

Welcome to the December 2016 edition of Missing News. This newsletter is produced by Missing People's Policy and Research team (policyandresearch@missingpeople.org.uk). It includes latest developments in policy, practice and research relevant to missing and other related sectors. You can also download this newsletter as a [pdf document](#). If you are not already a subscriber to Missing News and would like to receive future issues, please click [here](#) to email the Policy and Research team. Click on the links below or scroll down to see what is included in this edition:

[**New report from Missing People and ECPAT UK on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care**](#)

[**Please email your MP and ask them to support the Ten Minute Rule Bill on Guardianship which will be introduced to the House of Commons by Kevin Hollinrake MP on 11 January 2017**](#)

[**Looked after children: findings from the children's social care survey and new figures on the number of children missing from care in Northern Ireland**](#)

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[**Gangs: Independent review of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme**](#)

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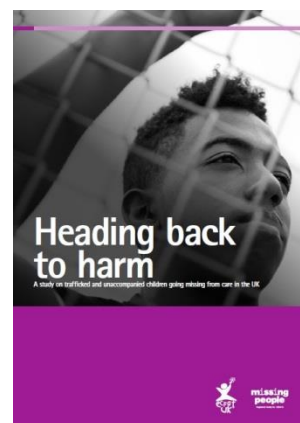
News from Missing People

NEW REPORT FROM MISSING PEOPLE AND ECPAT UK ON TRAFFICKED AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN GOING MISSING FROM CARE

In November, Missing People and ECPAT UK published a new report [Heading Back to Harm](#): a study of trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK. The study analysed freedom of information request data from 217 local authorities and also drew upon information collected during two focus groups with children and young people who had been trafficked, as well as a survey of practitioners and policy makers. The report found that more than a quarter (28 per cent) of all trafficked children went missing at least once.

Furthermore, around a third of trafficked and unaccompanied children were found to be missing for more than a week, compared to just 2 per cent of all missing children.

The report finds a worrying inconsistency in the way that local authorities identify and record trafficking and exploitation risk. Seven recommendations from the findings include: prioritising the development of independent child trafficking advocates; introducing child-specific training on trafficking, unaccompanied children and missing; resourcing safe and appropriate accommodation with victim-centred safety planning; improving data recording on trafficking and missing; and implementing a coordinated national, regional and local response to this issue. Missing People's press release accompanying the report can be found [here](#).



GUARDIANSHIP

On 11 January Kevin Hollinrake MP will be introducing a Ten Minute Rule Bill on Guardianship in the House of Commons. Please [email your MP](#) and ask them to support the bill.



Missing People has campaigned alongside families with a missing loved one to get guardianship powers introduced. These powers would help families with missing loved ones to look after their financial and legal affairs whilst they are away. The sad reality is that thousands of families in the UK are unable to protect their missing loved one's finances or property. The missing person's bank account can get drained by direct debits which their relatives are powerless to stop because they do not have any legal authority to act on

the missing person's behalf. Unnecessary debts can build up and, in some cases, people risk losing their homes. In March 2015 the Government agreed to introduce the legislation, however since then there has been little progress. This Ten Minute Rule Bill could be the opportunity we need to see this legislation introduced.

There is significant cross party support for guardianship powers as well as support from legal and financial organisations so there is no reason to delay bringing a Bill in front of Parliament. We hope you will join us in asking your MP for their support.

News from the Sector

Looked after children

In November, Ofsted [published findings from the children's social care questionnaires](#) this year. In total, 2,859 children living in foster or residential care completed the survey. Amongst those who had gone missing, children living in foster care were less likely to have the opportunity to speak to someone independent on their return than those in residential care. Additionally, children who go missing said that it helps them when staff and foster carers try to understand the reasons why. One fourteen year old living in a care home said: "Staff from the home were really worried about me. Afterwards they discussed with me the reasons why I went missing and what they could do as a staff team to help me feel more settled." However, not all children felt that staff or foster carers tried to understand why they went missing and, even when they did, some children did not want to talk to them. Another

fourteen year old in residential care said: "They say that it is my choice to go missing and therefore the consequences are my fault even though when I do go missing I always have a reason behind it." Ofsted also found that children living in foster homes tended to feel safer (93 percent felt safe all of the time) than those living in children's homes (70 percent felt safe all of the time).

In October, the [National Audit Office \(NAO\) published a report](#) on children in need of help or protection. The report states that the Department for Education (DfE) has not yet produced better outcomes for children, despite accepting the recommendations in the [Munro review of child protection](#) in 2011. The report finds no link between the amount local authorities spend and the Ofsted rating they receive. However, it does identify a relationship between Ofsted ratings and caseloads, vacancies and the number of agency workers engaged. In most authorities judged good, social workers had a caseload of between 10 and 14 cases compared to 35 in inadequate authorities. Good authorities had an average of 7% social workers as agency staff compared to 22% in inadequate services. Most good authorities had around 11% of social worker posts vacant compared to 22% in inadequate services. Furthermore, the NAO found that DfE interventions to improve failing services were not risk-based or early enough. The report recommends that DfE considers using performance data to anticipate risks.

In December 2016, figures on the [number of children missing from care in Northern Ireland](#) were published in response to a question submitted to the Policing Board by Sinn Fein MLA Raymond McCartney. They show that in the 12 months to April 2016, there had been 2,700 reports of young people going missing from children's homes in Northern Ireland, accounting for almost a quarter of the 12,189 missing person reports in the same time period. In response, Police Service Northern Ireland highlights a programme of joint training currently being undertaken with the Health and Social Care Trusts and Social Services which aims to better educate and inform staff about vulnerability issues relating to young people reported missing and those at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation

The [International Centre for Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking](#) at the University of Bedfordshire has published a [research summary slide pack](#). It gives an overview of findings from 22 studies on child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. The studies were published between 2008 and 2016 and cover a wide range of topics including the roles played by the police and families in safeguarding children. Each study is summarised on a single slide.

The PSHE Association and the Sex Education Forum released a [joint statement](#) in November calling for Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) to be taught within the context of statutory PSHE education. The joint statement outlines the role of SRE in developing skills and attributes which can be used by children to help protect themselves from harm and complex problems such as child sexual exploitation. Linked to this, Missing People is calling for the government to [ensure that all children are educated about the risks of running away](#) and what help they can access to stay safe. Whilst children are away from home or care they are at much greater risk of exploitation and violent crime but we know that only one in twenty tries to access professional help whilst they are missing - mainly because of a lack of awareness, or fear of what will happen to them if they do tell someone. Better education in this area would help ensure thousands more children are safeguarded.

Barnardo's [Real Love Rocks](#) healthy relationships and CSE prevention Service published a new animated video: [Stay Switched On](#). The video is aimed at young people who are travelling without adults to help them keep

safe, be aware of people and situations around them, and provide tips on how to keep safe and what to do if they are worried or concerned by anything.

Missing from education

In November, Bradford Council and HMRC announced a [pilot data-sharing scheme](#) which aims to locate children missing from education, whether enrolled, never enrolled, or removed from the school register. The pilot runs from January to June 2017 and replicates a similar agreement between HMRC and other local authorities. The announcement follows the government's response, in July this year, to a [consultation](#) on improving information in identifying children missing from education in which such data-sharing agreements were suggested. As part of the pilot, Bradford Council will acquire information on welfare payments for some households in the area once enquiries with health and education agencies have been exhausted. In Sheffield, the pilot helped to identify more than 40 percent of missing children.

Children and young people - bullying and self-harm

In November, ChildLine published a report [What children are telling us about bullying](#) to coincide with the start of [Anti-Bullying week in England](#). The report shows that bullying remains one of the most common reasons children contact ChildLine - 25,740 out of 300,000 counselling sessions. Bullying was the most common reason for children under 12 contacting ChildLine, second most common reason for all boys and the third most common for all girls. The report states that physical bullying is the top concern for under-12s, peer pressure for 12-15s, and online bullying for 16-18s. The importance of peer support for victims of bullying is highlighted, especially via ChildLine's online message boards with over 67,000 posts on this issue in 2015/16.

NHS figures [obtained by the Guardian](#) in October show an increase in self-harm among children and young people in the last ten years. Dr Peter Hindley from the Royal College of Psychiatrists said that the statistics appeared to confirm the experience of adolescent psychiatrists that levels of distress and numbers living with mental health problems are rising. Experts attribute this trend to a variety of factors, including pressure to succeed at school, pressure from social media, family break-up, and problems with body image.

Dementia



Health Education England (HEE) has published a [two-part video](#) following the story of Fred, who lives with dementia. The film aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by a person living with dementia who might leave their own home or care setting and risks becoming missing. The film [comes with a workbook and teaching slides](#) to help improve response if a person does go missing through better care, compassion and communication. We don't know for certain how many people with dementia go missing because many are not reported to the police but missing incidents are a significant

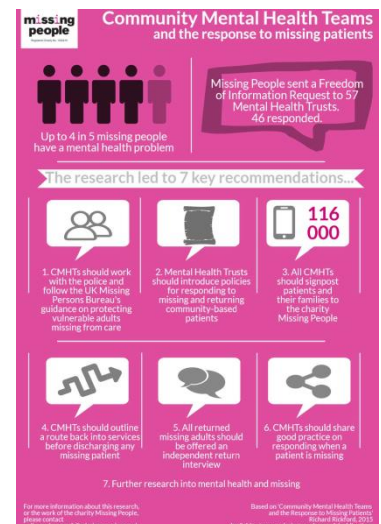
cause of worry for carers. Research conducted by Missing People with the University of Portsmouth has [highlighted coping strategies](#) for preventing missing used by people caring for someone with dementia, as well as the possibility of using [GPS technology](#) to keep the person with dementia safe.

Mental health

In December, Public Health England published a report on [the mental health of children and young people in England](#) which provides information to support commissioners in improving services for this group. The report describes the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and provides evidence to support the case for investment in this area which take into account the longer term negative impacts on physical health, educational attainment, employment prospects and social relationships. It also presents examples of interventions that can help children and young people manage different mental health problems.

A [report](#) by the National Confidential Inquiry on Suicide and Homicide found that many mental health patients at 'high risk' of taking their own lives are being diverted to intensive community services - that may not be suitable - because of pressure on other acute services. The findings show that around 200 suicides each year involved patients under the care of community crisis teams - three times as many as in inpatient units. More than four in ten of the people who died by suicide while under the care of crisis teams lived alone; a third died within a week of starting crisis team support; and 40 percent died within a fortnight of leaving hospital. [Findings from a study being carried out by researchers at University College London last year](#) showed that most crisis teams fell short of recommended guidelines set out by the Department of Health in 2001, with only 3 percent scoring 3 or more out of 5 on 'preventing future crises.'

In November, the Care Quality Commission published the results of the [2016 Community Mental Health Survey](#). Two thirds of patients reported a positive experience of their overall care: 65 percent scored their overall experience at 7 or higher out of 10. However, substantial concerns remain about the quality of care received by some people using community mental health services. Almost a third (32 per cent) did not know who to contact out of office hours in the event of a crisis and, of those who did, 24 percent said they did not get the help they needed. [Up to 80 percent of those who go missing are living with a mental health problem](#). Missing People has [published research](#) on the importance community mental health teams (CMHTs) preparing to respond appropriately to their service users going missing. Best practice suggests that CMHTs should not automatically discharge missing patients, but should be proactive in their efforts to pre-empt, prevent and respond to missing incidents.



A new article about adults with mental health problems who go missing, by Missing People's Research Manager Lucy Holmes, will be published in January 2017 in the Journal of Illness, Crisis and Loss. An early online edition of the article is now available: ["I Just Felt Like I was in a Cage": Examining the Accounts of Returned Missing Adults with Mental Health Issues](#) (Holmes, L).

Gangs

In November, the Home Office published [an independent review](#) of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) programme between 2012 and 2015. The programme aims to prevent young people becoming involved in violence, provide exit routes for those already involved in gangs, and ensure appropriate enforcement responses are in place. The 2012 cohort of pilot areas reported successes in identifying who is involved in serious violence

and gangs and where, when, and why it is happening. These improvements in data mapping have led to better strategies for tackling prevalent gang-related issues such as County Lines, missing children, and child sexual exploitation. Multi-agency collaboration in the EGYV areas has improved significantly. Emerging trends are now better recognised and identified more quickly. One local authority reports having 'drastically reduced the number of boys going missing from local authority care'. The report also highlights areas for improvement, in particular, the fact that missing persons co-ordinators play a strategic role in only two out of the eight areas with a developed gang strategy. Missing People, together with Catch 22, have published a [report on the links between gang involvement and young people going missing](#). In a survey of 160 professionals in 2015, 125 had been in contact with children and young people going missing who are involved with gangs. Of these professionals, 71 percent said that being recruited for gang activity was one of the most common pull factors for running away.



Trafficking and modern slavery

The [government's response](#) to the Home Affairs Select Committee report on prostitution was published in December. The Select Committee recommended that guidance should be issued to police on how to respond to, and ensure access to support for, young adults offering sexual services in the community or online, particularly if they have formerly been known as young people at risk of sexual exploitation. The government response refers to guidance due to be published later this year which will make clear that professionals should ensure they are familiar with legislation and guidance relating to transition into adulthood and safeguarding adults in need of care and support.

Also in December, the Home Office published [guidance on how to report modern slavery](#) which includes the government's definition of modern slavery, how to report it or get help, and what help and protection victims entitled to.

The first [annual report](#) from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner was published in October. The report states that it is crucial to ensure that an effective system of child advocates is in place to prevent further exploitation and abuse of trafficked children and asserts that the Government needs to introduce interim measures to address this whilst a long term solution to the child advocate model is developed. A new child trafficking protection fund has been introduced which aims to tackle the issue of trafficked children going missing and being re-trafficked (you can read more about it and other UK activity on trafficking in the [fifth annual report from the UK inter-departmental ministerial group on modern slavery](#)). Research by Missing People and ECPAT UK [published in November 2016](#) found that 28 per cent of a sample of children suspected or identified as trafficked went missing at least once.

Dates for the Diary

26 January 2017 Missing Children Europe Conference in Malta: Lost in Migration. All places for this free conference have now been booked but you can register on the waiting list here: [Registration for Lost in Migration Conference](#). Lucy Holmes will present findings from the ground breaking research from Missing People and ECPAT UK: Heading Back to Harm: Separated and trafficked children missing from care in the UK. You can read a blog from Lucy on Heading back to Harm ahead of the conference [here](#).

14-16 June 2017 3rd International Conference on Missing Children and Adults, Abertay University, Dundee, Scotland. Further information and a call for papers will be circulated shortly. Please contact one of the conference co-chairs if you have any questions at this stage: Dr Penny Woolnough: p.woolnough@abertay.ac.uk or Dr Karen Shalev-Greene: karen.shalev-greene@port.ac.uk.



Join us next summer for the [Missing People Liverpool to London cycle ride](#) Thursday 8 to Saturday 10 June 2017. Push your fitness levels forward and make friends for life riding through historic cities, the rolling hills of the Peak District all the way to London. [Find out more or register your interest here](#).