Conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter draws together some of the key themes and debates discussed throughout the report, with the aim of providing a summary of the key issues to be considered in developing and managing initiatives which work with young runaways. Inevitably, the choice of a manageable list of key points will be selective and some detail will be lost. Readers are, therefore, also referred to the summaries of key points at the end of each chapter for a more complete overview of the issues covered in the report.

The key issues presented in this chapter are divided into five broad areas:

1. Issues to be considered in making decisions about the kinds of services to develop
2. Issues to be considered in making decisions about methods of engaging and working with young runaways and their families
3. Issues to be considered in the early developmental stages of initiatives
4. Issues to be considered in planning the ongoing management of initiatives
5. Issues to be considered in terms of placing work with young runaways into a broader context.

Developing practice models to work with runaways

This section summarises the key issues to be considered when making decisions about what kinds of services are to be developed to work with young people who run away. The focus here is on making decisions about specific practice models. Many of the points made in the report also point to the need for more integrated models of working with this target group. This issue is discussed in the final section of the chapter.

Matching the model to the intended target group

Research indicates that around one in nine young people run away overnight before the age of 16. Inevitably there is a large amount of diversity within this category of young people. The discussion in Chapters 3 to 7 illustrates that the main practice models developed so far in the UK have each been successful in engaging with different sub-groups within the overall population of young runaways. For example, a city-centre-based street-work model is particularly effective in engaging with very marginalised and detached young people who have usually run away many times, but is not effective in engaging with first-time runaways. It is therefore vital to be clear
about the intended target group of an initiative and to be aware of the implications of choosing a particular model of service delivery.

It is important also to note that the existing models have not been equally successful in engaging effectively with all young runaways. Contributors expressed concerns about the ability of the current models to work with young people from minority groups (on the basis of ethnicity, sexuality or ability) as discussed in Chapter 10. There has also been a tendency to focus on older runaways and, so far, a relatively small level of engagement with the under-11 age group. As pointed out in Chapter 2, this is a particularly significant group of runaways as there is a tendency for young people who start running away before the age of 11 to go on to run away repeatedly as teenagers.

**Fitting the model to the local context**

A second key issue relates to finding a match between the kind of model developed and the local context. There is a need, as discussed later, to gather local information on which to base decisions about service development. The report has provided a number of examples of services which have been found to work well within a particular local context, such as the ASTRA Project (see Chapter 5) and the South Coast Runaways Initiative (see Chapter 6). These services would not necessarily work well if transplanted to another local area, and with this target group it seems vital to take local contextual issues into account when planning the development of services.

It is notable that, to date, there has been virtually no service development for young runaways in rural areas. However, research indicates that running away rates are just as high in rural as in urban areas. There is therefore a major challenge here if a range of services is to be developed which meet the needs of all young people who run away in the UK.

**Whether to offer emergency accommodation**

When developing initiatives to work with young people who have run away, the decision whether to offer short-term emergency accommodation is key. There was a shared view amongst contributors that whilst most young runaways do not necessarily need or want temporary accommodation, a significant minority do have such a need. Most of the projects described in this report do not provide accommodation, but managers and practitioners have often experienced this as a shortcoming when working with young people in particularly vulnerable situations (see Chapters 5 and 6 for further discussion). On the other hand, in the view of some contributors, there are drawbacks to offering accommodation in terms of gaining a speedy resolution to young people's problems, and this seems to be particularly salient in relation to working with very detached young people in street work situations.

**Resource implications of different models**

Decisions about models of service delivery also need to be tied in with resource considerations. The main models discussed in Chapters 3 to 7 vary widely in terms of costs. Models including an emergency accommodation element tend to be relatively costly, and there are also significant costs involved in running an adequate
street-work model. Centre-based models which 'add on' to existing services and missing person schemes tend to be cheaper models. See Chapter 12 for further discussion of this issue.

Issues of engaging with young runaways

Whichever practice model is chosen, the report has highlighted some key issues that are likely to be faced in developing ways of working with young runaways.

Methods of contacting young people

There is a key decision to be made about the extent to which any service is 'self-commissioned' by the young person. Most of the projects contributing to this report have tended to adopt an approach which emphasises the young person's choice in whether to take up services. This approach has generally been successful. However, this does not preclude projects being active in initially making contact with young people in the target group. For example, the street-work projects initiate contact with young people on the streets, and the ASTRA Project makes great efforts to contact young people directly and quickly (see Chapter 5). Whilst all the projects have accepted referrals from other agencies, this has usually been on the basis of also having a discussion with the young person at the point of referral to ensure that the referral is something the young person wants. In order to ensure that services are accessible to all young people who run away, contributors have emphasised the need for a range of means for young people to make contact, including drop-in facilities, a free telephone line and e-mail contact.

Balancing a young-person-centred approach with engaging with families

The existing models of intervention with young people running away from the family home have tended to be highly focused on the young person as an individual, rather than on the family. There are some good reasons for this focus, particularly the need to establish a relationship with the young person, which has been a key success of all of the projects discussed in this report. However, this approach, if taken too far, does have the drawback that it fails to engage with the key reasons for running away which are linked to relationships within the family home. There is a need therefore to pilot and develop approaches which retain the ability to engage with young people but also allow the possibility of family-based interventions. The solution-focused brief therapy model used by the Home & Away Project is one possibility, but there is also scope to test out other approaches, such as family mediation and family group conferencing.

Methods of working with young people and families

Along with the young-person-centred approach there has been a tendency for many of the projects working with young runaways to adopt an advocacy model of working with young people. The advantages and disadvantages of this model are reviewed in Chapter 8. There was a commonly-held view amongst contributors that whilst advocacy was an appropriate way of working with some young people in certain situations, its use had been too extensive. There is a need to pilot and refine other approaches which place more emphasis on working with young people and other family members. These might include the models of family interventions
mentioned above. Ultimately it may be desirable for projects working with young runaways to offer a range of approaches which can fit different situations, rather than be limited to the employment of one pre-determined approach.

Catering for young people's longer-term needs

A key issue facing all projects working with young people who run away relates to the handling of the long-term needs of some young people. The projects have tended to adopt short-term crisis intervention models, which focus on speedy resolutions to the problems that caused young people to run away from home. For some young people this may be an adequate response, but for others, particularly those for whom the problems they are facing are of a long-standing nature, crisis intervention alone is not sufficient. Projects report difficulties in referring these young people to other services which may be able to cater for these longer-term needs, and there is therefore a possibility of repetitive crisis intervention work with some young people. This is a key issue for the further development of integrated and comprehensive responses to the needs of young people who run away.

The development and setting up of projects and initiatives

The need for local information

As indicated in an earlier section, whilst research suggests that there is a similar level of running away in all types of geographical areas, there may still be significant variations in the options open to young people who run away within specific areas, and a variation in links with other issues that are important in those areas. It is therefore desirable to gather local information about the incidence of running away, the experiences of young people who have run away within the area and the current services which are available to young people who run away or are at risk of running away.

The need to engage key local agencies

The need to engage local agencies in planned work with young runaways has been emphasised at various points in the report. Young people who run away tend also to have a range of other issues in their lives, as discussed in the research summary in Chapter 2. Any initiative working with this target group will therefore inevitably need to have working contacts with a range of agencies, including the police, social services, education, and health and local voluntary agencies working with young people and families.

The need to engage in a dialogue with key local agencies was perhaps the point most commonly emphasised by contributors. Projects which had effectively carried out this task had often been dogged by difficulties with inter-agency relationships in their early years. One aspect of engaging with other agencies at the developmental stage is the value of developing protocols with other agencies which clarify roles, policies, expectations, and so on.

The development of policies

Contributors highlighted the need to develop good policies to deal with several issues which are particularly important when working with young people who have run
away. Among these, perhaps the most significant are policies in relation to confidentiality and child protection (see Chapter 8 for further discussion), and clear guidelines and working practices which promote staff safety (see Chapter 11).

Decisions about recruitment and structuring of the staff team

Based on the experiences of contributing projects, decisions made about the skills of staff and the structure of the staff team tend to have far-reaching implications. One important issue relates to the kinds of skills and experience which staff should have. Practitioners working with young runaways need to have a range of skills, including the ability to engage quickly and effectively with marginalised young people as well as the ability to deal effectively with, for example, child protection issues. Many contributors felt that it was important to have a range of backgrounds among the staff team, including some practitioners or managers with statutory social services qualifications and experience and some with a more youth-work oriented background. A second issue relates to the multi-disciplinary nature of working with young runaways. Contributors at some of the larger projects felt that it might be helpful to move away from generic job descriptions and develop a staff team with a range of specialisms (e.g., advocacy workers, family mediation workers) to deal with young people in different situations.

Potentially long developmental periods

A final point to be borne in mind when planning the setting-up of services for young runaways is the length of time which has been required before some projects have begun to work with young people. This issue seems to be particularly significant for projects providing emergency accommodation where the need to gain the approval of key local agencies and meet a range of legal requirements has led to much longer development times than was anticipated. Typically, projects of this kind have experienced a gap of between 12 and 24 months between the employment of the first member of staff and the start of work with young people. It seems important therefore for people initiating projects to be aware of, and plan for, a potentially long developmental period.

The ongoing management of initiatives

Training, supervision and support of staff

The challenges facing managers of projects were emphasised in Chapter 11. Working in a young-person-centred way with young people who run away places considerable stress on practitioners. The effective supervision and support for practitioners to ensure their welfare and safe practice will be a major aspect of the job of managers of projects working with young runaways. In addition, senior practitioners and managers face extra stresses due to the unpredictable nature of the work, the need to make key decisions on the spur of the moment, often outside normal office hours, and the challenges that they may face from staff.

Key issues to be considered in terms of developing the skills base of the staff team are training in dealing with child protection issues for all staff members (this would include administrative and other staff who would not necessarily have skills in this area) and the need to develop the cultural competence of the staff team (see the
Appendix) so that services are accessible and responsive to the needs of young people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Management of child protection issues

There was almost unanimous agreement amongst contributors that an appropriate confidentiality policy was one of the most vital foundations of effective engagement with young people who run away. The projects have generally adopted a higher threshold of confidentiality than the majority of social welfare agencies working with children and young people. Contributors have emphasised the high burden of responsibility that this places on managers and practitioners, both in terms of developing exemplary models of practice and in terms of decision-making about individual cases. Projects have developed sophisticated means of trying to ensure that their practice in terms of confidentiality and child protection is to a high standard. The approaches adopted have been endorsed by recent government guidance, and also by local ACPCs and social services departments.

This issue is a key area for anyone involved in developing, managing or undertaking practice-based work with young people who run away. Practice experience and research findings indicate that these young people often experience high levels of abuse, neglect and mistreatment on an ongoing basis. The appropriate balance in addressing these issues effectively whilst maintaining young people’s trust is absolutely vital to successful and professional work with this target group.

Maintenance of external relationships

The barriers to good working relationships with other agencies presented by the young-person-centred approach have been extensively covered in Chapters 8 and 9 of this report. The adoption of an ‘advocacy’ approach and of a high threshold of confidentiality are both factors which create inherent tensions in working in partnership with other agencies. The early experiences of projects working with young people who run away clearly illustrate the potential for conflict due to the above tensions. However, over recent years there have been improvements in the quality of relationships between most of the projects and the local agencies with whom they work. This may be partly due to a change in professional attitudes to young people’s rights and participation, but it appears to have been primarily due to a more realistic and refined approach on the part of projects working with young people who run away.

This improvement is encouraging but it is inevitable that tensions will remain between primarily voluntary sector projects working with young runaways who are in urgent need of a range of services, and statutory sector agencies working within a tight set of resource and policy constraints. Thus, contributors have emphasised the need for continued dialogue, sharing of information and expertise, realistic expectations and co-operative working wherever possible in order to minimise the impact of these tensions on the day-to-day individual work with young people.

Participation of young people

The projects contributing to this report have often made considerable effort to involve young people in the review and development of project work. Whilst there have been some successes, projects have also encountered a considerable amount of difficulty in this respect. The chaotic nature of the lives of many young runaways,
and the short-term or sporadic nature of project interventions, have tended to make it difficult to gain a high level of participation amongst young people who use projects. If there is to be more success in this respect in the future, there is a need to plan for participation and to develop methods of participation which fit in with the realities of the lives of young runaways (see Chapter 12).

Broader issues

Preventative work

Social welfare initiatives are often viewed as being placed on a continuum of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions. Viewing the history of work with young runaways in the UK on this basis, there was initially a concentration of models at the tertiary level (e.g., street work and refuge), focusing primarily on young people who have already run away a number of times or who are living on the streets. More recently there has been greater emphasis on secondary interventions targeted at young people in the early stages of running away, through the development of missing person schemes and centre-based work. However, relatively little has been done in terms of primary intervention which aims to prevent running away occurring in the first place. There are a few isolated examples such as the peer counselling scheme in Leeds and the Internet service at Youth Link, but these models are still being developed. The concept of preventing running away is a major challenge as there are no reliable diagnostic instruments to identify potential runaways (and it is highly unlikely that it is possible to develop such instruments, given the diversity of the phenomenon). However, there is scope to pilot approaches modelled in other countries such as educational initiatives, including peer education (see the Appendix). There is also a need to integrate the issue of running away into other preventative and awareness-raising initiatives, such as those focusing on youth homelessness.

The need for integrated models

It is clear from the preceding discussion that no single model will effectively meet the needs of young people who run away. There is a large amount of diversity within this group of young people and this needs to be reflected in a diverse range of services. A comprehensive network of services for young people who run away would include elements of all the four major models outlined in Chapters 3 to 6. An integrated and inclusive practice model would have three key characteristics.

First it would need to offer young people a variety of means of getting in touch, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This would include the possibility of self-referral (either face-to-face or over the telephone), referral by other agencies or concerned people, and various forms of outreach work.

Second, once contact is made there needs to be a range of services available to meet the diverse and complex needs of young people who run away. These services would need to be flexible in location (e.g., working in a centre, on the streets, or in the young person's home) and in approach including practical support, information, counselling, advocacy and family-focused work.

Third, an integrated model of service provision would need to have an emergency accommodation element for some young people. It is clear from contributors'
experiences and comments that there is a significant minority of young runaways who are in need of a safe place to stay for a short while, and that this is a prerequisite to undertaking successful work with them.

The US models described in the Appendix offer a blueprint for the kinds of integrated services which may be needed to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of young people who run away within any given local area. It may be possible to develop such networks of services in large population centres, perhaps through partnerships between a consortium of statutory and voluntary organisations.

For more sparsely populated areas, this kind of dedicated model of services for runaways may not be sustainable, and it will, perhaps, be necessary to explore the potential for integrating services for runaways into existing voluntary and statutory provision for young people, as some projects described within the report have begun to attempt. Efforts to reach out to young people can be undertaken in partnership with existing community-based agencies, an approach which is currently being piloted by Safe in the City in Manchester to work with black young people. Centre-based models of service provision can be located within existing centres for young people, as illustrated by the South Coast Runaways Initiative and the Breaking Free Project. Models of emergency accommodation do not need to follow the centralised refuge approach (although this may be a cost-effective model in large cities) but could be developed as flexible add-on to existing services as currently operated by the Home & Away Project.

There are therefore clearly possibilities for integrating work with runaways into existing service provision for children and young people through the employment of specialist workers with the skills and expertise to work with this target group. However, the extent to which such integration is possible will depend on the ability of existing services to accommodate the kinds of philosophy, policies, practices and structures which have been developed in order to successfully work with this target group.

The need to embed the issue of running away within existing structures

Much of the work carried out with young people who run away in the UK has been undertaken by voluntary organisations and has often taken place partly or wholly outside larger frameworks and structures underpinning work with children and young people. Whilst this has offered the opportunity to develop innovative practice models, it has also limited the extent to which running away has been taken on as a core issue affecting young people. In order to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of young runaways, it may be necessary to embed the issue of running away into current structures, frameworks and agendas, such as Connections in England and Social Inclusion Partnerships in Scotland.

Research has indicated that running away has strong links with a number of other problematic issues in young people’s lives and that it is associated with a process of social exclusion for some young people. It can therefore be argued that an effective response to running away is a key component of the social inclusion agenda and that it should be incorporated into national and local frameworks and initiatives which aim to tackle social exclusion.
Concluding comments

This report has provided an overview of a significant programme of work which, through practice and research, has explored the needs of a vulnerable group of young people and has gradually developed and refined ways of working with these young people which offer them help with the problems they are facing. The work so far carried out with young runaways in the UK provides evidence of the ability of social welfare organisations to identify and tackle key issues of social justice and produce significant and positive change.

Despite the considerable successes so far achieved in this field of work, significant challenges still remain before there can be said to be a comprehensive response to the needs of young people who run away or are at risk of running away. There are still many gaps and under-explored areas of working with this target group and minority populations whose particular needs and issues have not been fully explored or addressed. At a more general level, there is a need for work with runaways to be brought into the mainstream and to be embedded within existing structures and frameworks which aim to meet the needs of disadvantaged children and young people. Given the evidence on the nature of the problems faced by young people who run away, this task is an important aspect of promoting the social inclusion of all children and young people.
APPENDIX: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Introduction

The main focus of this publication is on learning from projects in the UK which have worked specifically with young people who run away, over the past two decades. However, young runaways and street children are a global phenomenon, and in view of this it is relevant to look at models that have been developed in other countries to work with these young people.

Most of the material for this chapter has been gathered via the Internet. This is inevitably a ‘hit and miss’ affair, and no claims are made for the completeness of the information presented here. There are literally hundreds of projects (mostly in the USA) and a comprehensive guide to these would constitute a substantial document in its own right. This appendix has the more modest goal of describing ways of working with young runaways which have been utilised in other countries but have not so far been tried in the UK, with the intention of bringing alternative approaches to the attention of those who may be considering developing new initiatives.

Inevitably the nature of this phenomenon varies hugely according to cultural contexts. Many ‘street children’ in developing countries are children and young people who are forced on to the street for economic reasons. The majority of these children and young people still live with their family but spend time on the streets in order to earn money (Council of Europe, 1993). A smaller proportion are young people who have become detached from their families and communities and literally live on the streets. There may well be similarities between this latter group and those young people in the UK who experience lengthy periods of detachment (see Chapter 2). There is therefore some potential for cross-over learning from work with young people on the streets in economically poorer countries, and an example of this is provided later in this appendix. However, given the very different nature of the phenomenon in economically affluent countries, the material that follows concentrates primarily on various models of working with young people that have been developed in these countries.

Much of the material presented here relates to the USA which, in many ways, has been at the forefront of the development of services for young people who run away or are on the streets. Some isolated projects began to work with this target group in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, the key landmark in developments in the USA was the passage of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act in 1974. This Act was the result of recognition that young people ran away due to problems at home, rather than for adventure, and that there was a lack of a safety net to engage with these young people and work with them on the problems they were facing. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act led to the set up of a federally-funded network of projects to work with young runaways throughout the USA.
The material that follows is organised into two sections: the first looks at alternative models of working with young people and the second looks at broader trends and issues in the development of work with young runaways.

Alternative models

Schools-based preventive initiatives

Given the fact that running away generally stems from other problems in young people’s lives, many initiatives targeted at issues within the family, school and personal spheres can play a preventive role with regard to running away. However, some specific initiatives have been developed in North America which aim directly to prevent the incidence of running away.

In the USA, the National Runaway Switchboard has developed a curriculum that schools staff can use with young people. The purpose of the curriculum is:

‘... to help young people acquire skills that will help them communicate more effectively, learn to seek out trusted adult resources for help, find ways to manage daily stress, and understand what it’s like to live on the street. The program is designed to have youth interact with adult service professionals so that in times of crisis, they will feel more comfortable seeking outside help.’

There is also a component aimed at raising awareness among parents.

The curriculum and associated materials are freely available from the National Runaway Switchboard website (www.nrs crisisline.org).

In Canada, a number of peer-helper initiatives have been developed which are aimed at preventing running away. These have tended to involve young people who have experience of running away or being on the streets in informing or assisting young people in schools who may be at risk of being in this situation. Many of these schemes are listed in Caputo, Weiler and Green (1996), which also contains a summary of guidelines for the running of peer-helper initiatives. It is possible to access this document at the Health Canada website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

Alternative ways of engaging with young people

Most of the ways employed by projects in other countries to make contact with young people who run away are broadly similar to those already employed in the UK, including telephone contacts, street work and other forms of outreach, and drop-in centres.

An alternative approach developed in the USA is Project Safe Place. This scheme, which was started by the YMCA in Kentucky in 1983, has since been replicated throughout the USA. It involves setting up Safe Place sites, displaying a logo in shops, community facilities, and so on. These are places where young people can go for immediate help if they are in a crisis situation. Staff at participating establishments receive training in dealing with young people and have contacts with resources, such as local runaway shelters, that can offer them immediate help.

Further information about this scheme can be found at www.iglou.com/safeplace.
Provision of accommodation

There are many shelters and refuges in the USA providing temporary accommodation for young people along similar lines to the refuges developed in the UK. It seems common for these projects to work to a 14-day timescale, as in the UK.

An alternative model of emergency accommodation is the 'host home' model run by The Bridge over Troubled Waters in Boston. This model uses volunteer families to provide short-term accommodation for young people, along similar lines to the Night Stop schemes working with over-16-year-olds in the UK. Information about this scheme is contained in an article to be found at www.ncfy.com/bridgfin.htm.

Given the discussion in Chapters 3 and 6 regarding the provision, with parental consent, of temporary accommodation for young people, it is interesting to note the existence of a community boarding programme in Bayside, Australia which provides this service together with family reconciliation work. (Crane and Braddock, 1996)

Street work

Many street-work services in North America appear to offer a more extensive range of services than those developed in the UK. There appears often to be a strong emphasis on the provision of health and practical assistance to young people on the streets. Projects employ means such as mobile vans in conjunction with health professionals.

Integrated models

One of the key features of many projects in North America which distinguish them from the UK projects is their comprehensive nature. A number of examples have been identified of projects that offer a wide range of inter-linked services with the aim of providing a comprehensive solution to the multiple problems faced by many young runaways.

Bridge Emergency Youth Services in Texas (see www.ncfy.com.texas2.htm) offers emergency youth shelter, host homes, family preservation services, street outreach, specific work aimed at young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and a transitional living programme for 16- and 17-year-olds.

Girls and Boys Town of Central Florida provides emergency shelter, fostering, long-term residential work, a parenting programme, children in need and family in need services, and runs a Safe Place scheme (see www.ffbh.boystown.org/aboutus/locations/cflorida.htm).

Youth Care in Seattle (www.youthcare.org) offers emergency shelter, longer-term residential, care and educational programmes, counselling and health services, a teen-parent programme, and a transitional living programme.
Broader issues

There are some notable trends in the work being carried out with young runaways in North America which are relevant in terms of considering future development of work with this target group in the UK.

Longer-term work

A number of examples of projects have been identified (including those listed above) which undertake much longer-term work with young people than is common in the UK. Emergency shelter services are often linked with individual counselling and therapeutic programmes which aim to resolve the underlying problems being faced by young people. There also seems to be a strong emphasis in the USA on transitional living programmes, stemming from a recognition of the links between running away and homelessness. These projects assist young people over 16 to move into independent living.

An emphasis on longer-term work is also evident in projects in Denmark and the Netherlands that are described in a review of European street children (Council of Europe, 1996).

Youth development perspective

An important aspect of the US runaway initiatives is their adoption of a 'youth development' perspective to their work. This perspective is outlined in a report by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, which can be obtained from www.ncfy.com/compend.htm. The emphasis of this approach is on facilitating young people to develop skills and competence. The four core components, set out in the above report, are:

- Viewing young people and families as partners rather than as clients, and involving them in designing and delivering programs and services
- Giving all youths access both to prevention and intervention services and to programs that meet their developmental needs
- Directing programs and services to all young people, rather than targeting only those in at-risk situations
- Offering youth opportunities to develop relationships with caring, supportive adults.

There are interesting parallels here with developments within UK projects working with runaways, and the social care sector in general, towards involving young people more in all aspects of service development and provision.

An emphasis on cultural competence

As the range of interventions in the USA has developed, there has been an increased recognition of the potential for projects to fail to meet the needs of the culturally-diverse group of young people who run away or live on the streets, and this has led to initiatives to enhance the cultural competence of projects and staff working with this target group. The cultural competence approach is concerned with meeting the needs of people from all backgrounds and emphasises the need for this to be seen as a dynamic, ongoing process rather than as a goal or outcome.

The Family and Youth Services Bureau has published a guide to enhancing cultural competence of runaway and homeless youth programmes, which is available
at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb. It sets out a recommended process for enhancing cultural competence and includes a set of questionnaires to assess current cultural competence and an extensive list of source materials.

**Links with education**

Links with education are a feature of many of the projects identified in other countries. These links are evidenced in a number of ways, such as the tendency to focus preventive efforts in schools settings and the inclusion of education as a programme element in some schemes (e.g., Youth Care in Seattle), both of which were discussed earlier in this appendix.

Another manifestation of these links is the adoption of empowerment-oriented educational models more commonly associated with work with street children in developing countries. An example of this latter approach is the Rising Youth for Social Equity project which was initiated in San Francisco in 1996, based on the Brazilian model of popular education (see www.icrichild.org/projects/ryse.html and www.cydjournal.org/NewDesigns).

The aim of the project is to create 'a well-structured educational, democratic and safe space for street youth to develop language to communicate their experiences and tools to transform their own realities.'

**Collaboration**

Finally, there is a notable emphasis on collaborative inter-agency approaches to tackling the problems faced by young people who run away in the USA. A number of examples have been found of local and regional initiatives which aim to develop co-operative relationships between runaway services and statutory services. For example, the Massachusetts Youth Development State Collaboration Project (described in www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb-State-YD-Colllb.htm) aims to 'increase collaboration among Massachusetts youth-serving systems and facilitate communication between State and community agencies and systems of care'. An initiative to build co-operation between law-enforcement agencies and runaway and homeless youth centres in Arizona is described in Chapter 6 of a 'Compendium of Critical Issues and Innovative Approaches in Youth Services' accessible at www.ncfy.com/compend.htm.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Children’s Society

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London WC1X 0JL.
Tel. 0207 841 4400. Fax 0207 841 4500.
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Working with Young Runaways

Learning from practice

In the UK, as many as 100,000 young people under 16 run away from home or care each year. This report presents models of practice that have been developed to support them, including refuges, street work, missing persons schemes, centre-based models and preventative work. It draws together the learning from these practice models and is designed to support guidance from the Department of Health and Home Office. It also contributes to the Social Exclusion Unit consultation on young runaways. The book will enable managers and policy-makers in the statutory and voluntary sectors who are setting up and developing services to implement government guidance and meet the needs of young people who run away.

The report draws on the expertise of managers and practitioners working with young runaways, and uses case studies of projects run by The Children's Society, Barnardo's, the NSPCC, the Catholic Children's Society and the ASTRA project to illustrate and discuss key themes.

The report also explores the following issues that support best practice: approaches to working with young people, inter-agency working, anti-discriminatory practice, staffing and management; and provides examples of alternative practice models that have been developed in other countries to work with young people who run away.

Working with Young Runaways will be useful reading for managers with responsibility for developing services within local authorities, social services, health and education sectors, the police, and voluntary organisations and community groups.

Gwyther Rees is Research Manager of The Children's Society's Safe on the Streets Research Team. In 1999, the team published Still Running, a comprehensive study of young people running away in the UK, and is currently conducting the first major evaluation of projects working with the target group in the UK.