



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2019-0226, 22 October 2019

Sexual and criminal exploitation of missing looked after children

Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on Sexual and criminal exploitation of looked after children is scheduled for Wednesday 23 October 2019 at 2.30 pm. The Member leading the debate is Ann Coffey MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

By Sally Lipscombe and
Tim Jarrett
Maria Lalic
Bess Jap

Contents

1.	Background	2
1.1	Action when a looked after child goes missing	2
1.2	Out of area placements	5
	Standard out of area placements	5
	Emergency out of area placements	6
	Additional funding planned to reduce out of area placements	7
	APPG report on those who go missing from out of area placements	8
1.3	Criminal exploitation	9
	Sexual exploitation	10
	County lines	11
2.	Media	12
2.1	Press releases	12
2.2	Articles and blogs	12
3.	Parliamentary Business	14
3.1	Early Day Motions	14
3.2	Ministerial Statements	14
3.3	Debates	14
3.4	Parliamentary Questions	16
3.5	Select Committees' material	20
4.	Organisations and further reading	21

1. Background

1.1 Action when a looked after child goes missing

When a child is looked after by a local authority, then they are often provided with accommodation¹ – usually with local authority-approved foster carers; a common alternative is a placement in a children’s home.

Box 1: The definition of a “looked after child”

A child is classed as a “looked after child” i.e. looked after by a local authority in the following two circumstances under the legislative provisions of the Children Act 1989 as amended:

- they are in the care of a local authority, pursuant to a section 31 care order made by a court – a local authority has (often shared) parental responsibility for the child and “a right and duty to provide accommodation”;
- under section 20 they are provided with accommodation by a local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours (e.g. with the voluntary agreement of the child’s parents – no court order is required) – a local authority “does not have parental responsibility for the child and may, and sometimes must, provide accommodation but, save in certain circumstances, has no right to do so”.²

Under statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), “local authorities should agree with local police and other partners a protocol for dealing with children who run away or go missing in their area. Where appropriate, they should also have agreed protocols with neighbouring authorities or administrations” – this is known as the Runaway and Missing From Home and Care (RMFHC) protocol.

The DfE explains that, in terms of the additional arrangements relating to looked after children that should be described in the RMFHC protocol, these include the following:

- the actions residential or foster carers should take to locate the child before they are reported as missing (such as trying to contact the child by phone or contacting known friends)
- appropriate responses to children going missing or away from placement without authorisation, including an assessment of risk, the actions and arrangements for making reports to the police when looked after children go missing
- agreed local authority reporting and recording systems on children missing and away from placement without authorisation, including children placed in other local authority areas
- details of any agencies providing independent advocacy services to looked after children

¹ A child subject to a care order can be placed by a local authority with their parents.

² Hershman and McFarlane, *Children Law and Practice*, para F146

- arrangements to monitor outcomes and analyse patterns including of children placed in the area by other local authorities.³

The Government adds that “the response set out in the RMFCH protocol should be put into action as soon as a child is reported as missing”.⁴

In addition, under separate guidance entitled “Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery”, the Government says:

A child protection plan may be required to protect unaccompanied children⁵ from further harm. This is particularly likely where there is reason to believe the child is a victim of modern slavery (or at risk of being so) or where the child is a witness to serious crime. In such cases, there is a high risk that the child will go missing from care and return to those who wish to exploit them. In these cases, the plan should include what steps will be taken by carers, the local authority and police to reduce the risk of the child going missing, and to recover the child if they do go missing, in accordance with local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols.⁶

When a looked after child goes missing, then:

the foster carer or the manager on duty in their children’s home is responsible for ensuring that the following individuals and agencies are informed within the timescales set out in the local RMFHC protocol:

- the local police;
- the authority responsible for the child’s placement – if they have not already been notified prior to the police being informed; and
- parents and any other person with parental responsibility, unless it is not reasonably practicable or to do so would be inconsistent with the child’s welfare.⁷

While there is no legal duty on a children’s home to report a missing child, they must have a prepared a missing child policy, and should a child go missing then the matter will be highlighted to the regulator, Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) – see Box 2 for more information.

³ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, pp10 and 11

⁴ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, p11, para 21

⁵ Which is defined as either: an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, unaccompanied migrant child not seeking asylum, or unaccompanied EEA [European Economic Area] national child. [Department for Education, [Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery – Statutory guidance for local authorities](#), November 2017, p6]

⁶ Department for Education, [Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery – Statutory guidance for local authorities](#), November 2017, p22, para 67

⁷ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, p22, para 66

Box 2: Children’s homes and duty to report missing children

The Children’s Home Regulations “require providers to have explicit procedures in place both to prevent children going missing and to take action if they do go missing”.⁸ Regulation 34 states that:

The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the missing child policy”) setting out—

- a) the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and
- b) the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent.

In addition, children’s homes must keep records “detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36 (schedule 3(14))). This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child’s parents”.⁹ This will form part of a children’s home’s quality assurance arrangements in place which are reviewed at least monthly by an independent person who then sends a written report sent to Ofsted, the children’s home regulator.¹⁰

Similarly, there is no legal duty on foster carers to report a missing care to the police although they too are expected to follow the RMFHC protocol. For local authority foster carers (who may be employed by a fostering service), then:

Every LSCB [Local Safeguarding Children Board], together with the relevant local authority and police force, must have in place a locally agreed ‘Runaway and Missing from Home and Care’ (RMFHC) protocol. The fostering service must ensure that foster carers and staff comply with the RMFHC protocol of the local authority where the foster carer lives (and also of the local authority which placed the child if that is different).¹¹

In addition, “written records should be kept detailing every individual incident of a child going missing and the fostering service should share these with the responsible authority and the child’s parents where appropriate”.¹²

In terms of the local authority as the body having parental responsibility for the child:

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities and other named statutory partners to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes planning to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do. Through their inspections of local authority children’s services, Ofsted will include an assessment of measures with regard to missing children as part of their key judgement on the

⁸ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, p21, para 63

⁹ Department for Education, [Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations including the quality standards](#), April 2015, p46, para 9.31

¹⁰ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, p21, para 62

¹¹ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations – Volume 4: Fostering Services](#), July 2015, p29, para 3.92

¹² Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations – Volume 4: Fostering Services](#), July 2015, p29, para 3.94

experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.¹³

As the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi, told the House of Commons in May 2018, “in addition to Ofsted’s inspection of individual children’s homes, Ofsted’s local authority inspections always report on the responses of local authorities and their partners to missing incidents, highlighting good practice and identifying specific areas for improvement”.¹⁴

1.2 Out of area placements

Where a child is provided with local authority accommodation, how far they are placed in terms of distance from their home can depend on the circumstances. As the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, Lord Agnew of Oulton, noted in response to a recent PQ:

While children should be placed close to home where this is possible and appropriate, it can often be the right option for a placement further away from home. This might be, for example, when a child requires specialist care that is not always available locally or is at risk of exploitation.¹⁵

Standard out of area placements

The rules concerning out of area placements are laid out in regulation 11 (and regulation 12 for placements outside of England and Wales) of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.¹⁶

As the DfE explains:

Such placements will require effective planning, engagement and information sharing with the services likely to be responsible for meeting the child’s needs in the future.

The general duties of local authorities towards looked-after children under Section 22 of the Children Act apply to all placements, including those that are out of authority. There are however a number of specific factors that must be taken into account when decisions are made to place the child out of the area of the responsible authority, but still within England and Wales.¹⁷

This includes consideration of access to health services, school support and also safeguarding: “for children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, children’s services in the [destination] area authority will be an important source of intelligence and information about local

¹³ Department for Education, [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#), January 2014, p8, para 13

¹⁴ [HC Deb 8 May 2018 c234WH](#)

¹⁵ [PO HL17655 7 October 2019](#)

¹⁶ SI 2010/959

¹⁷ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p56, paras 3.30-3.32

arrangements for safeguarding children".¹⁸ Certain notifications must also be made under regulation 13.

When placing a child out of area, a responsible local authority is required to gain approval from either:

- a nominated officer, or
- the Director of Children's Service if it is a placement "at a distance" i.e. outside the area of the responsible authority and not within the area of any adjoining local authority,

although these requirements "do not apply where the placement is with the parent, a connected person [e.g. a relative] or a [local authority] foster carer approved by the responsible authority".¹⁹

In addition, the local authority to which the child is to be placed in must be notified (if it is an adjacent local authority), or, for placements at a distance, consulted and provided with a copy of the child's care plan.

This consultation should be conducted "in good time to enable a thorough assessment of appropriateness".²⁰ In addition:

Where a responsible authority is considering a placement in a children's home it should take into account the information in the home's Statement of Purpose. It should ask for a copy of the home's location assessment which should include details of the home's safeguarding arrangements, including any measures taken by the home to manage safeguarding concerns arising from the neighbourhood where the home is located.²¹

Rules concerning consulting the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)²² and ascertaining the wishes and feelings of the child which apply in-area placements also apply to any out of area placement:

The child's personal Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must be consulted before any final decision is made about making an out of authority placement, whether distant or not, to enable the IRO to discuss the proposed arrangements with the child. The child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account, and where appropriate the child's relatives or parents should be consulted.²³

Emergency out of area placements

Special rules apply to emergency out of area placements:

An emergency placement occurs when a placement is necessary without any forewarning. This could occur when a placement must be arranged urgently to protect a child for example from

¹⁸ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p58, para 3.39

¹⁹ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p57, para 3.33

²⁰ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p57, para 3.34

²¹ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p57, para 3.36

²² The IRO appointed for the child "is responsible for monitoring the performance of the responsible authority functions in relation to the child's case" [Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p26, para 2.17]

²³ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p57, para 3.35

sexual exploitation or gang involvement; if a placement is made out of hours by the emergency duty team; or when a placement must be made immediately (on the same day) because of the breakdown of the child's current placement. Emergency placements may also be required at very short notice when a child becomes looked-after because they have been remanded by the youth court.²⁴

When an emergency out of area placement is proposed, then the nominated officer or the Director of Children's Services (for distant placements), must as a minimum be satisfied of the following before approving a decision:

- the child's wishes and feelings must have been ascertained and given due consideration; and
- the placement is the most appropriate placement available consistent with the care plan.

The other requirements set out in the regulations must be undertaken within five working days.²⁵

Additional funding planned to reduce out of area placements

In terms of reducing future out of area placements, Lord Agnew said in October 2019:

We are providing funding through our £200 million Innovation Programme to increase local authorities' capacity so fewer children are placed far away from home.²⁶

Further information was provided in a separate parliamentary written answer given by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Luke Hall, although it remains unclear how much of the £200 million funding for the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme will be specifically allocated to increasing the capacity of local authority's care accommodation provision (with the intention of reducing out of area placements):

Local authorities have a statutory duty to make sure that there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of children in their care. We are supporting local authorities to increase the sufficiency of care placements and ensure that placements meet children's needs, including investing part of our £200 million children's social care Innovation Programme into three residential care projects to increase councils' capacity and improve commissioning practice.²⁷

As the DfE explains about the Programme, it was launched:

by the Department for Education (DfE) to test innovative ways of supporting vulnerable children and young people, with investment of up to £200m (2014 – 2020). Funding rounds are now closed,

²⁴ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, p58, para 3.41

²⁵ Department for Education, [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#), June 2015, pp58–59, paras 3.42–3.43

²⁶ [PO HL17655 7 October 2019](#)

²⁷ [PO 290926 3 October 2019](#)

but there is much learning and evidence about what works emerging from the 98 projects sup[p]orted by the Programme.²⁸

APPG report on those who go missing from out of area placements

In a September 2019 report, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults published the findings of its inquiry which had aimed to “explore what further changes are needed to make children in care safer and to explore where practice on the ground is falling short of what is recommended in national guidance”.

Noting that “at 31 March 2018, 41% (30,670 of 75,420) of looked after children were placed outside of home local authority areas”, the APPG found that:

Factors that make children and young people vulnerable to going missing from out of area placements are not addressed and when they do go missing they are at risk.

- All too often children and young people are not being supported to keep in touch with family and friends after being placed in out of area placements. This is leading to them to go missing, being forced to travel long distances to return home - putting them at risk as they are faced with long distances and costly travel options.
- Seventy one percent of 41 police forces that responded to our information request stated that placing looked after children out of area increases their risk of exploitation, often resulting in them being coerced into going missing.
- These children and young people are less likely to receive a return home interview when they return from their missing episode and when they do the information from the interview is often not shared with the police and other safeguarding partners.
- Police forces are not made aware of vulnerable children placed in care in their areas.

Children are not being consulted with or informed before out of area placement moves. This causes additional stress and disruption in their lives increasing their level of vulnerability and can contribute towards why they go missing from out of area placements.²⁹

The APPG’s recommended that:

1. The Department for Education should develop an Emergency Action Plan to significantly reduce the number of out of area placements. The Government must take responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient local placements to meet the needs of looked after children. This plan should address the supply and the distribution of children’s homes nationally, and the use of unregulated semi-independent provision. It should be backed by funding.

²⁸ Department for Education, [The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme](#), webpage accessed on 22 October 2019

²⁹ All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, [No Place at Home](#), September 2019, pp7 and 9

2. The law must be changed to ensure that unregulated semi-independent accommodation for children is regulated and inspected.
3. Every out of area placement decision must be supported by evidence to demonstrate that the decision to place a child at a distance will keep that child safe and will meet their long term needs.
4. A new requirement should be placed on children's services to demonstrate that children and young people have been consulted and informed in advance and supported to prepare for any out of area moves. Contact with family and friends must be supported and planned for.
5. The Department for Education and the Home Office should develop a cross-departmental strategy on tackling child criminal exploitation and County Lines, specifically focusing on the risks to looked after children placed out of area.³⁰

1.3 Criminal exploitation

Sexual exploitation and involvement in "county lines" are the most commonly cited examples of child criminal exploitation. In its September 2019 report, the APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults said the evidence submitted to it suggested that children placed out of area are at increased risk of exploitation:

Seventy one percent (29) of the police forces that submitted evidence into this inquiry believed that placing children and young people out of area increases their vulnerability to becoming sexually and criminally exploited.

Looked after children and young people are known to be at significant risk of being groomed for exploitation, both due to the experiences and situations that lead to them becoming looked after in the first place and due to some factors associated with being in care.

It was clear from the evidence that when placement moves take place often new protective factors are not build around them in their new areas.³¹

The APPG suggested that out of area placements carry a "magnified" risk of exploitation compared to local placements, given factors such as loneliness and isolation, lack of familiarity with the area, travelling long distances, disruption to education, and lack of access to services such as healthcare. It also noted that out of area placements offer criminal networks an opportunity to "expand their reach" by following the children to their new location.

Government guidance on sexual exploitation and county lines notes that being in care is a vulnerability that might make a child more susceptible

³⁰ All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, [No Place at Home](#), September 2019, p10

³¹ APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, [No Place at Home. Risks facing children and young people who go missing from out of area placements. The final report on the Inquiry into children and young people who go missing from out of area placements](#), September 2019, paras 122 to 124

to exploitation. However, the guidance emphasises that “any child, in any community” is potentially at risk.³²

Any practitioner who thinks a child they are working with may be at risk of criminal exploitation should follow the guidance set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#) (HM Government, July 2018).

Sexual exploitation

The Government has adopted the following definition of “child sexual exploitation”:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.³³

Guidance on criminal investigations into child sexual exploitation has been published by both the police and the Crown Prosecution Service:

- College of Policing, [Authorised Professional Practice: Major investigation and public protection - Responding to child sexual exploitation](#) [accessed 22 October 2019]
- Crown Prosecution Service, [Child Sexual Abuse: Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse](#) [accessed 22 October 2019]

A Department for Education research report from December 2016 noted that it was an “untested” assumption that placing children away from their local area would help to keep them safe from child sexual exploitation:

... there seems to be a widespread belief that placing children outside their community, often in a remote location, can help to keep them safe. Some of the homes included in this study were deliberately sited in remote locations that were difficult to reach. They catered mainly for children from other areas, some of whom had been placed away from their community because it was believed that this would help to keep them safe. However, this assumption is untested. In the ‘welfare’ secure placements study (Hart and La Valle, forthcoming) we found local authorities that were increasingly reluctant to place children out of the area because of the disruption this caused.

³² See Department for Education, [Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation](#), February 2017 and Home Office, [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance](#), September 2018

³³ Department for Education, [Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation](#), February 2017, p5

Moreover, they could point to examples of children who had been placed out of area, in very remote areas, and still managed to run away. A local authority home included in this study also said they had a policy of keeping children affected by CSE in the area to ensure continuity of care and avoid disruption, and because ultimately they needed to learn to keep safe in their community.³⁴

County lines

“County lines” is the term used to describe the situation where a group supplies drugs from an urban hub to a county location (typically a market or coastal town) within a different police force boundary. Young and vulnerable people are often exploited by the group to carry and sell the drugs, or for their homes to be used as a base for drug dealing activity.

The Government has adopted the following definition of “child criminal exploitation” in the context of county lines:

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.³⁵

Further details on county lines are available on the website of the [National Crime Agency](#) and on the Gov.uk webpage [County lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults](#). The National Crime Agency has noted that “looked after” children are one of the groups particularly at risk of county lines exploitation:

Children displaying vulnerabilities such as poverty, family breakdown and intervention by social services, looked after status, frequent missing episodes, behavioural and developmental disorders and exclusion from mainstream schooling are frequently targeted by county lines offenders. It is likely that children displaying such vulnerabilities are attracted by the sense of belonging, inclusion and structure offered by participation in an offending group.³⁶

Crown Prosecution Service guidance on county lines emphasises the need to take account of potential exploitation and safeguarding issues when investigating and charging county lines offences: see [Legal guidance: Drug offences – county lines](#) (including the “County lines typology” linked to in this guidance) for further details.

³⁴ Department for Education/ Ivana La Valle and Berni Graham with Di Hart, [Child sexual exploitation: support in children’s residential homes Research report](#), December 2016, p30

³⁵ Home Office, [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance](#), September 2018, p3

³⁶ National Crime Agency, [Intelligence Assessment: County Lines Drug Supply. Vulnerability and Harm 2018](#), January 2019, para 22

2. Media

2.1 Press releases

The Children's Society

[Parliamentary inquiry into the scandal of 'sent away' children](#)

26 March 2019

Children's Commissioner

[The same mistakes that led to child sexual exploitation are being repeated with gangs](#)

28 February 2019

Ofsted, et al

[Criminal exploitation and 'county lines': learn from past mistakes, report finds](#)

14 November 2018

2.2 Articles and blogs

National Youth Advocacy Service

[Parliamentary report calls for end to 'national scandal' of children missing from care](#)

17 September 2019

Catch22

[Catch22 responds to No Place at Home APPG Report](#)

17 September 2019

BBC News

['Care crisis': Sent-away children are 'easy victims'](#)

16 September 2019

Guardian

[Revealed: surge in vulnerable children linked to UK drug gangs](#)

15 September 2019

Research in Practice

[County lines and criminal exploitation – what, why and what does it look like?](#)

9 July 2019

BBC

[Teens in care 'abandoned to crime gangs'](#)

20 May 2019

Howard League for Penal Reform

[Criminalising children, the Department for Education and county lines exploitation](#)

29 November 2018

Times

[Gangs circle as children 'dumped' on seaside](#)

1 July 2018

PoliticsHome

[Ann Coffey MP: Thousands of "sent away" children in danger](#)

8 May 2018

3. Parliamentary Business

3.1 Early Day Motions

REGULATION OF ALL ACCOMMODATION FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

That this House notes that over 5,000 looked-after children in England are living in 16+ supported or semi-supported accommodation; a rise of 70 per cent in a decade; further notes that the number of teenagers sent to unregulated care homes outside their home borough has doubled since 2014; is concerned that this accommodation lacks staff support, and includes unsupervised B&Bs and accommodation owned by private landlords, who have no obligations to offer appropriate care to looked-after children or those leaving care; notes that police have raised concerns on the number of teenagers reported missing from these homes and that vulnerable children are being placed in accommodation with known perpetrators of sexual and violent crimes and are at risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking, organised crime, serious violent crime, or lured into such criminal activity...

23 Jul 2019 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 2639 (session 2017-19)

Primary sponsor: Yasin, Mohammad

3.2 Ministerial Statements

Child Sexual Exploitation

03 Jul 2012 | Written statements | House of Commons | 547 cc45-7WS

Tim Loughton (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education)

3.3 Debates

Unregulated Accommodation: 16 to 17-year-olds

HC Deb 15 October 2019

Young Adults: Public Service Funding

HL Deb 18 July 2019, c445-446, c460

Children's Social Care

HC Deb 17 January 2019

Children Missing from Care Homes

HC Deb 08 May 2018

County Lines Exploitation: London

HC Deb 17 January 2018

Vulnerable Children

HL Deb 14 December 2017, c1681

Children and Social Work Bill [HL]

HL Deb 06 July 2016, c237GC-238GC

Children's Homes

HC Deb 19 April 2016

Modern Slavery Act 2015

HC Deb 26 October 2017

Children in Care

HC Deb 07 Jan 2016, 604 cc525-6

Sexual Exploitation: Protection of 16 and 17-year-olds

HC Deb 17 Dec 2015, 603 cc1753-5

Planning Guidance (Children's Homes)

HC Deb 11 Jul 2013

Children: Looked-after Children

HL Deb 25 Oct 2012

3.4 Parliamentary Questions

Children in Care: Protection

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults entitled, No place at home, published in September 2019, if his Department will allocated resources to local authorities in areas with high rates of county lines grooming and exploitation to ensure the provision of (a) in-area placements and (b) accommodation to children and young people (i) involved in and (ii) vulnerable to county lines criminal exploitation through (A) children's services, (B) social housing services and (C) temporary and emergency housing.

03 Oct 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 290926

Asked by: Brown, Lyn | **Answered by:** Luke Hall | **Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Human Trafficking: Children

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the findings in the report by Every Child Protected Against Trafficking and Missing People Still in Harm's Way: An update report on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK, published in December 2018, what plans they have to investigate the causes behind the rising number of child victims of trafficking going missing from care after referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

28 Mar 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL14552

Asked by: Baroness Doocey | **Answered by:** Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

Missing Persons: Children in Care

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to prevent unaccompanied and trafficked children going missing from care.

28 Mar 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 234834

Asked by: Rashid, Faisal | **Answered by:** Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

Human Trafficking: Vietnam

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Vietnamese children have gone missing from care shortly after referral to the National Referral Mechanism since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

25 Mar 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL14372

Asked by: Baroness Doocey | **Answered by:** Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

Human Trafficking: Children

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, if any, to assess the links between organised crime networks, re-trafficking and children who go missing from care after being referred to the National Referral Mechanism.

21 Dec 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL12232

Asked by: Baroness Doocey | **Answered by:** Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

Attachment: NCA National Ref Stats - April-June 2018; UK Annual Report - Modern Slavery - 2018

Runaway Children

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of children being re-trafficked after going missing from local authority care.

28 Mar 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL6489

Asked by: Baroness Doocey | **Answered by:** Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

Slavery

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 25 October 2016 to Question 48814, on slavery, if she will provide further data for (a) 2016 and (b) 2017.

20 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 107708

Asked by: Johnson, Diana | **Answered by:** Victoria Atkins | **Department:** Home Office

Refugees: Runaway Children

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to (1) the correspondence sent by Lord Alton of Liverpool on 20 February on behalf of ECPAT UK concerning missing, trafficked and unaccompanied children, and (2) the findings of the report by ECPAT UK, Heading back to harm, published in November 2016, that (a) a number of local authorities were unable to provide figures on the number of trafficked and unaccompanied children who had gone missing from care and had not been found, (b) some police forces did not hold figures on the number of children reported missing to them who were trafficked or

unaccompanied, and (c) 167 trafficked and 593 unaccompanied children had gone missing from care in the year to September 2015.

14 Mar 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL5689

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool | **Answered by:** Lord Nash |

Department: Department for Education

Crimes of Violence: Young People

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what contribution her Department is making to Government steps to reduce the incidence of serious youth violence.

11 Apr 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 32651

Asked by: Foxcroft, Vicky | **Answered by:** Nick Gibb | **Department:**

Department for Education

Children in Care

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to secure more stable placements for girls at risk of child sexual exploitation, in the light of the recent Children in Care report by the National Audit Office.

08 Dec 2014 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL3248

Asked by: Lord Taylor of Warwick | **Answered by:** Lord Nash |

Department: Department for Education

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local safeguarding children's boards have failed inspections on their child sexual exploitation action plans.

13 Oct 2014 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 209053

Asked by: Loughton, Tim | **Answered by:** Mr Edward Timpson |

Department: Department for Education

Advocacy: Children

(2) if her Department will consider extending the trial advocate scheme to unaccompanied children;

28 Apr 2014 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 196474 | 579 cc425-6W

Asked by: Alex Cunningham | **Answered by:** Karen Bradley |

Department: Home Department

Children in Care

I thank the Minister for the very constructive meeting we had before Christmas. I am sure he is aware of concerns about the new police definitions of “missing” and “absent” and their impact on effective child protection. I am sure he would agree that the key to protecting children from child sexual exploitation is a sharing of all data about vulnerable children, including absence figures at the local level? Will he therefore ensure that any future guidance from his Department about children missing from care reinforces that?

21 Jan 2013 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 557 c7

Asked by: Ann Coffey | **Answered by:** Mr Timpson | **Department:** Education

Children in Care

To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps his Department is taking to (a) improve the responsiveness of the children's care home inspection system and (b) enable local authorities to raise concerns on safeguarding.

03 Sep 2012 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 117448 | 549 cc95-7W

Asked by: Mr Sheerman | **Answered by:** Tim Loughton | **Department:** Education

Runaway Children: Missing Persons

To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of incidents in which a failure to track runaway and missing children results in them becoming vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

17 Jul 2012 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 117447 | 548 cc738-9W

Asked by: Mr Sheerman | **Answered by:** Tim Loughton | **Department:** Education

Young Offenders

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what strategies he will employ to cut crime among those who have (a) persistently run away from home, (b) been taken into care as a child, (c) regularly truanted from school, (d) been excluded from school and (e) acquired no qualifications.

26 Jun 2012 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 112272 | 547 cc213-4W

Asked by: John McDonnell | **Answered by:** Mr Blunt | **Department:** Justice

Human Trafficking

In the response to today's report on children in care, Ministers made no mention of the 60% of trafficked children who routinely go missing. Will he respond to widespread concerns surrounding the move of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre into the National Crime Agency, described by CEOP's former head as about saving face, not saving children, and ensure that child safeguarding is made an explicit strategic priority for the NCA so that the focus on these children is not lost?

18 Jun 2012 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 546 c593

Asked by: Lisa Nandy | **Answered by:** Mr Hayes | **Department:** Education

3.5 Select Committees' material

[Public Accounts Committee, Children in care, 11 March 2015, HC 809 2014-15](#)

4. Organisations and further reading

APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, [No Place at Home, Risks facing children and young people who go missing from out of area placements, The final report on the Inquiry into children and young people who go missing from out of area placements](#), September 2019

Children's Commissioner, [Keeping kids safe: Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation](#), 28 February 2019

HM Inspectorate of Probation, et al, [Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery: an addendum](#), November 2018

Department for Education, [National protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children](#), 27 November 2018

Department for Education, [Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners](#), 16 February 2017

Department for Education, [Child sexual exploitation: support in children's residential homes](#), Research report, December 2016

HM Inspectorate of Probation, et al, ['Time to listen' – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children](#), September 2016

Children's Society, [All children and young people are at risk of being sexually exploited, regardless of age, gender or where they live](#)

Barnado's, [Sexual exploitation research and lobbying](#)

Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland, [The Sexual Exploitation of Looked After Children in Scotland](#), May 2013

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).