



Rapid Review Learning Briefing

Missing Children

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Missing
Children](#)



A rapid
review
learning
event took
place in
June 2022

Professionals
from 13
teams /
organisations
took part in
the review



This rapid review looked at one teenager's experiences during periods of going missing. The review looked at how the safeguarding system worked together to keep them safe during this time and whether there was any learning for the safeguarding partnership.

The young person was reported missing nine times in a twelve-month period. They accepted missing return conversations following every recorded episode. The conversations were used to explore reasons for going missing, and discuss what had happened during the missing periods. Action plans were put in place after every conversation.



Rapid Review Findings

In line with policy, when the young person was reported missing, the police communications team consistently completed hospital, ambulance and custody checks, notified patrol and neighbourhood policing teams, British Transport Police and CCTV operators. Extensive enquiries and investigations took place and use of local and national media appeals were used appropriately given the level of concern.

The first five missing episodes within the review period were agreed as appropriately rated as medium risk by the police, one was later upgraded to high risk. Further missing episodes were rated as medium, with one being upgraded to high 36 hours later. Based on the risk being managed at the time and known escalating behaviour, it was agreed in the review that the later missing episodes should have been rated as high from the outset. There was some discrepancy in how risk was assessed in different team, however Avon and Somerset Police have already implemented a new pilot scheme for how missing children are risk assessed and managed based on this learning.

Following one missing period, the young person was found with a known offender who posed a risk to them. The young person was referred to Operation Topaz who assessed CSE intel and requested that a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) be issued. CAWN is an early intervention tool used by the police to disrupt contact between a vulnerable child and a predatory adult.

There was learning for services who work predominately with adults actively working with police and children's services to find a missing child when their service is working with an adult suspected of trafficking.

Trigger plans were found to be used effectively by police to inform missing investigations. The plans were updated and shared with professionals after each missing episode, containing details about recent missing incidents and areas the young person was known to frequent.

In the longest missing episode, there was evidence of improved practice when the missing investigation was reviewed by a Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) and a major crime approach was initiated. The group raised whether consideration should be given to how DCI reviews of missing incidents are triggered to ensure there is a senior oversight going forward.

During missing episodes, education and voluntary sector partners were actively engaged with multi-agency decision making alongside health, police, and the local authority. Education reported that at times, it would have been beneficial to be part of the risk management and during missing episodes so that they could support the wider school community and peer group who were impacted. This is not always possible in a fast-paced investigation. There is learning for the partnership around how to communicate changes to high profile investigation to the network, and have actions or resources aligned to supporting the networks around children. The rapid review identified that there were opportunities to do this through the new exploitation mental health practitioners who are being commissioned to work with peer groups and communities.