

	Action/Date
Title/Status-	Joint Protocol
New document or revised	Revised
Date approved SMT	August 2019
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Service Fieldwork



**Children and Young People who go Missing from Home or Care**

# Joint Protocol 2017

Leicester City Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding

Children's Board Leicestershire Police

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## 1. Introduction

This protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, or those using services in the area. It should be read and implemented, where necessary, by all practitioners and managers working with children or young people who are at risk of going missing from home or care or who are already doing so.

This protocol will assist in developing robust responses to missing children and young people and should be used to engage partner agencies in developing preventative services for children and young people who are at risk of going missing.

The Local Safeguarding Children Boards expect all agencies working with children or young people who are **missing** 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.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's Safeguarding Children Boards will be responsible for ensuring an annual review of the effectiveness of all aspects of this protocol.

### 1.1 Contact Information

If you believe that a child is at **immediate risk**, this should be reported without delay to Leicestershire Police on the emergency number **999**. Non-emergency reporting can be made by calling **101**. You should also make contact with Children's Services on:

- Leicester City                      0116 454 1004
- Leicestershire                      0116 305 0005
- Rutland                              01572 722 407

Leicestershire Police Missing Persons Teams can be contacted as follows:

[Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)

Telephone 101 Extension 5008

#### **Children Missing from Care:**

In cases where children go missing from home or care should be reported to the Police whether they are Missing or Absconding.

Forms are available at [Appendix C](#) which includes:

1. Record of Initial Actions – to assist staff with their recording their decisions
2. Risk Assessment Form – to assist staff with recording their decisions

3. Missing Person Report Form - If the child has previously gone missing and is already on the police COMPACT system then the form only needs completing with any changes since the last report. Where possible, staff should complete this form and hand it to the police on arrival.
4. Return (from missing) Interview Form – completed forms should be emailed to: [missingreturninterviews@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:missingreturninterviews@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)
5. Word versions of these forms are available at <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse> they are also available to download from the Leicester City LSCB website <http://www.lcitylscb.org/>

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this protocol and relate to children who go, or have gone missing

**Missing person:** New APP (Authorised Professional Practice) **definition:**

The new definition for a **'missing person'** is as follows: “Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed”.

(NB: The absent category has been removed and there is now only missing on a continuum of risk from No apparent risk to High risk)

**Absconder:** An Absconder is a child who is absent from the placement without permission and who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, other bail conditions, PACE detention or ASBO's), or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings. A child in this category must be reported to the Police **without delay**.

If an absconder is under the age of 16 years, or if the absconding does not involve a power of arrest, the Police will treat the case as **BOTH** a missing child case **AND** an absconder. This means that it will be necessary to provide detailed information to the Police on the missing child form and this will lead to a proactive Police investigation. 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.

**Child:** A child or young person under the age of eighteen years with the exception of a former relevant child within the meaning of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000; these young people continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority up to the age of 21 (24yrs if in receipt of full time education).

### **Child in care / looked after child/ accommodated:**

- Looked after by a Local Authority if s/he is “in care” by reason of a court order, or if s/he is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by agreement with her/his parents or with the child if s/he is aged 16 or more.

(Children accommodated under Sect 20 of the Children Act 1989, children subject to Care Orders including Interim Care Orders, Sect 31 and 38 Children Act 1989, and children who are otherwise provided with accommodation by Sect 21 Children Act 1989. These include PACE transfers and children on remand (bailed to reside as directed by the Local Authority).

- 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.

**Absconded:** When a missing child is subject to a court order, such as curfew or bail conditions, Police must be made aware of the order and the expiry date in order for the child to be classified as an absconder. If the expiry date of the order is not known, the child will be classified as a “missing person” NOT an absconder.

**Sexual exploitation:** Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) 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.

Please follow this link to the Office of the Children's Commissioner's website <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/> and you can then view the final report on gangs and groups.

The NWG Network has developed a CSE definition which is utilised in the UK government guidance and policy <https://www.gov.uk/> to view the definition click on this following link: <http://www.nwgnetwork.org/who-we-are/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation>

**N.B.** For the purposes of these protocols a ‘missing’ child will be defined as one where the missing episode has been reported to Leicestershire Police and is recorded on the police **COMPACT** database.

### **3. What makes missing children and young people important?**

We all have a responsibility to safeguard the young and vulnerable. Going missing can be symptomatic of wider problems in a child or young person’s life, but whatever the reason, one thing is clear: children who decide to go missing are unhappy, vulnerable and in danger. More tragically, ‘missing’ may result in loss of life and may be the first stage of a police murder enquiry.

The Children’s Society through its research has identified the following risk factors that can precede a missing incident:

- Arguments and conflicts

- Conflict within a placement
- Poor family relationships
- Physical and emotional abuse
- Boundaries and control
- Step parent issues

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities
- Involvement in criminal activities
- Victim of abuse (including [Forced Marriage](#), [Honour Based Violence](#))
- Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and [exploitation](#)
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Missing out on schooling and education
- Increased vulnerability

Longer-term risks include:

- Long-term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- Crime
- Homelessness
- Disengagement from education
- Poor physical and/or mental health (see [Neglect Practice Guidance](#))
- [Child sexual exploitation](#)

It is important, through the risk assessment process, to ensure that resources are targeted at locating those young people who are particularly vulnerable.

Where a child has been left behind anywhere, such as on a trip, then their whereabouts will be unknown and they will be considered as missing until located and their well-being established.

This protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of all those concerned with

this process. The protocol depends on good communication and a willingness by all parties to work together to promote the welfare of all young people.

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Procedures. These are available on the LSCB web sites at:

[Leicester City: www.lcitylscb.org](http://www.lcitylscb.org)

[Leicestershire and Rutland: www.lrsb.org.uk](http://www.lrsb.org.uk)

For Police Officers, the protocol should be read in conjunction with the Leicestershire Police Missing Persons Policy and Procedures.

## 4. 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).

### **Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act 1998 has been considered with regard to this protocol. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance. This means striking a fair balance between the rights of the individual and those of the rest of the community. The right to life and the protection thereof will always be the primary consideration in striking this balance. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

### **Data Protection Act 1998**

It should be remembered that the personal details of any individual, amount to personal data. That includes information about the missing person, the person reporting, anyone the missing person has been associating with during the time they have been missing and any other person whose details have been recorded, as a result of the enquiries undertaken.

Additional information about an individual's medical history, offences committed by them whilst missing, or similar information about others with whom they have been in contact whilst missing, may amount to sensitive personal information and must be handled accordingly.

Those involved in the collection of information relating to a missing person must ensure compliance with the Data Protection Principles in that the information collected must be accurate, relevant and necessary to achieve the particular aim.

Personal and sensitive personal information should be handled in accordance with the Government Protective Marking Scheme. Officers and Local Authority staff should ensure that all personal information is exchanged and held securely.

### ***Information Sharing and Confidentiality:***

[http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_info\\_shar\\_confid.html](http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_info_shar_confid.html)

**Statutory guidance on children who go missing from home or care DfE 2014:**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307867/Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Missing\\_from\\_care\\_3\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf)

**Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation – Action Plan April 2013:**

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/tackling%20child%20sexual%20exploitation%20action%20plan.pdf>

**Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

**Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland:**

[http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_sg\\_ch\\_y\\_p\\_sex\\_exploit.html](http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_ch_y_p_sex_exploit.html)

## 5. Scope

The protocol is designed for all children and young people living within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Authority areas.

It contains specific provisions for children looked after by those Local Authorities placed within children's homes or foster homes (either Local Authority or independent) and children who are living with parents or relatives and are subject to a care order.

Local Authorities must ensure that all private residential care homes within LLR are made aware of and work to this protocol which applies to all placements, including those young people from outside the local authority area.

### 5.1 Internal and External County Placements of Young People

It is acknowledged that young people will be placed within the areas of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland by external Local Authorities. Conversely, it is also understood that young people normally domicile in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland will be placed externally. There will be a requirement to record instances of the young people being missing and this protocol should be utilised during those occurrences.

## 5.2 Young People from Leicestershire, Leicester or Rutland who are in placements outside the Leicestershire area

There is an expectation that the local police and the local Children's Services will be informed if the child is missing. Part of the commissioning arrangements should include obtaining information about the local "missing protocol". If it seems that the young person is running back to their home authority, close liaison will be needed between the two police forces.

The procedures regarding risk management and planning/strategy meetings should apply regardless of where a young person is placed.

## 5.3 Young people who are in independent sector placements within the Leicestershire area, placed by Leicestershire, Leicester or Rutland

This protocol applies to this group of young people. It is the responsibility of the placing local authority to ensure that the providers they commission implement this protocol.

In addition, this protocol will apply to all young people placed within the Local Authorities boundaries (including those aged over 18) for which those Authorities have continuing responsibilities under The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

## 6. Principles

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.***

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 their absence 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 proper attention from the professionals involved, who must collaborate to ensure a consistent and coherent response is given to the child on his/her return.

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, problem-solving and performance management.

Interventions are important in attempting to address 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.

Interventions may be focused on the individual child, the child's home, or by targeting 'pull' factors in the community.

The Local Authorities will report a child, missing or absconding to Leicestershire Police according to this protocol. Leicestershire Police will also receive and record reports of children missing from their homes. The Local Authorities and the Police will monitor compliance with the protocol and monitor outcomes jointly via quarterly performance reports and multi-agency meetings.

## 7. Procedures for a Child Missing from Home

### 7.1 Responsibility of parents/carers

***Parents, those with parental responsibility and anyone else who has care of a child without parental responsibility should take all reasonable steps to locate the child and ascertain their safety before reporting the child as or missing to Leicestershire Police. They are expected to undertake the following basic measures to try to locate the missing child if considered safe to do so:***

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

Once the basic measures are completed it is expected that the Police will be informed ***without*** delay.

If there is any **serious concern** for the safety of the child at any stage, the **Police** should be **informed immediately**.

### 7.2 All agencies / members of the public

If it comes to the attention of any agency that a child is missing, they must advise the parent/carer of the need for them to report the matter to the police. They also need to advise the parent of the agency's duty to ensure that the matter has been reported to the Police and that they will follow this up by contacting the Police to verify that the child has been reported missing.

The consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any subsequent missing person investigation.

### 7.3 Role of the Police

All reports to Leicestershire Police of a child being missing will be notified to the Contact Management Department (CMD). At the point of the initial report, a 'Storm' record will be created.

Using the National Decision Making Model the Call Taker will establish the relevant circumstances and make an initial assessment as to whether the child should be recorded as missing (and whether they should be treated as high or medium risk).

The Call Taker will use the following set of questions to assist in the decision making / risk assessment process:

1. Detail the brief circumstances of going missing / absent?
2. Where, when last seen and by whom?
3. What has been done so far to trace this individual, and if not why not? \*\*Emphasise to caller they should undertake reasonable enquiries and continue to do so \*\*
4. What is the description of the person including clothing?
5. Is this significantly out of character, if so why?
6. What is the specific concern in this instance (if any)? (e.g. vulnerable due to age, Infirmary, mental health or physical illness, cognitive delay and learning disability )
7. Any last known intentions or preparations made prior to going missing?
8. Have they taken any personal items with them – clothing, passport etc?
9. What is the person's last known Home Address?
10. Do they have a mobile phone in their possession? (Network and Phone Number required )
11. Identify any place they may go to and why: specific interest or to find solace/peace and quiet?
12. Are they subject to any Mental Health Section- if so what and why?
13. Are there any specific medical needs that require medication and if this isn't available what are the effects and timescales e.g. diabetes, asthma, allergies, as these could result in impaired communication and risk to life if untreated in severe cases?
14. Are they likely to be a victim of crime – if so why?
15. Are they likely to be the victim of abuse – if so explain? (Domestic / Sexual / Racial / Bullying / Homophobic)
16. Are they currently at risk of sexual exploitation or on Child Protection register – If so from whom?

17. Are they likely to self-harm, attempt suicide – give details including last known attempt – (how, where, when)?
18. Have they been exposed to harm in any previous missing episode – if so provide details (including when)?
19. Do they pose a danger to themselves or any other persons?
20. Does the missing person have a current or previous history of drug or alcohol abuse (give details)?
21. Details of any vehicle using or normal mode of transport if none.
22. Details of messaging and social media used including usernames and passwords if known.
23. What access do they have to money?
24. Is there any other information relevant to their absence that may affect or influence a supervisor's risk assessment?
25. Have you completed the question set? Answering yes will close.

It is important that all assessments, review and action taken in relation to an incident are accurately recorded in the STORM (command and control system) log at the time.

### **Missing Persons Reports**

The assessment of risk is often a difficult process and must be carefully considered. The 25 questions above may help to identify what risk there is, but it is not an exhaustive list. Out of character behaviour is a strong indicator of risk.

Careful consideration must be given to all reports to ensure that an absence of information indicating that the person has come to harm isn't mistaken as a demonstration that the person is safe and well. Unless a person's whereabouts are properly established e.g. by actually seeing them, it is not possible to be certain of the risks they face.

There is clear evidence that those who exploit children are mindful of official processes and will seek to circumvent them and this must be considered when dealing with absences. It is common for offenders to time their abuse to coincide with the normal rhythms of a person's life.

Other specific vulnerabilities for some children such as those with Child Protection Plans, disabled children, gang-associated children, etc., could all result in additional risks during periods of absence or missing. 'Looked after' children have been identified as at greater risk, and include all of those that are within the care system, including those in children's homes and foster placement.

Where a Call Taker receives a report of a person fitting the above missing person definition a Storm log will be created straight away. Based on the risk that is evident to the caller and Call Taker, the Leics Police Incident Response Procedure will be followed. Cases that have been identified as needing an

emergency will be treated as such. Compact will then be created following creation of the Storm log.

In all cases the CMC Team Leader will be made aware of and asked to view the incident and the suggested police response based on the risk identified.

An initial risk assessment will be carried out by the police to determine the level of police response to the missing episode. A further full risk assessment (see [Appendix A](#)) will be conducted by the Initial Investigating Officer, and subsequently confirmed or revised by a supervising officer. This will inform the extent of the investigation into the child's disappearance. A full risk assessment will be conducted for each individual on every occasion they are reported missing.

Children who have gone missing may come to the attention of the Police in a variety of circumstances. Where the Police locate a child who they believe may be missing, although not officially reported, assessment and enquiries based on the child's account of the circumstances will be made. These should include checks of Police systems i.e. PNC / PND/ GENIE/COMPACT / STORM as well as enquiries at the home address. In the event that a missing child has not been reported by parents/carers this should trigger further enquiries and assessment by the Police and other relevant agencies in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

If enquiries identify risk factors at the home address, safeguarding procedures will be implemented. If Leicestershire Police decide not to return the child to the home address, options should be discussed with Children's Services to identify suitable responsible adult(s) and/or accommodation. (Emergency Duty Team to be contacted after hours).

### **Overview to missing person's process**

**Discovery** - person is not at a place they are supposed to be.

This is the initial moment that someone's whereabouts are considered to be unknown, regardless of the circumstances.

**Enquire** - Make reasonable enquiries to locate.

**The parent or carer is expected to make reasonable enquiries at this time to establish where the person may be. This would include checking obvious places where they might be, asking friends, etc.**

**In circumstances of immediate risk of harm, the police should be contacted**

**immediately.**

**Still not located** – Risk remains - Report to police.

When reasonable enquiries have been made and there is still no trace of the person and there are concerns for their well-being, a report should be made to

the police. The initial assessment must determine the circumstances of the disappearance and make an assessment of the level of risk, including checks of police records.

**Oversight - supervisor checks - keep under review**

Supervisors must take responsibility for all risks, missing persons. This responsibility initially sits with the Supervisor in the CMD (Call Management Department), before the OCI (Operational Command Inspector) assumes overall responsibility. All reports must be kept under review to ensure that they are being responded to and resourced appropriately.

**Return - Are they safe and well? - Further investigation required?**

When a person is located or returns, the investigation does not end until the circumstances of their absence are understood. In either case the police must be satisfied that they are safe and well and, in the case of a missing person, that a return interview is arranged or undertaken. An independent return interview should be offered and provided within 72 hours of the child's return. When a looked after child (LAC) is placed within a host authority, the responsible authority should ensure the independent review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority. It is also important to consider any wider issues that may be the cause of their disappearance and whether any further action or engagement with other agencies is necessary.

**Monitor - Oversight of reports – referral - trends or patterns**

The role of the Missing Persons Team Sergeant is essential. They should have oversight of all reports to identify those that need to be referred to other agencies or otherwise dealt with in a multi-agency forum. This oversight can also identify trends and patterns relating to individuals or groups and indicate other forms of risk or offending.

**Recording**

Leicestershire Police will record an incident on their Command and Control system (STORM) on every occasion a child is reported as missing. Management of the initial report, including risk and resource allocation, will also be recorded. STORM will auto generate a COMPACT record on every 'missing' occasion. COMPACT is the electronic recording and investigation tool used by Leicestershire Police for all aspects of missing person cases. The COMPACT record will remain open until such time that the missing child is located.

A missing person report will generate a Police National Computer (PNC) circulation. This will only be cancelled when the person is found *and* the COMPACT report is closed.

Leicestershire Police will notify the relevant Children's Services of all missing children recorded on COMPACT. This will be done via an automated e-mail process to the Local Authority.

### **Review of continued missing episode**

Throughout the missing episode, Leicestershire Police are responsible for ongoing 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. When a child has been missing for a period of 48 hours Leicestershire Police should update the relevant Local Authority carers or family of any significant developments and at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate.

## **7.4 Return of the child**

It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to contact the Police and confirm that the missing child has returned.

If the whereabouts are known or suspected, it is the responsibility of the parents or carers to arrange for the child's return. In exceptional circumstances and in the interests of safeguarding the child, the Police may agree to requests from parents or carers to assist.

Where the police locate a missing child and they indicate that they are running away because of abuse within the home or care setting, then the police will not return the child to that setting and will instigate child protection procedures.

Also see chapter 7.2 LSCB procedure:

[Allegations against persons who work with children.](#)

[http://lrsrb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_alleg\\_staff.html](http://lrsrb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_staff.html)

## **7.5 Police Prevention Interview (formerly known as 'safe and well' check).**

Once the missing child has been located, the Police will carry out a Police Prevention Interview. It will not be conducted over the telephone. The 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. This will lead to the Police closing the missing person report on COMPACT and the case being cancelled on the PNC. **This is NOT a return interview.** The Police will notify the Local Authority of the return of the child and any relevant information automatically via e-mail generated by

## COMPACT.

The Local Authority is responsible for deciding whether a return interview is conducted for each missing episode. When a looked after child (LAC) is placed within a host authority, the responsible authority should ensure the independent review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority. See 8.11

### **Welcome home**

Children returning to care homes or foster homes should be made welcome by carers. It is **really important** to make the young person feel welcome on their return. Do not immediately question them on their return about the reasons for going missing; offer them something to eat and something to drink. If they want some space or sleep respect this wish. It will be important to make sure there is no immediate health or medical needs for the young person. Any urgent health or medical needs must receive immediate action. This process will result in a better outcome.

The return interview conducted by the Social Worker or Advocate will cover many of the issues for running away. As a parent/ carer you can assist by being non-judgmental and enquiring about the young person's welfare.

If it is apparent, on 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 missing then the Police will instigate further enquiries. This is vital for the protection of the child and for the speedy recovery of evidence.

In such circumstances, the missing child's clothing, mobile phone and trace evidence from their body, fingernails or hair may be crucial. In cases of sexual abuse the child should be discouraged from washing and immediate advice sought from the Police. If parents or carers become aware of the location of a scene of any crime committed against the child, or of the location of any crucial evidence they must notify the Police without delay. This will enable the Police to take steps to secure and preserve evidence.

Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, 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.

### **Prevention and Planning for all Children Supported by the Local Authority**

- Leicester City                      0116 454 1004

- Leicestershire 0116 305 0005
- Rutland 01572 722 407

Leicestershire Police Missing Persons Teams can be contacted as follows:

[Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)

Telephone 101 Extension 5008

## 8. Procedures for a child missing who is supported by the Local Authority or from Care.

### 8.1 Pre-placement prevention and planning

In order to safeguard the welfare of young people it is important to try to reduce the likelihood of missing episodes as well as planning strategies to deal with young people who have been missing.

- Prevention measures should start when a young person's likelihood of a missing episode is increased; for example when it is known care proceedings are likely to take place; or events within the young person's live cause additional tensions. Strategies should be developed by social/support workers and parents/carers to avoid a young person become 'missing'.
- The plan of the young person should assess the potential risks of going missing. Names and addresses of all the people to whom the young person is likely to want to go to should be shared with all relevant people/agencies.
- Parents/Carers should agree how they will respond to a particular behavior exhibited or how they will pro-actively manage a particular young person. This will be done with help and advice from the child's social/support worker.
- Parents/Carers should be encouraged to have recent photographs of children and young people in their care. This is obviously an important tool in the process of tracing a missing person and searching/identification could be hindered without such material.
- Parents/Carers should have all the appropriate information available to enable them to be able to report a young person as missing. (Recent medical information including ailments and medication being taken/required may be particularly important and details of GP etc).
- Consideration should be given to consultation with and the direct involvement of other agencies to help manage particular behaviors.
- Patterns of missing episodes should be considered. Some young people are looked after because of their tendency go missing regularly; some young people go from their home or placements to family or friends. Other young people may flee from abuse. Young people may also be drawn away from

their placement or home as a result of outside influences such as being drawn into criminality or sexual exploitation.

- A young person's age, level of vulnerability and legal status must be considered in the planning process. A young person who is subject to a Care Order (or Interim Care Order) cannot, for example, just be left at their parent's home. Young people placed with their parents on a Care Order are subject to statutory regulations and the placement requires the permission of a senior social care manager.
- At each social care meeting there should be discussion about the risks of a young person going missing (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for risk management pro-forma). **A copy of the completed risk assessment should be kept available at all times in the child or young person's record file.**

Where appropriate, the discussion should include the following and be recorded in the young person's plan:

- The degree and level of risk the young person presents to themselves and others by going missing
- The young person's view
- The parent's view

**The plan and relevant information should all be available out of office hours and to those who will be responsible for reporting a missing young person to the police. This will help to guide the parent/carer about what appropriate information can be given to the police.**

## 8.2 On admission to the placement – Prevention and Planning

In order to safeguard the welfare of young people it is important to try to reduce the likelihood of running away episodes as well as planning strategies to deal with young people who go missing.

- Prevention measures should start when a young person first arrives in the placement. Strategies should be developed by social workers<sup>1</sup> and carers<sup>2</sup> to avoid a young person running away.
- The care plan of the young person should assess the potential risks of going missing. Carers should be given the names and addresses of all the people to whom the young person is likely to want to run to.
- Carers should agree how they will respond to a particular behaviour exhibited or how they will pro-actively manage a particular young person. This will be done with help and advice from the child's social worker.
- Carers should be encouraged to have photographs of children and young people in their care. This is obviously an important tool in the process of tracing a missing person and searching/identification could be hindered

without such material.

- Carers should have all the appropriate information available to enable them to be able to report a young person as missing. (Medical information including ailments and medication being taken / required may be particularly important).

<sup>1</sup> Social workers refers to the child's or young person's allocated child care worker

<sup>2</sup> 'Carers' refers to both residential workers and foster care.

- It is particularly important for all placements that the appropriate information is available to understand about any medical conditions and medication required. This will support an understanding of the risk to the young person of not receiving medication. Contact details of GP, specialist nurse and any other specialist medical practitioners must be recorded and available if required.
- Consideration should be given to consultation with and the direct involvement of other agencies to help manage particular behaviours.
- Patterns of missing episodes should be considered. Some young people are looked after because of their tendency to go missing regularly; some young people go missing from their placements to family or friends. Other young people may go missing from abuse by carers or other young people within the care setting. Young people may also be drawn away from their placement as a result of outside influences such as being drawn into criminality or sexual exploitation.
- A young person's age, level of vulnerability and legal status must be considered in the planning process. A young person who is subject to a Care Order (or Interim Care Order) cannot, for example, just be left at their parent's home. Young people placed with their parents on a Care Order are subject to statutory regulations and the placement requires the permission of a senior social care manager.
- It is also important to start to plan for the young person's return and introduce strategies to address any issues and prevent a further occurrence of the person going missing.
- At each social care meeting there should be discussion about the risks of a young person going missing (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for risk management pro-forma). **A copy of the completed risk assessment should be kept available at all times in the child or young person's record file at their current home.**

Where appropriate, the discussion should include the following and be recorded in the young person's care plan:

- The degree and level of risk the young person presents to themselves and others by going missing
- The young person's view

- The parent's view

**The care plan and relevant information should all be available out of office hours and to those who will be responsible for reporting a missing young person to the police. This will help to guide the carer about what appropriate information can be given to the police.**

- Leicester City                    0116 454 1004
- Leicestershire                    0116 305 0005
- Rutland                            01572 722 407
- Leicestershire Police Missing Persons Teams can be contacted via:
  - Email: [Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Missingpersonsteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)
  - Telephone 101 Extension 5008

### 8.3 Missing during an Out of Authority Activity

The person in charge of the external activity will:

- Notify the local police in that area
- Notify a senior manager
- Institute a local search if staffing levels permit

### 8.4 Missing from Care Categories

Flow chart of Children Missing from Care: Please see [Appendix B](#)

If a child is missing from care, following reasonable enquiries the Local Authority in consultation with the Police will decide which of the two categories the missing episode will fit; **missing, or absconder** (See absconder@point 8.6 for further details).

#### **Missing**

Where the child's location or reason for going missing is unknown and/or due to the circumstances, there is a serious cause for concern for the child or potential danger to the public, then an urgent response may be required. In these exceptional circumstances the person reporting should dial 999, explain the circumstances of the child's disappearance and the reason/s for concern. In these circumstances, staff must contact a senior manager to manage the missing episode.

### 8.5 Action by Carer to the Report of a Missing Young Person

When it first appears that a young person might be missing, the residential

worker or foster carer should try to find them by undertaking the following:

- Speak to other members of the household to establish whether the young person is, in fact, missing without permission.
- Consider previously agreed guidance incorporated within the care plan.
- Make enquiries to try to discover the whereabouts of the young person. Such enquiries would normally be made by phone and should include any places where the young person may have gone, including their home address, friends, etc.
- Start a written record of the missing episode.
- Conduct a search of the building including outhouses and attics. Record exactly when and where you have searched and the extent/thoroughness of that search.
- Make a risk assessment. There are 4 possible outcomes to this assessment. (For more details see [Appendix A](#)).

HIGH RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely,	<p>This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of Police resources-action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a Police search adviser (PoISA)</p> <p>There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Childrens services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.</p>

MEDIUM RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
The risk of harm to the subject or public is assessed as likely but not serious	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

LOW RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
<p>The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.</p> <p><b>No young person who is under the age of 17 and who is missing is ever classed as 'low risk'.</b></p>	Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm

NO APPARENT RISK(absent)	
Degree of risk	Police response
<p>There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public</p> <p>No Young person under the age of 17 will be classed as No Apparent risk.</p>	<p>Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.</p>

***A competent member of staff with a full understanding of the missing child should complete the risk assessment.***

***For all cases of high risk, the duty manager must be called to deal with the missing episode.***

1. Detail the brief circumstances of going missing / absent?
2. Where, when last seen and by whom?
3. What has been done so far to trace this individual, and if not why not? **\*\*Emphasise to caller they should undertake reasonable enquiries and continue to do so \*\***
4. What is the description of the person including clothing?
5. Is this significantly out of character, if so why?
6. What is the specific concern in this instance (if any)? (e.g. vulnerable due to age, Infirmary, mental health or physical illness, cognitive delay and learning disability)
7. Any last known intentions or preparations made prior to going absent/missing?
8. Have they taken any personal items with them – clothing, passport etc?
9. What is the person's last known Home Address?
10. Do they have a mobile phone in their possession? (Network and Phone Number required )
11. Identify any place they may go to and why: specific interest or to find solace/peace and quiet?
12. Are they subject to any Mental Health Section- if so what and why?
13. Are there any specific medical needs that require medication and if this isn't available what are the effects and timescales e.g. diabetes, asthma, allergies, as these could result in impaired communication and risk to life if untreated in severe

cases?

14. Are they likely to be a victim of crime – if so why?
15. Are they likely to be the victim of abuse – if so explain? (Domestic / Sexual / Racial / Bullying / Homophobic)
16. Are they currently at risk of sexual exploitation or on Child Protection register – If so from whom?
17. Are they likely to self-harm, attempt suicide– give details including last known attempt – (how, where, when)?
18. Have they been exposed to harm in any previous missing episode – if so provide details (including when)?
19. Do they pose a danger to themselves or any other persons?
20. Does the missing person have a current or previous history of drug or alcohol abuse (give details)?
21. Details of any vehicle using or normal mode of transport if none.
22. Details of messaging and social media used including usernames and passwords if known.
23. What access do they have to money?
24. Is there any other information relevant to their absence that may affect or influence a supervisor's risk assessment?
25. Have you completed the question set? Answering yes will close

Complete the missing person forms. The word versions of these forms are available on the LSCB web sites at: <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse> they are also available to download from the Leicester City LSCB website <http://www.lcitylscb.org/>

These forms should be given to attending officers from Leicestershire Police. To report the child as missing to the police, call the non-emergency number 101.

When receiving a missing person report, the new process above in **7.3** will be followed by the Police.

## 8.6 Premises search

For a child agreed as **missing** from a child's home or foster placement (not a residential children's home), a premises search will be undertaken by Police officers. For a child reported **missing** from a residential home, the Police will ask the senior care manager responsible for the unit to verify that a thorough premises search has been conducted by care staff.

The police have the right to search the premises at any time.

## 8.7 Level of Risk

When a child is reported missing the decision about the risk level attributed to the case lies with the Police. The police will complete an initial risk assessment within their call centre to determine the level of police response to the incident as detailed in 7.3.

The carer will provide information about risk factors in the case on the missing person form. The Police will decide the risk level to be assigned to the case. This will be high or medium (Low risk will never apply to a child under 17 years)

See Police Risk Level Chart at [Appendix A](#).

Carers must also inform without delay:

- The parents/those who have parental responsibility (unless indicated otherwise on the care plan)
- The Duty Manager for all High Risk cases
- The Social Worker and / 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

### **Absconder**

An Absconder is a child who is missing from the placement without permission and who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, other bail conditions, PACE detention or ASBO's), or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings. A child in this category must be reported to the Police **without delay**.

If an absconder is under the age of 16 years, or if the absconding does not involve a power of arrest, the Police will treat the case as **BOTH** a missing child case **AND** an absconder. This means that it will be necessary to provide detailed information to the Police on the missing child form and this will lead to a

proactive Police investigation. 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.

If the child is aged 16 or over and is liable to arrest, the Police will treat the child solely as an absconder and not as a missing child, unless there are grounds to

suspect that factors other than the absconders desire to evade justice are involved in their disappearance. If the Police treat the case solely as one of absconding, in these circumstances they will actively seek the absconder for arrest. Notwithstanding, absconders in this category must also be reported to the Police without delay.

## 8.8 Roles and responsibilities

After reporting a child missing, the Local Authority remains responsible for the child in their care. This responsibility is not absolved when the child has been reported missing to the Police.

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. They should also 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 enquiries should be passed to the Police.

Once a child is reported and agreed as '**missing**' to the Police, the Police will have primacy in respect of the investigation to trace the child.

The Police will normally conduct all physical enquiries away from the premises from which the child is '**missing**'.

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 Local Authority staff and will do so sensitively, causing as little disruption as possible to the establishment and residents.

**Social Workers/Care staff should ensure that the relevant Independent Reviewing Officer assigned to the child's case is made aware of each missing episode. This allows IRO's to carry out their statutory scrutiny function as required within the [Independent Reviewing Officers Handbook 2010](#)**

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. Police will likewise keep a record of all aspects of the absent or missing investigation as relevant to the new process on STORM and / or the COMPACT computerised missing person case management system.

## 8.9 Media Strategy

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. 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 to

publicise will be jointly made, and where appropriate, in consultation with parents and Children's Services. However, for operational reasons primacy over such decisions must lie with the Police.

The Police may also utilise the website facility of the Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) ([www.missingkids.co.uk](http://www.missingkids.co.uk)) to publicise the absence of the child or young person.

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 Leicestershire Police procedures by a Police officer of the rank of Detective Superintendent.

## 8.10 Review of continued missing episode

When a child has been missing for a period of 48 hours the Social Worker should inform the relevant senior manager.

Throughout the missing episode, carers and the Police will continually review the case. After the child has been missing for three days, or earlier, if deemed appropriate, the Local Authority will call an urgent case review meeting. 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

Further such reviews will take place at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate.

**Consider the need for Social Care managers who chair the review meetings to ensure that a Senior Manager briefs the Director of Childrens Services of any incident where a child has been missing for a protracted period beyond 5 days, or earlier if this is not the usual pattern of missing identified within their risk assessment.** This Manager should ensure that consideration is given as to whether protracted period of missing from care requires a more senior officer to chair a review meeting, and/ or liaise with the Senior Police lead to consider how the joint inquiry is being conducted.

## 8.11 Return of the child

**If the whereabouts are known or suspected, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to arrange for the child's return.**

However, there will be circumstances when, in the interests of the safe and speedy return of the child, the Police may agree to requests from the Local

Authority to assist. The Police should not unreasonably withhold assistance in cases involving local recovery and transport missions for vulnerable children.

It is the responsibility of the carer to contact the Police by telephone and to confirm that the missing child has returned and is safe and well. For children in residential placements, the Police will accept confirmation from care professionals without the need for an officer to attend the home and visit the returnee. This will lead to the Police closing the missing person investigation and the case being cancelled on the Police National Computer. For children in foster placements, the Police will verify the child's safe return in person.

However, 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 missing then the Police must be called and asked to attend without delay. This is vital for the protection of the child and for the speedy recovery of evidence.

In such circumstances, the missing persons clothing, mobile phone and trace evidence from their body, fingernails or hair may be crucial. In cases of sexual abuse the child should be discouraged from washing and immediate advice sought from the Police. If carers become aware of the location of the scene of any crime committed against the child, or of the location of any crucial evidence then they must notify the Police without delay. This will enable the Police to take steps to secure and preserve evidence.

In sexual cases the Police have access to specially trained officers, doctors and facilities designed to care for the victim and obtain evidence.

Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, referral must be made under the Local Safeguarding Children Board policy guidance and procedures – See Guidance on child sexual exploitation: 5.6 Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation

[http://lrsccb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_sg\\_ch\\_yp\\_sex\\_exploit.html](http://lrsccb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_ch_yp_sex_exploit.html)

And

<http://lrsccb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/LSCB%20CSE%20MULTI%20AGENCY%20PRACTICE%20GUIDANCE.pdf>

This guidance also includes a CSE risk assessment tool.

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 meeting at any time, regardless of the number of missing episodes.

## 8.12 Return interview: safety, assessment and information gathering

'Return Interview' is the term applied to the safety, needs and risk assessment carried out by statutory Children's Services and/or their partners. It should include an exploration of the reason the child left their home or placement as well as what risks they were exposed to whilst missing. The 'return interview' should not be confused with the Police Prevention Interview which has a different purpose.

The return interview is important in safeguarding the child in future. It **must not** be viewed as a routine or administrative task.

The Local Authority is responsible for deciding whether a return interview is conducted for each missing episode, however when a looked after child (LAC) is placed within a host authority, the responsible authority should ensure the independent review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority.

Return Interviews should be offered for every instance of missing where a child has:

- Been missing for over 24 hours
- Been missing on two or more occasions
- Engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities during their absence
- Known mental health issues

For a looked after child, a return interview should **always** be conducted. 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.

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.

It is the responsibility of each locality Children's Services Team Manager to ensure that the return interview is carried out to a suitable standard by a person

approved to do so. However, when a looked after child (LAC) is placed within a host authority, the responsible authority should ensure the independent review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority. Central Government guidance suggests that ideally it is conducted by an independent

person who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow up any actions that emerge. Account should also be taken of any preference the child has for the conducting of the return interview. It should not be conducted by a Police Officer except in exceptional circumstances, and by the agreement of both agencies.

When it is not practicable for a return interview to be conducted by a trained 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. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to inform the police Missing Persons Team via email.

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

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 Child Abduction Warnings – for more information, see section 9
- 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.

The interview will be recorded on the missing person return interview form shown in supporting documents. ALL return interviews must be signed off by a Children's Services Team Manager after presentation by the relevant professional.

A copy of the return interview should be sent to the Lead Manager within Children's Services. Where there is relevant information or disclosure the Police Missing Persons Team should be also sent a copy. This will ensure that details

from the return interview are added to the COMPACT missing person's record. The signed copy should be kept and stored in accordance with the Local

Authorities administrative procedures and not sent to the Police.

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.

Where a return interview leads to a disclosure that needs specific action, for example, to safeguard the child or investigate a crime the matter should be referred to the Local Authority and/ the Police.

For looked after children it remains the responsibility of the allocated 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 placement should alert the relevant Senior Manager in Children's Services.

Social workers should also consider sharing relevant information from the missing episode or return interview with other agencies such as the Youth Offending Service, CAMHS, LAC Nurse and schools nurse.

## 9. Police powers

The Police have significant powers to safeguard vulnerable children. In some circumstances the powers to enter premises, to recover children and to make Police Protection Orders.

### **Child Abduction Warnings:**

Anyone who has care of a child without parental knowledge or agreement should do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. Where, in these circumstances, the young person is believed to be at risk of offences being committed against them, Leicestershire Police will consider issuing a **Child Abduction Warning Notice**. Police staff can find the guidelines for this on the COMPACT web site.

When a missing child is found or known to have been in company with an adult during any missing episode, in circumstances which afford reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been committed by that adult relating in any way to that child (i.e. child abduction, sexual offence, drug offence, assault, aid, abet, counsel or procuring child to commit an offence etc.) the incident will be taken seriously throughout the process of reporting, investigation and provision of follow up care. The Police priority is the safety and well-being of the child; thereafter, the Police will take positive action against any perpetrators, hold them accountable for their actions and prefer charges where appropriate.

It is recognised that children who have been the victim of a serious offence may not always see themselves as victims or be willing to assist in the investigation, particularly in the early stages. Likewise those whom others have used for

criminal purposes may not be willing to assist the Police. A complaint from a victim is not required to make an arrest. Usually reasonable suspicion is enough to arrest. When such an offence has occurred and a power of arrest exists, the offender should normally be arrested. An officer should be prepared to justify a decision not to arrest in these circumstances.

Without prejudice to the welfare of any child, the Local Authority will support the Police in taking appropriate action against those who commit crimes against children and/or involve children in their offending behaviour.

## 10. Prevention strategy

The LSCB expect all agencies and professionals working with children who are missing from home or care, or at risk of being missing from home or care, to implement this protocol to ensure that all staff are aware of it and how to use it. It should be considered by professionals and agencies in all new and existing contacts with children.

It should be used to engage partner agencies in developing preventative services for children and young people who are at risk of running away.

All episodes of **Missing** children will be monitored. Leicestershire Police will automatically report all agreed 'MISSING' children incidents to the Local Authorities by electronic referral via the COMPACT recording system.

Monthly Strategic Multi-Agency meetings should be held to review actions and interventions for MISSING episodes, discuss any issues and identify any training needs and good practice.

### 10.1 Response to escalating concerns

Where there are concerns in relation to a child going missing, a referral may be made to the CAF process (for Leicester City & Rutland) where multi-agency meetings are in place to address these issues. (In Leicestershire, an electronic e-form will need to be completed. This will be automatically securely emailed to 'First Response Children's Duty' – this e-form is to be available on the 'Early Help' Webpage of the Leicestershire County Council website).  
[http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/children\\_families/early\\_help.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/children_families/early_help.htm)

Formal intervention meetings will take place in response to escalating concerns where the number of missing episodes is an issue or there is an identified safeguarding concern.

#### **Intervention Process.**

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 meeting at any time.

## 11. Appendix A: Initial response to a missing young person

This word version of this form can be downloaded at <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse> they are also available to download from the Leicester City LSCB website <http://www.lcitylscb.org/>

### Decision-making guide

The following check list is to be completed in all cases to assist in identifying the level of risk posed by the young person being missing and the appropriate risk assessment.

<b>Decision Making Guide</b>		
Consider all of the questions below in order to structure enquiries and to assist in determining the level of risk		
<b>Investigative Consideration</b>	<b>Details &amp; Circumstances</b>	<b>Person giving information</b>
Is the person vulnerable due to age or infirmity or any other similar factor?		
Behaviour that is out of character is often a strong indicator of risk:  Are the circumstances of going missing different from normal behaviour?		
Is the person suspected to be subject of a significant crime in progress e.g. abduction?		
Is there any indication the person is likely to commit suicide?		
Is there a reason for the person going missing?		
Are there any indications that preparations have been made for the absence?		
What was the person intending to do when last seen e.g. Going to the shops, and did they fail to complete their intentions?		
Are there family or relationship problems or recent history of family conflict and/or abuse?		

Are they the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence?		
Does the missing person have any physical illness or mental health problems?		
Are they on the child protection register?		
Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm?		
Belief that the person may not have the ability to interact safely with others or an unknown environment		
Do they need essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?		
Ongoing bullying or harassment e.g., racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns or cultural issues?		
Were they involved in a violent and/or hate incident immediately prior to the disappearance?		
School/College/University/ Employment or financial problems?		
Drug or alcohol dependency?		
Other unlisted factors which the carer / officer / supervisor consider should influence the risk assessment?		
Are there any concerns regarding the young person being sexually exploited?		
Completed by .....		

Guide taken from “The management, recording and investigation of missing persons 2005.

**Police Risk Level Chart**

<b>HIGH RISK</b>	
<b>Degree of risk</b>	<b>Police response</b>
The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely	<p>This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of Police resources-action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a Police search adviser (PoISA)</p> <p>There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children’s services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.</p>

<b>MEDIUM RISK</b>	
<b>Degree of risk</b>	<b>Police response</b>
The risk of harm to the subject or public is assessed as likely but not serious	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

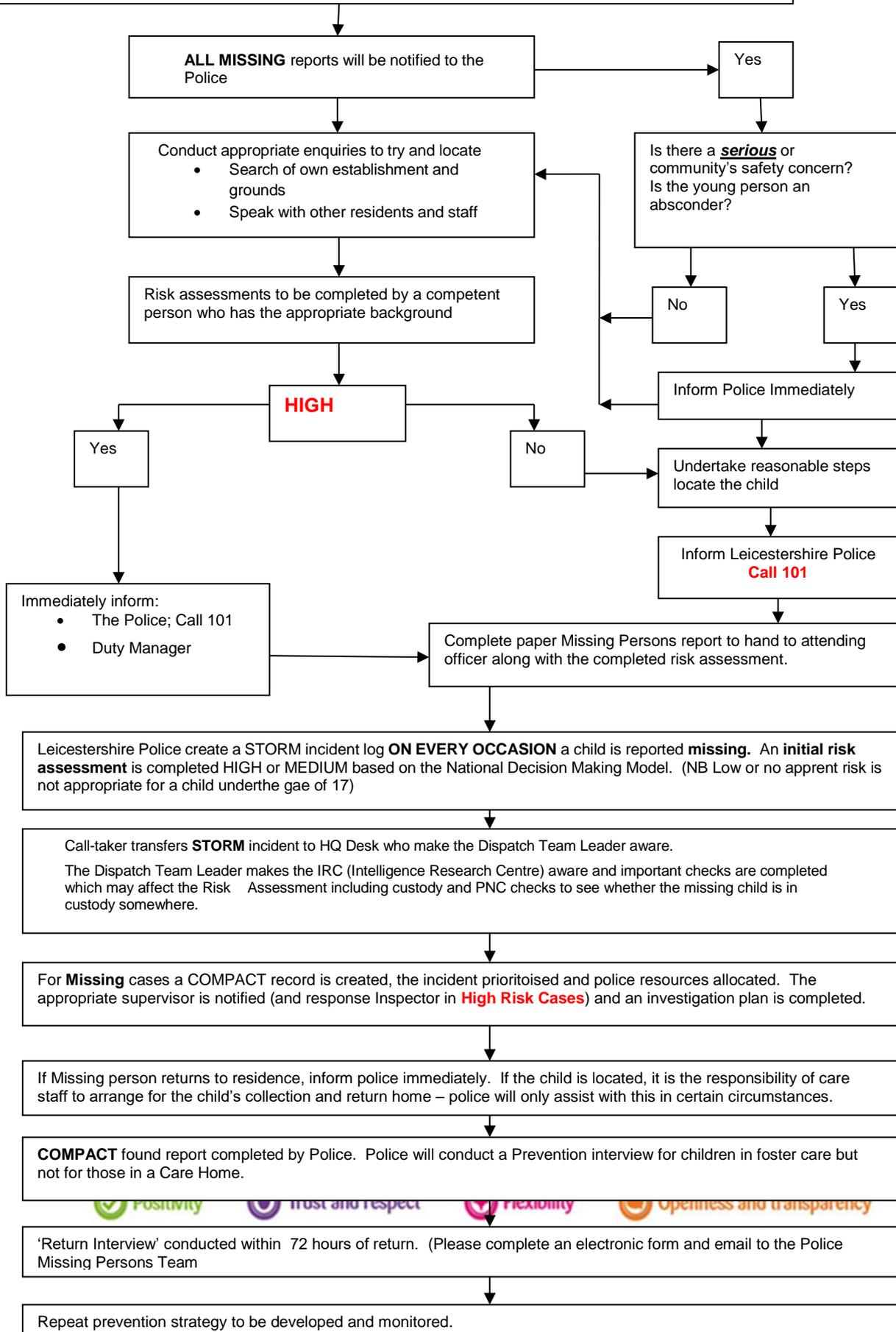
<b>LOW RISK</b>	
<b>Degree of risk</b>	<b>Police response</b>

<p>The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal</p> <p><b>No young person who is under the age of 17 and who is missing is ever classed as 'low risk'.</b></p>	<p>Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm</p>
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<b>NO APPARENT RISK(absent)</b>	
<b>Degree of risk</b>	<b>Police response</b>
<p>There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public</p> <p>No Young person under the age of 17 will be classed as No Apparent risk.</p>	<p>Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.</p>

## 12. Appendix B: Flow Chart for Children missing from Care

**MISSING:** Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed



## 13. Appendix C: Joint Protocol e-forms

### Children and Young People who go missing from Home or Care

#### Contents:

1. Record of Initial Actions
2. Risk Assessment Form
3. Missing Person Report Form
4. Return Interview Form

#### Notes:

These forms apply to children and young people in all local authority residential sites and Foster Care when they wish to report a child as missing.

The Return Interview Form is applicable to all children in the local authority areas. Full guidance is contained within the joint protocol.

Word versions of these forms are available at <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse> they are also available to download from the Leicester City LSCB website <http://www.lcitylscb.org/>

There are 2 categories of Missing:

1. **Missing**

When a care home or Foster carer wishes to report a child as missing, the following will apply:

- Where there is a serious concern or risk, contact the police immediately.
- Conduct whatever enquiries are reasonable and practicable to locate the missing child - these actions must be recorded.
- Conduct a thorough search of the premises and grounds.

- Complete the missing person report and risk assessment.
- Telephone Leicestershire Police 101 to report the child as **missing**. The police will record the incident on their command and control system (STORM). **Ask for and record the STORM incident number.**
- For agreed **MISSING** cases, please complete a full missing report and risk assessment form – these may be e-mailed to the control room for inputting on the police investigation system COMPACT / collected by the attending officer.
- The police will assess the level of risk and response to the report and commence an investigation as per the revised process (as of 1/7/2013).
- Leicestershire Police retain the right to re-visit basic enquiries and re-search the premises.

## 2. **Absconder**

Report as **Missing** ensuring the police are given the relevant information as to why the young person is an absconder.

### **The Return**

The police should be informed immediately following the return of a young person who has been reported missing. If criminal offences have been committed then these should be brought to the attention of the police immediately in order for them to be investigated.

If all appears well and there is no evidence of harm, the police will make a return phone call to a residential home to ensure that the notification of return is genuine. The police will not routinely visit children's homes to verify a young person's return. All 'Return Interviews' should be conducted within 72hrs of the child's return.

For children who have been missing from home, it is for the Local Authority to decide whether a return interview is conducted. However, return interviews should always be offered where a child has:

- Been missing for over 24hrs
- Been missing on two or more occasions

- Engaged/believed to be engaged in criminal activities during their absence
- Known mental health issues

For a 'looked after child' a return interview must always be conducted. When a looked after child (LAC) is placed within a host authority, the responsible authority should ensure the independent review interview takes place, working closely with the host authority. All return interviews will be recorded on the Return Interview Form in conjunction with the Aide Memoire of questions. A copy will be attached to the child's record and a copy should be e-mailed to the Leicestershire Police Missing Person's Team for adding to the COMPACT record.

Leicestershire Police Missing Persons Teams can be contacted as follows: Leicestershire Police

Missing Persons Teams can be contacted as follows:

- Email: [Missingpersonteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Missingpersonteam@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)
- Telephone Contact 101 Ext. 5008

**RECORD OF INITIAL ACTIONS**

1. Speak to other members of the household to establish whether the young person is in fact missing without permission

What staff have been consulted with? Morning / Afternoon / Nights	Has permission with conditions been granted and not adhered to?	What were the conditions?

2. Consider previously agreed guidance incorporated within the care plan (which must be available out of office hours)

What risk has been identified in the care plan if any?	What interventions or preventative measures have been put in place?	What was the young person's view as documented in the care plan?

3. Make enquiries to try to discover the whereabouts of the young person. Such enquiries would normally be made by phone and should include any places where the young person may have gone, including their home addresses, friends, etc.

<p>Have all known friends and relatives been contacted? Please record details below or on a separate report</p>	<p>Other locations checked such as hospital admissions / local Taxi / Other Care establishments / known places frequented</p>
Empty space for recording details	Empty space for recording details

4. Conduct a search of the building including outhouses and attics. Record exactly when (time) and where you have searched.

Location searched	Any items recovered to assist
Bedroom ..... .....	
Bathroom ..... .....	
Lounge ..... .....	
Kitchen ..... .....	
Communal area ..... .....	
Outbuildings ..... .....	
Grounds ..... .....	
Attic space ..... .....	
All internal cupboards ..... .....	
Other resident's rooms	

..... .....	
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Vehicles

.....  
.....

Places frequented

.....  
.....

Other

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

**Initial Risk Assessment**

The following check list is to be completed in all cases to assist in identifying the level of risk posed by the young person being missing and the appropriate risk assessment

<b>Decision Making Guide</b>		
Consider all of the questions below in order to structure enquiries and to assist in determining the level of risk		
<b>Investigative Consideration</b>	<b>Details &amp; Circumstances</b>	<b>Person giving information</b>
Is the person vulnerable due to age or infirmity or any other similar factor?		
Behaviour that is out of character is often a strong indicator of risk: Are the circumstances of going missing different from normal behaviour?		
Is the person suspected to be subject of a significant crime in progress e.g. abduction?		
Is there any indication the person is likely to commit suicide?		
Is there a reason for the person going missing?		

Are there any indications that preparations have been made for going		
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What was the person intending to do when last seen e.g. Going to the shops, and did they fail to complete their intentions?		
Are there family or relationship problems or recent history of family conflict and/or abuse?		
Are they the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence?		
Does the missing person have any physical illness or mental health problems?		
Are they on the child protection register?		
Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm?		
Belief that the person may not have the ability to interact safely with others or an unknown environment?		
Do they need essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?		

Ongoing bullying or harassment e.g., racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns or cultural issues?		
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Were they involved in a violent and/or racist incident immediately prior to the disappearance?		
School/College/University/ Employment or financial problems?		
Drug or alcohol dependency?		
Other unlisted factors which the carer / officer / supervisor consider should influence the risk assessment?		
Are there any concerns regarding the young person being sexually exploited?		
Completed by .....		

Form 3

**MISSING PERSONS  
MULTI-AGENCY  
REPORT FORM**



**MISSING PERSON DETAILS**

Title:	Last Name:
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Forenames:
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Other Names Used:	Nationality:
Date of Birth:	Religion:
Place of Birth:	Gender:
Height:	Home Phone Number:
Mobile Phone Number:	Network Provider:

Medication:
Care Order/Mental Health Act Order: (specify type of order)
Sexuality: (Asexual/Gay/Transgender/Transsexual/Heterosexual/Bisexual)
Occupation:
Place of Work:
If in education – School/College Attending:

Accent:
Eye Colour:
Vision (Spectacles/Contact Lenses / Unknown):
Complexion:

<b>Clothing</b> (at time of last seen) – Include designer brands and colours if known
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Shirt/Sweater:	Trousers/Skirt:
Headwear:	Coat:
Gloves:	Footwear:
Other:	

**Jewellery** - include distinguishing features e.g. engravings

Earring/s:	Watch/s:
Bracelet/s:	Ring/s:
Necklace/s:	
Other:	

**Other Personal Possessions**

Full details of other items believed to be in possession of missing person including cash

**Any Marks, Scars, Tattoos or Distinguishing Features**

Description and Location

**Hair**

Type: Bald/Receding/Cropped/Short/Collar Length/Shoulder Length/Very Long/Clean Shaven	Features: Such as Ponytail, Thinning, Beehive, Afro, Curly etc.
Natural Colour: Black/Dark Brown/Brown/Light Brown/Fair/White/Blond/Grey/Ginger/ Auburn/Sandy/Mousey	Artificial Colour: Such as Blonde, Green, Pink etc.
Dyed/Greying:	
Facial Hair:	

**Build:**

Fat/Stocky/Medium/Slim/Athletic etc.

Dentures:

Shoe Size:

## DESCRIPTION

### PNC Ethnic Origin

<b>Colour:</b>	White	Non White	Unknown
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### Ethnic Appearance

White European	Dark European	Asian	African Caribbean
Oriental	Arab	Unknown	

### Ethnic Origin

<i>Major Categories</i>		<i>Sub Groupings</i>	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Code</i>
Asian or Asian British	A	Indian	1
		Pakistani	2
		Bangladeshi	3
		Any other Asian background	9
Black or Black British	B	Caribbean	1
		African	2
		Any other Black background	9
Chinese or other ethnic group	O	Chinese	1
		Any Other Ethnic Group	9
Mixed	M	White and Black Caribbean	1
		White and Black African	2
		White and Asian	3
		Any other mixed background	9
White	W	British	1
		Irish	2
		Any other white background	9

### Languages Spoken:

### Accent:

### Warning Signals:

Firearms	Weapons	Violent	Escaper
Mental	Explosives	Allergies	Contagious
Suicidal	Drugs	Ailment	Male Impersonation
Female Impersonation			

**LAST APPARENT SIGHTING**

Place last seen:	
Time/Date last seen:	
Details of last person to see missing person:	
Last name:	Forename/s:
Gender:	Date of birth:
Address:	
Occupation:	Place of work:
Telephone No:	Mobile No:
Relationship of informant to missing person:	

**NEXT OF KIN (If different to initial informant)**

Known/Not known:	
Last name:	Forename/s:
Gender:	Date of birth:
Address:	
Occupation:	Place of work:
Telephone No:	Mobile No:
Relationship of informant to missing person:	

**CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISAPPEARANCE**

--

**HOME ADDRESS**

House No/Name:	Street:
District/Town:	
Post Code:	Telephone No:

**MISSING FROM**



Location:	
House No/Name:	Street:
District/Town:	
Post Code:	Telephone No:

**INITIAL INFORMANT DETAILS**

Last name:	Forename/s:
Gender:	Date of birth:
Address:	
Occupation:	Place of work:
Telephone No:	Mobile No:
Relationship of informant to missing person:	

**RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES**

<b>1. Name:</b>
Address:
Telephone No:
Relationship:
<b>2. Name:</b>
Address:
Telephone No:
Relationship:
<b>3. Name:</b>
Address:
Telephone No:
Relationship:
<b>4. Name:</b>
Address:
Telephone No:
Relationship:
<b>5. Name:</b>
Address:
Telephone No:
Relationship:
<b>6. Name:</b>

Address:

Telephone No:

Relationship:

**FINANCIAL DETAILS**

**Bank/Building Society**

Name:

Branch:

Sort Code:

Account Number:

**Bank/Building Society**

Name:

Branch:

Sort Code:

Account Number:

**Credit Card, Cash and Store Card details**

Name on Card:

Card Provider:

Card No:

**Credit Card, Cash and Store Card details**

Name on Card:

Card Provider:

Card No:

**Credit Card, Cash and Store Card details**

Name on Card:

Card Provider:

Card No:

**MEANS OF TRANSPORT**

Is the missing person in possession of a vehicle:

If yes obtain the following details for PNC

Make:

Model:

Colour:

Registration No:

Owner:

Registered Keeper:

Distinctive features:

Other information:

Body Group Description (such as saloon, lorry, moped etc.):
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Can the missing person drive a motor vehicle:
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Do they have a full driving license:
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**PASSPORT DETAILS**

Does the missing person have a valid passport:

Passport Number:

Expiry date:

Location of passport:

**PHOTOGRAPH**

Please insert or attach a recent photograph of the missing person.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- List details of friends and acquaintances so that the officer can make contact. Sometimes they tell the police something they would not tell you.
  - Speak with friends, neighbours, relatives and colleagues. Ask if they know where the missing person may be. Let them know it has been reported to the police. Sometimes they would rather tell you information before the police.
  - Ensure somebody remains at the home address in case the missing person returns or attempts to make contact.
  - Locate diaries, address books, itemised telephone bills and the like and make them available to the police.
  - Check the missing person's belongings to see what they might have with them such as clothing, bags, access to money and mobile phones.
  - Contact the police immediately if the missing person turns up or you receive information regarding their possible whereabouts.
- 
- Keep a record of all enquiries that you make yourself, including the time and date.