

2017 - 2019

PAN CHESHIRE JOINT PROTOCOL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families across Cheshire, or those using services in the area. It is intended that this protocol will assist in developing robust responses to running away, which mirror the good practice already established across Cheshire. It should be used to ensure all partner agencies are effective in their role in developing preventative services for children and young people who are at risk of running away.
- 1.2 This protocol has been developed to ensure a consistent approach across all agencies and in response to recent government guidance. It also introduces the new College of Policing definition of missing which will apply across Cheshire with effect from 1st June 2016.
- 1.3 It has been written jointly by Halton Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council and Cheshire Constabulary. The relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board and other assurance frameworks will be responsible for ensuring an annual review of the effectiveness of all aspects of the protocol.
- 1.4 The most effective assessment and support comes through good information sharing, joint assessments of need, joint planning, and professional trust within the interagency network and joint action in partnership with families. Halton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Safeguarding Children Boards expects all agencies including the faith and voluntary sector and commissioned services, working with children or young people who are missing from home or care to implement this protocol and ensure that all relevant staff are aware of it and how to use it. It should be used in all new contacts with children and young people.

1.5 If you believe that a child is at immediate risk, this should be reported without delay to the Police service; for emergencies use 999 as well as making contact with Children's Services:

- Halton 0151 907 8305 Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 0345 050 0148
- Cheshire East 0300 1235010
- Cheshire West and Chester 0300 1238123
- Warrington 01925 444239

1.6 Children with mental or emotional health needs, learning and physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable when missing. They may have communication difficulties and fewer opportunities to disclose reasons for running away. They are also far more at risk of sexual or other exploitation or Trafficking. All agencies should be alert to the particular needs of disabled children, making sure they know how to raise concerns and receive whatever assistance and support they require. If any child or young person within this category goes missing they should immediately and automatically be considered as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). For further information on CSE and Trafficking see the Pan Cheshire CSE and Trafficking Protocols via the LSCB websites.

1.7 It is essential that everyone is working together for children and young people and ensure that:

- All appropriate agencies and individuals are notified if children and young people are missing and / or return;
- A clear plan of effective inter-agency action is taken to trace or return children and young people who go missing;
- Appropriate and effective actions are taken when children and young people return or are located. This includes provision of a return interview and on-going support when required;
- The Police are appropriately notified of children and young people who go missing;
- Information is gathered to support the reporting requirements of the statutory guidance which includes the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Council Members and the DofE, and also to inform local practice;
- Children and young people are positively encouraged to influence the outcome of any professional intervention;



- All partners regularly update their knowledge of safeguarding procedures;
- Raising awareness of children who are missing with all professionals and others who work with children, young people, families and the general public;
- Protect and prevent vulnerable children from going missing and contribute to reducing the number of people going missing;
- Provide effective and early intervention and prevention strategies to help reduce the potential of repeat cases;
- Be aware of the name of the lead LSCB / local authority person in their own organisations;
- Ensure that all new employees receive safeguarding training that explains the potential vulnerability of all categories of missing children and the procedures to follow.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 The following definitions apply to this protocol and relate to children who run away or go missing from home or care. These definitions come from the Department of Education (January 2014) statutory guidance on children who run away who run away or go missing from home or care.

- **Child:** A child or young person under the age of eighteen. Care leavers cover young people aged 16 – 24 years.
- **Care leaver:** an eligible, relevant or former relevant child as defined by the Children Act 1989.
- **Young runaway:** A child or young person under the age of 18 who has run away from their home or placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.
- **Missing child/Young person:** A young runaway reported as missing to the police by his 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 authority that is responsible for the young person's care and care planning.
- **Host local authority:** The authority in which the young person is placed when placed out of the responsible authority's area.
- **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. This should be reported to the police as missing and a record of this should be made.
- **Abscorder: An absconder is a child or young person who is unlawfully at large:** In a small number of cases, young people become looked after children because they are remanded to local authority accommodation by a Youth Court, having been charged with a criminal offence. This is known as a Remanded to Local Authority Accommodation (RLAA). The child may be placed in secure accommodation, but may also be placed in a non-secure children's home or foster placement. A child who goes missing when RLAA is unlawfully at large, and in legal terms has escaped custody.
- **Accommodated:** A child is accommodated if the Local Authority looks after her/him with the voluntary agreement of his/her parents or with the child if s/he is over 16 years old.

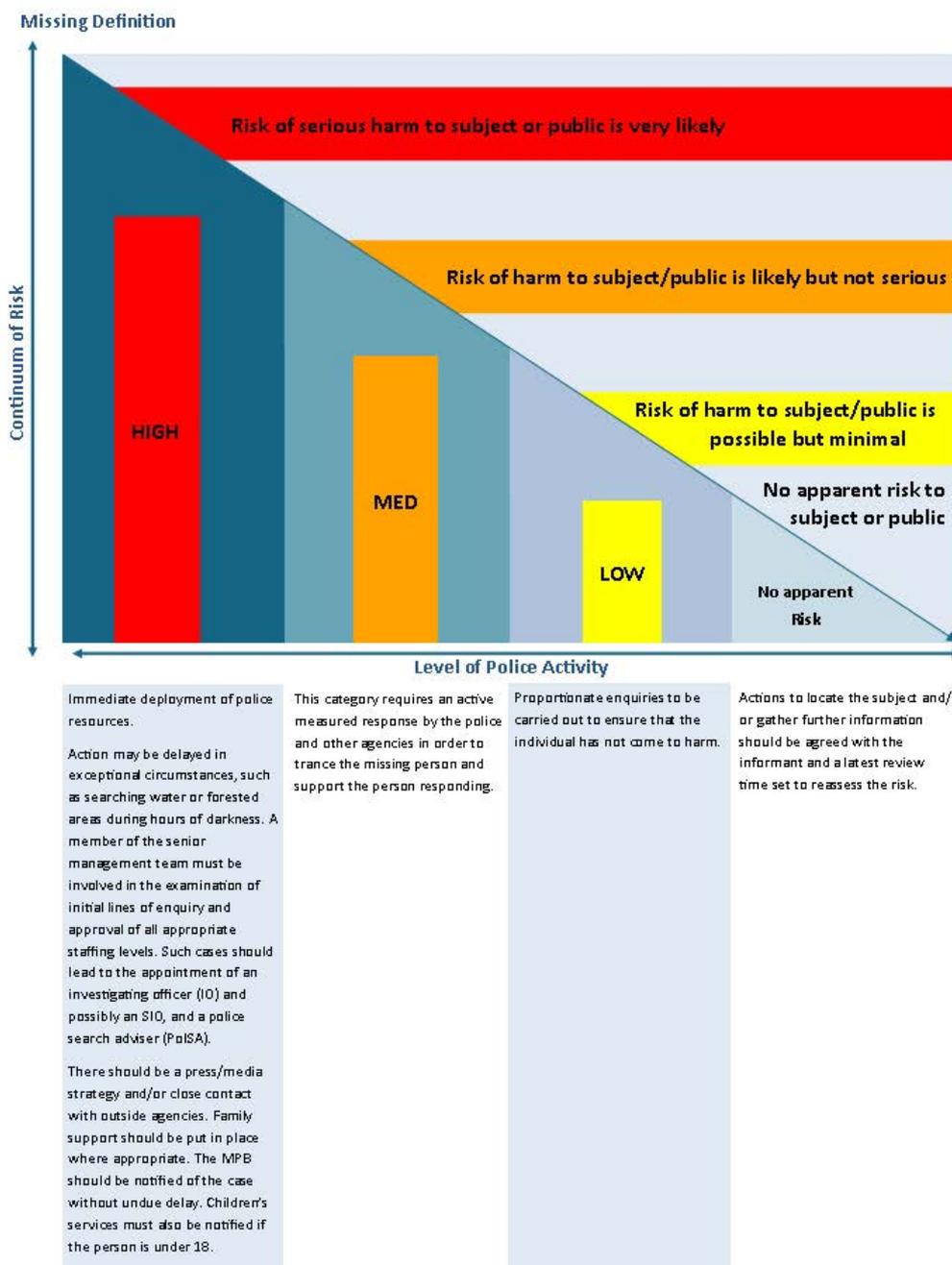
2.2 Missing

2.2.1 In line with the College of Policing guidance, with effect from 1st June 2017, Cheshire Police have adopted a risk based approach to managing incidents where children or young people go missing.

Definition of 'missing'

'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.'
All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk (absent)' through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action.

Risk Assessment and Response



3. SCOPE

3.1 The protocol is designed for:

- All children and young people who go missing from their family home living in the boundaries of the Cheshire Local Authorities.
- Children looked after by the Cheshire Local Authorities placed within children's homes or foster homes (either Local Authority or independent) within the Local Authority boundaries.
- Children looked after by the Local Authority who are living with parents or relatives and who are subject to a care order.
- Children and young people in the care of other local authorities who are placed in Cheshire. Other Local Authorities placing children within 'the host Local Authority' boundary will be required to comply with this protocol. 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 co-ordinated.
- Children and Young people looked after by the Cheshire local authorities placed outside of the Cheshire boundaries

3.2 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 including a missing service were appropriate. This should include full registration with a GP near to where they live. Notification of the placement must be made to the host authority and other specified services. Any information around trigger or safety plans should be shared across local authorities and with the police so that all areas can act appropriately. See Appendix 3

3.3 Within this context, "Children Looked After" refers to children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, children subject to Care Orders including Interim Care Orders, Section 31 and 38 Children Act 1989, and children who are otherwise provided with accommodation by Section 21 Children Act 1989. These include children on remand and children subject to a supervision order with a residence requirement.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 This protocol should be read as guidance only and cannot anticipate every situation. Anyone working with children in a professional capacity should use their judgment to take whatever action is deemed necessary to protect and safeguard the child, based on an assessment of risk for each individual. **Safeguarding principles should be followed alongside the missing protocol.**
- 4.2 Anyone who has care of a child without Parental Responsibility must do what is reasonable in all the circumstances to safeguard and promote the child's welfare (Children Act 1989 s3 (5)). It is likely to be 'reasonable' to inform the police, or Children's Services, and, if appropriate, their parents, of the child/ young person's safety and whereabouts; This includes the person caring for the young person who is acting as a 'private foster carer' within the meaning of s66 of the Children Act 1989. Children that are not subject to Care Orders but are in kinship arrangements and formal arrangements for contact with birth parents are in place.
- 4.3 Our joint aim is to reduce the incidence of all children going missing. Children who go missing may place themselves and others at risk and each missing episode is potentially serious. The reasons for running away are often varied and complex and cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances or their experiences of care. Every missing episode should attract proportionate attention from the professionals involved, who must collaborate to ensure a consistent and coherent response is given to the child on his/her return.
- 4.4 4.4 When a child does go missing our joint aim is to prevent that child suffering harm and to recover the child to safety as soon as possible. We do this by partnership working, information sharing, and problem solving and performance management. Interventions may be focused on the individual child, the child's home, or by targeting 'pull' factors in the community.
- 4.5 Interventions are important in attempting to address and prevent repeat missing episodes. Interventions for looked after children must be informed by and reflected in the placement information record and in the care plan. Interventions must also be informed by effective return interviews. Children's views and concerns will be taken seriously and each local authority area has independent advocacy services that can be accessed by young people where required.
- 4.6 Interventions may be focused on the individual child, the child's home, or by targeting 'pull' factors in the community.

- 4.7 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. If there is concern that the child may be at risk if returned home, the child should be referred to children's services' social care to assess their needs and make appropriate arrangements for their accommodation.
- 4.8 Across Cheshire there is a helpline supported by the Missing People Charity via Cheshire's commissioned service and is open 24 hours a day 365 days per year **0808 168 9698**. It is staffed by experienced Missing from Home Case Workers and fully trained volunteers. This helpline is open to young people, parents and carers there is also a variety of support for families across universal and specialist services.
- 4.9 4.9 The Local Authority, Residential and Foster Carers will report all incidents of missing to the police according to this protocol. Cheshire Constabulary will receive and record incidents of children missing from their home or care. Local authorities must ensure that incidents are appropriately risk assessed, and record all incidents for looked after children. See **appendix 1** for further details on these procedures.
- 4.10 The police will prioritise all incidents of missing children as highlighted in 2.2. A risk assessment is undertaken for each missing person on every separate occasion they are reported as missing. Due consideration will be given to their age, vulnerability and risks, including child sexual exploitation, capacity or learning difficulties of the young person.



5. PROCEDURES FOR A CHILD MISSING FROM HOME

5.1 Responsibility of parents / carers

5.1.1 Children who go missing from their home often place themselves at risk. The reasons for their absence are often varied and complex. Every 'missing' episode should be responded to effectively with professionals from all agencies and organisations involved with the child working together to ensure the child's safe return.

5.1.2 All children who have gone 'missing' must be reported to the police.

5.1.3 Parents and those with parental responsibility are normally expected to undertake the following basic measures to try to locate the child, if considered safe to do so, prior to reporting the child as 'missing'.

- Search bedroom/ accommodation/ outbuildings/ vehicles
- Contact known friends and relatives where child may be
- Visit locations that the child is known to frequent, if possible.

5.1.4 However, if there is any cause to believe that the child may have been harmed or is at risk of being harmed then the police must be informed **immediately**.

5.1.5 Any person who has care of a child but does not have parental responsibility should take all reasonable steps to locate the child and ascertain their safety. In these circumstances it is expected that the Police will be informed without delay when a child goes missing.

5.1.6 Children under the age of 16 years old are not legally considered as being able to live independently. For children over the age of 16 years old, consideration should be given to their legal status, physical and emotional needs and vulnerability when making a judgment as to whether they can live independently.

5.1.7 Anyone who has care of a child without parental knowledge or agreement

should also do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. In these circumstances, they should inform the Police, Children's Services and the parents of the child's whereabouts and safety.

5.2 All agencies

5.2.1 If it comes to the attention of any agency that a child is missing, they must advise the parent/carer of their need to report this matter to the Police.

5.2.2 They also need to advise the parent it is ALSO the agency's duty to ensure that they as agencies will be reporting the matter to the Police.

5.2.3 All staff should be aware of the need to identify children missing from education and how to notify the Local Authority where they know or suspect that a child is missing from education. Contact information and notification forms for Children Missing from Education can be found on each LSCB website. Schools as well as informing the parent should also contact the police in light of a missing incident.

5.2.4 The government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. These children are referred to as Children Missing Education.

5.2.5 Children are identified as Missing from Education where they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time

5.3 Role of the Police

5.3.1 Upon receiving a report of a child being missing from home, the Police will carry out enquiries aimed at locating the child as soon as possible.

5.3.2 It is important that in undertaking their investigative role the police has the full support of other agencies and other organisations and adopts an effective multi-agency approach in their efforts to trace the missing child.

5.3.3 The police will carry out a risk assessment for each individual on every separate occasion they are reported missing. This risk assessment will form the basis for the subsequent investigation into the child's disappearance.

- 5.3.4 In the event that a 'missing' child has not been reported by parents/carers and enquiries identify risk factors at the home address then relevant safeguarding procedures will be implemented.
- 5.3.5 The Police will notify the relevant Local Authority's Children's Services department of all missing children. This should normally be done as soon as possible but in any case within 24 hours of the report. This will be done by the Vulnerable Person Assessment (VPA) route.
- 5.3.6 Throughout the missing episode, the Police are responsible for on-going enquiries, risk assessment and proportionate actions. In the event of a continuing missing episode good communication and close cooperation is essential to ensure that any significant concerns are identified and appropriate safeguarding action is taken. Police need to be aware of any cross boundary issues and communicate with other force areas and local authorities as appropriate.
- 5.3.7 When a child has been missing for a period of 48 hours the Police will update the Local Authority of any significant developments. Contact will be made with the Local Authority at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate. In some cases it may be appropriate to undertake a case review meeting, which should be arranged and led by the police with representatives of the relevant agencies / organisations who have been involved with the missing child.

5.4 Return of the child

- 5.4.1 Where a missing child is found then they should be returned to their parents / carer or other person with parental responsibility.
- 5.4.2 Where a child is returned or has returned 'home' of their own accord it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to contact the Police and confirm that the missing child has returned.
- 5.4.3 It is the responsibility of the parents or carers to arrange any necessary transportation for the child to return to their home. In exceptional circumstances, in the interests of the safe and speedy return of the child, the Police may agree to requests from parents or carers to assist.
- 5.4.4 In all cases, once the child has been located, the Police will need to undertake a 'prevention interview' to ensure that the child is safe and well and 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. This is NOT a 'return interview' (see paragraph 8.1 below)

and the 'prevention interview' must not be conducted over the telephone, the child must be seen..

- 5.4.5 Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation or trafficking, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, a referral must be made to the Local Authority in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.



6. PROCEDURES FOR A MISSING LOOKED AFTER CHILD

6.2 Procedures

Prior to any placement, a written Placement Information Record (PIR) should be completed, outlining expectations about how it will meet the child's needs, how positive routines will be maintained, and how they will be supported to achieve their potential. Every looked after child must have a care plan, subject to regular review, that sits alongside the PIR. This process must include an evaluation of whether a child is likely to run away. Where this is likely, strategies should be put in place to minimise risk, what services that are required for the management and support for missing, how return interviews will be carried out and the pathway to inform the social worker.

- 6.3 Each looked after child has a care plan based on a full assessment of the child's current and future needs, including potential risk to self or others. The care plan will therefore take account of any risk that the child may go missing in future and any factors which may increase the risk to the child should they go missing. Children's residential and fostering service staff should contribute to this assessment. All information should be included in the placement plan and in the child's care plan. Within these plans due regard should be given to young people that will go missing and to ensure that the plans reference that the Cheshire protocol will be followed. As part of this assessment it may be appropriate for the Local Authority to consult with the Police to share

information that may be of relevance. **Appendix 2** contains a Missing from Care risk assessment this is required to be completed with the relevant staff and young person and reviewed on a monthly basis or as incidents occur.

6.4 This assessment should include information on the following:

- The likelihood of the child going missing;
- The child's view;
- Consideration of the measures that can be taken to prevent the child going missing;
- The level of supervision / support that care staff propose to provide for the child;
- The views of parents/carers on their child needs and the action that needs to be taken if the child is missing
- Consideration of any external influences which may result in a child's removal without consent;
- The likelihood of the child being harboured;
- Note the prevalence, from current statistical information, of 14-16 year olds going missing;

6.5 A trigger plan (action plan), applicable to that child, should be formulated to cover the event of the child going missing. This trigger plan should be agreed by all relevant parties including the local authority, police and placement provider. An example of a trigger plan is in **Appendix 3**.

6.6 The care plan will remain in the possession of the Local Authority. It is not a public document. It is not envisaged that the Police will need to view the care plan at any time. However, there may well be circumstances when it is necessary to involve the Police in aspects of the care planning process to safeguard the child.

6.7 The residential unit manager/foster carer should consider the most appropriate ways to meet the above requirements and to ensure that they discuss 'running away' and the requirements of this protocol with the child.

- 6.8 Carer's, including staff acting in a parenting role in care homes, are accepted to accept normal parenting responsibilities and undertake reasonable actions to try and establish the whereabouts of the individual. For example, a child who is late home from a party should not be regarded as missing until the carer has undertaken enquiries to locate the child.
- 6.9 The fact that the child may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk. In fact, children who repeatedly go missing are often being enticed away from their placement by activities that they see as exciting or by predatory influences.
- 6.10 Clearly some children are absent for a short period and then return, with their whereabouts known to the carer. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose to test boundaries, or accidentally. Examples of situations are: running away after a dispute, failing to return on time, staying at a known location with a friend.
- 6.11 If the carer assesses that the child is at risk due to any factor/s known to the carer, then the child should be reported as missing without delay and the believed risk communicated to the Police. If the assessment of the carer is that there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety but the child is away from their placement it is still important that staff/ carers record these incidences as away from placement in the child's record. This does not need to go to the police. In addition to this staff/ carers should always start a dated/ timed record of their contacts, risk assessment and decisions throughout the episode from the point that they are aware of the child's absence, in case the level of risk changes and decisions are auditable. All episodes of away from placement should be recorded by the carer and reported to the relevant social worker at the local authority and the social worker should inform the IRO.
- 6.12 If the child's whereabouts are known or suspected, the staff will decide whether to allow the child to remain at that location, albeit temporarily, or to arrange for their return. If the decision is to arrange their return and there is reason to believe that there may be public order difficulties, Police assistance will be sought. Police assistance in these circumstances does not mean that the child is categorised as missing.
- 6.13 Care Leavers may be particularly vulnerable to going missing. Care leavers are required to live in suitable accommodation and any risk assessment should take account of whether care leavers feel safe in their accommodation and the area where it is located. Pathway Plans will set out where a young person may be vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking or going missing, and support services to minimise this risk should be put in place.

Missing

- 6.14 If the decision is that of the child being 'missing' then staff / foster carers will complete a Cheshire Constabulary Form 200036, 'Report of Missing Person' (Form 36). **Appendix 4** shows the F36 form.
- 6.15 Staff / foster carers will telephone Cheshire Constabulary (**101**) and inform them that a child is missing from their establishment / home, giving details of the location where the child was last seen, the circumstances in which the child is missing, any immediate concerns that there may be for the child's safety and the reasons why they are being reported as 'missing'.
- 6.16 Cheshire Constabulary must get details of the placing responsible Local Authority from the staff or carer in case this is outside of the Cheshire boundaries. All correspondences will then take place with the responsible Local Authority but the relevant host Local Authority will also notified for information purposes only.
- 6.17 The carer will provide information to the police about any risk factors associated with the child on the missing person form.
- 6.18 Staff / foster carers will request that the Police 'incident number' is given to them. The Police 'incident number' must be recorded on the Form 36.
- 6.19 Staff / foster carers will then forward the Form 36 to the Police Force Control Centre by email via force.control.room@cheshire.pnn.police.uk (or fax via **0845 359 5909**). If staff / foster carers do not have access to the internet or to a fax then an officer must call and collect the form.
- 6.20 The Local Authority will ensure that sufficient knowledge and information about the child is recorded to enable carers to complete the missing person form should the child go missing in future.
- 6.21 Where available, an electronic version of the missing from home form should be completed. It may be that in cases of 'persistent' episodes, sections of the form can be completed in advance to enable speedy and accurate reporting if and when required.
- 6.22 When receiving a missing person report the Police will tailor their response to the circumstances. If information is available to suggest a possible location of the missing child, and this gives rise to concerns about the safety of the child, the Police response will be to immediately address those concerns, perhaps postponing the administrative recording duties for a short time in favour of safeguarding.
- 6.23 In circumstances where a child is reported missing from a residential home,

the senior care manager responsible for the unit will ensure that the following basic actions are undertaken;

- Conduct a thorough search of the premises
- Speak to any known friends and relatives where child may be
- Speak to other residents or other persons who may be able to assist with the investigation
- Speak to other (previously on duty) colleagues and care staff who may have had some form of earlier contact with the missing child

6.24 Carers must also inform without delay:

- The parents/those who have parental responsibility (unless indicated otherwise on the care plan)
- The Social Worker or the accountable team manager
- The emergency duty team if out of hours and the Social Worker and accountable team manager the next working day

6.25 Where there is a Child in Care that is placed within the Cheshire Local Authority (host) boundaries but comes from another local authority the residential staff or foster carer will inform the police and the placing responsible authority but also pass this information on to the relevant host Local Authority.

Absconder / Unlawfully at Large

6.26 A child is to be considered as having 'absconded' or being 'unlawfully at large' when he / she is absent from their placement without permission and is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. where the child has appeared before a youth court and has been remanded into Local Authority accommodation). A child in this category must be reported to the Police without delay.

6.27 If the child is under the age of 16 years the Police will treat the matter as BOTH a missing child case AND an unlawfully at large case. This means that it will be necessary to provide detailed information to the Police on the Form 36. When the child is traced however, it is likely that they will also be arrested or dealt with by the Police in relation to any offence or breach. It is essential however, that they are also viewed as a child in need of protection and safeguarding, and any risks exposed to during their absence must be reviewed fully.

6.28 However, if the child is aged 16 or over, the Police will treat the child solely

as a person unlawfully at large and not as a missing child, unless there are grounds to suspect that factors other than the child's desire to evade justice are involved in their disappearance.

Roles and responsibilities

- 6.29 The local authority has a range of corporate parenting duties in relation to children in care and should always apply the "reasonable parent" test when planning and making decisions in relation to the children in its care. This means having the same interest as any reasonable parent would have for their own children in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare. Both the relevant Safeguarding Children's Board and the Corporate Parenting Boards have a key role in monitoring the incidents of children and young people who go missing from care.
- 6.30 After reporting a child missing, Children's Services remain responsible for the child in their care. This responsibility is not absolved when the child has been reported missing to the Police.
- 6.31 Carers and the child's Social Worker will be responsible for liaising with the Police, taking an active interest in the investigation and passing on all information, which may help to inform the investigation and assist in protecting the child while absent or missing.
- 6.32 Carers and the child's Social Worker should continue to make appropriate enquiries with other residents or by telephone with all persons who may be able to assist with the investigation unless they are requested not to do so by the Police. All information gleaned from these enquires should be passed to the Police.
- 6.33 Once a child is reported missing to the Police, the Police will have primacy in respect of the investigation to trace the child.
- 6.34 In certain circumstances the Police may need to revisit the duties initially performed by care staff. When necessary they will do so in liaison with appropriate children's services staff and will do so sensitively, causing as little disruption as possible to the establishment and residents.
- 6.35 Throughout the process in this protocol, residential carers and social workers must keep a full record of all actions taken and messages received and given.
- 6.36 Independent Reviewing Officers / Managers (IRO/M's) should be informed about all episodes of away from placement without authorisation or missing where relevant so that these can be addressed via review meetings.

Review of continued missing episode

- 6.37 When a child has been missing for a period of 24 hours the social worker should inform the relevant senior manager as per the Local Authority protocols via the usual line management route.
- 6.38 Throughout the missing episode, carers and the Police will continually review the case. After the child has been missing for five days, or earlier, if deemed appropriate, an urgent case review meeting will be held. It will involve Police officers, carers, the child's Social Worker, and any other professional involved in the care of the child. The meeting will review:
- What action has been taken so far by the Police and professionals
 - What action needs to be taken by the Police and professionals
 - Decide whether the child should return to that placement when located
 - Consider any other relevant information
 - Whether further such review meetings will take place and the time scales for such review meetings (it is suggested that a period of at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate).

Return of the child

- 6.39 Where a missing child is found then they should normally be returned to their placement.
- 6.40 It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to arrange for transportation for the child to return to their placement.
- 6.41 There may be circumstances when, in the interests of the safe and speedy return of the child, the Police are requested to assist the Local Authority in returning the child. The Police should not unreasonably withhold assistance in cases involving local recovery and transport missions for vulnerable children. However, the Police will not agree to requests to provide escorts for missing children, which would unreasonably involve officers leaving their normal areas of patrol.
- 6.42 Where a child is returned or has returned of their own accord it is the responsibility of the carer to contact the Police and confirm that the missing child has returned.
- 6.43 If it is apparent, upon the return of a child, that they have been the victim of a

crime whilst missing, or that they may be in danger or at risk from any person arising out of circumstances that have occurred whilst they were absent then the Police must be called and asked to attend without delay.

- 6.44 Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, trafficking, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, the allocated social worker and the Independent Reviewing Officer must be informed.
- 6.45 Where the child is in foster placement, the Police will verify the child's safe return in person.
- 6.46 Some of the children that local authorities look after may be unaccompanied asylum seeking children or other migrant children, and some of 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 child who goes missing immediately after becoming looked after should be treated as children who may be victims of trafficking. For further information on Trafficking see the Pan Cheshire Trafficking Protocol via the LSCB websites.



7. PREVENTION INTERVIEWS

- 7.1 Cheshire Police will carry out a Prevention Interviews on all children and young people who have been categorised as missing, as soon as practicable after they are found and should be completed within 24 hours of the person being located. The details will be recorded on VPA and passed on to the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care.
- 7.2 When a child or young person has been located following an episode deemed 'Missing', statutory guidance requires that 'The police will undertake a prevention interview to establish whether there are 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'.
- 7.3 The objective of the prevention interview requires a Police Officer to physically see and speak to the missing child or young person as soon as possible after they are found. Where viable the Police Officer should speak to the young person independent of the parent or carer. The Police should also speak to the child or young person's parents or carers to satisfy themselves that the child or young person is safe. The key aims will be to:
- Determine the reasons why the child or young person went missing and in particular, if they have been subject to violence, exploitation, abuse or bullying;
 - To establish if they have been the victim of or committed any crime whilst missing;

- To obtain information which may lead to their early location should they disappear again;
- To put in place any support and preventative measures to avoid such a recurrence;
- To inform the child or young person and their parents and carers, if appropriate, that:
 - a. the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care has been notified of the missing episode; and
 - b that they will be contacted by an Officer of the Local Authority and offered an Independent Return Interview

7.3 Where a child or young person goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable for the Police to conduct a prevention interview and a different approach may be more appropriate. In these cases, discussion should take place between the Police and the child's parent or carer or, if Looked After, their allocated Social Worker, to agree the frequency of such checks. Given the established link between frequent missing episodes and serious harm, which could include gang involvement, forced marriage, bullying or sexual exploitation, agreements not to conduct a prevention interview should be recorded by both Police and Social Care. The Police Sergeant on duty must sign off with a rationale where there was no prevention interview conducted.



8. RETURN INTERVIEWS

- 8.1 A return interview is the term applied to the safety, needs and risk assessment carried out in the form of a formal discussion with the child.
- 8.2 The interview provides an opportunity to hear from a child or young person about why they went missing and to understand the risks and issues faced by them whilst missing. Children and young people sometimes need to build up trust with a person before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they ran away.
- 8.3 It should be conducted by a person who is independent of the child's home / placement and who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow up any actions that emerge. The responsible local authority should ensure the return interview takes place, working with the host authority where appropriate. Within Cheshire there is a commissioned service that will undertake return interviews; however social workers or other identified practitioners where appropriate can undertake return interviews following a discussion with the commissioned service.
- 8.4 Account should also be taken of any preference the child has for the conducting of the return interview if the intervention plan identifies the need for a particular key worker then they should conduct the interview.
- 8.5 When it is not practicable for a return interview to be conducted by the most suitable person, or an independent person, it is better that an interview is conducted by a nominated care professional than no interview being conducted at all. The following table highlights the return interview arrangements within Cheshire.

Pan Cheshire Local Authority Return Interview Arrangements	
Circumstances of the Child or young Person	Return Interviewer
For a child or young person living within Cheshire Local Authorities not an open case to Children's Social Care	The notification of the missing incident will come via the police. The Cheshire Commissioned Service is responsible for undertaking the return interview. This interview will inform whether the child or young person is in need of services or at risk of harm.
Cases with an allocated Worker (Children In Need and subject to a Child Protection Plan)	The notification of the missing incident will come via the police. The Cheshire Commissioned Service or relevant Social Worker (unless there is a suitable professional that the child would prefer) is responsible for undertaking the return interview.
For a child or young person 'looked after' by the Cheshire Local Authorities placed up to approximately 20 miles within Cheshire boundary	It is the social workers responsibility to inform the Cheshire Commissioned Service of the missing incident. The Cheshire Commissioned Service or relevant Social Worker (unless there is a suitable professional that the child would prefer) is responsible for undertaking the return interview. If the commissioned service is not available then it's the responsibility of the social worker to undertake the return interview. A record of the interview will be provided to the IRO/ M.
For a child or young person 'looked after' by Cheshire Local Authorities placed further than 20 miles away from the Cheshire boundary	At point of placement the social worker (were missing is identified from the risk assessment) is responsible for ensuring access to a local independent advocacy/ missing service should a missing episode occur. (<i>This will be outside of the Cheshire Commissioned Service.</i>) Details should be available on the Placement Plan which is accessible and known to the carer.
For a child or young person 'looked after' by another local authority placed within the Cheshire Local Authorities	The notification of the missing incident will come via the police. The Cheshire Commissioned Service or relevant Social Worker (unless there is a suitable professional that the child would prefer) is responsible for undertaking the return interview. A record of the interview will be provided to the responsible local authority.

8.6 The purpose of the interview is:

- To better understand the reasons why the child went missing
- To explore the circumstances which led to the missing episode(s)
- To inform future prevention strategies
- To inform any future missing person investigation should that person go missing again
- To learn of the activities, associates, risks and victimisation involved in the missing episode, and where possible to address those risks with appropriate and proactive strategies such as the use of the harbouring warning notices under the Child Abduction Act
- To identify and address any harm the child has suffered – including harm that may not have already been disclosed as part of the safe and well check.
- To provide information on how to stay safe if they choose to run again; including helpline numbers

8.7 The 'return interview' is different from the Police 'prevention interview', it must not be viewed as a routine or administrative task.

8.8 Every child that goes missing from home or care will be offered a return interview. There could be some occasions where a return interview may not occur for every missing episode for example repeat runners or those involved in direct work.

8.9 The return interview should be conducted in all instances within **72 hours** of the child's return, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

8.10 Cheshire Constabulary and the relevant Local Authority Social Workers are required to send details of the missing Incident to the commissioned services case worker within 24 hours. The case worker has a further 48 Hours in which to see the child, and will aim to see them independent of an adult.

8.11 Appropriate safeguarding procedures should be followed where there are safeguarding concerns for example:

- Where the child has been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing (or this is believed to have been the case)
- Where there is known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or contact with persons posing risk to children

- 8.12 It is acknowledged that a returning child may well share different parts of their experience with different people. It is the responsibility of all agencies therefore, to attend to issues of immediate safety, future support and safeguarding needs, and information-sharing in a way which respects and safeguards children and young people. The acceptable minimum in the event of a single missing episode is that the missing episode is risk assessed following information gathered and cross referenced from the child, the carers and the Police.
- 8.13 In some circumstances the child may make extremely sensitive disclosures that need particularly careful management that should be recorded separately but referred to on the return interview form. In such circumstances it may be appropriate for the interviewer to discuss the information with relevant professionals.
- 8.14 Where a return interview leads to an identification of a safeguarding issue that needs specific action, for example, to safeguard the child or investigate a crime the matter should be referred to the Local Authority and/or the Police.
- 8.15 For looked after children it remains the responsibility of the relevant Social Worker to ensure completion of the return interview. There is an additional responsibility on the child's placement to monitor that they are conducted within agreed timescales. In the event that the return interviews are not conducted within 72 hours, then the carer should alert the relevant Manager in Children's Services.
- 8.16 If the child or young person refuses to take part in the Return Interview, parents and carers must be offered the opportunity to provide any relevant information and intelligence. This should help to prevent further instances of the child running away and identify the support needed for them going forward. If the child/ young person is open to social care then options should be explored for the social worker of the child/ young person to undertake the return interview. Return interview template and guidance can be accessed by: http://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/halton/p_ch_miss_care_home_ed.html?zoom_highlight=missing



9. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- 9.1 In all missing child cases it is vital to the safe recovery of the child that a recent photograph of the child is made available. The photograph must be a good likeness of the child. Most commonly the photograph will be used by local Police officers to help them recognise the child when patrolling or when actively looking for the child at relevant locations.
- 9.2 The consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any missing person investigation.
- 9.3 In respect of looked after children, a recent photograph bearing a good likeness to the child will be kept on record by the Local Authority. When a child is admitted to care the consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any subsequent missing person investigation.
- 9.4 In some cases, particularly where a missing child is felt to be especially vulnerable or where they have been missing for a long period of time, it may be necessary to publicise the case via the media.
- 9.5 Such an approach is not routine but is usually a response to very serious concerns for the child's safety, either carers or the Police may suggest such an approach. Normally, such decisions will be made in consultation with parents and Children's Services. However, for operational reasons primacy over such decisions must lie with the Police.
- 9.6 The Police may also utilise the website facility of the Missing Persons Bureau

(www.missingkids.co.uk) to publicise the absence of the child or young person.

- 9.7 If the case falls within the criteria for 'Child Rescue Alert' then any decision to publicise the case is likely to be urgent. It will be made in accordance with nationally agreed procedures by a Police officer of the rank of Detective Superintendent. In cases involving looked after children, where practicable, Halton Borough Council, Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council will be consulted in advance.



10. RESPONSE TO ESCALATING CONCERNS

- 10.1 If a child has run away two or more times, local authorities should ensure a discussion is held, either with the child, their family or both, to offer further support and guidance. Actions following earlier incidents should be reviewed and alternative strategies considered. Access to and timeliness of independent return interviews should also be reviewed.
- 10.2 Where there are concerns in relation to a child going missing multi-agency meetings under CAF, Child in Need, Care Planning under section 17 or 47 should be in place and followed in line with child protection procedures, as good practice, to address these issues and to ensure the right information is shared with agencies. There will also be links through local authorities CSE risk assessment and risk management.
- 10.3 Formal intervention meetings, in response to escalating concerns must take place in the event of repeat episodes of children going missing and following the first missing episode if there are concerns in relation to sexual exploitation. For these meetings to work, and thereby improve our collective responses, appropriate attendance and clarity of purpose are essential. The intervention meetings should be held **within a week** of any trigger episode, this could require a separate meeting outside of any care planning meeting already established.
- 10.4 The first stage intervention meeting will take place after **five episodes** within a 90-day rolling period. This level of intervention meeting is the crucial stage in avoiding serious escalation and must, therefore, be given high priority by all concerned.

10.5 The meeting should be chaired by a Senior Children's Services Manager, attendees should include:

- Child*
- Social Worker or relevant lead professional
- Local Police Missing Person Co-ordinator
- Parent and or carer, residential worker or foster carer
- Fostering Social Worker
- Person who conducted return interview if different to above
- Other relevant professionals (For example Health, Education, Youth Offending Teams)

*Discussion should take place between the chair and the child's Social Worker or relevant lead professional about whether it is appropriate for them to attend.

10.6 This meeting should try to identify any 'push' or 'pull' factor in the case and any other voluntary or statutory agency, which has an interest, or may take an interest, in the missing child's welfare and circumstances. In the case of 'pull' factors it may be necessary to target those in the community who harbour the missing child or exploit them with regard to crime, sex or drugs. The meeting should be minuted and **MUST** produce a clear action plan, including timescales for action, named lead professionals, risk/ contingency planning and regular review dates. The notes of the meeting should be copied to all professionals invited. In addition, copies should be sent to the child's allocated IRO, where the child is looked after, and the Children's Services Lead Manager. These minutes need to be circulated **within 5 working days** after the meeting has taken place.

10.7 The second stage intervention meeting will take place after nine episodes within a 90-day rolling period. The meeting should be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer or a Senior Children's Services Manager, attendees should include:

- Child*
- Social Worker or relevant lead professional
- Local Police Missing Person Co-ordinator
- Parent and or carer, residential worker or foster carer
- Person who conducted return interview if different to above
- Other relevant professionals (For example Health, Education, Youth

Offending Teams)

*Discussion should take place between the chair and the child's Social Worker or relevant lead professional about whether it is appropriate for them to attend.

- 10.8 Meetings at this level should be rare provided that this protocol has been followed with regard to the 1st stage intervention meeting and return interviews. The meeting should be minuted and **MUST** produce a clear action plan, including timescales for action, named lead professionals, risk/contingency planning and regular review dates. The notes of the meeting should be copied to all professionals invited. In addition, copies should be sent to the child's allocated IRO, where the child is looked after, and the Children's Services Manager. In addition to seeking to reduce future missing episodes and reduce any apparent risks to the child, this meeting should also quality assure compliance with the protocols and the efficacy of the 1st stage intervention meeting and return interviews. These minutes need to be circulated **within 5 working days** after the meeting has taken place.
- 10.9 If the child continues to be reported missing beyond this level the Senior Manager for the area in consultation with the police Chief Inspector must consider the case and direct further intervention. Further strategies should continue to be managed by the Senior Manager / Police Chief Inspector until the risks to the child have reduced and/ or the missing episodes have been reduced or ceased.
- 10.10 It should be noted, however, that the volume of missing episodes is not the only reason to launch an intervention or to escalate the level of intervention. The following are examples of other reasons to initiate or escalate interventions:
- Any case where the risks involved in even a single future-missing episode is very high
 - Any case where sexual exploitation is a factor
 - Cases where it has been identified that immediate action is necessary to ensure the well-being of the child
- 10.11 N.B. In cases of a child going missing from an out-of authority placement the responsible authority calls a professionals' meeting involving the relevant organisations from the host authority, to determine action, and to ensure change. When a child who has a history of going missing is moved to an out-of-authority placement, the host authority should be informed of the risk, and as part of the placement agreement, appropriate details should be shared to support the Local Authority to manage the risks to inform care planning for the individual child.

- 10.12 It should be noted that if any one agency or professional has increased or serious concerns for a child's well-being or safety then they may call a multi-agency strategy/ Section 47 Strategy meeting at any time, regardless of the number of missing episodes.
- 10.13 When it is believed that an adult is adversely involved with a child going missing the Local Authority will invoke safeguarding procedures and the Police may consider using enforcement tactics such as the Child Abduction Notice legislation. [Section 2 Child Abduction Act 1984 or Section 49 Children's Act 1989]
- 10.14 Alternatively the Local Authority and/or parents, supported by the Police, may decide to institute civil proceedings to obtain an injunction preventing any particular adult having any contact with a named child.

11. GOVERNANCE

11.1 This protocol will form part of the Pan Cheshire Safeguarding Children Procedures. The relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board and other assurance frameworks are responsible for co-ordinating the activities of member agencies in relation to the effective implementation of this protocol. Each local authority has a senior officer that is responsible for policies and performance for children who go missing from home or care; In Halton and Chester West and Chester this is the Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, In Cheshire East this is the Head of Safeguarding Manager Children, Families and Adults and for Warrington this is the Head for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding

11.2 Each Cheshire Local Authority has established an appropriate sub group/ pathway that is responsible for Missing Children from Home and Care, Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficked young people. Reports will be fed into the LCSB and other assurance frameworks as appropriate. These reports will reflect key elements including some of below:

- To review the local implementation of the protocol
- Analysis of missing from home incidents; patterns and outcomes
- To identify any patterns and trends in running / missing episodes and links to CSE and trafficking.
- To develop local strategies / plans to address concerns / patterns / trends.
- Safeguarding implications
- Practice and procedural issues

11.3 The meeting will be attended by:

- Senior manager from the local police
- Senior manager from the relevant Local Authority Children's Service Department
- Senior manager from the relevant Local Authority Residential / Fostering Services
- Registered managers of local Care homes
- Other professionals may be co-opted on to the group depending upon local needs.

11.4 Quarterly Pan Cheshire meetings will also take place with strategic representatives from the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, the Local Authorities and the Police. The purpose of this meeting will be;

- To review the implementation of the protocol on a Pan Cheshire basis;
- To consider the provision of services for children missing from both local authority care and home;
- To identify any patterns and trends in running / missing episodes and any cross border issues
- To consider the provision of training for those responsible for management of, and services to, children missing from both local authority care and home;
- To monitor on a Pan Cheshire basis the provision of single and multi-agency data collation and information sharing processes.

11.5 The representatives from the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Boards are responsible for ensuring updating their respective Board with any Pan Cheshire issues or areas for concern.



12. COLLECTING AND SHARING DATA ON CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING

- 12.1 Early and effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for the identification of patterns of behaviour. This may be used to identify areas of concern for an individual child, or to identify ‘hotspots’ of activity in a local area.
- 12.2 Data about children and young people who go missing from home or care should be included in regular reports to Council members, especially to the Lead Member for Children’s Services and in reports by the local authority to the LSCB or other assurance frameworks. Each local authority with regard to looked after children will record all missing episodes through their relevant social care case management systems.
- 12.3 Compliance visits will also be undertaken with residential providers and part of this will be to review data/ records of missing young people.
- 12.4 Cheshire Constabulary will work in partnership with the Local Authorities to collect data on children reported missing from care and home and other relevant data. This data will be regularly analysed in order to map problems and patterns. This will include identifying patterns of local “hotspots” sexual and other exploitation, as well as concerns about who children run with and who they runaway to be with. The results will be reported into the relevant meeting structures and Lead Members were required. (Note for national data collection purposes only the authority responsible for a looked after child that is missing should include that child as missing in returns to the Department for Education.
- 12.5 Cheshire Constabulary will work and share information with other police forces and local authorities as required to ensure effective cross boundary working with missing cases including the transfer of primacy and the originating force

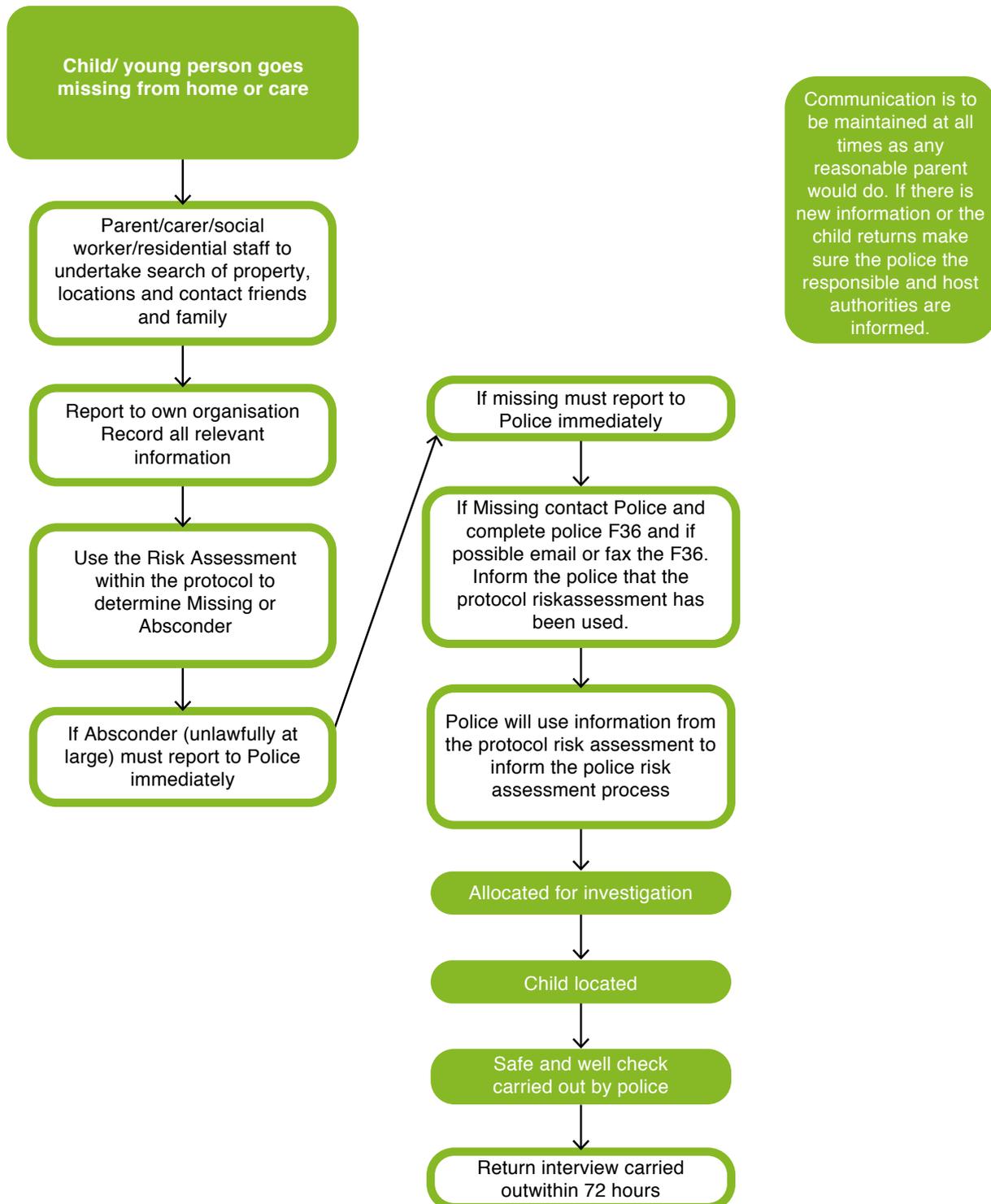


to keep the incident open until the child/ young person has been located.

- 12.6 Each month the strategic Public Protection Unit will send to each local authority a tracker that shows all missing young people. The tracker will show the type of placement and the number of episodes over the last 6 months, the responsible local authority, CSE or other significant risks.
- 12.7 The commissioned service provides regular reports to each local authority and subsequent boards around the activity of commission this includes further data on reasons for young people running, associates that they run with as well as highlighting positive outcomes for young people.
- 12.8 The sharing of data will help organisations across Cheshire to identify risks in their area, such as exploitation, gangs or crime related activity that might not be apparent. It will also help identify trends, for example, whether children are going missing from a particular children's home or other patterns across the local authority. This will enable organisations to have a proactive approach to the needs of children and young people across Cheshire.

APPENDIX 1

Procedures for reporting a child that is Missing or Absconder (unlawfully at large)



If children placed out of their local authority run away the host local authority Missing Protocol should be followed. A notification process for missing/absent episodes should be in place between the responsible and host local authorities

APPENDIX 2

LOCAL AUTHORITY MISSING FROM CARE RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment: for children and young people who run away from care or are at risk of becoming missing from care.

(The risk indicators can also be used to inform assessments for children and young people who run away or are at risk of running away from home.)

Name of child or young person:..... ID:.....

Date of Birth: Age:..... Legal Status:

It is important in completing this risk assessment that you consider the definition of missing:

‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.’ All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from ‘no apparent risk (absent)’ through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action

The risk indicators should prompt the assessment and any relevant information, which should be included under the section “risk assessment information”.

Risk indicators	Risk assessment information
What are the usual circumstances of the child/young person going missing i.e. is the young person running to someone or from a situation? When does the child/young person usually leave the home?	
Where do they usually go? Are they with family or friends or with people who are unknown or undesirable?	
What level of maturity has the young person shown in being able to make decisions about themselves or others?	
What are the agreed coming in times, if any?	
Do they have access to any money and how if necessary will they obtain this?	
Are there any known issues/events happening in the child’s/young person’s family or close friends?	
Past method of return i.e. via family or on their own	
What is the risk of suicide/self-harm? What are the indicators of this?	
Likely use of drugs/alcohol/solvents? If so, type and amount?	
Past involvement of offending and in what form? Is the child/young person a risk to the community and in what way?	



Risk indicators	Risk assessment information
<p>Is there risk of sexual exploitation? Have sexual exploitation protocols been activated (e.g. CSE strategy meetings)? Any previous harm suffered while absent?</p>	
<p>Any concerns about new friend's /boyfriends/ girlfriends/ associates?</p>	
<p>Any concern of abduction or being prevented from returning? Is there a risk of forced marriage?</p>	
<p>Are they experiencing bullying/racial and/or homophobic abuse? Any signs or indicators that child is experiencing difficulties or abuse in the placement?</p>	
<p>Is the child/young person on medication or suffering from medical condition?</p>	

Physical or learning disability/difficulties?	
What is the child/young person’s legal status?	
Any further information and knowledge	

This risk assessment grid above should be used as a guide and involve discussion and pooling of information to agree an informed risk assessment. In cases of little knowledge or where there is disagreement, the child or young person should be considered as being at higher risk.



Concluding risk assessment

--

Action to be taken by whom and by when (in bullet points)

Young Person Date.....

RCCW/Foster Carer..... Date.....

Home Manager/Family Placement Worker.....

Date.....

Categories of absence: for children and young people who run away from care

Missing	Usual action
<p>Missing – “Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.’ All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from ‘no apparent risk (absent)’ through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a risk assessment 2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises. 3. Inform on-call manager/senior. 4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details 5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility 6. Inform/discuss with social worker/Emergency Duty Team
Unlawfully at large	Usual action
<p>A child is considered unlawfully at large when they are absent from their placement without permission and are subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice system</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a risk assessment 2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person search premises. 3. Inform on-call manager/senior. 4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details. 5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility. 6. Inform and discuss with social worker/ Emergency Duty Team 7. Inform Youth Offending Service/probation/legal as appropriate.

Unauthorised absence– lower risk	Missing /unlawfully at large– higher risk

Signature of staff member PRINT NAME

.....

Date and time:

Signature of line manager:

PRINT NAME

APPENDIX 3 CHESHIRE TRIGGER PLAN CONFIDENTIAL

Date of plan
Name and job title of worker completing plan:
Local Authority area:
Child:
Insert photograph
Home Address:
For Cared for Child: placement address:
Contact details (mobile telephone, social media)
Child Status – Home / Care (If care state responsible local authority and legal status)
CARE HOME – local authority, private residential (*delete as appropriate)
Foster Carer
Placement with parents/relatives
Parental Responsibility – Kinship arrangements etc.
Overview of child/ young person circumstances:
Associates
Places frequented/ hotspots.
Significant risk indicators
E.g. Self-harm/Alcohol/Drugs/CSE/Gangs/Criminality/ Trafficking
Significant underlying vulnerabilities
Professional risk assessment High: Risk of serious harm to child or public very likely Medium Risk of harm to child / public likely but not serious Low Risk of harm to child / public possible but minimal No apparent risk No apparent risk to the child or public. Rationale for risk assessment

In the event thatis to be reported Missing from Home or Care Parents, Carers and Staff should undertake measures to try and locate the child.
This list is not exhaustive and the order in which they are completed should be dictated by the situation/incident presented at the time. It is known or suspected that XXX has an article in his possession that could potentially cause harm this information MUST be passed to the Police at the time of reporting.
1. Staff / Parents/ Carers are to ensure that a search for Including the accommodation, surrounding grounds are conducted to negate the possibility of them hiding nearby.
2. Staff/ Parents/ Carers to have visual contact with and monitor their movements, try to establish communication with them and to try and persuade them to return home.
3. Staff/ Parents/ Carers to search the area into and train station, Telephone Kiosk's and bus stops,
4. For staff / Parents/ Carers to contact relevant family/friends of.....to enquire if XX has recently communicated and to advise them of the incident. For staff / Parents/ Carers to supply this up to date list to police.
5. For staff/ Parents/ Carers to try to ascertain if has recently communicated with anyone via social network or discussed with other individuals options of leaving.
6. For Staff to visit train station to search and to have available a current photograph of
7. Where required Police to inform CCTV or appropriate travel networks
8. For staff / Parents/ Carers to check belongings and compile a list of any items including bank cards, cash and travel passes that may be in their possession.
9. If out of hours staff/ carers to inform Social Care emergency duty team

Actions to be taken when XXX is found

- Ensure that the child's record is updated and other professionals who may be involved with the child are informed, and where the child is in care that parents are informed
- Inform parents/carers/staff/ young people that they will be offered a Return Interview and any risk factors identified in that inform the plan for the child.
- Make sure you follow up with the child and talk with them about what happened. And any actions you can agree with them to help prevent them going missing again and how to keep them safe. This is particularly important if the child has refused a return home interview
- If suspects present when found – even without a disclosure consider arrest for Abduction if the child is under 16yrs, Incite child to engage in Prostitution pornography – the child does not need to receive money for this offence to be committed just a suspicion they have engaged in a sexual act with an adult in return for drugs etc.
- Trafficking in the UK, have they been driven to a hotel etc. by someone for the suspected purpose of engaging in any sexual offence – does the NRM process need to be complete, Grooming, have been contacted via social media and asked to meet for sexual activity?

This is not an exhaustive list and a full review of the circumstances should be undertaken of each missing report and you should re-visit the risk management and reduction plan on each occasion

RESTRICTED/CONFIDENTIAL (On completion of this form delete as appropriate)

APPENDIX 4**FORM 36 REPORT OF MISSING / FOUND PERSON**

HIGH RISK MISSING PERSON

MEDIUM RISK MISSING PERSON

LOW RISK MISSING PERSON

MISSING CHILD or YOUTH (Under 18 Years). LOOKED AFTER BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

MISSING CHILD or YOUTH (Under 18 Years)

FOUND ADULT

FOUND CHILD

FOUND BODY

ABSCONDER FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE

ABSCONDER FROM HOSPITAL (Record here Mental Health Act, Section..... and
Expiry date for Mental Health Act 1983 Order**Date of Initial Report****Incident No.****Reporting Officer****Force / Station Code****Case Reference No.****SECTION 1 IDENTITY / DESCRIPTION DETAILS (Use BLOCK capitals)**

Surname.....

Forename(s).....

Date of Birth

Sender

School/Occupation.....

SECTION 2**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Place of Birth.....

Nationality.....

Other Name(s) Used.....

Maiden Name.....

Nickname(s) / Alias (es).....
 Address from which missing.....

 Home Address if different from above.

Section 3**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Ethnic Appearance:

White European / 3. Afro Caribbean / 5. Oriental / 2. Dark European / 4. Asian / 6. Arab
 / 0. Unknown

Features:

Height:

Marks / Scars / Tattoos / Body Piercings (visible when clothed).....

Marks / Scars / Tattoos / Body Piercings (normally concealed beneath clothing)

Complexion.....

Build.....

Sideburns.....

Colour of Eyes.....

Eyesight Correction (where applicable)

Description of Spectacles

Contact Lenses Worn : YES / NO

Beard

Moustache.....

Peculiarities (Limp, Stammer, Other Disabilities)

Hair:

Length

Colour(s)

Hair Style (Description)

RECENT PHOTO

SECTION 4**CLOTHING**

Shirt / Sweater

Trousers

Outer Wear

Underwear.....

Head Wear

Gloves

Other Clothing.....

Footwear

SECTION 5**JEWELLERY**

Pierced Ears: YES / NO

Ear Rings (Description)

Other Body-piercing Jewellery (Description).....

.....

.....

Watch (es)

Bracelet(s)

Rings

Necklace(s)

Other

SECTION 6**CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH MISSING**

Last Seen: Time..... Date

Where?

By?

Who talked with misper?

What was discussed?

.....

.....

Misper seen going which way?

.....

Reason for leaving?

.....

.....

Attitude (confident/confused, etc.)

.....

Misper complaining of anything?

.....

Other comments concerning misper

.....

General Health

Factors for Concern (Medication, Drugs, Dressed, Suicidal, Violent, etc)

.....

.....

Consequences of missed medication

.....

.....

SECTION 7**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION****Medical Information:**

Doctor

Address

Telephone No.....

Dentist.....

Address

Telephone Number

Finance:

Money in possession of misper

Bank 1 Telephone No

Account Number

Bank 2 Telephone No.....

Account Number

Credit Cards:

Company 1

Account Number Telephone Number

Company 2

Account Number Telephone Number

Vehicle Access by misper:

Make Model

VRM

Colour

Other distinguishing features
.....
Location Now

SECTION 8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
(HABITS / PLACES FREQUENTED, ETC)

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION 9

INFORMANT DETAILS

Surname
Forename
Telephone Nos: Home
Work
Mobile.....Other
Relationship
Next of Kin
Contact: Address / telephone
.....
Relationship
Person to Notify when missing person found
.....
Publicity: The informant should be informed of the possible use of the media in assisting
in attempt to trace the missing person.

National Missing Persons Helpline Pamphlet issued: YES / NO

SECTION 10

CONSENT TO ACCESS RECORDS

I consent to the Cheshire Constabulary, in investigating the disappearance of the person named in this report, to make any necessary enquiries with the named doctor / dentist / educational establishment / workplace / financial or other agency, or their representative, and examine, take, copy and retain any material considered relevant to the enquiry : YES / NO

Date

Name

Signature

Relationship to misper

APPENDIX 5 LEGISLATION

The legal parameters within which missing person enquiries are conducted can be found in common law, international law and the provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). Some of the provisions of the ECHR have been given legal effect within the United Kingdom by virtue of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Data Protection legislation places certain conditions on the 'processing' of information classed as personal data. Data held for policing purposes should only be disclosed for such purposes. Adherence to this agreement will therefore ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Data Protection legislation does not prevent the Police and Local Authority working together to ensure the safe return of a missing child. Both organisations are registered for the purpose of protecting people and therefore for disclosing information for that purpose.

This protocol is based on and should be read in conjunction with

- The National Minimum Standards in Residential and Fostering Agencies (2011)
- Local Authority Missing From Education procedures
- Statutory guidance on children who runaway and go missing from home or care (2014).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and related statutory guidance (2013)
- The Missing Children and Adults strategy (2011)
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009)
- The Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan (2011); and
- The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations volumes on care planning and review
- OFSTED report 'Missing Children' (2013)

