

automated system could not identify and share them. It also meant that when reports were shared with the local authority, Bristol received a basic automated report rather than the additional context and information usefully provided by the coordinator. Our understanding is that previously the missing person's coordinator would have manually trawled the system for missing person reports that were inappropriately coded. The impact of this as we understand it was that whilst the neighbourhood policing teams continued to respond to these children, the local authority was not notified of every missing child, and could not therefore always risk assess or review the intelligence or offer a return home interview. We believe that the reporting issue was confined to missing children.

82. To understand this reduction better we have begun a quality assurance process with the police missing person coordinator. Through this we are reviewing our data on missing young people to identify discrepancies. We are able, through our Qlik app, to see which of these children are at risk of CSE. We have noted in BSC000118 that the reduction in missing episodes for children who are at risk of CSE is less.
83. Bristol City Council acknowledges that Return Home Interviews are an area for improvement and accepts the inquiry's view that the number of Return Home Interviews completed compared to missing episodes is low. Whilst we do not recognise this as the sum of our work with children who have been reported missing, with many children engaging regularly with a range of committed professionals about the circumstances which led to them being reported missing, we accept without reservation the need to improve compliance with, and the quality of, the statutory Return Home Interview process.
84. Return Home Interviews accepted by children in care are low in number. These numbers are skewed somewhat by a small number of young people who go missing repeatedly and nearly always turn down Return Home Interviews. Many of those young people do not view themselves as missing but 'out with friends'. They are often our young people at highest risk of CSE and CCE, and the Reducing Offending of Missing Children Officer reports a trend of children in care at risk of CCE turning down offers to speak to professionals about missing episodes. The building support offer for these children from community mentors and Barnardo's ROUTES service is beginning to strengthen our relationship-based practice with this cohort of high risk missing children.
85. We are committed to improving and towards that end, we have delivered a range of training and development to support those professionals providing Return Home Interviews. Compliance and quality is a focus for managers and performance is improving (see paragraph 87). Over the next few months we will be engaging in particular with children in care who are repeatedly reported as missing to identify how the process and accessibility can be improved for them.
86. The work we have done to improve the offer and uptake of Return Home Interviews has included delivering training and briefings across the service; putting increased resource into the early help contract for Return Home Interviews and the children in care missing prevention officer post; building new reporting mechanisms to improve