

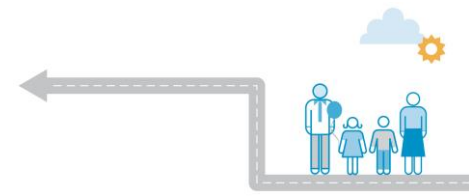
# London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance

Including City of London Corporation supplementary guidance

## 3. Children Missing from Care, Home and Education

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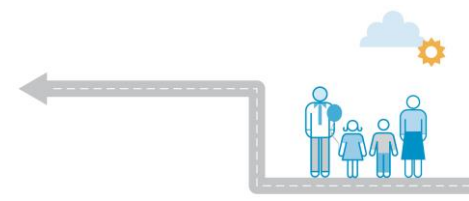
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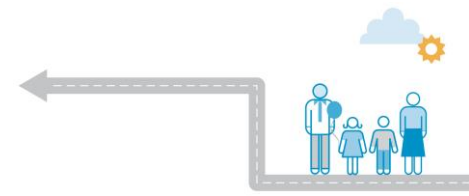
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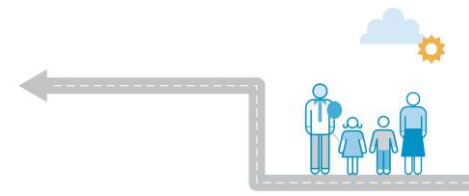
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## 3.1 Introduction

This guidance is the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocol for London and should be followed by local authorities, the Metropolitan police and other partners when children run away or go missing.

Children running away and going missing from care, home and education is a key safeguarding issue for local authorities and local safeguarding children partnerships. This guidance is designed to ensure that when a child goes missing there is an effective, collaborative safeguarding response from all agencies involved. Current research findings estimate that approximately 25 per cent of children and young people that go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. For example, according to recent studies [1], looked after children (LAC) missing from their placements are vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation, especially children in residential care.

This chapter provides guidance for assessing both the risk that a child may run away and the risk to the child if they do go missing. It sets out the actions that should be taken by professionals to locate the child, to assist with their return and to identify the issues which caused, and may continue to cause, the child to run away or go missing.

This guidance is based on guidance issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970[2] which requires local authorities in exercising their social services functions, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. Local authorities should comply with this guidance when exercising these functions, unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons that justify a variation.

This chapter complements: Working Together to Safeguard Children and related statutory guidance (2013)[3] and the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulation volumes in respect of care planning and review[4].

Acknowledgement: This guidance has taken account of the DfE Statutory Guidance on 'Children who run away or go missing from home or care', January 2014[5].

[1] The Ofsted report 'Missing Children' published in February 2013; the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care 2012 and the accelerated report of the OCC's ongoing inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.

[2] [Local Authority Social Services Act 1970](#)

[3] [Working together to safeguard children](#)

[4] [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review](#)

[5] [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)

***This guidance should be used in conjunction with the London Child Protection Procedures, Part A, 2013.***



### **City supplementary guidance**

The City of London of London Corporation (City Corporation) follows the London Child Protection Procedures practice guidance (“the LCPP guidance”) for Children Missing from Care, Home and Education. These are the City’s “runaway and missing from home and care protocol” and procedures for Children Missing Education should be followed by the City Corporation, the City of London Police and other partners.

Supplementary information and procedures that are specific to the City Corporation are given in ‘City addition’ boxes in the relevant sections of this document .The LCPP guidance should therefore be followed in conjunction with, and not in isolation of, the LCPP guidance.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty placed on the City of London Corporation. This includes planning to prevent children from going missing, protecting them when they do and understanding why children go missing to reduce the risk of them doing so again.

#### **Contacts and designated lead officers - City of London**

See City of London Appendices – Appendix A

#### **Summary – procedure flowchart**

Appendix B provides a summary procedure flow chart for children missing from care, or those missing from home who are assessed as a Child in Need.

## **3.2 Principles**

The following safeguarding principles should be adopted by each Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and its partner agencies in relation to identifying and locating children who go missing:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount;
- Locating and returning the child to a safe environment is the main objective;
- Child protection procedures will be initiated whenever there are concerns that a child, who is missing, may have suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.



### 3.3 Related Procedures

The *London Child Protection Procedures Part A and Guidance in Part B* provide information to support professionals to recognise, respond to and manage circumstances in which children, who have run away or are missing, may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

In **Part B** there is additional practice guidance for:

- Asylum Seeking Children;
- Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children;
- Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation.

These, and **Part A** can be accessed on the [London CPC website](#).

Nationally, the following information can be accessed:

- [The Missing Children and Adults strategy \(2011\)](#);
- [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary Guidance \(2009\)](#);
- [The Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan \(2011\)](#);
- [Statutory guidance: Children who run away or go missing from home or care \(2014\)](#).

### 3.4 The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

#### City supplementary guidance

References to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in this LCPP guidance apply also to the City of London Police, as do the descriptions of the police role and definitions in section 3.4, and the legal powers set out in section 3.5.

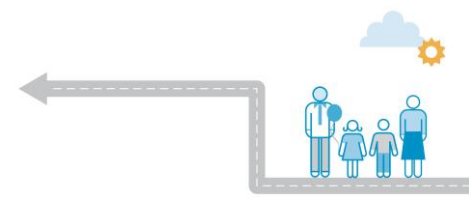
All general references to the police and/or MPS in the LCPP guidance should be read to include the City of London Police as appropriate.

The Metropolitan police service, as the lead agency for investigating and finding missing children, will respond to children and young people going **missing** or being **absent** based on on-going risk assessments in line with current guidance. The police will prioritise all incidents of missing children as medium or high risk.

The police definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' are:

#### **Missing**





Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another'.

and

### **Absent**

A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be'.<sup>[6]</sup>

The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. A child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions.

*It is important to note that professionals or others reporting a child missing to the police, should not make the judgement themselves as to whether a child is missing or absent – this decision will be made by the police on the basis of the information provided.*

Where a child is recorded by police as being absent, they will agree review times and any on-going actions with the person reporting the absence. All persons recorded by police as absent are monitored on the police CAD system. Monitoring is ongoing and subject to regular reviews to ensure risk levels do not change. Where information comes to light which introduces any risk to that person, then the case may be re-categorised as 'missing' and a police investigation instigated.

One of the overriding principles of 'Absent' is that police are able to focus resources more effectively, in accordance with the police risk assessments of 'absent' and 'missing' incidents.

The Police will carry out a 'Safe and Well' check with a 'missing' child who returns and will also carry out an independent "Return Review" interview in exceptional circumstances.

### **Risk Assessment**

The police will prioritise all incidents of missing children as medium or high risk. Where a child is recorded as being absent, the details will be recorded by the police, who will also agree review times and any on-going actions with the person reporting.

A missing child incident would be prioritised as '*high risk*' where:

- The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the child is in danger through their own vulnerability; or
- The child may have been the victim of a serious crime; or
- The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

The high risk category requires the immediate deployment of police resources. Police guidance makes clear that a member of the senior management team or similar command



level must be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an Investigating Officer and possibly a Senior Investigating Officer and a Police Search Advisor (PoSA). There should be a media strategy and / or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place. The UK Missing Persons Bureau should be notified of the case immediately. CEOP and local authority children's services should also be notified.

A missing child incident would be prioritised as '*medium risk*' where the risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others. This category requires an active and measured response by police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting. This will involve a proactive investigation and search in accordance with the circumstances to locate the missing child as soon as possible.

[6] Guidance on how police services will apply the new definition of 'absent' to children was issued in interim guidance by **ACPO** in April 2013. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) ratified and implemented the new definitions in July 2014.

### 3.5 Legal powers: Local Authorities and the Metropolitan Police

The police can use the powers under Section 46(1) of the Children Act 1989[7] to remove a child into police protection *if they are at risk of significant harm* [8]. Police Protection lasts up to 72 hours.

Section 17 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984[9] provides police with powers to enter and search a premises in certain circumstances, notably, with regard to this guidance, for the purposes of saving life and limb or to arrest without warrant a person who has committed an indictable offence or certain other listed offences under the section.

Section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984[10] provides police the power of summary arrest for any offence subject to certain provisions notably, for the purposes of this guidance, under S.24(5)(d) to protect a child or other vulnerable person from the person in question.

Should it be necessary to take the child into police protection, the child must be moved as soon as possible into local authority accommodation. The local authority should consider what type of accommodation is appropriate in each individual case. It is important that young people are not placed in accommodation that leaves them vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking.

The Local Authority may apply to the Court for a Recovery Order under Section 50 of the Children Act 1989[11] A Recovery Order can only be sought when the child is subject to an Interim or Full Care Order and it is clear that the child is in no immediate danger of significant harm[12]. Social services may need to obtain an Emergency Protection Order under Section 44 of the Children Act 1989[13], before expiration of the Police Protection.



[7] **Children Act 1989** (1) Where a constable has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, he may (a) remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep him there; or (b) take such steps as are reasonable to ensure that the child's removal from any hospital, or other place, in which he is then being accommodated is prevented.

[8] **Children Act 1989 Section 31**

[9] **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984**

[10] **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Section 24**

[11] **Children Act 1989 Section 50**

[12] **Children Act 1989 Section 31**

[13] **Children Act 1989 Section 44**

## 3.6 Local Authorities

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities and other named statutory partners to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes planning to prevent children from going missing and to do everything possible to ensure their safe return when they do go missing. Through their inspections of local authority children's services, Ofsted will include an assessment of measures with regard to missing children as part of their key judgement on the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.

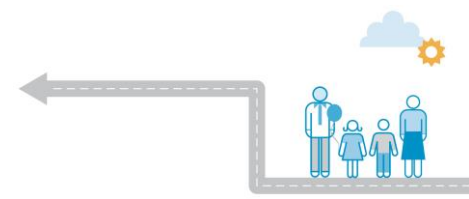
Local authorities should name a senior children's service manager as responsible for monitoring policies and performance relating to children who go missing from home or care. The responsible manager should look beyond this guidance to understand the risks and issues facing children missing from home or care and to review best practice in dealing with the issue.

Local authorities must ensure that all incidents where children go missing are appropriately risk assessed, and should record all incidents of looked after children who are missing or away from placement without authorisation.

Even with strong systems and services that minimise the likelihood of young people running away, some young people will still feel that they have to run away. In all circumstances local safeguarding procedures should be followed. If there is concern that the child may be at risk if returned home, the child should be referred to children's social care to assess their needs and make appropriate arrangements for their accommodation.

Children, who are looked after should have information about, and easy access to, help lines and support services including emergency accommodation. Support should also be made available to families to help them understand why the child has run away and how they can support them on their return.

It is important that emergency accommodation can be accessed directly at any time of the day or night. Bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation is not an appropriate place for any



child or young person under the age of 18 and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

***Sharing information to locate a child who is looked after, subject to a child protection plan or a child in need.***

The local authority should consult with the police regarding what action should be taken to share information about a missing child who is looked after, subject to a child protection plan or a child in need. This should include an assessment of whether to release information to the media. The local authority should also notify other local authorities according to degree of concern. Consideration should also be given to whether the child or their family has links to other areas in the United Kingdom.

On receipt of a notification from another local authority, a flag should be added to the electronic record system for children's social care and consideration should be given to notifying health and other relevant partners.

***Data on looked after children who go missing or are away from placement without authorisation***

The Department of Education Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) states the following:

Looked after children who go missing, or who are away from placement without authorisation, can be at increased risk of sexual or other forms of exploitation or of involvement in drugs, gangs, criminal activity or trafficking. Particular attention should be paid to repeat episodes. Data on these episodes should be analysed regularly in order to map problems and patterns. Regular reports on this data should be provided to council members and the LSCP.

Data for children missing or away from placement without authorisation should be reported to the Department for Education by the responsible authority (through their annual data returns on looked after children as part of the annual SDA903 data collection).

Local authorities collect information about children missing from education and educational establishments and about children who access other local authority services, such as youth services and children who are looked after.

As the guidance says, early and effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for the identification of patterns of risky behaviour. This may be used to identify areas of concern for an individual child, or to identify 'hotspots' of activity in a local area.

Local authorities should collect data on children reported missing from care including repeat episodes of missing from care, unauthorised absences from care placements, and other relevant data and should regularly analyse this in order to map problems and patterns. This should include identifying patterns of sexual and other exploitation.



Good practice suggests that the following data should be collected and analysed by a multi professional group:

- Demographics of all children who are missing, absent or away from placement without authorisation;
- Associates of the above;
- The legal status of the children;
- Episodes, and length of episode by child;
- Numbers and themes from safe and well checks;
- Numbers and themes from return interviews;
- Cross match data with gangs matrix, CSE lists, home educated and missing from education lists, including information about children who go missing for part of the school day;
- Consideration should be given to analysing where the child is found as this information could help identify links between missing children and criminal enterprises like the current expansion of London gangs' drug sale operations outside of London (the 'county lines' issue);
- Analyse data by establishment and geographical area.

Data about children and young people who go missing from home, education or care should be included in regular reports to Council members, especially to the Lead Member for Children's Services and in regular reports by the local authority to the local LSCP.

### 3.7 Ofsted: Disclosure to Police

On 1 April 2013 regulations came into force requiring Ofsted to disclose details of the locations of children's homes to local police services to support the police in taking a strategic and operational approach to safeguarding children particularly in relation to sexual exploitation and trafficking[14].

It should be noted that disclosure of this information to police services does not happen automatically and police services will need to request to receive this information on an on-going basis.

This duty is in addition to the existing obligation for Ofsted to disclose this information to local authorities. A protocol published alongside the regulations sets out the responsibilities of the public authorities to use information about the location of children's homes only for the purposes for which it was disclosed; and to share it onward only where this is compatible with safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

[14] Department for Education: Joint protocol: children's homes - procedure for disclosing names and addresses (2013)



### 3.8 Healthcare Professionals

Healthcare professionals have a key role in identifying and reporting children who may be missing from care, home and school.

Missing children access a number of services provided by a range of health providers, for example:

- Urgent Care Units;
- Accident and Emergency Departments;
- Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinics (GaUM);
- Community Sexual Health Services; and
- Pharmacy Services.

Health professionals should have an understanding of the vulnerabilities and risks associated with children that go missing. Staff working in health settings should be aware of their professional responsibilities and the responses undertaken by the multi-agency partnership. Risks include sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Radicalisation, also a risk factor for vulnerable young people, is managed via the national 'Prevent' strategy[15].

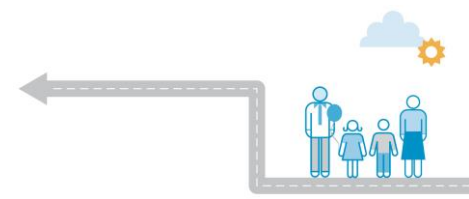
All health providers should provide a comprehensive service for Looked after Children (LAC). A Designated Nurse and Doctor for Looked after Children are located in each Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). They are statutory appointments and are responsible for the commissioning and delivery of appropriate healthcare, assessments and services. Designated health professionals for LAC should share relevant information and intelligence relating to high risk individuals or emerging themes and patterns indicative of organised and targeted abuse, to the NHS Patch Safeguarding Children Forum. They should also ensure that all health staff within their locality know how to identify, report and respond to a child who is missing from care.

[15] [Protecting the UK against terrorism](#)

### 3.9 Homeless 16 / 17 year olds

When a 16 or 17 year old runs away or goes missing they are no less vulnerable than younger children and are equally at risk, particularly of sexual exploitation or involvement with gangs.

When a 16 -17 year old presents as homeless, local authority children's services must assess their needs as for any other child. Where this assessment indicates that the young person is in need and requires accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989[16], they will usually become looked after.



The accommodation provided must be suitable, risk assessed and meet the full range of the young person's needs. The sustainability of the placement must be considered. Young people who have run away and are at risk of homelessness may be placed in supported accommodation, with the provision of specialist support. For example, a specialist service might be provided for those who have been sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation.

Local authorities should have regard to statutory guidance in April 2010[17] issued to children's services authorities and local housing authorities about their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996[18] to secure or provide accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

[16] **Children Act 1989 Section 20**

[17] **Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation**

[18] **Housing Act 1996**

### 3.10 Trafficking

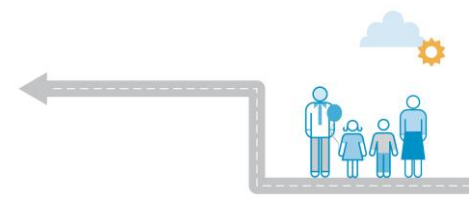
Some of the children who local authorities look after may be unaccompanied asylum seeking children or other migrant children. Some children in this group may have been trafficked into the UK and may remain under the influence of their traffickers even while they are looked after. Trafficked children are at high risk of going missing, with most going missing within one week of becoming looked after and many within 48 hours. Unaccompanied migrant or asylum seeking children, who go missing immediately after becoming looked after, should be treated as children who may be victims of trafficking. See Part B, Chapter 10: Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children[19]

Children, who have been trafficked, may be exploited for sexual purposes and the link to sexual exploitation should be addressed in conjunction with Part B, Chapter 8: Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation.[20]

The assessment of need to inform the care plan will be particularly critical in these circumstances and should be done immediately as the window for intervention is very narrow. The assessment must seek to establish:

- Relevant details about the child's background before they came to the UK;
- An understanding of the reasons why the child came to the UK; and
- An analysis of the child's vulnerability to remaining under the influence of traffickers.

In conducting this assessment it will be necessary for the local authority to work in close co-operation with the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)[21] and immigration staff who will be familiar with patterns of trafficking into the UK. Immigration staff should be able to advice on whether information about the individual child suggests that they fit the profile of a potentially trafficked child.



Provision may need to be made for the child to be in a safe place before any assessment takes place and for the possibility that they may not be able to disclose full information about their circumstances immediately. The location of the child should not be divulged to any enquirers until their identity and relationship with the child has been established, if necessary with the help of police and immigration services. In these situations the roles and responsibilities of care providers must be fully understood and recorded in the placement plan. Proportionate safety measures that keep the child safe and take into account their best interests should also be put in place to safeguard the child from going missing from care or from being re-trafficked.

It will be essential that the local authority continues to share information with the police and immigration staff, concerning potential crimes against the child, the risk to other children, or other relevant immigration matters.

'Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked: Practice Guidance (2011)' [22] contains practical guidance for agencies which are likely to encounter, or have referred to them, children and young people who may have been trafficked. Where it is suspected that a child has been trafficked, they should be referred by the local authority into the UK's victim identification framework, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) [23]. The Trafficked Children Toolkit [24], developed by the London Safeguarding Children Board, has been made available to all local authorities to help professionals assess the needs of these children and to refer them to the NRM.

The NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC [25]) provides specialist advice and information to professionals who have concerns that a child or young person may have been trafficked. CTAC can be contacted at free phone number: 0808 800 5000, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

[19] [Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children](#)

[20] [Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation](#)

[21] [National Crime Agency](#)

[22] [Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked \(GOV UK\)](#)

[23] [Reducing and preventing crime](#)

[24] [London SCB](#)

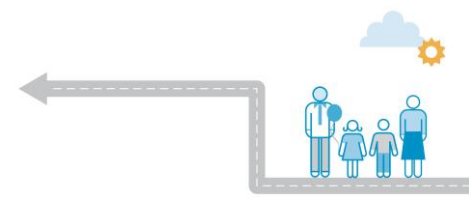
[25] [NCPCC](#)

## 3.11 Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse [26].





Children can be groomed for the purpose of sexual abuse as well as other forms of exploitation including involvement in criminal and extremist activity. Children who are missing are more vulnerable to being groomed and may also go missing as a result of being groomed.

### ***Protecting children at risk of radicalisation***

Children and young people can suffer harm when exposed to extremist ideology. This harm can range from a child adopting or complying with extreme views which limit their social interaction and full engagement with their education, to children being groomed for involvement in violent attacks.

Children can be exposed to harmful, extremist ideology in the immediate or extended family, or relatives/family friends who live outside the family home but have influence over the child's life. Older children or young people might self-radicalise over the internet or through the influence of their peer network – in this instance their parents might not know about this or feel powerless to stop their child's radicalisation.

Going missing is a risk factor in relation to radicalisation:

- A child may go missing because they have already been radicalised;
- A child's risk of being radicalised might increase because they are missing and are spending time with people who may seek to involve them in radical/extreme activities. The risk is heightened whilst they are missing, because the protective factors of family or care are not available to them.

Professionals should always assess whether a child who has gone missing is at risk of radicalisation.

### ***Children at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE)***

See London Child Protection Procedures, Part B3, Chapter 8, Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation [27].

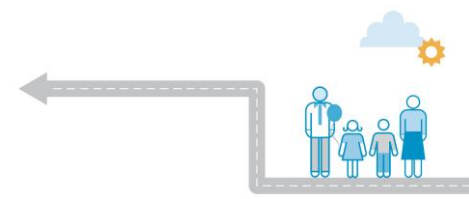
The sexual exploitation of children involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common.

Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice as a result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.

Going missing is a significant risk factor in relation to sexual exploitation:

- A child may go missing because they are being sexually exploited;



- A child's risk of being sexually exploited might increase because they are missing and are spending time with people who may seek to involve them in sexual exploitation. The risk is heightened whilst they are missing because the protective factors of family or care are not available to them.

Because there is such a strong link between children going missing and risk of sexual exploitation, professionals should always assess whether a child who has gone missing is being sexually exploited or at risk of being sexually exploited.

### City supplementary guidance

#### MACE Referral

Where a child or young person goes missing from home or care a referral should be made to the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group using the MACE Referral Form (City of London Appendix D). This should be by either the City of London Police or, where the child or young person is missing from care, in receipt of Children and Families services or considered a Child in Need, by a social worker.

Poor school attendance, whether through missing whole or part days, may indicate a risk of CSE. Where the Educational Welfare Officer refers a pupil to the Children and Families team, social workers should consider a MACE Referral.

### *Children at risk of being drawn into offending behaviour*

Children and young people who go missing from care, home and education also need safeguarding against the risk of being drawn into offending behaviour. For example, some children have become involved in what is colloquially known as the 'county lines' issue. This involves children being used by gangs to transport and distribute drugs outside of London as drug sales operations are expanded into the home counties and beyond.

[26] [NSPCC](#)

[27] [Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation](#)

## 3.12 Care Leavers

From the age of 16 young people in care are referred to as care leavers, however, it is important to note that local authorities have very similar duties and responsibilities towards 16 and 17 year old care leavers as they do to children in care and for the purposes of this guidance, the response to a missing care leaver age 16 and 17 year old should be the same.

Local authorities continue to have a range of responsibilities towards children leaving care until the young person's 21st and in some instances their 25th birthday. It is good practice to follow the guidance set out below whilst a young person remains 'leaving care'.



Care leavers, particularly 16 and 17 year olds, are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may go missing from their home or accommodation. Local authorities must ensure that care leavers live in "suitable accommodation" as defined in Section 23B (10) of the Children Act 1989 and Regulations 9(2) of the Care Leavers Regulations[28]. In particular young people should feel safe in their accommodation and the areas where it is located. Local authorities should ensure that pathway plans set out where a young person may be vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking or going missing, and put in place support services to minimise this risk.

[28] [The Care Leavers \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)

### 3.13 Out of Area Placements

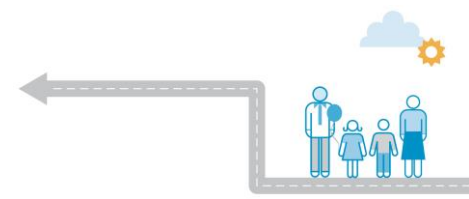
When a child is placed out of their local authority area, the responsible authority must make sure that the child has access to the services they need in advance of placement. Notification of the placement must be made to the host authority and other specified services. All children subject of a London pre-incident risk assessment should be notified to the local police service.

If children placed out of their local authority run away, this protocol should be followed, in addition to complying with other processes that are specified in the policy of the host local authority. It is possible that the child will return to the area of the responsible authority so it is essential that liaison between the police and professionals in both authorities is well managed and coordinated. A notification process for missing/ absent episodes should be agreed between responsible and host local authorities as a part of the care plan and the placement plan.

### 3.14 Looked after children who are away from placement without authorisation

Sometimes a looked after child may be away from their placement without authorisation. While they are not missing, they may still be placing themselves at risk (e.g. they may be at the house of friends where there are concerns about risks of sexual exploitation). The carer or social worker should take reasonable steps to ascertain the wellbeing of the child including, when appropriate, visiting the location. However, if there is a concern the child may be at significant risk of harm to themselves or to others then police should also be notified in order that appropriate safeguarding measures can be taken. This should not be confused with reporting a child missing.

### 3.15 Prevention and planning – risk assessment



Local authorities have a duty to place a looked after child in the most appropriate placement to safeguard the child and minimise the risk of the child running away. The care plan and the placement plan should include details of the arrangements that will need to be in place to keep the child safe and minimise the risk of the child going missing from their placement.

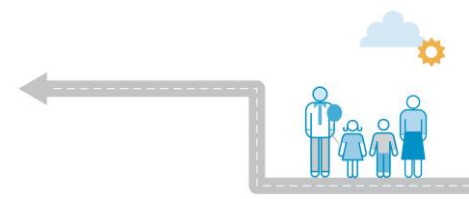
Remember:

- The Care Plan – should include strategies to avoid unauthorised absences and/or a child going missing. It should also include strategies to reduce the duration and risks associated if the child does have unauthorised absences/go missing;
- The Placement Plan – should include strategies for preventing the child from taking unauthorised absences/going missing;
- A pre-incident risk assessment should be completed for all children for whom there is concern that they may run away. Distance from home, family and friends should be considered as a risk factor;
- Provide the child with advice about an independent advocate and take the child's views in to account;
- Statutory reviews should consider any absences and revise strategies to prevent repeat absences and/or missing incidents and the care plan should be revised accordingly.

Where a child already has an established pattern of running away, the care plan should include a strategy to keep the child safe and minimising the likelihood of the child running away in the future. This should be discussed and agreed as far as possible with the child and with the child's carers and should include detailed information about the responsibilities of all services, the child's parents and other adults involved in the family network.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) should be informed about missing/ absent episodes and they should address these in statutory reviews. The pre incident risk assessment should be updated after missing incident and should be regularly reviewed.

Designated health professionals for **Looked After Children (LAC)** should be informed of children missing from care who are deemed to be 'high risk'. They should be included in any multiagency strategy meetings or activity to manage the child's retrieval and any subsequent health needs.



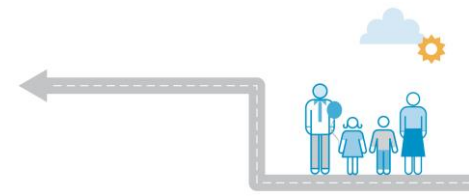
### Pre Incident Risk Assessment

If, there are major concerns that a child/young person is likely to go missing, a Pre Incident Risk Assessment/Trigger plan should be completed. This should be completed at the point a child is placed in care, or at the point at which concerns about the risk of going missing subsequently arise. (City of London Appendices - Appendix c)

At the pre-placement meeting and consideration must be given to any associated risk factors in relation to the child young person absencing him/herself and any protective factors that may reduce the likelihood of going missing or of reducing potential harm to the child should they go missing. This also applies to children/young people placed at home on a care order.

The Pre Incident Risk Assessment of the child/young person should consider the following:

- the likelihood of going missing, including information about previous patterns of going missing or associated risks
- the level of risk presented if they go missing – for example a history of alcohol abuse, sexual exploitation, involvement in gangs, mental health or learning difficulties
- the child's view on the current placement or the stability of their relationships at home;
- the level of supervision/support available to the child/young person
- the views of those with parental responsibility on what action should be taken if the child/young person goes missing or regularly returns home late
- details of any medical condition and treatment that the child / young person is currently undergoing and the implications of this in terms of their absence
- consideration of any external influences which may result in the child's removal without consent
- recording all the contact names, addresses, telephone numbers and social media handles of both the virtual and real places where the child/young person may return to (with their consent).



A copy of the Pre Incident Risk Assessment should be held on the child's case record in all agencies working with the child and created and held on file. The child/young person should also be given a copy of their Pre-incident Risk Assessment if appropriate.

An up-to-date description or photograph of the child must be maintained on the case record of the child/young person. In obtaining photographs, appropriate permission should be obtained from the child or parent.

The Pre Incident Risk Assessment, where used, should be reviewed regularly as part of the social worker's pre- review report.

The child/young person and those with parental responsibility should always be informed what action will be taken if the child/young person absents her/himself without permission. Children/young people should also be informed of their right to speak to an independent party on or prior to their return and should be given information on advocacy options.

In cases where there are serious concerns regarding the risks associated with a child/young person going missing, consideration must be given to informing the local police and the relevant local authority (where the child/young person is placed out of borough), at the point of placement or once particular concerns are identified.

### **Grab Pack**

It is good practice for foster or residential carers to prepare relevant information in the event a child goes missing that can be made easily available as a 'grab pack'. Its purpose is to ensure that the information needed to help locate a missing child is readily available. It should include a completed Information Sharing Form (LCPP guidance Appendix 4: Looked After Child Information Sharing Form) and should be updated on a regular basis.



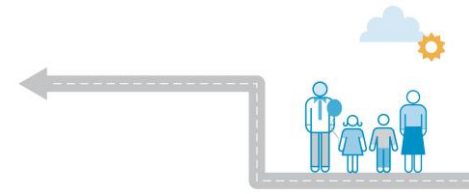
### 3.16 Actions when the whereabouts of a looked after child is not known

Whenever the whereabouts of a looked after child is not known, the foster carer or the manager on duty in the children's home is responsible for carrying out preliminary checks to see if the child can be located. For example, if a child was supposed to have returned home from school but has not arrived within the normal journey time, checks could include finding out if there are transport delays, phone calls to the child, phone calls to the school to see if the child has been delayed etc. If these initial checks do not succeed in locating the child or there are still concerns that, despite contact being made with the child they are at risk, the individuals and agencies listed below should be informed.

It is clearly important that a deadline is set at the outset of these initial checks so that they don't continue beyond a reasonable timeframe. What timeframe is reasonable should be based on an assessment of the risks relating to the individual child. In some cases, there might be particular reasons to be worried for the child's safety immediately and the individuals agencies detailed below should be contacted straight away – this in conjunction with on-going attempts to contact the child and find out why they aren't where they are supposed to be.

The individuals and agencies who should be contacted when a child is missing or they are away from placement without authorisation:

- The local police;
- The authority responsible for the child's placement – if they have not already been notified prior to the police being informed; and
- The parents and any other person with parental responsibility, unless it is not reasonably practicable or to do so, or would be inconsistent with the child's welfare;
- **The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).**



## City supplementary guidance

### Notification when missing

The process for notification when a child in care goes missing should be agreed as part of the care plan and placement plan as set out below, or as agreed at a placement meeting.

**From foster care:** the foster carer should inform the relevant social worker, team manager or the emergency duty team, unless it has been decided previously at the placement agreement meeting that the foster carer should contact the police directly. In an emergency situation, or where the child is considered high risk, the foster carers must call the police immediately.

**From residential care:** the procedures of that organisation should be followed. The residential staff must then inform the child/young person's social worker, team manager or the emergency duty team. In an emergency situation, or where the child is considered high risk, the foster carers must call the police immediately.

**From placement at home on a care order:** the parent/s should notify the child's social worker, team manager or the emergency duty team, who will notify the police immediately. In an emergency situation, or where the child is considered high risk, the foster carers must call the police immediately.

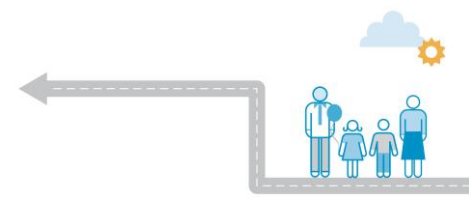
**From an external event/activity:** the member of staff in charge should immediately the police in the local area, the child/young person's social worker and the foster carer or residential home

Once it is established that the child / young person in care can be classified as missing and a risk assessment has been carried out, the police should be notified by the social worker/emergency duty team as soon as possible and within a maximum of 4 hours, unless the child is considered to be at serious risk, then the foster carer or residential staff should contact the police immediately and directly.

The foster carer/keyworker and social worker should be familiar with the social media platforms that the young person uses (with their consent and connect in this way with the young person and offer support.

If a child remains missing beyond a few hours, all agencies should keep a record of their discussions, decisions, actions. This information and details of any events or meetings held should be recorded within the child/young person's case notes. Foster carers and residential staff should record this information in the daily log/diary, which should be accessible to the social worker.





The social worker, team manager or the emergency duty team should alert parents or those with parental responsibility, unless there are clear reasons why this should not be done.

### **Missing Child Risk Assessment**

This assessment is Appendix 3 of the LCPP guidance.

In all cases where a child / young person has gone missing from care, the foster carer (or residential staff) must complete a Missing Child Risk Assessment, to help gauge the seriousness of the situation.

This should be completed immediately and on every occasion that a child is classified as missing (even if it has previously been completed as part of the Pre- Incident Risk Assessment) and reviewed by the child's social workers as soon as practically possible.

The Risk Assessment is an aid to action and information sharing and should be used as an action tool, to inform single and multi-agency decision-making and planning in order to identify the child's whereabouts.

The Risk Assessment provides an indication of:

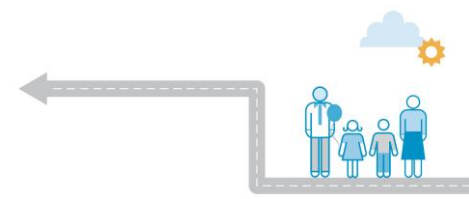
- the urgency of inquiries
- areas of inquiry e.g. where drugs are available or that certain adults frequent, country of origin or country children are trafficked on to etc.
- type of specialist knowledge that might be needed
- the supervision that may be required
- agencies who may be first alerted e.g. local Accident & Emergency services.

The completed Risk Assessment should be shared immediately with all agencies working with the child and kept on the child's file in each agency. In cases where new information becomes available and/or the child remains absent for a protracted period, the risks should be re-assessed, shared with the agencies and kept on the child's file in each agency. The most recently completed Risk Assessment should remain on the child's file in all agencies working with the child.

The following children/young persons should automatically be considered high risk and reported immediately to the police when missing.

- any child/young person who presents an immediate risk to themselves or to other people
- any child who is 12 years old or younger whose whereabouts are unknown
- any child/young person who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan
- any child/young person who is abducted from care
- any young person who is subject to a curfew and goes missing beyond the end of their curfew.

The risk assessment process should be informed by an assessment of the risk of child sexual exploitation. This should be assessed by the lead social worker using the SAFEGUARD tool found in the City of London CSE Operating Protocol.



**Appendix 4: Looked After Child Information Sharing Form** should be used when reporting the child missing to the police. As a minimum requirement, all reports should include the following information:

- The child's name/s; date of birth; status; responsible authority;
- Where and when they went missing;
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with;
- What was the child wearing plus any belongings such as bags, phone etc.;
- Description and recent photo;
- Medical history, if relevant;
- Time and location last seen;
- Circumstances or events around going missing;
- Details of family, friends and associates;
- Updated risk assessment.

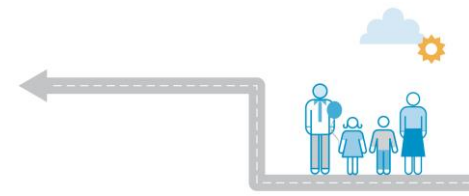
The carer/s should take all reasonable steps, which a good parent would take, to secure the safe and speedy return of the child based on their own knowledge of the child and the information in the child's placement plan. If there is suspected risk of harm to the child the carer/s should liaise immediately with the police.

Following initial discussions between the allocated children's social care worker and the police, they should agree an **immediate strategy** for locating the child and an action plan. This to include a range of actions to locate and ensure the safe return of the child, including:

- Arrangements for attempts to be made to contact the child on a daily basis by, for example, calling their mobile phone or the phones of friends or relatives that they may be with;
- **The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** should also try and contact the child;
- Visiting their parents' address/es and of any friends or relatives with whom they may be staying;
- Police should consider requesting a trace on the child's mobile phone and/or oyster card.

Within 3 days, a missing from care meeting/ telephone discussion between relevant parties should take place and include the police, the child's social worker and the provider. The action plan and risk assessment should be reviewed and updated.

- Missing from care meetings/discussions should be held at least monthly to update the action plan and share information;
- The Assistant Director should be notified within 3 days of the child going missing. They will notify the Lead Member and Corporate Parenting Board within 7 days of the child going missing;
- Any publicity will be led by the Police, the use of harbouring notices etc. will be agreed at the missing from care meeting. Recovery Orders may be used where the child is Looked After;



- During the investigation to find the missing/run away child, regular liaison and communication should take place between the police, the responsible local authority children's social care services and the host authority (if an out of area placement) and any other agencies involved;
- The authority responsible for the child should ensure that plans are in place to respond promptly once the child is found and for determining if the placement remains appropriate.

### City supplementary guidance

#### Strategy Meeting

When a child is missing from care the City Corporation requires the first 'strategy meeting' to be convened within the first working day of the child's absence being discovered, if possible, and at the latest, within 72 hours.

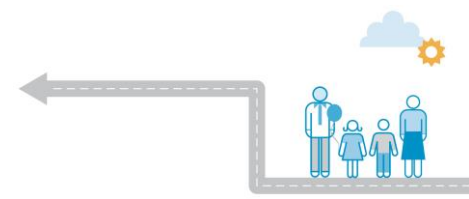
The purpose of the meeting is to agree an action plan to find the child/young person. It should be attended by the child's social worker, service manager, carer, parent (if appropriate), legal representatives, the police, the IRO, and members of other involved agencies, such as CAMHS, Youth Services, education, LAC Nurse or the Youth Offending Service.

The meeting should be recorded on the case file.

A further strategy meeting should be called once the child has been missing for 7 days, chaired by the service manager. If a child has been missing for more than 7 days, meetings should be held on a fortnightly basis. If a child remains missing after 3 months, monthly meetings should be held, which the Assistant Director (People) will chair. Additional strategy meetings can be called if deemed necessary.

The Strategy Meeting should consider the following:

- the CSE Risk as assessed through the SAFEGUARD tool;
- further attempts to contact known relatives, friends and regular places of visit and, where appropriate, setting out concerns about the child and the expectations to inform the Children and Families team of any relevant information obtained;
- informing other local authorities and local agencies with the information about the missing child/young person. Partner agencies should receive information from each other on the basis of their need to know and in order to take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child;
- use of publicity subject to consultation with the police and City POR, and the agreement of the Assistant Director (People). The child's parents must be informed prior to any press release being made and consent should be received from them and/or those with parental responsibility;  
*(Social workers should be aware that it is an offence for a person to publish material which is intended to, or is likely to identify a child as being involved in court proceedings under the Children Act 1989. However, the court can give leave for this restriction to be waived if the child/young person's welfare requires it).*
- seeking a Recovery Order and deciding how the order should be exercised i.e. should there be a joint visit with police and Children and Families staff (see Section 50 Children's Act 1989);
- notifying national authorities and agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions and Child Benefit agencies, or if the young person is an



- appropriate legal interventions if there is any suspicion that the child may have been removed from UK jurisdiction;
- the need for a further strategy meeting to be called before the child/young person has been missing for 7 days (the Missing Child Risk Assessment should inform this decision).

The decisions of the strategy meeting and the timescales must be clearly recorded on the case file.

### 3.17 Actions when a child has been found

When the child has been located, care staff/ foster carers should promptly inform the child's social worker and the independent reviewing officer that the child has returned. Arrangements should have been made for Safe and Well checks and Independent Return Review interviews:

#### **Safe and Well checks:**

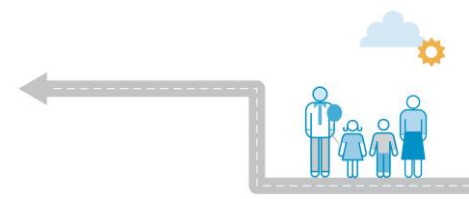
Safe and well checks are carried out by the police as soon as possible after the child has returned. Their purpose is to check for any indications that the child has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them.

Where a child goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable for the police to see them every time they return. In these cases a reasonable decision should be taken in agreement between the police and the child's parent or carer with regard to the frequency of such checks bearing in mind the established link between frequent missing episodes and serious harm, which could include gang involvement, forced marriage, maltreatment or abuse at home, bullying or sexual exploitation. The assessment of whether a child might run away again should be based on information about:

- Their individual circumstances;
- Family circumstances and background history;
- Their motivation for running away;
- Their potential destinations and associates;
- Their recent pattern of absences;
- The circumstances in which the child was found or returned; and
- Their individual characteristics and risk factors such as whether a child has learning difficulties, mental health issues, depression and other vulnerabilities.

#### **Independent Return Review:**

The independent return review is an in-depth interview and should be carried out by an independent professional (e.g. a social worker, teacher, health professional or police officer,



not involved in caring for the child and who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able). The child should be seen on their own unless they specifically request to have someone with them. The child should be offered the option of speaking to an independent representative or advocate. The IRO should be informed.

The responsible local authority should ensure the return review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority where appropriate. Contact should be made with the child within 72 hours of them being located or returning from absence, to arrange the independent return review interview in a neutral place where they feel safe.

The interview and actions that follow from it should:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the 'Safe and Well check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing;
- Understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away;
- Help the child feel 'safe' / understand that they have options, to prevent repeat instances of them running away;
- Understand what the child would like to see happen next whether short term and/or long term;
- Gather the parents or carers views of the circumstances, if appropriate;
- Provide the child with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers.

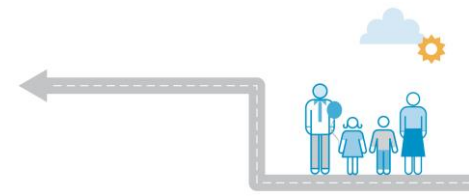
It is especially important that the independent Return Review interview takes place when a child:

- Has been reported missing on two or more occasions;
- Is frequently absent without authorisation;
- Has been hurt or harmed while they have been missing;
- Is at known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking;
- Is at known or suspected risk of involvement in criminal activity or drugs;
- Has contact with persons posing risk to children; and/or
- Has been engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence.

**Follow up:**

The local authority children's social care services, police and other agencies involved with the child should work together to assess the child and:

- To build up a comprehensive picture of why the child went missing;
- What happened while they were missing;
- Who they were missing with and where they were found; and,
- What support they require upon returning home;



- Whether a statutory review of the care plan is required.

Where children refuse to engage with the interviewer, parents and/or carers should be offered the opportunity to provide any relevant information and intelligence they may be aware of. This should help to prevent further instances of the child running away and identify early the support needed for them.

#### **City supplementary guidance**

The lead social worker should contact a child/young person who has been found or returned within 24 hours of notification of their return. An independent Return Reviews should be offered and arranged within 72 hours. The social worker will inform the child/young person that the City's independent provider will contact them to offer and arrange an independent review. If the child/young person refuses the independent review, the social worker will offer to undertake this role. The offer of a return home interview should be recorded within 72 hours on the child's Mosaic file.

A record of the Independent Return Review will be made and used to inform care planning. Intelligence from return reviews will be collated by the Service Manager and will be used to inform strategic planning by the City Corporation and shared with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership.

### **3.18 Repeat running away**

If a child continually runs away actions following earlier incidents need reviewing and alternative strategies should be considered.

To reduce repeat running away and improve the longer-term safety of children and young people, the agencies involved may want to provide:

- Better access and timely independent return interviews, particularly for the most vulnerable;
- Safety planning with the child for their missing;
- Better access to support whilst a young person is away, which may come from the voluntary sector

There may be local organisations in the area that can provide repeat runaways with an opportunity to talk about their reasons for running away, and can link runaways and their families with longer-term help if appropriate. Local authorities should work with organisations that provide these services in their area.

Children's homes staff and foster carers should be trained and supported to offer a consistent approach to the care of children, including being proactive about strategies to prevent children from running away; and to understand the procedures that must be followed if a child goes missing.



The competence and support needs of staff in children's homes and foster cares in responding to missing from care issues should be considered as part of their regular appraisal and supervision.

The Children's Home Regulations 2001 (as amended) [29] requires children's homes to have a missing child policy. They also require that before implementing, or making substantive changes to an existing policy, children's homes shall consult with relevant partners and take into consideration any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children. Finally, where a child is, or has been, persistently absent without permission from the children's home; or is at risk of harm, the children's home shall ask the local authority that looks after the child to review that child's care plan.

The National Minimum Standards (Standard 5.5) specifies that staff should actively search for children and work with the police where appropriate [30].

Please also refer to the Department of Education's, 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care: Flowchart to accompany the statutory guidance'. Available at: [GOV UK website](#).

[29] [The Children's Homes Regulations 2001](#)

As amended in: [The Children's Homes and Looked after Children \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

[30] [Children's homes: national minimum standards](#)

### 3.19 Children missing from home

When Local Authorities and the MPS analyse trends and patterns in relation to children, who run away or go missing from home, particular attention should be paid to repeat 'missing' and 'absent' episodes. Each Local Authority and LSCP needs to be alert to the risk of sexual exploitation or involvement in drugs, gangs or criminal activity such as trafficking and to be aware of local "hot spots" as well as concerns about any individuals, who children runaway to be with.

Local authorities and LSCPs should also consider the 'hidden missing', who are children who have not been reported missing to the police, but have come to an agency's attention after accessing other services. There may also be trafficked children who have not previously come to the attention of children's services or the police. Research demonstrates that children from black and minority ethnic groups, and children that go missing from education are less likely to be reported as missing. Local authorities and the police should be proactive in places where they believe under reporting may be more likely because of the relationships some communities, or individuals, have with the statutory sector.

Children missing from home are subject to risks and vulnerabilities similar to those for children who are looked after. NHS designated and named professionals hold a statutory role with



regards to safeguarding in the local health community and must be included in the information sharing and management processes being put in place for children deemed to be at high risk.

#### **City supplementary guidance**

Where a child missing from home is already in receipt of Children and Family services the procedures set out under 'Actions when the whereabouts of a looked after child is not known' should be followed.

### **3.20 Notifying the police**

The police will respond to all notifications of children categorised as 'missing' as medium or high risk in accordance with this Guidance[31]. Where a child is categorised as being absent, the details will be recorded by the police, who will also agree review times and any on-going actions with the person reporting.

The information required by the police to assist in locating and returning the child to a safe environment is as follows:

- The child's name/s; date of birth; status; responsible authority;
- Where and when they went missing;
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with;
- What the child was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone etc.;
- Description and recent photo;
- Medical history, if relevant;
- Time and location last seen;
- Circumstances or events around going missing;
- Details of family, friends and associates.

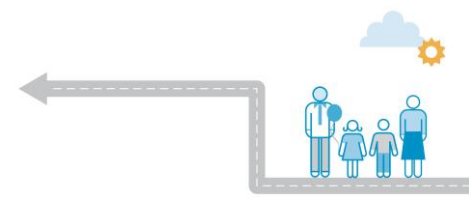
[31] See Part 2: The Metropolitan Police: [Risk Assessment](#)

### **3.21 Actions when a child is missing**

Child protection procedures must be initiated in collaboration with children's social care services whenever there are concerns that a child who is missing may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A risk assessment should be completed in line with this protocol and action by the police will include:





- An active and measured response by police and other agencies in order to trace the missing child and support the person reporting;
- A proactive investigation and search in accordance with the circumstances to locate the missing child as soon as possible;
- Family support should be put in place;
- The UK Missing Persons Bureau should be notified of the case;
- CEOP and children's social care services should be notified.

Where a child is living at home and is the subject of a child protection plan, or, are the subject of a s47 enquiry, additional action is required. This includes:

- Ensuring that a strategy meeting is arranged as soon as practicable and in any event within 7 days. If the child has returned prior to the date of the strategy meeting, it is not a requirement for the meeting to go ahead. Representatives from both the Police Missing Persons Unit and Child Abuse Investigation Team should attend the strategy meeting, as well as other practitioners involved with the child;
- In addition, a member of the senior management team or similar command level must be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and approval of appropriate staffing levels.

### 3.22 Actions when a child has been found

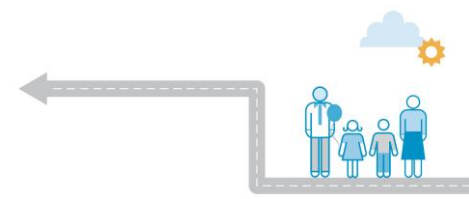
Where the child is known to children's social care services or meets the criteria for referral to children's social care services, the Local Authority will ensure that an assessment takes place and there are a range of service options available to address the child's needs following the safe and well check and independent return review interview.

Young people who have run away and are at risk of homelessness may be placed in supported accommodation, with the provision of specialist support, for example, for those who may have been sexually exploited.

#### **Safe and well checks**

Safe and well checks should be carried out by the police as soon as possible after the child has returned. Their purpose is to check for any indications that the child has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and to give the child an opportunity to disclose any offending against them.

Where a child goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable for the police to see them every time they return. In these cases a reasonable decision should be taken in agreement between the police and the child's parent with regard to the frequency of such checks bearing in mind the established link between frequent missing episodes and serious harm. In addition consideration should be given to a referral to children's social care services for an



assessment to understand the reasons why the child is going missing and to further assess the risk of harm.

The assessment of whether a child might run away again should be based on information about:

- Their individual circumstances;
- Family circumstances and background history;
- Their motivation for running away;
- Their potential destinations and associates;
- Their recent pattern of absences;
- The circumstances in which the child was found or returned; and
- Their individual characteristics and risk factors such as whether a child has learning difficulties, mental health issues, depression and other vulnerabilities.

### ***Independent Return Review***

The Independent Return Review is an in-depth interview and should be carried out by an independent professional (e.g. a social worker, teacher, health professional or police officer, who does not usually work with the child and is trained to carry out these interviews). Children sometimes need to build up trust with a person before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they ran away.

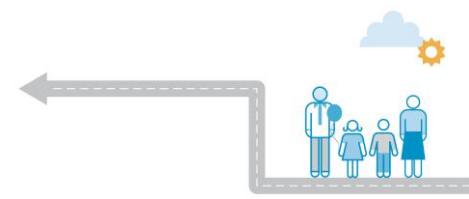
The police should make a referral to the children's social care services to ensure that a return review interview takes place. Contact should be made with the child within 72 hours of them being located or returning from absence, to arrange an independent return review interview in a neutral place where they feel safe.

The interview and actions that follow from it should:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the 'Safe and Well check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing;
- Understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away;
- Help the child feel 'safe' and understand that they have options, to prevent repeat instances of them running away;
- Understand what the child would like to see happen next whether short term and/or long term;
- Gather the parents or carers views of the circumstances, if appropriate;
- Provide the child with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers.

It is **especially** important that the independent return review interview takes place when a child:

- Has been reported missing on two or more occasions;



- Is frequently absent without parental agreement;
- Has been hurt or harmed while they have been missing;
- Is at known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking;
- Is at known or suspected risk of involvement in criminal activity or drugs;
- Has contact with persons posing risk to children; and/or
- Has been engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence.

Following the safe and well check and independent return review, the local authority children's services, police and voluntary services should assess the child's needs and work together:

- To build up a comprehensive picture of why the child went missing;
- What happened while they were missing;
- No they were missing with and where they were found; and,
- What support they require upon returning home

Where children refuse to engage with the interview, parents should be offered the opportunity to provide any relevant information and intelligence they may be aware of. This should help to prevent further instances of the child running away and identify early the support needed for them.

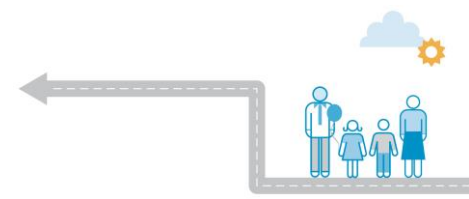
Information about local help lines and agencies working with runaways should be provided to the child and family.

#### **City supplementary guidance**

Where the child is known to children's social care services or meets the criteria for referral to children's social care services, a social worker should contact a child/young person who has been found or returned within 24 hours of notification of their return. An independent Return Reviews should be offered and arranged within 72 hours. The social worker will inform the child/young person that City's independent provider will contact them to offer and arrange an independent review. If the child/young person refuses the independent review, the social worker will offer to undertake this role.

A record of the Independent Return Review will be made and used to inform care planning. Intelligence from return reviews will be collated by the Service Manager and will be used to inform strategic planning by the City Corporation and shared with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership.

### **Intelligence and monitoring (City supplementary guidance)**



### City supplementary guidance

The Safeguarding Partnership will monitor responses to missing children. This will include receiving data on missing episodes and intelligence gained from return interviews. An annual report of incidences, trends and responses will be reported to the Board, the City's Children's Partnership Board and the lead member for children's services.

The City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership will also review this protocol to ensure that it is adequate and up to date. They will also receive reports from the City Corporation reporting children missing from home or care.

The City Corporation will also report data for children missing or away from placement without authorisation to the Department for Education (through the annual data returns on looked after children as part of the annual SSSA903 data collection).

The City Corporation will work with professionals and local agencies to support the early and effective sharing of information to identify patterns of risky behaviour. This may be used to identify areas of concern for an individual child, or to identify 'hotspots' of activity in a local area.

## 3.23 Relevant legislation and statutory guidance

This section sets out the actions to be taken when a child is missing from school and may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm or may be a child in need.

This guidance should be read in the context of the statutory duties upon local authorities and parents as set out in the following:

- **The Education Act 1996;**
- **The Education Act 2002;**
- **The Children Act 1989;**
- **The Children Act 2004;**
- **Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education (September 2016);**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration)( England) regulations 2006**, as amended (Education law regarding pupil registration where a child is on a school role): **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.**

In particular the guidance provides for professionals seeking to exercise their duty under the following Acts to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002;**

- And **Section 11 of the Children Act 2004**.



Additionally, this guidance seeks to ensure that the duty to co-operate to improve the well-being of children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004<sup>[32]</sup> is discharged. All schools will have a designated teacher for looked after children. These teachers are ideally placed to assist when identifying those looked after children currently in school who may be at greater risk of going missing from education.

[32] **The Children Act 2004**

### 3.24 Definition of Children Missing Education

For the purpose of the Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education (2016), children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'

### 3.25 Recognition and response

Enquiries into the circumstances surrounding a child who is missing from school can be effectively supported by schools adopting an admissions procedure which requires a parent/carer to provide documentary evidence of their own and the child's identity and status in the UK, and the address that they are residing at. These checks should not become delaying factors in the admissions process.

If a member of school/educational establishment/college staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/ carers, what has happened. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding teacher/advisor should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps should be taken:

- A trained staff member will make contact with the parents/carers (person with parental responsibility for the child) to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home;
- The outcome of the contact should be assessed and if there are any concerns a consultation with the school/establishment/colleges designated safeguarding adviser should take place to consider the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances a referral to children's social care and /or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection plan;



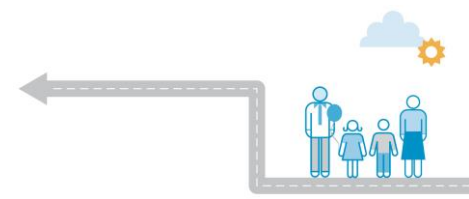
- The child is subject of s47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform LA children's social care and the police:

- In which age range is the child?
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Has the child been a victim of bullying?
- Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.
- Does the child need essential medication or health care?
- Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.
- Rites of passage or forced marriage planned for the child?
- Has the child got a disability and/or special educational needs?
- Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? e.g.
- Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?
- Is there any known history of domestic violence?
- Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, of itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly if a situation is not resolved within 3 days the Education Welfare Service should be contacted, then referrals should be made to the police and LA children's social care, as appropriate over the next two weeks.

Extended leave of absence can be authorised by the head teacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases the time line for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the extended leave started.



### City of London Supplementary Guidance

All children on school roll should have a minimum amount of information on their file. Following the recommendations of the Chadrack Review, The City of London's maintained primary school, The Aldgate School has amended its pupil collection form to include the following to ensure that basic demographic information is collected:

- Three emergency contact details of three,
- any known professionals known to the family
- any known restrictions to the property where the child lives,
- Whether the parent has a medical condition, which they are happy to disclose to the school.

Schools can then make an immediate assessment based on the vulnerability of the child.

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, in itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly, if a situation is not resolved within three days then the police should be contacted to carry out a welfare check. If the child is not located at their home address and all attempt to contact the family via the emergency contacts on the school list have been exhausted then referrals should be made to the local authority's CME team and to other agencies.

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following process should be followed and the case should be treated as a welfare issue as opposed to an attendance issue (See Appendix E – Rapid Response Flow Chart).

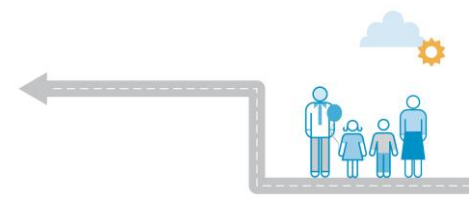
## 3.26 Notifications and actions

### *Day one*

If the answers to any of the points set out in the previous section indicates that there are concerns about the child's safety then a referral should be made to the police and children's social care on day one. The education welfare service should be informed and requested to assist in locating the child.

### *Step one:*

- Contact the local police station (24 hour response);
- Any suspicion/evidence of crime must be clearly stated;



- The circumstances and all available information regarding the child and family will be required.

**Step two:**

- The missing person report will be risk assessed and the local police response team will carry out immediate actions;
- The investigation will be progressed by the police response team, in conjunction with either the local Missing Persons Unit and/or the CID.

**Step three:**

- The missing person report will generate a notification to the police;
- The police will work with, and refer information to, LA children's social care;
- LA children's social care, who must be contacted as soon as possible in these circumstances, will also liaise with the Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) in order to identify, and act upon, any suspicion of child abuse or child related crime.

**Step four:**

The school / educational establishment / college should work in collaboration with Children's social care and the police and a safeguarding education representative should participate in any strategy discussions, s47 enquiries and Child Protection Conferences which may arise.

**Reasonable enquiry:**

If the judgement reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, then the school may delay making a referral. The process of 'reasonable enquiry' has not been identified in regulations, however this includes school staff checking with all members of staff whom the child may have had contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others.

School staff should also make telephone calls to any numbers held on record or identified, sending a letter to the last known address, home visits by some school based staff and consultation with local authority staff.

**Days two to twenty-eight**

If the above response was unsuccessful, the school should contact their local authority CME Officer. The local authority should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information from the family's neighbours and their local community – as appropriate.

The LA CME team should also check databases within the local authority, use agreed protocols to check local databases, e.g. LA housing, health and the police; check with agencies known to be involved with the family, with the local authority the child moved from originally, and with any local authority to which the child may have moved.





The child's circumstances and vulnerability should be reviewed and reassessed regularly jointly by the school's nominated safeguarding advisor and the CME Officer in consultation with children's social care and the police as appropriate.

### ***Child missing from school for more than four weeks***

A child may not be removed from the school roll before the end of four weeks. After 4 weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools. The CME Officer in the Local Authority must also be informed.

#### **City of London Supplementary Guidance**

When a child doesn't turn up for school, an assessment of vulnerability or potential vulnerability should take place using the prompts discussed in the previous section. If the answers to any of the prompts indicates that there are immediate concerns about the child's safety then a referral should be made to the police and children's social care on day one. The school and education welfare service should be informed and requested to assist in locating the child.

#### **Day One**

From day one, school staff should follow the process as highlighted in the Rapid Response Flow Chart. If the judgement reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, then the school may delay making a referral. The process of 'reasonable enquiry' has not been identified in regulations, however this includes school staff checking with all members of staff whom the child may have had contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others.

#### **Day Two**

If after 24 hours the child is still not in school and is not present for morning registration the contact will be made with the parents once again to identify that the child is safe. If not then the case will immediately be referred to the designated safeguarding lead. All emergency contacts will be made and another assessment will be made as to the child's vulnerability.

#### **Day Three**

If after 48 hours and the child is still missing from education and the school hasn't been able to speak to any emergency contacts and confirm that the child is safe, the school will undertake a home visit. If there is a problem accessing the property, then the estates management should be called. If there are unsuccessful attempts at accessing the property and the child is believed to be in need of immediate assistance due to a health condition, injury or some other life-threatening situation then the police should be called.

If the above response was unsuccessful, and the child is not located at home then the school should contact their local authority CME Officer. The local authority should make enquiries by visiting the child's home, checking local databases, check agencies known to be involved with the family and ask for information from the family's neighbours and their local community – as appropriate. The child's circumstances and vulnerability should be reviewed and reassessed regularly jointly by the school's nominated safeguarding advisor and the CME Officer in consultation with children's social care and the police as appropriate.



### **Transfer of information when a pupil changes school**

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000[33] (SI 2000/297) (as amended by SI 2001/1212 and SI 2002/1680) governs the transfer of information between schools.

- Regulation 10(3) states that 'The head teacher of the pupil's old school shall send the information within fifteen school days of the pupil's ceasing to be registered at the school'.

However:

- Regulation 10 (4) states that 'This regulation does not apply where it is not reasonably practicable for the head teacher of the old school to ascertain the pupil's new school or where the pupil was registered at his old school for less than four weeks'.

If the CME team or any other agency becomes aware the child has moved to another school the service should ensure all relevant agencies are informed so that arrangements can be made to forward records from the previous school.

[33] [The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2000](#)

#### **City of London supplementary guidance**

Primary and Secondary schools located outside of the City that have City pupils on school roll will ordinarily escalate any attendance issues with their own education welfare services.

Notifications of children missing education or of concern about pupils' attendance may be received from schools, agencies, the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service and will be directed to the CME lead officer. Notifications should be sent to [EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

The Admissions and Attendance Manager shall maintain and update a CME monitoring spreadsheet on behalf of the CME lead officer to include all pupils of statutory school age missing education or at risk of missing education.

All such notifications are considered and if required will be recorded on the CME spread sheet and cross checked against children's social care and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) records. Where the pupil is known to the City because of SEND, follow up actions will be overseen by the SEND team who will seek resolution and provide feedback to the original referrer/notifier.

Where the case is open to the Children's Social care and Early Help Service, it will be referred to the Children and Families Team for follow up who may secure resolution, share with Virtual Head (where the child is looked after), or refer on to the MACE as required. Where a pupil is found to be missing from home or care, the procedures for care and home above should be followed.



Where the pupil is not known to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service or the SEND team, or where there are specific attendance issues, the Education Welfare Consultant (EWC) will be asked to follow up with the school and host local authority, and make contact with the family if necessary. If the EWC is able to resolve matters with the school, this will be recorded and closed. If there are concerns about the home/family situation, onward referral shall be made to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service.

The Education and Early Years' Service will be responsible for monitoring children missing education in line with its statutory duties.. Where required, cases will be referred on to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service or the MASE.

All these cases are reported termly to the Director of Community and Children's Service and the Assistant Director, People Service and discussed accordingly. Monthly meetings are also held between the officers in the Education and Early Years Service and Children's Social Care and Early Help Service to ensure effective information sharing for our most vulnerable children.

### 3.27 Definitions

This section applies to children who are 'subject to restriction'. I.e. who have:

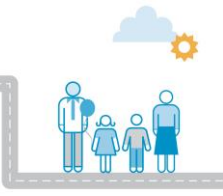
- Proceeded through immigration control without obtaining leave to enter; or
- Left the border control area Border Force accommodation without permission; or
- Been granted temporary admission; or
- Been granted temporary release or bail; or
- Released on a restriction order; or
- Served with a 'notice of liability to deport' or is the dependant of a foreign national offender whose status in the UK is under consideration by criminal casework – these dependants could be British Citizens or have extant leave

### 3.28 Action and responsibilities when the whereabouts of a child 'subject to restrictions' is not known

A missing person's referral must be made by Home Office staff to the police, the UK Missing Person Bureau and the local authority children's social care in a number of circumstances including:

- When a child 'subject to restriction' is identified as having run away from their parents;
- Where they are looked after and have gone missing from their placement;
- Where they are being hidden by their parents and where there is concern for the child's safety because they are being hidden by, or have gone missing with, their family.

A copy of the missing persons notification form must be faxed or emailed to the local authority duty desk and the UK MPB.



If it is believed by Home Office staff that a child is being coerced to abscond or go missing, this must be reported as a concern that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm to the local police and children's social care services.

Notifications will also be made where a missing child is found by Home Office staff. See Home Office Guidance: Missing Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidance[34].

The local authority and health are responsible for:

- Reporting any missing child who is in their care to the police;
- Notifying the Home Office when a child is reported missing to the police or is found.

The police are responsible for:

- Investigating all children reported missing by the Home Office - following receipt of a missing person's notification;
- Conducting joint investigations with the Home Office where necessary;
- Circulating a missing child on the Police National Computer (PNC).

The Police central point of contact is the PNC Team in Liverpool.

The local authority will also notify the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit when a child in their care goes missing or when a missing child returns or is found. The Home Office must maintain regular weekly contact with the local authority and the police until the child is found and record all contact with the police and local authority.

[34] [Chapters 19 to 22a: restrictions](#)

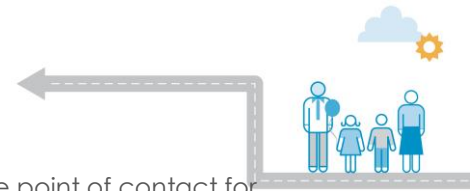
## 3.29 Action when the child 'subject to restriction' is found

### ***Found by Home Office Staff***

The local police and local authority must be informed immediately.

In consultation with the local police and local authority children's social care, a decision will be made as to where the child is to be taken, if they are not to be left at the address where they are encountered. The Home Office must follow up enquires with the local police and children/adult services in order to identify if there are any safeguarding issues.

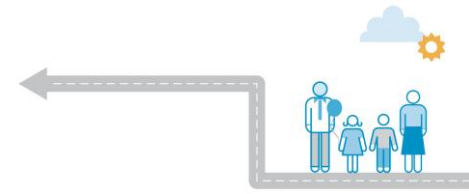
### ***Found by the police or local authority***



The Home Office Command and Control Unit[35] will be the single point of contact for the local police and the Evidence and Enquiry Unit Evidence and Enquiry Unit[36] will be the single point of contact for local authorities to notify the Home Office that a child has been found.

[35] [CommandandControlUnit@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CommandandControlUnit@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

[36] [Home Office UK Border Agency](#), Evidence and Enquiry Unit, 12th Floor Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, London, CR9 2BY



## City of London Appendices

### Appendix A - Contacts and designated lead officers

When a child goes missing the police should be informed:

- if there is concern of an **immediate risk** to a missing child this should be reported without delay by **calling 999**, or
- if there is **concern a child is missing** this should be report by **calling 101**

Children's Social Care should also be informed by calling the Children and Families team on:

- **020 7332 3621 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, or**
- **by calling the emergency duty team outside of these hours on 020 8356 2710.**

#### Designated lead officers

Designated lead officers are responsible for monitoring policies and performance relating to children who go missing from home or care. They will also, with the support of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, monitor and address compliance with this protocol.

#### Local Authority

Rachel Green: Service Manager – Children's Social Care and Early Help, is the responsible lead for children missing from home of care in the City of London

[Rachel.Green@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Green@cityoflondon.gov.uk); 020 7332 3621

Generic email: [Children.Duty@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Children.Duty@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

#### City of London Police

Gareth Dohie: Detective Inspector - Public Protection Unit, City of London Police

[Gareth.Dohie@city-of-london.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Gareth.Dohie@city-of-london.pnn.police.uk); 101

#### Youth Services

Monica Patel; Senior Commissioning Officer

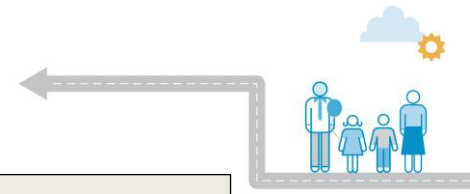
[Monica.Patel@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Monica.Patel@cityoflondon.gov.uk); 020 7332 3638

#### Health

Anna Jones, Designated Nurse Looked After Children

[a.jones2@nhs.net](mailto:a.jones2@nhs.net); **0203 816 3289, 07950882880**

Generic email: [CAHCCG.CITYANDHACKNEYSAFEGUARDING@NHS.NET](mailto:CAHCCG.CITYANDHACKNEYSAFEGUARDING@NHS.NET)



**Other relevant contacts:**

**Local authority**

Chris Pelham: Assistant Director (People)

[Chris.Pelham@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Pelham@cityoflondon.gov.uk); 020 7332 1636

Ria Lane: Independent Reviewing Officer

[Ria.Lane@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Ria.Lane@cityoflondon.gov.uk) 0207 332 3919

Andrew Russell: Virtual School Head

[Andrew.Russell@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Russell@cityoflondon.gov.uk) 0207 332

Children missing education

[cme@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:cme@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

**Kirstie Hilton: Lead Advisor- Universal Education Services**

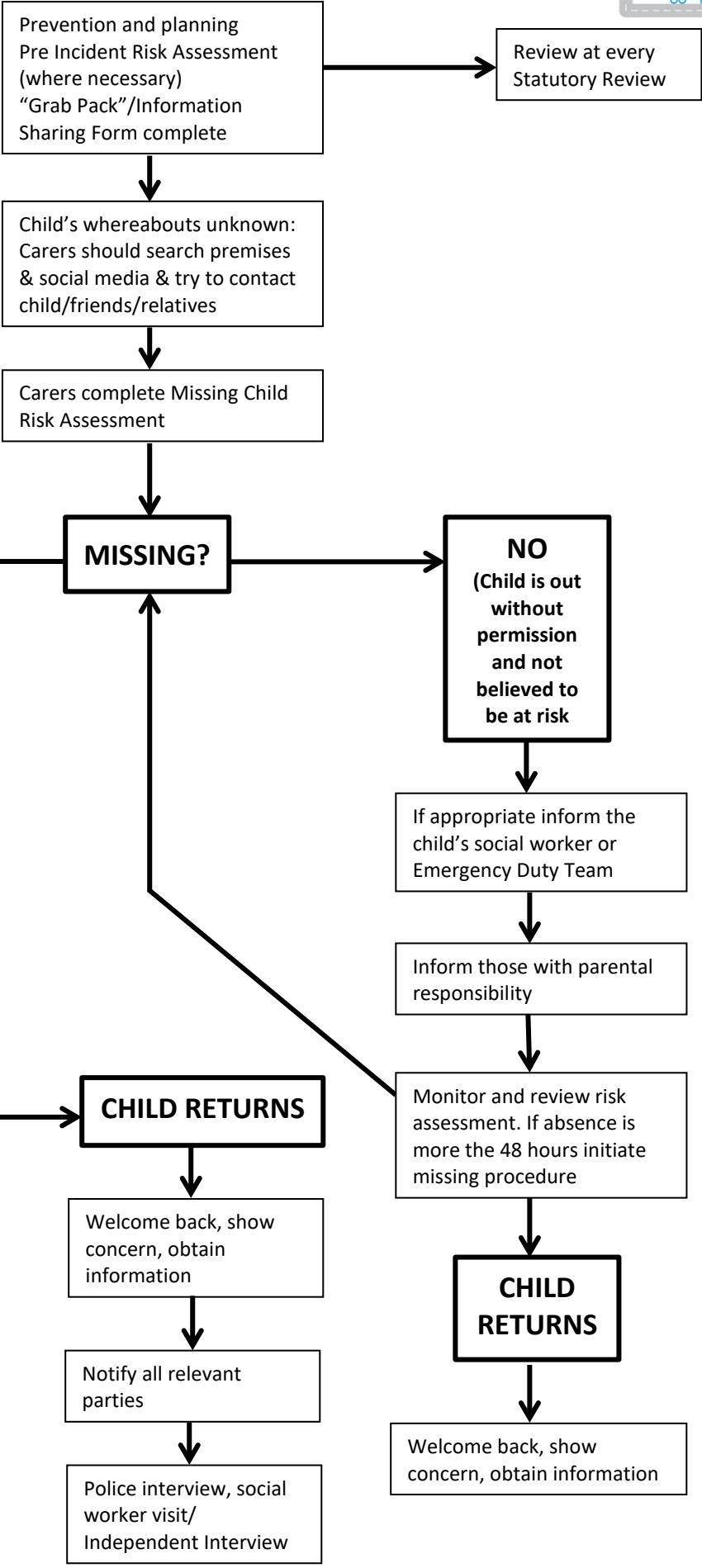
[Kirstie.hilton@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Kirstie.hilton@cityoflondon.gov.uk) 020 7332 3274



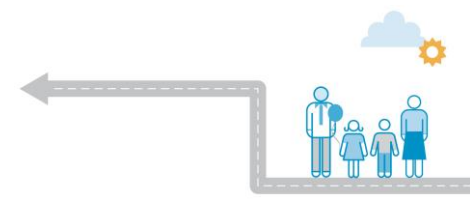
**Appendix B: City of London missing from care - procedure flow chart**

**Missing from Home**

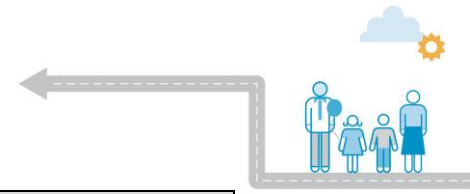
Where a child missing from home is already in receipt of Children and Family services of considered a Child in Need the 'missing from care procedures should be followed.







Factor impacting on the likelihood of a child going missing	Details and Explanation
Child's view on current placement	
Stability of child's relationships at home	
Level of supervision/support that care staff propose to provide for the child	
The degree of risk to the child if they do go missing – using the Missing Child Risk Assessment Record at Appendix 4	
The views of parents/carers on their child's needs and the action that needs to be taken if their child is missing	
Consideration of any external influences which may result in a child's removal without consent (See also <i>Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children, LCPC 2006</i> )	



<b>Protective Factors that may reduce the likelihood of child/ young person going missing</b>	<b>Details and Explanation</b>
E.g. use of voluntary/ street based agencies by child/ young person  Positive relationships with social workers/ carers	

**Completed by (Name):**

**Date:**

**Position:**

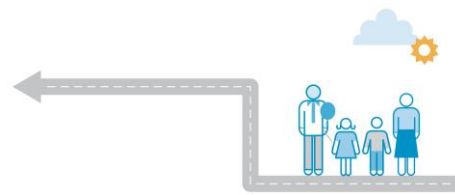
**Organisation:**

**Seen by child/ young person: YES/NO**

**Date for review:**



Appendix D – MACE Referral Form



# MACE Referral Form

Once form is complete - email to [dccsdutyf&ypteam@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:dccsdutyf&ypteam@cityoflondon.gov.uk)



Referring Professional	
Referring Professional:	Agency:
Telephone:	Email:

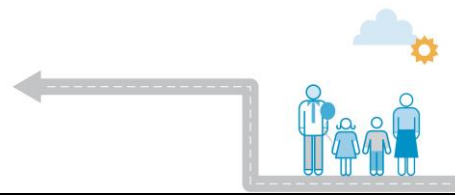
Subject		
First Name:	Middle Name:	Surname:
Any Alias:	Ethnicity: Please select	
DOB:	Gender: Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>	
Address including postcode:		



School:	Social Worker:
Borough/Force Area where Subject resides <span style="background-color: #cccccc; display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 15px; vertical-align: middle;"></span>	

Family		
Name	DOB	Relationship to Subject e.g mother

**Additional Linked Subject** (Please complete Separate form)



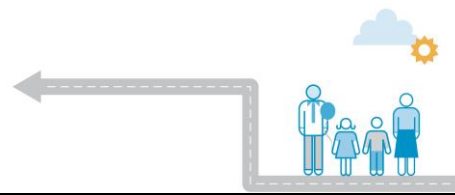
First Name:	Middle Name:	Surname:
DOB:		
<b>Additional Linked Subject</b> (Please complete Separate form)		
First Name:	Middle Name:	Surname:
DOB:		
<b>Additional Linked Subject</b> (Please complete Separate form)		
First Name:	Middle Name:	First Name:
DOB:		

**Perpetrator 1 (if known)**

Name of perpetrator:	DOB:
Any known alias:	Ethnicity: Please select
Address:	Gender: Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>
Borough/Force Area where perpetrator resides	

**Perpetrator 2 (if known)**

Name of perpetrator:	DOB:
Any known alias:	Ethnicity: Please select



Address:	Gender: Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>
Borough/Force Area where perpetrator resides	

**Perpetrator 3 (if known)**

Name of perpetrator:	DOB:
Any known alias:	Ethnicity: Please select
Address:	Gender: Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>
Borough/Force Area where perpetrator resides	

**Risk factors** (Mark those that apply - see guidance form for further details)

<b>S</b>	Sexual health and behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A</b>	Absent from school or repeated running away	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>F</b>	Familial abuse and or problems at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E</b>	Emotional and physical condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>G</b>	Gangs, older age groups and involvement in crime	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>U</b>	Use of technology and sexual bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A</b>	Alcohol and drug misuse	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>R</b>	Receipt of unexplained gifts or money	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D</b>	Distrust of authority figures	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Concerns/Other Information**

**For completion by MACE Coordinator**

Case suitable for discussion:	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------

Rationale for above:



## PRE-PLANNING – FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN TERMS OF VULNERABILITY

Checklist – immediate response (within 24 hours)

Think! **Safeguarding First**

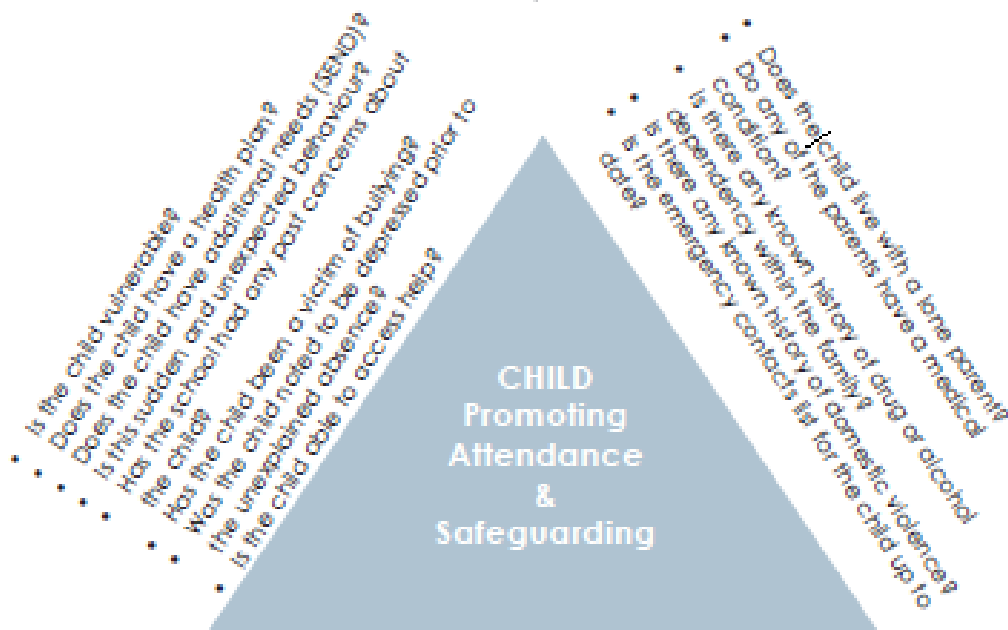


If the following apply, then Children's social care / Education Welfare or the police should be contacted within the first 24 hours of a child missing from education

- Is it possible the child is a victim of a crime?
- Is the child a subject of a Child Protection Plan?
- Is the child subject of s47 enquiries?
- Is the child looked after?
- Is there a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household?
- Is there a history of the family moving frequently?
- Is there a serious issue of attendance?

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS – TO ASSESS VULNERABILITIES / RISKS

Think! **Safeguarding First**



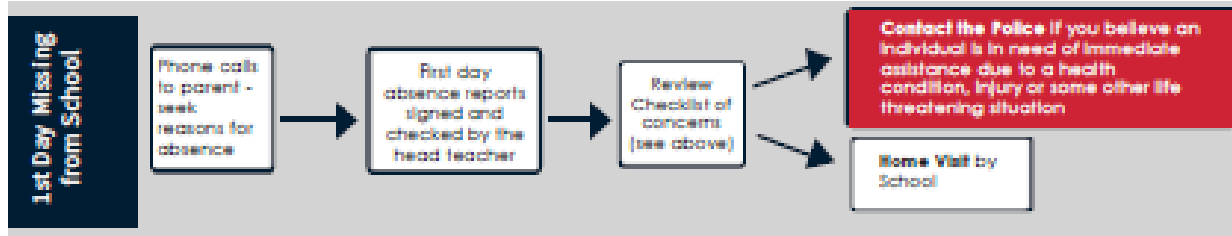
- Are there access issues to the property?
- Are there any religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk (including risk of forced marriage)?



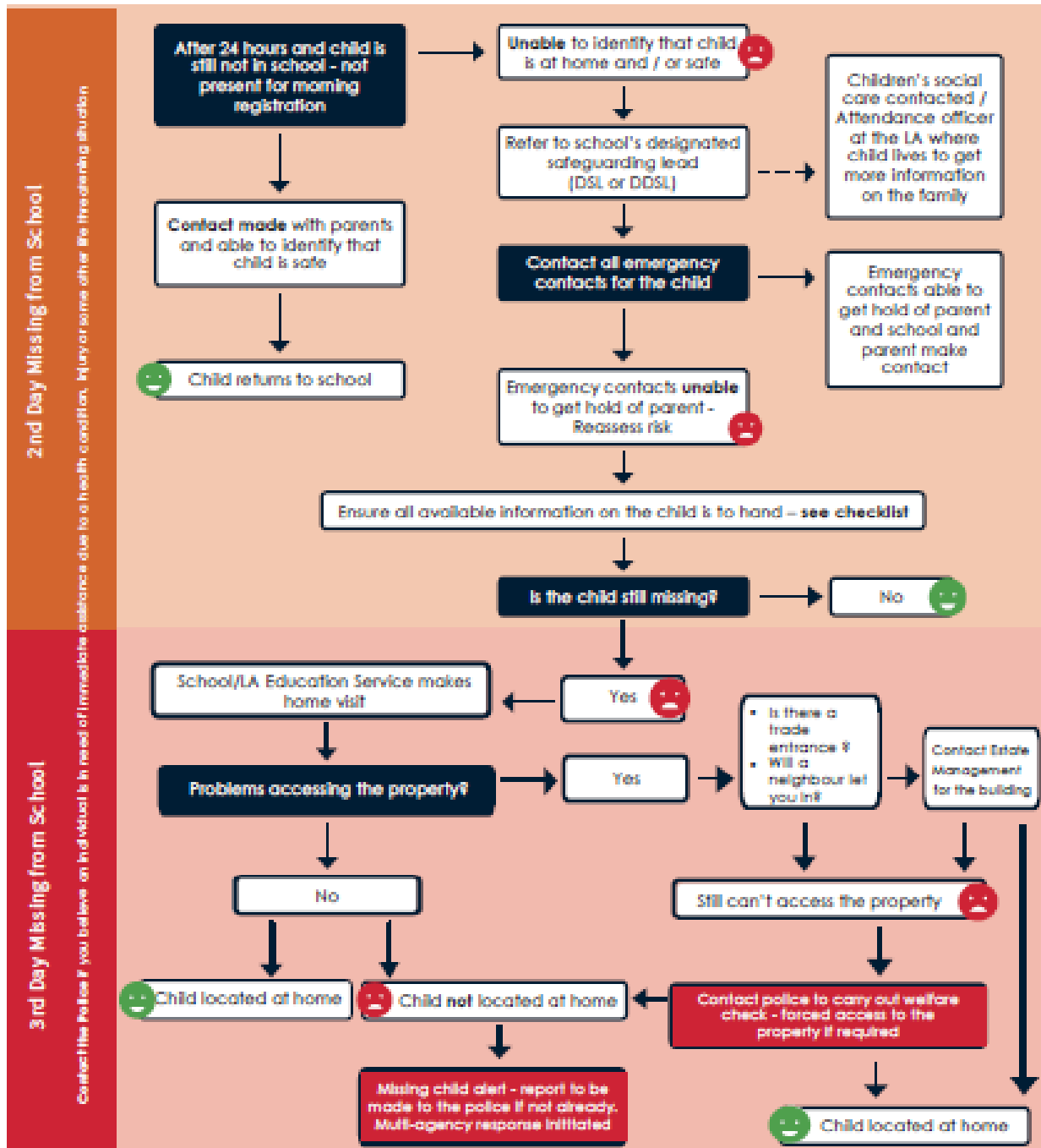


## RAPID RESPONSE FLOW CHART – SCHOOLS

Making sure the child is safe and well



On each day of absence assess vulnerability and risk





## LCPP Guidance Appendices

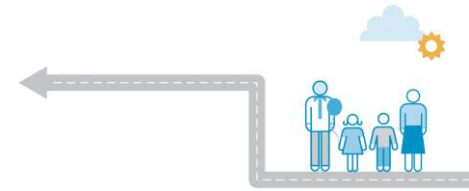
### Appendix 1: Definitions

Based on the DfE 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care' (2014)[37] the definitions which should be used are set out as follows:

- *Child*: anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. 'Children' and 'young people' are used throughout this guidance to refer to anyone under the age of 18;
- *Young runaway*: a child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave;
- *Missing child*: a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers;
- *Looked after child*: a child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of a care order, or being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989;
- *Responsible local authority*: the local authority that is responsible for a looked after child's care and care planning;
- *Host local authority*: the local authority in which a looked after child is placed when placed out of the responsible local authority's area;
- *Care leaver*: an eligible, relevant or former relevant child as defined by the Children Act 1989;
- *Missing from care*: a looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g., school) and their whereabouts is not known;
- *Away from placement without authorisation*: a looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer **has concerns** or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police[38];
- Care leavers cover young people from aged 16-24;
- For Metropolitan Police definitions of missing and absent see [The Metropolitan Police Service](#).

[37] [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)

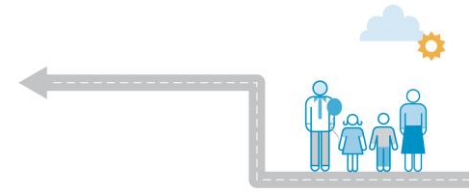
[38] [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care January 2014](#)



## Appendix 2: Agenda for Missing from Care meeting

Items to cover:

1. Information on child and family and presenting risks, including history of missing episodes and background of child;
2. Plans to locate/ recover the child, including as appropriate:
  - a. Visits to known address;
  - b. Contacting family/ friends, parents and professionals;
  - c. Police- tracing of phone, social networking sites and oyster card;
  - d. Use of the media to publicise details of the case;
  - e. Application of recovery orders and serving of abduction orders;
  - f. Notifications to local authorities, hospitals, ports, airports.
3. Additional risk factors including CSE/ offending/ abduction abroad/ substance misuse;
4. Parental involvement/ notification;
5. Plans once the child is located including the safe and well check, return home interviews, medical attention and social work visit;
6. Plans to prevent a repeat missing episode;
7. Actions and next meeting.



### Appendix 3: Missing Child Risk Assessment Record

Name of Child Missing \_\_\_\_\_

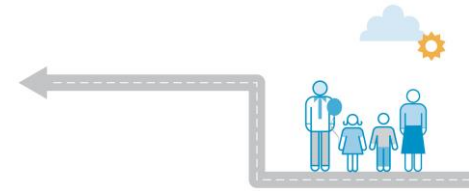
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address from which missing \_\_\_\_\_

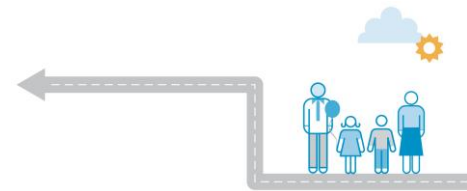
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Factor	Details and Explanation
10 years old or under	
11 to 14 years of age	
15 up to 18 years of age	
Has a Child Protection Plan	
Needs essential medication or treatment not readily available to them e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin	
May not have the physical ability to interact safely with others or in an unknown environment, e.g. visually impaired, history of abuse or inappropriate adult/stranger relationships, Downs Syndrome etc.	
Lacks reasonable awareness of the risks associated with running away, incl. learning disabled	
Known to associate with adults or children who present a risk of harm e.g. Sexual Offenders, Offenders against children	



Mental illness or psychological disorder that may increase risk of harm to themselves or others	
Drugs and/or alcohol dependency	
Suspicion of abduction	
Suspected suicide or self-harm	
Involved in violent and/or racial incident or confrontation immediately prior to disappearance	
Concerns about state of mind e.g. unusual behaviour prior to disappearance or disappeared with no prior indication, or seemed troubled etc.	
Inclement weather conditions where exposure would seriously increase risk to health	
Family/relationship problems or recent history of family conflict/abuse	
Employment problems	
Financial problems	
School or college problems	
On-going victim of bullying, harassment, or exploitation e.g. racial, sexual etc.	



Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing	
Victim or potential victim, of forced marriage, FGM or trafficking, incl. for sexual exploitation	
Known to associate with gang members and other violent offenders	

**Summary of Risk**

(Summarise the risks in a couple of sentences)

**Summary of Actions Taken**

Include attempts to talk to child on mobile phone and attempts to contact friends & family

**Review Date for Actions Decided**

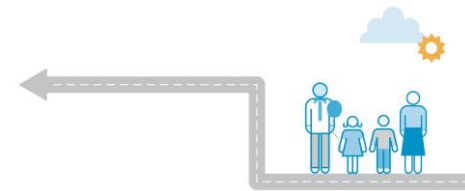
<b>Completed by, full name</b>	<b>Signature</b>
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This Risk Assessment is an aid to action and for information sharing and recording.

**Aid to action:** As an action tool the purpose of the Risk Assessment is to inform single and multi-agency agency decision-making and planning to locate a **'missing'** child. The Risk Assessment provides an indication of:

- The urgency of inquiries
- Areas of inquiry e.g. where drugs are available or that certain adults frequent, country of origin or country children are trafficked on to etc.
- Type of specialist knowledge that might be needed
- The supervision that may be required
- Agencies who may be first alerted e.g. local Accident & Emergency services

**Aid for information sharing and recording:** At the time that a child goes **'missing'** the completed Risk Assessment should be shared with all agencies working with the child and kept on the child's file in each agency. In cases where new information becomes available and/or the child remains absent for a protracted period, the risks should be re-assessed, shared with the agencies and kept on the child's file in each agency. The most recently completed Risk Assessment should remain on the child's file in all agencies working with the child.



## Appendix 4: Looked After Child Information Sharing Form

COMPLETED and UPDATED record to be provided to POLICE  
Please use this template to update information on children in your care, or for whom you are responsible.

### Section 1

**To be completed at the start of the placement and maintained throughout**

<b>Full Name:</b>  <b>Previous names</b>  <b>Nickname/Street name:</b>		<b>Recent Image of Child</b>
<b>DoB:</b> .	<b>Current home address:</b> .	
<b>Contact and Social Media</b> <b>Mobile phone number:</b>  <b>Facebook Username</b>  <b>Twitter Username</b>  <b>BBM detail/PIN Access Code:</b>  <b>Email addresses:</b>  <b>Any other social media: (Instagram etc)</b>	<b>Primary contact:</b>  <b>Office Tel No:</b>  <b>Mobile Tel No:</b>	<b>Height: .....</b> <b>Weight: .....</b> <b>Build: .....</b> <b>Complexion: .....</b> <b>Eye Colour: .....</b> <b>Hair: .....</b> <b>Marks, scars, tattoos:</b>
		<b>Physical/Psychological disabilities</b>
		<b>Ethnicity:</b>  <b>Nationality:</b>
<b>Legal status (including orders/Immigration)</b>		<b>School/College/Employer (including contact details)</b>
<b>Medical requirements – Including Medication</b>		
<b>Placing Authority:</b>	<b>Social Worker name:</b>  <b>Contact (phone/Mobile/email)</b>	

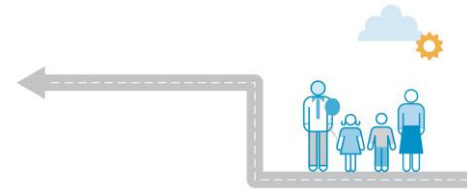


<p><b>Childs Next Of Kin – Including relationship and contact:</b></p>	<p><b>Detail of Child protection plan if relevant</b></p>
<p><b>OYSTER Card Number &amp; Adult Sponsor (U16):</b></p>	<p><b>Bank Account Details and Access to funds: Eg Debit card etc</b></p>
<p><b>Does the child smoke, consume alcohol or illegal/recreational drugs? Provide full details:</b></p>	<p><b>Provide details of the child's friends, include their home address and contact details:</b></p>
<p><b>Locations Frequented/Places or worship If the child has been missing before, include where they were found</b></p>	<p><b>Details of other associates and family members that the child has contact with, include their home address and contact details:</b></p>
<p><b>Risk Factors – Victim or potential victim, of forced marriage, FGM or trafficking, or sexual exploitation</b></p>	
<p><b>Risk Factors – At risk from Gang Involvement/Membership</b> <i>Consider new acquaintances, unexplained cash funds, regular travel patterns</i></p>	
<p><b>Risk Factors – Is the child previously known for Suicide Attempts or Self Harm Tendencies:</b> <i>Provide details including dates</i></p>	

**Section 2**  
**To be updated when the child goes missing**

<p><b>Circumstances:</b></p>
<p><b>Risk Factors - Recent Behaviour or incidents that have occurred leading up to being missing</b> <i>Victim of crime or bullying, problems with school/college, bereavement/life changing events.</i> <i>Include recent ABSENT or UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE details</i></p>





<b>Risk Factors</b> - Does the child need essential medication or treatment not readily available to them e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin	
Place last seen:	
Time & Date:	
By whom:	
Who with:	
Description:	
Reporting person Name, role and contact details	

<b>Missing Incident – Attempts to Locate</b> Contact Enquiries with Known Friends, Relatives and Acquaintances			
Date	Time	Name/Contact No and Address	Result
<b>Notes</b>			
Completed by			Date / Time
Received by			Date / Time

**This form should be emailed to police when the child goes missing, and must include an up to date photo**



## **Appendix 5: Children Missing Monitoring Form (Children's Home)**

[Click here to view Appendix 5: Children Missing Monitoring Form \(Children's Home\)](#)

## **Appendix 6: Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care: Flowchart to accompany the statutory guidance**

[Click here to view Appendix 6: Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care: Flowchart to accompany the statutory guidance](#)

## **Appendix 7: Information Sharing between Schools & LA Children's Social Care**

[Click here to view Appendix 7: Information Sharing between Schools & LA Children's Social Care](#)

## **Appendix 8: Safeguarding Children Missing Education Process for Schools**

[Click here to view Appendix 8: Safeguarding Children Missing Education Process for Schools](#)