



Missing / Away from Placement (without authorisation) and Return Home Interviews

A Quick Guide

What are the differences between missing and away from placement without authorisation?

Missing: The Police Missing definition "Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed,"

Away from placement without authorisation (Looked After Child). As described in the Children's Home Regulations Care Quality Standards: A child or young person is described to be away from placement without authorisation (care) if :

- The child/young person has deliberately or carelessly absented themselves; **and**
- This is not out of character or there is an apparent explanation for them going absent on this occasion; **and**
- The child/young person is expected to return; **and**
- The child/young person is not expected to suffer or cause harm whilst absent; **and**
- The level of risk does not justify police intervention at this time
- Whereabouts are known and there are no risks identified

Who determines if a child is missing?

The Police determine the criteria based on the information shared with them.

When is a return home interview (RHI) required?

All children/young people who are classified as missing or away from placement without authorisation will be offered an independent RHI. RHI's should be conducted within 72 hours of the child/young person returning home or to placement. The RHI will be recorded on Liquid Logic by a trained RHI worker and reviewed by children's social care.

Who undertakes a RHI?

The Missing Coordinator allocates the RHI's to a member of staff in the missing children's team. If the child does not wish to have an independent RHI, the Missing Coordinator will seek to utilise a professional with whom the child has a trusted relationship. This will be arranged in agreement with the child. All RHIs will be recorded on Liquid Logic by the relevant worker.

NOTE: If the child is allocated to a Social Worker, they must be visited by the worker after each missing episode.

What happens if a South Tyneside Child placed out of area goes missing?

If South Tyneside have placed a child out of area, but within a reasonable distance of the borough the RHI will be offered by the missing children's team. If the child is a significant distance out of area, there is an expectation that the child's Social Worker will be informed of the missing episode and undertake the return home interview within 72 hours of the child's return. (Dependent on the distance of the placement this may not always be practical and arrangements with the hosting authority should have been agreed within the placement agreement). The Social Worker will record the RHI on Liquid Logic.

What happens if South Tyneside is the host authority for a looked after child and this child is reported missing?

ISIT Business Support will ensure the Home Authority is emailed the CCN and a copy of the screening and assessment tool and referral process into MSET. The missing episode will also be shared with the Exploitation Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Social Worker who is linked to Northumbria Police Safeguarding Dept to ensure missing episodes can be monitored.

Operation Endeavour

Operation Endeavour is an innovative partnership between Northumbria Police and North East Schools and Colleges aimed at supporting children and young people who go missing from home. While missing, children are at risk of significant harm and they may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violent crime, gang exploitation, or to drug and alcohol misuse. Police will inform schools about the missing episode so that they are aware and can put in place appropriate pastoral support

Return To School Conversation Process

The Return to School Conversation Process was introduced to ensure there was a robust process in place relating to the return of a young person into school following a missing episode. The process does not take the place of an RHI but aims to support schools and colleges in their particular role in the prevention aspect of child sexual exploitation by informing young people of the risk factors and how to keep themselves safe.

Please note that this is just a quick guide. Further information and detail can be found in the section:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_miss_care_home_ed.html?zoom_highlight=missing+from+care