

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board Road Shows 2013



Learning from GSCB Audit on Children who go Missing from Home or Care Supplementary Workshop Material

The following notes supplement, and do not replace, the more detailed learning points discussed in small group workshops during the Safeguarding Road Shows.

Definitions

Current statutory guidance: 'children up to the age of 18 who have run away from their home or care placement, have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts are unknown'.

Safe and well checks

Current statutory guidance explains that 'safe and well checks' should be carried out by the police as soon as possible after the child has returned, in order to:

- check whether the child has suffered harm
- find out where & with whom they have been
- provide an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against, them.

Return interviews

Return interviews are more in-depth than safe and well checks. They should be carried out by a person who is suitably skilled to carry out these interviews. The interviews should in most cases be completed within 72 hours of a child returning home. Running away is often a sign of a greater problem, and return interviews help identify abuse, neglect and exploitation that may have happened whilst the young person or child has run away.

Multi Agency Quality Assurance Sub Group



- 86% of the episodes were for 18 hours or less, the rest were over 18 hours
- Even distribution between girls and boys reported missing
- Distribution from age perspective showed no noticeable variation from national picture
- Most from the Gloucester . Next highest Cheltenham and Stroud. Tewkesbury had the lowest numbers
- In every case the young person concerned was found
- Just over a quarter of all children reported missing had been involved in more than one episode.
- Factors contributing to these multiple episodes are unique in each case, although it is clear that there are some common 'push' and 'pull' factors which can be identified.

What sorts of good practice did we find?

- Missing incidents reported in line with the local protocol
- Prompt assessment of need by the local authority's children's services
- Good use of gathering intelligence to inform misper reports and actions
- Safe and well checks undertaken and evident on records
- Good liaison when a child is being looked for or found
- Best when "worker listened and gave good advice and looks at things from your point of view".

Common reasons for going missing: "PULL "	Common reasons for going missing: "PUSH" factors
Peer Influence Gang Offending Substance misuse Influence of adults Being in care & running home	Arguments and conflicts Conflict within a care placement Poor family relationships – own parents or step parent issues Issues with boundaries and control School related difficulties Bullying Physical, Sexual or Emotional Abuse, Neglect

Stay aware of the link to being at risk of child sexual exploitation :

- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **drugs**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **money**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **accommodation**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **clothes**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **other gifts**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **peer group credibility**
- Exchanging sex or sexual acts for **affection/ attention**
- Commercial or organised** (i.e. for financial gain by the abusing adult)
- Informal sexual exploitation** (swapping of sex in return for something e.g. cigarette)
- Grooming** (online or in the community – preparing a yp to be sexually exploited)
- Evidence of being a victim of internal or external trafficking

Vulnerabilities

- Not in Education, Employment or Training
- Truancy/poor school attendance
- Historic child protection concerns
- Experience of living in care
- Repeat episodes of going missing/running away
- Homelessness
- Problematic drug and alcohol use
- Learning difficulties/mental health needs
- Parental unmet needs
- Offending behaviour

Risk Indicators

- Relationships with older/powerful individuals
- Historical sexual abuse and/or sexual assault
- Evidence of grooming
- Frequenting known areas for sexual exploitation
- Unsafe sexual relationships
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Inappropriate internet use
- Gang, suspected or known criminal activities
- Trafficked (external and/or internal)
- Victim of crime

What could have been better?

- Misper report used more actively as a 'working document' to keep sharing information
- More consistent recording when a child who runs away frequently has returned.
- More consistently working on *co-ordinated* multi agency case planning.
- Sharing the young person's perspective between agencies:

"Depending on who are you are, what your role is, they will trust you and talk to you – we need to understand this in the way we work together to understand the child's journey in a joined up way".(Focus Group member)

What else is happening?

- A GSCB sub group taking forward all recommendations from the audit report
- Influencing national picture % practice to safeguard looked after children across counties
- Police safe and well checks will be completed by designated Police Officers

Good practice tips for you, if working with a young person who runs away

- Take part in getting together a really good assessment of need taking a full account of history
- If part of creating a safety plan, make sure it fully includes the views of the child/young person
- Young people told us they feel supported when they have at least one trusted person who they feel listens, understands their point of view, involves them in decision making and explains clearly if things they have asked for cannot happen
- You might not be the young person's "trusted adult" – but someone will be
- Call for a meeting to learn from and share the views of the child as understood across the different agencies involved

Healthy challenge questions to ask others

- Has a Return Interview been done consistently, in the right situations, to a high standard?
- Who is getting the perspective of the child? Is this informing the risk analysis and safety plan?

Where can I learn more?

GSCB pages for practitioners: your responsibilities and the local protocol

GSCB pages for parents and carers: what you can do if someone you know runs away

GSCB Pages for children and young people: what to do if you are thinking of running away

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Learning from GSCB Audit on Child Sexual Exploitation

Supplementary Workshop Material

The following notes supplement, and do not replace, the more detailed learning points discussed in small group workshops during the Safeguarding Road Shows.

Definition

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts money) as a result of them performing, an/or another or others, performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or economic vulnerability.

Multi Agency Quality Assurance Sub Group



What we found

- Most referrals raising concern about risk of CSE came from the Police & Social Care, followed by Education settings & Health professionals
- Stroud was found to have the highest number of CSE referrals, followed by Gloucester
- Risk indicators were of particular note: Missing from Home/Care; In Care; Drug Abuse; Possession of Gifts/Money; Known to be Sexually Active; Committing Crime..
- Young people referred were predominantly white females between the ages of 12 -16 with the peak age being 14 -15 years old
- Male victims were predominantly white but with a larger age range of 9 -17 years of age with 15 years old being the peak.
- Two were already subject to a Child Protection Plans. None of the victims identified were made subject to a CPP as a result of the CSE referral/crime committed.
- 68% did not name a suspect/offender at the point of referral.
- The majority of CSE suspects/offenders are white males, with the most prevalent age group being between 21 – 25 years of age.

- The majority of identified suspects/offenders appeared to operate alone with only two being identified as having multiple victims. One suspect linked to an Organised Crime Group (OCG).
- The suspects/offenders all operated in the “online” environment, inferring that the victim is less likely to make initial contact with an older exploiter face to face.

What sorts of good practice did we find?

- Good evidence of referring concerns to the police or children's social care
- Increasingly consistent use of the CSE screening tool developed
- Good examples of safety plans
- Many, but not all practitioners are sufficiently aware of the risks posed to children

What could have been better?

- In some cases, recognising key warning signs of sexual exploitation earlier on
- Strengthening the join up between agencies on sexual exploitation in individual cases
- Making sure all the agencies working with the child are fully involved in the risk assessment, strategy meeting or development of a safety plan

What else is happening?

- Gloucestershire partners' clear strategy in place to safeguard children at risk of CSE
- GSCB commitment to addressing CSE issues through ongoing scoping, training and action, via its CSE, Workforce Development and Communications sub groups

Good practice tips for you, if working with a young person at risk of CSE

- Learn the risk signs of sexual exploitation
- Remember that a focus on risky behaviours can potentially a “smokescreen” to tackling CSE
- Contact the police or children's social care in good time if you are concerned, so that risk is assessed and safety plan developed where needed
- Play *your* part in fully engaging the young person in the safety planning process
- Don't let go - hold the baton

Healthy challenge questions to ask others

- Are professionals in your own setting trained to spot signs of CSE?
- Are you equipped to take responsibility for your part in coordinating a multi-agency response?
- What does a robust safety plan look like - and how do I raise a challenge about a poor plan?

Where can I learn more?

- You can find Gloucestershire's **Multi-agency Protocol** for Safeguarding Children at Risk of Abuse through Child Sexual Exploitation, on the GSCB website pages for professionals
- There you will also find information and guidance about the **screening tool** for CSE, developed from the Barnardos SERAF (Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework)
- GSCB web pages guide you through **making a referral** to the Police Central Referral Unit and Children's Social Care;
- Regular training courses are available to you through the GSCB **multi-agency CSE training programme** - check the GSCB web pages for information and sign up for GSCB Alerts.