Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff team at ReRun for their ongoing patience and support with this evaluation, in filling in evaluation forms and participating in interviews, on top of an existing busy workload.

Further information

For any queries or further information relating to this report, or the research programme in general, please contact:
Research Unit
The Children’s Society
Gallery House
125-131 The Headrow
Leeds
LS1 5RD

Telephone: 0113 246 5131
E-mail: ru@childsoc.org.uk
1. Introduction

ReRun – description of the project

ReRun was set up to work with young people who run away or who are forced to leave home in Dorset. Work officially commenced on 1st April 2003. The project was funded by the CYPU in order to develop services with young people who run away in the area. The staffing consisted of two full-time project workers and a co-ordinator who would be working two days per week. ReRun is of specific interest as a rural project because, as Still Running (1999) research identified, the same proportion of young people run away nationally from urban, suburban and rural areas. There are, however, significantly fewer resources for young people in rural areas and often the school is the only place that offers support and the opportunity to mix with peers. What became plain during the course of the local evaluation was that many of the young people who use ReRun are at some point detached from school, and therefore from these opportunities.

Aims of ReRun

At the outset ReRun’s development work aimed to do the following:

- Establish a point of referral for the Dorset area, excluding Bournemouth and Poole.
- Build a profile of the needs of their specific client group across the county.
- Be young person friendly so that project workers would be perceived to be approachable, trustworthy and supportive.
- Be empowering and participative. It was intended that young people should perceive project workers to be listening, approachable and taking them seriously, as well as being effective.
- Offer support to the young people in order to prevent difficulties from escalating.
- Lessen the likelihood of young people needing to run away by providing support.
- Have a team that would be non-judgmental, empowering, perceived to be independent and jargon free.
- Make contacts where the young people feel comfortable and safe.
- Produce sufficient evidence that there is a need for the project by the end of the twelve months.

The Children’s Society Research Unit

The Children’s Society Research Unit has a background in runaways research having carried out the research for Still Running in 1999, which was influential in bringing about this stream of funding for development work with this population. Since then the Unit has worked on a national evaluation of runaways projects funded by The Children's Promise and is currently engaged in the CYPU-funded national evaluation of CYPU-funded runaways development work carried out by 18 projects across England. Part of the CYPU funding to projects included a sum for a local evaluation of the development work and the Children's Society Research Unit is also engaged in carrying out a number of these evaluations.
The national and local CYPU-funded evaluations
The national and local CYPU development work evaluations differ in that the national evaluation is concerned with different strands of work being carried out by the runaways projects with different locations, runaway client groups, focuses and means of referral. The intention is to build an overall picture of learning from practice in terms of what works well, with whom and in what particular context.

The local evaluations are specific to local projects and examine their particular ways of working with their own client groups, against the backdrop of their local context. They aim to address the located learning from practice in areas as different as North London and rural Dorset.

Aims of the local evaluation
At the outset it was hoped that this local evaluation research process would help to improve our understanding of some of the specific issues involved in delivering services to rural young people who run away or who are forced to leave home. This would be achieved by learning from the processes that had taken place with the young people in the context of ReRun’s development work.

Components of the ReRun local evaluation
- A schools survey, in which 474 young people participated, carried out by ReRun using the questionnaire designed by Gwyther Rees for the Children’s Society Research Team’s Still Running research. This provided a picture of the backdrop against which the project works.
- The monitoring data for the national CYPU evaluation, collected over a period of eight months from April to November 2003, which provided an overview of how Rerun is used by young people and the work carried out by the project, as well as a statistical breakdown of the characteristics, situations and outcomes for young people who access the project.
- Six in-depth case studies collected for the national evaluation to demonstrate what processes have worked well, with whom, and in what context, and data on a further eight completed cases drawn from the monitoring data (which covered 45 referrals in all).
- Data gathered at a 'residential’ held for the purpose of the evaluation, which took place in the New Forest with seven young people, two project workers and the project co-ordinator of ReRun, and a researcher for the Children’s Society Research Unit.

The data gathered by the above means has been processed and analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods as appropriate. In some cases this data has been summarised in order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants.
2. Methodology

Using mixed methods
This local evaluation research process has been carried out using mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative, including the survey and the realist evaluation monitoring as well as the case studies. Some more ethnographic elements were utilised at the residential held for the purpose of the evaluation.

The realist approach
The approach taken in the CYPU national evaluation is based on the ‘Realist’ model (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) using methods which are viewed as having a high degree of objectivity, while at the same time recognising the limitations of scientific models in relation to researching human relationships and processes. The Realist model aims to gain a deeper understanding of the workings of a programme and is concerned not only with the question ‘does the programme work?’ but also with ‘in what context?’, ‘with whom?’, and ‘by means of what methods?’ This model, therefore, places importance on looking at the wider context in which the service is delivered and the mechanisms involved in working with the young people, as well as the changes or developments that have taken place for the young person over the period of the work. For this study further data was collected three months after end of contact or after a substantial piece of work had taken place. This approach, which was also employed for the local evaluation of the work of ReRun, not only enables us to draw upon the project’s contribution to the national development work picture, but also to use it in a localised and personalised way. The realistic evaluation methods, which include the monitoring and case studies, provide a backbone to the more ethnographic elements of the study and give a higher degree of reliability to the findings than ethnography alone.

The schools survey
The local schools survey, which included 474 respondents between the ages of 13 to 15, was carried out entirely by ReRun. This was intended to discover the prevalence and frequency of running away in the area as a backdrop to the project. The initial analysis of the Dorset Survey is attached as Appendix 1.

The ‘residential’
In October 2003 ReRun held a ‘residential’ in the New Forest for seven young people who had the shared experience of running away and who had been involved with the project as a result of this. The residential was held over three days in the last week of October 2003 during the half-term school holiday. The adults in the group included two project workers who had been working closely with the young people on an individual basis, as well as the co-ordinator of ReRun and a researcher from The Children’s Society Research Unit.

The purpose of the residential
From the research point of view it was thought that a residential would be an ideal opportunity to gain access to a number of young people who had experienced running away, to carry out the initial case study interviews with the young people and to engage in some group feedback about the project and issues of running
away in a rural area. As mentioned above, this data would feed into both national and local evaluations. The researcher and project staff discussed involving the young people in case study interviews for the purpose of evaluating the work of projects as well as holding telephone discussions about taking the young people away, as the ReRun workers in particular have experience of organising residential. It was thought it would give the opportunity to work with the young people in developing their group work skills and improving peer group relationships, and whilst having good quality time, allow access to the young people in a relaxed setting which would enhance the possibility of gathering rich data for the evaluation research. It was thought that the young people would have the opportunity to get to know the researcher by spending time together over the three-day period. What was known to the project staff but not to the researcher was that the young people did not know each other. Most of the young people were not attending school. Given the fact that they had not previously met each other or the adults present (other than their individual project workers), the young people jelled very well as a group, although this was probably helped by the fact that each participant had the security of an established relationship with one of the project workers.

**Elements of Participant observation and action research**

Elements of both participant observation and action research were also present in the methodology for the local evaluation, in that a researcher attended the residential described above. The seven young people who attended, three boys and four girls aged 12-17, had all been the focus of substantial pieces of work undertaken by ReRun. The young people knew that they would be asked to take part in interviews and some group work during the three days. There were also plans for lots of activities that everyone could join in with. Data was gathered by means of two focus groups (one with girls and one with boys), individual face-to-face interviews, and a degree of participant observation, where this did not transgress confidentiality. For instance, answers to questions from the interview schedule obtained outside the frame of the interview were not utilised on the grounds that the young person was told that they did not have to answer the interview questions if they did not wish to. It was therefore not possible, should a question be answered by some other means (for instance, overheard or as part of a personal conversation) during the activities outside the frame of the interview, to use that answer in the data without the young person’s permission. It was possible, however, to mention certain general issues that arose outside the frame of the structured interviews and the groups. One such issue was how four of the six young people who gave interviews were not able to write their name and address for the researcher, who had to enlist the project workers’ help. Only one of these young people described themselves as being dyslexic, but there was clearly an issue for these young people either through undiagnosed dyslexia, through learning disability or through missing school. There was also an element of action research to this project in that it became evident during the residential that group work was beneficial to these generally isolated young people who do not attend school, who have underdeveloped social skills and who have poor peer group relationships.
3. Research Findings

Rural Issues

Rural young people
Franks (2000) in a follow-up study to the Still Running Research found rural social exclusion issues for young people to be:

- No transport and poor communications
- The rural economy, low wages and unemployment, as well as a lack of employment opportunities, exacerbated by the FMD crisis
- Difficulty in gaining access to confidential services, lack of anonymity, high visibility and stigmatisation
- Romantic expectations associated with rurality (on the part of others) may mean low tolerance of young people’s needs or behaviour
- Even more than in urban areas, young people have no voice
- Limited resources.

The project co-ordinator suggested in interview that he felt the key point in a rural area was the level of support services available for young people in terms of social services, counselling, youth provision and things to do. He suggested that in communities such as small villages young people with a family issue find this hard to conceal, as most people tend to know each other. Families consequently find it hard to hide a problem with a teenager. The options for a young person who decides they want to run away are few – young people generally stay locally – and they are less likely to find a place that their parents might not know about. Even though the young people at the residential did not see themselves as being ‘rural’ they still faced issues of a lack of facilities and relative isolation. This isolation is especially the case for young people who cannot or do not attend school and it emerged as an issue during the residential given that most of the work carried out by ReRun had previously been with individuals or with young person and parent(s) or carer(s). This meant that young people who were not attending school had little chance to meet with their peers and to engage in normal social interaction.

It is interesting to note that although the services of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) were not particularly appreciated by the young people (except for one who said an EWO helped her to see her brother) as a school resource, they were at times highly appreciated as an enabling factor by project workers.

The locality
In the locality of ReRun, apart from the statutory kind, there is no overnight accommodation and no night hostel. Neither the statutory out-of-hours Social Services’ provision nor the police are particularly young person friendly. It was thought at the outset of the development of ReRun that young people in private foster care outside the county might provide the project with a lot of work, as they are more likely to be unsettled and also to be reported away from home. The intention was not, however, for ReRun to offer a night service. In practice, there
are young people who have made contact by mobile phone overnight but no new referrals are taken during this time. There are lots of gaps in the local service provision, especially in relation to housing and housing advice for 16-and-17-year-olds and in relation to leaving care. There had been little transitional support although Connexions was developing this at the outset of the ReRun project. There had also been very little in the way of family work that could benefit the prevention services, as well as a general lack of provision for young people who are not in mainstream school. As a result, lots of young people were ‘falling off the map’. Consequently young people were finding it difficult to access contraception and, as a project worker from ReRun explained to the researcher: “young women with pregnancy issues will not or can’t get to their GP”. Generally there is a lack of services for these young people. Although there is a network of Advice and Information centres across the county some young people may not contact them either because they have difficulty accessing them from rural areas or they do not or do not have the skills to initiate contact with a centre-based service.

One of the issues for project workers is the sheer distances they have to cover in order to see young people, as well as a lack of services on to which they can refer them. One project worker described how she does a lot of work in her car. This actually had a positive effect in some ways, for instance in terms of the way in which:

"The car is an ice-breaker. No one can hear. (Sometimes) it is easier for a young person to talk when they are not the total focus of attention."

The Survey findings
The Dorset school survey about running away showed that at least 32 young people out of the 474 who completed questionnaires had run away in the last year, at least 25 of whom had stayed away overnight. This is a slightly higher proportion than that identified in the 1999 national survey. The overall age profile of this local sample was also lower than for the earlier national survey. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 13 and 15 and 95% described themselves as white, with most of the remainder describing themselves as being of ‘mixed origin’. If the figures of running away were replicated throughout Dorset there would be 1,000 13-15-year-olds running away overnight each year. This is consistent with 1999 estimates that there are 750 first-time runaways each year in Dorset and that there are over 1,200 running away incidents per year. In the most recent incident of running 90% of respondents who had been away from home categorised themselves as having run away and 10% as having been forced to leave. Although 32% went outside the local area, with only one exception who went to London, no one mentioned any places outside Dorset. The work of ReRun takes place against this backdrop. The sheer number of possible runaways alerts us to the need for such a project.

Referrals
The referral process
ReRun works with young people up to the age of 18. At the outset it was intended that the police would be generating a referral for every young person reported
missing more than once although police inspectors had discretion whether to refer a one-off. The workers give a one-to-one response to referrals within their geographical boundaries. In the case of young people in residential care ReRun exercises discretion. Social workers and police did not expect them to have much to do with young people who repeatedly run away at the outset. There was an issue with young people placed out of county, who were likely to be unsettled and could give them a lot of work, not least because of the distances involved in travelling to see them. Initially they were not going to be involved with young people from Gloucester but they will deal with young people who have come to the county from outside. As will be seen below, although the police were the main referrers, in actuality the project took referrals from a diversity of sources.

At referral the project worker establishes contact with the young person and passes information about the project to them with the free phone number. They explain to the young people why ReRun is there and what they do. Learning from the setting up of ASTRA was employed and there is a brief assessment of need. The project may provide support services like family work or drug and alcohol work, but also make referrals to and co-work with other agencies. ReRun did not intend that young people should become dependent on the project in any long-term sense. Before the CYPU development money was made available family work was unusual for the child-centred runaways projects. At the outset ReRun had no particular intention of developing group work and family work was a new departure. In practice they have carried out a high proportion of family work with positive results.

The data obtained through the monitoring process shows that the 45 referrals received during the period of eight months were from young people between the ages of 11 and 18, with the ages of two unknown. The majority were aged between 13 and 16, with 12 referrals aged 15. More females than males were referred. Of the 45 referrals, 30 were either away from home or had recently been away or were at risk of running. Around half of these young people were known to be living with parents (20) or relatives (3), in residential care (3) or foster care (4). The situation of the remainder is unknown.

**Sources of referral**
Although the main source of the 45 referrals was the police (17-15 of these from their Misper scheme), there was a diversity of other sources. Below is a table showing the sources of referral between the opening of the project and November 2003:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Referral</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/carer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Misper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare Officer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Welfare Officer + Learning Centre Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves Project Weymouth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connexions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Councils (Housing)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another runaway</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and Information Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Service Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Means of Referral**

We can see from the above table that the sources of referral to the project are varied. The spread of referring agencies demonstrates that it is not only the young people who have been reported missing that have been referred to the project. This is positive because it can be the young people who are not reported who are the most at risk.

The monitoring data obtained from ReRun shows that of 45 referrals over the period of eight months 15 young people were referred through the police Misper scheme and two through the police for other reasons. The police were therefore the main source of referrals. Of the other known sources of referral four were referred by social workers and four self referred. Others were referred by a parent (1) and a teacher (1). The majority of referrals were made via telephone or fax.

The six interviewees who participated in the case studies were referred from a number of sources. Two were referred by the police, one didn’t know how she was referred (and therefore was probably referred by police), another was referred by a head teacher, one by a social work assistant and one by his mother.

**The young people at the time of first contact**

From the monitoring data we can draw the information that of the 45 referrals received by ReRun over the monitoring period, 25 went on to the point of an initial contact. In 17 cases the project workers arranged to meet the young person or the young person and family (8) as well as ‘other persons’ in seven cases. The ‘other person’ might, for instance, be a teacher. At the time of first contact none of these young people was on the streets and 15 were in their usual accommodation.

At the time of the first contact with the project 13 young people gave problems with parents and three gave other problems at home as their reason for running
away. Six young people also said it was because of school problems, whilst five young people said they wanted to be with someone else. Four had been thrown out of home, while five said there was another reason for their situation. Of the six interviewees at the ‘residential’ five were living with parent(s) or parents and step-parent, and one young person couldn’t remember where she was living at the time, due to having stayed in a number of places and being unable to remember what her situation was at the time of referral. 'Jay', aged 12, recalled that he was refusing to go home from school:

"I had been in a lot of trouble and had taken dad’s hunting knife to school and was refusing to go home. I went home in the end at about 10 and 11 in the evening".

'Michelle' described herself as staying away without permission, while two others had run away and one other had been thrown out.

At the residential the interviewees retrospectively described their situations before contacting ReRun. Separation and bereavement were issues for a number of the young people.

For one young person the most important things in his life so far were the loss of his grandma and grandpa who were his main support, and his move to a grammar school without his old friends, which left him feeling largely isolated and unsupported. Another young person had also been bereaved, in her case with a parent and stepparent both dying. For 'Rachel' the worst thing was being separated from her brother and for 'Neil', who now lives with his mum and stepdad:

"My dad. He’s basically not a nice person. I don’t like him. I’ve disowned him. Basically I don’t have a dad”.

Michelle described getting engaged and then splitting up. She said of her family situation:

"My brothers and sisters were in care. I stayed with mum because I was the youngest. My stepdad said it was him or me. She chose him”.

**Profiles of the young people**

The profiling data we have on the 17 young people with whom longer-term work has been carried out shows that they are mainly white, with only one young person being of mixed race. This is not surprising in a rural area and is in keeping with the local profile provided by the respondents to the survey. The young people who went on to have longer-term interventions are mostly recorded as being straight/heterosexual, with one young person being unsure and four whose sexuality is unknown. Four stated that they had disabilities, nine did not and in the case of four others their status in this regard was unknown. This can be a grey area as some young people who are experiencing difficulties, say with reading and writing, may not have a diagnosis of dyslexia. Conversely, a previous diagnosis can be lifted or changed. For instance a project worker spoke about how one young person had been diagnosed as having ADHD and had been prescribed
Ritalin, but had later had the diagnosis disconfirmed. The young person felt angry that she had been taking the medication for no good reason.

Being a rural area it was not particularly surprising that all the young people at the residential were white. Four of the young people said that they had not been discriminated against in any way except for ‘Michelle’ who said she was dyslexic and ‘Jay’ who said that teachers also thought he had a learning disability. It was notable to the researcher that when asked four of the six young people were unable to write or spell their addresses. ‘Michelle’ said that it had been suggested that she suffered from dyslexia but this had not actually been diagnosed:

“It’s frustrating. People think I am lazy...I get distracted and at the end of the lesson I’ve only written two lines and I get into trouble. I can read and spell but not write”.

We asked the young people who were interviewed if a number of things had happened at any time in their lives. All said they had been bullied at school, four said they been suspended or excluded from school, while three had had to change school a lot, with one young person answering: “yes, one every year”. Four had had a social worker, one had lived in substitute care and two had moved around a lot.

**Why did they run?**

Overall five young people said they had run away because they had wanted to be with somebody else, either running from their family or, as in the case of ‘Sam’, one of the interviewees, running from substitute care to be with her mother. The young people at the residential gave answers as to why they had run away in the past: for two it was for a combination of reasons involving problems both at home and at school, as well as wanting to be somewhere else or with someone else. This wanting to be with someone else was also an issue for four of the young people about whom end of contact monitoring forms were completed: a young person who ran away from a children’s home to be with an ex-resident, a young person who ran away to be with a boyfriend and a young person who wanted to be ‘up North’. In addition another young person ran from foster care to return to the travelling community. One interviewee said she wanted to be with her mother when she was in care while another said: “I wanted to be with my grandma and grandpa who had died when I was ten,” expressing bereavement as his reason for running. All these young people are expressing the ‘pull factor’ of ‘running to’, while another interviewee described a ‘push factor’ when she told how her mother had believed lies about her and so she ran away because “No one was listening to my problems”.

Triggers to running among the interviewees were mostly conflicts at home in connection with relationships with parents, stepparents or siblings. ’Neil’, the young person who had been thrown out, said: "Mum under a lot of stress snapped and kicked me out”, while ‘Sam' did not want to be at home because mum was getting drunk with a new partner.
Young people’s issues: home, school and personal

In the monitoring data 25 initial contact forms were completed, citing a total of 36 reasons for running away. This is because, for some young people, there is an overlap of issues; for instance many young people with problems at home also have difficulties at school. Thirteen of the young people were said to have had a problem with parent(s) or families, including unclear parental boundaries and sibling rivalry. Six had problems at school. For two there was the reason of ‘running to’, one who wanted to be with mum who was living with a schedule one offender and the other wishing to be with parents in a different geographical area. For three others there were a variety of issues ranging from being evicted from supported housing, to issues with drugs and alcohol and friends and parents being unable to cope with the situation.

School issues

All of the young people with whom ReRun engaged had school issues. Out of the 17 with whom longer-term work took place, nine were attending schools, one was excluded, four were bullied and three had ‘other’ school issues. Four of the young people interviewed at the residential said they were not attending school at the time of referral.

Personal issues

From the monitoring (and interviews) we can see that personal issues overlap for young people and that only rarely do they have just one personal difficulty. Alcohol usage was an issue for ten young people followed by six who took drugs. Four were reported as self-harming, five as offending and five as being at risk of sexual exploitation. Three were known to have learning disabilities, two as having mental health issues and one a physical health issue. Only one of these young people was known to have been in substitute care (and yet there were a number who had run from children’s homes).

The overlap of issues was demonstrated by the young people at the residential who gave interviews. When they were asked about problems they had at the time of referral all six said they were depressed and all said they were angry. Four out of the six said they were in trouble with the police and three said they were hurting themselves. ‘Jay’ (aged 12) said he was getting depressed and on tablets for this. He said there were people he didn’t get on with at school and said that young people were scared of him. Jay was hurting himself at the time of referral and was in trouble with the police for assaulting a police officer.

‘Michelle’ (aged 15) was getting depressed, feeling angry, was in trouble with the police, and was drinking alcohol and using drugs (“pills and base cocaine”). She also said she had boyfriend problems and problems with friends.

Home issues

The monitoring data informs us that out of 17 young people with whom longer engagement (than initial contact) took place at least five of these had parental problems. Three others did not have family problems, but the situation is unknown in the case of the rest of these young people. Five of these young people are recorded as having been abused either physically or emotionally and in four cases
there were other issues at home. Family structures were varied but lack of data at this point makes it impossible to state definitively what the predominant family form was, if any.
Out of a total of 14 young people about whom monitoring data was obtained in this respect, four had both parents, three were living with a parent and stepparent and six were living with lone parents. One young person was in substitute care.

Running away histories
Of the 17 young people with whom ReRun did longer-term work and on whom we have profiling data, twelve of the seventeen had run away more than twice, seven of these five times or more. Four had not previously run away.
From the monitoring we can tell that of ten completed cases three young people ran away and two of these ran from children’s homes. One of these, ‘Y’, a fifteen-year-old was away for two years in all, moving around the country staying with strangers. She returned to Dorset and was placed in a children’s home from which she is now excluded. Four of the ten had stayed out without permission, one of these from foster care. Three of the young people were at risk of running. Of the ten, five were referred by the police, two self referred, two were referred by social workers and one was referred by housing. Three of the cases closed when the young person was deemed not to fit the project criteria.

All the young people interviewed at the residential said they had run away. The youngest, aged 12, said he had first run away aged four. Of the others two had run away first at age 12, two at 14 and one at 15. Three of the young people had run away more than ten times, two more than three times and one had run away only once. This was a young person who with the help of ReRun had, at that time, largely had his difficulties at home resolved through mediation.

Where they stayed/survival strategies
Most of the information about where the young people stayed comes from the interviewees. When asked if they had ever been hurt while away three of the six interviewees said they had and one did not want to answer. One of these had been beaten up while away from home and another had been in a car accident. Two said they had not been hurt. Two said they had felt unsafe sometimes whilst away and another said he hadn’t, because “I was enjoying it”. Three said they had never felt unsafe when they were away, including a sixteen-year-old female who said: “Never, because I always carry a knife”. None of them said they had used risky survival strategies in terms of exchanging sex for money or accommodation or resorting to begging. Only one said she had stolen, in this case from her mother. While they were away the youngest, ‘Jay’ was at school and refusing to leave, but he said he had previously run away and slept out “in a friend’s tree house”. Two slept rough but one of these, ‘Michelle’, combined this with staying with friends or a boyfriend. Four had generally depended on friends or friends and relatives. This is not surprising in a rural location where resources are few and far between. In the group one young person described how:

“When I ran away I would walk for miles until the police picked me up”.

The longest period for which the youngest person had stayed away was one night. Three had stayed away between two and six nights, and a 13-year-old female had
stayed away between one and four weeks. A 14-year-old had stayed away for nine months staying with friends, relatives, sleeping in a garage and rough on the streets.

Ways of working

Feedback from young people, project workers and carers on ways of working

In the end of contact forms which were part of the monitoring project workers described their engagement with young people as being about developing self awareness in relationships with parents and peer groups, group work skills, and developing self-esteem and self confidence. Other support was concerned with dealing with emotions and behaviour and discussing the consequences of running away. Sometimes the work was simply described as listening.

The kinds of interventions that the project workers frequently describe include work with parents, such as mediation and help with parenting skills, for instance in relation to setting boundaries and family roles. This is frequently in relation to setting boundaries where they have not previously existed, though in some cases it may be about relaxing them, for instance in the case of a foster carer who had imposed strict rules. In two cases project workers mediated between care staff and a young person. This kind of work with parents and carers has been unusual in the context of child-centred runaways projects, which have generally not included any work with parents or carers.

Project workers also described a referral function, linking the young people into other local support services. In one case the worker linked the young person into the local Advice and Information Centre and Connexions service and identified her housing needs and the options available in the area.

Interventions include mediation between the young person with parents or carers or between the young person and school. This could take place over an extended period. For instance, in the case of ‘M’ the project worker met with the young person 10 times fortnightly and with the mother seven times fortnightly.

On a number of occasions the project workers worked with parents to support their parenting skills, for instance with how they should set appropriate boundaries and spend quality time with their children. In this case the work was very structured:

“The family agreed to monitor how much time they spent with their children and set up a punishment and reward scale”.

At other times the support for the parent was less structured, such as a project worker assisting a mother in a housing application.

Project workers also described taking on an advocacy role in order to obtain educational assistance for young people who were experiencing problems in school or who had no school to attend. Often they are working with young people whose
problems have not been regarded as severe enough to warrant special educational provision, for instance in the case of ‘Michelle’, for whom the project worker liaised with the EWO and the school so she could go to a learning centre. ‘Michelle’ was being bullied at school and was not attending. The project worker thought that the learning centre would enable her to gain confidence.

Data from the interviews and end of contact monitoring studies demonstrate that ReRun work in an ecological way, working with a young person’s support network in addition to the young person. At times they offer support to a parent or carer or mediate between the young person and carer. Only one young person among the attendees at the ‘residential’ seemed to disagree with this way of working and felt that the work should be solely young person centred. This was in a situation where his mother was not allowing him access to his sister. ‘Stephen’ said:

"It should stay that way - they shouldn't work with parents. It should just be for young people".

The project workers have developed good links with other agencies in the area. They have picked up referrals from the Advice and Information Centre on several occasions. They seem good at providing information about the services they offer. For instance, a headmaster gave ‘Jay’ a pamphlet about ReRun that he had received that day and suggested he phone them.

Project workers described interventions such as providing phone contact and introduction to local support agencies; building self awareness about relationships with peer groups and parents/carer; developing self-esteem and self confidence; discussing issues about running away and its consequences, both with care staff and a young person; and giving advice including advice on sexual health issues. Listening, which is the cornerstone of the project’s way of working, was valued highly be the young people. Four of the six young people interviewed listed having someone to talk to as an important aspect of the project, which included a sense of being ‘listened to’.

"Its nice to have someone you can talk to who actually listens who doesn’t think: ‘She’s just a kid. She doesn’t know anything’".

Another interviewee described ReRun as "always being there when you need them to listen to you".

‘Neil’ described the process of mediation, with the project worker talking to his mum and then to himself and bringing them together. ‘Michelle’ described a more complex set of interventions, including advice and help with school as well as listening. ‘Sam’ said she thought the important thing about ReRun was that “they’ve taken me out”. She was to echo this three months on in a follow-up interview as being the most important thing about ReRun. This young person was very positive about being taken away on the residential. These were all good things about the project and when asked about the bad things only three were mentioned. The first was that the project worker (no doubt through pressure of work and distances she had to travel) tended to arrive late. ‘Neil’ thought that (on the residential):
“There is not enough discipline – this is my personal feeling. I think some people here get away with things very lightly. If they do it here they’ll try it out back home”.

Whilst ‘Michelle’ suggested:

"It (ReRun) should be a bigger thing to help more kids“, which is actually more of an affirmation than a negative comment. When asked if there was anything else they’d like to say about running away ‘Michelle’ said:

"It didn’t really achieve much. It’s just made everything worse. I didn’t run away from the problems. I should just face them“.

When asked how many times they had run away since they got in touch with ReRun three interviewees said they had run away more than once, one said “loads”, one “none” and one was not sure.

The responses to how things had changed since the interviewees were in touch with the project were encouraging. Everybody reported some change for the better. Although they mostly still had issues, two were not hurting themselves any more, giving reasons for ceasing to self-harm such as "there is no point“ or "I can’t be bothered". One of these felt less angry and was no longer in trouble with the police. Another was not getting depressed any longer. She said: "I don’t know definitely if it’s because of ReRun but I’m not hurting myself any more“. One, who was still depressed and angry, was still using alcohol but was not using drugs any more. Another was not in trouble with the police any more but was still using drugs. Reasons as to why they had changed were similar to those given regarding the issue of self-harm: as not seeing the point any more. All apart from one said that nothing else had got better or worse in their lives. Just one said:

"I get on with my family more. I can talk to them (at ReRun) I had help with school stuff and they are helping me move away from the area”.

**Enabling factors**

In the monitoring and the case studies the project workers cite effective interagency work as an enabling factor in practically all cases when longer-term work occurred. The willing support of parent(s) or carer(s) is also mentioned frequently, for instance, in one case: "The willingness of parents to continue work although dealing with difficult issues”.

It is clear from the majority of the cases and interviews, as well as observation at the residential, that the project workers are very able to connect with sometimes difficult to engage young people. At times the relationship with the young person is cited as being the enabling factor along with their receptivity and willingness to work on issues. An enabling factor in the case of ‘Y’ was that she was able to make 24-hour mobile phone contact.

The project workers also indicated that factors in the way the project worked had
helped the work on three occasions. One thought that the confidentiality policy had led to open communication with one young person. Another suggested that as ReRun was seen as a separate agency to statutory services this had helped the relationship with the young person, whilst one worker felt that the project had been able to provide consistent support to a young person.

**Hindering Factors**

The young people who were interviewed did not generally think that anything had hindered the project’s work with them except for one who said: “*Sometimes when (the project worker) comes around my brother is home and she can’t talk to me*”. This perhaps indicates a down side of home visits.

In the interviews regarding specific case studies the project workers cited the attitude and inflexibility of schools as a hindering factor on a couple of occasions. For instance in the case of ‘Neil’ the school was of the opinion that he didn’t have any problems and would not make a referral to the EWO. The project worker consequently had to develop a three-way relationship in meeting with the young person and then meeting with the EWO, who could then instigate changes. This may be one reason for the young people’s general negativity about EWOs, as they may not always be aware of work done on their behalf:

“In this particular school the attitude was very anti-social worker, which is what they called me right until the end”.

Another school was described as having written a young person off. The project worker had to contact the school eight times before she got a response from the head of year.

Project workers also thought that a lack of support from carers was a hindering factor, along with inability in a couple of cases to get the young person to engage.

**Feedback on outcomes**

According to project workers ReRun is able to work with some young people who refuse to access other services.

A project worker gave an account of how, in one case, ReRun provided a vital link between the statutory agencies and the young person. Her offending behaviour reduced and ReRun facilitated her planned return to education via a learning centre. ReRun also supported her return home when she became pregnant:

“*Re-run was the only organisation the young people kept in touch with voluntarily.*”

In another case the young person’s relationship with her parents has improved and she has developed new friendships. Her project worker suggested she had learned the skills to manage change or difficulties in her personal relationships. From the project worker viewpoint, carers living with the young people felt more supported. In one case the young person’s grandmother was pleased there was someone she could call on for advice. She felt more positive about having her granddaughter living with her.
Project workers have also been supportive to foster carers, after which, in one case:

"The foster parents had a better understanding of issues facing the young person and were able to support him."

Both project workers and the young people saw mediation as being positive in its outcomes. In the case of ‘Neil’ the project worker described how both parties shifted in their approach: Mum "eased off a bit" and the young person developed better communication skills.

Support to parents was seen as helpful. In another case mum decided to leave stepdad and the young person settled with mum. Furthermore she was responding to the new boundaries mum was setting after help with this issue. Another young person was now spending time with his own age group instead of young people who were much younger and older than him. Another young person was losing her temper less.

When the young people at the residential were asked in what ways they felt the project had helped them two said they didn’t know, One young person said ‘none’ but three suggested ways in which they had been helped:

1. “It stopped me from running away. I don’t do that any more and it stopped me hurting myself.”
2. "They brought me and my mum a bit closer."
3. " (Project worker) helped me to see my brother and my friend."

**Carer interviews**

In the two interviews carried out with carers, the foster carer echoed the young people’s view about the importance of the project workers’ ability to listen to young people. She suggested that projects like ReRun can help by “caring when no-one else does. Someone is listening which is most important.”

She, like another parent, thought that the residential was a mixed blessing. The foster mother thought that taking young people away appeared to reward them and was spending tax payers’ money on this when the young person had anger management problems. She said she was “not sure it works speaking as a taxpayer, as I wonder if the rewards you get with young people are equal to what you spend?” She did admit, however, that the young person had hugely enjoyed the residential and that there had been dramatic changes for the better in the young person, though she wasn’t sure if this was the result of the work of ReRun.

The other parent thought that the residential meant that her daughter made friends with someone who was a bad influence and who got her into trouble, staying out and not phoning home. Nevertheless she said that the young person had managed to “work this out” and had stopped seeing the new friend.

The foster carer thought that the project worker “looked like someone who young people could relate to” and that the young person “clearly liked her.”
She said that although young people have a number of professionals - or as she referred to them, “back up people” - involved she has to deal with the problems with the young person as they occur “on a 24:7 basis.” She said that the young person “had thoroughly enjoyed a residential that she had gone on with ReRun”. Since then, in this current foster placement the young person’s attendance at the learning centre has improved:

“She has packed her bags twice to run away but has been back in half an hour and apologised for going.”

The carer says she has seen “dramatic changes” in the young person since she has been placed with her but was not sure how much of the change resulted from ReRun’s input in particular.

A Case Study

The project worker who worked with a young person who lived in a reconstituted family saw issues of a lack of self-esteem and sexual promiscuity, drug and alcohol use, sibling problems and refusal to go to school.

In interview the young person said that she was meant to be going to school but wouldn’t go because of bullying. She said:

“My brothers and sisters were in care. I stayed with mum because I was the youngest. My stepdad said it’s him or me. She chose him”.

The project worker met the young person once a week over a period of six months. Interventions included “listening and being someone to talk to”. This was obviously appreciated by the young person who said she so much appreciated having someone to talk to who actually listened. Issues of practicing safe sex and building self-confidence were also addressed. The project worker said she:

“Encouraged her to value herself and raise awareness that she did not need to be involved in sexual relationships with men in order for them to like her”.

Mediation was also involved, particularly with a family friend. Some mediation was done with mum “around the young person’s right to make some choices and in trying to negotiate contact with brother”. She also advocated for the young person to attend a learning centre but she had not been expelled from school. However, she managed to achieve this and this has given the young person more confidence:

“She is learning to handle disputes with mum in a calmer way and learning to stand her ground and explain why she is not happy rather than running away”.

In this case an enabling factor was co-operation from mum and co-operation between professionals, for instance the school accepting a suggestion from the project worker that a learning centre would be appropriate. Mobile phone contact also helped: “Five minutes to calm things down until they next see us... these problems can’t be solved by 9 to 5 office hours, especially runaways as ...the weekend that’s when parental rules come in”.

The project worker saw the hindering factors as a failure of social services to be involved, as they did not regard the young person as sufficiently at risk, and the initial reluctance of the EWO to refer to a learning centre. The project worker thought that the young person needed longer-term support – beyond the remaining three months for which the project is funded.

The young person when interviewed said how she appreciated having someone who listened to her. She stopped running away having learned to think before reacting. She feels that she is listened to more at home:
"They say next time I run away they’ll kill me but they listen a bit more than they did.”

**Young people at the time of the ‘residential’**

Five of the six young people interviewed at the residential were living with both parents or parent and stepparent. One was living in foster care. Two felt their current situation was positive, one thought it was mixed, and three were experiencing varying degrees of unhappiness about their living situation.

Two of the interviewees were not living in the same place as they had been when they were referred and one who had stayed in a large number of places couldn’t remember if she was in the same place or not. Of the two who were in changed living situations, one said her situation was worse because she had no friends in the area (friends were an issue for a number of the young people, especially in relation to changing school), and one young person who was in foster care said things were better in some ways but worse in others.

There was generally a degree of disruption in the family life of the young people; for instance five of the interviewees saw none or only part of their family. Only one saw both parents and his brother – but hated his brother. Nevertheless he had attacked someone at school on behalf of this younger brother, who was being bullied. When asked how they get on with their families now the young people were careful to itemise differences in relationships. For instance: "Mum’s okay, dad’s okay but I hate my brother” or “Gran thinks I steal from the family” or “My dad is not my real dad at all”. However compared with when they were first in touch two said the situation with their family was better, two the same, one mixed and one worse. Another said that the project had helped by mediating between himself and his mother:

"(Project Worker) spoke to my mum and spoke to me and sort of told us the points of view of each other and brought us together.”

Another said that her parents “listen a bit more”.

Three of the interviewees had not been going to school at the time of referral, one could not remember and two were attending. At the time of the interview three said they were attending and three not; however further questions established that only two were actually attending. Two of them felt they “can’t be bothered”. One was truanting because she was being bullied and another was excluded. The two that were attending said school was currently good. One who was staying away from his new school and another who was attending school both had an issue about moving school and missing old friends.

All had had involvement with workers from other agencies but two were in the past. None had anything good to say about social workers – usually because they said they didn’t see them. One young person was very positive about his psychologist who he said listened to him and another said her EWO had helped her with seeing her brother. One young person who had been involved with a youth justice worker, a YOT worker and an advocacy worker had nothing positive to say about any of them. According to the young people ReRun had not referred them to any of these agencies and had not referred them to anyone else either. Project
workers’ accounts show that they have liaised and referred young people onward but it is interesting that the young people are unaware of this. When asked about other important people in their lives four of the young people cited friends – one spoke of friends at his old school. Friends were clearly very important and an issue when changing location or school. One young person mentioned her mum and brother as important people and another mentioned her brother who her mother would not let her see.

The interview process wasn’t easy for all the young people. ‘H’ shows some insight into her behaviour (whatever it is) when she says: “I can’t stay still because I start to get angry”

The Young people three months later

Follow up interviews

Follow-up interviews or questionnaires were carried out/completed with four of the interviewees three months after the initial interviews took place at the residential. Of these four only one has run away since their contact with ReRun finished.

‘Rachel’, who had been very withdrawn at the first interview, was happy to give a follow-up telephone interview on her mobile. She was far more positive and said she had a better relationship with her mother and that life had improved because she was allowed to see her brother. This was something that ReRun had helped her with. Two others said they had more positive family relationships and all four were attending a school or learning centre. This is in a situation where three of the four had previously been excluded or truanting. ‘Jay’ was in trouble again. He had run away after a row in the car. Police found him on a bridge and thought he was going to jump, though he says this was not his intention. He still has contact with ReRun.

‘Neil’, who completed a follow-up questionnaire, wrote that he was living with mum and stepdad and he said that things were not so good. Nevertheless, the mediation work seems to have paid off as he says he still gets on better with the family. When asked what had caused the improvement he replied: “I am allowed to smoke“. School is okay but alcohol seems to have become an issue since the interview as the young person wrote that he is drinking three litres of cider a night. Nevertheless he has not been thrown out or run away since end of contact with ReRun.

‘Sam’ was more positive than she had been in the first interview. Since end of contact she has made the decision that she wants to join the army. At the time of the initial interview she was not attending school but she is now attending and has a sense of a future. She has not run away since the end of contact.
4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Although the majority of ReRun’s referrals have been from the police they have also taken referrals from a diversity of other sources. This means that they are accessing young people who have not been reported missing and that they may be working with young people who run away and who are most at risk.

ReRun has clearly worked well with individual young people, gaining their trust, and above all ‘listening’ to them. The young people, both girls and boys, at the residential, were clearer about the importance of the project workers’ listening skills than the project workers themselves. This may be because the project workers feel that they listen as a matter of course. To the young people being treated as someone worth listening to was something to which they felt unaccustomed. According to the interviewees, being listened to was the attribute they valued most highly. Apart from individual face-to-face work the development work has included working in a more ecological way with young people’s support networks, offering support to parent(s) or carer(s) and mediating where appropriate. This mediation was also appreciated by young people who felt that this increased the ability of their parents to listen to them or enabled the young person and parents to work out a contract together. In a number of cases these interventions appear to have been effective, leading to (or at least contributing to) a cessation of running away.

ReRun project workers have also acted as advocates in relation to linking young people to educational resources and other agencies. At the residential three young people had stopped self-harming since they had been in touch with ReRun. There has also, among the young people who attended the residential, been an improvement in school attendance in the three months post that event. Young people, at times, did not seem to be aware of some of the background work of this kind that had taken place on their behalf – especially in relation to access to education.

Sometimes ReRun works with young people who are considered to not be critical enough to warrant special resources in terms of social service or educational provision. They have shown themselves to be able to offer support to these young people and their families or carers and helped to stop them slipping through the net and ending up in a more critical position. They have also shown themselves to be able to work with detached young people who will not take up or cannot take up other services. The way in which ReRun workers represent themselves is non-threatening and young people they have worked with appreciate this.

The action research element of the process came about through the residential, where it became apparent that because the majority of the young people were not attending school they were not meeting and socialising with their peers. The young people and the project workers all said they thought there should be more group work. It was clear that group work was an important issue for the young people’s development of interpersonal skills and it was decided that more residential would
be planned. It was thought that residential also offer the opportunity for project workers to get to know the young people better and to carry out intensive work with them.

**Recommendations**
The young people at the residential felt that the project, rather than closing through lack of funding, should be expanded and a drop-in facility as well as group work should be made available. They made a number of recommendations for developments they would like to see:

1. They appreciate having the project workers to talk to - people who will listen to them. They want ReRun to continue as a service for them because they said they have not found other mainstream services helpful to them. The girls and three of the boys said they had not received any help from social services – this was even though they had social workers. They also said they had not received help from EWOs even though project workers in interviews suggested that they had.
2. They appreciate the independence of ReRun from statutory services and wish it to continue that way.
3. They think there should be a Safe House for them but in this case it should be a ‘Safe Camp’. They thought this should be similar to the setting of the lodge they stayed in (for the residential), in the New Forest but “camping style” because this gave them a sense of ‘freedom’. They thought this should be there for all children and young people of all ages so they don't have to go into foster care.
4. They would like to have a ‘residential’ once a month with ReRun.
5. The girls said they would like a ReRun drop-in centre where they could go when they were distressed.
6. The boys and one of the girls thought that ReRun should be bigger as they knew of other young people who would benefit from such help.
7. All the young people at the residential, except for one who thought the work should be with the young people only, appreciated the mediation work and wanted it to continue.
8. Most of the work carried out (until the residential) by ReRun was one-to-one and the girls said they would like to have more group activities and more group work. If they are not attending school they are not in groups and they want more activities like the residential.

The writer of the report would confirm that the analysis of the data suggests that ReRun is an important resource for young people in this rural area. Having access to someone who is willing to listen cannot be overestimated as a way of harm limitation for distressed young people who are running away from home.

The baseline is ReRun’s young-person focused approach - listening helps them to engage with young people and the young people have frequently responded positively by running away less, feeling less angry and ceasing to self-harm.

The author also agrees with the young people that it would be beneficial to hold further residential on the model of the one described above in this report.
These would provide opportunities for rural young people who are at risk of running and who may not be attending school to build closer relationships with project workers, develop group work skills and obtain peer support.

Family mediation is an important function of the project and where carried out successfully can mean that 16-and-17-year-olds are able to stay in the family home longer precluding the need to move into supported accommodation. The further development of this function could prevent not only further running away but also youth homelessness. It would mean that they do not need access to supported accommodation that they might otherwise require if living at home could be sustained.
Appendix 1

Dorset survey about running away: Initial analysis

Below are some initial findings from the local survey carried out in Dorset in 2003. At this stage these are just for internal ReRun use. All statistics need to be checked before dissemination.

The survey sample
The survey included a sample of 474 young people, of which:
- 52% were female and 48% male
- almost all were in the 13 to 15 age range with a fairly even split across this range (23% were 13 years old, 36% were 14 years old and 39% were 15 years old)
- 95% described themselves as white, and most of the remainder as of ‘mixed origin’.

Number of young people running away
23% of the sample said that they had run away. Around two-thirds of these young people (64%) said that they had stayed away at least one night on the most recent occasion. So 13% of the total survey had run away for at least one night. This is a slightly higher proportion than in the 1999 national survey, which is notable as the overall age profile of this local sample is lower than for the earlier survey.

At least 32 young people (6.75%) had run away in the last year and at least 25 of these (5.25% of the total sample) had stayed away overnight. If these figures were replicated throughout Dorset there would be over 1,000 13- to 15-year-olds running away overnight each year. This is consistent with 1999 estimates that there are 750 first time runaways each year in Dorset and that there are over 1,200 running away incidents per year.

Who runs away?
The sample is quite small so some differences between runaways and non-runaways may not show up as significant. However many key significant
differences still show through in terms of:
- Family form (running away rates are as follows: both parents – 10%, lone parent – 13%, stepfamily – 30%).
- Quality of family relationships and parenting (e.g. almost half the runaways said that they were hit a lot compared to around 8% of non-runaways; almost half the runaways said that they didn’t get on at all well with their parents/carers compared to 6% of non-runaways).
- School problems (significantly higher rates of unhappiness at school, having learning difficulties, being bullied, truanting and being excluded).
- Personal problems (significantly higher rates of self-reported depression, loneliness, anger, and problems with police, alcohol and drugs).

Running away histories
Of the 104 young people who had run away:
- 32% had started running before the age of 11
- 40% had run away more than once, including 8% who had run away more than three times
- 32% had run away during the last 12 months.

Running away experiences
On the most recent incident:
- 88% ran from family, 1% from a children’s home and 11% from other.
- 91% ran on their own.
- 90% categorised themselves as having run away, and 10% as having been forced to leave.
- 71% ran due to issues at home, 27% due to personal issues, 23% due to school issues, and 15% for other reasons, (more than one response possible).
- Roughly half the overnight runaways spent one night away, and the other half more than one night.
- 32% went outside their local area, but with one exception (London) no one mentioned any places outside Dorset.
- Places people sought help from were: friend (34%), boyfriend/girlfriend (9%), relative (19%), stranger (5%), social worker (2%), police (1%), and telephone helpline (2%). The small proportion of people (less than 5%) who sought help from an agency is notable.
- One in eight (12%) felt that they would have liked more help while they were away
- In the end 63% went back of their own accord, 24% were found by family, 7% went to live with somebody else, one was found by police, and there were five ‘other’ responses.
- Amongst young people who stayed away overnight, almost half (47%) slept at a friend’s, 39% slept rough, 17% slept at a relative’s and 6% slept at a stranger’s (Some people slept at more than one place).
- 11 of the overnight runaways (18%) said that they had been either physically hurt or sexually assaulted whilst away.

---

i The CYPU has since become the DfES

ii Summarised from an interview with Keith Harrison carried out at the outset of the project

iii Summarised from an interview with Keith Harrison carried out at the outset of the project
Appendix 2

Re*Run – January 2004
Mission Statement

Re*Run exists in Dorset to provide advice, information and support to young people under 19 and their families who are experiencing issues around running away or unplanned leaving home; with a view to reducing the incidence of persistent running away.

Aims

- To ensure that young people are living in a safe environment and that their basic needs are met
- To empower young people to make decisions about, and feel in control of issues that affect them
- To develop skills required for independent living
- To broaden young people’s outlook and aspirations
- To reduce anti-social behaviour and promote good citizenship
- To promote a healthy lifestyle
- To raise awareness of issues that affect young people who run away or who are threatened with homelessness

Objectives

- Provide independent outreach workers who can develop voluntary relationships in a caring, supportive and non-judgemental manner.
- Provide a 24 hour emergency contact point for young people who find themselves in a critical situation.
- Work in a flexible manner, taking an holistic approach to the young person and their individual circumstances.
- Maintain a one to one dedicated keyworker for young people needing ongoing support
- Enable young people to identify their needs, consider a range of actions, make choices and evaluate the outcomes.
- Provide confidential advice and information on pertinent issues e.g. housing, education, training, benefits
- Support young people in accessing specialist advice and information from other agencies e.g. health, substance use, debt
- Complement and add value to other services for young people under 19.
- Support families of young people through direct work with the family, advocacy or mediation.
- Provide opportunities for the voice of young people to be heard.
- Monitor the incidence of, and associated issues around running way in Dorset.