**Missing Children Response Assessment Tool**

All Thematic Checklist

**Checklists**

1. Children missing from home
2. Looked after children who go missing
3. Children missing from children’s homes
4. “Hidden missing” children
5. 16 & 17 year olds who go missing
6. Risk and harm assessments
7. Gaining parental consent
8. Return Home Interviews
9. Timeliness of RHI’s
10. Information sharing
11. Data collection on missing children
12. Follow-up after the child returns from missing
13. Transitional Safeguarding

**Quality Assurance and scrutiny of practice**

Whilst this resource does not contain a separate section on quality assurance or scrutiny of practice it is vital all individuals and agencies using this resource keep the importance of this in mind at every stage,

Quality assurance and scrutiny of practice should be a golden thread running through all aspects of local safeguarding partnership response to missing children.

Safeguarding partnerships must ensure that they are scrutinising local performance at every step of the way, from understanding what a good prevention interview looks like and challenging instances of bad practice, to scrutinising the offer and take up rate of follow up support after RHI. It is vital that staff are trained in how to scrutinise and analyse performance data effectively.

 **Children missing from home**

In 2018/19 over 60,000 children were reported to the police as missing[[1]](#footnote-1). Around 5 out of 6 children going missing are children who go missing from family home. Children going missing from family home are at risk of exploitation and abuse.

The research shows that children often go missing from families due to:

* Conflict and experiences of abuse at home
* Having poor experiences with education
* Mental health issues
* Being enticed to go missing form home or care by people who are trying to exploit them sexually or criminally

Not all children are reported as missing to the police by their families. Research shows that as many as 70% of children who run away from home may not be reported as missing.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local authority keep children residing in their area safe and undertake assessments and take appropriate actions, including in cases where there are concerns about a child’s welfare?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority offer all children who go missing an independent RHI every time they return from missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership know and monitor the number of children who go missing in their area, the number of incidents in which they go missing, and the risks these children experience?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership monitor issues in relation to children missing from home, such as individuals who target particular areas and known hotspots?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does every returned missing child receive a safe and well check/prevention interview on their return? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership ensure that staff in all agencies receive awareness raising and training about missing children, reasons children go missing, the importance of relationship building with young people, non-judgemental attitudes to young people and local policies on missing? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority record and analyse the number of children going missing from home and the response that these children receive?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority record and analyse the number of children missing from home who receive a RHI and the reasons for any refusals? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority have procedures for alternative support or interventions if there are repeated refusals of RHIs? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your RHI provider offer alternative support or signposting in cases where an RHI is declined? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority have procedures in place for offering RHIs to young people when they are concerned for their welfare but the parents have not consented to a RHI? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your RHI provider work with families when appropriate, particularly when a child has declined, to gather information about the risks surrounding a child, to share relevant information about the specific missing incident and how the child presented on their return, and to put safeguarding measures in place? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do children in your area receive a supportive safe and well check/ prevention interview from a police officer or appropriate professional who has had training in how to carry out checks? And is the information shared with the return interview provider and relevant agencies as appropriate? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Following a RHI, does your local authority, share all relevant information with the police (including in cases where the child has been placed out of area in a new police force area)? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Following a RHI, do the RHI provider(s) in your local area share relevant information about risks and the issues a child may be experiencing with the local authority or police according to local protocols and guidance on what information is shared? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority have one contact point for referrals of children missing from home into the RHI service? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership or any agency ever dip sample safe and well checks/prevention interviews and RHIs assist with quality assure? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority work with schools to identify children who are going missing from home and from education? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority offer follow up support to children and their families according to needs identified in a RHI? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your local area, do the local authority, police, RHI provider(s) and other relevant agencies have an established operational approach to discuss and problem solve responses to children who go missing, including those who go missing frequently or are at risk? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local strategic partnership have regular meetings and structures in place to monitor operational responses to missing children and any follow up support that children receive?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the police record information form prevention interviews/safe and well checks and RHIs in the found report in case the information is useful in the case of a future missing episode? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your children’s service work with schools to identify and offer RHIs to children who are missing from home and school but are not reported as missing to the police? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your children’s service work with families who do not report their children as missing to ensure that they are reported as missing in the instance of future missing episodes?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| If a child is new to an area, does your children’s service carry out checks to see if there is any relevant history in the old area that is important for safeguarding the child in your area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local CAMHS accept referrals from RHIs? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your multi-agency partnership review safe and well check/prevention interview records to quality assure and ensure that information is being shared appropriately and necessary safeguarding action is being taken? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

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| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Looked after children who go missing**

Every year around 1 in 10[[3]](#footnote-3) of children in care will go missing. Many of them will be missing many times

Research shows that children missing from care go missing because they:

* Want to be with family and friends
* They are not happy in their placements
* They are groomed or enticed to go missing by people who want to exploit them sexually or criminally
* Mental health issues

Reasons why children go missing are similar for children in in and out of area placements but those placed outside their local home area may be experiencing greater risk due to the distance they travel to see their families and friends or due to feeling isolated in their placements.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| In your local area, does your children’s services listen to children’s wishes and feelings when making placements as set out in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, does your children’s services take into consideration the risk of a child going missing when making a placement decision, and make plans to mitigate this risk?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Following a missing episode, does your children’s services (or a commissioned service) offer and provide a RHI to all children, including when a child is placed out of area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When concerns or risks are identified about a child, a timely strategy meeting should take place – how often do you feel that your local authority meets this requirement?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership monitor the number of children missing from care?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership monitor the number of issues that arise in relation to children missing from care, for example; individuals who target specific areas, potential hotspots and risks facing missing children in their areas?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership monitor and identify patterns or trends that might help to identify harm? e.g. child criminal or sexual exploitation   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does every returned missing child receive a safe and well check/prevention interview on their return? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

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| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Is your local strategic partnership able to effectively monitor and deliver an operational response to missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership ensure that staff in all agencies receive awareness raising training about; missing children, reasons children go missing, the importance of relationship building with young people, non-judgemental attitudes to young people and information on local policies relating to missing children?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, do local multiagency groups and safeguarding partnerships know and scrutinise the number of children going missing from care and the response they receive when they return for all missing children?  ***Note****: This includes instances where a local authority is the corporate parent and a child has gone missing from inside their home local authority and children who have gone missing from a placement outside of their home local authority and instances where a child is placed inside the responders local authority and they go missing within these boundaries.*  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your local area do multiagency groups and safeguarding partnerships know and understand the number of children who receive a RHI for all groups of missing children? ***Note****: This includes children missing from placements inside your local authority, outside your local authority and children living in your local area placed there by another local authority.* | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| If a child from your local authority is placed out of area and they are at risk of going missing do you inform the police force in the host area? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| If a child from your local authority is placed out of area and they are at risk of going missing do you complete the Philomena Protocol or a similar planning and information recording process to support the response to missing if they do go? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is there a single point of contact in your local authority where reports of looked after children going missing both in and out of area can be made?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| For looked after children who go missing frequently, does your local authority commission a service that enables RHI practitioners to build relationships with these children where needed?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is there a multi-agency approach to discussing and solving problems relating to missing children, including those who regularly go missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority advocate for appropriate responses when a child placed out of area goes missing in your local area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When a child is placed in an out of area placement and there is a risk that a child may go missing from that placement, does your children’s services include information about the risk to each child in the notification to the host local authority and discuss the response needed?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When a looked after child goes missing in your local area do you notify their school (where applicable)?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do children in your area receive a supportive safe and well check or prevention interview from a police officer or appropriate professional who has had training in how to carry out checks? And is the information shared with the return interview provider and relevant agencies as appropriate? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Following a RHI with a child, is relevant information shared with the police (including with the police in the area if a child is placed outside of your local area)?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Following a RHI with a child, is relevant safeguarding information shared with the host local authority if the child is in an out of area placement?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When looked after children are placed out of area does your local authority include the name of an RHI provider in the notification and placement plan?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Are children’s homes and foster cares included in safeguarding communication relating to missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is the follow up support offered to looked after children who have been missing monitored by your Local Safeguarding Partnership?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, is resource allocated to relationship building between the police and ‘hotspot’ locations to improve prevention and the response to missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Are health colleagues included in local multi-agency partnerships to ensure the response for children who are missing from healthcare settings is considered, as well as involving CAMHS?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is the Local Safeguarding Partnership in contact with the relevant regional Ofsted team?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the police have a process in place for considering whether publicity would be helpful in a missing investigation and how to seek consent for that?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do you have a process for challenging inappropriate reporting which is not beneficial to the child, for example, reporting a child missing as a disciplinary measure rather than because of safeguarding concerns?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Are health colleagues included in local multi-agency partnerships to ensure the response for children who are missing from healthcare settings is considered, as well as involving CAMHS?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Is the Local Safeguarding Partnership in contact with the relevant regional Ofsted team?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the police have a process in place for considering whether publicity would be helpful in a missing investigation and how to seek consent for that?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do you have a process for challenging inappropriate reporting which is not beneficial to the child, for example, reporting a child missing as a disciplinary measure rather than because of safeguarding concerns?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the police record information form safe and well checks/prevention interviews and RHIs in the found report in case the information is useful in the case of a future missing episode?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area allow spot purchasing of RHIs for children placed in your area by other local authorities?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority have arrangements in place to share important safeguarding information about children who go missing in your area that have been placed there by another local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your police force have Single Points of Contacts (SPOCs) for care settings who are able to focus specifically on responding to missing looked after children and improving the local partnership response?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your multi-agency partnership review safe and well check/prevention interview records to quality assure and ensure that information is being shared appropriately and necessary safeguarding action is being taken? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Children missing from children’s homes**

Department for Education data[[5]](#footnote-5) shows that looked after children that are placed in children’s homes make up the largest number of children going missing from care each year[[6]](#footnote-6).

Many of these children live in placements outside of their home areas, are older teenagers and have complex needs.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area have a policy in place for responding to children who go missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area have an agreed approach with the child’s social worker on when a child is reported missing to the police?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area regularly review the agreed time a young person should be home and allow for young people to have flexibility over this if they want to pursue extra-curricular activities etc.?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do children’s home staff in your local area receive awareness raising training about missing children, reasons children go missing, importance of relationship building with young people, non-judgemental attitude to young people and local policies on missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area develop their missing policies together with children and young people?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area have trigger plans in place for when a child does not return to placement?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area have trigger plans in place for children who go missing more than once and are those developed and shared with other relevant agencies?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When a child does not return to placement at an agreed time, do children’s home staff in your local area act to establish the whereabouts of a child, the same way a responsible parent would, to avoid over reporting children as missing to the police in instances such as the child is delayed by transport problems or has informed staff of their whereabouts?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do your children’s homes have a clear policy on the use of restraint and have staff received training on when it would or would not be appropriate to use restraint?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority consider the 24-hour staffing levels of a children’s homes when they place a young person who is at high risk of going missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area explain to a child, at the point of placement, in what circumstances they would be reported missing and the actions that the children’s home would undertake to locate them?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do children’s home staff in your local area record useful information about the situation when a child leaves their placement e.g. what clothes they are wearing, the vehicle they left in etc.   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When a child returns from a missing episode, do children’s home staff in your local area note down any observations about the child’s appearance, mood, who the child was missing with etc.  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do children’s home staff in your local area have conversations with young people when they return from a missing episode rather than taking a punitive approach and is, where appropriate | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority commission an independent RHI service for children placed in children’s homes in your local authority by other local authorities?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority ensure that children’s homes have adequate resources to facilitate training on missing children, missing policies and risks of going missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a linked Police Community Support Officer (PSCO) to support with building relationships between young people and the police?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the children’s homes in your local area have IT systems that can automatically notify the RHI provider when a young person returns from a missing episode?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority commission an independent RHI service for children placed in children’s homes in your local authority by other local authorities?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**“Hidden missing” children**

Not all children and young people who go missing from home or care are reported as missing to the police. A study published in 1999,[[7]](#footnote-7) based on self-reporting by children and young people found that in England each year there are around 129,000 incidents of young people under the age of 16 going missing overnight. As this figure is based on real life experiences it is more likely to reflect the true picture of the number of children missing each year, suggesting that official data collected by the National Crime Agency may significantly underestimate the scale of missing episodes.

Young people may not be reported as missing to the police for a number of reasons such as; a lack of understanding of the risks facing young people when they go missing, not knowing how to report, concerns regarding the safety of the young person following police involvement if parents or carers are concerned that a young person is a victim of child criminal exploitation, etc.

The discrepancy between the number of young people reported missing and the number who are likely to be missing is an important issue to bear in mind for safeguarding young people missing from home and care, given the aspiration to support and safeguard all young people who go missing.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| When children who have been missing from home in your local area are found but have not been reported to the police are parents and carers encouraged to report them missing in the future?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership ensure that staff in all agencies receive awareness raising training on; missing children, reasons children go missing, the importance of relationship building with young people, non-judgemental attitude to young people and local policies on missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority proactively extend the reach of its RHI service to children who go missing but are not reported to the police? **If ‘Never’, please see box A below for suggestions that could help you achieve this.**   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Box A – reaching children who have not being reported as missing to the police* Carrying out awareness raising exercises with schools, social workers and other agencies who come into contact with the child to notify RHI services of young people they know have been missing but not reported.
* Gathering intelligence from a variety of key stakeholders, for example drawing on intelligence from other young people, families, housing and schools to identify young people who have been missing or may be at risk of going missing.
* Carrying out awareness raising with parents and carers into the risks of going missing, the importance of reporting each episode to the police and how to report.
* Supporting and promoting young people who have been missing to make self-referrals into your RHI service.
* Carrying out peer-mapping - mapping young people who go missing together.

Taking a contextual safeguarding approach accompanied by training for local authority staff and police professionals in analysing contextual risks and themes. |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership utilise available public data, such as that from the Troubled Families Programme to target awareness raising activities? | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**16 & 17 year olds who go missing**

Young people aged 15, 16 and 17 years-old are reported missing more frequently than any other age group. Missing episodes of 16 and 17 year olds make up 52% of all missing episodes.[[8]](#footnote-8)

They are also more likely than any other age group to be assessed by the police to be at ‘no apparent risk’ when they are reported missing.[[9]](#footnote-9)

50% of all missing episodes of children missing from care are young people 16 and 17 who go missing from children’s homes and unregulated accommodation.

16 and 17 year olds who are not in care but live in unregulated accommodation are also reported missing.

16 and 17 year olds are often very vulnerable when they go missing. The links between going missing and being exploited sexually or criminally have been reported.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local authority keep children aged 16 and 17 residing in your area safe and undertake assessments and take appropriate actions, including in cases where there are concerns about a child’s welfare?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority offer 16 and 17 year olds an RHI by an independent professional when they have been missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority collect data on the number of children who go missing in your area, including for 16 and 17 year olds with detail of where they went missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do local processes ensure that the voices and opinions of 16 & 17 year olds are included in any planning or actions taken about their care?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area know and understand the number of 16 & 17 year old children who go missing from home and care and other types of accommodation?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area know and understand the number of 16 & 17 year old children who receive an independent RHI following a missing episode?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority share relevant information with the police, including the police in the area where a child is placed, following a RHI with a 16 or 17 year old?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority receive all relevant safeguarding information after an RHI has taken place with a 16 or 17 year old?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have a single point of contact for referrals of missing children into RHI services?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area work with schools and further educational (FE) colleges to identify 16 and 17 year olds who are going missing from home and from and education?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area offer follow up support to all 16 & 17 year olds and their families according to needs identified in a RHI?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority carry out mapping exercises to help them develop a better understanding of where upregulating accommodation is situated within the area?      | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is there collaboration between your local authorities planning department and children’s services to enable easy sharing of information about where 16+ unregulated accommodation is set up?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area provide specific training on meeting the needs of 16 & 17 year olds and how to work with them in an age appropriate way?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a framework/protocol in place that supports the transition from children to adult services for young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area do representatives from adults services join strategy meetings or other planning meetings for a handover if there are ongoing concerns about a young person’s safeguarding needs as they approach adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area are health, education, housing and CAMHS involved in safeguarding meetings for those young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area can representatives from children’s services continue to join relevant meetings even once a young person is 18 to help ensure continuity? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Are all agencies in your local area provided with guidance that has been approved by the local safeguarding partnership about when to report a young person who is 18 as missing? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How well do agencies share information about vulnerable young people as they transition into adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area have there been any reviews that have focused on how effectively reporting a young person missing post 18 safeguards them from harm? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does your local safeguarding partnership consider the risks involved in reporting young people as missing post 18 whilst acknowledging that this should never outweigh the safeguarding responsibility?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority work with 16+ unregulated accommodation providers to ensure that they meet the needs of the young people living in them?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority carry out robust transitional planning with care experienced young people as they approach their 17th birthday?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority carry out robust transitional planning with children on the edge of care as they approach their 17th birthday?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Risk and harm assessments**

Classification of risk and harm is important for a number of reasons, a well-informed risk assessment carried out by the police call handler is vital if a missing child is to receive the type of response they need and can aid with the search for the missing young person.

The risk assessment should be informed by all the available information about the child including information from any previous RHIs if they are to effectively support the safe search for a missing young person. However, research by the Children’s Society found that some police forces ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ receive information about a young person to assist with their risk assessments.[[10]](#footnote-10) In addition, evidence from a recent APPG inquiry[[11]](#footnote-11) into children who go missing from out of area care placements found that all too the police have little or no information about a child, who may be at risk and living in their area, in advance of them going missing - making a robust risk assessment difficult. Furthermore, in a report by the charity Missing People, found that serious harm and ongoing risks are not confined to the high risk minority but are regularly disclosed during RHIs by children whose missing episode had been assessed as low or medium risk but the police.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| In your local area, do the police prioritise all incidents of children categorised as ‘missing’ from home or care as medium or high risk rather than low or absent?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the relevant agencies in your local area share an understanding of risk and the definitions of different levels of risk?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do the police genuinely listen to parental or carer concern and work with them to make the risk assessment?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, do the police have access to all relevant information about risks to the child at a point of missing, including information about previous missing episodes, intelligence from previous RHIs and information about any risks or vulnerabilities the young person might be facing?       | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority provide training for residential children’s homes and foster parents to ensure that children missing from care are reported missing appropriately and key information, relevant to the inquiry, is communicated to the police?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your area, do the police work together with other local agencies to develop and promote using a form, or similar, to communicate some standard information when a child goes missing to inform appropriate risk assessments?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area offer training in what information to record when a young person is placed out of area and into a new police force area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority ensure that a report including a risk assessment around missing is provided to the host local authority when a young person is placed out of area and into a new police force area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership scrutinise the risk assessments conducted by the police in the context of missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority hold police forces to account when they have risk assessed a young person inappropriately?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, do the police have read only access to children’s services databases to inform risk assessments?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your local area, is there a clear escalation process in place for when someone disagrees with a risk assessment made by the police?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do the police make it clear to the reporting person what different levels of risk mean and what this will mean in terms of action taken?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority ensure that a report including a risk assessment around missing is provided to the host local authority when a young person is placed out of area and into a new police force area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership scrutinise the risk assessments conducted by the police in the context of missing children?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Are there clear routes through which the reporting person or local authority can communicate additional information about risk as it becomes available during an investigation?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is there a police process for reviewing risk which involves the local authority or parent? Including when a child has been missing on multiple occasions?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area is there robust training for all duty inspectors on how to make appropriate risk assessments with a focus on understanding and recognising vulnerability and the warning signs of grooming and exploitation?     | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area offer training in what information to record when a young person is placed out of area and into a new police force area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a framework/protocol in place that supports the transition from children to adult services for young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area do representatives from adults services join strategy meetings or other planning meetings for a handover if there are ongoing concerns about a young person’s safeguarding needs as they approach adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area are health, education, housing and CAMHS involved in safeguarding meetings for those young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area can representatives from children’s services continue to join relevant meetings even once a young person is 18 to help ensure continuity? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Do agencies in your local area share information about vulnerable young people when they turn 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does your area have a multi-agency protocol in place for the response to missing adults? If so, does this include information on young people who are transitioning into adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How well do agencies share information about vulnerable young people as they transition into adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does your local safeguarding partnership consider the risks involved in reporting young people as missing post 18 whilst acknowledging that this should never outweigh the safeguarding responsibility?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Gaining parental consent**

As part of the Children’s Society research, The First Step, a survey, sent to all local authorities in England and Wales, asked about their approach to gaining parental consent before a RHI can take place. This issue was also discussed during qualitative interviews in 5 case study areas.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The lack of parental consent was identified as a hindering factor for the delivery of RHIs. We do not know the proportion of RHIs that don’t take place due to a lack of parental consent. However, different approaches around parental consent were evident both in the national survey and in the case study areas with local authorities reporting that they ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ and ‘never’ seek parental consent before conducting a RHI suggesting the need for a consistent approach across the country.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority and RHI provider(s) monitor the number of RHIs that do not take place due to lack of parental consent and the reasons why consent is denied?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a clear approach, when in the interest of a young person’s interest and safety, a parent’s lack of consent for a RHI should be overridden?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In instances where the decision is made to override a parent's lack of consent for a RHI, are practitioners supported to take different approaches?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have an agreed approach on when a young person should be considered competent to consent to the offer of a RHI themselves?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area enable children and young people to self-refer into your RHI services themselves?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area carry out awareness raising with parents and carers on the risks facing young people when missing, the RHI process and the potential for follow-up support?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area adopt different strategies to bypass parental consent where there are particular safeguarding concerns around regular missing incidents? For example, approaching schools to act ‘in loco parentis’ enabling them to give consent to RHIs.  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Have you adopted contextual safeguarding processes in relation to working with parents as partners in safeguarding their children – engaging them with planning and delivery of any measures put in place around their child?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

** Return Home Interviews**

A Return Home Interview (RHI) is a conversation between a child and a trained professional after a child has returned from a missing episode. Its purpose is to ‘provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in their home.’[[14]](#footnote-14)

They are a valuable tool and are not threshold based meaning that they are available to all children and young people who go missing from home or care.

In 2014 the provision of RHIs was made statutory and included in Ofsted inspections of local authorities – a rise in the number of RHIs offered and delivered to young people who had been missing followed. Recent research conducted by the Children’s Society and funded by the Home Office,[[15]](#footnote-15) found that across 78 local authorities in England, RHIs are offered to all missing children after each missing episode. However, in some local authorities they were only offered on a case-by-case basis for some groups of missing children. Data on uptake was patchy and therefore a clear national picture is not available. However, the available data suggests that on average 50% of missing episodes result in an RHI taking place – wide variation in uptake rates were reported from around 20% to 100%.

The same research examined some of the key factors that help or hinder the provision of RHIs in an attempt to provide some suggestions on how uptake can be increased in those local authorities providing few RHIs to children who have been missing, detail will be provided below.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local area offer a RHI to all children and young people that they are responsible for who have been missing and returned after each episode?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, are RHIs carried out within 72-hours of the child returning to their home or care setting?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are RHIs carried out by an independent person (i.e. someone not involved in caring for the child), who is trained to carry out RHIs and offer follow up support?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are RHIs held in a neutral place where the child feels safe?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area take a young person centred approach to delivering RHIs and allow practitioners to be flexible in regards to, where the interviews are done and who conducts the interview?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are the purpose and limitations of RHIs communicated to young people?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area gain informed consent, explaining the process of RHIs in full, from the young person before carrying out a RHI?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area give young people time to decide if they want a RHI?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area see missing children as a priority for local safeguarding agencies and are they able to demonstrate this through regular multi-agency meetings?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area engage in partnership working, participating in groups and meetings where issues relating to missing children are reviewed on a regular basis?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a dedicated team with a primary focus on conducting RHIs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a dedicated team with a primary focus on bringing RHI data together and providing oversight and scrutiny of the data gathered from RHIs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have information about the young person in advance of carrying out the RHI, for example information from the police safe and well check/prevention interview or any previous RHIs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area facilitate training for all staff on conducting RHIs, for example; understanding what intelligence looks like, active listening, using internal systems etc. If you have a commissioned service do you ensure that this is a requirement set out in tenders?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have a single point of contact for referrals within the local authority for RHIs for all children that your local authorities is responsible for?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a dedicated team with a primary focus on bringing RHI data together and providing oversight and scrutiny of the data gathered from RHIs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are there referral pathways in place for children who go missing but are not reported missing by their parents or cares?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area use a variety of different methods to contact young people and their parents/carers to make the offer of a RHI and make several contact attempts if not initially successful?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area, when the offer of an RHI is made, does it come with information for parents and carers about the purpose and potential for follow up support?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your area, when an offer of a RHI is refused do the local authority consider whether the child is at risk and how relevant information about any missing episodes can be gathered or the child approached for conversation?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When a looked after child is placed out of area local, does your local authority name the potential RHI provider as part of the placement plan?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Once an RHI has taken place in your local area is any relevant information shared with the police in the child’s home local authority and, where appropriate, in their host area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Once an RHI has taken place in your local area, is relevant safeguarding information shared with the local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area record details about the reasons why a RHI hasn’t taken place and share this information with the local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area offer follow up support to young people and their families, according to need?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area enable RHI practitioners to develop good and trusted relationships with young people by supporting and commissioning longer term RHI contracts, for example?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area support RHI practitioners to explore creative ways to work with children and young people who might be less likely to engage, e.g. young people who go missing repeatedly?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Are RHIs offered in a flexible, inclusive way that reflects the needs of the child, including adjustments for children who have disabilities, language barriers or are neurodiverse?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| If a young person is engaging with return home interviews while under 18 can this service be continued post 18? Do you have flexibility in local commissioning arrangements to allow this to happen? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your local area, in instances where parental consent is not gained but staff are concerned about the welfare of a child is there a clear policy what should happen, e.g. reaching a child in school or making referral to a child in need assessment?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area work to identify the ‘hidden missing’ and ensure that they are referred to RHI services, by raising awareness in schools and other local services about children who are missing but not reported as missing by their families?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area facilitate ongoing relationship building for young people who go missing more than once?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Are children in your area provided with a choice in who provides their RHI, including the opportunity for upskilling a trusted professional in their life to be able to deliver effectively if that is who the child would be most happy to speak to?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

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| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Timeliness of Return Home Interviews**

In England there is statutory pressure for providers of RHIs to complete them 72 hours after a child returns home.[[16]](#footnote-16) However, recent research[[17]](#footnote-17) found a number of issues associated with understanding and adhering to this timeframe. Confusion around when the timeframe commenced - when the young person returned or when the referral was made was expressed. This issue is particularly pertinent when a young person went missing over a weekend or bank holiday and for children and young people who go missing repeatedly, sometimes going missing again before the RHI for a previous missing episode takes place.

Capacity issues and delays in RHI referrals were raised by RHI practitioners reporting that peeks in missing episodes which may occur, for example, over school holidays or bank holiday weekends, can create a backlog of RHI referrals. Changes to the way that RHI services are commissioned and funded can also mean that services are stretched with small numbers of RHI practitioners having to cover a large number of missing episodes.

A number of professionals advocate that the framework of 72-hours helps focus providers efforts on delivering RHIs in a timely way and we know that many local authorities use the number of RHIs delivered within 72-hours as a measure of success. However, practitioners at the Children’s Society report that when working with young people, especially exploited young people, the best way to engage them is to give them control and choice and the nature of the 72-hour time frame can limit this. There is varied practice in terms of how local authorities manage the 72-hour time frame resulting in different outcomes for young people that they are responsible for.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| When a child is found or returns home in your local area, are they offered a RHI and is the interview carried out within 72-hours of the child returning to their home or care setting?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority know and understand, for all groups of children and young people, the number of RHIs that are offered within 72-hours of the referral being made?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority know and understand, for all groups of children and young people, the number of offers that result in an RHI taking place within 72-hours of the referral being made?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority know and understand, for all groups of children and young people, the number of RHIs that do not take place within 72-hours and the reasons why?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area consider the reasons why a RHI might not have been completed within the 72-hour timeframe when reviewing data on the number of RHIs not completed within 72-hours?     | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area take a flexible, young person centred approach, recognising that there are some instances where it might not be appropriate to carry out a RHI with a young person within the 72-hour timeframe?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a protocol for cases and scenarios where it may be acceptable to offer a RHI to a young person outside of the set 72-hour time frame?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority speed up referrals by creating a single point of contact for RHI referrals and, following a missing incident, transfer all information gathered by police in a safe and well check/prevention interview to a central contact in the local authority to be forwarded to the RHI practitioner?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| In your local area is there a system in place to speed up referrals to your RHI provider for children missing from residential children’s homes?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area plan for peak times of RHI referrals such as during the school holidays or after a bank holiday weekend, upskilling additional staff to carry out RHIs for times of high demand?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Information Sharing**

Information sharing from RHIs is vital to the safeguarding, both before and after, a child or young person goes missing. Information can be used to inform an individual safeguarding response or the support a young person is given to address the risks of going missing and it can be a source of ‘intelligence’ for the strategic and operational work of relevant agencies (such as local authorities, the police and local safeguarding partnerships) in an area.

Currently, little research exists on the issue with just three reports exploring the matter in any detail. In 2016, the APPG on Runaway and Missing Children and Adults noted inconsistencies and a lack of understanding around information sharing from RHIs.[[18]](#footnote-18) In 2017, a report[[19]](#footnote-19) based on Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs), to local authorities found many variations in information sharing practice, including that almost half of the local authorities which responded had no formal arrangement for sharing information about missing young people between agencies.

Finally, in 2019, research[[20]](#footnote-20) confirmed that inconsistencies in information sharing were still an issue - just 53% of the local authorities who responded to a question were aware of an information sharing protocol in their local areas, variation was found in practice with regard to the information that was recorded and shared from RHIs with some local authorities sharing an unnecessary level of detail and poor information sharing from RHIs for looked after children placed out of area was found to be a big issue.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local area have an agreed Runaway and Missing From Home and Care (RMFHC) protocol to respond to children who run away or go missing in their areas? The protocol should include details on how information should be used to support missing investigations and prevent future missing episodes. The key elements which should be included are: * Arrangements for information sharing between the local authority, the police and other agencies

Arrangements for information sharing between different local authorities and police forces when a child runs away to another area   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Do the police and other relevant agencies have access to relevant information when a child is reported missing to allow them to make an accurate risk assessment and carry out an effective investigation to find the missing child?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area seek consent from young people before sharing information about them, relating to missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| If the young person doesn’t give consent are there clear processes that staff are aware of for what must be shared and how much the child’s wishes can be taken into account?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have an information sharing protocol in place in relation to sharing information from RHIs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area provide training for RHI practitioners on what good intelligence looks like including the distinction between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ intelligence?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Once a RHI has taken place in your local area is any relevant information shared with the police in the child’s home local authority and, where appropriate, in their host area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Once a RHI has taken place in your local area is relevant safeguarding information shared with the local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are details recorded about the reasons why a RHI hasn’t taken place and are those details shared with the local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a shared understanding of what information about missing children is useful to share and how to share it?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area is information shared in a proportionate way? Only information that is relevant to the safeguarding of an individual or wider safeguarding of children in the area should be shared.   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have an agreed procedure on what intelligence can be shared in the absence of consent from the young person?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a good shared understanding between the police, the RHI provider and social work staff about what information is important to be shared about children who go missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have an agreed system for recording and sharing information, e.g. using intelligence/information sharing forms to enable robust and consistent information sharing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area encourage good partnership working, sharing information in a multi-agency forum and include public and private children’s homes in such forums?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your area, when looked after children are placed out of area are packages of information about any risks facing the young person shared with the host local authority and, if appropriate, the new police force?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have an agreed system for recording and sharing information, e.g. using intelligence/information sharing forms to enable robust and consistent information sharing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area encourage good partnership working, sharing information in a multi-agency forum and include public and private children’s homes in such forums?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your area, when looked after children are placed out of area are packages of information about any risks facing the young person shared with the host local authority and, if appropriate, the new police force?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area do you have effective IT systems to facilitate information sharing e.g. granting the police read only access to children’s social care files to support effective risk assessments?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have structures in place to support the analysis of information that has been shared from RHIs as well as scrutinising this information and how it is used?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have an agreed language and corresponding training for all safeguarding partners on risk, vulnerability and spotting the signs of grooming and exploitation?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area use information that is shared in relation to missing children in a disruptive way e.g. to inform mapping processes?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area is relevant intelligence from the police prevention interview stored on the police intelligence system and shared with the local authority to inform the way they approach the young person for a RHI?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area are the views and concerns of the parents/carers reporting the missing episode recorded and shared with the local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area do representatives from adults services join strategy meetings or other planning meetings for a handover if there are ongoing concerns about a young person’s safeguarding needs as they approach adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area are health, education, housing and CAMHS involved in safeguarding meetings for those young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In your local area can representatives from children’s services continue to join relevant meetings even once a young person is 18 to help ensure continuity? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Do agencies in your local area share information about vulnerable young people when they turn 18? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does your area have a multi-agency protocol in place for the response to missing adults? If so, does this include information on young people who are transitioning into adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Are all agencies in your local area provided with guidance that has been approved by the local safeguarding partnership about when to report a young person who is 18 as missing? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How well do agencies share information about vulnerable young people as they transition into adulthood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area provide training for children’s home professionals in noting down important information related to a child going missing and when they return, how to facilitate a way for this to be shared directly with the police to help safeguard and find a child, and/or children’s social care and/or the RHI provider to facilitate conversations?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area demonstrate an understanding that information sharing is part of a continuous process, e.g. creating a feedback loop and communicating with RHI practitioners when intelligence they have shared has been used effectively?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Data collection on missing children**

Research shows that effective use of data about missing children, the number of RHI offered and conducted, the level of risk assessed, issues children experience whilst missing and support needs missing children have can support better safeguarding response for these children and young people who go missing.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local authority collect data about children who go missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership scrutinise data about missing children in your area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority report to the Department for Education on the number of children missing from care as part of the children in care data return?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| For children missing from; home, from care placements within the local authority boundaries and from care placements outside the local authority boundaries – does your local authority collect and analyse information on: |
| 1. The number of children that the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. The number of RHIs **offered** to children that the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each placement?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. The number of RHIs **accepted** by children that the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. The number RHIs **undertaken** with children that the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. The number of children that the local authority is responsible for who refuse an offer of an RHI and the reasons for refusal from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. The risks experienced by children who the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| 1. Any follow-up services needed and provided to children who the local authority is responsible for who go missing from each setting?
 | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your police force collect and scrutinise data on how many safe and well checks/prevention interviews are carried out?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area collect data on the number of RHI conducted within 72 hours and the reasons for any delays?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your Local Safeguarding Partnership offer training on how to scrutinise data about missing children?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is data collected by your local authority used to identify children at high risk of harm?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is data collected by your local authority used to identify operational problems?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Is data collected by your local authority used to identify local disruption exploitation priorities?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area collect data on how many strategy meetings are taking place in relation to children who go missing?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area analyse data to map patterns of missing within the area including hotspots for both where children go missing from and where they spend time while missing or are found?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority collect information on the number of children other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority?    | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority collect information on the number RHIs offered to children that other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority collect information on the number RHIs accepted by children other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority collect information on the number RHIs undertaken with children other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local authority collect information on the number of children other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority who refuse an offer of RHI and the reasons for refusal?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority collect data on the uptake of follow up support offered to children other local authorities are responsible for who go missing within the boundaries of your local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority use data when commissioning local services for missing children?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority analyse RHI data to understand patterns or themes in what children are disclosing following missing incidents?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |

**Follow-up after the child returns from missing**

Research shows that most children do not suffer harm when they are missing. Data from the National Crime Agency (NCA) shows that 4% of children experience harm such as being hurt, being a victim of crime. Other research says that around 1 in 4 children are forced to sleep rough or stay with strangers, beg or shop lift to say.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Whether a child experienced harm whilst missing, witnessed something traumatising or due to the reasons that resulted in them going missing in the first place, all children require some follow up on returning from a missing episode.

Research shows that follow up support after a Return Home Interview (RHI) takes place is very inconsistent across the country, particularly for children who are already in the looked after system or children who are not yet considered to be at high risk of harm.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Feedback from young people also suggests that due to the lack of meaningful follow up from services after any initial missing episodes, young people who go missing more than once may disengage from services and be more likely to decline any future offers of a RHI.

Follow up after a missing episode should include, support provided to a child, using information from RHIs to inform safeguarding responses to individual children and using information for strategic safeguarding in the area through information sharing.

**How to use this resource**

This resource is divided into three sections: required actions, good practice and good practice that might require additional resourcing.

* Required actions describe actions that local agencies are required to do under different pieces of government guidance.
* Good practice actions describe those that have been identified as good practice through research
* Good practice that may require additional resourcing describe those good practice actions that could need additional staffing or other capacity.

Under each heading there will be a number of self-assessment questions that aim to make you think about the level of response provided and facilitate discussion about what may need to change to improve the response.

**Required Actions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | How often do you feel your children’s service meet’s this requirement? | What impact does this have? |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always |  |
| Does your local area offer RHIs to all children who go missing and use this opportunity to identify their supports needs?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do care settings and professionals supporting children in your area receive training about speaking to children in a supportive way upon their return, outside of the official RHI process?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does every returned missing child receive a safe and well check or prevention interview on their return?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area know and understand the needs of young people who access services following a missing episode?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area commission services that meet the needs of all young people who go missing in the area, from a universal offer of awareness raising sessions to intensive 1:2:1 support for children with complex needs?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Do children in your area receive a supportive safe and well check/prevention interview from a police officer or appropriate professional who has had training in how to carry out these checks? And is the information shared with the RHI provider and relevant agencies as appropriate?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Following the completion of a RHI, does your local authority share all relevant information with the police, including, in instances where the young person is placed out of area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Following a RHI is all relevant safeguarding information shared by the RHI provider with your local authority?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority have one point of contact for referrals of missing children to the RHI services?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority offer follow up support to all children and families according to needs identified in a RHI?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| In your local area is there a clear pathway to support following a RHI?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local authority scrutinise what follow up support is provided to missing children at the children’s services level, at the police level in terms of disruption activities and at the local safeguarding partnership level in terms of co-ordinated multiagency response and service commissioning?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| When placing a looked after child out of area does your local authority ensure that the child they are placing has access to services they may need in their new area?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Good practice that may require additional resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area have a framework for children and families to provide feedback from any RHIs they may have and the support they received following a RHI?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area consult with children who have been missing on follow up services that they would like to see that are specific to missing children?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area offer follow up support for children who go missing from placements within your local authority boundary but are placed there by other local authorities?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area use data from RHIs to inform the commissioning of follow-up services for missing children?  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |
| Does your local area have a universal offer of follow-up support for all children and young people who go missing?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Always | What impact does this have? |
| Does your local area convene strategy meetings with other local authorities when children from out of area placements go missing in your area?   | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  | ***[ ]***  |  |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |       |
| **Police** |       |
| **Health** |       |
| **Education** |       |
| **Other Agencies** |       |



**CHECKLIST 13 – Transitional Safeguarding**

For young people in the care system, the transition from childhood to adulthood greatly determines the level of support and care they are entitled to and are able to access. However, like young people in general there are additional transitions related to education, experience in the juvenile justice system, and mental health that are also significant in that they involve change, uncertainty and a stop to or change in the level of support. Practitioners need to be aware of these transitions, prepare for them, and be equipped with the right information regarding how to ensure there is continuity in care where possible, and how to avoid the ‘cliff-edge’ in some instances where all support ceases overnight. Practitioners also need to understand the intersectional nature of the vulnerabilities and risks young people may face during periods of transition.

So what happens for children and young people who are regularly going missing as they transition to adulthood? We know going missing can be a warning sign of serious harms including exploitation, mental health issues, parental neglect and abuse. We also know that Looked After Children are at higher risk of going missing than others, and that some will go missing repeatedly.

Young people turning 18 may still face the challenges or harms that they experienced as children. However, in terms of statutory entitlements and support, for many it can signify a drastic drop in the support available to them.

The response to when young adults go missing differs significantly to when children go missing: police actions are more limited, less support is in place, and young adults may be in contact with different services than they were as children.

Transitional Safeguarding is an “approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives.”[[1]](https://ukc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en%2DUS&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fthechildrenssociety.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FAdolescentRiskVulnerabilityPolicy%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fa8311efdb7a24410a030335a4699d161&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=C03AC1A0-A0FF-6000-C763-3852842C9FF2&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1687947261735&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=e7a002b1-646e-4aa4-b87a-0ad8b947e95a&usid=e7a002b1-646e-4aa4-b87a-0ad8b947e95a&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftn1)

Transitional Safeguarding is about activity that emphasises a needs-led, personalised approach. For young people at risk of going missing or with a history of going missing, transitional safeguarding requires all involved in services for children and adults, to work together and think beyond child/adult silos. Concerns about potential exploitation that continues from childhood into adulthood and may be linked to missing episodes, should also be addressed through a transitional safeguarding approach, ensuring support is consistent throughout.

**Good Practice Actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement**  | Never  | Sometimes  | Often  | Very Often  | Always  |  Can you measure impact? How? |
| 1. Does your local area have a framework/protocol in place that supports the transition from children to adult services for young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. In your local area do representatives from adults services join strategy meetings or other planning meetings for a case transfer if there are ongoing concerns about a young person’s safeguarding needs as they approach adulthood?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. In your local area are health, education, housing, CAMHS and the voluntary sector involved in safeguarding meetings for those young people who have been identified as having ongoing safeguarding needs as they approach 18?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. In your local area can representatives from children’s services continue to join relevant meetings even once a young person is 18 to help ensure continuity?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Do agencies in your local area share information about vulnerable young people when they turn 18?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement**  | Never  | Sometimes  | Often  | Very Often  | Always  | What impact does this have?  |
| 1. Does your area have a multi-agency protocol in place for the response to missing adults? If so, does this include information on young people who are transitioning into adulthood?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. If a young person is engaging with return home interviews while under 18 can this service be continued post 18? Do you have flexibility in local commissioning arrangements to allow this to happen?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Are all agencies in your local area provided with guidance that has been approved by the local safeguarding partnership about when to report a young person who is 18 as missing based on national guidance?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. How well do agencies share information about vulnerable young people as they transition into adulthood?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement**  | Never  | Sometimes  | Often  | Very Often  | Always  | What impact does this have?  |
| 1. In your local area have there been any reviews that have focused on how effectively reporting a young person missing post 18 safeguards them from harm?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Does your local safeguarding partnership consider the risks involved in reporting young people as missing post 18 whilst acknowledging that this should never outweigh the safeguarding responsibility?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Do you have provision for any professionals who hold a trusted relationship with a child to continue to provide support as they pass 18?
 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Agreed Actions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Local Authority**  |        |
| **Police**  |        |
| **Health**  |        |
| **Education**  |        |
| **Housing** |        |
| **Substance Abuse Services** |   |
| **Other Agencies**  |   |

[[1]](https://ukc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en%2DUS&rs=en%2DUS&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fthechildrenssociety.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FAdolescentRiskVulnerabilityPolicy%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fa8311efdb7a24410a030335a4699d161&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&hid=C03AC1A0-A0FF-6000-C763-3852842C9FF2&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1687947261735&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=e7a002b1-646e-4aa4-b87a-0ad8b947e95a&usid=e7a002b1-646e-4aa4-b87a-0ad8b947e95a&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Normal&ctp=LeastProtected#_ftnref1) Holmes, D. and Smale, E. (2018) ‘Mind the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding – Adolescence to Adulthood.’ Dartington: Research in Practice. <https://www.researchinpractice.org>. uk/all/publications/2018/august/transitional-safeguardingadolescence-to-adulthood-strategic-briefing-2018/

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