

# BSCB Briefing



## Ofsted Report on Missing Children, published February 2013

The Chief Inspector of Ofsted has published a new report that highlights the need for urgent action to establish a single register to track accurately the number of children who go missing. Sir Michael Wilshaw said that at a time of heightened concern about vulnerable children falling victim to sexual exploitation, it was profoundly worrying there was currently so little reliable data on the issue – including numbers, characteristics and trends. He spoke on the day Ofsted published a report, [Missing children](#), which found data sets recorded and held by local authorities and the police were significantly different in most areas, reflecting concerns that data about missing children is flawed at a national level. For the report inspectors visited a sample of 10 local authority areas. The report draws on evidence from 105 cases and from the views of children and young people, carers, and professionals from the local authority and from partner agencies.

The Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, said: "Children who go missing from care are at serious risk of being exploited and harmed. Reports issued last year by the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry and the Office of the Children's Commissioner illustrated this only too starkly. So, if we're to get to grips with this abuse, it's clear we must have robust data on children who go missing to work with". The Working Group set up last year to look at this has now reported and I can announce today that we will begin piloting a new data collection in the next few months. "This will, for the first time, collect information on all children who go missing from their placement - not just those missing for 24 hours – enabling better analysis and more effective practice to prevent and combat the problem. In addition, we will shortly issue revised statutory guidance on Children who go Missing from Home or Care based on the best local practice. This will complement guidance issued to police forces by the Association of Chief Police Officers. "Ofsted's new looked after children inspections and the new multi-agency inspections, which will begin in June, will also shine a powerful light on progress being made on the ground."

### Recommendations

The Ofsted Missing children report made four recommendations about things the inspectors thought should happen.

#### The government should:

- make sure that a single, nationwide system is in place to keep accurate, reliable and up-to-date information about incidents of children and young people going missing.

#### Local councils and the other organisations they work with should:

- Look urgently at how well children at risk of running away or going missing are being helped
- then agree a plan of how best to help children at risk of running away or going missing
- make sure they keep their understanding of issues about missing children up to date. In particular, they should listen to, and take notice of, what children and young people have to say.

To read the Chief Inspector's report, please click [here](#). To read the Minister's speech, please click [here](#)

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