

**Multi-Agency Strategy
Prevention: Children
Running Away / Going
Missing from Home and
Care**

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Document Author	<p>Sonia Johnson Head of specialist services</p> <p>On behalf of:</p> <p>Children’s Social Care</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Borough Council</p> <p>Time Square, Market Street Bracknell</p> <p>Berkshire RG12 1JD</p> <p>Telephone 01344 352020</p> <p>E-mail Childrens.social-care@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p>	
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Please contact:

Policy and Research Officer

Children's Social care

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Time Square

Market Street

Bracknell

Berkshire RG12 1JD

Email: sarah.roberts@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Telephone: 01344 351582

Fax: 01344 351521

Minicom: 01344 352045

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1 Bracknell Forest Prevention Strategy – Working Together to Safeguard those at risk of going Missing from Home and Care

1.1 Statement of intent

- 1.1.1 This is a short complementary strategy to look at the local multi-agency arrangements assisting with the prevention of missing children incidents – to be read in conjunction with ‘Children Who Run Away and are Missing from Home and Care Policy and Procedure’ (v 3.3 May 2014).
- 1.1.2 Running away can be indicative of wider problems in a child or young person’s life; children who decide to run away are often unhappy, vulnerable and can be at risk of significant harm. According to the Children’s Society, nationally a quarter of children and young people who run away from home or from care each year are at risk of serious harm. As such, a great deal of responsibility lies with local government and their partners to safeguard the young and vulnerable. It is critical that Bracknell Forest has a support system in place to reduce the risk of young people running away.
- 1.1.3 A co-ordinated multi-agency response across a range of policy areas and operational partners is vital in protecting and supporting vulnerable children. Whilst significant work has been done to improve education, early intervention and family support to address some of the social problems that can trigger young people to run away, there is still more to be done in improving support services for children at risk of going missing.
- 1.1.4 The development of this strategy offers an invaluable opportunity for the local authority to examine local involvement, analyse the potential impact on preventing young people running away, and consider how agencies can work in partnership to ensure the adequate safeguarding of children through intervention and prevention measures. Furthermore, the strategy can explore ways in which the local response can be strengthened.
- 1.1.5 It is estimated that each year in the UK, there are approximately 240,000 notifications of children going missing – with such notifications relating to approximately 140,000 children.
- 1.1.6 Within Bracknell Forest between April 1st 2014 and November 7th 2014 there were 73 missing notifications on open Social Care cases – relating to 34 individual children. Eight of the children were Looked After (LAC), one was a Child Protection (CP) case, and the remaining 25 children were open Child In Need (CIN) cases.
- 1.1.7 The well-being and safety of individual children and young people is paramount to our work. Bracknell Forest Council’s Children Young People and Learning (CYPL) promotes assessment and services that are centred on children and young people themselves - – focussing on *their* individual needs and risks.

- 1.1.8 This strategy sets out the commitment of CYPL and partner agencies to proactively work to prevent and reduce the incidence of local children / young people going missing.
- 1.1.9 We recognise that only a proactive, co-ordinated, multi-agency approach will be effective in reducing incidents of missing, and therefore the risk of harm i.e. child sexual exploitation. There is an overlap with other areas of need such as young people exposed to domestic abuse, those involved in offending behaviour, and those in local authority care. Bracknell Forest has a jointly chaired (CSC and Police) CSE/Missing Panel that is well attended and can evidence it is developing positively with some good outcomes. It is important to keep in mind that it is impossible to eliminate all risks to children and young people being harmed, but there is a lot we can do - particularly if we work together.
- 1.1.10 As well as the significant individual and societal impact attached to going missing, there are also substantial financial implications for example expensive and restrictive residential placements, as a reaction to when a young person runs away. By managing risks that exist, we reduce the likelihood of a child, young person, or young adult leaving care being harmed.
- 1.1.11 The mere age and stage of development of young people / care leavers presents both opportunities and increased risks. This strategy looks at who needs to do what, in order to increase awareness about risk factors, present ways to reduce missing incidents, and increase the personal safety of young people.

To :-

- Ensure that we are working in a joined-up and proactive way in preventing 'missing' incidents occurring, as well as working reactively to young people who are going missing.
- Ensure there is an understood expectation and commitment to working together across agencies to identify those vulnerable to going missing and the risks associated with that. Our focus needs to be on building resilience, and increasing the personal safety of vulnerable young people.

2 Our aim is to :-

- Prevent – Reduce the number of children who go missing
- Protect – Reduce the risk of harm to those who go missing
- Provision – Provide missing children & families with support and Guidance.

To do this a variety of people need to work with young people, their families and / or carers, professionals and communities to raise awareness of the issue, and ensure our early help services are well placed to provide effective support.

2.1 How we will achieve our priorities?

- There is a strategic service manager lead for missing children within Bracknell as well as a designated police Manger
- A Multi agency Missing Childrens Panel meets monthly to monitor and progress our local missing agenda
- Data is collected and scrutinised by the LSCB

3 How we are doing this across the partnership / what else do we need to do?

	Prevention Strategies		
	What are we doing / going to do?	How will we do it?	Evidence
1	Ensure that there are clear policies and processed to support the work of responding to missing children.	Through the provision of multi-agency practice guidance and standards for responding to missing children.	Children who Run Away and are Missing from Home and Care : policy and procedure May 2014
2	Have an understanding of the 'picture' and context of 'missing' in Bracknell and whether there are locations or venues which are high risk and where children regularly go missing to.	The police and local authority will collate and share data which will be analysed to identify hot spots which will then be targeted and shared as appropriate.	Joint report to LSCB executive 16/09/14 and annual analysis thereafter.
3	Develop a better understanding of the reasons why children and young people run away and go missing. Ensure that colleagues working with, or in contact with children understand missing issues to support them in developing their work on intervention and prevention	By the use of data collated from return interviews to try and understand the push and pull factors and respond accordingly. Through multi-agency training and development to ensure Children's workforce employees have sufficient awareness of the possible physical and emotional impacts and services available.	An analysis of missing events took place between Jan - April 2014 evidencing a need to improve our return interview arrangements. An analysis of return interviews is due to be completed Dec 2014 A bespoke training event is being planned to be delivered by Research In Practice, early 2014. Silsip (children in care council) have been asked to do a presentation to employees on the Runway Charter, early

Prevention Strategies			
	What are we doing / going to do?	How will we do it?	Evidence
			2014.
4	For schools to deliver services designed to heighten awareness and reduce risk	Develop and deliver a package of training resources for Young People. Engage with schools to encourage the use of CEOP Thinkuknow training.	Bracknell Forests Team Leader for Safe Guarding and Inclusion – sits on the CSE/missing panel and has oversight of the significant work is taking place / being developed within schools.
5	Improve the connectivity with both local authority / private fostering services and the private providers residential sector to ensure that there are policies and practice to minimise the likelihood of children going missing and to respond appropriately when they do.	Family Placement Team and Procurement and Contracts Officer, to include residential and fostering service in policy development and training. By sharing the Ofsted report 'Running Away' 2012 with provider colleagues we will share Children's views about the need to be listened to and what may help them. Through an emphasis on missing children within the LAC strategy.	Family Placement sent the Children who Run Away and are Missing from Home and Care : policy and procedure May 2014 to all Foster Carers. A what to do one page guidance and the Runaways Charter is also being circulated in December 2014.
6	We will ensure that the link between going missing and child sexual exploitation (CSE) is well known and understood	Emphasise the link in policies, procedures and training. Ensure there is a clear link between Missing and CSE operationally. The strategic lead within social care has the responsibility for both CSE and missing. CSE is a priority area for LSCB for which there is an active CSE sub group.	In July 2104 the CSE operations panel and the Missing Childrens Panel merged and are jointly chaired by the CSC and Police.

Protection Strategies			
	What are we doing / going to do?	How will we do it?	Evidence
1	We have a multi agency co – ordinated approach to missing children.	We are doing this through our partnership working on a strategic and practical operational level.	Pan Berkshire Missing Strategic Group Local CSE Missing/ Operations Panel . LSCB CSE Strategic Sub Group

2	Information sharing is a critical factor in correctly identifying vulnerability and ensuring children are found quickly.	Agencies will share information and intelligence with each other to assist in the prevention of missing and rapid location of young people if they do go missing.	Multi agency information sharing protocol
	The police will inform the Local Authority of all missing children reports and subsequent found notifications. The police will respond robustly to all reports of missing children	There is well established arrangement that missing and found notifications are routinely sent to CSC by the police. Both the police and CSC have a risk assessment pro forma to assist with risk management and location of children known to be vulnerable.	Data analysis checks in April and September 2014 indicate this arrangement is working well.
3	Using information and data gathered from return interviews at a strategic level will endeavour to better understand the reasons why children run way / go missing	Children will be offered a return interview either by CSC, Youth Services or an appointed independent person. Multi agency meetings (CIN/LAC/CAF/CP) will cover factors regarding missing.	An analysis of return interviews for 2014 will be completed in December 2014.
4	We will intervene at an early stage of a child going missing to attempt to reduce the risk of them going missing again and to reduce the harm they may suffer.	Children will be offered a return interview by either CSC, Youth Services or an independent person. Multi agency meetings (CIN/CP/LAC/CAF) will include focus on missing as an issue. The Family Placement Team will consider the risk of missing within the match and prior to placement. Where appropriate child protection procedures will be followed. Where appropriate the police may use disruption strategies.	Referral and Assessment procedures There is a predict and prevent checklist and the LAC commissioning strategy coverings missing arrangements. Berkshire Child protection procedures Work has taken place with a local hotel 'hot spot'
5	We will ensure there is a robust approach to completing return interviews	We will monitor and track compliance of the undertaking of return interviews.	Performance & Governance report weekly to managers

<i>Provision Strategies</i>		
What are we doing /	How will we do it?	Evidence

	going to do?		
1	We will ensure that services to young people and families are of a high standard and that safety and well-being remain paramount.	<p>We will ensure that children receive a service in a timely manner</p> <p>We will ensure that Young people and their families receive a supportive and effective service or that they are sign posted to the appropriate service</p> <p>We will audit cases to ensure that the quality of the work is good.</p>	Any audit evidence (AE)
2	Engagement of the voluntary sector	Increase engagement of the voluntary sector. Involve (trading as Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action) have agreed to circulate a letter on behalf of the LA to try and stimulate the 'market'	Work in progress
3	Ensure that Youth line (youth counselling and Youth Services web sites offer good quality advice on Missing and CSE issues	Both agencies have been asked to review their web sites and provide information links on missing and CSE related issues	Work requested
4	Strengthen the role of IROs	An earlier review will be convened if missing is increasing Monitoring RI as part of the review. Ensuring that the care plan addresses missing	HOS (SS) attending IRO Team Meeting to discuss early 2015.
5	Commissioning with Childrens homes to ensure that Missing arrangements form part of our contract.	CSC has a Procurement and Contracts Officer, Finance – to ensure that Missing arrangements are a contractual requirement.	With current contracts.