

Joint Protocol for Children & Young People Missing from Home, Care and Education

Jan 2021

Version 1

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff at Expanse Learning Wigan School (Hereafter referred to as the School).

2. Foreword

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on Local Authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away, they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local Authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from home, care or education.

Children may run away from a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or to someone they want to be with. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason it is thought that approximately 25% of children that go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, to violent crime, gang exploitation or to drug and alcohol misuse.

(Department for Education; statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, Jan 2014.)

Going missing is a dangerous activity, a child or young person who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as faced by a child or young person who regularly go missing. However, children who go missing when they are young (and/or more frequently) are more likely to face longer term problems.

The following procedure has been created to provide a joined-up response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home, care or education. This Joint Protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families in Wigan, 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 missing from Home, Care and Education.

The protocol was drafted jointly by, the Missing from Home / Care Sub Group of Wigan Safeguarding Children Board, and was ratified by WSCB on

The most effective assessment and support comes through good information sharing, joint assessments of need, joint planning, and professional trust within the interagency network and joint action in partnership with families. If you believe that a young person is at immediate risk this should be reported without delay to the police service as a 999 emergency. Concern that children and young people may be at risk of significant harm, but who are not in immediate danger should be relayed to the Children's Duty Team on 01941828300. Out of working hours contact can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01618342436. Telephone referrals made by professionals should be followed up within 48 hours with a written professional referral form, which can be found on the WSCB website. www.wiganlscb.com

3. Principle

Children who are missing from home may be at greater risk of harm as a consequence of their basic need for food safety and shelter and / or from people with whom they may come into contact with.

Risks can include physical harm, sexual exploitation, drug abuse and involvement in a range of criminal activity. Additional vulnerabilities due to age, development, and level of understanding or the significance and seriousness of the circumstances that led to the missing episode may also be present.

The following procedure has been developed to provide a multi-agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home or care.

Key Principles:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- Effective use of data return interviews and services to better understand the needs of children and young people who go missing.
- Strengthening of partnership working to ensure consistent and robust information sharing and pooling of resources to provide support to children and young people at risk.
- Alignment of good practice and data recording

- Strengthened strategic planning and preventative work to inform practice and reduce the number of missing children.
- Child protection procedures will be implemented for all children where risk of significant harm has been identified.
- Every missing child will be interviewed by someone other than their direct carer.
- Where the child is known to Children’s Services or meets the criteria for referral to Children’s Services the Local Authority will ensure that there are a range of service options to address the child’s needs when they return.

Any missing episode is potentially serious, one runaway is one too many. Therefore, prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing requires an integrated multi-agency approach to vulnerable children and young people.

Children who go missing from care may place themselves and others at risk. The reasons for their absence are often varied and complex and cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances and their experiences of care. Every “missing” episode should attract proper attention from the professionals involved with the missing person and they must collaborate to ensure a consistent and coherent response is given to the missing person on his/her return.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on local authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away, they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care (DfE 2014)

It is imperative that services working with children are able to and actively do identify those who are commencing a pattern of running behaviour and provide the appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity to prevent future incidents which may place them, or others, at risk. (GM principle B)

4. Introduction and Background

The following has been created to provide a joined up multi agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home, care and education. This policy is a revised version of that used across the Greater Manchester ‘Children missing from home and care – a standardised approach to dealing with missing and absent children and young people across Greater Manchester’. This provides a framework for a co-ordinated, standardised and effective response by Local Authorities, Police and partners in Greater Manchester.

It also has been written in consultation with the Department for Education statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) and the Greater Manchester standardised approach to dealing with missing or absent people of all ages – part A Children and young people (March 2012)

This protocol is published by Wigan SCB and is based on the following legislative guidance.

- Children act 1989 guidance and regulations Vol 1, 4.88, 4.91.
- Children Act 1989, Section 49, 50, 51.
- Children Act 2004, section 10 (1) (2)
- DoE statutory Guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care – January 2014.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.
- Wigan Council Child Protection Procedures
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked – 2011

This guidance should not be read in isolation and the additional guidance as outlined above should be considered. This guidance is particularly significant when working with missing children who are at risk of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic Abuse
- Self-Harm
- Involvement in criminal activity of substance misuse
- Children with disabilities
- Trafficking

5. Background

Research has shown that every year approximately 77,000 under 16-year-olds go missing overnight in England. Peak ages for going missing are between 13- and 16-year-old and a quarter are under 11 years old (Children's Society, Still Running 1999/ Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 2002).

Why children go missing: The Children's Society through its research has identified the following risk factors¹ that can precede a missing incident:

- Arguments and conflicts
- Poor family relationships
- Conflicts at school
- Physical and emotional abuse – Domestic Abuse
- Stepparent issues
- Boundaries and control

The 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
- 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 (inc internet)
- long-term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- crime
- homelessness.
- Disengagement from education
- Child sexual exploitation
- Poor physical and/or mental health (The Children's Society, 1999)

6. Scope

The protocol is designed for all children under the age of 18 years and in addition up to the age of 25 years for children with disabilities or care leavers including:

- Children missing from home.
- Children missing from care including residential care homes.

The protocol is informed by good practice guidance in relation to children missing from education. The purpose of this protocol is to assist practitioners across all agencies to develop a robust response to children and young people who go missing. This will include preventing the child from suffering harm and recovering them to a place of safety as soon as possible.

The protocol provides operational guidance to ensure accurate recording and information sharing supporting local working arrangements between relevant agencies involved in developing this including:

- Children's services
- Metropolitan Police
- Education
- Public Health
- Housing

Wigan Safeguarding Children's Board expects all agencies working with children and young people who are missing from home, care or education to implement the protocol and ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this and receive the appropriate support to ensure its implementation. In order to assist the management of recording missing and absent children the WSCB has agreed to adopt and implement the relevant procedures for missing children. The WSCB in fulfilling their statutory role should give due consideration to the safeguarding risks and issues associated with children missing from home or care. To do so they will need to see partners working effectively together to prevent children from going missing and when they do go missing they should ensure that the local Runaway and Missing From Home and Care protocol is adequate and up to date. The WSCB should scrutinise regular reports from the Local Authority analysing data

on children missing from home or care.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

[Role of the Corporate Parent / Local Authority](#)

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

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

[Local Safeguarding Children Board \(LSCB\)](#)

In fulfilling their statutory roles, LSCBs should give due consideration to the safeguarding risks and issues associated with children missing from home or care. To do this, they will need to see that partners from children's social care, police, health, education and other services work effectively together to prevent children from going missing and to act when they do go missing. They should ensure that the local Runaway and Missing From Home and Care (RMFHC) protocol (see paragraph 19) is adequate and up to date. They should receive and scrutinise regular reports from the local authority analysing data on children missing from home and from care. As part of this, they should review analysis of return interviews. They should also review regular reports from children's homes used by the local authority or within the local authority area on the effectiveness of their measures to prevent children from going missing.

[Multi agency working](#)

The local authority and police should work together to risk assess cases of children missing from home or care and to analyse data for patterns that indicate particular concerns and risks. As part of their framework to safeguard children, individual local authorities and police forces should have an agreed RMFHC protocol.

Local authorities should also consider those children who have not been reported missing to the police, but have come to an agency's attention from accessing other services. There may also be trafficked children who may not have previously come to the attention of children's services or the police. For example, the Office of the Children's Commissioner's report (see Paragraph 3) highlights that children from black and minority ethnic groups, and children that go missing from education, are less likely to be reported as missing. Local authorities and the police should be pro-active in places where they believe under reporting may be more likely because of the relationships some communities, or individuals, have with the statutory services.

[Voluntary sector](#)

Those working in the voluntary sector, as well as youth workers working in both statutory and voluntary services, are experienced in building trusted relationships with children. Their projects can often provide a range of additional services, such as family mediation and specialist support to parents. They can also help play a part in engaging with children to develop a support package to meet their needs if they are at risk of running away.

[Jobcentre Plus](#)

In some circumstances, 16- and 17-year olds will be eligible to claim a Social Security benefit. Although the numbers of 16- and 17-year olds that are currently in receipt of benefit are low, most Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices will come into contact with 16 and 17 year olds, some of who may be at risk of running away or who are already missing from their families or from care. JCP under 18 advisers are required to create and maintain close working links with local authority personal advisers, identifying and forwarding information required by local authorities.

[Wigan Missing Children's Governance Meeting](#)

This is a newly formed group that will meet on a six weekly basis including representatives from Social Care, EIP, GMP and Education. The meeting will ensure the sharing of information and the review of intelligence to ensure that messages received via the completion of Return Home Interviews are shared, understood and influence future plans. The vision being to safeguard all missing children be they from home, care or education. Children Missing policies, procedures can be discussed/amended as and when appropriate. Standard agenda items will include:

- Top ten missing
- Multiple Missing Episodes
- Return Home Interviews
- Missing dashboard
- High risk missing
- Crime data
- Intelligence
- Mapping
- OOB Missing episodes
- Out of area placements

The group will directly report to the WSCB and Departmental Management Team Meetings.

8. Definitions

Child: A child or young person under the age of eighteen years.

Missing: The whereabouts of a child / young person cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another. Any child aged 12 or below whose whereabouts cannot be established would automatically be classed as missing. Any child at risk of CSE whose whereabouts cannot be established should be classed as missing although there should be sufficient risk indicators to support the belief that the child is at risk.

Absent: Child / young person (aged 13 or over only) is not at a place where they are expected or required to be (whereabouts unknown). Following risk assessments, the absence does not raise concern for their immediate safety or that of anyone else. Where a child / young person has been reported as absent and new information comes to light or if the subject has not made contact within a maximum timescale of 24 hours the case can be re-categorised as missing.

Unauthorised absence: Whereabouts are known but the child or young person is not where they are expected or required to be. A child cannot be categorised as missing if their whereabouts are known.

9. Responding to Reports of Missing from Home care or Education

Responsibility of the reporting individual

When a child or young person is identified as not being at a location they are expected to be at, the reporting individual (care provider / foster carer / social worker etc) must take proactive steps to trace the child's whereabouts prior to contacting the police. Such steps would include:

- Physical checks of the residence, including the child's bedroom and any other location the child may be hiding within the house / building;
- Physical checks of any garden, garage, sheds, grounds and surrounding area(s);
- Attempting to contact the missing person directly, via mobile phone, text, or social networking sites (twitter / facebook etc);
- Contacting the missing person's family and friends;
- Make reference to any risk assessments, placement plans or action plans that allow for some leeway with curfews for 'boundary testing'.

In respect of children missing from home it is expected that the parent / carer will inform the police without delay and will provide all relevant information to support enquiries including:

- Description of the child
- Details of where last seen and with who
- Recent photograph
- Relevant addresses
- Previous history of absenteeism

For children Looked After it is expected that children's services are contacted also.

10. Response from the police:

The police classification of a person as absent and missing are based on continuous monitoring and risk assessment. (See

ACPO guidance for further details).

All cases classified as missing by the police will receive an active police response, such as deployment of officers to locate a child.

Cases where the child is classified as absent will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. Absent cases will be resolved when a young person returns or new information comes to light suggesting a risk of harm which would result in the episode being re-classified as missing.

Upon receiving a report of a child or young person being absent from care or missing from home, GMP will carry out enquiries (which are proportionate to the perceived risk) aimed at locating the child/young person as soon as possible.

Whilst missing persons aged under 18 years are automatically classified as “Vulnerable Missing Persons”. However, this is NOT an indication of risk.

A risk assessment will be carried out for each individual on every separate occasion they are reported missing to the Police. This risk assessment, conducted by the Initial Investigating Officer, and subsequently confirmed or revised by his or her supervising officer will form the basis for the subsequent investigation into the person’s disappearance.

Risk assessments will be subject of regular review from GMP:

- Twice during each shift by divisional supervision
- After 48 hours by CID
- After 72 hours by chief inspector
- After 7 days by divisional superintendent and referred to missing person section.
- Every 28 days by chief inspector
- After 6 months by divisional superintendent Police Risk Definitions

RISK	DEFINITION
High	The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability, or may have been the victim of a serious crime, or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger. The child may have been the victim of a serious crime.
Medium	The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger, or they are a threat to themselves or others.
Low	There is no apparent risk of danger to either the subject or the public.

It should be recognised that police powers to return an individual to a care address are limited unless they are on a Care Order or Police Protection Powers are considered necessary. Children / young people must not be reported missing as a behaviour management tool. Police Protection must not be considered merely as a tool to return an individual.

11. Response from the Local Authority:

There is a statutory requirement to record all LAC missing episodes of 24 hours. If a child’s whereabouts are known or suspected parents / carers / residential staff in conjunction with the social worker should decide whether to allow the child to remain at that address temporarily or to arrange for their return. The child should not be classified as missing and should not be reported to the police unless significant safeguarding concerns exist in respect of their known whereabouts. The responsibility for returning children remains with Children’s Services however the police may assist if considered necessary.

12. When the Young Person goes Missing or is absent

Categories of absence have been agreed between the Police and Wigan Council. If a young person is absent from a care placement Wigan Council will decide which of the two categories the absence will fit; absent without authority, or missing

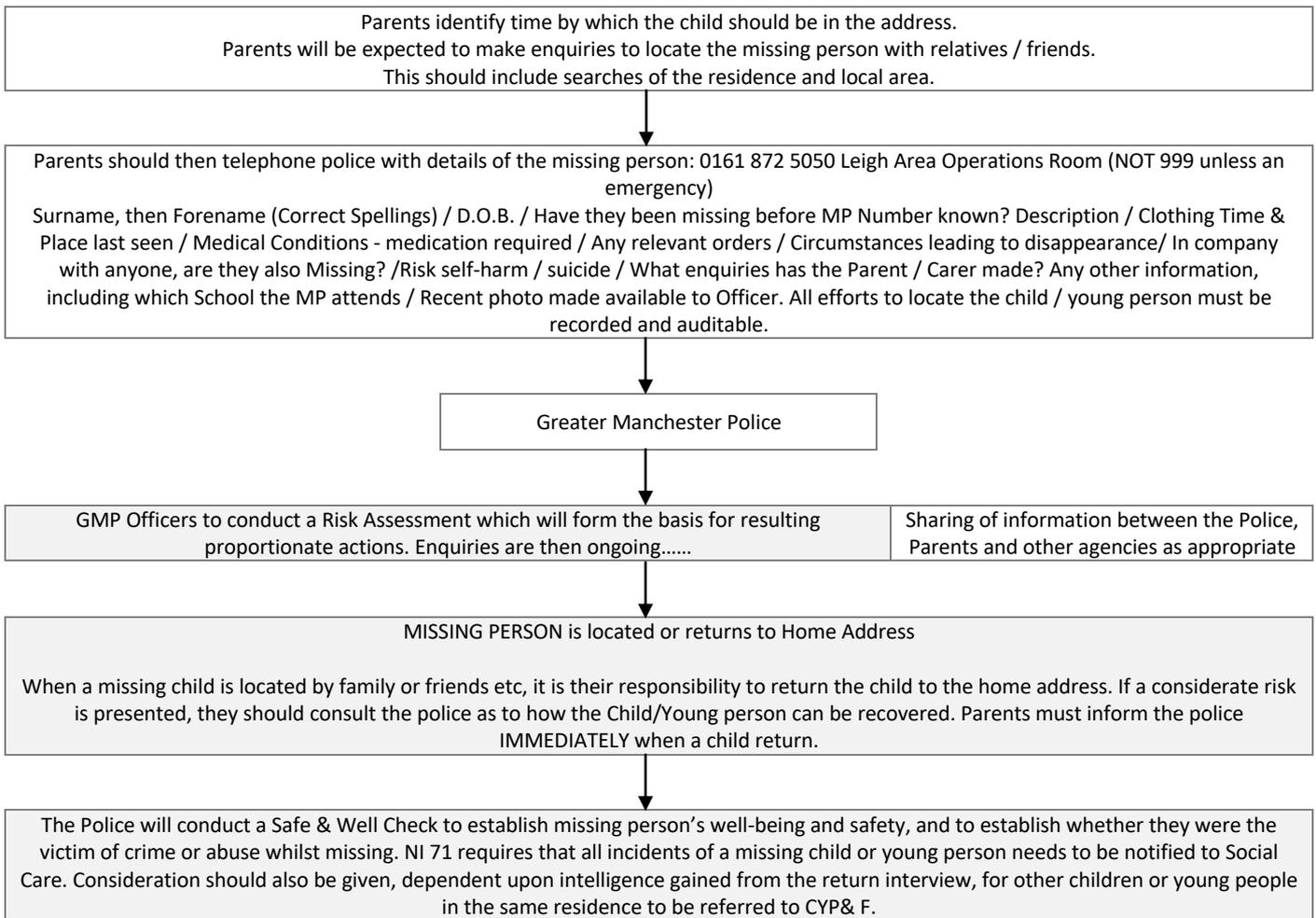
Categories of absence: for children and young people who run away from care

Unauthorised absence	Usual action
Absence for a short period of time Sometimes it may be known or suspected where the child/ young person might be	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises 2. Do not inform police at this stage. 3. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility. 4. Where action not already agreed in MFH risk assessment is available Inform and discuss with on call manager and or social worker/EDS .

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Review decision not to call police at agreed intervals to reassess the category of absence. 6. Once child/young person has been missing for longer than the agreed period follow-on action needs to be agreed.
Missing	Usual action
Concern includes where the child/young person's location is unknown and/or the reason for absence is unknown and there is cause for concern because of their vulnerability or there is a potential danger to the public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises. 2. Inform on-call manager/senior. 3. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details 4. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility 5. Inform/discuss with social worker

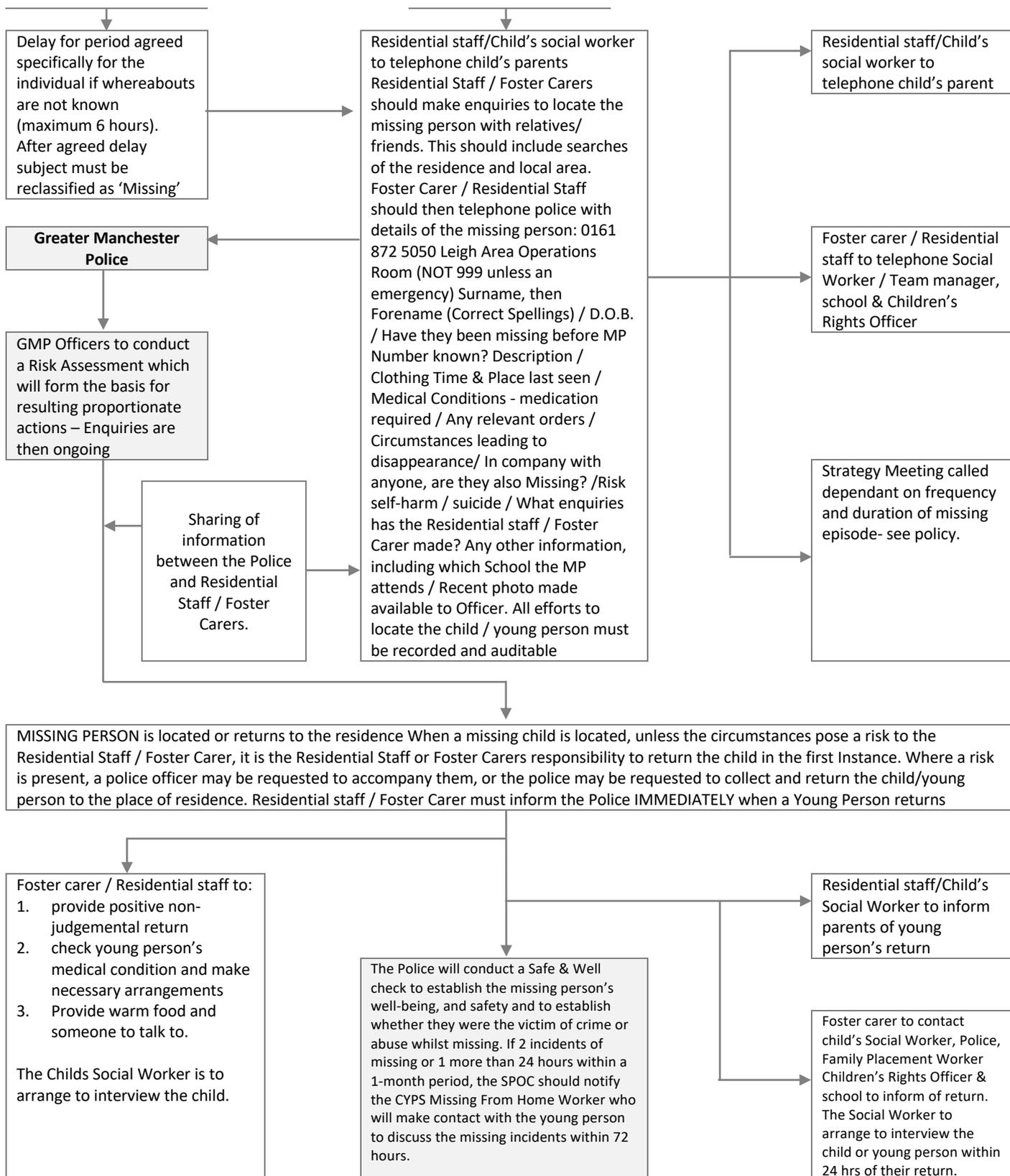
After assessing risk, you must now agree the category of absence. This decision should be taken in consultation with the on-call manager or accountable social worker or EDS worker, as it will determine what action will be taken.

13. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING FROM HOME ADDRESS



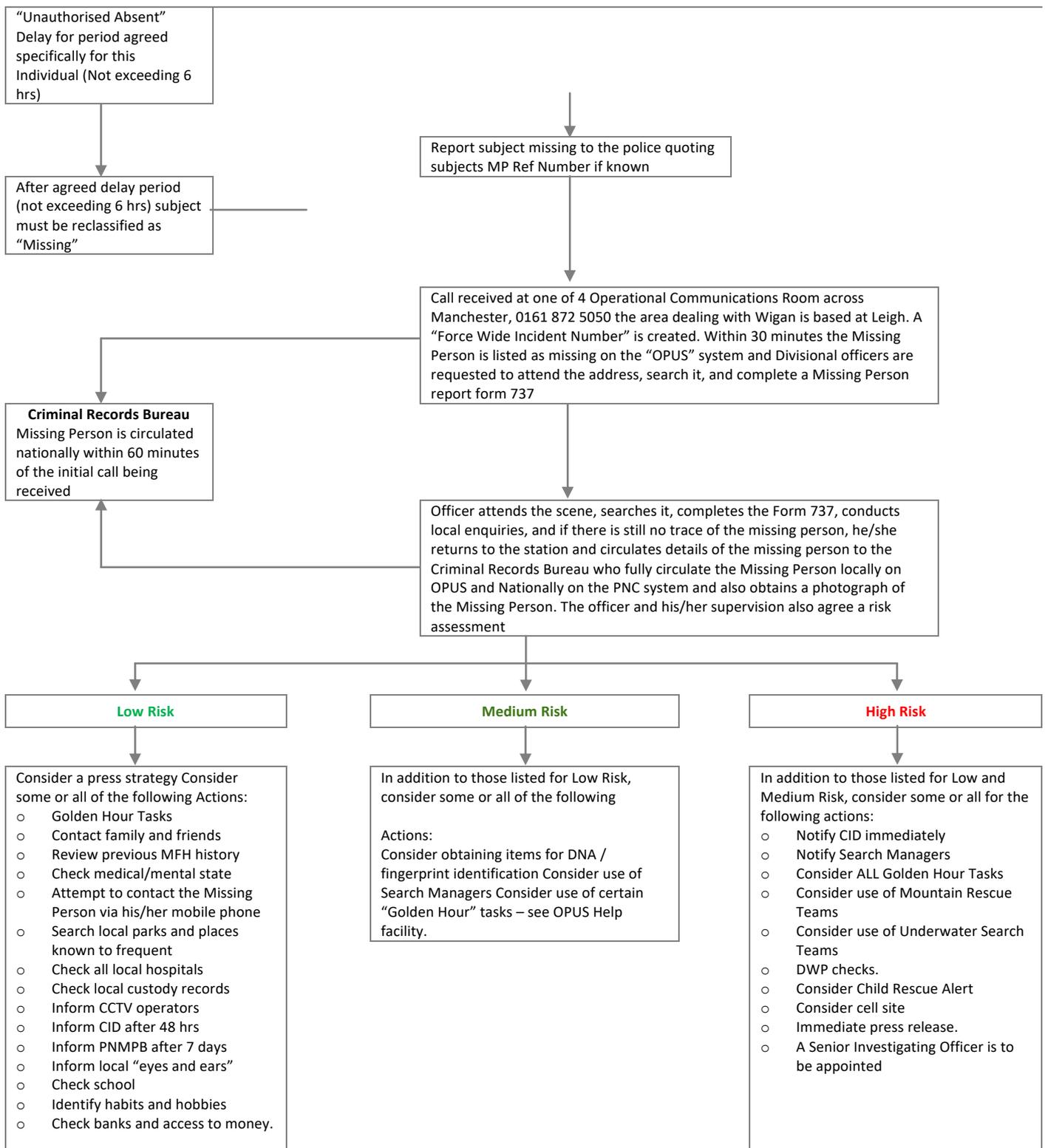
14. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING FROM CARE





15. GMP Initial Investigation Flowchart





16. RETURN PROCEDURES

The attitude of professionals, such as the police officers and social worker, towards a child who has been missing can have a big impact on how they will engage with subsequent investigations and protection planning. However, “streetwise” they may appear, they are children and may be extremely vulnerable to multiple risk. A supportive approach, actively listening and responding to a child’s needs, will have a greater chance of preventing the child from going missing again and safeguarding them from other risks. DFE 2014

If the whereabouts are known or suspected, it is the responsibility of Wigan Council to arrange for the young person's return.

However, there will be circumstances when, in the interests of the safe return of the young person, the police may accede to requests from Wigan Council to assist. When a missing child is located, unless the circumstances pose a risk to the parent/carer/ residential staff/foster carer, it is their responsibility to return the child in the first Instance. Where a risk is present, a police officer may be requested to accompany them, or the police may be requested to collect and return the child/young person to the place of residence.

It is the responsibility of the carer to contact the police immediately by telephone and to confirm that the missing child has returned to the home. The police will accept immediately 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. In all instances of missing young person's return the police will conduct a Safe & Well check to establish the missing person's well-being, and safety and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing.

If it is apparent, upon the return of a young person, that they have been the victim of a crime whilst absent, or that they may be in danger or at risk from any person arising out of circumstances that have occurred whilst they were absent then the police must be called and asked to attend. 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 young person, or of the location of any crucial evidence (i.e., a used condom) 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 WSCB Sexual Exploitation Protocol or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, referral must be made as per WSCB Child Protection procedures. When a young person returns to the placement it is the responsibility of the carers to inform any person notified of the missing episode.

Response from the police:

Once a child has returned home the police will carry out a Safe and Well Check as soon as possible. The aim of this is to check for any indications that the young person has suffered harm; establish the reasons for their disappearance, find out where and with whom have they been; to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by them, or against them. Where a young person is frequently missing there is a requirement for an agreement between the police and the child's carers/parents or social worker with regards to the required frequency of Safe and Well checks. This must consider the needs of the young person and consider any risk identified. This agreement should be clearly recorded within the child's file.

When the police locate a child, who is reported as Missing From Home they will normally return the child to the parent / carer, when the police locate a child who is Missing From Care they will return the child to their placement.

Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child could suffer significant harm, particularly if returned home the police are able to exercise Powers of Police Protection and remove them to suitable accommodation in liaison with Children's Services.

When a Looked After Child goes missing frequently from a care setting it may not be practicable for the police to see them to conduct a Safe and Well Check every time they return. In cases, a reasonable decision should be taken with regards to the frequency of Safe and Well Checks and whether such checks can be undertaken by the person responsible within the care setting.

- The purpose of a SWC is outlined below:

- Check for any indications that the person has suffered - or is suffering - harm and follow normal Child Protection Procedures if relevant, including consideration of a referral to Social Care for this young person and / or others in the household.
- Identify where they have been.
- Identify who they have been with.
- Give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against, them.
- Offer and encourage a full return interview with a relevant agency, in areas where this service is available;
- Provide information about support services, including Childline, particularly in areas where a full return interview is not available or is unlikely to be taken up

17. Response from the Local Authority:

When a child is found, in addition to the police Safe & Well Check, they must be offered an Independent Return Interview. This applies to all children who have been classified as missing by the police. Independent Return Interviews provide an opportunity for professionals to understand why the young person ran away, to uncover information that can be used to reduce the likelihood of the child going missing again; to address the risks or incidents they may have been exposed to while missing and the risk factors in their home life

Wigan Children's Services are responsible for ensuring that a return interview is conducted for those children & young people who have been missing from home. This return assessment should be undertaken by the Missing From Home Worker from the 'Missing Hub' within 72 hours of return.

The return Interview should be completed as soon as possible. It is expected that it will be conducted within 72 hours of the child's return.

The purpose of the assessment is to: -

- To discover the factors which led to the missing episode.
- Identify and respond to any harm they may have suffered.
- Understand the reasons why the child / young person ran away
- To inform efforts to prevent further missing episodes.
- 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.
- To explore and identify 'push and pull' factors.
- Provide children, young people and their families with information and advice regarding staying safe, including information about services who can provide support.

The return Interview is important in safeguarding the child in future. It must not be viewed or conducted as a routine administrative task. The interview should be held in a place where the child feels safe and provides an opportunity to understand the risks and issues faced by the young person whilst they were missing. Issues to be explored include:

- Frequency of missing episodes
- Risk of CSE or trafficking
- Contact with people who pose a risk to children
- Engaging in criminal activities whilst missing

The interview should consider also the potential for further missing period exploring:

- Individual circumstances
- Motivation
- Destination
- Associates
- Addition risk factors; learning difficulties, mental health and other vulnerabilities.

The record of the interview will be forwarded to the police, where possible electronically, in accordance with locally agreed procedures. It will be added to 22 the 'OPUS' missing person record for that episode. A copy will also be sent to the child's social worker, and information shared with the carers as appropriate.

In some circumstances the child may make extremely sensitive disclosures that the carer feels need particularly careful management. If so, the carer may disclose on the form that there are sensitive matters disclosed by the child, which are not being shared on the form. These disclosures should be the subject of a separate record retained. In such circumstances it will usually be appropriate for the carer to discuss such cases with the police missing person SPOC for the area. Such records must be kept in such a manner that will become immediately accessible in the event of a future missing episode, when they may become relevant to the investigation to recover and safeguard the child.

The procedure outlined above should not become the default response for the majority safe and well checks. If the police are to recover missing children safe and well after future episodes and thus protect them from predatory influences they need to be informed of the relevant issues.

Where a return Interview leads to a disclosure that needs specific action, say, to investigate a crime against the young person or require measures to safeguard the child, the matter should be referred: -

- In urgent cases to the police, via telephone.
- In non-urgent cases to the police missing person champion or deputy champion for the area in question.
- The child's social worker should also be informed (if urgent and out of hours, EDT)

Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, or any other situation that indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, referral must be made under Wigan Safeguarding Children's Boards Sexual Exploitation Protocol. (web link to be inserted once protocol agreed)

Police Safe & Well Checks and the LA Independent Return Interviews don't offer much in themselves to prevent young people going missing again if no further action is taken. The outcomes of the checks and interviews should be recorded on case files so that they can be shared with professionals; they provide an opportunity to inform case planning for wider strategic planning and for professionals to take into account children's views. Following the safe and well check and independent return interview, local authority children's services, police and voluntary services should work together:

- To build up a comprehensive picture of why the child went missing and address this;
- To understand what happened while they were missing;
- To understand who they were with when they were missing and where they were found; and
- What support they require upon returning to home or their care placement in accordance with the 'Working Together' guidance.

18. Children Looked After by the Local Authority:

Looked after children are particularly vulnerable, although the number of looked after children who go missing is a small percentage of the overall number of children that go missing it is disproportionately high compared with the children's population.

Prior to each accommodation arrangement for a Looked After Child, the social worker must consider within the care planning process all potential risks to the child including an assessment of the potential for them to go missing. The child and their parent/carer should be involved in the planning process and it should be related to that individual's needs, previous history and views. Missing episodes prior to the child becoming Looked After must to be taken into account.

Care should be taken when establishing where the child or young person should be accommodated:

- Is the home "right" for that individual?
- Will that individual fit into the existing structure of that home?
- How will a new resident interact with existing residents?
- Are there external factors in the area of the residence which need to be taken into account when considering the placement?

When placing outside the placing (home) Authority, it is even more critical to properly assess the above issues. If there is a need to discuss specific risks or issues, the placing Authority should speak to the Safeguarding Unit in the Authority in which the child would live. When a placement is confirmed, the Placing Authority with Parental Responsibility must always follow the Formal Notification Process to inform the new Authority that a Looked After Child is being placed in their area (see Appendix B: Formal Notification of Placing LAC Out of Area - Letter with Form and contacts at Appendix A: - contact Local Safeguarding Unit or Social Care if unsure of local LAC Notification contact).

The initial Placement Plan is an opportunity for the care provider and the social worker to discuss with the young person issues around going missing and absent and to explain the rules and responsibilities of all involved. It is also the opportunity to provide the carer with details of the young person and their family and history. This will help carers to understand any risks to the young person or themselves if they go missing and it may help to locate the young person. The Placement Plan should cover:

- Trigger points for absence or missing episodes;
- Risks to themselves, the public and/or the carer before, during or after a missing episode including when being picked up;
- What steps can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the child going missing and coming to any harm or harming others;
- Friends and family details and contact numbers as well as addresses commonly found at;
- Expectations of the young person: ◦ I.e. curfew; when and how to make contact; consequences of lateness etc.
- Expectations of the care provider: ◦ I.e. at which point the Police will be notified, what processes will follow an incident, who will collect a child if they are missing, details of who conducts immediate assessments on their return and arrangements for full return interviews etc.
- Agreements around rules for staying overnight at friend's houses or going on trips. This is frequently cited as a major issue by young people who wish to behave like their peers who are not Looked After. As stated in Delegation of Authority Guidance, decisions on overnight stays should normally be delegated to foster carers and residential care staff. Arrangements for such decisions should be written into the Placement Plan or equivalent. There is no statutory duty for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to be carried out on adults in a private household where a child/young person may stay overnight and so restrictions should only be placed on Looked After Children if there are exceptional reasons.

All these elements should be reviewed during the care planning process. An example risk assessment and action plan which should form part of placement planning is provided at Appendix C: Example Missing from Care Risk Assessment and Action Plan.

The Care Providers together with the Local Authorities and all other relevant agencies should operate a system of intervention strategies designed to reduce the possibility of the child or young person going missing again, as stated under the Quality Standards for Children's Homes (2015). These must relate to the individual young person and take into account their experiences and needs.

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

When a child or young person is reported 'Missing', the carer(s), Local Authority with Parental Responsibility (PR) and the police have joint responsibility for protecting the wellbeing of the individual. Whilst the police are the lead professionals for the investigation of 'Missing' people, any child who is Looked After by the Local Authority remains the responsibility of that Local Authority at all times.

Equally, the act of reporting a child or young person MISSING (or Absent) by staff at the care establishment or foster home does not absolve the carers from their 'duty of care' to the individual and of continued duty to do what a 'reasonable parent' would do.

19. Reporting to the Police

As stated in the previous section, the Police will only become involved after all reasonable checks to locate the individual have been carried out. If the child / young person is not located, the reporting individual should contact Greater Manchester Police by dialling 101 to report them as being away from their address.

It is the responsibility of the care provider to inform the family and social worker of a child being reported missing, in accordance with local arrangements. It is good practice for the care provider to record all incidents of absence in order to build a picture of behaviour.

20. Location and Return of the 'Missing' Person

Statutory guidance states that when a missing child is located, it is the responsibility of the residential staff or foster carers to collect the child, unless the circumstances pose a risk to them. Where the locating officer has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer Significant Harm, he or she may take the child into police protection (Sect 46 Children Act 1989) and return them to the home address / place of safety / Local Authority accommodation or a

place chosen by the Local Authority. A Police Station should not be considered an appropriate place of safety. Police Protection will not be used as a tool to simply facilitate the return of an individual.

Where no such risks are involved but the logistics of collecting and returning the individual make it difficult or impossible for the care provider:

- Local Authority Care Homes and Foster Carers will need to make use of the Emergency Duty Team / Service (EDT) to assist in collecting the individual;
- Private Providers must have their own arrangements to assist them with the logistics of returning a missing young person. This should be identified by the Authority with Parental Responsibility during the placement planning stage.

21. Children & Young People Subject to a Care Order

When a young person is in the care of a Local Authority and has subsequently absconded, they may be returned to the address they are committed to under Section 32(1a) and 32(1b) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1969. If any information is divulged by the individual that suggests they are not safe if they were returned home this will be discussed with the EDT (Emergency Duty Team) of the Local Authority with Parental Responsibility to establish a course of action and a place of safety. Officers will also consider markers on a home address that indicate CP (Child Protection) concerns or history:

- If physically located by the police, they are to be returned by the police or taken to a place of safety. Once returned, the on-going report can be closed;
- If physically located by another statutory agency (Social Worker / EDT/ Care provider), the locating agency must return the individual to a place of safety and the police must be informed they have been found and the report closed when they are back in a place of safety;
- If physically located by family / friends, the care providers are to advise them that the missing person should be returned to the care provider at the earliest opportunity and assist in doing this if necessary. The police must be informed that they have been found and when they have returned;
- If located by other means (i.e. telephone), the LA with Parental Responsibility / Care Providers are to make provision for the collection and return of the missing person.

22. Children & Young People Looked After under Section 20 (Voluntary Care)

Missing person located by the Police:

When a young person is reported from a voluntary care placement, the Police have NO power to return the child without consent. When the police locate such an individual their first consideration will be any concerns for their welfare and/or the circumstances (or location) at which they have been found. Where necessary attending officers may consider the use of Police Protection Powers. If the locating officer(s) has no concerns for the welfare of the individual, they must: °

Conduct a Safe and Well Check (SWC);

- Notify the care provider of the individual's location;
- Ensuring the individual is safe, advise them on how to return home, where necessary, and otherwise leave the individual at the place he/she was located;
- Close the report.

If the Police Officer considers no concerns to be evident and the care provider allows the individual to remain where located, this decision is to be recorded in both the officer's Pocket Note Book (PNB) and on the Safe and Well Check screen on the OPUS system when completed by the officer.

Located by any other agency or individual:

If the missing person is located by an agency or individual other than an agent of the Police, the following action should be taken: ° Immediately notify the care provider of where the individual has been located;

- Provide details of any concerns to the care provider;
- Agree with the care provider an immediate action plan to safeguard the young person until such time as the local authority / care provider can arrange for the individual to be collected;
- Subsequently the LA / Care Provider is to notify the police of the individual's location and any concerns they may have in order that the police can consider use of Police Protection Powers and consider completing a Safe and Well Check (SWC).

Individual returns to the care placement of their own accord:

If the missing young person returns to the care placement of their own accord the care providers must notify the police immediately so that a decision can be made regarding whether Safe and Well Check should be conducted and closing the on-going report.

Out of Area Placements

Placing Authorities should clarify how care providers will record absence including 'missing' episodes to develop a picture of behaviour for review during care planning processes.

In cases where a missing child resides in one area and is reported missing in another, there can be difficulties over which police force should own the enquiry. The principle that the police area that receives the report MUST record it is particularly important in these cases. However, such concerns are secondary to the welfare of the missing individual, and a report should still be taken as it ensures the safeguarding of the child. Transfer of the case can be negotiated at a later stage.

It is the responsibility of the LA with Parental Responsibility to establish what provision they will make for Looked After Children to have Full Return Interviews, including those out of Authority. They may be done through the Care Provider's independent arrangements if deemed satisfactory. Arrangements should be made clear to the LSCB and local Police.

23. Specific Circumstances

In dealing with missing people, there may be specific risk factors which need to be taken into account, as described below. Professionals involved in reporting a person missing must inform Police of any concerns around specific circumstances.

24. Individuals on the Sex Offenders Register

If an individual is known to be on the Sex Offenders Register, this information must be shared with the call taker when the initial call is made, regardless of the individual's sex or age. The Service Desk will always check the Police systems following classification of a case and if necessary the case will be referred back to the call-takers to re-classify as 'MISSING'.

25. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK under Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (For England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005. FGM is undertaken on British girls in the UK as well as overseas. Girls of school age who are subjected to FGM are often believed to be taken overseas at the beginning of school holidays, particularly summer holidays, in order for there to be sufficient time for her to recover before returning to school. Guidelines to be considered when FGM is known or believed to be a factor in any missing episode are contained within Government Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines, Female Genital Mutilation Multi-Agency Protocol.

26. Forced Marriage

Unlike an arranged marriage, where the prospective spouses may choose whether or not they wish to accept the partnership, a forced marriage is when one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage or consent is extracted through duress. From June 2014, forcing someone to marry against their will is a crime and anyone found guilty can face up to seven years in prison. There are occasions when families, who are attempting to trace a person who is missing in an attempt to avoid a forced marriage or other honour-based violence, use the police as a "tracing service". This presents the police and other agencies with a number of difficulties, and careful management of the situation is required, particularly when the person is located, highlighting the importance of the immediate risk assessment on location of a person and on the Safe and Well Check. Officers are reminded that where there is a forced marriage, there is also likely to be an offence of rape.

Other possible offences linked to Forced Marriage are:

- False Imprisonment
- Abduction
- Kidnap
- Assault
- Sexual Offences.

27. Domestic Violence (DV) and Domestic Abuse (DA)

There is sometimes a link between domestic violence and missing persons and identifying if a missing person is a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence or child abuse may have a critical influence on the investigation and in particular the way the location and return of the individual should be handled. Informants are unlikely to admit domestic violence is a factor in the case. Previous history should therefore be taken into account but professionals should bear in mind this may not be currently relevant to the missing episode. Police should work with partners where Domestic Violence is known to be involved. Maintaining the victims safety and protection is the first priority of the investigation at all times. Police should be aware that the abuser may:

- Report the victim missing in order to show false concerns in an attempt to hide the abuse;
- Fail to report the victim missing to avoid a subsequent investigation;
- Seek police assistance believing the police will lead him or her to the victim or even return the victim to the abusing relationship.

Officers should carry out full domestic violence checks on those that report partners and family members missing. Locations of refuges must never be revealed to family members attempting to trace a missing person.

28. Asylum Seekers and Trafficking

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are likely to be placed in the care of the local authority. If they subsequently go missing, they are to be treated as missing persons, not failed asylum seekers or illegal immigrants. Many of this group may have been trafficked into the UK for criminal purposes. Young people at risk from / having been trafficked present a high level of risk of going missing following coercion and threats from traffickers. Young people may be unable to provide information about missing periods due to fear of retribution to them or their family from their traffickers. Anyone who believes that a person who is/was missing may have been trafficked should make reference to the procedure on Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked. If a person is missing who is known/suspected to be subject to immigration control any agency should contact Andrew Heseltine, Vulnerable Person Protection Manager for the North West, on Andrew.heseltine@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or 0151 213 2260. Practitioners should not be blinkered to the fact that “trafficking” does take place between differing areas of Britain, and even areas of Greater Manchester or within an Authority, and the victim of trafficking may not necessarily be from abroad.

Advice can be sought from the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (Tel: 0114 252 3891 or 08447782406). This is an advice line that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit the National Crime Agency website for more information on trafficking.

29. Sexual Exploitation

There is a strong link between people (including adults and boys) being at risk of sexual exploitation and going missing from home or care - evidence suggest that 90% of children subject to sexual grooming go missing at some point (DCSF, 2009). Early intervention, effective monitoring and management of children who are reported as missing provides an early recognition of the possibility of Child Sexual Exploitation. Concerns around suspected sexual exploitation could include:

- The person is repeatedly reported missing from home;
- The person is known to be visiting locations or addresses which raise suspicions around sexual exploitation;
- The person has unexplained money, gifts, mobile phones etc;
- The person has additional vulnerability; this is linked to the age of the child.

If sexual exploitation is suspected or a risk then the procedures on Safeguarding Children and Young People Abused Through Sexual Exploitation should be referred to and the person should be considered as high risk when reporting to the Police and during the subsequent investigation. See References for more information on the Government’s commitment to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and the links to going missing.

30. Role of the missing hub:

Missing hub will be co-located within Wigan Police Station, alongside the multiagency CSE team, the management oversight will be provided by the CSE Practice Manager.

The missing hub will consist of the Independent visitor and also the Missing Coordinator.

The workers will be responsible for reviewing missing reports on a daily basis and determining the level of need and

required response.

The workers will undertake return home interviews for all children requiring this service and ensure that this information is fed both to the allocated case workers and also into the weekly multi-agency missing meeting.

In addition to this the workers will attend a 6 weekly Governance meeting to ensure the review of intelligence and information to inform practice and developing responses to children missing from home, care or education.

31. For children and young People at Levels 1 /2 /3 Threshold of Need:

All children within this category will be discussed within the multi-agency missing meeting held on a weekly basis, the circumstances of the incident / report will be discussed and determination made regarding future action. Return Home Interviews will be offered to all children and young people who have been missing. Where required and accepted a Return Home Interview will be undertaken by the Missing Co-ordinator. This information will be recorded within the missing workspace on Liquid Logic. Where required Early Help Assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure the provision of appropriate support.

32. For children subject of a CIN / CP Plan:

The allocated social worker will receive notification of the missing episode and request an Independent Return Home Interview via the Children's Society Missing Worker. This Return Home Interview will be offered and undertaken within 72 hours of the missing episode and the information gathered recorded within the child's record and shared with the allocated social worker.

It may be in some cases that the allocated social worker and the Children's Society Missing Worker undertake a visit jointly.

The information regarding the missing episode will also be shared within the multi-agency missing meeting held on a weekly basis.

33. Children and young people in care

In all cases the Social Worker must visit and meet with the young person alone within 24 hours of his/her return. Where this is not possible, e.g. the child is placed at a distance from Wigan or the social worker is not available, a team manager may agree that the child is interviewed at a later date, or by an alternative person. The arrangement and reasons for this must be fully recorded. The Social Worker will ask the young person if they wish to speak to an independent Missing worker who will arrange to complete the Independent Return Home Interview. If the social worker is not available it is the responsibility of the team manager to arrange the visit. In all cases consideration will be given to the need to convene a strategy meeting.

34. For Children open to the CSE multi-agency team:

The missing episode will be discussed within the Daily Governance Meeting in order to share information on a multi-agency basis and agree any required actions, considering the missing episode in the context of the identified CSE concerns. A missing worker will attend Daily Governance Meetings where missing reports are discussed. The need for an independent return home interview will be determined within Daily Governance Meeting and arranged appropriately.

Information, analysis and review:

Information gathered as part of return home interviews provide an opportunity to inform case planning, for wider strategic planning and for professionals to take into account the children's views. The outcome of interventions will be recorded within Liquid Logic to ensure that information can be accessed and form part of the wider plan for the child.

This information will also be accessed and subject of scrutiny as part of the analysis of the data gathered. The information will be reviewed within Missing meetings and Governance meetings. This will allow the opportunity for scrutiny of return home interviews, ensuring that the child is central to the process but also to assist in the development of intelligence gathering in respect of heat mapping; identifying risk within areas. This will allow a focus on intervention and prevention to reduce the risk of missing episodes.

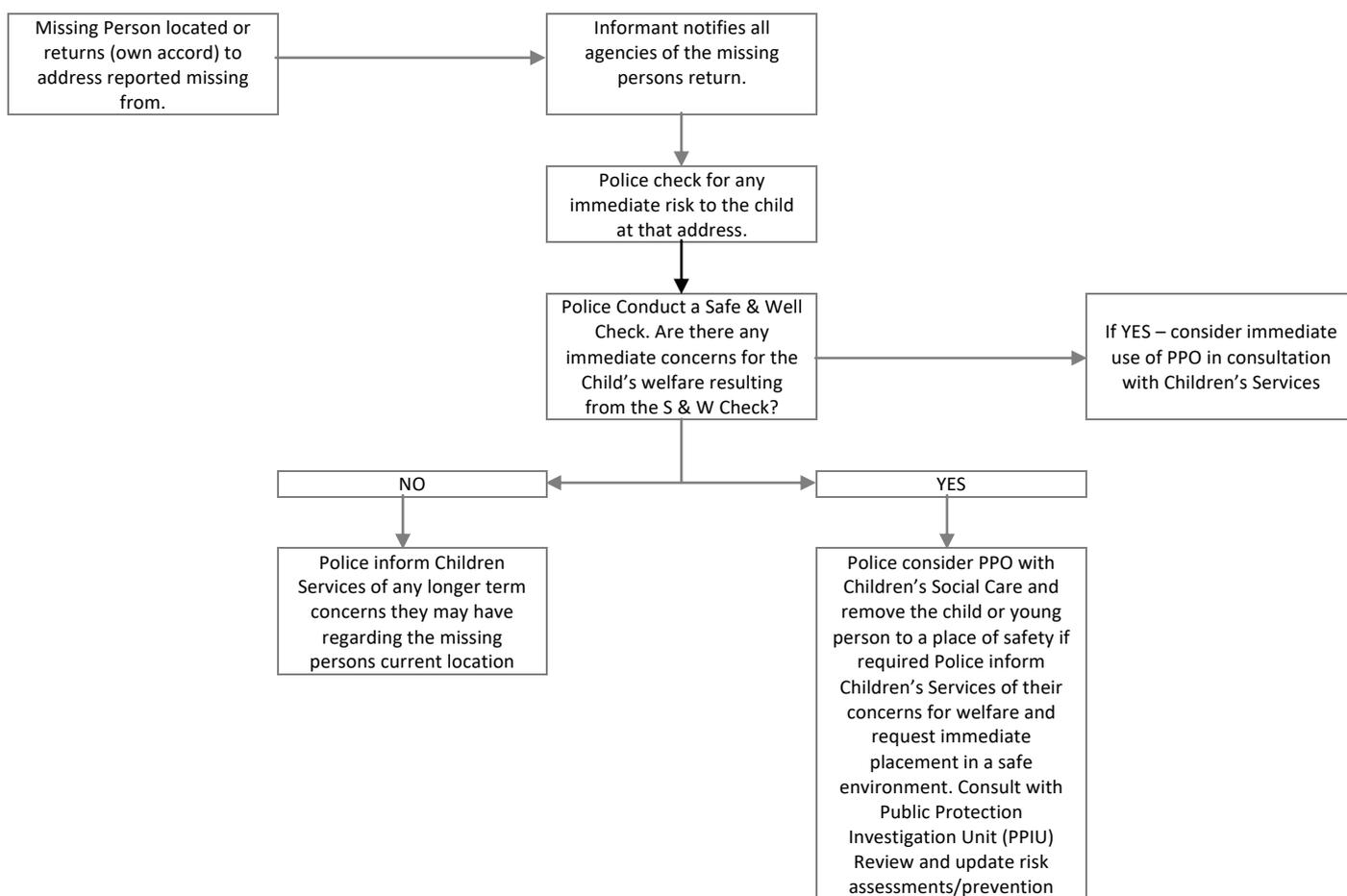
The data and analysis in respect of missing children will be provided within regular reports including the lead member and WSCB.

Mapping meetings will also be undertaken on a regular basis where intelligence highlights a specific issue or concern. Where numerous young people are linked to the same report or similar circumstances. Mapping exercises will allow for the review of intelligence to identify patterns.

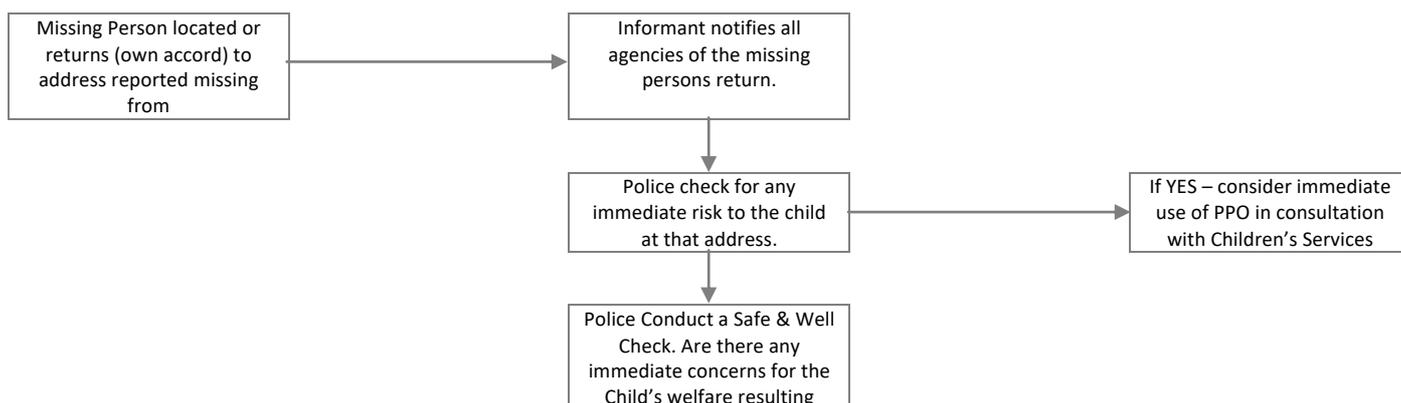
The data will include detail of:

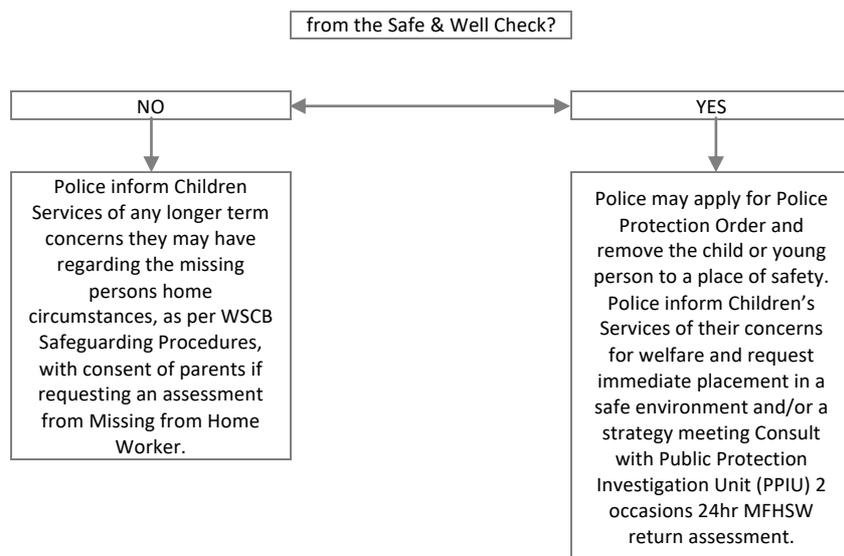
- Time and duration of missing episodes
- Information from partner agencies
- Review of return home interview
- Frequency of missing episodes

35. RETURN PROCEDURES – MISSING FROM CARE



36. RETURN PROCEDURES – MISSING FROM HOME





37. ADDITIONAL RETURN PROCEDURES COMMON TO MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE

Once the child or young person has been located, the police will carry out a Police Safe & Well Check. It will not be conducted over the telephone, and it must only be conducted by a Police Officer. Safe & Well Checks are not to be conducted by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

If there are immediate concerns please see both flowcharts for guidance and actions to be taken.

Where any child or young person has indicated a wish to speak to an independent professional, their Social Worker or the Police will ensure referral details are passed to the Missing From Home in accordance with existing internal procedures.

Any person who becomes aware should inform the relevant agency/professional concerns Wigan Divisional SPOCs must highlight such concerns to the Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU) who can address this matter.

38. EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION:

The Edge of Care facility provided via The View can be accessed if it is considered that an emergency placement, or already established short breaks are needed.

It is important for emergency accommodation to be accessible at any time for children and young people who require emergency placements. The Local Authority will consider what type of accommodation is most appropriate to meet the child's needs.

39. CHILDREN WHO REPEATEDLY RUN AWAY AND GO MISSING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

All agencies will operate an escalating system of interventions to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing.

Individual cases will be reviewed on a weekly basis within the weekly missing meeting to ensure that service provision remains effective and suitable to need.

In addition the 6 weekly governance meeting will consider those young people identified as high risk.

This intervention should try to identify any 'push' or 'pull' factors as well as any other agencies that could provide support. In the case of 'pull factors' it may be necessary to target those in the community who harbour the missing person or exploit them with regards to crime, sex or drugs. The intervention should also establish which other agencies are already involved in working with the child/young person.

After Three Missing From Home and Care episodes within a 1 month period: a strategy meeting should be held at the earliest opportunity including all involved professionals to ensure the appropriate sharing of information.

Meetings at this level should only be required for a small number of children provided that the protocol has been followed

with regard to early intervention and prevention. In addition to seeking to reduce future missing episodes and reduce any apparent risks to the child, this meeting should also quality assure compliance with the protocols and the efficiency of earlier intervention meetings and return assessment. It is recognised that there will be some children who go missing repeatedly within a short period of time where this level of intervention will immediately apply.

For children and young people considered to be at High Risk of Missing: A 'Grab Pack' will be developed and subject of regular review for all children considered to be at high risk, this will include a risk assessment which will be shared with the police to ensure effective responses. This assessment will be reviewed within the weekly and 6 weekly meetings held.

If the child/young person continues to be reported missing beyond this level the senior management team for children's services and police should discuss the case and consider whether it is appropriate for them to intervene further or for the Assistant Chief Constable (or their nominated representative) / Director of children's services to be asked to intervene.

Other risk factors demanding escalated interventions include:

- Any case where the risks involved in even a single future missing episode is very high.
- Cases where it has been identified that immediate action is necessary to ensure the well being of the person

40. MONITORING

The Missing from home WSCB Sub Group will ensure that Missing From Home remains a priority for Wigan by having oversight of the following;

- Implementation of "Missing from Home and Care" protocols and procedures.
- Evidencing the response to DCSF re: NI 71, Missing from Home / Care.
- Reporting information about patterns of absence among Looked After children / young people to the Director of CYPS and to Lead Councillor responsible for "corporate parenting".
- Receiving standardised report from GMP Missing from Home SPOCs, Children's Residential Services and ensure they are analysed at Missing from Home / Care Operational Group
- Any issues/concerns will be raised with WSCB via WSCB dataset, or WSCB Executive Report on a bi-monthly basis.

This Protocol will be reviewed 6 months after its implementation and annually thereafter.

41. PUBLICITY / MEDIA STRATEGY

It is the responsibility of the Police to advise the media regarding any missing child or young person. If disagreement arises it is the responsibility of Executive Director of Children Services to communicate with Wigan Police Divisional Commander.

Whether the child or young person is missing from public sector or private care providers, the decision to publicise by press and/or television will always be made in consultation with the child's social worker and Head of Service, Social Care, however GMP reserve the right to publicise the child if there are serious concerns for the welfare of that child.

Such publicity will be arranged at local level, by direction of the Divisional Commander and Head of Service, Social Care (or nominee). Prior to any publicity the child's social worker will be informed in order to allow the parents to be informed.

The police may also utilise the website facility of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (www.missingkids.co.uk) to publicise the child or young person. The Safeguarding of the child / young person will always be paramount.

42. GLOSSARY

ACPO Association of Chief Police Officers

Absconder See Definitions

CAF Common Assessment Framework

CAMHS Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services

CSE Child Sexual Exploitation

CYPS Children and Young Peoples Services

Dfes Department of Education & Skills

DCSF Department of Children, Schools and Families Div Division (Police)

DoH Department Of Health

EDS Emergency Duty Services

GMP Greater Manchester Police

LSCB Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Looked After See Definitions (Para 1.5)

Missing See Definitions

MFH Missing From Home

PACE Police And Criminal Evidence (Act 1984)

PNMPB Police National Missing Person Bureau (New Scotland Yard)
London

Protect Multi Agency team regarding CSE issues

PPIU Public Protection Investigation Unit (Police)

Runaway See Definitions

SEU Social Exclusion Unit

SLT Senior Leadership Team (Police)

SPOC Single Point of Contact (Police)

WSCB Wigan Safeguarding Children Board

WT Working Together 2006

43. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months but can be revised as needed.

Impact of non-compliance

Staff:	Disciplinary action
Student:	Welfare
Legislation/organisational:	Reputational damage, litigation, statutory and non-regulated compliance. prosecution
Compliance lead:	Headteacher/Director of Schools
Policy Reference:	ELWS-OPR-027
Version:	1
Agreed policy location:	DatabridgeMIS and Company Webpage
Does the policy require Governor approval?	No

Approval

Written by Ed Hanley 01/01/2021  Assistant Headteacher	Approved by Tony Brown 01/01/2021  CEO	Counter Signatory Richard King 01/01/2021  Director of Schools, Pre 16 Education
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Version Control

Version	Date	Revision	Review Date
1	01/01/2021	First Issue	31/12/2021
2			
3			
4			
5			

APPENDIX 1 - LOCAL AUTHORITY MISSING GRAB PACK

This information should be verified and reviewed during weekly missing meetings to ensure information remains up to date and that information is available to agencies including the police alongside any information arising from risk assessments.

Childs Full Name:	
Also Known As:	
D.O.B:	
Gender:	
Ethnicity:	
Languages Spoken:	
Legal Status: (i.e. CLA / S.20 / resident in parents care)	
Current Address:	
Mothers Address: (if different from above)	
Fathers Address: (If different from above)	
Other significant address:	
Known Acquaintances:	
Child / Young Person contact details (including social media if known)	
Physical Appearance: (eye colour, hair, glasses, facial hair, piercing, clothing)	
Distinguishing marks:	
Height and Build:	
Medical Conditions and medication required:	
Any physical or learning disabilities:	
Any mental health issues:	
EHC Plan:	
Details of any court order:	
Name and address of GP / Dentist:	
Any previous history of absconding:	
Any circumstances which may increase the risk to the child:	
When was the child last seen and by Whom:	
What was the last method of contact with the child:	
Details of allocated worker:	
Details of worker completing the Grab Pack	

APPENDIX 2 - Risk Assessment Record:

This record will be completed by the Missing Coordinator / Missing worker; the risk assessment will be stored within the child's record and shared with the police. The risk assessment will be updated following any further missing periods as part of the return home interview process.

Name of child _____

Date Risk Assessment completed _____

Risk indicators	Risk assessment information	
What are the usual circumstances of the child/young person going missing i.e. is the young person running to someone or from a situation?		
When does the young person usually leave the home?		
Where do they usually go? Are with family or friends who are undesirable?		
Are they with people who are unknown or undesirable?		
What level of maturity has the young person shown in being able to make decisions about themselves or others?		
What are the agreed coming in times, if any?		
Do they have access to any money and how if necessary will they obtain this?		
Are there any known issues/events happening in the child's/young person's family or close friends?		
Past method of return i.e. via family or on their own		
What is the risk of suicide/self-harm? What are the indicators of this?		
Likely use of drugs/alcohol/solvents? If so, type and amount?		
Past involvement of offending and in what form? Is the child/young person a risk to the community and in what way?		
Is there risk of sexual exploitation? Have sexual exploitation protocols been activated? Any previous harm suffered while absent?		
Any concerns about new Friends/boyfriends/girlfriends/associates?		
Any concern of abduction or being prevented from returning? Is there a risk of forced marriage?		
Are they experiencing bullying/racial and/or homophobic abuse?		
Any signs or indicators that child is experiencing difficulties or abuse in the placement?		
Is the child/young person on medication or suffering from medical condition?		
Physical or learning disability/difficulties?		
What is the child/young person's legal status?		
Any further information and knowledge This risk assessment grid above should be used as a guide and involve discussion and pooling of information to agree an informed risk assessment. In cases of little knowledge or where there is disagreement, the child or young person should be considered as being at higher risk.		
Analysis of risk factors		
Action to be taken by whom and by when (in bullet points)		
Young Person		Date
Missing coordinator / missing worker		Date
Practice Manager		Date