



Registered Charity No. 1020419

Missing News

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

Significant news for this edition is the release of a new research report from Missing People: [When the Search is Over: Reconnecting Missing Children and Adults](#). Based on six case studies, the report examines the issues that arise when people, who have gone missing in different circumstances, are found and reconnected.

The newsletter is divided into five sections. 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.

[Policy and parliamentary work](#)

[Practice](#)

[Research](#)

[Consultations and inquiries](#)

[Dates for the diary](#)

Policy and parliamentary work

[Guardianship consultation](#)

The Ministry of Justice consultation on guardianship of the property and finances of

missing people closed on 18 November. You can read the [submission from Missing People](#) here. Additionally, there is an [appendix outlining the experiences of nine families who have had a loved one missing](#) which provides a powerful illustration of the practical and emotional difficulties families encounter because no system of guardianship currently exists. The Ministry of Justice are due to give their response to the consultation by the end of January 2015.

Presumption of Death Act 2013

The Presumption of Death Act 2013 came into force in England and Wales on 1 October 2014. The legislation introduces a new comprehensive and straightforward system which will assist families of missing people (and the legal professionals who support them) to resolve the affairs of a loved one who it is believed has died. Missing People successfully campaigned for the new law and you can read more about the legislation, including updated guidance for families of missing people, on our [Presumption of Death web pages](#).

Child sexual exploitation

In November, Ofsted published findings from a [thematic review evaluating the effectiveness local authorities responding to child sexual exploitation](#). The report is based on evidence from eight local authority areas and makes 25 recommendations for local authorities, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs), Ofsted and the government. The report recommends ensuring every child returning from a missing episode is given a return interview and that information from these interviews is collated and used to improve operational and strategic activity. Another recommendation is to develop a national data set that reports on all prevention, protection and prosecution activity relating to child sexual exploitation in a local authority area, including information on missing children and looked after children moving into and out of the area.

In Scotland, a [national action plan on safeguarding young people at risk of child sexual exploitation](#) was published in November. Recommendations in the report include a public awareness campaign to educate people on how to spot the signs of CSE, as well as specific guidance for people working in the 'night time' economy.

Human trafficking

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has published the [latest statistics](#) on the nature and scale of human trafficking in 2013. More than 2,744 potential victims were identified, a rise of 22 percent on 2012, which the NCA attributes to an improvement in reporting. It suggests the number of cases is likely to be higher due to the covert nature of human trafficking. You can read more about the link between child trafficking and missing in our recently updated [information sheet](#), co-authored by Missing People and ECPAT UK.

In November, the Home Office published an [interim report reviewing the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) – the trafficking and victim identification system in the UK. The review examined whether the NRM provides an efficient means of supporting and identifying potential victims of human trafficking and whether it can, or should, cover all victims of modern slavery. The report identifies three emerging issues including a need for: tighter, professionally managed entry to the NRM; multi-disciplinary decision making; and comprehensive oversight of the system.

Modern slavery

The Home Office published the [Modern Slavery Strategy](#) at the end of November which details actions expected from government departments, agencies and partners in the UK and internationally. The strategy is structured around four components: pursue, prevent, protect and prepare. It includes: plans for prosecution of individuals responsible; strengthening safeguards to protect vulnerable people from exploitation; and improving victim identification, support and protection. The Home Office [estimates](#) that there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2013.

Mental health

In October, the Department of Health published a [policy paper](#) which details plans to improve patient access to mental health services by 2020. The plans are based on commitments to achieve parity of esteem for mental and physical health set out earlier in 2014 in '[Closing the Gap](#)' and in 2011 in '[No Health without Mental Health](#)'. The paper sets out funding commitments for crisis care, as well as mental health beds and early intervention services for young people. Plans for the introduction of access and waiting

standards are also detailed in the paper. You can read more about the links between mental health and missing in our [information sheet](#).

In a separate [announcement](#) in November, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and Department of Health outlined plans for a mental health taskforce which will examine improvements to mental health services for young people, places of safety for people with severe mental health problems in crisis and employment issues.

In October, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published a [report](#) calling for urgent action to continue to improve access to, and the operation of, health-based places of safety for people experiencing a mental health crisis. The report details the findings of a survey of all NHS mental health trusts and two social enterprises providing health-based places of safety. It found that too many providers had to turn away people experiencing a mental health crisis because they were full, or refused to help people intoxicated or exhibiting disturbed behaviour. A quarter of providers did not believe the provision of health-based places of safety in the locality was sufficient.

At the [Policing and Mental Health Summit](#) in October, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, [announced new measures](#) to improve police responses to people living with mental illness. The new measures include a three-month pilot scheme in Sussex which aims to ensure that people detained under the Mental Health Act, and awaiting professional assessment, are held outside of police custody.

Looked after children

In October, the House of Commons Education Select Committee published the [Government response](#) to the each of the committees' twelve recommendations set out in their [report on 16+ care options](#). The recommendations included setting a timeframe for banning the current practice of providing young people leaving care with bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation in emergencies. Statutory guidance is already clear that B&B accommodation is not suitable for young people leaving care and the government will amend this to clarify that B&Bs should only be used in emergencies and for no longer than two working days.

The government has also [published a cross-departmental progress report](#) on the success of the first year of the Care Leaver Strategy, which outlined the actions government

departments would take to improve services and support for young people leaving care.

In September, the Department for Education (DfE) published [statistics on looked after children in England](#) for the year ending 31 March 2014. Key findings show a five per cent increase in the number of children who entered care compared to the previous year, although overall the number of children in care increased by just one per cent in the same time period. There was a six per cent increase in the number of children leaving care and a 26 per cent increase in the number of adoptions of children in care (rising to 5,050), of which 76 per cent were aged under five.

Also in September, DfE published its [response to the consultation on improving permanence for looked after children](#). The government's actions will include: incorporating long term foster care into the definition of permanence in care planning guidance; strengthening requirements for returning children home from care, including a 'return plan', visits and review; and improving the status, security and stability of long-term foster care. The 2013 Ofsted report '[Missing Children](#)' found that placement instability was a key feature for looked after children who run away.

Forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

On 30 September 2014, Scotland [enacted legislation](#) to make it a criminal offence to force someone into a marriage, with penalties of a fine, up to two years in prison, or both. Legislation criminalising forced marriage was introduced in England and Wales in June 2014. In addition to the legislation, the Scottish Government has published [guidance](#) for health workers, educational staff, police officers, and other practitioners on responding to incidents of forced marriage and providing information to communities. Research has identified forced marriage as a factor in going missing for some young women; further information on this is available in our information sheet [Forced marriage, 'honour' based violence and missing](#).

In October, the government published [their response](#) to a consultation on introducing civil protection orders to help prevent female genital mutilation (FGM). The majority of respondents to the consultation (85 per cent) felt that current criminal legislation was not adequate. The government will use provisions of the [Serious Crime Bill](#) to introduce civil protection orders, similar to those available to prevent forced marriage, to strengthen the protection available for victims or potential victims of FGM.

The Department for Education has updated [statutory guidance for keeping children safe in education](#) to reflect new [multi-agency guidelines on FGM and forced marriage](#).

Children and the police

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Children published a [report from its inquiry into children and the police](#) in October. The report showed that children and young people's attitudes towards the police are often characterised by feelings of mistrust and that first contact and early experiences with the police are important in shaping their viewpoints. The report emphasises the need for strong and positive relationships between children, young people and the police. It also underlines the importance of treating anyone who comes into contact with the police, and is under 18, as a child first, giving due regard to their welfare, safety and wellbeing, in line with the Children Act 2004.

Practice

Big Lottery Fund grant for Missing People's family support services

Missing People has been awarded a grant of £499,349 from the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities scheme to help the charity embed and develop its Family Support Programme over the next three years. The services Missing People provides to families affected by missing address the findings of our research [Living in Limbo](#) (Holmes, 2008) and [Living in Limbo: Five years on](#) (Steyne et al, 2013), which found that more than half of families with a missing loved one reported a deterioration in either their physical or mental health. Feelings of isolation are also commonplace and many of the families we support struggle with the ambiguity of their loss. Missing People's bespoke emotional and practical support is available, at no cost, to every family in the UK that is affected by a loved one going missing. Our services include specialist telephone counselling, online guidance, and ongoing telephone support including named family support workers.

Return home interviews in Wiltshire

Missing People has been commissioned by Wiltshire Police to deliver a pilot project to support and safeguard missing children in the county. The project which started in November, offers missing and absent children in Wiltshire and Swindon a Return Home Interview when they are found or choose to return to their home or place of care. In addition, those children and young people at most risk of victimisation and further harm will have the opportunity for intensive one-to-one mentoring and support. Crucially, every child will know how to call, text or email the Missing People 116 000 helpline, meaning the charity can reach more children in crisis who need us. Statutory guidance on children missing from home or care states that children should always be offered a return interview when they come back from a missing incident. You can read more about the issue in our information sheet [Return Interviews](#).

Suicide risk TextSafe®

Missing People has embarked on a new project in partnership with Samaritans which seeks to provide tailor-made support to adults who go missing and are thought to be at risk of suicide. The project builds upon Missing People's 'TextSafe®' and Samaritans' 'third party referral' services, to provide suicidal missing adults a combined offer of support. At the request of police, Missing People texts a missing adult (thought to be at risk of suicide) and then asks a Samaritan volunteer to call the person and offer their listening service. Currently being piloted with seven police forces, and supported by the National Policing lead for missing (Pat Geenty), this service will be rolled out nationally following evaluation in early 2015.

New information sheets from Missing People

Missing People has published an information sheet which examines the links between [missing, running away and crime](#). Crime can be a key factor in the reasons adults, children and young people go missing either in response to a crime that has been committed or threatened against them, or because they are in trouble with the police or involved in criminal activity. Crime can also feature in the lives of children and adults once missing. Whilst away from home, the likelihood of being a victim of crime, or committing a crime (often as part of a survival strategy), may increase. The information sheet uses case

studies of people who have contacted Missing People's 116 000 helpline, to help illustrate the complexities of some of these issues.

Missing People, in partnership with ECPAT UK, has published an updated information sheet on [Trafficked Children and Missing](#) to reflect new statistics from NCA on the nature and scale of human trafficking in the UK and other recent policy developments, including the development of the modern slavery strategy and legislation.

Vulnerable adults

A [booklet](#) advising on new or improved ways the police can deal with people with mental health problems, learning disabilities or drug misuse issues was published by the Home Office in October. The booklet helps police to identify those who may have particular needs or vulnerabilities and suggests the most appropriate response.

Child sexual exploitation

The first [National CSE Awareness Day](#) will take place on 18 March 2015 and aims to highlight the issues surrounding CSE and encourage everyone to think, spot and speak out against abuse. NWG is running a #HelpingHands campaign which asks people to write a personal pledge on their hands and post the photo on social media using this hashtag. NWG's campaign website: www.stop-cse.org was launched at the start of December and provides extensive information on CSE and how practitioners, businesses and the public can help spot and stop it.

Modern slavery

The Home Office has published [briefings](#) explaining how modern slavery affects various industries, the profile of modern slavery victims, and the signs to identify illegal labour providers. The briefings are intended to help businesses protect their workers and spot the signs of slavery.

Mental health of children and young people

DfE [announced](#) that it will be working in partnership with the PSHE Association to help schools learn how to teach pupils about mental health and reduce the stigma associated

with this issue. Additionally, a blueprint for delivering counselling services in schools will be developed by young people and experts.

The NSPCC published a spotlight report on suicide in October. ['On the Edge'](#) examines calls to ChildLine from children and young people about suicidal feelings. The report found that the adults in children's lives (including professionals) are failing to spot the signs of suicidal feelings and, when they do, are not able to provide adequate and appropriate support. Advice for parents and professionals is detailed in the report, alongside a recommendation for the mental health and wellbeing of children to be prioritised by the government and services providers and included in local strategies and school curricula.

Research

New research report from Missing People: 'When the Search is Over'

Missing people launched a new research report in October: [When the Search is Over: Reconnecting missing children and adults](#). Funded by the Oak Foundation, this in-depth study explores the range of ways in which missing people are reconnected to those who have searched for them. Based on six case studies, the research examines the issues that arise when people who have gone missing in different circumstances are found and reconnected.

New 'Reaching Safe Places' research published by Railway Children

In December, Railway Children published a research report [Reaching Safe Places](#) which explores young people's journeys when they run away from home or care. The research found that practitioners are struggling to find safe places for vulnerable children due to fewer services, funding cuts and higher thresholds for interventions.

The study was conducted by the charity with a team of peer researchers who interviewed other young people who had run away or been street-involved. Using Freedom of Information requests to local authorities about emergency placements for young runaways, and consultation with professionals, the research aimed to establish how young

people find safe places to stay when they run away from home or care, identify the barriers to doing so and assess whether current existing emergency provision is an adequate safety net.

Call for participants – Going Missing and Dementia study

Missing People is working with the Centre for the Study of Missing Persons at the University of Portsmouth on a ground-breaking new study of people with dementia going missing. We are currently looking for participants to take part in a research interview. You are invited to take part if you care for someone living with dementia (but not in a professional capacity) and if they live at a home address (not a care home). If you are interested in hearing more please download this [information leaflet](#) or contact lucy.holmes@missingpeople.org.uk.

International Conference on Missing Children and Adults – call for papers

The Second International Conference on Missing Children and Adults will be held from the 8 to 10 July 2015 in Brussels. The conference will be partnered by Missing Children Europe, University of Brussels and The Centre for the Study of Missing Persons (CSMP), University of Portsmouth. An invitation for proposals for symposia, papers and posters addressing topics in all areas of missing are invited. The deadline for submissions is Friday 9 January 2015 and you can find out more on the [CSMP web pages](#).

Mental health

The We Need to Talk coalition (a coalition of mental health charities, professional organisations, and service providers) published [results from a survey](#) of 2,000 people who had tried to access talking therapies between 2012 and 2014. It found that waiting times were long and that therapy offers were restricted. Whilst waiting for therapy, the condition of 67 per cent of respondents deteriorated, 40 per cent harmed themselves, and one in six attempted to take their own life. The report calls on the next government to invest more in the area so that all patients can receive an offer of care within 28 days of requesting a referral.

Findings from the [Scottish Social Attitudes Survey](#) show that a quarter of people in Scotland have experienced a mental health problem, most commonly depression. Almost

half say they would not want other people to know if they had a mental health condition, although 85 per cent who experienced a mental health problem had spoken to someone else about it. One in five adults say they would not be willing to interact with a person with schizophrenia. The [See Me](#) campaign aims to tackle the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health and has held 22 events across Scotland since April 2014.

Child sexual exploitation

In October, the University of Salford and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust produced a joint report: [Living on a railway line: Turning the tide of child abuse and exploitation in the UK and overseas](#). The report examines how different countries tackle child abuse, in particular, sexual exploitation.

Also in October, Ann Coffey MP, published [Real Voices – Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester](#), a report based on an inquiry commissioned by Tony Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester. The report makes a number of recommendations on how CSE cases can be better dealt with in the future, including improvements to preventative measures and increased joint working across police and local authority boundaries. The report also calls for CSE to be treated as a key public health priority.

Bullying

In October, the Government Equalities Office [published findings](#) from research on how best to tackle homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic (HBT) bullying in schools. A list of recommendations for government includes ensuring that all school staff are aware of government support for tackling HBT bullying and are able to discuss issues that arise in relation to sexual orientation and gender.

[Findings from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England](#) (LSYPE2) has shown a fall in the number of young people who have been 'bullied in the last year' from 45 per cent in 2004 to 40 per cent in 2013.

Homelessness

Homeless Link has published [Young and Homeless in 2014](#), their third annual report

exploring young people and homelessness. The report shows that over half the people seeking help with homelessness from local authorities and charities are under 25 and, correspondingly, half of those living in homelessness services are also under 25. It found that emergency accommodation such as Nightstop is only available in four in ten local authorities, highlighting the shortage of suitable alternative accommodation for young people who are unable, or for whom it is unsafe, to return home. Missing People's [Manifesto for Missing People](#) calls on the government to ensure that every missing child or young person who is unable to return home safely can access suitable emergency accommodation to keep them safe.

Looked after children

The National Audit Office [published a report](#) in November which examines how well DfE is meeting the objectives for children in residential and foster care. The key findings of the report demonstrate the importance of getting the right placements for children first time and that significant long term costs result if needs are not correctly assessed or met effectively. The report recommends that DfE develop better indicators to measure the effectiveness of the care system and improve understanding of what works, particularly in terms of early intervention.

Consultations and inquiries

The Department of Health has [opened consultation](#) on draft revisions to statutory guidance to implement the strategy for adults with autism in England ('[Think Autism](#)'). The consultation looks at a broad range of areas, including staff training, the identification and diagnosis of autism in adults, preventative support and safeguarding, and the employment of adults with autism. **The consultation closes on the 19th of December.**

The Department for Education and Department for Health has [opened consultation](#) on proposed revisions to statutory guidance on promoting the health and welfare of looked after children. **The consultation closes on 9 January 2015.**

Dates for the diary

11 December 2014 [Cardiff Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, Tabernacl Chapel

18 December 2014 [York Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, St Michael le Belfrey

2 May 2015 [Miles for Missing People](#): take part in our 10k run on Clapham Common, or opt for the 3k fun run or kids' race.

8-10 July 2015 [Second International Conference on Missing Children and Adults](#), Brussels

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