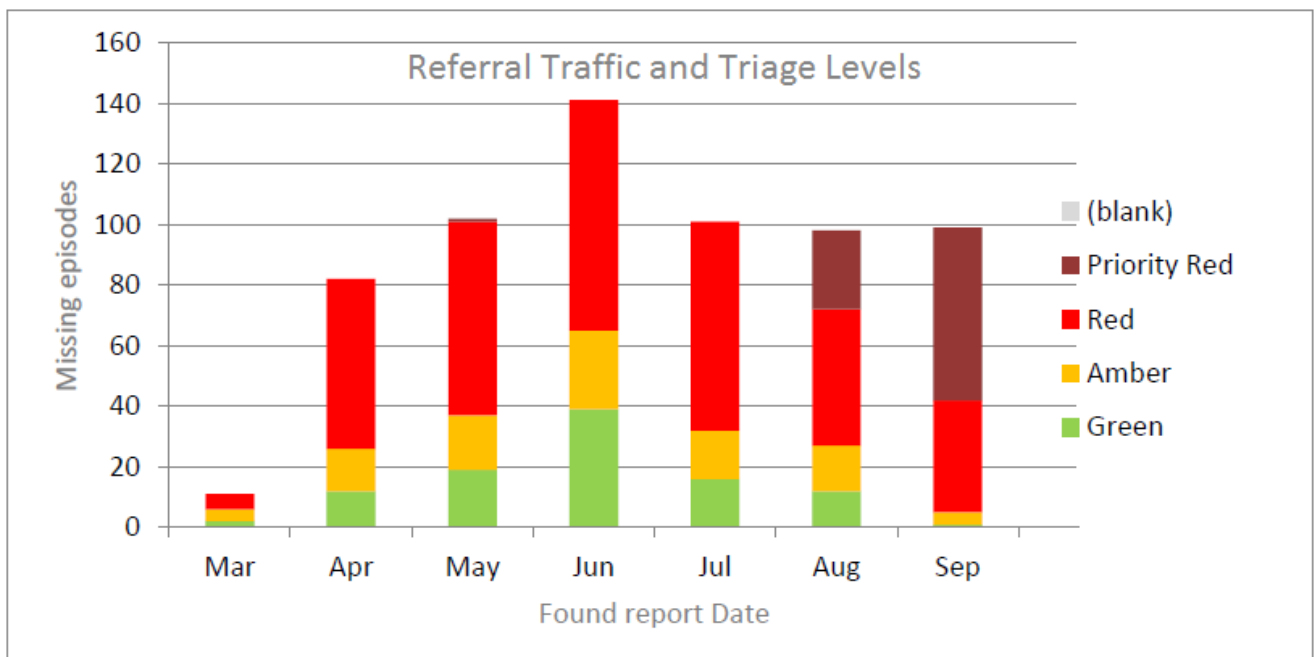
April 2015 – September 2015

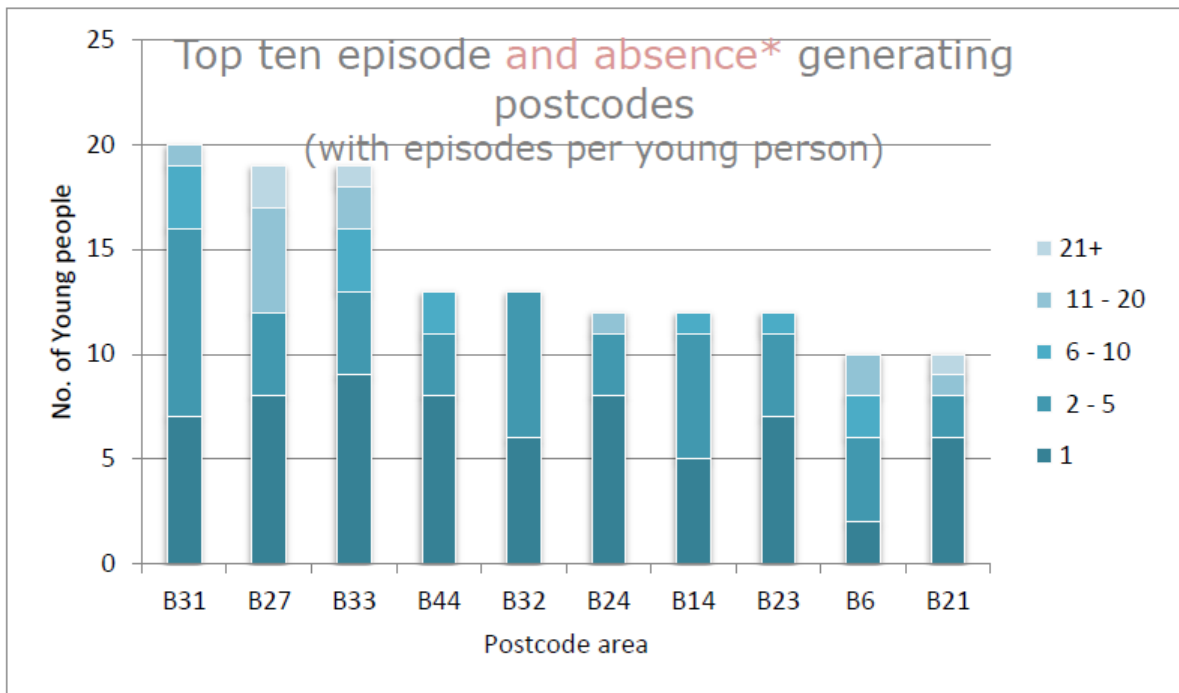
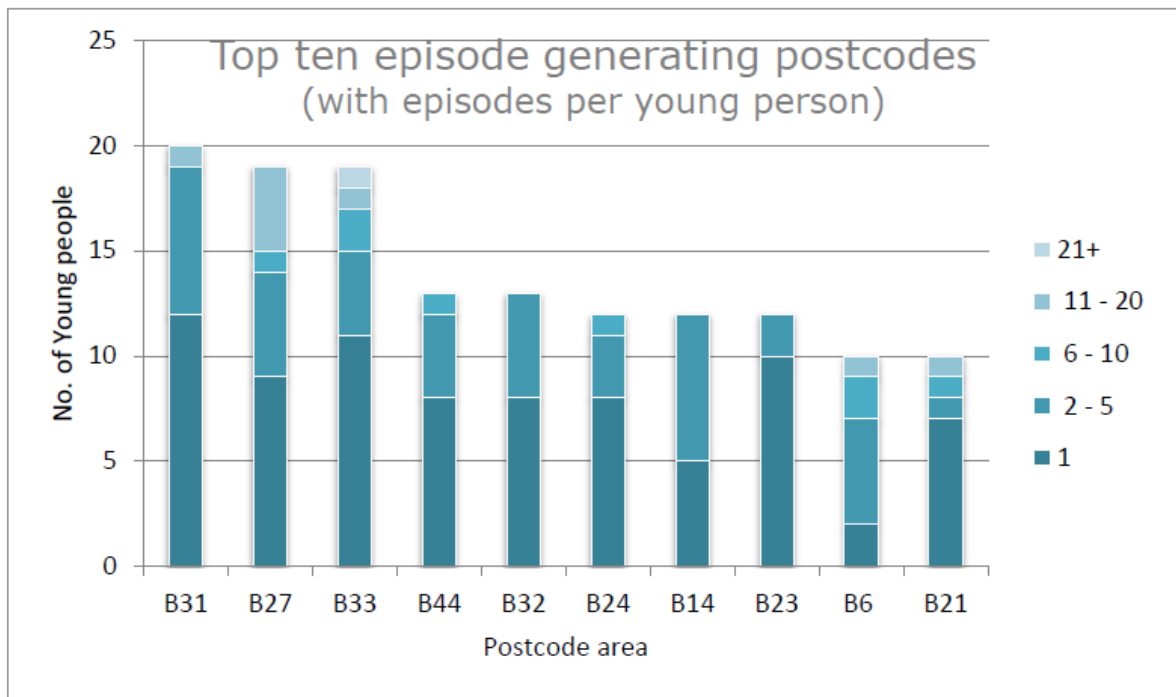
Funding

At the end of 2014 the Big Lottery Fund awarded a three year grant to The Children’s Society to support its work with CSE and missing in Birmingham and Coventry. This funding is complimentary to the support from the City Council and TCS focusing on additional counselling capacity, volunteers and family support.

In addition although it has taken a long time in the current year for funding from Birmingham City Council to be confirmed we have now the following contributions to support the missing RHI service over the following three years.

Schedule	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total	% of total
Birmingham City Council	152,087	154,310	161,023	467,420	49%
Lottery	79,720	80,566	82,983	243,269	26%
TCS	77,521	79,620	81,765	238,906	25%
Total	309,327	314,496	325,771	949,595	100%





The two charts above (Episodes and Absence) show which Birmingham postcodes generate the most individual young people that go missing. B31 (Northfield), B27 (Acocks Green) and B33 (Kitts Green/ Stetchford) have each generated at least 19 missing young people in the rolling year.

The colours of the individual bars denote how many times an individual has been classified as missing in the rolling year.

The charts above are the addition of absence and missing which gives a fuller picture of activity for prolific missing young people.

*NB: Absence data not provided for July - September by Police

7. **Key issues for the future**

- The Children's Society would like to see the Missing Operational Group become much more effective in managing the interagency support for and intelligence gathering concerning children who are missing.
- The Children's Society is very concerned about the welfare not just of the children notified to the police as missing but also absent, and we know that some of these absent categorisations concern young people with known levels of vulnerability.
- The trigger questions for WMP call operators to assess young people as absent or missing may not be the right questions. We recognise that this is a national standard/ procedure. Streetwise suggests that at least there needs to be a more considered look at the type of questions to ask to assess risk. The safeguarding board and West Midlands Police to make representations to review this process.
- Streetwise is concerned about the poor level of information supplied from children's homes who make referrals to us. More training for residential care workers on risk indicators around safeguarding, CSE, substance misuse, gang involvement and criminality and corporate parenting responsibility and on the difference between safe and well check and return interviews.
- Placing a young person out of area does not necessarily reduce missing episodes and on occasions exacerbates them. Streetwise does not have the resource to conduct out of area return interviews, or to offer intensive support. Consideration to be given to explore a "spot purchase arrangement" to enable out of area return interviews/intensive support.

Evidence from West Midlands Police

INFORMATION TO ASSIST THE SHORT INQUIRY: CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE.

The below is a summary of the key points from the recently updated West Midlands Police policy regarding the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing and Absent Persons which is intended to provide information to assist the short Inquiry: Children Missing from Home and Care. A full copy of the policy is available should further detail be required.

Each of the 10 LPU's has a Crime and Vulnerability Officer (CVO) who collate data and signpost risk in absent cases in line with policy as summarised below.

Safeguarding of repeat missing/absent adults sits with the CVO and the adult safeguarding team who will share information to determine relevant action to reduce episodes and risk. For children this role will sit with CSE coordinators where this risk is identified and with Child Abuse teams if other risks are apparent.

Each Local Neighbourhood Police team has a responsibility to deliver demand reduction activities which often centre around Children's Care Homes.

Referral to Local Authorities is done through the primary investigators in cases of missing episodes recorded on Compact and through CVO's in absent cases. Children debriefs are managed by each of the seven local authorities.

WMP has established effective engagement with both statutory and non-statutory partners including the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), local care homes and key third sector agencies who are commissioned to debrief returned missing children. A summary of Safeguarding structure and protocols can be seen in the West Midlands Metropolitan CSE Regional Framework (Updated July 2015) which is attached

KEY MISSING & ABSENT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

DEFINITION OF A MISSING PERSON

'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another'.

DEFINITION OF ABSENT

'A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk'.

The absent category is for those cases where the person is not where they are supposed be and there is no apparent risk.

PROCEDURES FOR ABSENT CASES.

INITIAL REPORT

At the point of the initial report, the call handler will obtain information from the caller that will be used to determine whether the person is missing or absent. An OASIS incident log should be created to record the information given by the caller.

When creating the brief incident details in the incident log, the details field must start with the name, age and date of birth of the person subject to the report. This is to ensure that repeat absent incidents can be accurately monitored by the missing persons coordinators.

RISK BASED QUESTIONS AND INTELLIGENCE CHECKS

To establish whether the person should be classified as absent or missing, the call taker will ask a series of questions. The questions to be asked are:

- Is this significantly out of character; have they done this before? If yes, when was the last time?
- Have you been in contact with this person, do you know their whereabouts and is there a time you expect them to return?
- Do you know their intended actions when last seen and have you done anything to locate them?
- Do you know who are they with?
- Is this person a danger to themselves or others?
- Does this person have any specific medical needs; do you have a list of their medication? Is there a care plan in place?
- Is this person likely to self-harm or attempt suicide?
- Is this person likely to be subjected to harm or a crime?
- Is this person a victim of abuse and/or at risk of sexual exploitation?
- Is this person being looked after or supported by any Children's or Adult Services?
- Prior to this report was the person displaying any behaviours or actions you consider out of the ordinary or cause for concern? E.g. Increased use of technology, unexplained gifts/money.
- Are there any other specific concerns or can you offer any other significant information at all?

The response to these questions will be recorded on the Oasis incident log taking time to enable a proper risk assessment to be completed so that the absence can be categorised appropriately.

A simple yes or no should not suffice and the call taker should adopt an investigative mind-set to establish risk.

The questions are a guide to determine the level of risk posed to an individual. Where it is clearly evident that the person is in danger, the call taker should not delay the immediate deployment of a resource in order to fully complete the questions i.e. a missing 2yr old child.

Incidents where call takers are in a position where they are unable to answer the questions or obtain sufficient information are to be treated as a missing person investigation. Lack of available information should be treated as a risk in itself. Any known CSE risk around an individual reported to Police will be classified as a missing person

Intelligence checks will be conducted on the individual to ensure that a fully informed decision can be made. Significant information should be recorded on the Police Oasis log.

GRADING OF INCIDENT

All logs that are missing will be graded as early response as a minimum. This includes cases where the missing person is upgraded from absent.

All logs that are absent will be graded as early response as a minimum until the Inspector (or other person as detailed below) has completed the risk assessment and agreed a contact plan with the caller. This ensures that a decision around the risk posed to individuals is made in a timely manner.

INITIAL REVIEW OF ABSENT INCIDENT LOG – DUTY INSPECTOR

The Duty Inspector will review the Oasis incident log containing the information given by the caller in response to the risk based questions described above and then decide whether the person should be classified as absent or missing.

The Duty Inspector will agree the review period and the call back timescales with the informant.

The Duty Inspector should record on the Oasis incident log the decision together with a full rationale.

REVIEW PERIOD AND CALL BACK PROCESS

Incidents classified as absent will not require an officer to be deployed or enquiries to be carried out, but must have regular defined review periods relevant to the circumstances of each case. Agreement may be reached about enquiries that the informant can make during the interim period, and any such agreed actions should be recorded on the incident log.

If any further enquiries are required other than initial intelligence checks and risk based questions then this should be appropriately resourced and considered a missing person investigation.

The call back procedure will continue until either the person returns and the log is closed, or until they are re-classified as missing and an officer deployed to commence a missing persons investigation.

When an absent incident log is closed because the person is found, the closure code to be used is, 'Missing – Unauthorised absence'. In order to ensure that the absent incidents can be effectively monitored by the missing persons' coordinators, it is essential that the correct closure category is used. This closure code should only be used for absent logs, where a person is classified as missing, the log should be closed as 'Missing Person'.

There is no defined age limit or time period that an enquiry can remain as absent before becoming missing. All decisions are to be based on risk, taking into account all of the circumstances at the time. All rationale is to be recorded on the Oasis log.

ESCALATION POLICY

In the event that the informant and Duty Inspector cannot resolve any disagreement about whether the person should be classified as missing or absent, the decision will be referred to the duty Force Incident Manager (Chief Inspector). Having reviewed the information and made a decision, the duty FIM should record the decision and rationale on the Oasis incident log.

SAFEGUARDING ISSUES IN ABSENT CASES

Absent incidents will be robustly monitored by designated coordinators, who will identify trends and patterns within reports of absent cases. The co-ordinator will then work in a multi-agency environment to tackle and reduce the incidents of repeat absent cases.

Triggers for safeguarding interventions in repeat absent cases will be:

A vulnerability assessment will be made on a case by case basis with appropriate intervention and rationale documented by the designated coordinator.

All children will be referred to Children's Services for considerations of safeguarding interventions.

In the absence of any other risk or concern for adult absent cases, the following will generate an automatic referral to Adult Social Services and Police Safeguarding Teams for consideration:

- Three absent reports for an individual in a 90 day period, and
- Five absent reports from a location in a 30 day period.

When the dedicated co-ordinator identifies a case that has met the trigger for an intervention, the coordinator will generate a non-crime reference number that will contain details of the absent incidents. This non crime number will then be allocated to the relevant safeguarding or child abuse team supervisor. If the supervisor reviews the report and decides that there are actions to be completed, the supervisor will allocate the report to a relevant officer to complete the actions.

RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR MISSING PERSONS

Where an adult or child is categorised as missing, an investigation will be commenced that is appropriate to the level of risk.

When a person is classified as missing a secondary risk assessment is conducted as a result of an officer being deployed to take a missing person report. Using all the information available, the officer will determine the level of risk of danger to the missing person, which in turn informs the extent and urgency of the enquiries to be made. Before deciding on the risk category, police systems should be checked, as they may provide vital background information and bearing on the risk assessment decision.

The level of risk must be reviewed by a Supervisor and revisited regularly to ensure that it is still appropriate in light of information received during the investigation.

MEDIA

Prior to using publicity as part of the investigation the missing person's family must be consulted and authority obtained for publicity. Although always preferable, their consent is not needed provided that the decision is made with consideration to the Human Rights Act, and the action is carried out proportionately in the best interest and welfare of the missing person.

Automatic referrals to Missing People Charity will be made in each missing person case. This will act as an additional media opportunity and provide family and victim support where necessary.

RECORDING THE INVESTIGATION

COMPACT is used to record and track all missing person investigations. The following guidance applies to all COMPACT users:

As soon as possible after the initial investigating officer has taken the missing person report, the Oasis log should be closed and all relevant information from it should be transferred onto COMPACT. If an Oasis log and COMPACT are allowed to run concurrently, vital information may be missed which could hamper the investigation and put the missing person at greater risk

All actions taken and decisions made during an investigation should be recorded on COMPACT

All updates to COMPACT must be completed within the Tour of Duty.

Sensitive issues apparent during the course of an investigation – e.g. HBV or , forced marriage – the Duty Inspector should instruct restricted access to the record

Photographs should be scanned onto COMPACT within the same Tour of Duty that they are obtained

Where the missing person returns prior to a COMPACT record being created, a full debrief will take place and a COMPACT record created and fully updated. This will prevent vital information from being missed and allow for appropriate notifications, providing an accurate missing history.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF A MISSING INVESTIGATION

Missing persons represent a real risk and it is vital that they receive the correct level of resourcing and priority to investigate them and ensure all safeguarding issues are addressed. To achieve this, the investigation and review process must be adequately supervised. The purpose of the supervision and review process is as follows:

All cases should be reviewed at the LPU daily management meeting. It is the duty Inspector who has responsibility for bringing details of each missing person enquiry to the DMM. High risk and exceptional cases will, where appropriate, also be discussed at Force DMM.

The Duty Inspector, based on information received can, at any time, upgrade a case to high risk or reduce the risk from medium to low.

Only a Superintendent can authorise a reduction from high risk. The one exception to this is where an initial investigating officer has incorrectly classified the first risk assessment as high. In these circumstances, the Duty Inspector can downgrade the risk from high.

The LPU Operations Superintendent will, in most cases be carrying out the review procedures for missing investigations. The investigation should be reviewed at daily management meeting.

The Public Protection department should be actively involved in the review process and made aware of any safeguarding issues that come to light as soon as possible.

RECORDING AND OWNERSHIP OF A MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION

The following principles are equally applicable to cross border issues between different forces and between different LPUs within the WMP Force area.

The police area that receives a report of a missing person must record the missing person and must still take responsibility for ensuring an officer is despatched to take a missing person report.

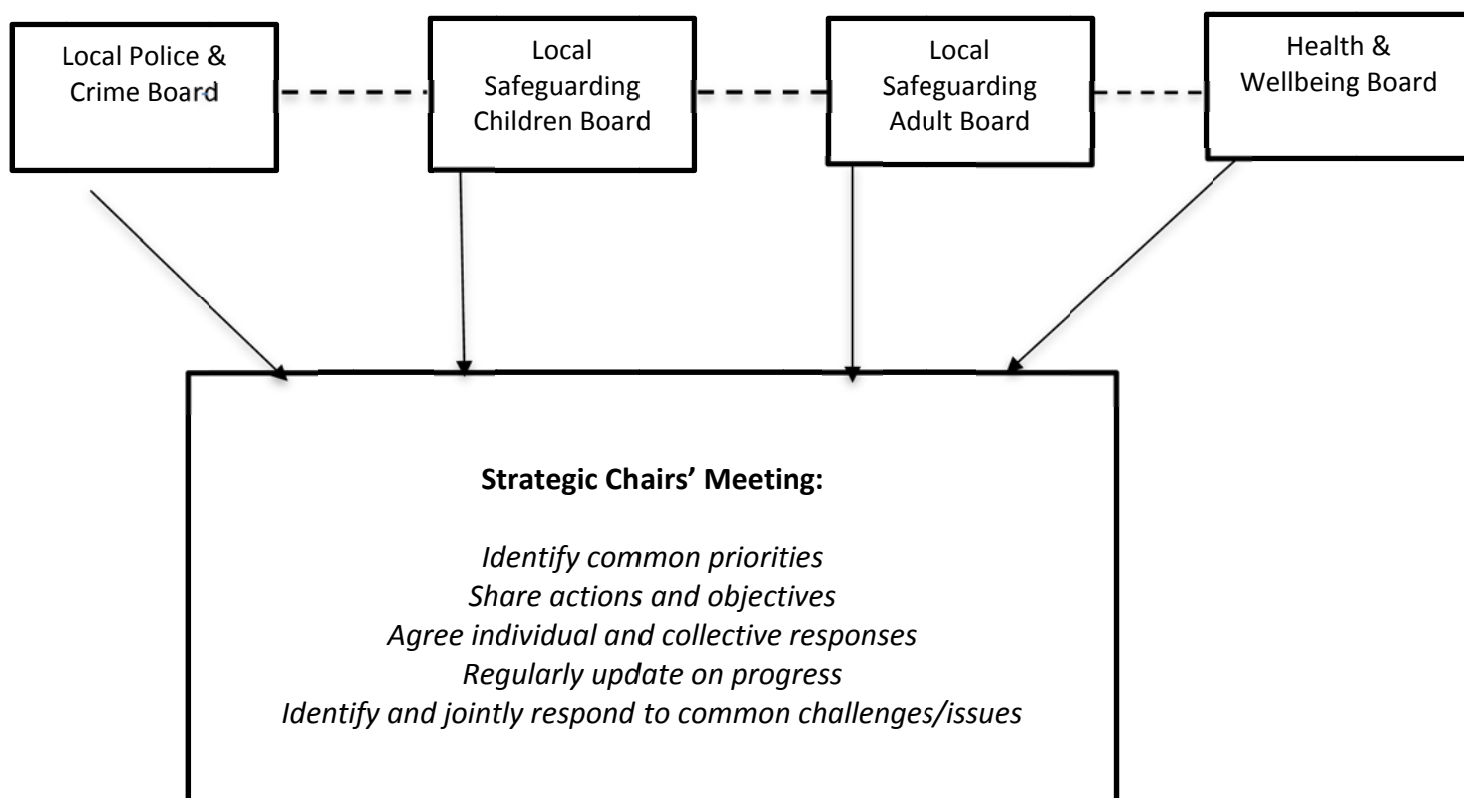
The reporting person should not have any uncertainty over who has responsibility.

The police area that took the report then has responsibility for managing and supervising the investigation unless responsibility is passed to another police area as described below.

The bulk of enquiries are normally conducted in the police area where the missing person is most likely to be located. Therefore, the police area where the bulk of valid, identified enquiries are to be conducted must accept responsibility for managing and supervising the investigation.

The purpose of transferring an investigation is to improve the management and supervision of the investigation in order to maximise the chances of finding the missing person

Relevant statutory agencies have individual and collective responsibility to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are properly safeguarded. As such all key strategic plans, whether formulated by individual organisations or partnerships, should have consideration of any safeguarding implications. It is important that a mechanism is in place to clarify the role and responsibilities of each of the strategic boards and that there is a clear understanding how they inter-relate. One recommended way of doing this is having a regular meeting which brings together the Chairs of key strategic partnerships with a view to improving the way the Boards work together on common priorities; avoiding duplication; clarifying lead roles and responsibilities and having clear lines of communication.



PROTECTION: THE ROLE OF MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERS

Providing an appropriate response to CSE requires the combined efforts and skills of a protective network for children and young people and depends heavily on a multi-agency response. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The same principle applies to educational institutions with duties under Section 157 or 175 of the Education Act 2002 regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Meetings Structure

The type and format of meetings described below will enable agencies to keep a clear overview of child sexual exploitation issues within their area as per 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' and other statutory guidance.

Local areas will have different arrangements but it is important that there is an identified individual and/or team who will:

- provide a lead officer role for the Local Authority;
- be based within Children's Social Care (or working very closely with them) ensuring CSE is addressed as a core part of the local child protection system;
- co-ordinate and analyse all information relating to children and young people at risk of or being exploited, locations and perpetrators;
- provide advice and support to professionals who have identified or are managing cases;
- ensure local policies and procedures are in place to prevent, identify and respond to CSE, in line with this regional framework;
- ensure there is challenge and quality assurance in the system.

In order to respond effectively to CSE there should be a number of layers in place that strategically lead and co-ordinate and operationally support individual victims and manage offenders and locations:

LSCB Strategic CSE and Missing Sub-Group - This strategic multi-agency group is responsible directly to the LSCB for ensuring that local child protection systems to prevent, identify and respond to CSE and missing are co-ordinated and effective. They should ensure that specific local procedures (within the context of this wider regional framework) are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people. These procedures should be a subset of the LSCB procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and be consistent with local youth offending protocols. This group will provide strategic oversight for CSE and missing work across the local area. They will receive regular reports from the CSE and Missing Operational Group and ensure that there are sufficient multi-agency resources available to respond effectively. They will produce a local strategy and delivery plan and regularly monitor performance and delivery. In some local areas, a separate group will be established to manage and monitor missing in order to ensure sufficient time and focus is given to children and young people who go missing. Strong links and information sharing between the two groups is essential. Local areas will have different arrangements but there should always be an overarching CSE Sub-Group established as part of the LSCB working arrangements.

CSE & Missing Operational Group – This senior Operational Group will receive regular updates from the CSE Lead Officer and Police Intel on victims, offenders and locations. This is the key mechanism for providing assurance and challenge that collective work in tackling CSE is having a real impact on the ground. They will direct medium and long term actions to safeguard, disrupt, pursue and reduce opportunity for children to be harmed through sexual exploitation and missing episodes. They will consider the strong associations that have been identified between different forms of sexual exploitation, running away from home, child trafficking and substance misuse and act accordingly. They will use the multi-agency problem profile to drive local commissioning and tasking of resources and provide regular reports to the LSCB Strategic Sub-Group on progress, impact and outcomes. They will also identify gaps in services or forms of response to inform the commissioning of services. Minimum standards for the local Operational Group include:

- The local authority will be aware of all children at risk of CSE that are known to have moved into the local area and evidence of this process will be available and regularly reviewed by the appropriate sub-group of the LSCB.
- Police trigger plans will follow a child if moved out of area.
- All children that are reported as missing will be debriefed and offered support – all of the debrief information will be fed into police intelligence systems, recorded on the child's record and shared with other professionals as needed so that services offered to support the children can be improved according to the learning from the feedback.
- Action to identify, visit and then monitor children who are identified as living unregistered with universal services will be agreed.
- Children that are reaching the age of 18 will still be discussed at CMOG if they are a victim of CSE. The local area will have a robust pathway in place that can support victims into adult services.
- Membership will include key professionals from police, education, health, social care teams, local authority regulation/enforcement teams and representatives from specialist voluntary sector services.

- The groups will monitor the impact of work to combat CSE as well as the actions undertaken.

In some areas, a separate group to manage 'Missing' has been established and in addition, more than one CMOG is in place. In order for this to work effectively, there needs to be robust links, communication and planning between the different groups.

Operational Group meetings will be chaired by an appropriately ranked Police Officer from the local Public Protection Unit and will meet at least monthly.

Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation MASE – (VICTIMS) – Each local authority should establish at least one MASE meeting to review and manage individual cases of children and young people at risk of or being sexually exploited. Where a child/young person is referred to the MASH/known to Social Care, their needs in relation to CSE should be considered as part of the statutory processes. The aim is to ensure only one set of processes is followed rather than parallel processes. Where appropriate, the MASE can be combined with the TAF or Think Family planning meeting/care planning meeting or initial or child protection case conference. Where the child/young person is looked after CSE should be part of the child/young person's care planning process/reviews. Critically there should only ever be one plan for the child/young person, which encompasses all of the relevant requirements/actions/interventions and desired outcomes and which is then regularly reviewed by the MASE/relevant multi-agency review meetings working closely together.

The MASE meeting should conduct focused discussions for each case concentrating on:

- Whether the child is a child in need of early help (when a CAF or TAF process is required), is a child in need (Section 17) and/or is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (Section 47).
- Ensuring that a multi-agency assessment of need (ie. CAF, a child in need assessment or child/young person in need single assessment) has been or will be carried out, involving the young person and their family to inform the plans for working with the child/young person, their family or primary carers. These plans can be a TA/YOS Plan, a Think Family or Family Support Plan, a Children in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan going forward.
- Ensuring that the child/young person has been spoken to alone and their views and desired outcomes are recorded.
- Ensuring the child/young person has been offered support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.
- Ensuring that the child/young person's family have been engaged and their views, strengths and support needs taken into account.
- Sharing and clarifying information in order to complete the CSE risk assessment.
- Analysing their needs and/or the nature and level of any risk and harm being suffered.
- Understanding risk for any other children, including siblings.
- Sharing information pertaining to a suspected perpetrator(s).
- Considering all possible powers and options to protect the victim and disrupt the offenders.
- Consider a referral using the National Referral Mechanism in cases where a child/young person may have been trafficked.
- Ensuring a multi-agency plan is in place which provides support to address the child/young person's needs to improve the child's outcomes to make them safe.
- Co-ordinating actions, where appropriate, with other processes such as MARAC and MAPPA.

The outcome of the meeting may be that:

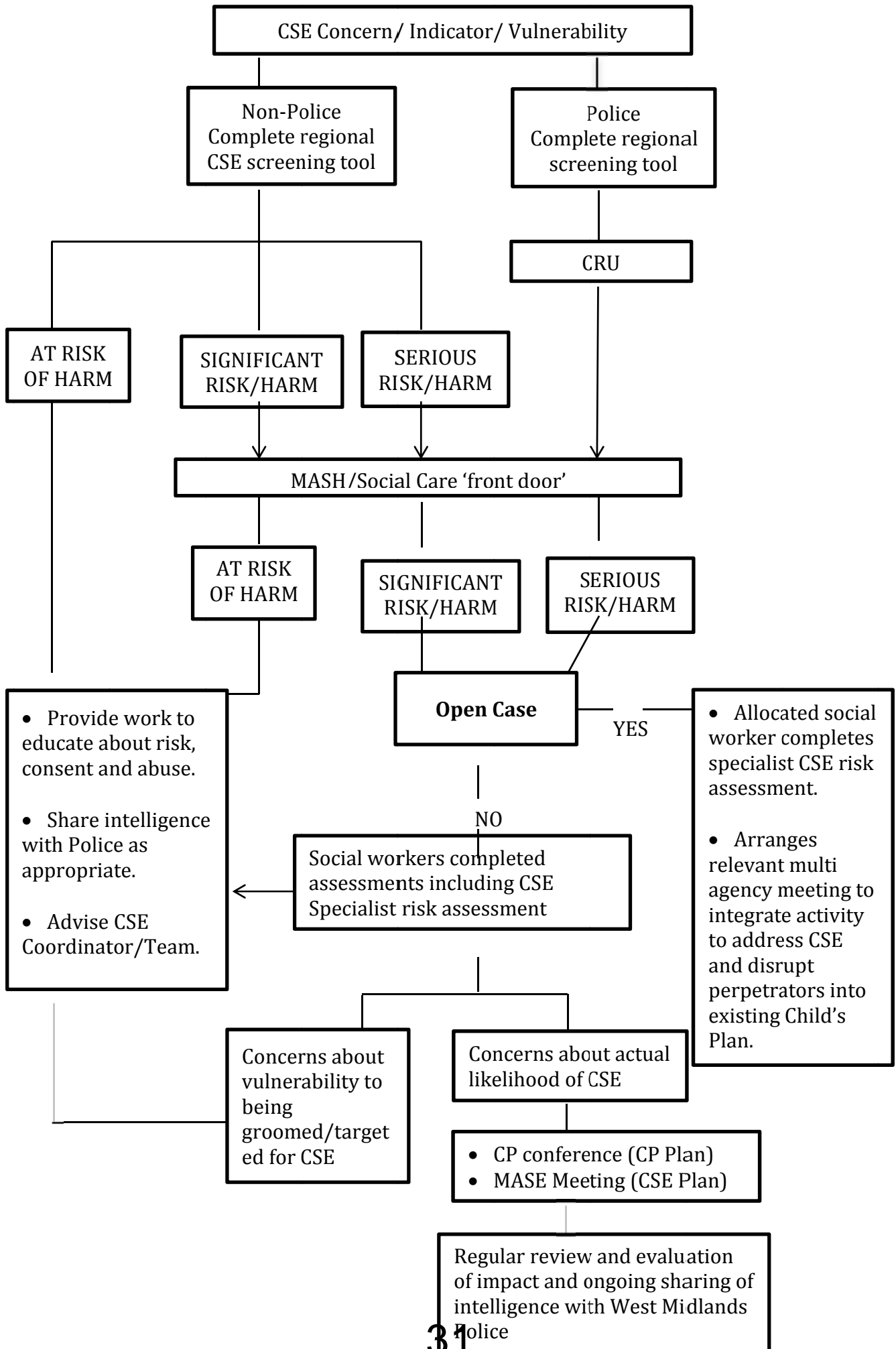
- The young person and family can be supported through Early Help services.
- The young person will be supported through a Child in Need Plan.
- There is a need to invoke Child Protection procedures or review the existing Child Protection Plan.
- There is a need to review and change the existing Care Plan.
- Support is provided by an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.
- There is a possibility of criminal action against an adult.

- Co-ordinated multi-agency support is required to support and divert the child from involvement in sexual exploitation, this will be outlined in a plan/or added to existing plans with clear lead officers and timescales.
- There is insufficient information at this stage, but concerns remain, interim action needs to be taken and further assessment is required.

The Child's Plan must set out which agencies will provide which services, including specialist sexual violence services, to the child and family, what direct work or interventions will be used, how and with whom and should set clear measurable outcomes for the child and their parents/carers and for those professionals involved. The aim should always be to give children/young people, their parents and carers, the skills knowledge and ability to manage on their own or to cope with support. The plan should reflect the positive aspects of the family situation as well as any weaknesses.

A well established process exists when placing looked after children outside the Local Authority area and when receiving children from another Local Authority into the area. Whilst this is consistently used and notification is received, where CSE is a concern, *more consideration and emphasis needs to be given to the preparation and consultation process* that should take place before the child is placed. It is important that children/young people are not put at more risk by being put into an area where there are high risks re. CSE. Every residential setting is now required to undertake an annual locality assessment to assess whether there are such wider risks in their locality and to act to mitigate this as necessary. LSCBs should be receiving copies of these assessments and they should be shared with the CSE and Missing Group when CSE risks are identified.

CSE & Missing Regional Pathway



Missing children and young people may be at increased risk of CSE and should be reported as missing to the Police at the earliest opportunity. Once a missing child is located, it is important that they are properly debriefed to identify any risks the child has been exposed to. There are two stages to the process - the Police Safe and Well Check and the Return Interview. Where possible, the Return Interview must be completed within 72 hours by an independent person. The information/intelligence from these interviews must be reported into the **Police Intelligence Systems and recorded on the child/young person's record**. Where external agencies are commissioned to conduct Return Interviews, this responsibility to share all information from interviews should be clear in the commissioning and contracting process.

All missing children will be screened for CSE and local pathways will be in place to ensure that they receive the appropriate single or multi-agency response. It is recommended that children who have gone missing 3 times within a 3 month period, are automatically discussed at a MASE meetings. Children placed out of area should consistently receive return interviews following missing episodes and local protocols should clearly identify who is responsible for doing this.

Local areas should have a good understanding of the links between children missing from home, care and education and CSE and use this to identify themes and patterns and to inform planning.

LSCB Strategic CSE & Missing Sub-Group Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The group provides strategic oversight for CSE and missing work across the local area on behalf of the LSCB. They will receive regular reports from the CSE & Missing Operational Group and ensure that there are sufficient multi-agency resources available to respond effectively to CSE. They will produce a local strategy and delivery plan and regularly monitor performance and delivery.

Scope:

The scope of the group is to:

- Share best practice and ensure local action is underpinned by available evidence to ensure an effective response to child sexual exploitation/missing.
- Ensure that specific local procedures are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people. These procedures should be a subset of the LSCB procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and be consistent with local youth offending protocols.
- Ensure that a local strategy/delivery plan is in place, in line with the West Midlands Metropolitan Area CSE Framework.
- Promote good working relationships with peers in neighbouring local authorities, police forces and health services.
- Receive regular reports from the Operational Group which provide a clear understanding of the scale and scope of CSE and Missing in the area and action that has been taken to respond to it.
- Identify gaps in service provision to ensure safe, responsive and effective services are provided to children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation/being abused via child sexual exploitation and those that are missing/absent and use this intelligence to influence local commissioning activity.
- Ensure the views of children and young people and parents/carers are reflected in on going service developments.
- Ensure that an awareness raising and training programme is in place for professionals.

- Ensure there is an engagement strategy in place which raises awareness of CSE; how to identify it; what type of information to record; and where to report it.
- Ensure that preventative programmes are in place to raise awareness with children and young people of the risks of CSE and going missing.

Accountability

The Group is accountable and reports directly to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and works closely with all sub-groups of the board. The meeting will be minuted and a record of the work of the group will be available to the LSCB.

Effective working relationships will be forged with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and the Local Police and Crime Board.

Membership (senior strategic representatives from):

West Midlands Police PPU

West Midlands Police LPU

Community Safety Team/Partnership

Health & Wellbeing Board

Safeguarding Adults Board

Local Authority – (Public Health; Social Care; Early Help; CSE Team; Regulatory Services; Youth Services; Youth Offending Services; Education; Housing)

Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

Clinical Commissioning Group

Health Providers (community and acute)

Voluntary Sector Specialist Service Providers

LSCB Lay Member

Probation

Chair of the CSE and Missing Operational Group

CSE & Missing Operational Group Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The CSE Missing & Operational Group is a multi-agency forum which directs medium and long term actions to safeguard, disrupt and reduce opportunity for children to be harmed through sexual exploitation and missing episodes.

Scope:

Direct intelligence collection and/or disruptive actions with regard to individuals who are believed to be harming children through sexual exploitation activities.

Direct safeguarding and disruption activities in locations considered vulnerable to sexual exploitation activities.

Provide oversight of ongoing criminal investigations to ensure interventions reflect the risk of harm.

Share information and intelligence with regard to children whose behaviour and activities indicate they are at risk through missing episodes or sexual exploitation.

Understand trends, networks and connections between victims, perpetrators and locations.

Consider the strong associations that have been identified between different forms of sexual exploitation, running away from home, child trafficking and substance misuse.

Share information and intelligence with regard to individuals involved in perpetrating abusive and criminal behaviour.

Understand and respond to key locations that are being used to exploit children and young people.

Develop multi-agency plans to protect children and young people; manage key locations; and to prosecute/disrupt perpetrators.

Accountability

The Group will report to each meeting of the LSCB CSE Strategic Sub-Group.

Membership

The listed agencies are considered to be the minimum full members and require routine attendance at the meeting.

Core members - Senior Operational Officers from:

West Midlands Police:

DI - Public Protection Unit (Chair)

CSE and Missing Lead(s)

Lead Officer from the Local Policing Unit

Intelligence Officer

Children's Social Care, including as appropriate, Lead for CAF/Early Help

CSE Co-ordinator

Relevant Health Professionals

Education (Missing or absent from Education including links with PRU's)

Representative from the Community Safety Team/Partnership

Local Authority Regulatory & Enforcement Services (taxis and licensing)

Housing

outh Service

Youth Offending Service

Probation

LA Commissioning team (LAC placements)

Specialist Voluntary Sector Providers

Missing from Care – Internal Fostering and Residential Services**October 2015**

As of 12/10/2015 Birmingham Fostering Service has:

485 = Short Term & Long Term Mainstream Carers -

10 = Emergency Duty Team Foster Carers Carers -

50 = Connected Persons Foster Carers [family and Friends approved Foster Carers]

Children Missing from Foster Placements from April 2014 to May 2015 = 27

In the first six months of 2015, 3 episodes of children/young people missing from internal foster care have been notified.

There are 10 registered children's homes in BCC, 5 of which provide care for children with disabilities and 5 provide mainstream care. In the first six months of 2015, 140 episodes of children/young people missing from internal residential children's homes have been notified.

In line with National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations, foster carers for Birmingham City Council (BCC) are provided with pre and post approval training which covers safeguarding matters, including children missing from care and their responsibilities as foster carers to prevent this.

The fostering support social workers regularly visit the foster carers and offer additional guidance and support to ensure that children in the care of BCC are provided with good safe care to minimise the risk of children going missing.

A copy of the Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) forms part of the Foster Carers Handbook for continued reference. A copy of this guidance is accessible by all staff in the children's homes.

Foster Carers and staff in the Children's homes are also made aware of their role alongside other agencies in reporting children who go missing as set out in the Local Safeguarding Procedures and legislative and government guidance. Every time a child goes missing from internal foster care a Schedule 7 report is completed by the Fostering Service and signed off by the Assistant Head of Service for Fostering. Within the Children's homes a Regulation 40 report is completed which is signed off by the Service Manager and Assistant Director. Social workers for the child/young person are also notified of the missing from care episode. This ensures a local and strategic oversight is kept of those children/young people missing from care and any emerging themes or patterns are noted and acted upon.

Staff in the fostering support service and in the Residential homes all have Child Protection training as part of their ongoing learning and development. This includes areas in relation to children/young people missing from care. In residential homes, staff meetings issues relating to missing from care are discussed. Previously the fostering service were not regularly monitoring and reviewing missing from care. As part of the service improvements however this data is now being considered on a monthly basis.

When a young person goes missing from residential care, staff follow the local guidance as set out in "Reporting of Missing persons from (name of) home" dated March 2014 which is due for review shortly.

Particular note is made of those young people who are placing themselves at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. To date the Radicalization of children/young people who are missing from care has not be fully recognised as a potential risk when missing. In future this will be considered routinely in the way that CSE is now considered.

Those cases would be highlighted to colleagues in safeguarding and relevant agencies for strategy discussions.

Currently the Fostering Service are often not included in those strategy discussions/meetings for children/young people who go missing from care and this is an area for improvement as they have relevant and key information that would contribute to the risk assessment and subsequent plan.

At a strategic level key personnel from Fostering and Residential Services sit on the bi-monthly Multi Agency - Missing Operations Group [Leads are ADs for Safeguarding and Development and Integrated Services]. Members of this group include police, education, health, area services, Children's Society, Carefirst and systems representatives. The Terms of Reference of this working group is to emphasise the need to consolidate thresholds, working practices, joint ownership and working together, data collation and interrogation, alongside systems to review and improve the services and practices delivered to safeguard children missing from care and at risk of exploitation.

The statutory guidance is clear that Local Authorities must provide the children missing from care with the opportunity to speak to an independent person of their choice within 72 hours of returning who will complete a Return Interview with them.

This process is triggered by the MASH who receive a police referral and subsequently the provider, The Children's Society, are informed of the need to complete the Return Interview. The fostering service and internal Residential services are not involved in this process however the interview is likely to take place in the foster placement or at the Residential home. The Fostering Service is informed after the interview has taken place.

Practice in this area could be improved in BCC by implementing a more "joined up" approach between the Fostering Service and the MASH service.

Foster carers have access to specific out of hours telephone support service (365 days a year) which is provided by qualified social workers and team managers working in the Service as well as BCC Emergency Duty Team and BFCA [Birmingham Foster Carer Association] out of hours support.

Residential Childrens Homes have access to social workers or a duty worker in working hours, out of hours they have access to the EDT and a Service Manager/Registered Manager is on call to support the home when needed.

This ensures that all foster carers/residential staff are supported and provided with guidance wherever required about their roles and responsibilities.

All children placed in Residential homes have an up to date risk assessment. As part of their placement plan a child/young person in foster care should have a risk assessment completed by their social worker. These risk assessments are updated for young people in residential care every time they go missing.

Recommendations:

- BCC/LSCB to produce clear guidance for Residential Children's Homes and Foster Carer in relation to the Prevent Agenda, to include recognising the signs of risk and their responsibilities in terms of addressing that risk.
- The Fostering Service to be fully included in strategy discussions/meetings with colleagues in other Service areas by a more "joined up" process being developed.
- All children/young people in the care of BCC to have an up to date risk assessment as part of their ongoing care plan which is reviewed by the IRO at each CLA review.
- An integrated electronic system is required to ensure that all data in relation to children/young people who go missing from care is collated effectively with the purpose of safeguarding and supporting those children/young people.



**Education and Vulnerable Children O&S Committee
Short Inquiry;
Children Missing from Home and Care
Evidence presented by;
Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board**

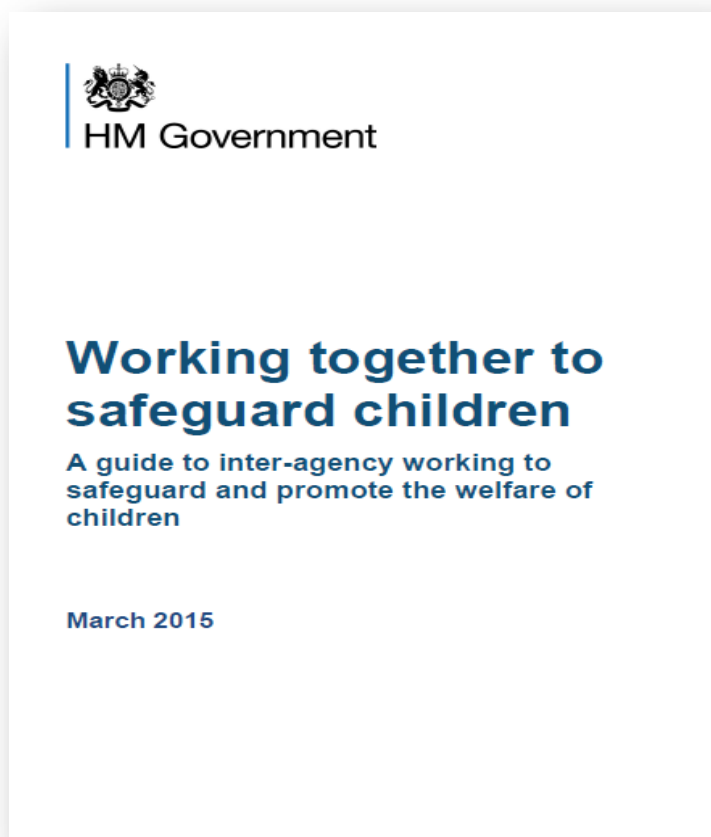


Focus of the session

Areas to be covered
Statutory role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and National context
Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board - Strategic Priorities in relation to missing children
Strategy, Support and Structure
Accountability, Effectiveness and Outcomes
Missing Operational Group
Key areas for improvement – Annual Report 2014/15
Discussion and Questions



Statutory Functions of LSCBs



Local Safeguarding Children Board statutory functions;

1. Coordination of safeguarding and the promoting the welfare of children in Birmingham; and
2. to ensure the effectiveness of what is done.

Working Together to Safeguard Children



HM Government

Working together to safeguard children

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

March 2015

- Local Safeguarding Children Board should conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation.
- There is specific reference to data sharing on children missing from care and how the LSCB is addressing the issue



Department for Education - Statutory Guidance – January 2013

Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care - Role of LSCB

- Evaluate the effectiveness interagency working associated with children missing from home and care
- Up to date Local protocol on runaway and missing from home and care
- Receive and scrutinise regular reports from the Local Authority analysing data on children missing from home and Care
- Provide strategic oversight of the effectiveness of measures to prevent children from going missing from children's homes




Strategic direction - 'Getting to Great'

Key priorities:

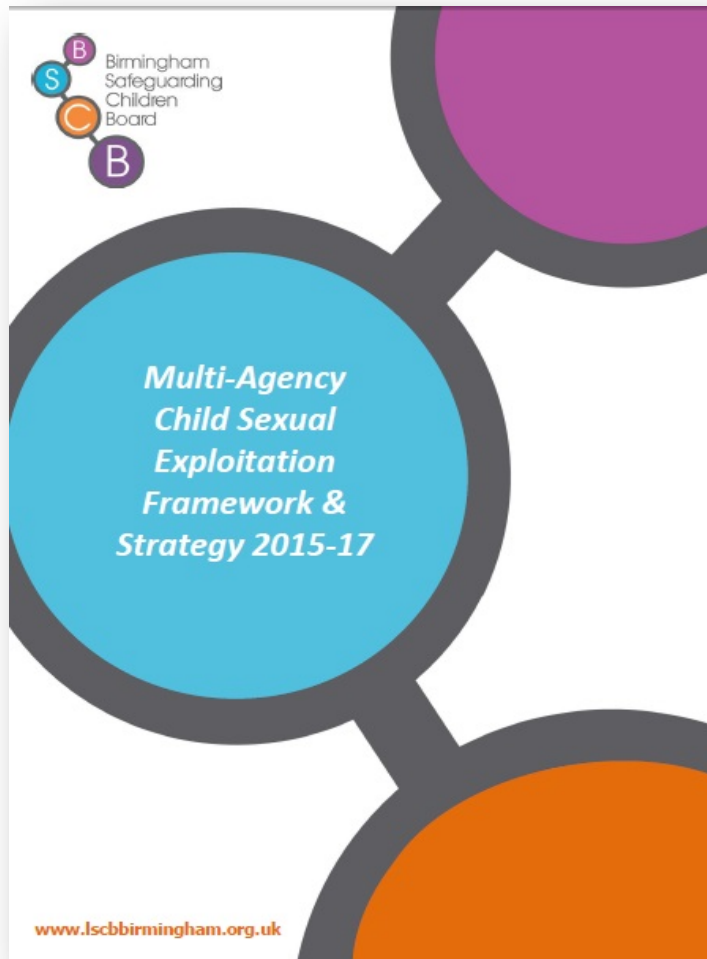
1. Voice of the Child
2. Early Help
3. Safe Systems
 - **CSE**
 - LAC
 - Front Door
 - Strengthening Families

Getting to Great

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board
Strategic Plan 2015-17 and
Business and Improvement Plan 2015-16



Multi-Agency CSE Framework & Strategy



www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk

Key Strategic Strands

1. Preventing
2. Protecting
3. Preparing to disrupt and target
4. Prosecuting

Sets out implementation of Regional Model (CMOG) in Birmingham

Distinction between Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Group and Missing Operational Group



Understanding the needs of a child

1. Guidance for everyone who works with children, young people and their families.
2. It sets out four levels of children's needs:
 - **Universal Needs**
 - **Universal Plus**
 - **Additional Needs**
 - **Complex/Significant Needs**
3. Guiding principles.
4. Defining need – questions to ask yourself.
5. How to access support based on need.



Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board

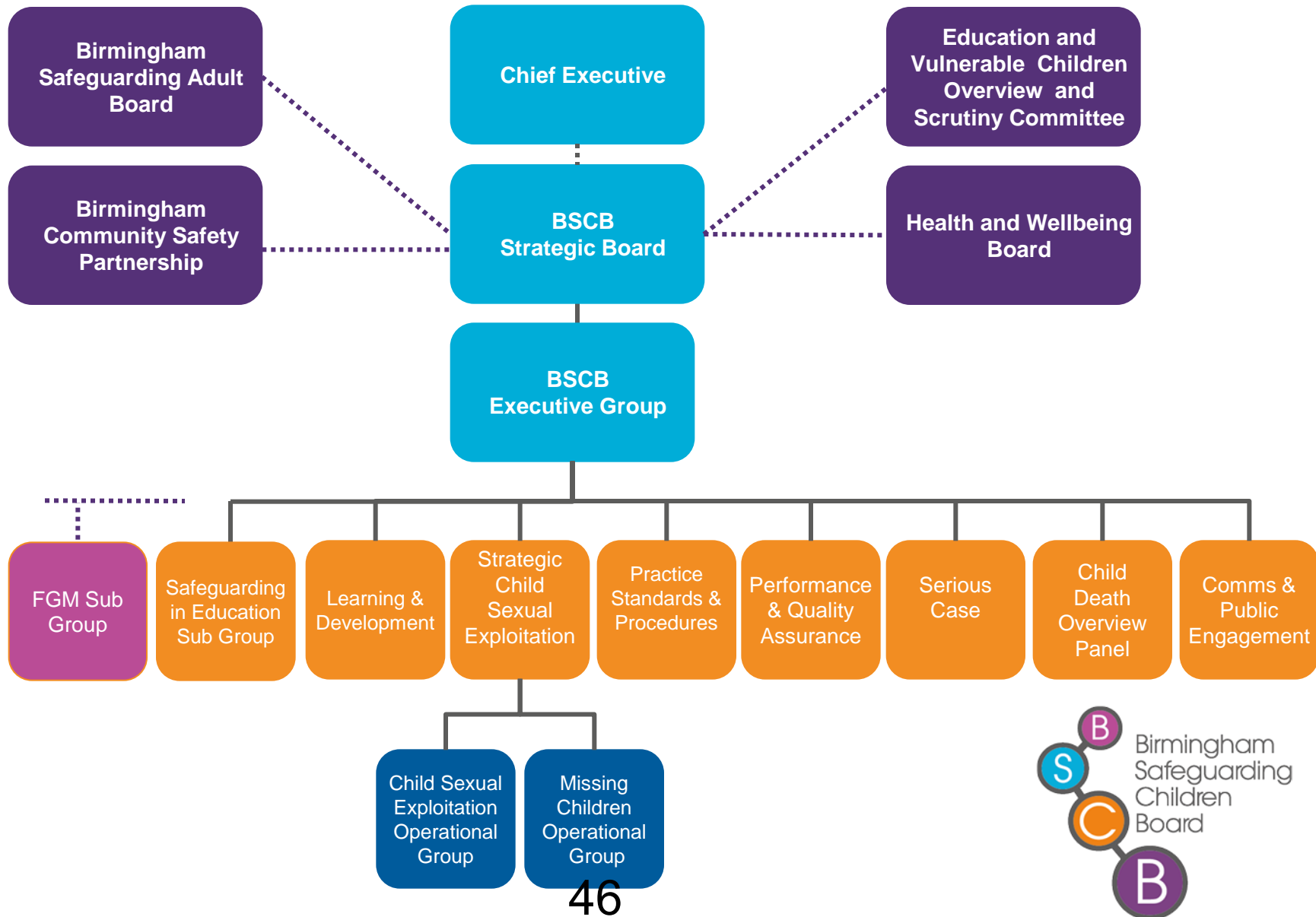


Right Service, Right Time
Delivering effective support for children and families in Birmingham

Guidance for Practitioners



Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board Structure



High Support and High Challenge – LSCB Strategy, Support and Structure

- 3 Year Strategic Plan ‘ Getting to Great’ priorities Child Sexual Exploitation and the link to missing children
- Multi-Agency CSE framework and strategy 2015-17 – Revised March 2015
- Established Strategic CSE Sub-Group – Chaired by Alastair Gibbons, Executive Director Children’s Services appointed October 2015
- Child Sexual Exploitation Operation Group – Chaired by Dawn Miskella, Detective Chief Inspector
- Missing Operational Group – Chaired by Tony Stanley, Chief Social Worker appointed October 2015
- West Midlands Metropolitan CSE Regional Framework – updated July 2015 endorsed by the Board
- Missing from Care, Home and Education Multi-Agency Procedures updated September 2015
- Commission multi-agency training – CSE Training offer approved October 2015
- Establishing a network of CSE Champions in each agency



High Support and High Challenge – Accountability, Effectiveness & Outcomes

The Board evaluate the effectiveness interagency working to prevent children from going missing from home, care and education through;

- Monitoring implementation of the Multi-Agency CSE Strategy 2015/17
- The Chair of Strategic CSE Sub-Group is accountable effective delivery of the Multi-Agency CSE Strategy 2015/17 and providing regular reports to the Board
- Chair of MOG is a key member of Strategic CSE Sub-Group to ensure continuity
- The Board ratifies both regional and local Missing from Care, Home and Education Protocol and Procedures
- Scrutinise implementation of the Children's homes regulations amendments from July 2014 with respect to the suitable location of children's homes
- Ensuring effective implementation of the findings of '*We Need to Get it Right*' Health Check into the Council's Role in tackling CSE – Up date to November 2015 Committee
- The Executive Group receives, contributes and scrutinises the West Midlands Regional CSE Assessment
- The Board publishes the BSCB Annual Report 2014/15 – November 2015
- Education & Vulnerable Children O&S Committee – November 2015
- Presentation on the BSCB Annual Report 2014/15 to the



Missing Operational Group

The group covers ALL forms of missing children – school, care, education and view. The Core Functions of the MOG;

- Present regular reports to the Strategic CSE Sub-Group on the scale and scope of missing children and the action being undertaken
- Ensuring there are good multi-agency procedures in place – oversee the development of new regional procedures
- Evaluate the outcome and effectiveness of the independent 'Return Interview' process (72 hour) ensuring the timeliness and accuracy of intelligence recorded on Police Intelligence Systems and the child/young person's record.
- Monitor the effectiveness of CSE screening of missing children and appropriate use of pathways to MASE meeting.
- Ensuring each part of the multi-agency system has appropriate single agency procedures in place to address the issue and that these are in place and being used properly
- Collecting and collating intelligence across all categories and ensuring where a child is missing from more than one setting is identified and proper assessments, plans and interventions are put in place via the correct approach (e.g. COG/MASH via MASE or through TAF and CAF processes etc. etc.)
- Identifying practice issues (single and multi-agency) and drawing these to the attention of relevant senior staff to address as well informing the Performance & Quality Assurance Sub-Group audit and scrutiny programme.
- Commissioning and evaluation of multi-agency and single agency training



Documentary evidence for submission

1. BSCB Annual Report 2014/15 - Published November 2015
2. 'Getting to Great' BSCB 3 year Strategic Plan 2015/17
3. Multi-Agency CSE Framework & Strategy 205/17
4. Missing from Care, Home and Education Multi-Agency Procedures updated September 2015
5. Progress Report on 'We Need to Get it Right' – November 2015
6. Right Service Right Time - Delivering effective support for children and families in Birmingham – March 2015



Discussion and Questions?

