

APPENDIX D

Notes on comments provided in evidence re.

What arrangements are in place for identifying missing children who may have been taken abroad for marriage? Do we any reliable or indicative statistics? If pupils return to school after a long absence and there are indications that they may have been “married” are there any procedures in place to ensure that this is reported as a child protection issue?

Liz Rowbotham - NHS Leicestershire County & Rutland

This would come under safeguarding. Nurses, health visitors and particularly General Practitioners should build up a picture that would identify problems. There is a process for identifying DNA (Did Not Attend) young people but nothing in place to monitor if people had left the country.

Detective Inspector Peter Williams, Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Adults Coordinator, Leicestershire Constabulary.

The problem with recording and identifying missing children it that there is no national co-ordination allowing the tracking of children within the educational system. This means much time is wasted investigating possible missing children who turn out to have simply moved to another part of the country.

Natasha Rattu, Karma Nirvana, Leeds

There is a known problem in tracing missing children in that there is no national system and often the disappearance of children for a long period is not investigated, with schools often regarding this as the “norm” for children from that community. Even when drawn to the attention of welfare officers, investigations are often rudimentary, with no evidence of rigour in getting answers to queries. The message that this is a Child Protection issue has not yet got through to all schools and governors.

Jonathan Ord, (Jonathan.ord@newcastle.gov.uk Tel. 0191 277 4500) the Exclusion Officer at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has worked with KN on this issue and has a detailed understanding of the problems involved in tracking “missing” children.

The main issues are:

- There is no obligation for parents to inform the local authority of home tutoring;
- The regulations for independent schools do not suggest a relationship between independent schools and the local authority;
- There needs to be an improvement in data management and communication through all the relevant agencies;
- Resources for tracking down “missing” pupils;
- Need for good quality information and a higher profile.

**Walter McCulloch, Assistant Director for Children's Services
Chris Nerini, Head of Service, Extended Services and Family Support
Leicestershire County Council**

This is done on a case by case basis. The School Support process identifies missing from school including possible FM cases. On this basis the answer is yes. However, whilst actual reported incidents are recorded, there is no test available to identify the effectiveness of the system. Schools are second, after the police, in making referrals. The systems seem to be working well in the County. However whether independent "faith" schools are monitoring for possible FM is not know. CYPS anticipates offering advice to all schools on the matter in the coming year.

HREC Meeting

Whilst there are good procedures in Leicestershire (subject to the lack of a national tracking system so that children can be lost between authorities) this only applies to state schools. Participants were unaware of any similar system relating to private schools and have concerns as to whether private faith schools face up to the issue. There may also be issues where children are taught at home. One participant was aware of children being taken to Somalia and not returning.

It was agreed that awareness of the issue needs to be improved in schools amongst both teachers and children. It was considered particularly important that children between the ages of 10 and 12 be aware of the issues and how to report any concerns. The County in conjunction with the police is undertaking some training programmes with teachers.

There may be opportunities to highlight the issues through the Youth Forum and SACRE.