THE RUNAWAYS' CHARTER

The Children's Society

_____ has committed to:

Count

We have a clear picture of the numbers of all children running away or going missing from care or home in our area, and regularly analyse the data to look for trends and hotspots.

Think

We address the problems of identifying and responding to children who run away in key strategy documents, such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Local Safeguarding Children Board plans and other strategic plans for young people set out by the local authority.

Our Local Safeguarding Children Board has a set of protocols for preventing running away and dealing with incidents when they occur. There is a named person with responsibility for coordinating responses to runaways and missing children and young people.

We make sure that every professional who works to prevent repeated running away and responds to children and young people who run away, has a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

Act

We make available to children and young people, professionals, parents and carers, information on the risks of running away as well as information on 'safe places' where runaways can seek support.

Our agencies recognise that young people of 15, 16 and 17-years-old are not adults and should receive a response to keep them safe, just as younger children do.

Prevent

Our agencies work together and work with parents and carers to prevent repeat instances of running away.

We understand that running away is an indicator of need and requires appropriate responses from local agencies, including a police safe and well check and independent return interview. If a child runs away more than once there should be a presumption that they are at risk of significant harm which requires an appropriate response, such as a multi-agency risk management meeting.

MAKE RUNAWAYS SAFE

Help us build a safety net for children who run away from home

makerunawayssafe.org.uk

A better childhood. For every child.

THE RUNAWAYS' CHARTER

The Children's Society

How runaways should be treated:

Be understanding, calm and relaxed with us

Don't automatically think we have been 'wasting your time' or have done something wrong. Children and young people can run away for a number of reasons, including abuse, neglect and grooming for child sexual exploitation. Young people are more likely to open up and allow you to help if you treat us with respect and understanding.

Help us trust you and don't judge us

We need a person that we can trust, that listens and doesn't judge - body language is important. It is important to develop trusting relationships – we might be in danger, but we may not feel able to tell you about it if we don't trust you to listen without judgment.

Be straightforward and honest with us

Where the law stops you from keeping things confidential, explain this to us and involve us in the process of sharing information. Be honest with us about what information you are sharing, why you are doing it and who you are sharing it with – we want to know what's being said and to whom.

Listen to us and take us seriously

Please listen to what we tell you and don't assume you know the facts about a situation until you have heard us. Support us when we come to you and talk about what is happening.

Explain things to us. Give us choices and don't force us into making decisions that we don't understand

Take the time to explain to us the reasons why we need to do certain things, such as attend school, rather than simply telling us that we have to. We need to understand the benefits of doing something, rather than simply being threatened with the consequences of not doing it.

Show us respect

If you need to cancel a meeting, tell us why and rearrange to see us.

MAKE RUNAWAYS SAFE

Help us build a safety net for children who run away from home

makerunawayssafe.org.uk

A better childhood. For every child.