



Improving Local Practice Messages from the Multi-Agency Audit on Safeguarding Missing Children

BSCB carried out an audit on safeguarding arrangements and processes for children and young people who repeatedly runaway or go missing for over 24 hours.

Highlights

1. Cases are regularly supervised with regular management oversight in all agencies.
2. Police training resulted in early identification of Sexual Exploitation as a risk factor in assessment and referrals.
3. Referrals to Oxleas, Social care and the CAF process are good.
4. CAF team escalate to Social Care appropriately.
5. SLHT routinely notify GP and school nursing services following a child's emergency department attendance in good information sharing practice.
6. Good assessments by agencies included clear identification of risk, comprehensive assessment of parent issues.
7. Comprehensive information sharing and risk assessment by YOS multi-disciplinary team leads to improved outcomes for some young people.
8. Agencies use the escalation guidance to take forward professional disputes.
9. Where a lead professional or agency takes responsibility for a case, better outcomes are achieved and case drift is minimised.

Key Actions Taken

10. Staff reminded to follow the procedure for missing children, including use of the indicators to identify vulnerabilities and use of risk assessment forms.
11. Agencies continue to raise awareness among staff and managers on the identification of SE risk indicators such as the importance of a focus on welfare concerns; and that boys are as much at risk of sexual exploitation as girls.
12. A working group to review and simplify procedure and BSCB to sign off in November 2013.
13. Updated risk assessment form to be included within foster carer handbook, and shared with other agencies for inclusion in their electronic records, to be distributed at BSCB conference.
14. Behaviour service completed a review of cases to determine the appropriateness of alternative school provision, home tuition and set clear plans for some of the young people audited.

Areas for Improvement

15. Establish a regular formal multi-agency meeting/forum to address the needs of young people who go missing in a coordinated way. There should be a lead professional for each young person.
16. Improved identification of the welfare concerns in assessing the risks of young people who runaway or go missing.
17. Schools are to be reminded to update the CAF record and this important role in safeguarding monitoring.
18. Assessments should include an analysis of the observations of young people, their views and expectations.

Further Actions for BSCB

19. BSCB to raise awareness of the needs of missing children. Annual Conference on CSE in autumn 2013 to be used as opportunity to brief the network on the vulnerability of missing children and to introduce the Missing Children referral pathway.
20. Training programme to be reviewed in Autumn 2013. Issues around missing children is included within the BSCB's core training.

September 2013

