

**To the Chair and Members of the  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PANEL**

**HOW THE ISSUE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM CARE IS  
ADDRESSED IN DONCASTER**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
<p>Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Lead Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Services to Families and support to Lead Member for Children’s Services)</p>	All	None

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report will set out the scale of Missing from Care episodes, the underlying reasons for a young person going missing and the co-ordinated responses of the local authority, South Yorkshire Police and the voluntary sector to such incidents and the support available to young people involved.

**EXEMPT INFORMATION**

2. Not exempt

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. There are no recommendations arising out of this Report. It is very much more for the purposes of information sharing and awareness raising for the Scrutiny Panel and to provide a response to the specific questions and issues that the Panel has raised.

## BACKGROUND

4. There has been a protocol between the four South Yorkshire local authorities and South Yorkshire Police (SYP) for several years now. However, over the course of 2013 SYP have wanted to revise this protocol but there has been no finalised version agreed by all parties. As a result of this Sheffield City Council have drafted and implemented their own revised procedures in respect of dealing with young people Missing from Care. Doncaster C&YPS have accessed this and are in the process of revising their own procedures which will broadly mirror those of Sheffield so as to achieve some consistency of response from the SYP. These will be in place by the end of March 2014 but the protocol between SYP and the four South Yorkshire local authorities will be revised over the course of 2014 with a series of meetings already arranged to achieve this.

## Definitions

5. Within this protocol there will be a clear differential between those young people who are deemed to be “Missing” and those who are “Absent”. This risk based approach to managing incidents ensures that resources are targeted at locating the most vulnerable young people.
  - **Missing** – ‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.’
  - **Absent** – ‘A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.’
6. Although the categorisation of any particular incident remains the responsibility of SYP, if the residential staff or foster carer remains concerned that the categorisation of the young person does not match the identified risks then they can escalate the issue through the Emergency Social Services Team (ESST) on - call manager. Parents of children placed at home whilst subject of a Care Order can similarly access support to challenge the decision of SYP in respect of the categorisation via ESST. In addition there are increasingly open lines of communication between SYP and Doncaster C&YPS and regular face to face meetings. This ensures that information is regularly shared in respect of those young people who are particularly vulnerable so that this categorisation decision is fully informed. This minimises the chances that a particular young person will be ‘downplayed’ as being absent simply because they exhibit a regular pattern of running away behaviours.
7. The police will not be actively looking for a young person deemed to be ‘absent’ and it will remain the responsibility of the local authority to take all appropriate steps to locate and return the young person to their placement. However, SYP will continue to monitor and review the case and if there is a change in circumstances their ‘missing’ status may be changed.

## ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Responses

8. Providers of residential care are not allowed to lock young people in – either in a room, or in the Home itself. There are also very robust national guidelines on the use of any restraint. Staff, like all responsible parents, do implement boundaries for young people, such as coming in times and going to bed times, with there being clear sanctions for their non-compliance such as ‘groundings’ or a withdrawal of treats/rewards. For many of the young people placed in our Children’s Homes this may be the first time that adults have routinely tried to impose such boundaries upon them and unsurprisingly some of them will find it difficult to adhere to them. The Children’s Homes Regulations do not allow for a member of staff to physically prevent a young person from leaving the premises. In addition staffing levels do not often allow a member of staff to follow a young person who has left the premises inappropriately due to the need to provide adequate supervision for those young people who remain in the Home.
9. The point at which a young person is reported to the police will vary from young person to young person and will be clarified in their individual Care Plan and Risk Assessment. For example a young person who is deemed to be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation will be reported to the Police almost immediately when their whereabouts are unknown whereas a 17 year old who regularly goes out with his mates on a week-end and returns an hour or so late may not be reported at all.
10. Once the phone call is made to the SYP they will take the caller through a series of questions to assist them in deciding into which category the young person falls. Although the SYP will not actively investigate an ‘Absent’ episode a supervising police officer is allocated and a timescale agreed for this to be category to be reviewed. It may also be reviewed if any new information comes to light that would heighten concerns. Where appropriate the carers will follow up any information to locate and return the young person to placement.
11. In respect of ‘Missing’ young people SYP will actively investigate, locate and return the young person to their placement.
12. If the young person remains ‘Missing’ for 72 hours (by which time an ‘Absent’ young person will ordinarily have been re-categorised as being ‘Missing’) a multi-agency Strategy Meeting will be convened to further share information and plan any actions that may be necessary to locate the young person. This will include active consideration of a media alert, for which the final decision rests with the Assistant Director. Similarly if the young person has been ‘Missing’ on more than 3 occasions in any one 28 day period a Strategy Meeting will be held to agree a plan of action to better manage these Missing incidents.

13. All social work teams now provide the Assistant Director and Heads of Service with a weekly report of absent and missing episodes to ensure that patterns are identified and more strategic responses considered.
14. In the course of 2013 there has been only one young person who was 'Missing' for more than 72 hours. This person's whereabouts have never been identified although it is highly likely that this person was in fact an adult member of a criminal network who had been brought to the UK to manage a cannabis house and that he is in all probability now fulfilling an identical function elsewhere in the UK. Unfortunately, the Statutory Guidance in respect of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) means that once an age assessment has been completed the local authority is legally bound to abide with this assessment and treat the Asylum Seeker accordingly. Not only are these age assessments a very inexact science but these people usually have their identification papers removed from them by the people bringing them to the UK. In addition they are told to present themselves as an under 18 year old so as to acquire certain financial and legal entitlements. In this particular case it is suspected that the 'Missing' young person was in fact an adult and probably should not have been in the care of the local authority in the first place.
15. Once a young person is located wherever possible it should be the social worker and/or the carer rather than SYP who returns the young person to their placement although SYP will undertake a "safe and well" visit on the young person and refer the young person for a return to placement visit from Safe@Last (cf Appendix 2).

### **Numbers Missing From Care**

16. (cf Appendix 1.for a breakdown of the Missing figures for 2013)
17. In respect of those young people who are placed in other local authority areas in either Independent Fostering Agency placements or in Out of Authority residential placements Doncaster C&YPS has, as part of the contract with the placement provider, a requirement that the social worker is notified of every 'Missing' and 'Absent' incident.
18. These incidents are then incorporated into the weekly monitoring form so that all incidents involving Doncaster young people are accurately recorded. Unfortunately Doncaster C&YPS does not get informed when a young person in the care of another local authority but placed in the Doncaster area goes missing from care. This is because when a young person that is placed in the DMBC area by another local authority goes missing it remains the responsibility of that local authority to manage the Missing from Care procedure. SYP do not routinely record these statistics and without contacting every placement provider on an individual basis it will not be feasible to ascertain these figures as requested by the Scrutiny and Overview Panel.

19. However, I have managed to record the missing figures for the whole of 2013 which have been split into total number of Missing incidents, number of young people involved and the number of those incidents involving DMBC young people missing from local authority care. The total numbers of Missing incidents include those young people going missing from their family home and from placements made in the Doncaster area by other local authorities but it is not possible to separately identify these within the figures provided.
20. As these graphs indicate, children in care make up a small but periodically significant proportion of the total number of children reported as being missing in the Doncaster area. Within that total the young people placed in local authority children's homes form the vast majority of missing incidents with peer group pressure being a significant factor in many of these incidents.
21. The other statistic of note from these graphs is that there was a significant spike in Missing incidents between June and November for children in care rising from c 25% of the total missing reports in Doncaster in the first 5 months of the year to 39%. This spike was directly attributable to a very challenging cohort of young people placed together in Cromwell Drive and Pinewood Avenue. It is noticeable that once some of these young people were moved on to more appropriate placements as part of the Care Planning process the rates dropped back down to 28%.
22. There are three significant factors that can be deemed to aggravate the high numbers of missing reports to the police made by Doncaster C&YPS:
  - Doncaster has historically been too ready to accommodate young people on a Section 20 basis i.e. at the request of the child's parents. In January 15% of those in foster care but 49% of those in residential care were subject to a Section 20 arrangement. Residential care is both more expensive and the types of placement from which young people are most likely to go missing due to peer group pressures. By establishing a better gatekeeping provision and stronger alternative offers to parents experiencing difficulties in managing the behaviours of their adolescent children Doncaster C&YPS should be able to reduce its overall number of Children in Care and its number who go 'Missing'.
  - These young people often come into our care with some history of going missing from their home address along with risk taking behaviours, non-school attendance and some offending history which has led to the parent's requesting them to become accommodated in the first place. With these behaviours already established it is not surprising that upon admission to a children's home not only does the missing behaviour not improve but they can also have a very destabilising effect of the rest of their peer group. This was identified as being the underlying reason for the spike in 'Missing' episodes between June and November 2013.

- A part of the Placement Review Project Doncaster is no longer placing so many of its children in care in very expensive out of authority placements. This has meant that occupancy levels in the in-house children's home increased from about 65% at the start of 2013 to around 95% by the end of the year. This also means that the young people placed in our children's homes are much more challenging and are less likely to abide by the boundaries set down for them in terms of coming in times etc. Thus, it may be that we have to balance the risks between reducing our financial commitment arising from the large number of Out of Authority placements and those risks of increased 'Missing' episodes arising from managing a more complex and challenging cohort within the in-house children's homes.
23. It is hoped that as the revised Missing from Care protocol becomes embedded in practice the numbers of young people who are reported as being 'Missing' will both give a more accurate report and revise the figures downwards.

### **Underlying Reasons for Young People Going Missing**

24. The underlying reasons for a young person to go missing are many and varied. They can be symptomatic of some degree of unhappiness with being a child in care or more specifically some degree of dissatisfaction with their placement. The "draw" for especially older young people back towards their birth families can often be hard to resist whatever risks that contact may present to their welfare.
25. Analysis of 'Missing' episodes evidences that by far the biggest cause of reports to the police is in respect of those young people who leave their placement to embark in adolescent risk taking behaviours such as alcohol and illicit drug use and then not returning to their placement until late/early hours of the morning. Where this is a reasonably regular event and no other risk factors identified, it is likely that these reports are the most likely to be categorised as "Absent" in the future although work will continue to be done by all relevant agencies to change the young person's behaviours. The inherent risk in this process is that these young people are often considered to be "street-wise" and able to look after themselves when in fact they can be more vulnerable due the activities they become involved in whilst out of their placement.
26. In a small number of cases the young person may be exposing themselves to the risks of sexual exploitation. This issue is addressed on a strategic level at the Sexual Exploitation and Runaways Subgroup of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board. The risks posed to individual young people are considered at the Risk Management Group which reviews and contributes to the risk management plan. On a small number of occasions where these risks are deemed to be too great to be managed internally some young people have been placed in specialist Out of Authority placements with the aim of developing the young person's recognition of and resistance to sexual exploitation so as to enable them to safely return to the Doncaster area on a planned basis.

## **Support Available - C&YPS**

27. In dealing with Missing incidents there is a two stage process to consider:-
  - Locate the missing person and return them safe and well to their placement.
  - Provide on-going interventions to identify the causes of the Missing incidents and to minimise the re-occurrences in the future.
28. Within both of these functions the child's carer and social worker will obviously be the key personnel. However, a multi-agency approach also needs to be implemented to achieve a consistent response and minimise future risks. This may also include the Youth Offending Service, the Better Education for Children in Care (BECIC) team, SYP and Safe@Last.
29. For the minority of young people who go missing on a frequent basis (3 times in a 28 day period) or place themselves at a particular risk a strategy meeting should be convened to discuss the reasons for the incidents and to develop a plan to tackle these.
30. Ultimately, as an option of last resort and where the risks are deemed to be too great to be managed 'in-house' such young people may be placed in Out of Authority placements, often in a locality from which it is much harder to go missing. Such placements are time limited and are designed to break the cycle of 'Missing' episodes and to enable the young person to return to the Doncaster area once these risks have been addressed.

## **South Yorkshire Police**

31. Doncaster C&YPS is working increasingly closely with SYP and has developed some very strong strategic links between the children's homes, Doncaster Youth Offending Service and SYP. One outcome of this relationship is that we are currently trialling the placement of one of the police officers seconded into the YOS to be the specialist children's home worker. The aim of this role will be to:-
  - Undertake a 12 month analysis of the Missing from care reports to identify any underlying causes and any pre and post spike outcomes.
  - To review all "Missing" reports to assess whether they were appropriate or in fact there is an issue of over – reporting.
  - To work with staff and young people to reduce the Missing from Care incidents.
  - To work with staff and young people within the Restorative Justice framework to ensure the young people are not over-criminalised for the other anti-social/challenging behaviours they exhibit.

32. Each local authority in South Yorkshire has a Missing Person's Co-ordinator who is responsible for being the link between SYP and the local authority for all missing children. In addition there is a quarterly strategic meeting held between the four South Yorkshire local authorities and SYP to ensure a consistency of approach and share cross boundary information in respect of particularly vulnerable young people.
33. This has especial relevance for those young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and any young person identified as experiencing such risks are then referred for further multi-agency discussion as part of the Safeguarding Procedures. The other main source of support for young people reported as being 'Missing' is the voluntary organisation, Safe@Last (c.f. Appendix 2).

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

34. There are no specific options to consider within this report as it provides information for the Panel to consider and evaluate.

### **IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES**

	<b>Priority Outcome</b>	<b>Implications of this initiative</b>
1.	Doncaster's economy develops and thrives, underpinned by effective education and skills	The Missing from Care Protocol has obvious implications for ensuring that children are safe by being designed to minimise the incidents of missing episodes, ensuring a prompt return of the young person to their placement and providing the follow up work to minimise the re-occurrences. In addition by ensuring that these young people do not become further disengaged from their placement and education the Protocol should have a positive impact on an individual's outcomes and on a successful transition to adulthood.
2.	Children are safe	
3.	Stronger families and stronger communities	
4.	Modernised and sustainable Adult Social Care Services with increased choice and control	
5.	Effective arrangements are in place to deliver a clean, safe and attractive local environment	
6.	The Council is operating effectively, with change embedded and sustained with robust plans in place to operate within future resource allocations	



## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

35. There are no risks and assumptions associated with this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

36. There are no legal implications arising from the report .

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

37. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

38. No consultation is required for this report.

## **CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR**

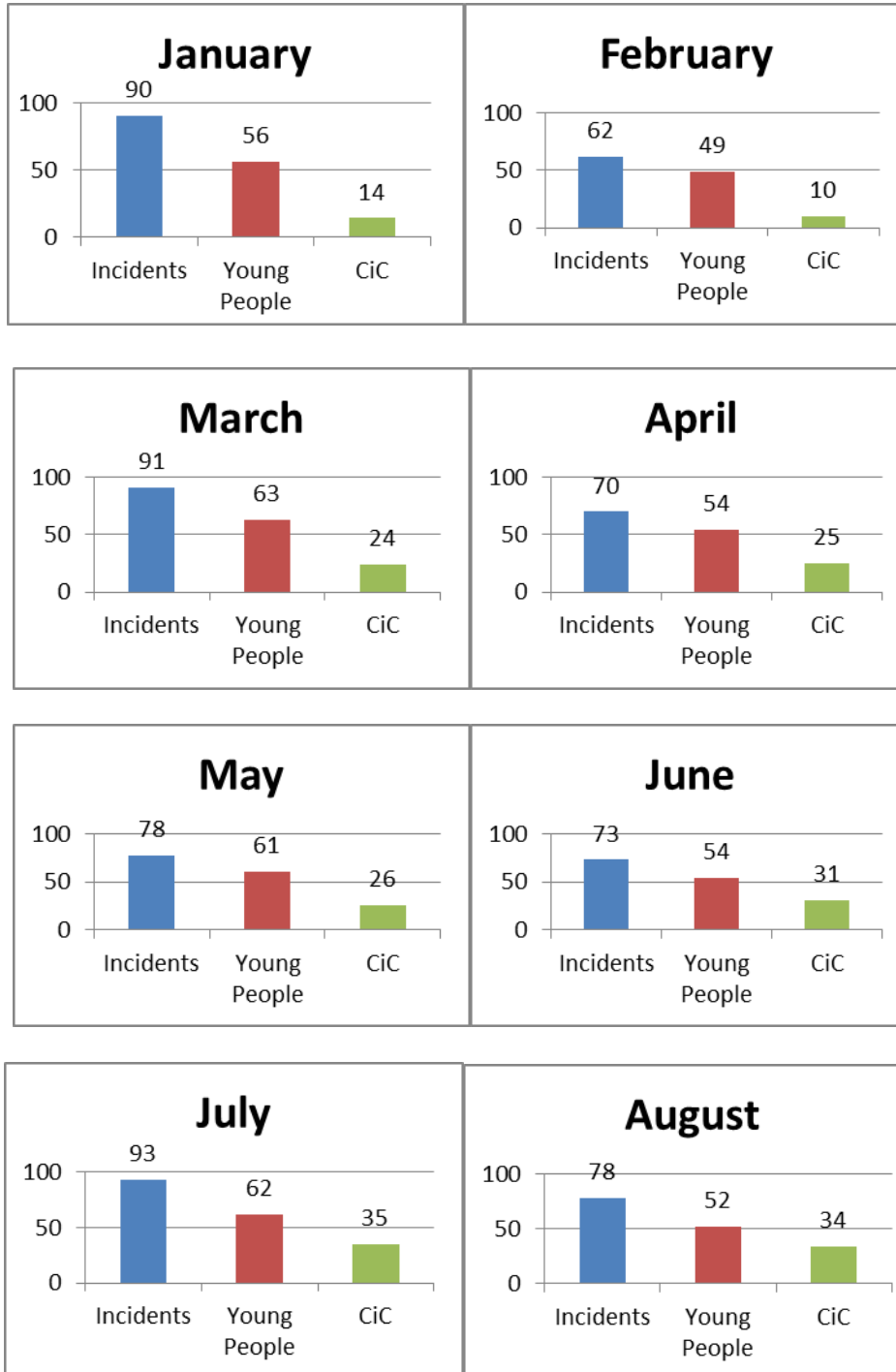
39. Ian Walker, Head of Service, Children in Care

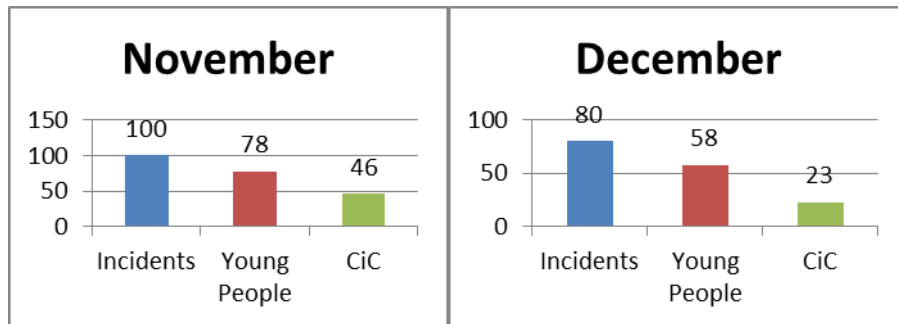
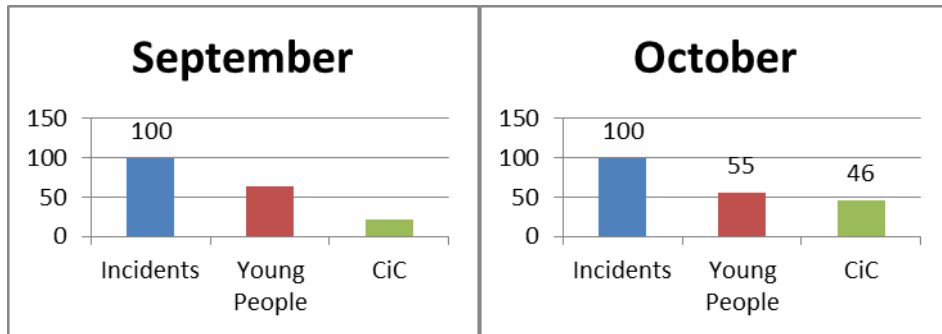
## **Background Papers**

c.f. attached appendices in relation to the reported statistics for young people missing over the course of 2013 and the service provided by Safe@Last

**Eleanor Brazil**  
**Director Children and Young People's Services**

## APPENDIX 1





40. NB: The figures relating to Children in Care report the number of incidents as opposed the number of young people involved.

## APPENDIX 2

SAFE@LAST is a registered charity working with and on behalf of young people at risk through running away. We are based at Dinnington, near Sheffield, and were established in response to an acute need for services for the 1 in 9 children under the age of 16 in South Yorkshire who are affected [www.safeatlast.org.uk](http://www.safeatlast.org.uk).

SAFE@LAST currently delivers a range of services in Doncaster to children and young people, before, during and after episodes of running away. SAFE@LAST underwent an evaluation in February 2013 in terms of its effectiveness and value for money. The full Reach report is available via our website: [www.safeatlast.org.uk/documents/RailwayChildren-ReachReportFull.pdf](http://www.safeatlast.org.uk/documents/RailwayChildren-ReachReportFull.pdf).

In Doncaster currently deliver:

- **MISPER (Missing Persons) Project**
- **Family Support Work**
- **Preventative & Education**
- **SAFEplace Children's Refuge**
- **Children's Freephone Helpline including Text Service and Webchat**

### MISPER Scheme:

The MISPER Scheme in Doncaster provides one to one support to children and young people at risk through running away or going missing from home/care. This scheme is in response to the Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, originally published in 2009 and reviewed and republished in January 2014 the guidance states, *"When a child has run away or is missing from home they should be able to easily access support services, such as help lines or emergency accommodation. Support should also be made available to families to help them understand why the child has run away and how they can support them on their return.....When a child is found, they must be offered an independent return interview.....This is an in depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (ie someone not involved in caring for the child)'*. SAFE@LAST are the independent organisation who carry out the return interviews in Doncaster, and also undertake them in Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care).

SAFE@LAST receives referrals from South Yorkshire Police after a young person has been reported missing. We also receive referrals from schools, other non-government organisations and direct from young people themselves. **In 2013 we received referrals for 161 young people from Doncaster of which 131 were first time referrals.**

After receiving a referral from South Yorkshire Police or another source young people are contacted and offered a return interview where a Project Worker will meet with them and discuss their issues around running away. We aim to contact a young person and their family within 72 hours of receiving the referral to arrange to deliver the return interview.

**We delivered return interviews to 77 of the first time young people in 2013 of which 66 were for children and young people missing from home and 11 were for children and young people missing from care.**

We then offer on-going support. If a young person chooses to engage the Project Worker will meet with them regularly to offer one to one support. This support is tailored to each individual child to address their specific issues and could include work regarding keeping safe and developing coping strategies. When young people engage with us we meet with them regularly based on their needs – usually this is about once a week, with additional regular telephone and text support. We work with a young person for as long as they need our support and do not have set timetables in place as we recognize that every young person and the issues that led them to run away are unique. Our support with a young person can be for just two months or over a year.

**Research has shown 59% of young people that run away do so again within a year. With support from our Project Worker, in Doncaster that number is reduced to 26% and at the end of the planned intervention only 6% were still having episodes of running away.**

When attending meetings where a young person is present, SAFE@LAST advocates on behalf of that young person when they did not feel confident enough to get their thoughts and feelings across. If the young person could not or did not want to attend a meeting SAFE@LAST spoke on their behalf or asked them to write down their thoughts which are then passed onto the Chair.

We also aim to support young people in accessing other services, where appropriate, to receive support on their specific issues.

One of the projects main aims is to reduce the number of young people who repeatedly run away from the place where they live. An outcome of the project is that young people who have run away from home are supported to make safer choices to enable them to stay safe. As a result of the work children will be better informed, feel physically and emotionally secure and be more competent at identifying risky situations.

This project reduces the risk to young people of issues closely associated with running away such as mental health, drug and alcohol use, breakdown in family relationships, lack of engagement with school and risky behaviours. Of the young people we worked with the most common reasons identified for running away were arguments, family problems, peer pressure, to be with friends and a dislike of school.

When working with young people we hope to improve their self-worth, self-esteem and self-confidence and help them to identify activities that they enjoy and make them feel good. We also aim to support them to adopt healthy lifestyles by learning about personal hygiene, eating healthily, exercise and safe sex and will also provide practical support such as accompanying them to attend GUM clinics and doctors. Young people are emotionally healthier as a consequence of being listened to and heard.

The work of the Project Workers also involves informing Children and Young People about our 24 hour freephone helpline, text service and webchat which enables young people to contact us to talk about their worries and issues around running away during and after regular office hours.

SAFE@LAST

**Case Study:**

*We first received a referral for Sally on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011 when she was 12 years old. A return interview as booked for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2011, however upon arriving Sally had*

*jumped out of the kitchen window as her mother answered the door to the Project Worker, Sally was reported missing and she returned the following day. A second return interview was booked for the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2014 where Sally agreed to weekly support from the Project Worker. Sally admitted that she went missing much more than her mum reported her to the Police. Sally said she was often hanging around with older peers that she met through the local Youth Club around the Town Centre and St James flats. Sally said that she often smokes and drinks but isn't worried by this and said 'its what everyone is doing.'*

*Since the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, Sally and the Project Worker have met on a weekly to bi-weekly basis depending on the level of need at the particular time. Sally engaged well from the start and work was completed around making safer choices, dangers of going missing, positive peer relationships and maintaining relationships with parents.*

*The family moved house due to issues within the community and Sally getting bullied at school. The family moved to a different area of Doncaster in March 2012. Sally also moved to the local Academy against her wishes.*

*Sally and the Project Worker continued to meet regularly and sessions were completed around the Dangerous Loverboy resource, Friend or Foe and How Risky is Risky? Sally was struggling to make appropriate peer relationships at her new Academy and was often getting put into inclusion or excluded from school due to her behaviours. The Project Worker worked closely with the Academy and would often go to school when Sally's behaviour was 'out of control' to help Sally work through her issues.*

*Sally came off school roll in October 2013 due to Parents request and was having no formal education. The Project Worker worked closely with mum around locating a place for Sally to be educated and Sally gained a place on a Child Care programme at Doncaster College this includes studying for her Maths and English qualifications.*

*Sally is now doing really well on her college course with 100% attendance and is enjoying her education. Sally has also recently become an active member of the SAFE@LAST Young Advisory Board and volunteered at our education programme through Crucial Crew. Sally has also attended a meeting with GamesAid (grant funder) in London to talk openly about her experiences with SAFE@LAST.*

### **Family Support Work:**

The Family Support Work was started up in response to a need that was highlighted to us by our Project Workers of families who were asking for support around their child or young persons running away or going missing from home.

Young people tell us that one of the main reasons for their running away is problems at home. The Family Support Workers role is to work in partnership with the family to identify the problems and help them find solutions. By using a 'joined up' approach the Project Worker and Family Support Worker can work together with the young person and the family towards the same aim e.g. stop the child or young person running away, family arguments, school attendance etc.

We consider this piece of work to be a part of the Early Help offer in Doncaster as the service is activated in the same way as the MISPER Scheme with the family/parent/carer being offered a return interview after an episode of running away or going missing by their child or young person. We have learnt that intervention at such an early stage is for many families the first

contact that they have had with a professional. This service offers families an alternative choice for family support through the voluntary sector which, in the same way as the Project Worker, is available until the family no longer requires support or has been signposted on to other services. This piece of work started in March 2013 and during this year the Family support Worker worked with 11 families of which 10 of the families had their young person supported by the Project Worker. During the time these families were worked with there were no run away or missing incidents and this continues to be the case after closure.

#### Case study:

Claire had been missing and was found in a hotel with an older male she had met on the internet. The family were referred to the Family Support Worker by the Project Worker who was working with Claire. List of the young person's presenting issues:

- Inappropriate relationships via the internet
- Increasing arguments with her mother which could be physical
- Low self-esteem for both young person and mother

#### Support

Family support worker gave weekly support through home visits to mum, project worker worked with Claire.

- Following Claire going into care after an incident at home, family support worker helped the family through the child protection process and informing parents of their rights
- The family support worker gave emotional support to mum who was very low at the start of the work
- Advice was given how to build better relationships between mother and daughter

#### Outcomes

- Claire returned home and relationships improved between all family members
- Claire's mum had increased her self esteem and was much happier
- Claire completed her exams and got accepted at college
- The family support worker was able to close this case as the family were progressing well and they felt that other families could benefit from the support.

This work is funded by SAFE@LAST via grants.

#### **Prevention and Education work:**

This programme is designed to raise awareness of the dangers of running away with targeted work aimed at year 6, year 7 and year 9 students.

The year 6 work is initially delivered through South Yorkshire Police Lifewise Project, Crucial Crew where a scenario is shown to them about 'Stranger Danger', this scenario was delivered to around 3000 year 6 children from Doncaster in 2013. In addition to this some primary schools will invite us in to do some extra work with targeted children that they identify as showing early signs of risky behaviour which may lead to running away.

The year 7 and 9 work raises awareness of the dangers of running away. We deliver 10/15 minute talks during assembly and then return to deliver a 40/50 minute workshop which we

focus, in an age appropriate way, on what the dangers of running away are and the risks of this behaviour and offer some solutions for help, our helpline being one of the key sources of help. In 2013 we delivered this work to approximately 5000 students in Doncaster Comprehensive Schools and Academies. If any schools or academies request that work is delivered to the other year groups then we do this also. This has included work in the Pupil Referral Units and other specialist schools.

We have also delivered workshops for Brownies, Scouts, Church Groups and Youth Groups. This work is funded by SAFE@LAST voluntary income raised through fundraising.

**Children's Refuge:**

SAFE@LAST has the only children's refuge in the UK, this refuge provides emergency accommodation to young people aged 16 years and under. It is a registered children's home and benefits from regular unannounced inspections from Ofsted and holds an exemption certificate in line with Section 51 of the Children Act 1989 <http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=childrens+act+1989+s.51>.

In 2013 the children's refuge provided 6 bed nights for 4 young people from Doncaster.

The children's refuge is owned by SAFE@LAST but bed nights are paid for by the Local Authority.

**Freephone helpline, text and webchat:**

The freephone helpline is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week including bank holidays and weekends and is a confidential service. It is a free service for young people to ring from landlines or mobiles and the number does not show up on telephone bills. The text service is available from 9.30am to 11pm daily and the webchat is open at times which are advertised on our young person's website [www.safeatlast.co.uk](http://www.safeatlast.co.uk).

In 2013 we had 21 recorded calls from young people in Doncaster, there may have been more, but some young people choose not to tell us their location.

This work is funded by SAFE@LAST voluntary income raised through fundraising.

**Other information:**

- Our Director of Children and Young Peoples Services is the voluntary sector representative on DSCB.
- Our Director of Children and Young Peoples Services is the Deputy Chair of the CSE and Runaways Sub Group.
- Our Director of Operations and Strategy participates in the level 3 Safeguarding training, by delivering a section on running away.

Tracey Haycox  
Director of Children and Young People's Service  
SAFE@LAST