

SURREY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD RETURN HOME INTERVIEWS AUDIT 2016/17

Introduction:

Children who go missing can be at risk, and return interviews are a way in which this or any actual harm can be uncovered and managed. Statutory guidance on children who go missing states that when a child is found they should be offered an independent return interview (DfE, 2014). The key benefits of return interviews are to identify Children) at risk; understand the risks and issues faced whilst missing; reduce the risks of future episodes of missing; and equip children) with the resources and knowledge of how to stay safe if they do choose to go missing again (DfE, 2014). The 2016 missing data shows that on average 132 children a month go missing in Surrey. These include children who are known to Surrey Children's Service, those for whom there is no involvement with Surrey, unaccompanied minors and children from other local authorities placed in Surrey. Missing episodes range from a few minutes to several days in length.

Methodology:

- ✘ In order to understand the effectiveness of services, this report mainly pulls out some basic data from the Performance and outcome monitoring report on Independent Return Home Interviews. This is based on the first quarterly report covering the period from 1st April to 30th June 2016.
- ✘ There was an audit completed by a Quality Assurance Officer in Surrey County Council (SCC) to explore the quality of interviews. The audit consisted of 10 children identified by the police as being missing on 3 or more occasions during the month of July. The findings from this audit have been compared with the findings from similar audit on RHIs carried out during May 2016.
- ✘ The Quality Assurance Officer of the SSCB and the Quality Assurance Officer in SCC carried out a brief audit of the LCS records of 6 children who went missing since April 2016 mainly exploring how the information around the missing episode is being used.

Outcome:

Children's Services Quality Assurance Team and Surrey Police to continue to carry out routine audits to monitor the effectiveness and quality of the Return Home Interview Services provided by Missing People Charity

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What needs to happen next?
Positive feedback about the Return Home Interview (RHI) services from MASH and staff are attending relevant training	Circumstances that led to the child going missing being discussed have improved but are still not routinely explored	Children's Service and Surrey Police continue to routinely evaluate the quality and detail of Return Home Interview's received from the charity Missing People and sharing and implementing best practice
Return Home Interview information is written and sent to Children's Services within timescales	Where they went / who they were with and what they did is being explored but little evidence of investigating further into the details when a child refuses this information	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Further information and resources:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SSCB Policy and Procedures</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Missing People website</p> </div>
In August 2016, there has been an improvement compared to previous months to the quality of RHI's received by Surrey Police which identified locations of child sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour, patterns of drug and alcohol use/activity of those under 18 going missing	Push / pull factors are being discussed / explored but there is still a lack of professional curiosity in investigating further into the details / snippets of information given by the child.	
Good examples of safety advice provided by interviewers around media use, safety at night and traffic/road safety was commended	Missing episode not being routinely discussed / explored with or by IRO for children who are Looked After	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px;"> <p style="color: red;">If you are concerned about the safety of a child, young person or an adult you can contact our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.</p> <p>Phone: 0300 470 9100</p> <p>Email: mash@surreycc.gov.uk</p> <p>Out of hours phone: 01483 517898 to speak to the emergency duty team.</p> </div>

