

Tina Fontaine	Recommendation Five	Reported Status: (not reported)
Report Sent: March 12, 2019	Public Body: Manitoba Families	

Recommendation Five:

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends that Manitoba Families, in consultation with other government departments and relevant stakeholders, create a new protocol to ensure that response plans are created for missing youth in general, and sexually exploited youth in particular who are at risk of imminent harm.

DETAILS – Manitoba Families to ensure that this protocol:

- Distinguishes between absent and missing youth.
- Require that plans are initiated the first time a child goes missing, and that there is a further requirement to ensure the response plan is consistently reflective of the harm and dangers that are present in the individual child’s life.
- Provide timelines for when service providers must report missing children and act to locate them as quickly as possible, including when their whereabouts are known, when and how to report their absence to police.
- Include clear components for response plans and include any known addresses where the youth may be located or is know to frequent.
- Include 24/7 provisions for a joint child welfare and justice response in Winnipeg and ongoing capacity for a joint child welfare and justice response for missing and sexually exploited youth in rural areas.
- Includes consultation with persons with lived experience, community members, and relevant stakeholders.

Response from the Manitoba Government on June 27, 2019:

Summary of activities completed since report was released

MHSAL and Families have been working with service delivery organizations to address the perceived and real gaps in services for this population. Work is underway to make policy and process changes at a service delivery level to reduce barriers and increase accessibility.

Additionally, Families has worked with Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) to provide clarification to placement resources and CFS agencies when children should be reported missing and the role of agency and placement staff in attempting to locate missing or absent children. The WPS missing persons unit attended a quarterly meeting of executive directors of group care facilities to discuss the issue. The department also distributed the police service’s Standard Child in Care Missing Person’s Report Questionnaire to be used by facilities as a guide for follow-up to missing children in care.



Furthermore, as part of the collaboration with the Block by Block Community Safety and Wellbeing Initiative, Families undertook an analysis of the most frequently missing children in care.

Collaborative work now underway includes three main areas:

- work with placements and CFS agencies to develop plans to address the needs of children who are repeatedly late in returning to placements (under six hours),
- work with placements and CFS agencies on how to do case planning to minimize risk and work with children who are repeatedly absent from their placements and are in a known location, and
- continue to work with WPS to focus on dedicated resources to focus on the needs of children who are assessed as high-risk when they are absent from placements.

Work is also underway to strengthen relationships and practices to help missing youth, in particular youth who are at risk of sexual exploitation, across the province. As previously noted under Recommendation #2 in *In Need of Protection: Angel's Story*, the province is actively looking at opportunities to augment the services of StreetReach.

The consultation respecting the Tracia's Trust research report key findings, outlined earlier under Recommendations #2 and #3 from *In Need of Protection: Angel's Story* will help inform further responses to this recommendation.

(continued below)

Analysis of Manitoba Government's Response by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth:

Activities Completed:

- 'Work' is underway to make policy and process changes.
- Families has worked with WPS to provide clarification to placement resources and CFS agencies when children should be reported missing and the role of agency and placement staff in trying to locate missing or absent children. WPS's missing persons unit attended a quarterly meeting of executive directors of group care facilities to discuss this issue. The department also distributed the police service's *Standard Child in Care Missing Person's Report Questionnaire*.
- The Department of Families also undertook an analysis of the most frequently missing children in care.
- Current collaborative work includes three main areas:
 - work with placements and CFS agencies to develop plans to address the needs of children who are repeatedly late in returning to placements (under 6 hours).
 - work with placements and CFS agencies on how to do case planning to minimize risk and work with children who are repeatedly absent from their placements and are in a known location.
 - continue work with WPS to focus on dedicated resources based on the needs of children who are assessed as high risk when they are absent from placements.
- Work to strengthen relationships and practices to help missing youth

Level of Compliance

This response does not indicate whether the activities identified will meet the intent of this recommendation.

Analysis of Response

- What clarification was provided and how has this specifically aided in enhancing the reporting and follow-up process when a child is missing?
- What specific work has been done in regards to policy and process changes?
- Is work with WPS ongoing? If so, what is the long-term strategy for maintaining this collaborative approach?
- What was the strategy, intention and outcome of the 'analysis of the most frequently missing children in care'?
- What are the timelines and intended outcomes associated with the on-going work in the three main areas described in the response? Will this work fulfill the intent of the recommendation regarding a new protocol that ensures response plans are created for missing youth?
- Are there specific activities that can be described that have worked to strengthen relationships and practices to help missing youth?
- To be addressed in the short term*:
 - Status of implementation
 - Information indicating a timeline for implementation



*On September 30, 2019, the Manitoba Advocate sent a letter to the members of the government's MACY-RAP committee and working group requesting additional information regarding the government's progress on recommendations made by the Advocate. The Advocate communicated to the government representatives short-term questions for information that could be provided quickly. Additionally, the Advocate sent long-term questions for the government to address in future progress reports. The questions are designed to seek clarification on activities, seek evidence or documentation to support the activities, or to determine how the government's responses are meeting the intent of the recommendations made by the Advocate. All of this information will be used by the Advocate to determine the levels of compliance with implementation, in accordance with s.11(1)(d), s.30(2)(d), and s.30(4), of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*.