

Report to: Children's Services
Scrutiny Committee
27^h March 2007

Date:

Report of: Director of Children's
Services

Report No:

Contact Officer: Peter Jones

Tele No: 337203

Report Title: THE WORK OF RU'Rna

Non Confidential:

This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press and members of the public.

Purpose:

To update the scrutiny committee on the work of RU'Rna

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Panel is requested to ratify the report.

Decision:

Signed:

Leader/Executive
Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

UPDATE TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF RU'Rna

R.U'r.N.A. is a missing from home project which aims to;

- Reduce instances of young people running away from home or care
- Reduce instances of repeat running
- To provide support and advice services for these young people.

We make contact with every child reported missing to the police and we are working towards providing an independent return interview to all young people reported missing from care.

All reports taken

During this half year since the funding commenced, there have been 372 reports made to the police. The police intelligence system is accessed twice a week where all young people reported missing are collated and recorded on the project's database. A meeting has been held with the police to look at improving information sharing and we have worked together to draw up profiles on a group of runaways considered to be the most prolific and/or most at risk.

Visits to the most vulnerable

The number of visits made was 24 not all of these have been successful this has usually been due to communication issues e.g. young people failed to arrive or schools failed to confirm the arrangements.

Multi agency working

We have organised multi-agency strategy meeting attended by 15 organisations to consider Child Protection and welfare issues for a large gang of 40+ young people. Many of these have been reported missing and through our tracking procedure we highlighted a number who were at risk of sexual exploitation and at the same time highlighted the potential abusers to the police.

Partnership equals Arrest

One of the outcomes as a result of this meeting along with other information we had received was that one 15 year old girl was found by the police and a man was arrested for Child Abduction.

Schools as part of the solution

Discussions have begun with Designated Teachers for Child Protection of secondary schools to raise the project's profile and establish links for sharing information and this will be developed in the next quarter.

Contact all children and young people reported missing

All children and young people contacted by letter.

Complete induction and training of staff

2 new members of staff began employment at the beginning of December

Agree protocols for increased information sharing with Police and Children's Services

Arrangements have been made to meet with the police and Children's services to look at improving information sharing. The police have agreed to e mail reports immediately so a response can be quicker. The project has a very strong working relationship with the Police and Children's services, and collaboration is making the identification of young runaways better and the prosecution of offenders with evidence is better.

Endeavour to provide independent return interview with all young people reported missing from care

The project has attempted to deliver this milestone. However, the needs of some of the most prolific runaways have mean an increase in the amount of work that has had to happen to ensure their safety. In addition to this, requests from schools and parents have meant a service has been needed.

All children and young people looked after have been contacted by letter – 32 letters sent to 18 young people.

There have been some difficulties in gaining access to some of these young people and this is being addressed by ourselves and children's services.

Contribute to statutory reviews where running away is an issue

The project has been involved in 6 Child Action meetings for 3 young people, 1 Child Protection Conference and 1 Core Group meeting

Child in Need process for 4 young people and 1 strategy meeting which considered 10 young people, all of whom are runaways.

Develop an information sharing protocol between the scheme, schools and ESW's

Regular contact is maintained with ESW's and this works very well in highlighting the most at risk young people.

A pilot process has been discussed with a local secondary school to see how best we deliver our missing agenda along with their pastoral care.

**Provide training in procedure for reporting all children missing from care
Ensure all children missing from care are reported directly to the scheme in addition to the police**

Meetings held with senior managers to discuss how this how this will be rolled out to the relevant staff within Children's Services

Attend and contribute to both operational and steering groups for young people at risk of sexual exploitation

All operational and steering groups have been attended and any actions resulting from the meeting have been completed.

3. Lessons Learnt/Remedial action

As a result of the significant risk of harm posed to a small number of young people the project has had to target its resources to ensure their safety and well-being. As a result it has been a challenge to provide a face to face interview with everyone we feel should have a visit. However, systems have been put in place to ensure that this will not be the case for the future

Dave Baguley
Project Manager