

16 September 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

Consultations on runaway and missing children and looked after children

Missing People welcomes the opportunity to respond to the three recently published consultations on issues connected to missing and runaway children and provisions for looked after children:

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care
- Reforming children's homes care: consultation on changes to The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 (as amended) and The Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration) (England) Regulations 2010
- Improving safeguarding for looked after children: consultation on changes to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

The charity very much supports the positive ethos behind each of these consultations, which is to ensure better outcomes for children and young people, and believe that many of the proposed provisions will help to ensure that the better processes and structures are in place to promote good practice. Nevertheless, we feel that underpinning these processes and structures must be a supportive and child-centred culture within agencies that provide services and care to children and young people who have run away or gone missing, or who may be at risk of doing so. This is particularly important for those working in care homes, and who thus have a pivotal role in providing care and stability to this vulnerable group. By this, we mean that the response to each child or young person should be tailored in line with their needs, and that their views should be listened to and respected in terms of their care. The need for a positive, child-centred and supportive approach must be recognised throughout these consultations.

To aid this, Missing People recommends that processes and provisions for these children and young people must be structured around the journey of going missing – those ahead of a missing or runaway episode, whilst away, and then aftercare – to ensure that they are comprehensively supported at each stage. This would help to prevent missing incidences (both first instances and repeat episodes), whilst cohering with the Cross-Government Strategy on Missing Children and Adults, which focuses on prevention, protection and provision.

Should the Department wish to discuss any of the charity's views in greater detail, please do get in touch as we would be happy to support in any way we can; you can reach me at susannah.drury@missingpeople.org.uk, or on 020 8392 4584.

Yours faithfully,

Susannah Drury
Director of Policy and Advocacy