



Coventry Safeguarding Children Board

Missing Audit 2017

Audit Summary

Objective

- To provide an evidenced based assessment of the strengths and areas for development of the partnership approach to working with children who go missing

Key lines of enquiry

- The risk of abuse is identified and responded to appropriately and in a timely way
- The LSCB Levels of Help for Children (Thresholds of Intervention) Guide is used to make evidence based, appropriate referrals.
- Case work is carried out to a high standard and in a timely fashion
- Coordination between agencies is effective and information sharing is completed in a timely way.
- The voice of children is evident in any work to respond to their need.
- Supervision and management oversight is effective.
- Interventions work effectively to improve outcomes for children
- Work with children demonstrates appropriate consideration of diversity. For example, age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, identity, language, race and sexual orientation.

Summary of Findings

- Improvement activity should be focused on ensuring that work with missing children takes greater account of the voice of the child and that there is a greater focus on ensuring the effectiveness of interventions with missing children.
- There was evidence of young people being spoken to and that their views were recorded.
- In some cases there was evidence that information was shared with children in a way that they could understand.
- There is a lack of focus on the outcomes for the child as the pressure to manage caseloads means that practitioners focus on what needs to be done to close the case.
- There are still difficulties in all children being able to build a consistent relationship with a worker that they trust.
- There is scope to use return home interviews to represent the voice of the child but this is not maximised.
- Youth workers anecdotally reported successful outcomes from their work with missing children
- Still a lack of evidence that information captured during the return home interview is used effectively to shape plans and interventions.
- Interventions could be more effective if they were linked to a clear overall strategy for responding to missing children.
- Resources not always focused on the most vulnerable cases due to way in which the definition of missing is currently applied
- The root cause of missing behaviour is not well understood and this limits the effectiveness of work with children.

Recommendations

- All agencies should take action to ensure that children who are at risk of going missing have the opportunity to build and maintain a consistent relationship with a trusted worker, from within the group of professionals working with them.
- All agencies should introduce methods of working that ensure regular reviews of progress are carried out that include whether interventions are having a positive impact.
- Board to receive a report exploring the reasons why children go missing. The Board should then agree partnership wide action in response to this.
- Consideration should be given to the way in which the definition of missing is applied, to enable resources to be more appropriately focused on more vulnerable children.