

Learning from the Multi-Agency Audit – Missing Children

Why....

Children and young people who are missing from home or care has been identified as a priority for Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) because of their particular vulnerability.

What.....

The Multi-agency audit focused on 15 young people that were missing between the period of 16th Oct – 22nd Oct 2015. The 15 cases were randomly selected from the 27 that went missing during that period.

The aim of this audit was to see that partners from children's social care, health, police, education and other services work effectively together to prevent children from going missing from either home or care and act accordance with guidance when they do go missing.

Who did the audit.....

- Doncaster Children's Services Trust
- South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
- Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Doncaster Bassetlaw Hospital Foundation Trust
- Early Help, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
- Rotherham, Doncaster South Humber NHS Trust.
- Education via Lead Advisory Officer Safeguarding Education, DMBC

“What is working well” Themes

- ✓ SYP police Safe and Well checks are happening.
- ✓ Independent Return Interviews are taking place with children and young people.
- ✓ Strategy meetings are held with the maximum of five working days.
- ✓ Strategy meetings evidence that the risk and concerns are identified,
- ✓ Strategy meetings evidence clear plans aiming to reduce missing episodes and minimising risk especially around CSE concerns.
- ✓ Strategy meetings- follow up actions are being completed and evidenced within case recordings
- ✓ The majority of cases evidenced effective and efficient multi-agency working.
- ✓ The majority of children/young people engaged in the Independent Return Home Interviews.

“What are we worried about” Themes

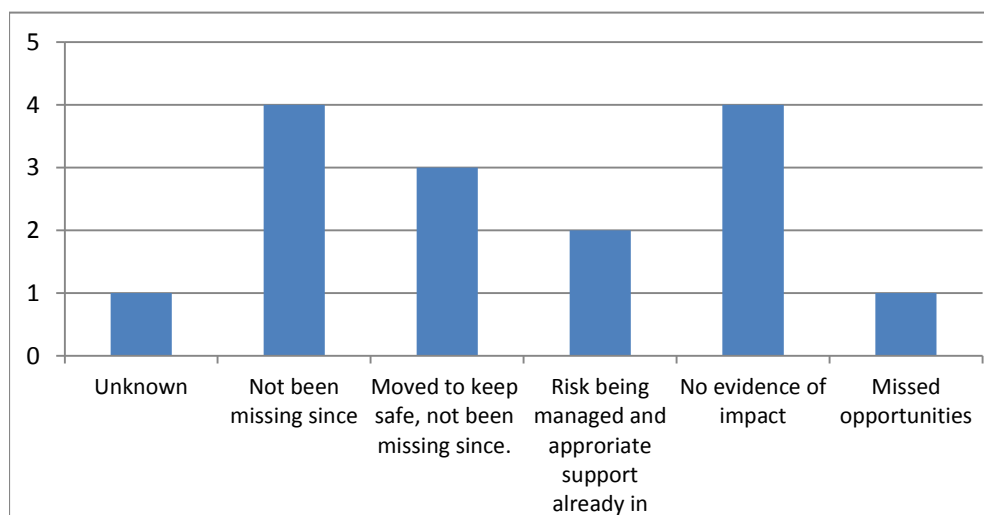
- The SY Police automatic notification does not include all relevant information.
- The quality of return home interviews needs to be improved.
- Return interviews need to be informed by any ongoing criminal Investigations.
- Quality of engagement and direct work with young people needs improving.
- Criteria for convening Strategy meetings are not always followed.
- Multi-agency attendance at Strategy meetings is poor.
- Planning and support is not always in place for children who go missing who are known to early help provision.
- Agencies don't evidence when they use the Resolving Professional Differences Protocol.
- Role of IROs and CP Chairs in missing episodes is not clear.
- Better coordination of return home interviews needed across local borders.

Recommendations

- Always be mindful of risk indicators, especially Child Sexual Exploitation in regards to children/young people who have been missing.
- Remember to consider physical appearance, ethnicity, culture, religion, language or disability as this information may be important.
- Case note recording – Make sure you identify yourself and role within case notes. • Be mindful of professionals involved and keep them informed of any missing or return home episodes, particularly if they are actively involved with the young person.
- Record where you saw the child/young person and your reasons for having the visit there.
- Be tenacious and flexible in your attempts to engage vulnerable young people.

- Always be mindful about what difference you are making to the child/young person and how can you evidence this, what impact has been achieved.
- Always capture the voice of the child in your work.
- Consider a Safe in Care Assessment for those children who go missing from care.
- Try and understand the reasons for going missing, what are the triggers, what can be done to reduce further incidents and document your analysis.
- When the Resolving Professional Differences Protocol is used, regardless of stage, make sure you evidence the discussion and outcomes are clearly recorded. Consider using the form for submitting cases for escalation and resolution which can be found on DSCB Policies and Procedures.

Impact identified:



Future developments for audits:

- Increase involvement of children/young people.
- Involve parents/carers
- Involve practitioners.