

given the opportunity to talk about their experience of going missing, when they are ready, and at a place and time where they feel comfortable to talk. This may be with their parents or carer but they should be given information about where they can go to speak to someone confidentially about anything that is worrying them. In addition, it reflects that in some areas of Wales third sector organisations provide support to children through Return Home Interviews and aftercare, for those who meet the service criteria.

- 3.3. A representative of my office currently sits as an observer on a third sector task group chaired by the National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) Cymru whose work includes exploring best practice in respect of return interviews. I understand this work involves a mapping exercise of provision and arrangements and that Welsh Government is currently engaging with this group. The outcome of this work alongside information about the effectiveness of a statutory entitlement to a return home interview in England is likely to provide the information necessary to inform my view on whether a statutory entitlement to return home interviews is necessary to ensure that children's voices are being heard and opportunities to keep them safe or offer support in future can be identified. I am aware that a report from the Children's Society "*The First Step: How return home interviews can improve support and safeguarding for missing young people*" has identified that children are not consistently being offered provision despite the statutory requirement in England and that there are barriers in respect of the current process. These findings imply that a statutory entitlement may be only part of the solution to providing the support required for children who have been missing.
- 3.4 In the roundtable meeting of July 2018 (CFW000005_10) Welsh Government summarised their position to members that they did not feel it was proportionate or appropriate to notify the Police when a child who is Looked After is placed in their area as children should not be treated as potential criminals by virtue of being looked after. On this basis they expect Local Authorities to assess the situation when a placement is made, and only inform the police when appropriate and necessary, for example where there is a history of absconding, risk of CSE or other child protection concerns. I asked members to monitor this practice but I am not aware that anyone has brought concerns back to the roundtable for further consideration. Members are able to use the roundtable meeting as a mechanism for highlighting any issues that they would like to draw mine and other members' attention to and the agenda is open for suggestions from all members. I would also expect members to use any local or regional mechanisms available to discuss and where necessary address any issues identified in respect of any issues arising from the meetings and updates. I have monitored whether this matter has been raised by members at further round table discussions (CFW000009, CFW000010, CFW000012 (New doc) and this is not the case.
- 3.5 In January 2020, as part of their update, Welsh Government drew the roundtable's attention to emerging practice and their position in respect of contextual safeguarding (CFW000008). As when any systemic change is being considered, I would expect there to be an evaluation of the impact of such a change on children and young people. I note that from the paper *Contextual Safeguarding: a 2020 update on the operational, strategic and conceptual framework* "Implementing Contextual Safeguarding requires a transformative shift in the systems and approaches agencies use when responding to young people's experiences of harm" and that