



Registered Charity No. 1020419

Missing News

Read about the Guardianship consultation and other latest developments relating to missing

Welcome to the eleventh issue of *Missing News*, bringing you the latest developments in policy, practice and research from across the missing sector, and other linked sectors.

Significant news for this edition is that the Ministry of Justice has published its [consultation paper on guardianship of the property and affairs of missing people](#), following years of campaigning by Missing People. Please [read more](#) about the issue in this newsletter, watch a short [film](#) where families with missing loved ones outline their experiences and why guardianship is needed, and [get involved](#) in our campaign for this important legislation.

As usual, the newsletter is divided into five sections. Simply click on one of the sections below to be taken to the latest updates in that area or scroll down to browse all news and developments. Please contact Jenny Dickson (Information and Evaluation Officer) at jenny.dickson@missingpeople.org.uk if you have any feedback about this newsletter or would like to share the work of your organisation or project in the next edition.

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Policy and parliamentary work

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On 27 August, the Ministry of Justice published its [consultation paper on guardianship](#) of the property and finances of missing people. This follows years of campaigning by Missing People on the need for families to be able to apply for the legal right to look after their missing loved one's finances and property whilst they are away. The charity believes a guardianship law is vital, as without it, missing people can return to find their finances devastated and their home lost, and families are left to powerlessly stand by and watch as this happens. You can watch a short [film](#) where families with missing loved ones outline their experiences and why guardianship is needed, and [get involved](#) in our campaign for this important legislation.

Missing People Manifesto

Missing People has produced a [Manifesto for Missing People](#) to highlight priorities for the next government to safeguard vulnerable missing adults and children and to improve support for those left behind. There are four calls to action for the next government, which are grounded in the needs of these three groups: to prioritise the introduction of guardianship legislation; to ensure that every adult who returns from being missing is offered a return interview to find out what help they need and are given support to access that help; to ensure that every missing child or young person who is unable to return home safely can access suitable emergency accommodation to keep them safe; and to ensure that all children are educated about the risks of running away and what help they can access to stay safe.

Presumption of Death Act 2013

In July, Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, announced that the Presumption of Death Act 2013 will be fully in force on 1 October 2014. This will enable families of missing people (and the legal professionals who support them) in England and Wales to make use of the new comprehensive and straightforward system it introduces, assisting them to resolve the affairs of a loved one who it is believed has died. Missing People successfully campaigned for the new law and you can read more about the legislation, including guidance for families of missing people, on our [Presumption of Death web pages](#).

Modern Slavery Bill and human trafficking

In July, the Home Office published a document outlining a [programme of activity on modern slavery](#) which will form a new modern slavery strategy due to be published in the autumn. The Home Office has also published a [series of factsheets](#) outlining how the measures in the Modern Slavery Bill aim to eradicate modern slavery.

In July, the Department for Education published the [consultation outcome](#) and [statutory guidance on the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children](#). The guidance states that the complex needs of unaccompanied and trafficked children need to be explicitly taken into account during the care planning process. Sixty per cent of child trafficking victims placed into local authority care subsequently go missing, nearly a third of whom disappear within a week. You can read more about this issue in our [Trafficked Children and Missing](#) information sheet jointly produced with ECPAT.

Children and young people

A House of Commons Transport Committee report [Security on the Railway](#) shows that over 700 children who had run away from home or care were discovered at railways stations between April 2012 and August 2013. The Committee calls on the British Transport Police to develop appropriate policies and targets in relation to child protection in line with other police forces.

The Department for Education has published [guidance for school staff on mental health and behaviour in schools](#). The non-statutory advice clarifies the responsibility of the school, outlines what they can do and how to support a child or young person whose behaviour – whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise – may be related to an unmet mental health need.

A survey conducted on behalf of the [PSHE Association](#) showed that 90 per cent of parents would like schools to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, but three in four educational professionals feel they need more support on teaching about young people's mental health.

Looked after children

In July, the House of Commons Education Select Committee published a [report on support and accommodation options for care leavers](#). Among the key findings were that

the Staying Put policy, which extends the rights of children and young people in foster care to remain looked after up to the age of 21, should be extended to those in residential care. The report also calls for the Department for Education to establish a timeframe for an outright ban on the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for looked after young people and that local authorities should be required to commission sufficient suitable alternative emergency temporary accommodation. Ensuring that every missing child or young person who is unable to return home safely can access suitable emergency accommodation to keep them safe, is one of the four calls to action in our [Manifesto for Missing People](#).

The Department for Education published an update to the [Children's Home Data Pack](#) in June. The pack presents a range of data about children's homes in England and is intended to help local authorities make better decisions about placements for their children. The report shows that 53 per cent of children are placed within their local authority boundary and that nearly all local authorities accommodate out-of-area placements in their children's homes.

DfE also published its [response to the consultation on delegating children's social care functions in June](#). The draft regulations, due to be introduced this autumn, will be amended to limit the extended range of functions to non-profit making organisations in response to concerns about the possibility of privatisation and profit-making in children's services.

Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM)

In June the government [introduced](#) new legislation to criminalise forced marriage in England and Wales which also applies to UK nationals overseas who are at risk of becoming the victim of a forced marriage. Research has identified forced marriage as a factor in going missing for some young women; further information on this is available in our information sheet [Forced marriage, 'honour' based violence and missing](#). Childline, in conjunction with the government's Forced Marriage Unit, have produced a [short animation](#) to help children and young people understand the change in the law on forced marriage and how it might affect them.

Practice

'After Missing' support project in Wales

A new ['after missing' support project in Wales](#), funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is being delivered by Missing People. The support project will seek to help previously missing people and their families come to terms with their experiences – providing support to reduce the likelihood of them leaving again and the uncertainty and anguish that follows. Figures compiled by the Welsh Police Authorities offer compelling evidence to support the need for this service. Of the 13,390 people reported missing in Wales in 2011/12, 39 per cent went missing again during that year. Additionally, findings from our [Family Feedback Survey 2014](#) showed that 58 per cent of families whose relative had been found would be likely to use aftercare services to help support them with the reconnection. The project will be developed in partnership with Welsh police forces and the Gwent Missing Hub, along with local voluntary and public sector organisations.

New information sheet on return interviews

Missing People has published a new information sheet on [Return Interviews](#). Statutory guidance on missing children states that a child who comes back from a missing incident should always be offered a return interview to discuss what risks they faced and what support they need to prevent them going missing again. Ensuring that every adult who returns from being missing is also offered a return interview is one of the four calls to action in our [Missing People Manifesto](#).

Modern slavery and human trafficking

In August, the Home Office [launched a campaign](#) to raise awareness of modern slavery in the UK, educate people about the different types of modern slavery, how to spot the signs and report it. A national helpline and [website](#) have been established for the victims of slavery, the public and professionals.

Looked after children

Ofsted has published an [evaluation](#) of the new framework for the inspection of children's services and for reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), alongside a

[review](#) of the first eleven Ofsted inspections using the new framework.

In August, the Audit Commission published a [report examining local authority expenditure on looked after children](#) in England. The study shows there is significant variation in the amount councils spend on each looked after child.

Child sexual exploitation

The [NWG Network](#) has published a Summary of Recommendations document, which brings together all the recommendations related to child sexual exploitation, from reports, inquiries, serious case reviews and research, in one document.

Children and young people and gangs

The NSPCC has [launched a helpline](#) for parents who are worried about their children being involved in gangs. The Home Office has also published a leaflet to help parents identify and respond if their [children are affected by gangs](#).

Mental health

Mind, working with the Department of Health, is running a series of [regional roadshows](#) as part of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, to support partners to set up their own local crisis care declarations.

NHS England published a [report on their review of Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#). The review found that too many children were having to travel long distances to access beds and highlighted a lack of capacity and staffing problems at inpatient services. In response, NHS England says it will 'urgently' open up to 50 new specialised beds for young patients and move further beds according to need. In addition, Care Minister Norman Lamb announced that a taskforce will be appointed to improve commissioning of mental health services for children and young people.

Dementia

The Scottish Government [announced](#) additional funds to support education and training for front-line staff working with people with dementia, which will help to increase the

number of Dementia Champions working in Scotland's hospital and social care settings, and support Alzheimer Scotland's Specialist Dementia Nurses.

Research

Call for participants – Going Missing and Dementia study

Missing People is working with the Centre for the Study of Missing Persons at the University of Portsmouth on a ground-breaking new study of people with dementia going missing. We are currently looking for participants to take part in a research interview. You are invited to take part if you care for someone living with dementia (but not in a professional capacity) and if they live at a home address (not a care home). If you are interested in hearing more please download this [information leaflet](#) or contact lucy.holmes@missingpeople.org.uk.

Safe Places research wins IARS award

In August, a team of young people aged 18-21 involved in the [Railway Children 'Safe Places' research](#) project won an Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) award celebrating cutting edge research and youth leadership in social problem-solving. The research explores the journeys of young people when they run away from home or care and aims to identify what needs to happen to enable those young people to find a safe place. Findings from the study are due to be published in the autumn.

Missing from education

In June, the National Children's Bureau [published the results](#) of a Freedom of Information request which suggests that as many as 14,800 children are missing education on any given day in England and the whereabouts of over 3,000 children are unknown to their local authority. DfE [statutory guidance on keeping children safe in education](#) highlights the fact that a child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and signposts the [statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#) for more information about this specific issue.

Repeat reports to the police of missing people: location and characteristics

In July, the Centre for the Study of Missing Persons at the University of Portsmouth, published a [report on the locations and characteristics of people who are reported missing repeatedly to the police](#). The report aims to highlight issues surrounding the 'duty of care' and 'safeguarding' responsibilities of agencies in relation to the prevention and location of people who go missing from organisational addresses such as mental health establishments and children's care homes.

Child sexual exploitation

In August, Barnardo's together with the National Centre for Social Research and University College London, published [Hidden in Plain Sight](#), a report based on scoping research examining the sexual exploitation of boys and young men. The research showed that almost one in three of the sample of sexually exploited young people supported by Barnardo's since 2008 were male. The report acknowledges the link between running away and CSE and found that boys are often 'missing' for longer periods of time before they are reported as such because they are more likely to be perceived as able to look after themselves than girls.

The Stop it Now! child sexual abuse prevention helpline published [initial findings](#) from an independent evaluation of its service, which answers up to 500 calls each month. The helpline offers confidential advice, information and support to UK adults who are concerned about the safety of a child or the behaviour of another person who may represent a risk, including providing advice to adults who may themselves be at risk of harming a child.

Children and young people

In August, the NSPCC published findings from a [survey](#) which shows that, whilst UK adults are keen to intervene to help children who are lost, almost two thirds are worried about making a mistake or how their actions will be perceived if they do offer assistance, particularly male adults. Just over two in five (44 per cent) say they would report suspected child abuse. The NSPCC wants adults to understand that taking action is always the right thing to do and urges people to contact their [helpline](#) if they are unsure

what to do.

Multi-agency information sharing

In July, the Home Office published a report which examined [multi-agency information sharing models](#), also known as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), which aim to improve the safeguarding response for children and vulnerable adults through better information sharing. The findings suggest that most local authorities are working towards the implementation of a co-located hub of agencies enabling real time information sharing, decision making and communication.

Mental health

The Centre for Social Justice published a report [Enough is Enough](#) in June based on a detailed analysis of 20 high risk and vulnerable children and young people who had been supported by Kids Company. The report states that whilst there are examples of good practice in statutory mental health and child protection services, more needs to be done to improve consistency and ensure that all services take a young person-centred approach.

Homelessness

Homeless Link published research findings of their [Health Audit](#) which demonstrates the prominence of mental and physical illness amongst homeless people. The survey findings show that homeless people are more likely to have a physical or mental health problem, or have used drugs, than the general population. Furthermore, almost one in five homeless people with mental health or alcohol issues would like support but are not receiving it. Using return interviews to ensure vulnerable adults can identify and access the help and support they need to prevent repeat missing episodes is one of the calls to action in our [manifesto for missing people](#). You can also read more about the links between homelessness and going missing in our information sheet [Missing and Homelessness](#).

Consultations and inquiries

The Ministry of Justice has an open consultation on the [guardianship of the property and affairs of missing persons](#). They are seeking views on whether to enable the families of a missing person to deal with their legal and financial issues whilst they are away; and, if so, how and on what terms. The consultation closes on 18 November 2014.

The Home Office is consulting on [proposals to strengthen the law on domestic abuse](#) to offer better protection to victims. The consultation closes on 15 October 2014.

Dates for the diary

Throughout September local Missing People teams are holding a number of Appeal Days – which raise awareness of active appeals for missing people - in BHS stores across the country, including Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Yorkshire, the South East and London. If you would like to find out more about an appeal day in your local area, please email martin.crosby@missingpeople.org.uk for more details.

3 December 2014 [Manchester Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, St Ann's Church

8 December 2014 [London Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, St Martin in the Fields

11 December 2014 [Cardiff Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, Tabernacl Chapel

18 December 2014 [York Missing People Carol Service](#), 7pm, St Michael le Belfrey

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You are receiving this newsletter because of your previously indicated interest in policy and research related to the missing issue.

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