

## Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000405  
Date 01 September 2016

### ***Missing Children***

**Request:**

Please find attached a Freedom of Information request to your local authority children's social care services concerning how you respond to missing children. There is a particular focus on how you share information with statutory partners and others that a missing children coordinator or similar would be able to answer.

- 1a) Between April 1st 2015 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 how many looked after children are you aware of who were placed in your area by other local authorities

349 LAC who were known in 15/16 as being placed here by another LA, of which 119 had been placed here between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

- 1b) Of these children how many did you receive notification about their placement from:

Wolverhampton LA do not record electronic information regarding the information requested below and therefore are unable to provide this data.

The placing local authority only	
Their children's home only	
The foster agency only	
Other placements (like secure units, supported accommodation) only	
Both the local authority and the placement	
No notification – they came to our attention because they went missing	
No notification – they came to our attention for other reasons like criminal or anti-social behaviour, sexual exploitation etc.	

- 2a) In what setting does your local authority operationally assess the risks to and responses needed for missing children?

Through a multi-agency safeguarding hub which deals with a range of safeguarding requests	
Through a multi-agency missing children's team	

Through the local authority's safeguarding 'front door' which deals with a range of safeguarding requests	
Through a dedicated missing children team based within your local authority	1 full time Missing officer
Other mechanism (please describe)	

- 2b) If you monitor and respond to missing episodes in a multi-agency partnership (for example through a multi-agency safeguarding hub) please could you list all the organisations that have a permanent and co-located staff member in the partnership and all the members who have a virtual presence or contribute on a case by case basis?

Permanent co-located member	Virtual member/case-by-case participant
N/A	N/A

- 3a) When the police receive a report of a missing child and need to conduct a risk assessment to determine their immediate response what local authority information do they have access to? (tick each that applies)

	Missing from care	Missing from home
Police have read only access to children's social care database in real time		
Police access children's social care information through a multi-agency hub database		
Police do not have access to local authority information systems at the time of initial assessment	✓	✓

- 3b) Do you provide your police force with a risk assessment when a looked after child from another local authority is placed within you area?

No	Yes	Only for high risk looked after children

- 3c) When you place a child out of area and within the boundary of a different police force to your own do you provide this police force with a risk assessment to inform any missing person investigation related to the child?

No	Yes	Only for high risk looked after children

- 4a) Which children, whom your local authority is responsible for, receive an offer of a return interview? (tick all that apply)

Children missing from family home	✓
Children absent from family home	
Looked after children missing from care	✓
Looked after children absent from care	
Children reported as going missing from	✓

school	
None	
Interviews are provided on a case by case basis	

4b) Who provides these return interviews: (tick one box for each category)

	Local authority staff	External provider	Both	Neither
Children missing from the family home	✓			
Children absent from the family home				✓
Looked after children missing from care	✓			
Looked after children absent from care				✓

4c) Do you have arrangements in place to offer return interviews to looked after children living in your area that have been placed there by other local authorities? (Yes/No)

We provide return interviews for all out of area looked after children placed in our locality	
We provide a spot purchase service for local authorities who have placed children in our area	
We do not provide return interviews to children placed in our area by other local authorities	✓

5a) How do you share information from return interviews with your police force? (tick the one that most closely reflects your practice)

Children's Services collate all the information centrally and then pass relevant details to the police	
An external provider collates all the information centrally and then passes relevant details to the police	
Individual practitioners pass on relevant information according to their professional judgement	
Return interview forms are automatically shared with the police in full with no redaction	✓
A relevant summary of the interview/key intelligence/safeguarding issues only is shared with the police in all instances	
A relevant summary of the interview/key intelligence/safeguarding issues only is shared with the police on a case by case basis	
Information from return interviews is not routinely shared with the police	
Our return interview providers/team are co-located with the police to share information	

5b) Do you have an information sharing protocol or agreement in place between yourselves, the police and any return interview providers in relation to sharing information about missing children? If so please attach.

No. The Partnership utilizes the Safeguarding Board Information Sharing protocol to inform this.

6a) How many children classified as either missing or absent between 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) were assessed to be at high risk of harm because of:

- i) child sexual exploitation - 19
- ii) gang involvement - did not collect this information in data form so not reportable
- iii) criminal activity - did not collect this information in data form so not reportable
- iv) trafficking - did not collect this information in data form so not reportable
- v) risk of suicide - did not collect this information in data form so not reportable
- vi) substance misuse - did not collect this information in data form so not reportable

6b) How many return interviews did you/your external provider complete for missing children in the year April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

325
-----

6c) As a result of return interviews conducted between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 how many children and young people have been:

Referred to early help services	11
Referred to a family intervention team	N/A
Found to be a child in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	99 were involved with Social Care
Taken into care by the local authority	0
Referred to CAMHS	1
The subject of a strategy meeting	
Put on child protection plan	See CIN above
Provided with intensive help to reduce missing episodes	Part of care plan/CIN/CP or early help
Provided with group-work to reduce missing episodes	

6d) Please attach or summarise your policy regarding support following a missing episodes:

Where concerns or issues are evident from the interview the worker will make an informed decision in line with the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board threshold document as to whether further support is required and at what level. Local policies and procedures are followed to access appropriate support and where Early Intervention support or Social Care involvement is required a referral is made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Where cases are already open to Children's Services any concerns highlighted during the return interview are shared with the caseworker for follow up.