



## Children Missing from Home or Care and/or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation Annual Report. Frontline Practitioner Guide



### What does the information tell us?

#### Children who go missing from home:

- Most only go once when they go missing from home
- Some of our most vulnerable young people who go missing in our communities are in semi-independent living or supported accommodation
- Children's peak time for going missing is in the school day (noon- 2pm)
- Girls are as likely to go missing as boys
- Many of our children who go missing are already known to have mental health problems and are known to CAMHS
- The use of legal highs is reported as peer pressure factor that increases vulnerability

#### Children who go missing from care:

- Our most vulnerable cared for children go missing multiple times and these children are also vulnerable to CSE
- Many of our cared for children go missing in association with other cared for children or care leavers
- The 'mix' of children placed together, the level of support and the quality of the risk assessment and plan has a profound impact on the risk that they may go missing

#### Children at Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation:

- Most children subject of a CSE child protection plan are female
- The most common factors are disrupted education histories, poor self esteem, alcohol and drug mis-use
- Highest sources of exploitation we are identifying comes from older males in the community, on-line grooming and social networking, and peer, 'boyfriend', exploitation
- A significant number of our children identified as being at risk of CSE are already known to CAMHS, or have identified mental health problems eg self- harming
- Many also go missing
- Very few females have been identified as person's of interest
- Some of our children subject of a CSE child protection plan had been subject of a child protection plan years earlier
- Inevitably some of our children remain at risk after 18 and are now engaged with adult services before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in transition planning to ensure they remain safe and continued support across agencies is in place for them.
- The boys we are currently aware of where child sexual exploitation is risk have emerged because they are gay or are questioning their sexuality, feel isolated and become vulnerable through adult gay on-line 'dating' forums

## What children and young people tell us

*'Sometimes it feels better to get away from home than stay'*

*"The men are nice at first and after a couple of months when they think everything is fine they start forcing them to do things they do not want to do like sleeping with them and all their friends or forcing them to keep drugs in their mum's house or asking them to carry things. By then the girls are too scared to say no.'*

*'You want someone who has been there and understands and is not just reading a text book.'*

- *'I was being bullied in school and pretty much at home and the only time I felt OK was when I was with these men.'*

## How do we improve practice?

- *'Missing from home/ care:*
- *Ascertain the education pattern for the child to inform your risk assessment*
- *If you have concerns about a child, ask if they have ever gone missing*
- *Be particularly vigilant towards young people on the verge of independence and risk assess them.*
- *Ask them where they feel safe and who they feel safe with*
- *For children who have been missing, check their history in respect of their mood and emotional well-being*

- Child Sexual Exploitation:
- Use the Child Sexual Exploitation screening tool to engage the child in the discussion about your concerns and use it to inform your next steps
- Consider if boys you are concerned about might be at risk – boys don't tell us – we don't ask
- Assess the child's behaviours in respect of the likely impact to cause them harm not their capacity to make decisions/take risks
- Make yourself social media aware – you cannot assess the risk if you don't understand the technology/ social media sites young people are using

## What will the LSCB do?

- The LSCB partners will establish a multi-agency integrated Missing from Home and Care and Child Sexual Exploitation team to support best practice at the earliest opportunity for the child

### **Missing from Home and Care:**

Will review and update the operational guidance so practitioners can be confident about their responsibilities and how they can make a difference together.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Will run a CSE practitioner workshop to make sure that you have the skills, tools and knowledge to assess risk and intervene, and are confident about using them.