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| <p>Title: Joint protocol for children and young people missing from home/care</p> | |  <p>Salford Safeguarding Children Board</p> <p>Keeping children safe IN Salford</p> | |
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| <p>Departments/Groups This Document Applies to: ALL partner agencies</p> | | | |
| <p>Scope: All Partner Agencies in Salford</p> | | <p>Classification: SSCB Policy</p> | |
| <p>Keywords: Child Protection, Neglect, Abuse, Referral, missing from home, police</p> | | <p>Replaces: NONE</p> | |
| <p>To be read in conjunction with the following documents: Private Fostering Policy Abuse and Neglect Recognition referral and response</p> | | | |
| <p>Unique Identifier: SSCB/0003</p> | | <p>Review Date: January 2013</p> | |
| <p>Issue Status: CURNET</p> | | <p>Issue No: 1</p> | <p>Issue Date: December 2010</p> |
| <p>Authorised by: SSCB Executive</p> | | <p>Authorisation Date: January 2011</p> | |
| <p>Document for Public Display: Yes</p> | | | |
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1. INTRODUCTION

Going missing is a dangerous activity. A child or young person who goes missing just once or persistently faces the same level of risk every time. However, children who go missing when they are young (and/or more frequently) are more likely to face serious and longer-term problems.

1.1 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 crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Missing out on schooling and education.

1.2 Longer-term risks include:

- long-term drug dependency
- crime
- homelessness.

Research has shown that every year approximately 77,000 under 16 year olds go missing overnight. 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, 2002). Research also shows that the main causes of going missing are family conflict and personal problems such as relationships, substance misuse and bullying and school truancy. Young people who go missing from care are often unhappy or are influenced by others and do so to fit in with the group.

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 and care.

2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Statutory guidance was issued in 2002 ("Children Missing from Care and from Home", Department of Health) which directed local authorities to respond more effectively to young runaways, as well as outlining statutory responsibilities for Local Authorities in terms of responding to young runaways, the guidance makes the important point that a young person is at much as risk the first or tenth time they go missing.

3. WORKING TOGETHER

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) is clear in setting out responsibilities for respective agencies for children who go missing, including the development of standard protocols and the importance of understanding the reasons that lead to why children and young people go missing (WT 2010,11.65).

Generally Working Together 2010 stresses the importance of services working together to safeguard the welfare of children, and see it as a shared responsibility, rather than seeing this as solely social services' responsibility.

Working together can include:

- Discussing any concerns with the children's services

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- Referring children and young people to agencies willing to carry out return interviews
- Sharing critical information to enable thorough assessments to take place
- Negotiating and agreeing roles and responsibilities
- Holding planning meetings where information can be shared and action agreed.

Working together can help to focus on key issues, so as to make best use of resources and reduce professional anxiety.

4. “CHILDREN IN NEED” THRESHOLD

It is the responsibility of Salford City Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its area. With Children’s Services having a responsibility for assessing whether children might be in need and offering appropriate services.

The protocol detail roles and responsibilities for agencies and provide a description of the circumstances where it will be appropriate to consider referring a child or young person to the local authority for an initial child in need assessment.

The following criteria should be considered when requesting an initial child in need assessment from Children’s Services. If a child or young person meets the agreed criteria the manager of the agency carrying out the return interview and/or providing follow up support should make a referral to the Children’s services Referral Investigation and Assessment Team (RIAT). It will be important to be as clear as possible about the purpose of the assessment and what Children Service’s may be able to offer as a result.

If the referral does not receive a satisfactory response the accountable team manager should then be contacted.

5.1 Criteria for requesting a child in need initial assessment:

1. The age of the child – a child going missing aged 12 y/o and under.
2. The number of occasions a child or young person runs away – two occasions in a 12 month period.
3. Risk of significant harm, for example:
 - Neglect and/or physical, and/or sexual, and/or emotional abuse
 - parenting issues i.e. out of parental control; parents not reporting child or young person missing; parents misusing substances e.g. drugs and/or Alcohol; persistent school non-attendance with parents’ knowledge and/or collusion; domestic violence; mental health/behavioral problems of parents.
5. At risk of forced marriage
6. If an independent/voluntary agency has attempted to make contact but has been refused access and there are concerns about the health and safety of the young person or access is considered unsafe for the worker.
7. Indicators of sexual exploitation (which should activate local sexual exploitation protocols).
8. Learning difficulties, mental health issues and/or physical disabilities.
9. Behavioural disorder, particularly where the child or young person is at risk to self or others.

The above could be one or a combination of factors or prolonged factors and may also indicate child protection concerns, which should trigger child protection procedures.

6. SCOPE

The terms child and children refers to any young person under the age of 18 years old.

The protocol is designed for:

- All children and young people who go missing from the parental home.
- Children and young people Looked after by Salford City Council placed in Local Authority Children's Homes within the authorities boundaries.
- Children and young people Looked after by Salford City Council placed with foster carers within the authorities boundaries.
- Children and young people Looked after by Salford City Council placed in private establishments or with agency foster carers within Local Authority the authorities boundaries and where compliance with the protocol is specified in the contract or placement agreement.
- Within the context of the policy, 'Children Looked After' refers to children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, children subject to care Orders including Interim care orders, Section 31 and 38 of the Children Act 1989, and children who are otherwise provided with accommodation by Section 21 of the Children Act 1989. These include PACE transfers, children on remand and children subject to a supervision order with a residence requirement.
- In addition the protocol will apply to all young people within the Local Authority (including those aged over 18) for whom Salford City Council have continuing responsibilities under the Children (leaving care) Act 2000.
- Children and Young People resident in care homes controlled by the Local Authority or Private care Providers having been placed there by other Local Authorities / Children & Young Peoples services outside of the Salford City Council area.

7. PRINCIPLES

**Every Individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.
Any missing episode is potentially serious.**

All agencies and those with parental responsibility will report a child/young person missing to the police according to this protocol.

All agencies and those with parental responsibility where they suspect a child/young person is at risk of going missing they need to refer that child/young person to the Missing from home team

When a child/young person goes missing our joint aim is to prevent the child/young person experiencing harm and to recover them to safety as soon as possible.

Interventions are important in addressing persistent missing episodes.

Interventions may be focused on the individual child/young person or the care establishment or by targeting 'pull factors' in the community.

The reasons for every child/young person going missing are key to informing effective prevention strategies. Children and young people's concerns must be taken seriously.

This is best achieved by partnership working, information sharing, and problem solving and performance management.

Salford City Council the Police, Health and other key partners will monitor compliance with the protocol and monitor outcomes jointly via quarterly reporting systems.

This protocol should be read as guidance, which cannot anticipate every situation. All agencies should use their professional knowledge and judgement to take any action that is deemed necessary to safeguard the child/young person, based on an assessment of risk for each individual child.

When a child or young person goes missing from care it is expected that Local Authority staff will act in the capacity as a 'good parent'. This means that:

- Children /young people will **NOT** be reported missing as a behaviour management tool.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to locate the child/young person.
- On return children / young people will be given a positive welcome with their immediate needs being met i.e. offered a hot drink, food and medical attention.
- Children and young people will be given the opportunity to talk to someone they choose about their experiences within a return interview.

8. MONITORING AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM HOME / CARE.

Given the seriousness of the risk associated with running and missing young people A designated senior manager in Salford has responsibility for:

- managing its "missing from home and care" protocols and procedures
- Reporting information about patterns of absence among looked after children to the director of Children's Services and to councilors responsible for "corporate parenting"
- monitoring policies and performance relating to children missing from home.

The senior manager will ensure that all missing from home data is subjected to robust analysis as will present a quarterly report to Local Safeguarding Children s Board

Children's Services will report quarterly to Department for children, school and families on the National Indicator 71 Children Missing form home or Care.

9. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this protocol and relate to children and young people under 18 years old who have go missing or gone missing. The definition of running away is taken from the SEU Young Runaways report (2002) and includes reference to young people who self-define running away as being forced to leave because for example they do not believe they have any alternative.

Runaway

- A child or young person, who is absent for one or more nights from the family home or placement without permission or who has been forced to leave by their parents or carers.

- or : A child or young person, who is absent from their home or placement without permission for any length of time where their age and experience, background and ability make this a concern.

- **Looked After :**

A child is 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.

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- **Accommodated :**
A child is accommodated if s/he is looked after by the Local Authority with the voluntary agreement of his/her parents, or with the child if s/he is over 16 years old.
- **In care :** A child is in care if s/he is the subject of a care order made by a court.
- **Child :** A child or young person under the age of eighteen years.
- **Police SPOC :** Single Point of Contact

- **Missing Person – Definition:**

A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. He or she will be considered missing until located and his or her well being, or otherwise, established.

- **Unauthorized absence**

Absent for a short period of time i.e. less than overnight and after a careful and thorough risk assessment the absence does not raise concern for their immediate safety or that of the public. In accordance with the ACPO Manual of Guidance 2005 this period of absence should not exceed 6 hours.

Whilst the child or young person is not present, but through careful risk assessment, there are no immediate concerns for the well being of the individual, and they will not be reported missing until their agreed period of unauthorised absence has passed. This period is not to exceed 6 hours.

- **Absconded**

When a child or young person has gone missing who is subject to legal orders such as secure orders. Police must be made aware of the order under which the child has been placed in the residence, and the expiry date of the order for the child to be classed as an absconder. If the expiry date of the order is not known, the child or young person will be classified as a “missing person” NOT an absconder.

10. Additional Procedures & Strategy

10.1 Agencies working with children and young people and their families and carers must use well established, comprehensive and consensual information sharing systems and processes that place the individual at the centre of how their information is used.

10.2 This must be delivered in accordance with :

The Data Protection Act(1998)

The Children Act (1989 and 2004)

Human Rights Act (2000)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)

ACPO Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (2005)

DoH Guidance Safeguarding Children and Young People involved in Prostitution: Practice Guidance (2000)

Salford Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure

Salford Children Missing Education procedures

LSCB Traffic Children

10.3 All information obtained and shared in support of this protocol must be fully recorded within the organisation’s client management systems and be clearly referenced as to the

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evidence and the information upon which decisions have been made. This must include details for any third parties and full details of all the information/evidence that they have supplied/ been given.

Greater Manchester Police will automatically inform the following agencies of missing persons in line with the ACPO Guidance document listed in Para 10.2:

- The Police National Missing Person Bureau (after 14 days)
- The Missing People Charity (after 4 hrs for High risk missing persons, 72 hrs for Medium Risk Missing Persons, and after 14 days for Low Risk missing persons)

10.4 Whilst assessing risk, attention should be given with regard to sexual exploitation in line with DoH Guidance Safeguarding Children and Young People involved in Prostitution: Practice Guidance (2000) and existing local Child Sexual Exploitation guidance. Local Guidance has been developed in relation to Sexual exploitation which was sanctioned by the Salford Safeguarding Children's Board.

10.5 This protocol is also in conjunction with the Salford CYPS Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures.

10.6 This protocol for children who go missing whilst "looked after" will aid early identification of risk and vulnerability; assist in the investigation into tracing the missing person and make valuable use of any information received from the return to care "independent interview" in preventing further incidents.

11. PLANNING BEFORE THE EVENT

11.1 Children and young people who may go missing from the Parental Home.

It is difficult to plan for when young people go missing from the parental home, as some young people and families are not already known to agencies that could provide preventative interventions.

All agencies need to be able to recognise and respond to risk factors that could lead to missing incidents.

The know risk factors that can precede a missing incident:

- Arguments and conflicts
- Poor family relationships
- Physical and emotional abuse
- Step parent issues
- Boundaries and control

The Common Assessment Framework is key to assisting agencies to respond effectively to these risk factors and going missing should be seriously considered as a possible outcome, and appropriate support put in place to prevent any potential missing incidents.

11.2 Children and young people in Care

All Looked after children aged 12 or over should have an absconding plan in place

The absconding plan will should take account of any risk that the child may go missing in future and any factors which may increase the risk to the child should they go missing. Children's residential and fostering service staff should contribute to this assessment.

The plan should set out agreed action should a the person go missing , places to look and places if the child is found where they can and can't be left

The absconding plan will remain in the possession of Salford City Council. It is not a public

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document. It is not envisaged that the police will need to view the plan at any time. However, there may be circumstances when it is necessary to involve the police in aspects of the planning process to safeguard child/ young person.

Additionally ALL children who are “looked after” by the Local Authority (and private care providers) will receive from their Local Authority an age appropriate information guide which clearly states:-

- The procedure that will be followed if they go missing.
- They should expect to be interviewed by a police officer on their return
- That where required they will be offered the opportunity to speak to an independent person identified and approved by each local authority

Absconding plans need to be stored in Care first and clearly labelled to enable easy access for the officer including the RIAT Team.

11.3 Risk Assessment

Individual risk assessments are an essential part of this protocol. They will enable staff/carers to be clear what the risks are for the particular child or young person and/or the risks they pose for the public.

For those children and young people, who go missing from the parental home, the risk assessment will be carried out by the police once they have been reported missing.

Children and young people missing from Care

Is the lead responsibility for the Local Authority to undertaken the risk assessment. A risk assessment will assist staff to decide a category of absence, clearly indicating whether the child should be reported “missing”, and to share the fullest and most accurate information with the police and other concerned agencies

It is important not to dismiss the significance of multiple episodes of running away or going missing by a child or young person. Often the police, Children Services staff and other agencies may label the child or young person as a "problem", which can take the focus off the risks the child or young person is facing. Undertaking the risk assessment it will help staff differentiate between Missing children and those that are” late returning”

The registered manager and accountable social worker will need to consider the timing of reporting children and young people missing to the police and this decision needs to be informed by an accurate description of the child or young person’s vulnerabilities.

The risk assessment grid (Appendix 1) in this protocol will help guide the assessment and should be completed as soon as possible when a child or young person runs away. It is mainly to be used for children and young people who are looked after or in care and have gone missing from their placement. If the child or young person has gone missing from a residential unit, then the senior member of staff on duty in the unit must be informed, notify the Police and the emergency duty team if the child/young person is aged 11 or under. Those who are older than this but considered to be at risk due to their vulnerability should be reported in the same way. The emergency duty team should always be informed of all those who are missing for a period of 24 hours.

The risk assessment grid should be used as a guide, to encourage discussion and to help bring together information. The categories of absence (Para 9) should be used together with the risk assessment grid to inform decisions about the timing of reports to the police.

The risk assessment process must take account of different circumstances, for example:

- a child or young person may have a pattern of absenting themselves for a short

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- time and then returning. Often their whereabouts is known or suspected
- a child or young person who stays out beyond agreed limits on purpose or without knowing This may included an upper time limit (not exceeding 6 hours) for periods of unauthorised absence, catered towards each individual child or young person.
 - making decisions based on what is appropriate given the cultural circumstances.

If the child or young person has absconded from foster care, then the foster carer must, contact the Police and inform the RIAT Team or the emergency duty team (if it is out of hours), or the child's social worker during office hours.

Police will conduct their own Risk Assessment upon attending the residence from which the child or young person has been reported missing, taking into other factors that are not directly associated with the child, for example weather conditions, proximity to potential dangers in the environment ie rivers, canals, moors etc

Where there are disagreements as to the level of risk a child or young person should be assessed at, it is agreed that the highest level will take precedence until the matter can be agreed. Disagreements should be addressed at the peer level in the first instance, and should only be taken to respective managers if unsuccessful. Disagreements should remain private to the professional bodies involved.

11.4 Photographs

Should a child/ young person go missing it is vital to the safe recovery of the child that a recent photograph of the child is made available. The photograph must be a good likeness of the child/young person, and the date the photograph was taken should be endorsed on the back of it to identify it's relevance to the enquiry. The photograph will be used by the police to help them identify the child or young person whilst conducting enquiries. In very serious cases, where the child is believed to be at severe risk, the police and local authority may decide to use the photograph more widely, including publishing the photograph to national or local media, and circulation on the Police / ICMEC www.missingkids.co.uk website.

On admission to care, the consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any subsequent missing person investigation. If possible the consent of the child/ young person should be gained.

12. ROLE OF THE ALERTER

12. 1 - Parents

Every individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.

Parents and carers are expected to do undertake the basic measures to try and locate their child if considered safe to do so:

- **Search bedroom/ house**
- **Contact known friends and relatives where child/ young person may be**
- **Search known locations child/ young person may be at.**

Children and young people, who go missing under the age of 16, are not legally considered as being able to live independently away from home. Parents should take all reasonable steps to locate the child/young person and ascertain their safety. It would be considered a reasonable step for parents to inform the police, children's services departments that their child is missing. Failure to report a child missing may result in their child being placed at risk of significant harm. Where parents do not report a child or young person as missing may themselves become part of an investigation.

Anyone who 'takes or detains' a runaway under 16 without lawful authority may be prosecuted under Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984.

12. 2 – RESIDENTIAL UNIT STAFF AND FOSTER CARERS

Principles – acting as a good parent

When a child or young person goes missing from care it is expected that Local Authority staff will act in the capacity as a 'good parent'. This means that:

Children and young people will not be reported missing as a behaviour management tool.

Every reasonable effort will be made to locate the child/ young person- including phoning the young person if they have a mobile, searching the unit and contact names on the absconding plan

On return children/ young people will be given care and support with their immediate needs being met i.e. offered a hot drink, food and medical attention.

Children and young people will be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and their concerns taken seriously.

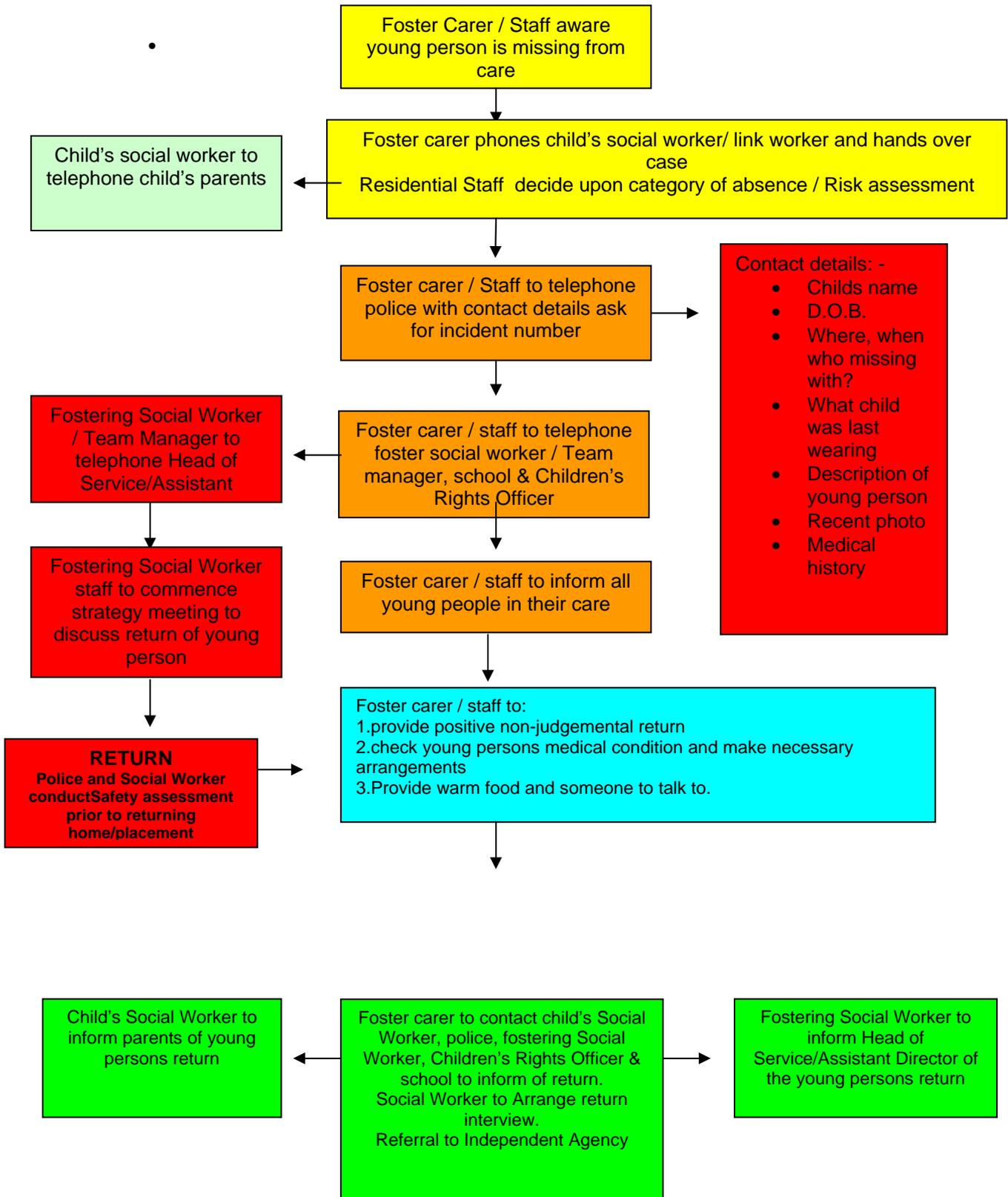
When a child/ young person goes missing, the local authority will decide upon which category of absence applies to the child or young person (See Para 10.) Staff will use the 'category of missing grid' (see practice guidance) to assist in making this decision.

In deciding the category of absence, all staff must consider the circumstances of the child/ young person and their absence. This will include detailed consideration of:

- The circumstances of their absence
- The care plan
- The age of the child
- The maturity of the child
- Any physical or cognitive disability of the child
- Any continuing or urgent need for the child to have medication or other medical treatment.
- The legal status of the child
- Previous behaviour and history
- Danger posed by the child to themselves or others
- General vulnerability of the child/ young person
- The child's/ young person's vulnerability to drug/substance use
- Whether the child is perceived as running to/from someone or something.
- Any circumstances within the placement, say with carers or other residents that may be relevant to the absence.
- The risk of offending
- The influence of peer groups, families or friends
- Predatory influences on the child i.e. grooming
- At known risk of abduction
- Environmental factors such as weather, time of year. Community events or tensions.

12. 2 – RESIDENTIAL UNIT STAFF AND FOSTER CARERS

FLOW CHART FOR ‘THE PROCEDURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE GOING MISSING FROM CARE’



Do and Don't s

When a child absents him/herself without permission it is necessary to initiate procedures which encourage him/her to return as quickly and safely as possible, ensuring he/she is treated positively on return.

When it is discovered that a child has absented him/herself without permission from a residential home, residential staff will refer to the young person's individual risk assessment in considering whether the young person is "absent" or "missing" as defined by these procedures. In cases of doubt the home manager or manager on call will be consulted.

Children and young people who are absent from their care placement can be a matter of considerable concern to their carers and there is a need to locate them and ensure they are safe. The young people can be thought of as on continuum, with there being little cause for concern at one end and with significant cause for concern at the other. Children and young people who are a few minutes late home from school would not normally give rise to concerns; they have missed the bus, or they may be exhibiting normal adolescent testing out, to establish the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, or to show their disagreement with aspects of their placement. It is not helpful to consider every momentary absence as warranting a formal missing person report, and such instances should be considered as unauthorised absences.

However, at some point, depending upon the child and the circumstances, the young person's absence will give rise to justifiable concern and require a formal missing person report to the police. Whilst there can be no substitute for a considered judgement, based on a sound assessment of the young person and the circumstances, it is the purpose of this framework to assist carers to structure their thinking with regard to the three categories of absence.

This decision should not be taken in isolation, residential staff should consult with the senior member on duty and foster carers should liaise with the young person's social worker or RIAT Team staff. Any decision should incorporate information from the child/ young persons' absconding plan. The situation should be kept under constant review and changes in circumstances taken into account. If the young person is receiving support from CAMHS professionals, Educational Psychologists and so on, it may be advisable to discuss the case with them. However, if they are not readily available a decision must be made on the basis of the best available information. In cases of doubt it may also be appropriate to discuss the case with a local police supervisor.

Each case must be decided on merit and a formal missing person report to the police may be actioned earlier in some circumstances than in others. Indeed for a small number of young people it may be appropriate to immediately report them as a missing person. Normally this will have been previously agreed as part of the Care Plan because of the young person's vulnerability.

The fact that the young person may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk. In fact, children who repeatedly go missing are often being enticed away from their placement by activities that they see as exciting or by predatory influences. Furthermore, short absences may be as risky as lengthy ones.

If the child absents his/herself from a foster placement the foster carer will inform the child's social worker or duty officer if the social worker is not available or the Emergency Duty Service if out of hours.

On receipt of the referral, a careful risk assessment will be made which takes into account individual circumstances. Each missing incident will be given equal attention and treated as an episode in its own right.

If the absence is considered to fall within these procedures the relevant staff member, i.e. child's social worker, duty social worker, RIAT Team social worker, residential child care

worker, will as soon as practical inform:

- the child/young person's parents/and those with parental responsibility; and
- the Police.

Where, initially, the decision was made that this absence **does not** fall within this procedure this decision will be reviewed **every hour** throughout the period of unauthorized absence (to a maximum of 6 hours) if the child does not return or his/her whereabouts are not known.

If such a period of absence continues for 6* hours it will automatically be considered to fall within these procedures. This is the maximum period; and in most situations much shorter periods will be appropriate.

In every case where, following consultation with the Police, the level of risk to the child is deemed to be the matter must be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Service, Children Services Salford City Council and the Divisional Commander (Police) or their nominees without delay. They will then decide upon further action and consider the need to inform the Assistant Director, Children Service , Salford City Council.

If, during a period of missing or at the point of reporting, the location of an absent child or young person is known, then this matter is to be recorded as unauthorised absent. The alerter must then undertake a risk assessment of the factors surrounding the location of the absent child or young person and, if deemed to be anything other than HIGH, **it is the care providers responsibility to arrange collection of the child or young person.**

If the child or young person is subject to a care order, and refuses to return voluntarily with the agent of the care provider, then the police are to be called.

If the child or young person is "accommodated", then a risk assessment is to be undertaken, and if police attendance is required , the use of a police protection order is to be considered.

Whilst notifying the police of the absence of a child or young person is an essential part of the overall process, having done so **does not** absolve the residential staff of their corporate parenting responsibilities for the child, and such carers and Foster Carer should take all necessary actions to attempt to locate the missing person, including where possible, searches of the missing persons room within the residence, immediate searches of the local area, telephone calls to family and friends to establish if the missing person is with them, or has been seen since the time they were identified as missing.

12.4 Health

Children and young people missing from home often present themselves at various health services i.e. accident and emergency departments, walk in centers, GP surgeries.

The local designated professionals (Doctors, nurses) will co-ordinate the circulation of missing child alerts. They will ensure the relevant health services are alerted.

If a child initially discloses that they have gone missing, then the Health professional needs to refer to the notification procedures for 'All Agencies'.

12.5 Youth Offending Teams

Children and young people missing from home are sometimes already involved with youth offending teams, and as such there is sometimes a focus on their criminality rather than the safeguarding needs. It is important that any incidents are reported according to this protocol.

12.6 All agencies / member of the public

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If it comes to the attention of any agency or voluntary organization that a young person is missing from home they must:

Advise the parent /carer of the organizations duty to ensure the matter is reported to the police who will ensure procedures are activated; and if necessary follow this up by contacting the police to verify the reporting by the parent / carer has occurred.

12.6 Check list of the Information to be made available when reporting the matter to the Police

When reporting the matter to the Police, the Informant (be they a residential child care worker, social worker, foster carer or duty social worker) is to make the following information immediately available to the police:

- a description of the child (including description of clothing, if known);
- when the child was last seen and with whom;
- a recent photograph (including the date of the photo and confirmation that it is a true likeness of the missing person);
- family addresses;
- known acquaintances;
- any previous history of running away or going missing;
- the name and address of the child's GP, school and dentist;
- circumstances which increase the risk to a child should be drawn to the attention of the Police; and
- Any health concerns and details of any medication e.g. the need for any time-based treatments i.e. diabetes
- Legal status of the child or young person – absconder or missing
- Any action agreed or taken.
- Length of time in current placement.
- Overall length of time in the Care System
- Reason for the missing person being in “care”
- Immediate circumstances prior to disappearance (ie phone call received, visitor etc)
- Missing persons demeanour immediately prior to disappearance (excited, anxious etc)
- When the Alerter is or has been made aware of the location of a missing person, this must also be disclosed (see para 10.6)
- Details of all actions that have already been undertaken to locate the child or young person – ie names and telephone numbers of family and friends already contacted by the residential staff in an attempt to locate the missing person.

Information sharing should be carried out in accordance with information sharing principles set out in both Working Together 2006 and Salford 's Information Sharing policy

13. CONDUCTING THE MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION

13. 1 Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

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GMP will, upon receiving a report of a child or young person being absent from care or missing from home, carry out pro active enquiries to locate, trace and return the child/young person as soon as possible.

Whilst all under missing persons aged under 18 years are automatically classified as “Vulnerable Missing Persons”, 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 prior to being circulated on Police Systems will form the basis for the subsequent investigation into the persons disappearance.

13.2 GMP Risk Assessment and Associated actions:

Classification of Risk and Response (ACPO Manual of Guidance 2005 – Para 3.5)

| RISK | DEFINITION | PROPORTIONATE ACTION |
|---------------|---|--|
| High | There is an immediate risk and definite grounds for believing that the missing person is at risk through their own vulnerability or mental state, or there are grounds for believing that the public is at risk through the missing person’s mental state | This category requires the immediate deployment of police resources and a member of the BCU senior management team or similar command level must be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and the approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an SIO. There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies |
| Medium | The risk posed is likely to place the missing person in danger, or they are a threat to themselves or others. | 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 | There is no apparent risk of danger to either the missing person or the general public. | In addition to recording the information on the PNC, the police will advise the person reporting the disappearance that following basic enquiries and unless circumstances change, further active enquiries will not be carried out by police. The missing person’s details will be passed to the “Missing People” charity in line with the national protocol. Low risk missing persons, however, must be kept under review as risk can increase with the passage of time. |

Actions relating to Risk category

High Risk

The officer has serious concerns about the safety of the missing person or the risk he or she may pose to others. Risk factors are likely to be significant. Immediate action is required of the police, including command level involvement, press/media liaison and close contact with outside agencies. All the OPUS Missing Person “HELP” menu “golden hour tasks” options should be considered without delay. The case must be regularly reviewed. An SIO should be appointed.

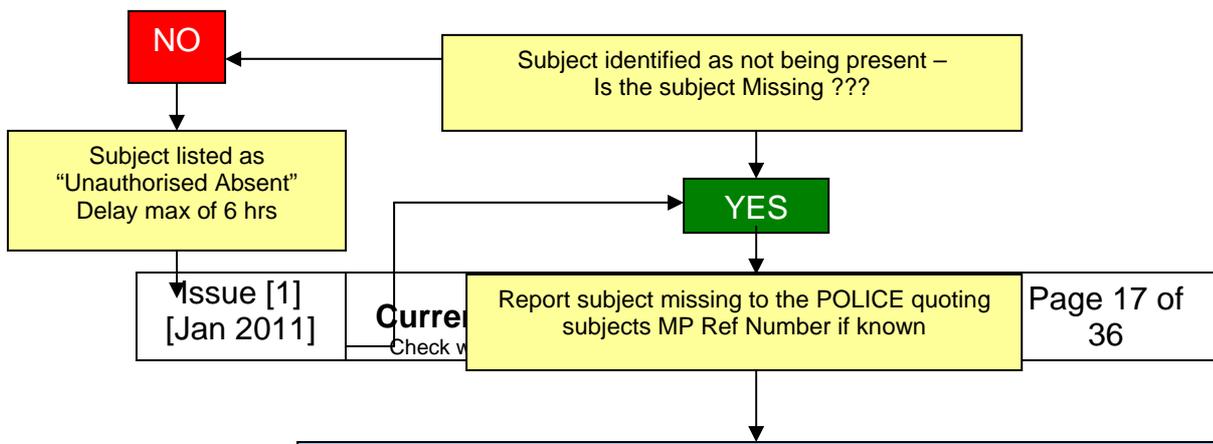
Medium Risk

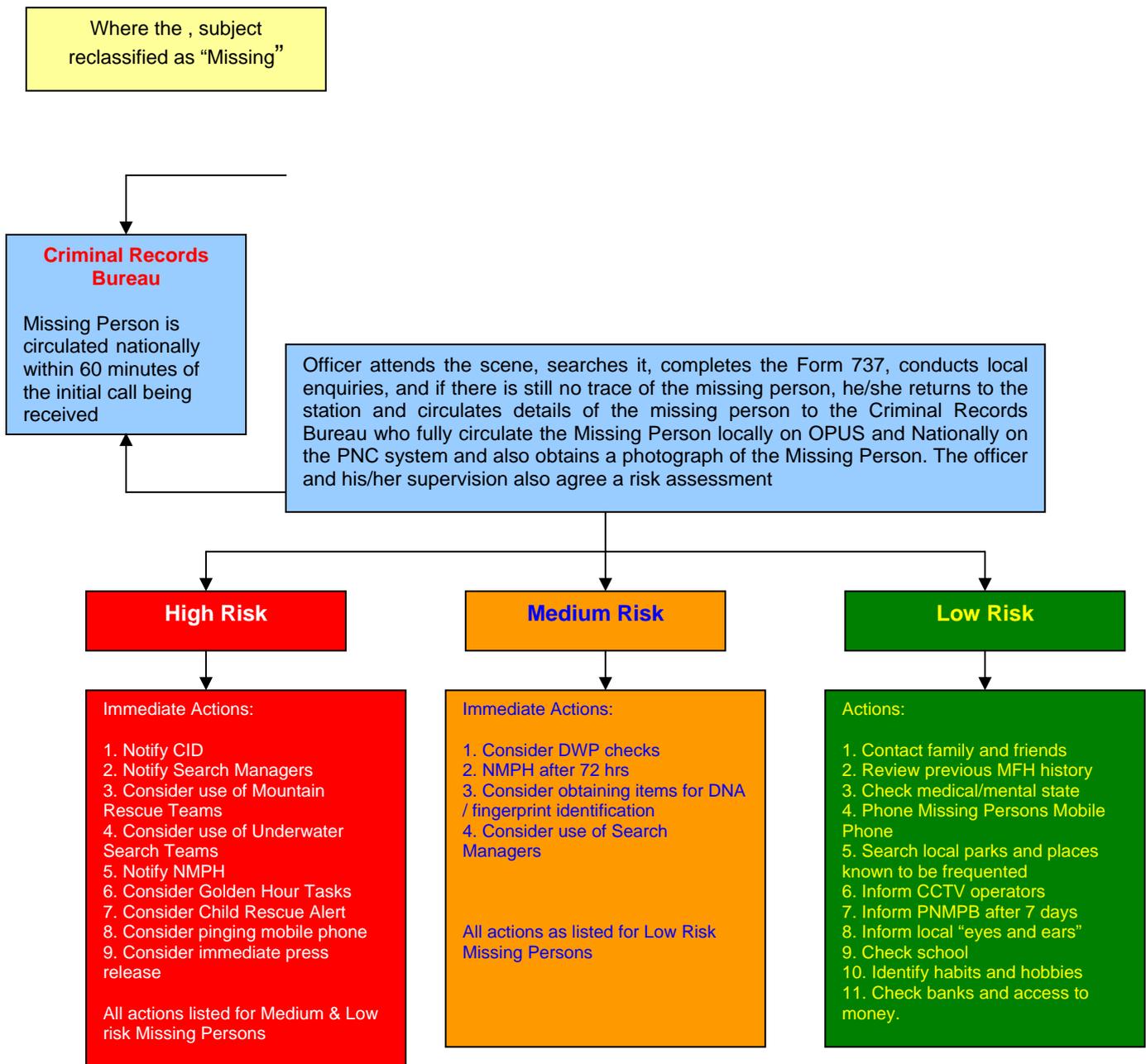
The officer may have some concerns about the missing person and some risk factors do exist. All the MISSING PERSON HELP MENU options should be considered and prioritised for action. The case requires positive action by the police to trace the missing person and to assist and support the informant, although not to the total exclusion of all other tasks. The case should be regularly reviewed by supervision, particularly risk assessments due to the passage of time.

Low risk

Whilst the officer may be confident that the case will be resolved quickly and without incident, some risk factors do exist, but taken into consideration with other factors regarding the case such as the views of those who know the missing person well, an adverse outcome is not feared. The police will record and circulate details of the missing person and will conduct those enquiries most likely to resolve the case. Friends and family will be asked to assist with enquiries and the case will be periodically reviewed by supervision

13.3 GMP Initial Investigation Flowchart





13.4 Detailed Police Response:

- Informant contacts the Police:
- Force wide Incident Log is created (FWIN)
- Missing Person is logged on OPUS within 30 minutes
- Missing Person is semi circulated nationally on the PNC with 60 minutes.
- The Initial Investigating Officer is to notify the local CID of any missing person classified as HIGH RISK, and/or any missing person for whom there is concern.
- "Missing People" charity (normally the NMPH) notified within 4 hours if the missing person is classified as "HIGH" risk. If Medium risk – the "missing people" are

informed after 72 hrs, and if classified as low risk, missing people are notified after 14 Days.

- After 48 hrs, local CID are automatically informed of all missing persons, regardless of risk.
- After 72 hrs the Divisional Chief Inspector Operations is requested to review the case notes.
- After 7 days, the Divisional Superintendent Operations is also requested to review the enquiry.
- After 7 days, the GMP MFH Manager is requested to ensure that the Police National Missing Person Bureau (PNMPB) at New Scotland Yard are made aware of the missing person. PNMPB circulate the missing person on their database after 14 days. .
- After 28 days, (and every 28 days thereafter) the case is referred to the Chief Inspector Operations.
- After 183 days, the case is referred back to the Supt Ops for review.

13. 5 Publicity / Media Strategy

It is the responsibility of the Police to advise the media regarding any missing child or young person.

For those missing from their "home / parental" address, the approval of the parents (or those with parental responsibility) will always be sought, but GMP reserve the right to publicise the child without parental consent if they believe that the concerns for the child outweigh any reservations highlighted by those with parental responsibility.

For those 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 Director Children' Services. The 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 (or nominee). Prior to any publicity the child's social worker will be informed in order to allow the parents to be informed.

Additionally GMP will automatically inform the "Missing People" charity of all high risk missing persons with 4 hrs of them being reported, Medium risk missing persons within 72 hrs of them being reported, and Low risk missing persons within 14 days of them being reported.

GMP 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.

13. 6 Recording

Throughout the process identified within this protocol a full report must be kept of all actions taken and messages received/given. In the case of a child missing from a residential establishment this will be made in the log book and their individual file. In the case of a child missing from a foster placement the carer should record on their incident/events note pad.

There should always be an entry on the child's Social Services file about the incident, this may include a copy of log or note pad entries.

14. THE MISSING PERSON IS LOCATED OR RETURNS

14.1 Children and young people in care

In all cases the allocated Social Worker must visit and meet with the young person alone

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within two working days of his/her return. The Social Worker will ask the young person if they wish to speak to an independent person of their choice. **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.

14.2 All children and young people

Parents and carers must be informed that the child/ young person has been found immediately, if appropriate.

If any information is gathered during the course of enquiries which indicates a child / young person is at risk on their return home, the Police and Children's Services must be informed immediately, so that they may take appropriate action.

A full safety assessment should be carried out by Police and / or Social Worker to ensure that it is safe for the child to return to their placement/ parental home.

When the child is located by agencies other than the Police, or returns to their residential address, the attending adult (parent / guardian / carer) is to notify the Police of the child's return (and location) **without delay.**

The carer should ensure that on the child's return, his/her medical condition is discussed with the child and his/her parents immediately, and an offer made to arrange medical attention if necessary.

The carer will remind the child they will be spoken to by the police, the purpose of this interview being to confirm their well being, and to discover whether they have been the victim of any crimes whilst missing.

| Status | Action | Who to be involved |
|---|---|--|
| Young person absent, not at risk, possibly testing boundaries | Wherever possible staff should locate the young person. Review after 6 hours | Staff on shift at unit |
| Young person absent deemed to be at risk | Report to police Social worker notified as soon as practically possible Parents notified Young persons in unit asked for information Senior or unit Manager notified as soon as practical | Staff on shift Social work Parents |
| Young person missing for 24 hours or more | Team Leader should be notified Unit manager notified Inform school | Team Leader Unit Managers School |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Young person missing for 48 hours | Head of Service | Team Leader Unit Managers School Head of Service |
| Young person missing for one week | Strategy meeting called to include parent, police, Social worker RSW and team leader Head of Service to be informed of plan AD informed | |
| Young person missing for 28 days | Director to be informed in writing | |

14. 3 Greater Manchester Police

Once the child or young person has been located, the police will carry out a Safe and well visit this will not be conducted over the telephone, and it must only be conducted by an appropriately trained Police Officer or member of Police Staff.

The **Return Interview** will be based upon a standard 1-10 Questions. The results of the interview will be updated on the GMP OPUS computer system, and the answers supplied by the child or young person during this interview may be shared with other agencies where appropriate.

The 1-10 questions upon which this interview is based can be seen Appendix 4 to this protocol.

Interviewing Officers will then notify other agencies as appropriate and the child/ young person will be removed from the missing person reports and that it will be cancelled within 2 hours.

If there are already concerns **in existence** relating to either:

- a) The missing individual, the circumstances under which they went missing, their activity whilst missing or potential exposure to danger / risk whilst missing, or,
- b) The care establishment that the child or young person has been absent from, or their home circumstances,

When a child or young person returns either the police or other agencies involved will inform the child/young person that they can speak to an independent professional.

Where a child or young person has indicated a wish to speak to an independent professional the police will ensure referral details are passed to the independent agency providing the return interview.

The police will record any action taken in accordance with their procedures.

Where a child/young person has gone missing from their family home for 3 or more occasions they must make a referral to the Duty and Investigation team requesting an assessment to

ensure that there are no underlying child care issues.

14.4 Local Authority responsibility to conduct a Return Interview

Professionals should carefully consider the circumstances of the “return” of the child/young person to ensure that they are not being placed in a position of potential risk. If a child returns to a care setting of their own accord then this may be seen to be a safe setting. If the child is “found” then the reason for reluctance on the part of the child to return to their care setting should form part of the police “Return Interview” before a child is “returned” or any consideration is given to being accommodated elsewhere

The purpose of the LA Return Interview is to:

- give the child or young person the chance to talk about why they ran away
- assess risk (see risk assessment grid Appendix 1) including risk of future going missing
- consider whether a referral to Children Services for a child in need assessment is required.
- provide advice, information and support
- decide with the child or young person what type of follow-on services best meet their needs in the context of what is available
- Appropriately refer the child and/or family to the relevant service e.g. family mediation or youth counseling.

Return interviews should also be offered to children and young people who have not been formally reported missing.

Formats for Return Interviews can be reviewed at Appendix 5

For concerns relating to possible crimes, police may also wish to make enquiries in order to investigate these. Concerns about a child or young person being abused should be reported to the police.

Where there are child protection concerns the agency’s child protection procedures must be followed.

15. MONITORING, PROTECTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

15.1 Monitoring

Salford city council along with police and other key partners will monitor children and young people who go missing from home and care in Salford

Local authority accountable Head of Service managers must monitor patterns of absence from individual children’s homes and foster carers and provide reports to the Director of Children’s Services on a quarterly basis, and annually to councilors responsible for "corporate parenting". These reports also LA service managers are also responsible for monitoring policies and performance relating to children and young people missing from home.

Reports should include:

- Action plans for minimizing missing from care/home incidents
- Incidences of missing persons’ episodes
- Location – if in care are children or young people likely to go missing from one placement rather than others and where do they run?
- Child protection implications
- Actions taken when children or young people return

- Practice and procedural issues.

15.2 Prevention

The prevention of children and young people who go missing requires an integrated multi agency approach to vulnerable children and young people. Existing prevention strategies will need to include the prevention of children who go missing from home and care and will include:

- Awareness and training for all professionals
- Awareness and safety sessions for young people via curriculum opportunities
- Multi agency assessment procedures, including CAF, include the risk indicators for running away.
- Consistent implementation of this protocol across all agencies.
- Monitoring and reporting of missing from incidents.
- Support to parents via the Parenting Strategy for Salford.
- Use of existing legislation such as Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984.

When it is believed that an adult is adversely involved with a child/young person who are missing from home, there will be consideration to invoke Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984. This will mean gaining witness statements from Unit managers and carers/parents.

Alternatively the local authority, supported by the police, may decide to institute civil proceedings to obtain an injunction preventing any particular adult having any contact with a named child.

15.3 Intervention – Persistent Missing

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

For Looked After children Progress meetings should take place in the event of repeat episodes of children going missing from home and care. These meetings should have clearly identified purpose and attendance. The meeting should be held within a week of any trigger episode. The meetings should be chaired and recorded and the increased levels of concern reflected in the seniority of those attending as follows:

IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT THE DURATION AS WELL AS FREQUENCY OF MISSING FROM HOME EPISODES IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

After two **episodes within a 90-day period**: Social Worker (chair), local police officer, residential worker or foster carer, **and** return agency worker.

This meeting 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.

After **five episodes within a 90 day period**: team manager from children's services, deputy police missing person manager/champion, assistant residential unit manager/family placement manager (as appropriate), representative from health and /or education and return agency worker.

This level of intervention meeting is a crucial stage in avoiding serious escalation and must be given high priority by all attending.

Meetings at this level should be rare provided that the protocol has been followed with regard

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to earlier intervention meetings and return interviews. 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 interviews.

At this stage a report about the case should be forwarded to the Police Missing person Champion, as the case will feature in the quarterly report on missing children and young people.

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/ 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.

16. APPENDICES

| | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Risk Assessment Grid |
| Appendix 2 | Categories of Absence |
| Appendix 3 | Police Return Interview 1-10 Questions |
| Appendix 4 | Local Authority Return Interviews |

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL AUTHORITY RISK ASSESSMENT GRID

| | | |
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The Risk Assessment Grid is to be completed for all children and young people who are missing from home /care (The risk indicators can also be used to inform assessments for children and young people who go missing from home.)

Name of child or young person: ID:.....
 Date of Birth: Age:..... Legal Status:
 MP Ref Number

Any child or young person 12 years old or under whose whereabouts is unknown will automatically be considered as at higher risk and classed as **missing or absconded**, and they must be reported to the police immediately.

For children or young people 13 y/o and above, this risk assessment must be completed and be based on age, current circumstances, experiences, background and ability. This will help to establish an assessment of their vulnerability. The risk indicators should prompt the assessment and any relevant information, which should be included under the section "risk assessment information".

| Risk indicators | Risk assessment information |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Length of time missing? When was the c/yp last seen? Who was the last to see the c/yp? Have they gone on their own or with others? | |
| What are the circumstances of the c/yp going missing ie is the young person running to someone or from a situation? What time of day or night did they leave? | |
| Level of maturity ie has this c/yp shown signs of being able to make protective decisions about themselves or others? Was there any discussion or agreement reached about time to return? | |
| Previous history of going missing ie how recent? For how long? Where did they go? Ie with family or friends or with people who are unknown or undesirable and where are they now believed to be staying? | |
| 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 ie via family or on their own? | |
| Risk of suicide/self-harm and what are the indicators of this? What was c/yp's state of mind when they were last seen? Likely use of drugs/alcohol/solvents and what type and amount? | |
| Likely involvement of offending and in what form? Is the c/yp a risk to the community and in what way? | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Risk of sexual exploitation and have sexual exploitation protocols been activated? Any previous harm suffered while absent? | |
| Are they experiencing bullying/racial and/or homophobic abuse? Any signs or indicators that child is experiencing difficulties or abuse in the placement? | |
| Any concerns about new friends/boyfriends/associates? | |
| Any concern of abduction or being prevented from returning? Is there a risk of forced marriage? | |
| Medication/medical condition? | |
| Physical or learning disability/difficulties? | |
| What is the c/yp's legal status? Is this c/yp identified as being in need of a care plan? Reason for being in Care ? Overall length of time in Care ? Length of time at this particular residence ? | |
| Lack of information and knowledge | |

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

Concluding risk assessment

Action to be taken

Name/position.....
(Please print)

SignatureDate

Authorised by

SignatureDate

APPENDIX 2

Categories of absence: for children and young people missing from care

| Unauthorised absence | Usual action |
|--|---|
| <p>Absence for a short period of time</p> <p>It may be known or suspected where the child/young person might be.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Carry out a risk assessment 2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises 3. Inform on-call manager/senior 4. Do not inform police at this stage. 5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility. 6. Inform and discuss with social worker/EDT. 7. Review decision not to call police at agreed intervals to reassess the category of absence. 8. Once child/young person has been missing for longer than the agreed period follow-on action needs to be agreed. |
| Missing | Usual action |
| <p>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</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a risk assessment 2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises. 3. Inform on-call manager/senior. 4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details 5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility 6. Inform/discuss with social worker/EDT |
| Absconded | Usual action |
| <p>For example where the child/young person is considered missing and is also looked after as a result of a court order</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a risk assessment 2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person search premises. 3. Inform on-call manager/senior. 4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details. 5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility. 6. Inform and discuss with social worker/EDT. 7. Inform YOT/probation/legal as appropriate. |

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 EDT worker, as it will determine what action will be taken.

| Unauthorised absence– lower risk | Missing /absconded – higher risk |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | |

If a child or young person is in care and on unauthorised absence, the agreed interval of six to eight hours before reporting to the police should be seen as a maximum. In many cases a shorter period would be appropriate.

| First interval | Hours | Any additional information (ie the child/young person has telephoned) |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| | | |
| Second interval | Hours | Action/additional information |
| | | |

If the child or young person does not return within the agreed interval and there is no additional information that reduces risk, or if there is information that increases risk, the child or young person needs to be reclassified as missing/absconded, and necessary action taken. This decision should be taken in consultation with the on-call manager or EDT social worker.

Signature of staff member PRINT NAME

.....

Date and time:

.....

Signature of line manager: PRINT NAME

.....

Date and time:

.....

APPENDIX 3

POLICE RETURN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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(Police 1-10 Interview Questions)

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Why did he or she feel it necessary to go missing? | |
| 2 | Was (or is) he or she subject to bullying at home, school or elsewhere, or, domestic violence, or, mental/physical abuse? | |
| 3 | Where did he or she go, with whom did he or she stay whilst missing? | |
| 4 | With whom (if anyone) did he or she go missing? | |
| 5 | Was he or she the victim of any crimes whilst missing? | |
| 6 | Have circumstances changed sufficiently to prevent him or her going missing again? | |
| 7 | Is he or she likely to go missing again? | |
| 8 | What does he or she see as a remedy, which will prevent him or her from going missing again? | |
| 9 | Was he or she involved in the committing of crime whilst missing? | |
| 10 | What contact did he or she have with other welfare agencies whilst missing? | |

The above questions are to be used as a basis on an interview, and should not be used to gain YES and NO answers from the missing person.

APPENDIX 4

LOCAL AUTHORITY RETURN INTERVIEWS

Preparation

Before the interview the worker should prepare by considering the following:

- the information within the standard referral letter
- if the agency already knows the child or young person
- who is the most appropriate person to provide the interview based on, for example language, gender and sensory factors for the child or young person to participate fully
- whether the involvement of an interpreter is appropriate in order for the child or young person to participate fully
- any known wishes of the child or young person including if they want the interview to take place with someone else eg a friend or teacher
- whether there is more than one child or young person involved in the runaway episode
- any risk indicators eg in the risk assessment grid
- the health and safety of staff.

What makes a return interview work well?

- there is a clear framework
- staff carrying out the return interview have the necessary skills and experience, for example communicating with children and young people, assessing risk and need, interviewing skills and child protection training
- managers have responsibility for ensuring their staff competencies are met
- there is clarity about sharing information
- young people are given clear information and understand the process, including time frames and confidentiality policies
- there is a clear route in to the police and child protection service
- interviews are carefully planned
- there are clear support mechanisms for workers, service users and their families
- there is good cross agency working
- the process is reviewed and training needs are met.

Conducting the interview

The child or young person should be made to feel as comfortable as possible and the interview carried out in a relaxed and professional manner. The interviewer/worker should be objective, neutral and sensitive.

The interviewer should not:

- be judgmental
- make assumptions or jump to conclusions
- make promises they cannot keep.

The worker from the independent agency should ensure that they give clear information about:

- the interviewer's role and the agency they represent
- the specific purpose of the interview
- the issue of information sharing and confidentiality; and should seek to gain the child or young person's consent to sharing information within service and explain the duty to share information in situations where they or other young people may be at risk
- check that the child or young person has understood and answer any queries they may have.

Ending the interview:

- summarise main points of the interview for the child or young person

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- say which agencies may be involved at this stage
- state what additional services or support have been identified and agreed with the child or young person as needed and will be arranged.

Support to the child or young person

The role of the independent agency providing the return interview is important to children or young people who have returned from an episode of going missing:

- to help the child or young person understand their legal rights
- to ensure that any police debrief has taken place appropriately
- to ensure the child or young person has understood everything that is going on
- to ensure written notes are kept
- to listen to and establish the views and wishes of the child or young person, providing information and explaining options so they can make their own decisions. The worker will therefore support and represent these decisions.

Interpreters

An interpreter is a person who translates from one language to another. This can include interpreting from one foreign language to English or vice versa, translating from or into written language or any other form of communication used by the child or young person. Agencies need to ensure access to interpreter services appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. Interpreters do not facilitate communication nor do they have a role in safeguarding the rights of the child or young person. An interpreter must use the words of the worker conducting the interview to tell the child or young person what is being asked. They must use the exact words the child or young person uses in describing what has happened to them. An interpreter must not use their own words or translate words to convey what they think the child or young person means to say.

The interpreter may be called as a witness in cases of alleged criminal offences or be part of the child protection process. It is never good practice to use family members as interpreters.

Quality assurance and complaints

Any concerns you have about practice should be raised with a manager. Firstly, this would be your line manager or any other manager designated within your organisation. If for any reason you are unable to raise the concern with your manager, for example if they are implicated in your concern or have failed to act on your concerns, then you have a right to protection if you take your concerns to an outside agency.

Follow your agency complaint procedure and/or child protection procedures where allegations are made against a member of staff or any other person

| Record of Changes to Document | | | | | |
|---|------|--|----------|----------|--------|
| Changes approved in this document by - SCSB Policies and Procedures Sub Group | | | | | |
| Section Number | Date | Amendment (<i>shown in bold italics</i>) | Deletion | Addition | Reason |
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Diversity & Equality Screening Questionnaire

Organisations are legally required to ensure that all new policies and documents are assessed for their impact both positive & negative on equality target groups ; religion/beliefs, disability, age, gender, religion & sexual orientation & transgender.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this assessment process please contact the Equality Advisor, HR dept.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | |
| Name of policy, document or leaflet; | |
| 1 | Whom is this document or policy aimed at ? |
| 2 | Is this document a specific user group? if yes, why ? (what are the demographics of your target audience?) How will you ensure that this policy is cascaded to the target group ? |
| 3 | Is there any evidence to suggest that different groups have different needs in relation to this policy or document (positive or negative; for example; elderly, patients with disabilities, issues on gender etc) ? |
| 4 | If you a revising a policy are any the changes to this policy likely to impact on any groups? |
| 5 | Have you undertaken any consultation/involvement with service users or other groups in relation to the new policy ? If yes, what format did this take? face/face or questionnaire? (please attach evidence of this) Were service users who may require additional support (e.g. visually impaired) involved ? Has any amendments been implemented as a result of this exercise? |
| 6 | Are you aware if a request has been made for the policy to provided in alternative formats? |

If yes, how/was this achieved?

7 Does the document require any decision to be made which could result in some individuals receiving different treatment, care, outcomes to other individuals (could any group be excluded for any reason)?

On what basis would this decision be made ?

Could this impact on any particular group ?

8 Are you aware of any complaints from service users in relation to the application of this policy ?

If yes, how was the issue resolved ?

9 Looking at the above points does this indicate that any of the groups listed below have different needs, experiences or priorities groups in relation to the document ?

| | Yes | No | unsure |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Age | | | |
| Disability | | | |
| Gender | | | |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Racial group | | | |
| Religious belief | | | |
| Sexual orientation | | | |
| Transgender | | | |
| Low Income | | | |

10 Any additional comments

If any impact has been highlighted by this assessment, you will need to undertake a full equality impact assessment:

Will this policy require a full impact assessment? Yes/No (delete)
(if yes please contact Equality Advisor, HR for further guidance)