



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee Review Scoping Report 2012/13

### **OBJECTIVE**

#### **Safeguarding Children who are Reported Missing from Care**

##### **Aim of review**

To review the statutory duties of the Council and partner agencies with regard to children and young people who are reported missing from care; and to review local practice as it reflects national policy and guidance.

##### **Terms of Reference**

- To learn about national policy and statutory guidance relating to children who are reported missing from care.
- To learn about the research relating to children who run away, or who are reported missing from care.
- To understand the reporting arrangements for data about children missing from care at the national level.
- To understand the local reporting arrangements for collecting data on children reported missing in Hillingdon.
- To learn about best practice initiatives for safeguarding children reported missing from care across the country, and in other local authorities and partner agencies.
- To review the practice around safeguarding children reported missing from care in the locality of Hillingdon.
- To be updated about the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable children who may go missing at a port of entry; and to understand the data related to Heathrow Airport as a port of entry.

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- After due consideration of the above, to bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations (if needed), in relation to the Council's approach to children reported missing from care.

**Reasons for the review**

In June 2012, an All-Party Parliamentary Group published findings into its enquiry into children missing from care. This initiative was supported by the Children's Society and other non-Governmental organisations with an interest in safeguarding children.

[http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint\\_appg\\_inquiry\\_report...pdf](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_report...pdf)

The Policy Overview Committee conducted a review in Hillingdon on child trafficking in 2009/2010; and asked to be updated in the future about progress relating to children who had been reported missing after arriving at the airport. This review brings together both the national initiatives around children missing from care; alongside the local issues which arise due to the close proximity of Heathrow Airport. The intention of this review is to provide reassurance to the local Council members about Hillingdon's responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable children who may be at risk, as a consequence of running away, or repeatedly going missing.

**Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives**

The Policy Overview Committee will receive reports, presentations, supplementary handouts, and hear from witnesses about the issues relating to children missing from care; both in Hillingdon and more widely across the London region. The Policy Overview Committee will be given access to the Terms of Reference of the Local Safeguarding Children Board sub-committees and operational meetings that deal with the central issues relating to children missing from care; to ensure that they are sufficiently robust.

Some data will be supplied along with analysis of the issues to enable members to understand the difficulties in using data to properly depict the prevalence of this issue as a local and national trend.

The Policy and Overview Committee will also receive documentation relating to research on children missing from care, and its links to serious case reviews such as the recent ones in Rochdale and Derby, where children were sexually exploited whilst being reported missing from care.

**INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS****Key Issues**

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Going missing is a key indicator that a child may be at risk of abuse or exploitation. When children do go missing, they are often at very serious risk of significant harm in the form of physical abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking or neglect.

Very recently there has been publicity on the need to protect these vulnerable children. For example, the media interest in the Rochdale case and the Derby serious case review are examples of this societal concern and the possible relationship with gangs, etc. The Children's Commissioner has been asked by Government (Tim Loughton) to conduct a national survey of the prevalence of gang activity; and children going missing can be an indicator of serious crime being committed in an organised way.

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/csegg1>

There have been problems associated with the police data and local authority data around the prevalence of children who are reported missing during any year, not only missing from the care system but also missing from parental care in the community. It is estimated by the police that 10,000 individual children are reported missing in a year, but this does not seem to be reflected in the data collected by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards or by other national bodies such as the Department for Education.

The remit of this Policy Overview Committee review will be to cover the issues relating to data collection at the national and local level; and also the implications for practice and the intelligence that should be shared to help protect and safeguard Hillingdon's children.

### **Remit - who / what is this review covering?**

To avoid duplication, this review will not be covering child trafficking, per se, but only data relating to children who have been reported missing from care either through the airport terminals or in the locality of Hillingdon.

There is already in existence a plethora of statutory guidance around safeguarding children who are reported missing from care. (See Background Reading List) The purpose of the review will not be to reinvent national and local policies, but will be primarily about ensuring consistent application of what is already statutory, and an existing requirement for safeguarding vulnerable children.

A spin-off from undertaking this review will be to ensure that Hillingdon and its partner agencies will be fit and ready for future inspections by Ofsted and related external regulators, who will have missing children as a significant focus in both the announced and un-announced inspections, which are soon to come into force.

**EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

The proposed first session will be a Power Point presentation by Paul Hewitt (Service Manager, Safeguarding Children & Quality Assurance Service) on the national issues and local issues relating to children missing from home or care. This will be accompanied by handouts to members and a question and answer session to ensure a fuller understanding of the background issues.

**Witnesses**

The second session will include witnesses.

It is suggested that a representative from the Metropolitan Police, based at the local Missing Persons Unit in West Drayton would be an appropriate witness. It is also suggested that one of the registered care home managers, Steve White, would also be a key witness for members to have available in a question and answer session.

Other potential witnesses might include, Lynda Crellin, the Local Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chairman who receives data from the various multi-agency operational meetings relating to child trafficking and missing children.

**Intelligence**

- Updated data on children missing after arrival at the airport will be made available to members at the first session; alongside the presentation.
- Local data relating to children missing from care will also be made available at the first session, along with any benchmarking comparative data.

**Lines of enquiry**

It will be important for members to put questions to all the witnesses and the main presenters in the first session about the definitions of children missing from care, and the statutory requirements for reporting this at both the national and local level; and the implications for practice.

**PROPOSALS****LOGISTICS****Proposed timeframe & milestones**

Meeting Date *	Action	Purpose / Outcome
30 July 2012	Agree Scoping Report	Background information and literature
12 September 2012	Witness Session 1 Paul Hewitt – presentation national landscape and local issues	Evidence & enquiry Question and answer session
10 October 2012	Witness session 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Police representative – Missing Persons Unit</li> <li>○ Registered Children’s Home Manager – Local Authority</li> <li>○ Local Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chairman</li> </ul>	Evidence & enquiry Question and answer session
21 November 2012	Draft Final Report	Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report

*\* Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

### **Risk assessment**

The resource implications will be mainly around making the expertise in the Local Authority Senior Officer team available to the Members.

**APPENDIX A****Safeguarding Arrangements for Children Missing from Care**

The Local Safeguarding Children Board has developed a 3 tier model to address the issue of children being reported missing from care. At a strategic level, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (main Board meeting comprising core agencies and attended by senior managers) receives data relating to children who have been reported missing in the local area, and also children who may be at risk of trafficking and going missing after arrival at Heathrow airport.

A secondary tier of response includes a number of sub-groups which have been created for middle managers, both in the local authority and across partner agencies, to determine policy and levels of response to key issues relating to children reported missing, or likely to be at risk of exploitation and trafficking. These sub-groups meet 6 times a year, and also include representatives from non-Governmental organisations such as ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking), the NSPCC, Action for Children and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection).

At the operational level, there are regular multi-agency meetings to examine the intelligence relating to children reported missing, both those who arrive through the airport and those who are reported missing within the locality of Hillingdon. The Operational Meeting relating to the airport includes representatives from the Heathrow Intelligence Unit, Paladin (law enforcement) representatives from the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and also the local authority. This examines potential indicators for when children who have newly arrived through the airport terminals, could be at risk of being trafficking or going missing. This multi-agency response has helped to reduce considerably the number of children going missing, since the last review by the Policy Overview Committee in 2009/2010.

In addition, there is a multi-agency operational meeting which meets 8 times per year, to discuss all the children and young people who have been reported missing to the local police Missing Persons Unit based in West Drayton. The purpose of this meeting is to share information about possible indicators of exploitation; and share intelligence about other possible gang related issues or exposure to criminal activity.

Both the operational meetings mentioned above have a remit to create a risk management plan for each individual child, to ensure that the safeguarding needs of these children are kept paramount through regular de-briefings and feedback within the professional network.

The Terms of Reference for these operational groups do include membership from local providers who look after children within Hillingdon's boundaries. (Eg Blandford House, Elm Tree Unit etc).

The work of these operational groups and this 3 tiered model has been officially recognised by the Home Office in its strategy for addressing child trafficking, and also in the allied guidance for this purpose. In addition, representatives from Hillingdon were called as witnesses at the recent All Party Parliamentary Select Committee on children missing from care.

The Terms of Reference for the multi-agency groups are maintained on the Local Safeguarding Children Board website along with other information for professionals, who need to be mindful of the risks associated with children going missing from care.

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=15535>

### **Background Reading**

- Report from the joint enquiry into children who go missing from care (June 2012 – APPG)

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/rcpp/assets/attachments/1461\\_joint\\_appg\\_inquiry\\_report..\\_original.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/rcpp/assets/attachments/1461_joint_appg_inquiry_report.._original.pdf)

- DCSF (2009) Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care

<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=statutory+guidance+on+children+who+run+away+and+go+missing+from+home+care>

- London Child Protection Procedures – Version 4 – supplementary procedures on safeguarding children who go missing from home or care

[http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary\\_procedures.html](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures.html)

- Barnados (2012) *Cutting them free* : How is the UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation

[http://www.barnados.org.uk/get\\_involved/campaign/cutthemfree.htm](http://www.barnados.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cutthemfree.htm)

- Barnados (2011) What's going on to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation? – Jago, S et al

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[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/media\\_centre/press\\_releases/press\\_releases\\_archive.htm?ref=73573](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/news_and_events/media_centre/press_releases/press_releases_archive.htm?ref=73573)

- CEOP (2011) Child trafficking update – strategic threat assessment

[http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/child\\_trafficking\\_update\\_2011.pdf](http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/child_trafficking_update_2011.pdf)

- The Children's Society (2011) *Make runaways safe launch report*

<http://makerunawayssafe.org.uk/>

- DfE (March 2012) Children's homes in England – data pack

<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=childrens+homes+in+england+data+pack>

- DfE (March 2010) *The Children Act 1989: Guidance and regulations, Volume 2, Care Planning, placement and case review* – London: HM Government

<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=children+act+1989+volume+2+care+planning>

- ACPO Guidance on the management, recording and investigations of missing persons (2010) NPIA

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2011/201103CRIIMP02.pdf>

- Rochdale – serious case review – executive summary

- Derby – serious case review – executive summary 2011

[http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=derby+serious+case+review&hl=en&gbv=2&gs\\_l=hp.1.1.0i2j0i5l4j0i5i30j0i8l3.1125.7391.0.10735.12.9.0.3.3.0.187.1016.3j6.9.0...0.0.iHX8vwLPohs&oq=derby+serious+cas](http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=derby+serious+case+review&hl=en&gbv=2&gs_l=hp.1.1.0i2j0i5l4j0i5i30j0i8l3.1125.7391.0.10735.12.9.0.3.3.0.187.1016.3j6.9.0...0.0.iHX8vwLPohs&oq=derby+serious+cas)

- Child sexual exploitation – Government Action Plan – 2011 – Tim Loughton

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<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/tackling%20child%20sexual%20exploitation%20-%20action%20plan.pdf>

- 'Puppet on a String'

[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf\\_puppetonastring\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf_puppetonastring_report_final.pdf)

- Missing children – ECPAT

<http://www.ecpat.org.uk/content/missing-children-dalals-story>