

Laura Holton
Child Protection Team
Safer Children Stronger Families Division
Scottish Government
2B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ



15 September 2010

Dear Ms Holton,

Consultation on the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

I write on behalf of the UK charity Missing People in response to the consultation on the draft National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland.

Missing People is pleased that the guidance recognises the contribution of voluntary sector organisations to this area. We agree that effective relationships should be developed between voluntary and statutory agencies, as multi agency working is often key in ensuring that children are able to access the full range of support measures that they need.

Missing People welcomes the reference to missing children in part four of the guidance, as it is important to recognise the risk of harm posed to children who run away or go missing. However, it is also key to explicitly acknowledge here that running away can be symptomatic of serious issues from which the child is looking to escape. Therefore those who work with children need to consider the potential harm children can face whilst away alongside whether there are any underlying support needs that require addressing.

Last year, Missing People's Runaway Helpline received more than 7,000 calls for help from vulnerable and missing children in Scotland. The charity regularly works in partnership with the police and social services to help resolve cases across the UK, and where appropriate we publicise cases of missing children through our network of media partners. We would be pleased for the new guidance to include our contact details so that those working with children are able to get in touch with us quickly and easily for assistance should a child go missing.

I would be happy to discuss any of the content of this letter in greater detail with you. I can be reached on **020 8392 4566** or at holly.towell@missingpeople.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly".

Holly Towell
Senior Policy and Campaigns and Officer