



Registered Charity No. 1020419

Missing News

The latest developments relating to missing

Welcome to the tenth issue of *Missing News*, bringing you the latest developments in policy, practice and research from across the missing sector, and other linked sectors.

International Missing Children's Day takes place on Sunday 25 May 2014, so please read on to find out how this is being marked with our **Big Tweet for Missing Children** and the launch of the **Child Rescue Alert** system.

Simply click on one of the sections below to be taken to the latest updates in that area or scroll down to browse all news and developments. Please contact Jenny Dickson (Information and Evaluation Officer) at jenny.dickson@missingpeople.org.uk if you have any feedback about this newsletter or would like to share the work of your organisation or project in the next edition.

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Policy and parliamentary work

Children and young people

In April, the Department for Education (DfE) published new [statutory guidance on keeping](#)

[children safe in education](#). The guidance sets out what schools and colleges must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18. It highlights the fact that a child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The guidance states that, when children are missing, education providers should follow their procedures to identify any incidence of abuse or neglect and signposts the [statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#) for more information about this specific issue.

Child sexual exploitation

Barnardo's and Sarah Champion MP published a joint [report of the Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the United Kingdom](#). The report makes a wide range of legislative and policy recommendations including: more power should be given to Local Safeguarding Children's Boards; the term 'child prostitution' should be removed from all legislation; there should be a greater focus on prevention when children learn about sexual exploitation; and improved training and information should be available for judges and jurors.

Looked after children: Children's homes, out of area placements and the Children and Young People Bill passed in Scotland

Ofsted has published the framework and guidance for the [inspection of children's homes from April 2014](#). Children's homes are expected to be aware of, and implementing, the [statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care](#). The way managers, staff and the placing authority respond to incidents of young people going missing from home forms an integral part of the evaluation of the care provided by the home.

Ofsted also produced a report in April on [looked after children living away from their home area](#) which shows that one in ten looked after children and young people live outside their home local authority area and more than 20 miles from their home community; those in children's homes are three times as likely to have an out of area placement. The report emphasises the importance of ensuring appropriate quality of support and access to services such as education and health care for children placed far from home.

In February, the [Children and Young People Bill](#) was passed in Scotland. Of particular

note is that children in local authority care gain new rights to remain looked after up to the age of 21 and entitlement to aftercare is extended up to their 26th birthday.

Slavery and human trafficking: the Draft Modern Slavery Bill, new NRM data and a new Human Trafficking Bill proposed for Scotland

In April, the Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill published a [report](#) which recommends that the Bill needs to be strengthened to give greater attention to the victims of trafficking; particularly more protection for children, and enhanced legal support and compensation for victims.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has published National Referral Mechanism [data](#) for 2013 on human trafficking. The data shows that there has been a 47 per cent increase in referrals of potential victims of human trafficking since 2012 and that the number of British children believed to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation has more than doubled in the same period. You can read more about this issue in our information sheet [Trafficked Children and Missing](#), published jointly with [ECPAT](#).

The Justice Secretary for Scotland, Kenny MacAskill, [announced proposals](#) in March to introduce a dedicated Human Trafficking Bill in Scotland. The Bill will: consolidate and strengthen existing criminal law against human trafficking; enhance the status and support for the victims of human trafficking; and give statutory responsibility to relevant agencies to work with the Scottish Government to develop and implement a Scottish Anti-Trafficking Strategy.

Domestic Violence

In March, the Home Office published: [A call to end violence against women and girls: action plan 2014](#). The action plan summarises progress towards the elimination of violence against girls and women over the last 12 months and details where government activities will be focused during the coming year in response to emerging challenges. Actions include progressing legislation to criminalise forced marriage, and campaigns to raise awareness of both the general issue and Female Genital Mutilation in the UK. Research has identified that forced marriage and 'honour' based violence can be factors in going missing for some young Asian women; see our information sheet, [Forced Marriage, 'Honour' Based Violence and Missing](#), for more details.

Practice

International Missing Children's Day: The Big Tweet for Missing Children and launch of the Child Rescue Alert system

Missing People will be running the Big Tweet for Missing Children, for the fourth year running on International Missing Children's Day (Sunday 25 May 2014). Every half hour for 24 hours we will be posting a Twitter appeal for a different missing child. You can take part by retweeting the appeals to get as much coverage as possible to help find the missing children. Last year the Big Tweet achieved 58,000 retweets in one day and two missing children were found. Please take part if you can by [following Missing People on Twitter](#) or look out for **#TheBigTweet** on Sunday 25 May.

Also on International Missing Children's Day, Missing People, the National Crime Agency and Groupcall are launching an enhanced Child Rescue Alert system, funded by the players of the People's Postcode Lottery and the European Union. A Child Rescue Alert is activated when a child is missing and known to have been abducted or their life is believed to be at immediate risk. The enhanced system will enable urgent alerts to be sent to the public by text, email or social media, as well as the message being broadcast through media and publicity partners. Please sign up now to receive free alerts - you could help save a child's life: <http://www.childrescuealert.org.uk/register>.

Home Office funding for Missing People

In March, Crime Prevention Minister Norman Baker announced £220,000 funding for Missing People from the Home Office. The funding will contribute towards providing some of our key support services including our free 24 hour helpline 116 000 which anyone affected by a disappearance can call or text for support. The charity also provides police forces with a single point for publicity when a person is reported missing, maximising investigative opportunities and increasing the chances of a person being found.

Missing People launch Support Partner Network

In May, Missing People launched a new Support Partner Network to help safeguard and reconnect more vulnerable missing children and adults. The network of over 200 partners provides a system through which appeals for missing people can be shared when it is not safe to publicise the disappearance in the public domain. Partners sign an agreement to only share briefings about missing people with staff and volunteers and limit the display of information to non-public areas. The network of over 200 support partners, including hostels, youth centres and mental health projects, provides a new resource to police force missing persons units. If your organisation is interested in becoming part of the Support Partner Network, or you would like to find out more, please contact partners@missingpeople.org.uk.

New Information Sheet on homelessness

Missing People, in partnership with [Homeless Link](#), has published a new information sheet [Missing and Homelessness](#). This highlights common factors between homelessness and going missing, including relationship breakdown and family conflict.

Child sexual exploitation

The [NWG Network](#) has added additional resources to their Say Something if you See Something toolkit. This aims to help businesses to spot the signs and report suspected incidences of child sexual exploitation, and the new resources include materials specifically targeted at the hospitality and transport industries such as online information and practical tools.

Children and young people: Child Abduction Hub launch, and a new fund

The charity Parents and Abducted Children Together (PACT), with support from the NCA's CEOP command, has launched the [Child Abduction Hub](#), a website providing information and advice on all types of child abduction to parents and professionals. PACT has also published a new report [Beyond Stranger Danger](#), which builds upon a joint PACT and CEOP report published last year, [Taken: A study of child abduction in the UK](#). The report examines the advice and information given to children on how to avoid abduction by a stranger and assesses whether it remains relevant and effective.

In May, the Cabinet Office [announced a new fund](#) to help vulnerable young people. Funding has initially been awarded to three voluntary organisations including a social action programme where volunteers open up their homes as temporary emergency accommodation for young people, and a project which sets up care leavers with a mentor to support them towards independent living.

Dementia

On 7 May, Public Health England and the Alzheimer's Society launched a new campaign to raise awareness of how to help people with dementia and encourage individuals and businesses to become [Dementia Friends](#). People with dementia can go missing through getting confused and wandering; you can learn about this in our information sheet, [Mental Health and Missing](#).

Mental health: supporting children and young people, and concern around cuts to early intervention programmes

In March, the Department of Health launched the [MindEd website](#) which aims to improve the knowledge and awareness of child mental health issues among professionals and volunteers working directly with children and young people. It is hoped that by helping people identify the signs and understand mental health problems in young people, it will speed up the time taken for them to access appropriate treatment and support.

Youth Access and The Young People's Health Partnerships have published three new [briefings on integrated mental health services for young people](#). They provide important guidance to commissioners in the NHS and local authorities on how to implement responsive and cost-effective age-appropriate services.

Mental health charities have [expressed concern](#) about cuts to early intervention programmes aimed at young people with mental health problems. Early intervention schemes are intended to reduce suicide rates, prevent patients from becoming more ill and keep patients out of hospital and in work. Mental health problems are more prevalent in adults and children who go missing than in the general population, as detailed in [Mental Health and Missing](#).

Learning disability

The Department of Health launched [Think Autism](#) on the 2 April, which updates the Government's 2010 adult autism strategy, [Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives](#). The five key areas for action centre around: increasing awareness and understanding of autism; developing clear pathways for diagnosis; improving access for adults to services and support; helping access to work; and enabling partners to develop relevant services. More information about the links between learning disabilities and going missing can be found in our report, [Intellectual Disabilities and Going Missing](#).

Research

Missing People Family Feedback Survey

We have recently completed our annual survey of families who have used our services in the past year. Findings from the survey will be published shortly, and a report will be available from Missing People's website [here](#).

Can you help the Railway Children with their Safe Places research?

Railway Children is an international charity working with vulnerable children who live alone and at risk on the streets. In the UK, their work is focused on children and young people who run away or go missing, who can be at risk of exploitation and involvement in crime. The charity is currently carrying out research on the journeys young people take when they run away from home or care, to both increase understanding of this and the chances of young people finding a safe place instead of an unsafe one. You can read more about the project [here](#).

The research team are talking to young people directly, but are also asking professionals in relevant fields to share their knowledge via the Safe Places survey. If you work with young people, please do fill in the questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LYYLW8C>. Your help is much appreciated. If you would like to know more about the research please contact Jane Thompson:

j.thompson@railwaychildren.org.uk.

Research by Action for Children shows that one in four children considers running away from home

Action for Children has released [findings](#) from a survey of 1,000 children aged between 8 and 16 in the UK which show that one in four children (27 per cent) has considered running away, with half of them admitting to spending a night away from home without telling their parents. Relationship breakdown was the main reason cited for running away – half because of arguments with family members and 42 per cent who believed their parents did not want them at home. The survey findings also showed that one in five know another child who regularly sleeps away from home because of problems in their family.

New research from Caroline Pidgeon AM about looked after children running away

London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon, recently published findings of a Freedom of Information request sent to all London Boroughs. The boroughs were asked about the numbers of looked after children and young people who had gone missing for more than 24 hours, and the report makes several recommendations, including improved Local Authority data collection systems and strengthened communication and data sharing between care providers and Local Authorities. Caroline Pidgeon's statement is available [here](#), and the full report can be downloaded [here](#).

NSPCC publish [How Safe are our Children? 2014](#)

This report, published by NSPCC in March, compiles 20 different indicators of child protection data from across the UK. Some of the key findings include: the number of children on child protection registers and protection plans is increasing in England, Scotland and Wales; online abuse, self-harm and suicide continue to be growing issues for children and young people; and there is an increased willingness to speak out about abuse and neglect.

The Centre for Social Justice and urban youth charity XLP new report on “Girls and Gangs”

Published in March, this [report](#) is based on research with individuals and organisations involved in gangs from across the UK. The report calls for the Government to act with urgency to better understand the scale and depth of problems with girls in gangs in order to ensure an effective response. Several specific recommendations are made, including producing practical guidance for police and local authorities and embedding youth workers and training NHS staff in gang-affected areas to spot the signs of gang associations. It is well documented that children and young people who go missing are vulnerable to a wide range of inter-related risks, including gang exploitation, both before and when they are missing. You can read more about the issue in the Office of the Children’s Commissioners report: [“If only someone had listened”](#) from the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.

Consultations and inquiries

The Department for Education has opened consultation on [powers to delegate children’s social care functions](#). The proposed regulations will enable local authorities to delegate additional children’s social care functions to third parties. The consultation closes on 30 May 2014.

The Education Select Committee is currently conducting an [inquiry](#) in to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in schools. Submissions should be sent by midday on 6 June 2014.

DfE has published a series of papers which set out key research priorities and questions across education and children’s services for the research and sector community. Individuals and organisations are invited to respond to the papers outlining whether: the areas identified are right; evidence relevant to the proposed research areas is missing; research is already being planned in these areas. The full suite of papers can be found [here](#).

Dates for the diary

25 May International Missing Children's Day including [The Big Tweet for Missing Children](#), launch of the [Child Rescue Alert](#).

28 June – 2 July [Missing People Cycle Challenge](#): a five day cycle challenge from Edinburgh to London sponsored by Tracesmart.

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