**Return Home Interview for children and young people who were missing and absent**

# Offering a Return Home Interview to a child who was missing/absent

1. When a child was reported as **missing** returns home a Police safe and well check must take place.
2. Within 72 hours of the child returning, a return home interview (RHI) must take place.
3. This will be undertaken by an appropriate Children’s Services professional (Early Help worker Personal Advisor or Social Worker). Thought should be given as to who is best placed to undertake this interview, as it could provide valuable information for future risk assessment, safeguarding and care planning.
4. The child will be given a choice of speaking to their allocated worker or speaking to an independent person.
5. If the child wishes to talk to an independent person, a return home interviewer will be appointed. This independent person will be part of the AXIS team.
6. If in the course of the safe and well check or RHI, information has been provided by the child that they have been trafficked or exploited, the social worker and team manager should give consideration as to whether or not a strategy discussion should be convened.
7. If a missing child strategy meeting has taken place, all attendees must be informed that the child has returned home. The social worker is responsible for ensuring this task is completed.
8. If a child returns home after they have been **absent**, the social worker and their team manager should decide whether a return interview should be undertaken, depending upon the assessed risks for the child. If a RHI is being done, the steps above (2 to 6) will apply
9. If the young person missing is a **care leaver**, the same approach is taken as for the children who are absent: the Personal Advisor (PA) and the Team Manager will consider whether a return interview should be undertaken, depending on the assessed risks for the young person.
10. The RHI will be completed as often as possible face to face. In some instances it may be more appropriate to be completed over the phone. However these will be kept to a minimum and the reason for not completing a face to face interview will be recorded and agreed with the Line Manager
11. The Return interview is used as the template to establish the ‘push factors’ which drove a child/young person to run away or go missing e.g. disputes with parent(s) or carer(s) and/or ‘pull factors’ which are those factors outside the home or care setting that drew a child/young person to run away or go missing e.g. family conflict or the influences of a negative peer group. The information gathering during the interview  also assesses the risk of harm and the likelihood of any future episodes of ‘missing’.

# Completing the Return Home Interview

1. When the RHI is discussed, the child will be offered an option of who will conduct the interview. They can chose their allocated worker or and independent person.
2. There will be instances where the allocated worker may not be the best person to discuss with the child about their missing episode (when the child is clear that he would not want to talk to their allocated worker) or the allocated worker is not available to undertake the interview due to holiday or sickness. In these cases a professional independent of the child’s allocated worker and their team will be offered to undertake the interview.
3. The independent person will be a person based in the AXIS team. They will be trained in undertaking and recording the interview in the child’s electronic record.

# Recording a Return Home Interview

1. When a child is reported as missing, Children’s Services will be notified by parents/carers or the police.
2. Once the notification is received the missing episode will be recorded in the child’s electronic record (see Appendix 1)
3. This section of the record will remain active until the child has returned.
4. When the child returned, the allocated worker will update the section “found” of the child’s electronic record.
5. The same process will be followed for the children who are absent
6. Upon receiving the workflow for the completion of the RHI, the allocates worker will start the RHI form
   1. If they are not going to be the professionals completing the RHI, the Allocated Worker will transfer the workflow and the completion of the form to:
      1. the Task Tray of the identified worker after having discussed and agreed who will complete the RHI
      2. the team Task Tray for AXIS when the interview is completed by an Independent person.
   2. When the child refuses to engage with the RHI, the person identified to completed the RHI will close the RHI form in child’s electronic record indicating in the “Form closure reason” section that: “child refuses to participate in the Interview”
7. When the RHI is completed and episode closed in the child’s electronic record, and automatic notification will be sent to:

* Team Manager
* Allocated Child Protection Advisor (if one allocated)
* The Independent Reviewing Officer (if one allocated)

# **Return Home Interview**

**Part 1 – interview offered**

*“A return home interview should be offered to any child/young person who was missing within 72 hours of their return. If the child was absent, the allocated worker and their line manager will consider if a Return Home Interview is needed, taking into account the assessed needs and risks.”*

1. Is the interview offered as a result of one or multiple missing episodes?

Drop down One/Multiple (if multiple, supplementary question: How many missing episodes are covered by this Interview?)

1. Date interview offered
2. Was the interview accepted
3. If accepted has the child chosen an independent worker or their allocated worker

**Part 2 – Return home interview**

The interview should take the form of a conversation more than a formal interview.

1. Date of the interview
2. Name of the person completing the interview
3. How are you feeling today?

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1. Explain the purpose of the discussion and explain confidentiality – discuss what information will need to be shared with other services and what information will always be kept confidential.

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1. What has been happening recently? - Update on general life - this often leads to the discussion re where they have been/why they left

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1. Where did you go when you were missing?

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1. Were you with anyone/who?

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1. Explore “Push Factors” which drove a child/young person to run away or go missing e.g. disputes with parent(s) or carer(s)

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1. Explore “pull factors” which are those factors outside the home or care setting that drew a child/young person to run away or go missing e.g. family conflict or the influences of a negative peer group, CSE, etc

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1. Did you feel safe?

Drop down: YES/NO

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1. Did anything happen that you were worried about/that we need to know about?

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1. Is this going to happen again? What can we do to stop this from happening? How can we make sure you stay safe if this happens again?

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1. Agree what happens next identifying as far as possible who will be doing what by when

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1. Any supplementary information

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1. Interviewer analysis

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1. Name of the Team Manager
2. Name of the Independent Reviewing Officer (if applicable)
3. Name of the Child Protection advisor (if applicable)
4. Was the interview conducted face to face or over the phone