**Young People Missing from Home or Care Audit – Summary on a Page**

**Overall Findings**

There was a lack of early help provision for young people who went missing and limited active involvement until situations had escalated to a crisis.

The quality of responses was variable and the use of information from RHI was not routinely used to inform planning and interventions to children and young people

There was limited evidence of the voice of the child in case files.

Information sharing was disjointed and led to silo working and a lack of coordinated responses to children.

There was a willingness to improve services and recent changes had started to see some improvements particularly with police and children social care.

There appeared to be a “culture” of normalisation in responding to missing episodes particularly in relation to older males.

The use of intelligence from RHI did not translate into care plans or interventions with children and young people.

There was not a consistent response across the services to young people who went missing.

**Background**

Children and young people who go missing from home or care has been identified as a priority for Coventry LSCB and Coventry Childrens Services because of their vulnerability. Running away can be symptomatic of wider problems in a child’s or young person’s life. Children who run away are vulnerable, unhappy and potentially at risk of harm, regardless of the reasons. . It is important that the identification, notification and risk assessment process ensures services are targeted at locating those young people who are particularly vulnerable and work with them to deal with issues that led to them running away in the first place.

**Methodology**

The audit focused on

* the services to young people who go missing from home or care;
* the quality of the assessment and risk management;
* Level of compliance with relevant legislation and protocols.

A random sample of 6 of the most vulnerable missing children was chosen. All partners were asked to audit their own case files and report back on their own agencies involvement the life of each child or young person.

**Recommendations**

1. Improve the arrangements to support missing children to ensure that there is sufficient and effective early multi-agency intervention to prevent escalation to high risk level of vulnerability.
2. Agencies to work creatively and holistically with children to fully engage them in prevention and intervention work.
3. Develop service commissioning and quality monitoring to ensure looked after children are well cared for and residential homes are engaged in prevention and intervention activity.
4. Develop the RHI process so that:
5. Recording is improved. Children’s Social Care should monitor this by undertaking an audit of RHI completion.
6. It engages young people appropriately.
7. information obtained from the RHI can be taken into account in the planning for the young person.
8. Reverse the trend to normalise missing behaviour, particularly among boys.
9. In order to improve the quality of information sharing and the ability for partners to deliver positive outcomes for children, plans to support children should include:
10. Analysis of what really occurs for them and include creative ways to interact and respond to them, in a way that met their wishes and feelings.
11. Child focused aspirations and goals for the outcomes of the work being carried out.
12. Information from return home interviews so that it can inform planning and decision making.
13. progress made in improving children’s lives and evidence that the child’s life was better as a result of intervention by LSCB partners.
14. a coordinated multi-agency chronology to inform and shape action.
15. Review the current multi-agency policy and procedure for dealing with missing children and ensure that practice is consistent. This should include:
16. Correct and consistent categorisation of missing and absent.
17. Consistent episode recording between the police and social care.
18. Equally robust response to children living in Coventry and those looked after children who live outside of the city.
19. The use of a Missing from Home – Assessment and Trigger Plan for all children when a strategy meeting is held.