

A better childhood. For every child.

The Children's Society's work with young runaways



- •130 years of supporting vulnerable children and young people.
- •We currently run 9 dedicated projects for young runaways supporting more than 1,000 children under 16.
- •Providing independent and confidential help, advice and support.

Running away



Every five minutes in this country a child runs away from home or care.

1 in 4 of young runaways are at risk of harm when away from home or care.

Running away is one of the key indicators of child sexual exploitation.

Return interviews help build local picture



The Children's Society in Newcastle SCARPA

- Return interviews with young runaways include questions to determine the risk of sexual exploitation.
- SCARPA's Programme Manager chairs the Missing, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking (MSET) subgroup of the LSCB.
- Through the subgroup intelligence from return interviews that can be used for disrupting sexual exploitation and building evidence for prosecutions is fed through to the police and local authority.
- The intelligence the Northumbria police receive from the return interviews has helped them produce a 'problem profile' or picture of offenders and their behaviour in the local area.

Say Something if You See Something



- Young runaways in return interviews mentioned hotel parties where sexual exploitation took place.
- Local campaign developed to raise awareness of CSE among hospitality industry.
- Developed into a national campaign and local pack by NWG and The Children's Society.



Safeguarding role of schools



Case study: Shelly

Shelly's life changed when her mum's new boyfriend started abusing her. She decided to run away and spent six weeks staying with friends or in the park. One night she was so frightened of men who were drinking in the park that she hid in a bush.

Shelly started to miss school. When she did attend, she was tired, hungry and dirty and often told off by teachers for not paying attention and dozing in class. Shelly did wonder why none of the teachers noticed the change in her at school:

'I went from being a hard-working well-behaved pupil who never got told off to one who was a mess and always being pulled up for something. I mean, did they [school staff] never wonder why I was so different?'

Barriers to seeking help



'There was no agencies where I was at all for young people.'

'I didn't think that there was anywhere to go.'

'[I was] frightened of destroying the family.'

'Cos they'd just stick me back where I left ... I don't see the point...'

'I'd do anything I'd do absolutely anything to just stay away ... If you want to run away to disappear from your life then you're not going to be found.'



Visit:

www.makerunawayssafe.org.uk

to find about our work with young runaways or contact us on policy@childrenssociety.org.uk