



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Child exploitation

Multi-agency working where children are placed in residential placements out of county, go missing and are at risk of child sexual exploitation

Report of summit hosted by
South Wales Police and
CSSIW on 3 May 2017

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Context

South Wales Police has voiced increasing concern at the frequency with which they are attending residential homes to deal with children going missing and incidents of aggression and criminal damage.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) has equally become increasingly concerned at the high levels of notifications about the behaviour of children and their vulnerability when away from the children's home. Inspections of children's homes often highlight the impact on children of high rates of staff turnover and the difficulties of achieving the required level of qualified staff. We are also aware of children being placed without statutory and therapeutic services agreed.

All agencies are increasingly aware of child sexual exploitation and the range of other risks to young people. There is debate as to the prioritisation of placing a child close to home versus placing in a 'specialist' placement often at a considerable distance. Increasingly we are aware of capacity pressures on all types of accommodation for children looked after and the financial implications of high cost placements. Both of these factors are impacting on the meaning of 'choice' for local authorities and children and young people.

This summit forms part of CSSIW's response to the recommendations of the report of the Children's Commissioner 'The Right Care' (June 2016). CSSIW and South Wales Police are members of the Welsh Government task and finish group on residential care. This reports to the Ministerial Advisory Group on improving outcomes for children looked after. The summit provided an opportunity to gain the views of a wide range of relevant professionals on multi agency working and quality residential care. This report contributes to the work stream of these governmental groups.

The following recommendations are based on the feedback from those attending the summit.

Recommendations

- Welsh Government guidance on process and practice should be produced as soon as is practicable to improve multi agency working when children are placed out of the area. This should have explicit and improved expectations for shared decision making and clear lines of accountability.
- This guidance should outline detailed expectations of information sharing between professionals on children placed out of area as a supplement to Part 6 of Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014).
- All children's homes should ensure they have relevant and sufficient information on children, from admission, to provide to police if they are reported missing and this should include a photograph.

- There should be a concerted effort to develop a common understanding of risk and risk management of children to bring about a consistent interagency approach.
- Commissioners, providers and Welsh Government should continue to consider the impact of the insufficiency of appropriate placements for children with complex needs, which is resulting in a lack of genuine choice necessary to ensure decision making is based on the needs of the individual child.
- Providers must ensure that children's homes primarily provide a caring and stable environment, with considerable focus on value based management and excellent trained staff. Commissioners, CSSIW and Social Care Wales must be satisfied that this foundation for the delivery of care is in place in registered children's settings.
- Local authorities and providers continue to need to do more to involve children and young people meaningfully in their care planning; achieved through consistent and effortful professional relationships with young people.
- Revised Welsh Government guidance on restrictive physical intervention is required to increase clarity and confidence across the residential sector and improve multi agency understanding.

The event

CSSIW and South Wales Police co-hosted the summit on 3 May 2017 at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. It was attended by 120 professionals; providers of residential care, representatives of Welsh police forces, local authorities, Welsh Government, the office of the Children's Commissioner, CSSIW and the third sector.

The summit was addressed by Dr Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner; Jon Drake, Assistant Chief Constable and Gillian Baranski, Chief Inspector. Several short presentations were given by a range of professionals, including providers and we were particularly happy that a young man who had left care agreed to speak to us about his experience.

The presentations were intended to stimulate debate and the purpose of the event was to gain the views of participants to influence and inform the Welsh Government work outlined above. We are therefore very grateful to all those who attended the event which has resulted in this report.

Action taken since the event

We are signing off an information agreement that allows CSSIW to receive information from South Wales Police on call outs to children's homes and to share relevant information that will inform CSSIW's inspection work.

Methodology

Four predetermined questions were given to mixed disciplinary groups and recorded using the meeting sphere system. Responses were subject to analysis and this is presented as an Appendix. A detailed outline of responses given is provided below.

Detailed findings

The initial question put to participants was:

- 1. What are the barriers to effective multi agency working around young people placed out of area who go missing and are at risk of harm and exploitation?**

The themes identified below are in order of the frequency of responding (highest number of responses first). Some responses were made only once and are listed below.

- **Uncertainties and reluctance with regard to information sharing**
There is a perceived lack of clarity about who has the responsibility for information sharing with other agencies i.e. the placing local authority or the provider where children and young people are placed. There is a reluctance to provide full information to providers as this may impact on whether the young person is accepted for the placement. One person raised potential difficulties in information sharing between police authorities. People commented on the need to balance the right to privacy for children and young people versus sharing personal background information to promote safeguarding and well-being. This was particularly mentioned in relation to providing the police with information.
- **Lack of awareness by professionals as to how the system operates around management of children and young people placed out of county**
Many people indicated they don't know which professionals should be involved in decision making. There is confusion around different geographical boundaries in police, health and local authorities. There is also a lack of understanding about children placed from England and the different legislation governing this. Equally, there is a lack of knowledge about the placing of Welsh children in England. Some people did not feel they had developed sufficient professional relationships with those from different authorities/agencies that aids effective inter agency working.
- **Lack of background information on children and young people made available. Information not provided by the placing local authority and/or not made available to other agencies**

Emergency placements are identified as a particular challenge to good information sharing between agencies; children and young people are sometimes placed without supporting information. Providers/registered managers feel under pressure to accept individual children and young people and information can be slow to get to the provider and local agencies after the placement is made. There is a lack of required information made available to police when children and young people are reported missing, particularly in the evening and including such basics as a photograph. Lack of capacity in Emergency Duty Teams was also cited as a barrier to timely responding to placement breakdowns.

- **A lack of appropriate placements, including secure placements**
People feel that a lack of placements results in children and young people being placed at a greater distance from their local community and family. It can also lead to the placing social worker making fewer visits to the child or young person and not forming relationships with residential staff. This means that those managing placements are less sighted on the views of the child and his/her on progress and well-being. A lack of capacity in the market means that it is more likely that inappropriate placements are made, driven by lack of alternatives and financial considerations.
- **Lack of agreed local protocol between agencies**
There is a lack of understood and agreed roles between placing local authorities and host local authorities; for example in convening strategy meetings. People believe there is a lack of sense of shared goals between agencies, including the provider.
- **Lack of robust risk assessments on children and young people**
People are concerned that children and young people are not sufficiently risk assessed before placements are made or regularly reviewed thereafter. Risks are not adequately communicated to the local authority where the child or young person is placed. Some people are concerned that placing local authorities downplay risks in order for placement referrals to be accepted.
- **Responses that were made only once but may be of significance**
Poor preparation of children and young people for moving placements. This negatively impacts on successful moves and relationship building with staff in the new children's home.

English children placed without a risk assessment for CSE (Seraf equivalent).

There is a lack of awareness of Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) and young people.

Time pressures on social workers to gather all relevant information to pass to others when children and young people placed out of area.

Resource issues of the host local authority and local agencies can impact on prioritisation and 'empathy' for children and young people placed into their area.

Children and young people who have moved frequently are less likely to have their needs identified due to lack of consistent intervention from CAMHS and other therapeutic services

They are also less likely to attend sports clubs and engage in community activities.

Location of children's homes may impact on risks to children and young people and decision to register by CSSIW is not sufficiently considered on the basis of multi agency information.

There is a heightened risk of self harm when homes are located in rural areas with insufficient links to multi agency resources.

Lack of consistency as to what constitutes 'missing' and as children and young people move across areas they will receive an inconsistent professional response.

There is a lack of multi agency understanding of the role and nature of restrictive physical interventions, most notably between the police and care staff.

There are financial imperatives on providers to accept children and young people who may not be suitable for their particular setting.

2. What is needed to create and contribute to effective multi-agency working for this cohort of young people?

The themes identified below are in order of the frequency of responding (highest number of responses first). There was considerable consistency in responding.

- **Improved systems for information sharing and managing risk**
We need to ensure that all relevant professionals are in our networks. There is a need to resolve any issues to do with confidentiality and data protection to allow sharing of relevant information. There is a call for police to have more information from the outset about young people being placed in the area. There is a suggestion of the development of an agreed format for providing necessary information.

It was raised that police could share intelligence on local communities with providers and CSSIW to influence the siting of children's homes. CSSIW should continue to consider how it responds to notifications from providers and gathers information from agencies to inform its regulatory role.

We need to gain from the intelligence and understanding of dedicated CSE professionals/ services. People felt there needed to be greater clarity and acknowledgement of the role of the local authority where the child or young person is placed. There was a suggestion that more use could be made of legislation on trafficking.

There needs to be a greater emphasis on multi agency systems for managing risk and work toward common thresholds for risk tolerance. We need to respond to risky behaviour as early as possible, but also proportionately and consistently. Providers should talk more to each other where friendships between children in different placements impact on risk. We need to produce clear safety plans for children and young people, with agreed thresholds for escalation to corporate parenting/ Chief Executive. We need to gain from existing risk tools and protocols for young people going missing.

- **Improved system of shared decision making and establishing a common agenda**

Accountability of individual agencies is a strong theme, including the duty to raise challenge where agreed actions have not been taken or outcomes achieved. Equally, other people wanted a more supportive working dialogue between agencies.

There is significant support for the development of Welsh Government guidance; an agreed national pathway that professionals could follow. Gwent was given as an example. People feel that professional confidence would improve with greater strategic support from senior management. Practical difficulties in attending strategy meetings were raised where young people are placed out of area.

People felt that professional agencies needed to establish a common agenda, starting off from agreement on the priority of safeguarding. Greater openness and multi agency training is likely to foster shared understanding and greater consistency. Specifically, greater dialogue between the police and providers was recommended and the practice of police visiting children's homes to forge positive relationships is supported. An increased understanding of the remit and limitations of different agency roles and powers was raised. Finally, reaching organisational consistency on definitions and terminology e.g. 'CSE' and 'missing', would improve effective communication and joint working.

Some people called for increased integrated or co located teams working with young people at risk of going missing/CSE. MASHs were given as an example. It was suggested that Missing Person teams could be rolled out further. Identifying a single point of contact within each agency was highlighted as good practice to achieve consistent organisational response at a strategic level and better allow for building professional networks. One person commented that 'people are more effective than process' although this feedback would support the importance of both.

- **Increased meaningful involvement of young people in decisions about their care**

People felt this can be achieved through increased access to advocacy services and in retaining the same social worker and IRO and other key professionals for the young person. CSE workers, where available, are considered as helpful in raising the views of young people. It was suggested that greater information available to both children and residential staff about different agencies and services available would allow for more informed participation in discussions about support services. We need to develop the focus on needs and outcomes for children and not expecting the child to 'fit into' what the available children's home can offer.

- **More placement options to allow for good quality care**

People believe there should be more use of police intelligence in decisions by providers to site services and by CSSIW in their registration process. Commissioners should ensure they have current and accurate information about services, which can be used even in emergencies. This should allow for more 'matching' of young people to placements, not dictated by availability and finances alone. Local authority commissioners can keep updated via communication with the 4Cs (where applicable) and should regularly satisfy themselves that the service is helping young people achieve identifies outcomes.

- **Reframing the narrative**

There were several comments that came under this heading. It was pointed out that 'out of county' doesn't necessarily mean children are at significant distance from their community and our language could be more accurate. Instead of negatively framing children being placed in England, 'Welsh children living in Wales' may be a more positive ambition. We are reminded that young people in care are not problems to be managed or criminals, they are individuals with complex needs that we have a duty to care for. When young people are required to change schools or their social worker is re allocated, the impact of this is for the local authority to manage rather than being placed on the child.

3. What aspects of support in residential care for young people at risk makes it more likely they will achieve positive outcomes and enhanced well-being?

As above, the themes identified are in order of the frequency of responding (highest number of responses first). There was considerable consistency of responding with the six themes accounting for all responses given.

- **Caring and stable care arrangements**

It is fundamental that children and young people view their placement as 'home' and that the culture is one of warmth and strong positive relationships with staff are promoted. The keyworker role is significant but all staff should be viewed as compassionate and caring and able to give the young person a 'cwtch' when appropriate. Staffing levels must allow for considerable individual contact time with children. Staff must be familiar to children with a consistent staff team. Children and young people maintaining the same social worker is also important to maintain a sense of consistency and stability.

In so far as possible, the children's home should replicate a family home. Care must feel unconditional and possibilities for young people to feel rejected must be minimised. 'Stickability' is viewed as vital, although continuing to consider other children and the ability of the home to fit the needs of the child was also raised (albeit in significantly smaller numbers). Children and young people need to feel secure in their placement in order to trust staff. Trust was viewed as an essential element for children and young people to develop a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

- **Excellent trained residential care workers**

Access to a wide range of relevant training opportunities was viewed as vital for care staff to best understand the children and including specific behavioural or therapeutic approaches to individual children. Clinical support to staff was suggested by some to better allow for informed and reflective practice. While current regulations dictate 80% of residential staff must have the relevant qualification, many recognised that qualified staff are difficult to employ in such numbers. Several people queried the status of the role and if the salary is sufficient to attract and retain staff. Many recognised the responsibility staff have to model positive behaviour and relationships and be aware of appropriate boundaries. Staff must project a confidence that young people that they can achieve their goals. The role requires energy and curiosity to understand children thoroughly and to be responsive to their needs. Staff need to have personal resilience and the manager has an important role to provide support.

The knowledge and skills of manager has a major impact on morale and confidence of children and staff. One person suggested that registered

managers could undertake shadowing opportunities in the police, social services, education etc. to better understand the work of other agencies. The same could be suggested, perhaps, for other professionals also.

- **Good individual care planning**

Many people cited the importance of thorough individual care plans that recognise the uniqueness of the child or young person and which is subject to regular review. This includes review of the appropriateness of the current placement. Professionals need to know the child well in order to plan well and to understand the root causes of behaviour or emotional distress. Appropriate direct work can be arranged and achievable targets agreed with the young person. Many people mentioned the accessibility of CAMHS and resources to employ other specialists. Although the importance of risk assessments was cited, the majority of respondents talked of the need to know and understand the child in order to ensure the right help is given.

Two people mentioned the Newport system where a child has a single point of contact, rather than input from a range of different professionals, as good practice that could be considered more widely. Transition planning for children leaving a particular placement and the care system was also raised.

- **Involving children and young people**

There was consensus that we should listen more to children and young people in residential care and act on what they tell us. They should be truly active in their care planning. We should take more account of their insight into their own behaviour e.g. what helps calm them when they are feeling anxious. We should negotiate where at all possible but give clear explanations when we cannot meet their wishes. For meaningful engagement with young people, professionals need to take the time to get to know them. Advocacy (both formal and informal) can strengthen our understanding of children's views. We should consider greater use of mentoring arrangements. We need to continue to consider the language we use, so children understand us and also considering the message we give i.e. referring to a children's home as a 'unit'.

- **Important features of the children's home**

The following are specific aspects of a children's home that people cited as contributing to children achieving positive outcomes.

- 'Doing what it says on the tin' i.e. the home operating in line with its Statement of Purpose, so commissioners are confident in what is being delivered
- Self care, sex and relationship education
- Access to health and therapeutic services
- Interesting and stimulating activities and staff spending time with children and young people

- Reflective interviewing
- Clear policy on use of restrictive physical intervention (restraint) and training for staff
- Clear policy on behaviour management, confident and well trained staff to deliver on this approach and the avoidance of unnecessary criminalisation
- Restorative approaches
- Support for children leaving.

Before a home is registered, the provider should know about the availability of local services and resources for children placed. The manager needs to be resilient in only accepting children and young people he/she is confident that the staff team can help to achieve positive outcomes.

- **External factors**

The importance of education was highlighted and ensuring arrangements are in place for young people in residential care. A tailored approach to education may be needed including academic and vocational training opportunities. There is recognition of financial constraints and a lack of suitable placements. These are significant factors that impact on choices made. Some felt the business nature of children's homes means that providers may accept young people for whom they may not be adequately equipped to care.

The importance of corporate parenting responsibilities was mentioned by several people. People felt awareness of this could be heightened and that elected members benefit from training on childcare issues. The importance of good relationships between providers and the local police was highlighted.

4. What needs to change in residential care for young people at risk of exploitation that will improve their life chances and reduce their vulnerability?

Again there was considerable consistency in the themes coming forward in responses. Inevitably there was some repetition of points made in response to the question above. We have included these again for accuracy and to make appropriate emphasis of persistent matters raised.

- **Operation of children's homes**

People had views for and against homes caring specifically for young people at risk of CSE. Those in favour felt that the vulnerability of other young people can be increased when a young person at risk of CSE goes missing with others from the home. Those against believed that all good children's homes should be equipped to look after all children including those at risk of CSE.

There were a lot of responses around increasing the range of activities open to children and young people and that more effort should go into maintaining

healthy links with friends and family in the community. One person asked how many children in care homes follow hobbies (compared to other children) and boredom was seen as a major factor to be addressed. The level of support provided by staff to facilitate such pursuits should increase and be prioritised by management due to the positive impact this can have on life skills, self esteem and confidence. This would be part of a strengths based approach, which was also raised. Some described the culture of some homes as characterised by staff disinterest, low staff motivation and low aspirations for children and young people.

The importance of more available therapeutic support to staff in children's homes was also extensively cited. This was to encourage staff to work on to a more attachment based model and to develop a more positive culture. This may include reviewing systems of sanctions to evaluate if they produce positive change.

It was viewed as very important that homes had access to therapy for children and young people. A 'one size fits all' approach was criticised and the importance of developing bespoke management arrangements for individual children promoted. A complete ban on internet access for some young people was viewed as inadvisable despite the inherent risks.

- **Residential staff**

Improvement in outcomes for children and young people would result from an increase in staff team stability, lower turnover and less use of agency staff. Allied to this is ensuring we attract people with sufficient resilience, life experience and high levels of empathy to become residential care staff. More managers, too, need to be sufficiently experienced and receive support. There was high endorsement for residential staff to receive more training. Particular areas cited were attachment, restorative approaches, CSE, behavioural management and restrictive physical interventions.

- **Strategic factors**

Several people felt that there needed to be a clear strategy across all agencies for the care of young people at risk of CSE and going missing and placed out of area. Additionally people felt there was a need for new guidance on restrictive physical interventions and greater understanding of DoLS and young people. Better information sharing about specific young people was put forward by several people. Better communication between police and providers was a specific example given. It was suggested that British Transport Police could be engaged more where young people go missing.

People believed that better planning for children could be achieved with respect to education and therapeutic services, particularly CAMHS. People are concerned that waiting lists can be long and so services are not always available to children who are placed into the area. There was also a clear

message about the insufficiency of suitable placements for complex young people that impacts on choice and can lead to inappropriate placements being made, at a considerable distance. There was suggestion that CSSIW inspections should be more frequent.

- **Placement decisions**

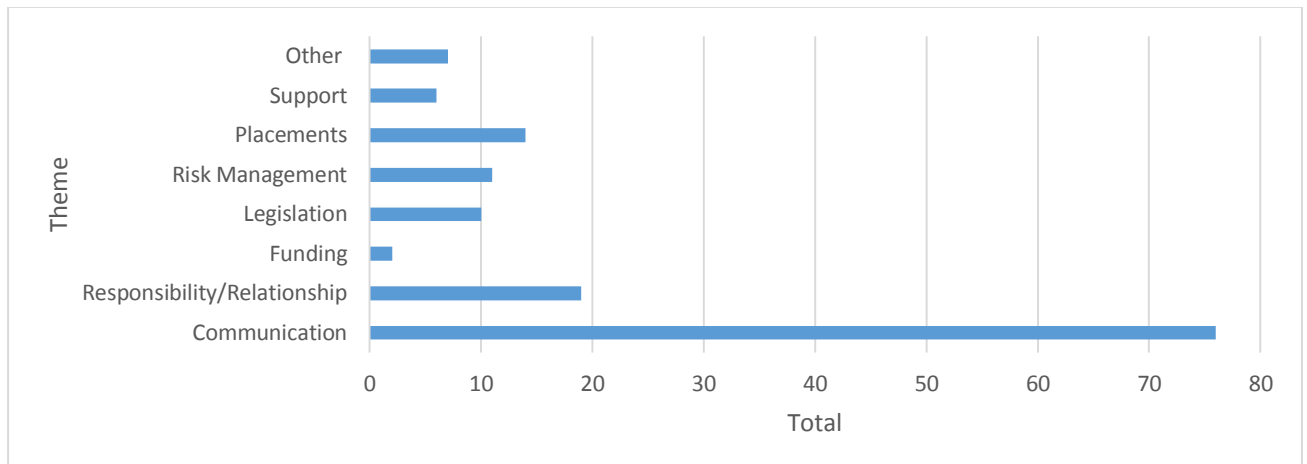
People felt we could still improve at explaining to children why they need to move placements or come into care in a way they can understand. Some people felt that the threshold for moving children and young people between placements is too low and mentioned 'stickability'. People believed that there are too many emergency placements made and that planned placements should more often ensure that education and CAMHS (where required) or other local services are in place for the child. There was mention of the matching process needing to be more robust. Several people stated that there needed to be more consideration by commissioners of the location of the children's homes and risk factors (known sexual offenders, gang culture etc).

- **The needs of children and young people**

Care leavers were specifically cited as a group where more support should be given as vulnerability does not stop at 18. Some people said that 'when I'm ready' should be extended to children's homes and others that more support, including therapeutic support should be provided in the community. Lack of sufficient resources was raised in respect of this. Some people believed much more could be done to engage with young people as to what they see as their vulnerabilities, in order to engage them more in their care plan and identifying the support they most require. This is consistent with the process of establishing 'what matters' under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

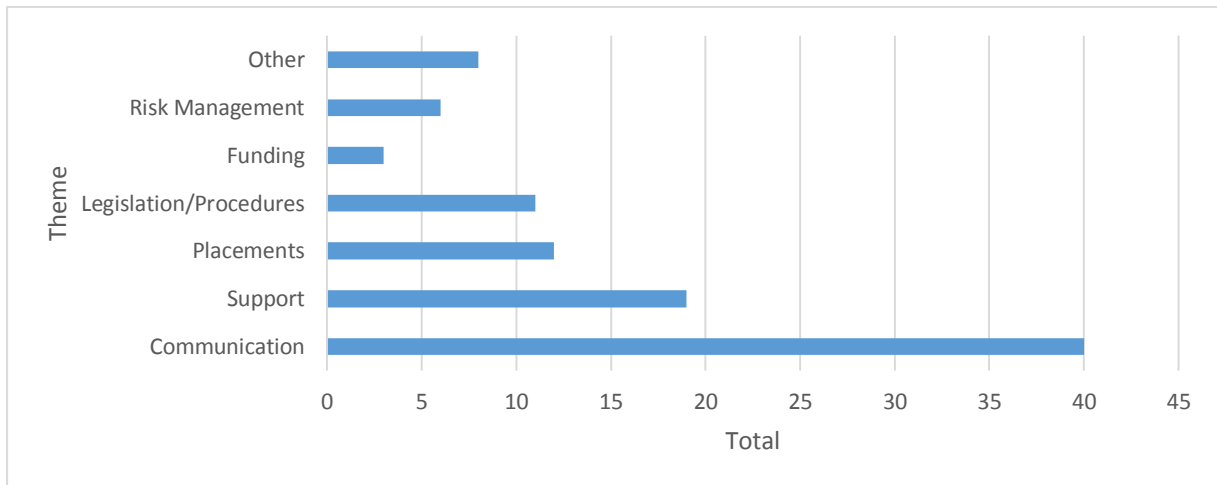
Appendix

Q1. What are the barriers to effective multi-agency working around young people placed out of area who go missing and are at risk of harm and exploitation?



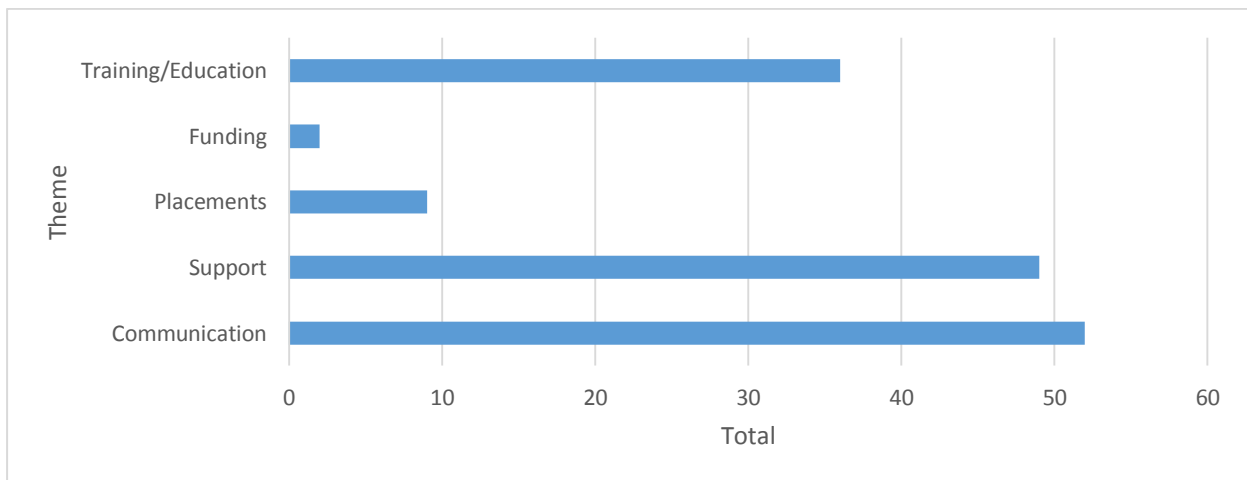
- The most common theme throughout the responses to the above question was communication. This included the issues of the lack of information being shared across multi-agency working
- Issues were also raised re the relationship and responsibility between each agency and the children involved. This has resulted in the children not trusting the systems in place to protect them
- A number of responses have been categorised as 'other' as they were not able to be identified under the chosen themes such as 'commercial issues' etc.
- The availability of placements seems to be limited and not always suited to the needs of the young person. Placing children out of area may put vulnerable children at an even higher risk, which is of concern to the agencies. The lack of local placements results in the pre planning process being delayed, resulting in difficulty communicating between agencies
- Legislation in England and Wales differentiates which causes difficulty for local authorities to work together
- Professionals in England and Wales need to carry out appropriate risk assessments in order to safeguard the children
- Funding restraints.

Q2. What is needed to create and contribute to effective multi-agency working for this cohort of young people?



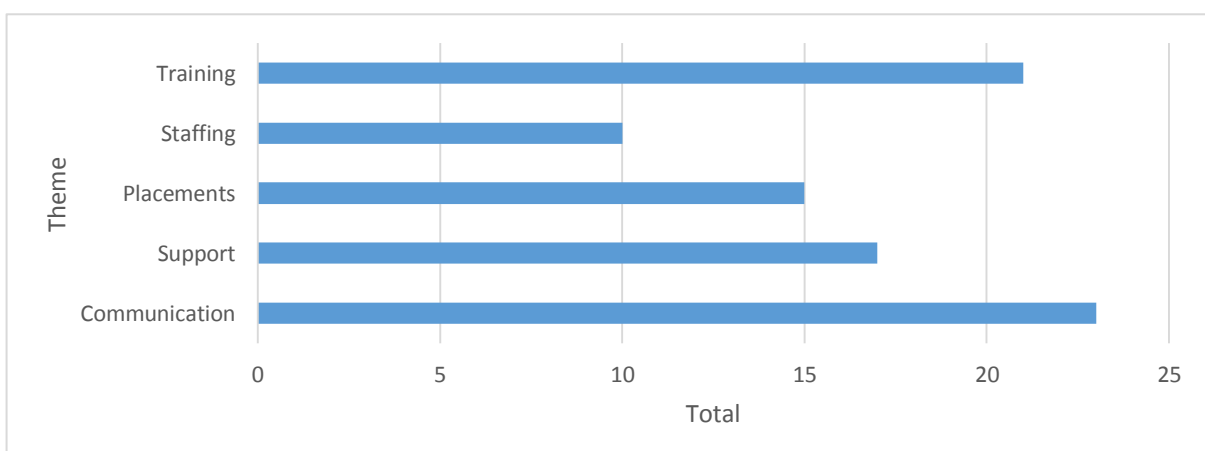
- A lack of communication between agencies and young people is a common attribute throughout the responses. An important aspect of this was a need for an agreed platform for all agencies to communicate effectively together and to create a time based structure that all can adhere to
- Ensuring a proactive support system is in place between the agencies and young people is a frequent trend. Building relationships with the young people will promote a great understanding of what resources are available to them and what is needed to encourage trust towards the agencies. Other issues raised were the need of more safeguarding and public knowledge of issues such as CSE
- The theme concerning placements had a similar response to Q1 with a prominent factor being out of county placements to mitigate more risk
- Clearer guidance between agencies re legislation and procedures. Multi agency training to help understand each other's roles and responsibilities
- The financial aspect does play a role in the decision of where a young person will be placed.

Q3. What aspects of support in residential care for young people at risk makes it more likely they will achieve positive outcomes and enhanced well-being?



- Maintaining education at a high standard across all agencies and ensuring staff feel supported and well trained within their role. Maintaining a high morale across agencies will increase motivation and enable staff to be more proactive
- Making sure all agencies understand the children’s needs and commit to investing time in each child. Adjusting their personal approach and language when dealing with young people creating a relaxed atmosphere
- The issues raised re placements are similar to previous questions
- The children should participate throughout the process in order to create clarity in decision making. This communication creates a better understanding of the child
- Funding restraints.

Q4. What needs to change in residential care for young people at risk of exploitation that will improve their life chances and reduce their vulnerability?



- CAMHS to be involved at point of referral, support from health providers required. Support of the children to be extended after they exceed eighteen

years of age. Encouragement for children to join groups such as sports teams or classes to help develop life skills. Making sure the child has a clear understanding of the therapy they are receiving

- Assessments of the vulnerability of a home such as information of the sex offenders within the area. Are specialist CSE residential homes making children more vulnerable? All homes should be equipped to deal with issues such as CSE as standard
- Local intelligence to be shared with the children's homes. Multi agencies working together to share information and concerns of specific children
- Invest in training and support of staff which creates continued care for the children. With the necessary training staff will be able to deal with issues such as behaviour and CSE in an appropriate way.