

# Written evidence to London Assembly Metropolitan Police's approach to safeguarding children in the capital

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Children's Society is a leading national charity, driven by the belief that every child deserves a good childhood. We provide vital help to the most vulnerable children, young people and families in our society through a range of services.
- 1.2. We run 12 specialist services for children who run away or go missing and/or at risk or victims of sexual exploitation, supporting more than a thousand children every year. Five of these services are in London. Our projects provide intensive one-to-one support and advice, drop-in services, awareness raising sessions for children and professionals and family mediation. Our services provide a safe haven where children can go for independent and confidential help, advice and support. We have experience in supporting young people before, after and during the prosecution process, including in several large scale, high profile CSE police operations. We also have experience of providing intelligence for such investigations and several of our projects are co-located with their local police forces.
- 1.3. We welcome this important inquiry into the safeguarding of London's children. Our submission is informed by learning and case studies from our direct work with children and young people who are at risk of CSE or have been sexually exploited. We also currently sit on either the Local Safeguarding Children's Board or a relevant sub-group in five London boroughs.
- 1.4. Through our policy and research, we seek to influence public policy and practice as well as changing attitudes and perceptions of young people at all levels to enable all children and young people to have a better chance in life.

**Question One: How effective is the Met in working together with key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children?**

## 2. Missing and absent definitions

- 2.1. The Children's Society has raised concerns about the introduction of missing and absent definitions and the impact these new definitions may have on safeguarding children.
- 2.2. We are concerned that if not implemented effectively these new definitions may allow vulnerable children to slip through the gaps in service and would not allow for identification of abuse at the earliest possible stage.

- 2.3. The recent evaluation of the pilots by the University of Portsmouth<sup>1</sup> reveals the challenge of conducting robust risk assessments when children are reported missing, inconsistent training and oversight of 'absent' cases and a lack of joined up work. We know children who run away are more likely to be abused, get involved in crime or be exploited but the University of Portsmouth report reveals that most police call handlers have not been trained with spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation or other risks associated with runaway children. Missing children who the police judge to be at risk should always be treated as 'missing' rather than 'absent' but the report reveals that the police are failing to consistently or robustly carry out risk assessments.
- 2.4. In particular the sharing of information when a child is classified as 'absent' is critical as sharing this information amongst key agencies may lead to the child being reclassified as 'missing' due to knowledge about the young person which another agency may hold. This holistic and comprehensive risk assessment is crucial to ensuring young people are appropriately classified when they are missing from either home or care.
- 2.5. Furthermore, children classified as 'absent' may not receive a police 'safe and well' check so they will have fewer chances to be identified early and referred for further support. This means relevant information that could have been gathered during this check may not come to light until the situation in a child's life worsens or after a considerable delay.
- 2.6. ACPO guidance states that the police should collect data on children who are absent but we are concerned that if this does not happen, vital opportunities to collect intelligence and protect children before harm escalates may be missed. We also need to ensure that safeguards are introduced in the system to guarantee that children do not fall through the net, such as the use of Missing Person Co-ordinators, close monitoring and re-classification of absent episodes based on thorough risk assessments and the sharing of this information with local partners.
- 2.7. Recommendation 1: Information on children who go missing needs to be shared with local partners as soon as possible to ensure that young people are appropriately classified as either 'missing' or 'absent' based on a comprehensive risk assessment.**
- 2.8. Recommendation 2: Met Police should ensure there are measures in place to record data on absent children as part of a prevention and protection strategy to safeguard children.**
- 2.9. Missing Person Coordinators**
- 2.10. The role of Missing Person Coordinators is particularly crucial in ensuring the Met is safeguarding London's children. Missing Person Coordinators therefore need to be supported through appropriate management and an appropriate workload to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> Shalev, Greene K and Pakes, F (2013) *Absent: An Exploration of common police procedures for safeguarding practices in cases of missing children* <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/reports/2013/201312-absent-report.pdf>

they can fulfil their crucial safeguarding role. In line with the ACPO guidance<sup>2</sup> on the management, recording and investigation of missing persons, the Missing Person Coordinator should regularly review all incidents are being referred and dealt with in line with effective safeguarding practices. The Missing Person Coordinator should also ensure joint protocols between agencies and pro-actively ensure coordination between local partners.

2.11. Liaising with local partners and service providers is an important element in the role of a Missing Person Coordinator. In 'Still Running II' running away rates of 'looked after' young people were 30% higher than young people living with their family<sup>3</sup>, therefore Missing Person Coordinators need to ensure strong relationships are developed with care homes in their area to appropriately assess the risk to these young people should they run away.

**2.12. Recommendation 3: The training of Missing Person Co-ordinators should be reviewed by the London Assembly and their resourcing within the Met should be prioritised to reflect the importance of this role for safeguarding children in the capital.**

**2.13. Recommendation 4: All police officers, Missing Person Co-ordinators and PCSOs should develop relationships with care homes in their area so they can gain a better understanding of why children there go missing and how to work with that home.**

### **3. Working with industry in the capital to safeguard children**

3.1. Recent high profile sexual exploitation cases – such as in Oxford – and our services have identified that grooming, exploitation and trafficking is happening in hotels, restaurants and other commercial premises. That is why The Children's Society and the National Working Group developed the Say Something if You See Something campaign with local businesses such as the hospitality, retail, transport and leisure industries to tackle child sexual exploitation taking place on their premises. The campaign and toolkit helps staff in these industries to recognise the signs that sexual exploitation is taking place and sets out what action they can take in response.

3.2. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Policing and Crime Bill police have been given new powers to tackle crimes against children in hotels. The Bill gives the police powers to require hotels to disclose the personal details of guests, such as names and addresses if they have a 'reasonable suspicion' that someone is committing crimes against children. These details will provide the police with vital information so they can identify, gather further intelligence and take instant action to prevent guests from sexually exploiting or grooming young people. The Bill also permits the police to close premises used for child sexual exploitation, where at the moment police can only close

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2013/201303-cba-int-guid-missing-persons.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/research\\_docs/Still%20running%20%20-%20Findings%20from%20the%20second%20national%20survey%20of%20young%20runaways\\_0.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/research_docs/Still%20running%20%20-%20Findings%20from%20the%20second%20national%20survey%20of%20young%20runaways_0.pdf) p.11

the premises of a hotel if prostitution and child pornography offences are taking place there. The Children's Society would encourage the Met police to use these measures available to tackle and disrupt child sexual exploitation in the capital.

**3.3. Recommendation 5: The Police and Crime Committee should encourage the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to support the Say Something if You See Something campaign and work with the hospitality, retail, transport and leisure industries in London to safeguard children.**

**3.4. Recommendation 6: The Police and Crime Committee should monitor and support the implementation of the new powers available to police under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Policing and Crime Bill and how these are being used by the Met to safeguard children.**

#### **4. Responding to needs and vulnerabilities of trafficked children**

4.1. Young people who are victims of trafficking are particularly at risk of exploitation and this is recognised in the Pan-London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol. This exploitation can take many forms, for example being forced into committing crimes, for example in cannabis factories or selling drugs in gangs. The way in which the police deal with these young people is crucial, as they may be the first people the young person has come into contact with other than their trafficker<sup>4</sup>.

4.2. Trafficking both into and within the UK is an area where greater knowledge and training is needed amongst the police more generally, including the Met.

#### **4.3. Trafficking within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation**

4.4. Our practitioners report a mixed picture in terms of police awareness of legislation relating to trafficking within the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The majority of practitioners report that the police are not aware of the trafficking legislation in the Sexual Offences Act or do not use it to their full potential. Therefore very few of the CSE cases that they have been involved with at prosecution stage have used the charges of trafficking within the UK to prosecute despite trafficking having taken place. This is mostly because it can be difficult to prove the movement that the legislation specifies.

4.5. The evidence from practice suggests that the CPS and barristers are not always aware of or applying trafficking offences in cases of child sexual exploitation, where it is known that children were moved between places with intention of sexual exploitation. The number of prosecutions, particularly in London in cases of CSE remains low. Our practice report that in some cases it is due to the lack of understanding of trafficking and mistaken perception that trafficking only occurs if it is across borders. In fact trafficking can occur within the same town, street, or neighbourhood.

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<sup>4</sup> Although outside the remit of this investigation the training and support available for housing providers and housing officers is also critical to disrupting traffickers and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.

4.6. Where trafficking offences are prosecuted for, they are a very beneficial piece of legislation and have a high likelihood of conviction. This is because they are often the only charges that the CPS can bring a strong case for and ensure a long sentence. Practitioners also report that trafficking is easier to trace and prove than other offences and does not involve the same focus on the victims disclosing that they have been abused in the same way as with such offences as rape. This is because trafficking of a child is always an offence because the child cannot consent.

**4.7. *Recommendation 7: The Met and ACPO should initiate a programme of work to ensure that the police are aware of legislation relating to trafficking within the UK and that it is recognised that trafficking can take place over very short distances.***

#### **4.8. Training to recognise the signs of child trafficking**

4.9. In September 2013, The Children's Society published '*Still at Risk*', a Home Office commissioned review into the support for trafficked children.

4.10. It is crucial that police officers responding to calls are trained in spotting the signs of trafficking and allow time to separately meet with young people they encounter when visiting premises. One case discussed in our *Still at Risk* report is Christine. The police visited the house where Christine was being kept after she called them as she feared physical violence from the man who lived there. When they arrived, the man claimed she was his daughter and she was asked what had happened in front of him and therefore did not disclose.

*"I don't want to be around him and when the police came and the police talk to the man and then they ask me what happened, I didn't want to talk I was just crying and then they asked the man who am I to him. He say I am his daughter and they say what is your daughter date of birth, he say I don't know my wife usually keep the children and stuff I can't remember it. And they asking me if you feel threatened or anything say something and I couldn't say it standing there so they didn't do anything. Christine*

The police did not make any further checks and Christine continued to be exploited until she found another way out.

**4.11. *Recommendation 8: A training programme on the signs of trafficking should be part of all Met police training.***

#### **4.12. Ensuring the police do not treat victims of trafficking as perpetrators**

4.13. The Children's Society are particularly concerned about the treatment of victims of trafficking who are in some cases treated as perpetrators rather than victims by the police. This has been reported by our RISE project in London that supports boys and young men aged 11-25 who are from outside the UK.

4.14. Article 8 of the EU Trafficking Directive states that a Member State is entitled not to prosecute a victim of trafficking for his or her involvement in criminal activities which he or she has been compelled to commit as a direct consequence of acts of trafficking. It is crucial that all police officers are aware of this Directive as The Children's Society

remains concerned about the continued criminalisation and detention of child trafficking victims.

- 4.15. Recent research by The Children’s Society and The Refugee Council highlighted instances where young people were prosecuted for crimes committed under duress<sup>5</sup> including immigration documentation offences, and that in addition to prison custody some children were detained in police stations and immigration detention centres because their age was not believed<sup>6</sup>.
- 4.16. Each year between a quarter and a fifth of all those claiming asylum as children have their ages disputed. The age assessments need to be done in a safe and child-friendly environment as age assessments are often lengthy processes which can involve the child talking through their history which can lead to feelings of isolation and depression. The Children’s Society would want to see the Met introduce a policy preventing age assessments taking place in police stations that is not a suitable environment for such an assessment to take place.

### **Case Study**

T. is a 14 year-old boy who was referred to us by a health walk-in centre. At the time of referral, he was living with an older couple and other young people, none of whom related to him. He was brought to the UK two years ago but never regularised his immigration status, registered with a GP or attended school. He was made to do all the cleaning and cooking in the house in exchange for accommodation. We immediately realised he had been trafficked and made a referral to Children’s Social Services. Unfortunately the Local Authority’s response was not as prompt as we expected and, despite our efforts, T. was moved to a different location and went missing. The local authority were reluctant to liaise directly with the police; it took a few hours of advocacy as well as support from the NSPCC until they even reported it to the police.

The police then did not treat it as a trafficking case, but allocated it to the missing persons’ team who went to visit his last residence where the traffickers told him they had never heard of the young person, so the police tried to close the case. Fortunately our project worker had managed to forge a close trusting relationship with the young person who managed to escape after a few days and subsequently got back in touch with us. We went to pick him up and requested Social Services to arrange an emergency foster placement, which they agreed to do the same day.

- 4.17. Recommendation 9: Children who may have been trafficked shall not be detained, charged or prosecuted for the illegality of their entry into or residence in countries of transit and destination, or for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that such involvement is a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons.**

<sup>5</sup> This is despite the fact that in the case of child trafficking, duress does not have to be shown.

<sup>6</sup> Franklin, A. and Doyle, L. (2013) *Still at Risk – A review of support for trafficked children*, Refugee Council and The Children’s Society: <http://tinyurl.com/o3e8k7w>

**4.18. Recommendation 10: The Met should put in place a policy which ensures no age assessments are completed in police stations**

**4.19. Recommendation 11: The London Assembly should monitor and evaluate the number of cases which are quashed subsequent to conviction as a result of identifying the young person as a victim of trafficking to identify the scale of this problem in London**

**Question Two: How has the Met's approach to safeguarding changed over the past five years? How has the establishment of SOECA improved the Met's response to safeguarding?**

## **5. Prosecution of sexual exploitation crimes**

- 5.1. There have been a number of improvements in the Met's approach to safeguarding in the last five years, including the development through the Child Sexual Exploitation Unit of the CSE pan London protocol. The renewed commitment to take action on those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people by prosecuting and disrupting perpetrators is welcomed.
- 5.2. Our practitioners however report that a very low percentage of sexual exploitation cases go to prosecution. Prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence is a clear message sent not only to professionals but also to children themselves that they will be supported and protected throughout criminal proceedings. The Children's Society are particularly concerned about the over-reliance on young victims to disclose abuse and would welcome a more pro-active approach to the prosecution of child sexual exploitation cases. A more pro-active response to evidence gathering would help take the focus off the young person.
- 5.3. A close working relationship between the Met, Council and the voluntary sector is critical to enabling information to be shared to support pro-active disruption and prosecution of perpetrators. Often voluntary sector staff are able to gather information through their work with young people which if shared could lead to more robust evidence gathering and building up a case against the perpetrator. For example one practitioner spoken to in London discussed how information which may aid prosecutions, such as registration numbers, addresses and names are regularly shared with her and not the Police (during the Safe and Well check) due to trust built up over time between the practitioner and the young person.
- 5.4. The pro-active disruption of child sexual exploitation using existing legislation should be used more by the police. Our practice nationwide reports instances where the police have successfully used provisions contained in different pieces of legislation to disrupt CSE and to build evidence for prosecution. Examples include the application of Child Abduction Notices to break up contact between a child and suspected perpetrator, the application and breach of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to deal with grooming cases, investigating premises as part of health and safety or environmental checks, or

working closely with the voluntary sector to build up a bigger picture and intelligence on local hot spots and individuals posing a risk to children.

**5.5. Recommendation 12: The Police and Crime Committee should review the use and efficacy of pro-active mechanisms to disrupt and tackle CSE, including the use of Child Abduction Notices and new anti-social behaviour orders.**

**6. Improved training, awareness and attitudes**

- 6.1. Feedback from our practitioners working directly with the Met Police have recognised an improvement in the awareness and knowledge of child safeguarding and child sexual exploitation, however variation still exists with a Programme Manager telling us *"it depends very much on who answers the phone. There is not a standardised service across the Police"*.
- 6.2. This feedback from practitioners reflects that training and support for Met officers at all levels is crucial and MPS wide CSE training which is scheduled to be completed in 2014 will be central to this<sup>7</sup>. The training should be required to cover the attitudes of professionals as well as safeguarding processes and procedures as young people regularly report their attempts to explain to police officers their circumstances are treated with scepticism at best, or are regularly disregarded.
- 6.3. Despite recent high profile CSE cases our practitioners report that frontline professionals in children's services, the police, the CPS and judiciary still lack a good understanding of what constitutes child sexual exploitation, how children are groomed for sexual exploitation, children's responses to grooming and CSE and indicators of CSE (such as going missing, challenging behaviour, and substance misuse). As a result, when a child is identified as at risk of CSE, in many cases the necessary steps are not taken to support the child with a disclosure or to share information and build evidence for successful prosecution.
- 6.4. The APPG inquiry into children missing from care heard from several witnesses<sup>8</sup> who told how in many cases where children are at risk of, or have experienced sexual exploitation and may have also run away, they are seen by professionals, including the police, as 'promiscuous' and making an active choice to become involved in a particular 'lifestyle'. Indeed the inquiry was told that some professionals see sexual activity between a child under 16 and an adult as acceptable. They believe that the young person has 'consented' to such sexual relations and therefore do not perceive it as a child protection or sexual exploitation concern.
- 6.5. Negative attitudes towards child victims of CSE also hugely impact on their willingness to disclose their exploitation. Young people who have been groomed are also often *unable to see or understand they have been groomed* which means they do not want to disclose. It takes a long time for young people who have been groomed to trust

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<sup>7</sup> This training schedule is referenced in Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley's response to Joanna McCartney AM <http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s33348/Appendix%202.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-from-the-joint-inquiry-into-children-who-go-missing-from-care>

professionals, because sometimes at first the young people believe in the innocence of the perpetrators, and will not want to engage with someone telling them otherwise or asking them to break contact or disclose abuse. We need a system that takes focus away from the child and focuses on a more pro-active investigation to target the perpetrator.

- 6.6. There are also negative attitudes reported on young runaways with going missing not being seen as a warning sign and a call for support. Rather young runaways often report being treated as a nuisance and being seen as criminals by the police.

**6.7. Recommendation 13: The Police and Crime Committee should monitor the progress of Met training throughout 2014 and ensure the training includes a focus on changing attitudes.**

**7. Joint working to ensure effective safeguarding**

- 7.1. As part of the SOECA the Met has 16 Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAITs), each aligned to one or more local authorities. This alignment is to be welcomed, however The Children's Society has concerns that in some areas the ability to deliver effective joint working is challenging, raising concerns about the joint responsibility for child safeguarding.
- 7.2. Joint interviewing or initial joint visits with social care is a valuable role completed by CAIT teams, however with a significant increase in child investigations (one CAIT team we work closely with has seen a 40% increase from the same period last year (1<sup>st</sup> April '13 – 31<sup>st</sup> October '13)), the ability of CAIT teams to complete these visits is limited. Our practitioners highlighted that by having joint visits the young people may become more familiar with the police officers in the CAIT teams and therefore can be supported to build up a trusting relationship with the local police.
- 7.3. Jointly assessing MASH referrals and conducting joint interviewing or visits between the police and social care will ensure all agencies have a shared understanding of why young people run away or are sexually exploited.

**7.4. Recommendation 14: The London Assembly should review the resources and response time of CAIT teams against the number of child investigations to ensure the teams are appropriately resourced**

**Question Three: What lessons can be learned from borough serious case reviews? What improvements have the Met made in response to the findings from serious case reviews?**

**8. Serious case reviews and sexual exploitation**

- 8.1. The Children's Society has not been involved in any serious case reviews in the Greater London. However many of the issues raised by practitioners as part of this response

echo the conclusions of the NSPCC briefing on learning from serious case reviews around child sexual exploitation<sup>9</sup>.

- 8.2. In particular, one of three key issues highlighted by the NSPCC was confusion around consent, particularly for older teenagers. Our practitioners highlight this is a particular concern amongst the Met police that supports our Recommendation 13 for increased training which should focus on attitudes as well as procedures and best practice.

**Question Four: How has the rollout of MASH improved information sharing in your borough (if applicable)?**

**9. Prevention and proactive information gathering through return interviews**

- 9.1. A lack of information sharing between agencies prevents services from intervening early to identify and safeguard young people at risk and secure intelligence and evidence for CSE prosecutions. We have been instrumental in setting up a number of multi-agency forums on CSE and missing across the country that involve social and voluntary services and the police and we are part of MASH arrangements in three London boroughs.
- 9.2. MASHs in London present an opportunity to not only collaboratively address risk and work across agencies to safeguard children but also to play a proactive role in prevention and information gathering. The government's statutory guidance on children who go missing from home or care published in February 2014 require all local authorities to conduct return interviews for children who go missing<sup>10</sup>. The Pan-London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol recognises missing children and young people must be considered at an enhanced risk of CSE<sup>11</sup>. Ensuring information obtained from return interviews is collated, analysed and interpreted at a MASH level is critical to identifying trends in child sexual exploitation and in turn opportunities to pursue prosecution.
- 9.3. Several of our projects have been involved in mapping and gathering intelligence about perpetrators which have sometimes been the first step in uncovering grooming rings and have resulted in police operations. This is because they are often the first professionals to come into contact with the victims and will uncover valuable information about whom they are associating with, which other victims may be involved and where the exploitation may be taking place. Frequently the site of exploitation or perpetrator is uncovered through return interviews that are required in statutory guidance, to take place when a child has gone missing or run away.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/scrs/briefing-sexual-exploitation\\_wda99717.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/scrs/briefing-sexual-exploitation_wda99717.html)

<sup>10</sup> Government Statutory Guidance on Children who go missing from home or care  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/statutory-guidance-on-children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

<sup>11</sup> Pan-London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol  
<http://content.met.police.uk/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheadname1=Content-Type&blobheadname2=Content-Disposition&blobheadvalue1=application%2Fpdf&blobheadvalue2=inline%3B+filename%3D%22452%2F936%2FProtocol+final+PDF.pdf%22&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1283684846364&ssbinary=true>

- 9.4. Return interviews, which are separate and in addition to Safe and Well checks, provide an opportunity for young people who go missing to speak to an independent specially trained professional about the reasons behind their running away. Return interviews done independently allow a young person to talk to someone they trust and is independent from the professionals they may wish to discuss. Return interviews are now required in statutory for all children who go missing from home or care and whether the police classify them as absent or missing.
- 9.5. Return interviews for all children who run away can also highlight where police responses may not have been sufficient and help the agency conducting these to gain a better understanding of why the young people ran away and the risks they faced, so they can share this with the police.
- 9.6. *Recommendation 15: The Police and Crime Committee should recommend data sharing protocols in all London boroughs ensure information from return interviews is shared in an appropriate way to enable prevention and proactive information sharing to identify perpetrators.***

## **10. Joint protocols and joint risk assessments**

- 10.1. Multi-agency safeguarding hubs have been a significant step forward in recognising the benefits and advantages of co-location to jointly assessing risk and developing joint safeguarding protocols. This is recognised in the Munro review of child protection<sup>12</sup>. Alongside co-located teams it is important local partners have coordinated and complimentary protocols to safeguard children and that risk assessments are completed with a holistic picture of the child's needs. This should include information held by the police, local authority, other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. Shared risks assessments also enable shared thresholds for referrals meaning all children are supported appropriately based on a complete picture of that child's needs.

## **Question Five: How should MOPAC hold the MET to account on safeguarding?**

### **11. Ensuring the voice of young people is central to holding the MET to account on safeguarding**

- 11.1. Although there may be many positive examples of children and young people's experiences and relationships with the police, the children we work with tell us that their experience of the police is overwhelming negative. Therefore ensuring the voice of young people is central to how they are treated, supported and viewed by the Met police should be central to MOPAC's role in holding the Met to account

- 11.2. *Recommendation 16: MOPAC should review their engagement with young people and put in place opportunities for the voice of children is heard and is able to inform MOPAC's oversight function.***

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf) p.82

## **12. Review important changes and analyse these in the context of safeguarding**

12.1. The introduction of missing and absent categories is likely to have a significant impact on the Met's role in safeguarding children. Ensuring these definitions are implemented appropriately will be critical to the Met fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children in London. MOPAC should review the introduction of these new definitions in the context of safeguarding and ensure processes are in place to enhance the safeguarding procedures associated with these new definitions if necessary.

***12.2. Recommendation 17: The Met should report back on the introduction of the missing and absent categories and an evaluation should be completed as the impact of introducing these definitions on safeguarding London's children.***

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