

DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

MULTI AGENCY RESPONSE TO CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE

Author	K.Murphy HoS CYPD
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Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 has been considered with regard to this policy. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance. This means striking a fair balance between the rights of the individual and those of the rest of the community.

The right to life and the protection thereof will always be the primary consideration in striking this balance. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

Health and Safety Act 1974

Health and Safety issues have been considered with regard to this policy. Adherence with this policy will therefore ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation and internal Health and Safety policies.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Freedom of Information issues have been considered with regard to this policy. Adherence with this policy will therefore ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2002 and internal Freedom of Information policies.

Data Protection Act 1998

Data Protection issues have been considered with regard to this policy. Adherence to this policy will therefore ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and internal Data Protection policies.

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INTRODUCTION

This over-arching protocol sets out the arrangements for promoting multi-agency working in Derby to minimise the risk of children and young people going missing, alone or with their parents/carers, and for protecting them from harm. It should be read alongside the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures.

This is a revised version that has taken into account the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) report into children who go missing from care.

The revision of this document has taken into consideration recommendation 25;

“Children's homes, fostering services and local police forces should draw up joint protocols for the management of individual missing incidents”.

The relevant recommendations will be referred to where appropriate throughout this document.

This protocol is in three parts covering:

- Children and young people go missing **from** their parents or carers or from foster carers and residential children's homes.
- Those who go missing **with** their parents or carers
- The role of the Missing Children's Monitoring Group

PART ONE: CHILDREN&YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING FROM HOME

1.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING FROM HOME

It is important to understand the reasons why children and young people might go missing from their home. It may be a response to an argument or other incident at home or to more serious problems either at home, at school or in the community. On the other hand, a child or young person may be running to, rather than from, something. Whatever the reason, children and young people can place themselves at significant risk. Whereas a first absence may never be repeated a second absence may denote the beginning of a pattern of response that requires examination. Similarly, the response of parents to the absence – whether or not they had tried to locate the child, whether the absence was reported to the police in a timely manner, the appropriateness of their response on the child's return all are relevant to understand the child's behaviour and whether or not any intervention by agencies is indicated. A range of 'push' and 'pull' factors may be reasons for being absent including:

PUSH FACTORS

- Problems at home – ranging from arguments with parents to long-term abuse or maltreatment.
- Family break-up – young people drawn into their parents' conflicts are less likely to do well at school and more likely to truant or to run away from home.
- Mental health problems – a disproportionate number of young people who run away from home have mental health problem.
- Bullying – children who are being severely bullied are more likely to run away from school and home or care.
- Teenage pregnancy – some young women run away or are forced to leave home because they become pregnant (or fear that they may be pregnant).
- They may also be in denial about their pregnancy, meaning that they are not getting the advice they need about pregnancy options. There is also a greater risk of pregnancy when girls run away, and those working with them will need to ensure they have rapid access to confidential contraception and sexual health services to prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- Issues regarding identity, sexuality, religion or culture may be prevalent

PULL FACTORS

- Running to be near friends or family – especially when a young person is in care and placed away from their usual home environment, also where there are problems in contact arrangements with family and friends.
- Grooming for potential sexual exploitation or child trafficking – young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them.

1.2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING FROM CARE

Children and young people may go missing from their care placements perhaps to be with family or friends or to be away from a placement where they are unhappy, either with their carers or peers. Many young people who enter care as teenagers bring with them an established pattern of going missing from home and school. Not all such absences may be described as “missing” episodes – often they represent non-compliant behaviour a failure to return by an expected time. Sometimes absences trigger safeguarding procedures because of concerns about what a child or young person may be running from or to. Sometimes their likely whereabouts may be known.

It is important to understand the reasons that lead children and young people to go missing from their placement and agencies with responsibility for children and young people in care need to understand their respective roles in these circumstances.

The joint protocol on children & young people in care who go missing from their placement sets out the multi-agency arrangements for managing all aspects of both unauthorised absences and investigations and effective interventions where children and young people go missing from care.

OTHER LONE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1.3 HOMELESS & VULNERABLE 16/17 YEAR OLDS

- Young people who are aged 16/17, sometimes younger, who have left home or been asked to leave their homes by parents or carers are especially vulnerable. Not only might they be “sofa-surfers” or rough sleepers, and vulnerable to all forms of exploitation, they are unlikely to be reported as missing persons and come to the attention of services
- In such circumstances the homeless 16/17 year old young peoples protocol should be initiated and the appropriate services and support should be provided by Over 11 Locality based multi-agency teams(MAT Teams)

1.4 MIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The number of migrant children and young people in the UK has increased for a variety of reasons, including the expansion of EU countries, economic migration or because families with children and young people want to escape poverty. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children and young people must remain paramount with agencies in their dealings with this group. Child victims of trafficking and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people are especially vulnerable.

1.5 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (UASC)

A UASC is an asylum-seeking child under the age of 18 who is not living with a parent, relative or guardian in the UK. An holistic assessment will be carried out regardless of their immigration status and services provided on the basis of need. This assessment is likely to lead them being accommodated with a care plan (pathway plan at 16+) based on this comprehensive assessment of their needs.

If UASC goes missing trafficking should always be suspected and both the missing from care protocol and relevant Safeguarding procedures should apply.

A independent legal advocate with parental responsibility should be appointed for all unaccompanied migrant children (recommendation 6)

1.6 CHILD VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Trafficking in people may involve many crimes; across many countries causing considerable suffering for those trafficked. It involves the exploitation of children and young people and human rights abuses through sexual and labour exploitation, including domestic service and benefit fraud. It includes movement across and within national borders. The UK is a destination country for trafficked children and young people who may enter the UK as UASC's, students, visitors or be brought by adults who state that they are dependants, or are met at the airport by an adult who claims to be a relative. The internet is playing an increasing role in child and adult trafficking. The issue of internal human trafficking is becoming more prevalent and all agencies should be aware of this.

An urgent response is required when a child who may have been trafficked goes missing because of the risk of being moved long distances or out of the country.

Guidance for practitioners on what to do can be found in the DSCB safeguarding procedures and at;

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMG-00994-2007&>

1.7 FORCED MARRIAGE/HONOR BASED VIOLENCE

Some young people run away because they are at risk of abuse. Forced marriage in particular can lead to both girls and young women running away from home. It is both a form of abuse and a crime but a considered response is required to avoid increasing the risk to the child. Further guidance and information can be found in the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures and also at;

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/>

1.8 GROOMING FOR POTENTIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

In some cases, young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them sexually. Evidence suggests that 90 per cent of children subjected to sexual grooming go missing at some point. The supply of drugs and alcohol or the offering of gifts may be used to entice and coerce young people into associations with inappropriate adults. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual exploitation. Looked After Children may also be targeted by those wishing to abuse and sexually exploit them, and encouraging these children to run in order to disrupt their placement is often part of this abuse. Young people living in residential care are particularly vulnerable to being directly targeted in this way. If concerns are present regarding sexual exploitation then the Derby Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding procedures concerning sexual exploitation should be followed and guidance about how to proceed should be sought from the relevant CSE Champion or the CSE Child Protection Manager.

1.9 CHILD ABDUCTION

Where a child has been abducted or forcibly removed from the place of residence, this is a 'crime in action' and should be reported to the police immediately. There is also the issue of children being harboured in adult's homes/houses, if this is suspected this should also be reported to the Police.

1.10 OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

Children and young people need not go missing overnight or longer to put themselves or others at risk. Much shorter absences when a child or young person is not where they should be can be of equal concern – for example truanting from school to offend or to be with persons known to pose a threat to children and young people – if a child is known to be involved in such circumstances a CAF should be completed as a minimum requirement and presented to locality vulnerable children's meetings (VCM) for multi-agency support..

1.11 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR OR WHO HAVE COMMITTED OFFENCES.

Any member of Youth Offending Service (YOS) staff, who has knowledge or a suspicion that a child/young person is placing themselves in vulnerable situations, for example by going missing or truanting from school and is at risk or has committed offending behaviour or is with persons known to pose a threat to children and young people, has a duty firstly to refer their concern to their line manager. Such concerns might be identified through assessment of the young person by the YOS worker in conjunction with information received from other colleagues from other agencies and potential information received from other service users. If the agreed action is that the Young Person does not require a referral to Children's Social Care, the YOS case manager should consider a referral to the locality based VCM.

1.12 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM SCHOOL WHERE THERE ARE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

When a child is absent from education, it is possible that this is due to other behaviour, associations or activity that puts them at risk of harm. This could be of their own choice or by the actions of another person or persons influencing their behaviour and choices. They could be the victims of abuse, neglect or crime, including sexual exploitation, forced marriage, trafficking, domestic servitude or abduction. It is important to recognise when young people are in situations where they are vulnerable and to take appropriate action. In the first instance and in all cases the school should attempt to locate the child by contacting parents/carers or named contact and when appropriate contact the young person themselves.

- Where there is genuine concern that a young person's safety and/or well being is at risk, it is essential to take action quickly, as delays can see problems escalate, and also hamper an effective investigation of the circumstances in which the child is living.
- In any case where there is concern for a child's welfare this should be referred to schools Education Welfare Officer in the first instance and if following a CAF the issue has not been resolved a referral to the locality based VCM should be considered.
- If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved.
- If any child with a Child Protection Plan or subject to a CSE strategy meeting is off school and the school cannot locate the child or have genuine cause for concern, even for one day, school should notify the social worker/lead professional on the first day of absence.

- If any child who is identified as being “looked after”(LAC) the Childs social worker/foster carer or residential worker should be informed on the first day of absence.

Schools should also inform the Children Missing from Education (CME) officer within 1 to 2 days of the child who they suspect may be missing under suspicious or unusual circumstances The CME Officer can be contacted on 01332 641026,.

PART TWO:

2.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING WITH THEIR PARENTS OR CARERS

Children and young people may go missing with their carers for a variety of reasons – to escape social pressures such as debts or to escape domestic violence. They may also go missing to avoid or to evade the involvement of agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. A series of missed appointments with health or social care agencies or absences from school may indicate that a family has moved out of the area or overseas. Sometimes they indicate their intentions, sometimes not; sometimes they contact agencies on arrival in their new area, sometimes not.

The agency first becoming aware of this possibility should make every effort to locate the family through repeated home visits, liaison with other agencies and if unsuccessful through national agency networks. The Education Welfare service (school aged children) and Children's centres (under 5's) along with Health service staff may be best able to lead these enquires.

2.2 ADULTS AND CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING IN SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Practitioners across all agencies should be alerted to the possibility that adults may go missing, sometimes taking vulnerable children with them, in an attempt to avoid the involvement of children's social care and other agencies. Examples of such circumstances might be:

- An *adult* who is a pregnant woman when there are concerns about the welfare of the child following birth.
 - A *family* where there are concerns about the welfare of the child because of the presence of an individual who poses a risk to children or other person suspected of previously harming a child.
- A child* who:
- Is the subject of a child protection referral or s47 enquiry goes missing or is removed from her/his address without agreement as part of the plan; or
 - Is looked after and is removed from placement without this being part of the care plan;
 - Goes missing in suspicious circumstances or about whom there are concerns, for example a child who is subject to initial/core assessment, where there are developing concerns about their safety.
 - If a child[ren] who is/are subject to a child protection plans goes missing with their parents/carers then an electronic alert to all local authorities in England and Wales will be sent.

Procedures and further guidance in relation to these groups of missing children and families can be found in the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures.

<http://www.derbyshirescb.org.uk/procedures/>

particular consideration needs to be given to appropriate legal interventions where it appears that a child for whom there are outstanding concerns about their safety and welfare may be removed from the UK by his/her family in order to evade the involvement of agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. If this is suspected then a referral to children's social care should be made immediately.

2.3 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

Children not receiving a suitable education are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not on a school role, and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being in school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision. They may have been withdrawn from a school without that school knowing their destination. This may include children:

- Believed to have moved abroad or to an independent school but there is no verification.
- On *elective home education* and have moved home without reporting their new address.
- Reported by another local authority as having recently moved into Derby and have not registered at the destination school or not made moves to access education.

There are a number of reasons why children and young people go missing from education. Many of those are not missing children and young people in that their whereabouts are known. The concern here is for those whose whereabouts are *not known* and who may be at risk.

These can include:

- Families fleeing domestic abuse/living in women's refuges
- Families who are homeless, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- Children and young people who fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA area)
- Children and young people with a gypsy/traveller/Roma background or from transient families
- Migrant children and young people, whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants.

Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education. Once identified as missing from education, an alert is raised with Elective Home Education Officer (Paula Nightingale) and the Education Welfare Service carries out searches to locate the child – the situation is monitored until the child is back in statutory education or identified as being “home educated”.

2.3 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF FAMILIES LIVING IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Placement in temporary accommodation, often at a distance from previous support networks or involving frequent moves, can cause individuals and families to fall through the net and become disengaged from services and support systems. Some families who have experienced homelessness, and are placed in temporary accommodation by district/borough councils can have very transient lifestyles.

It is important that effective systems are in place to ensure that children and young people from homeless families receive services from health and education, as well as any other specific types of services, because these families move regularly and may be at risk of becoming disengaged from services. There is an expectation that any professional engaging with a family in this way should ensure that the agencies previously involved are notified of the move

2.4 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM HEALTH

The East Midlands missing children and families alert system and operational flow chart can be found at **appendix D**

2.5 FAMILIES AND CHILDREN FLEEING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Families and Children fleeing domestic abuse will be accommodated either in a refuge or other safe accommodation provided by, or on behalf of, Local Housing Authorities. Each Refuge has a liaison worker who ensures that the needs of children are met and that they are linked with an appropriate school.

- Children living in temporary accommodation for reasons of domestic abuse are *prima facie* children in need and are entitled to a holistic assessment if this appears to be appropriate.
- Children who have safeguarding needs are referred to children’s social care or locality based VCM’s according to the level of need (please refer to multi-agency guidance on responding to DV)

There is an expectation that any professional engaging with a family in this way should ensure that the agencies previously involved have been informed of these moves.

3. CHILDREN IN CARE WHO GO MISSING FROM THEIR PLACEMENTS,(these include residential placements, foster carers/IFA's and also children placed outside of the city).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1. This protocol refers to situations when children who are looked after by the local authority go missing from wherever they are placed and;
- Defines the roles of police, children's social care staff and carers;
 - Provides guidance to these staff and carers.
- 3.1.2. This should be read as guidance, which cannot anticipate every situation. Police, children's social care staff and foster carers should use their professional judgement to take an action they felt that is necessary to protect the safety of the child, based on an assessment of risk for each individual child.
- 3.1.3. All parties involved in the protocol should be clear about the definition of a missing person, and discourage the routine reporting of 'unauthorised absences' as missing persons.

- 3.1.4. Children who go missing from care may place themselves and other 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 professionals involved with the missing person and they must collaborate to ensure that a consistent and coherent response is given to the missing person on his/her return.
- 3.1.5. Channels of communication between the local authority and the relevant Police Area must be established and maintained in order to facilitate the partnership approach.
- 3.1.6. This protocol applies to all children missing from residential or foster care and placed in IFA's.
- 3.1.7. This protocol covers all children's homes, and foster carers homes in Derby, this applies to the local authority and independent sector.
- It also has relevance for both local authority and independent children homes
 - It also covers children on care orders placed with parents.

3.2 DEFINITIONS

- 3.2.1. The terms **young runaway** and **missing** refer to children up to the age of 18 who have run away from their home or care placement, or have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts are unknown.
- 3.2.2. A child is **missing** where his or her whereabouts 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 others.
- 3.2.3. **Unauthorised absence.**
Children and young people in this category are not required to be reported to the police.
This category includes:
- Young people who have been absent for a short period, who are not considered at risk and who may just be just testing boundaries.

- Young people who stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or unwittingly. This kind of boundary-testing activity is well within the range of normal teenage behaviour and should not come within the definition of 'missing' for the purposes of this protocol.
- Young people who choose to absent themselves and are known to be staying at locations that are deemed unauthorised. This will cause concern; however they should be managed within existing procedures such as planning/strategy meetings and risk assessments and may involve the police without necessarily reporting the young person as 'missing'.

Young people who fall within the category of 'unauthorised absence' must be the subject of continuous assessment whilst they remain absent. During their absence circumstances may change and carers need to be in a position to respond. In this phase carers should continue to take all reasonable/ practical steps to establish the whereabouts of the young person and encourage them to return.

Where the young person's location has been established and carers believe that a breach of the peace would be likely should they physically attempt to bring the young person back, the police may be requested to attend the address jointly with care staff in order to prevent such an occurrence. This attendance may form part of a "scheduled" response rather than an "immediate" response, depending on the individual circumstances.

It is possible for young people on care orders to be included in the category of unauthorised absence. Their care plan and current placement may however have been agreed by the court. Any stay with parents that is not part of an approved contact arrangement would need to be agreed by a senior manager in Children's Services under the 'Placement with Parents' procedures

3.2.4. Clearly some children absent themselves for a short period and then return and their whereabouts are known. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or accidentally, and may be testing boundaries. This kind of boundary testing is within the range of normal teenage behaviour and not necessarily considered a risk.

However:

- The absence of a child aged 12 and under should always be considered as a missing person episode;

- No unauthorised absence should continue beyond 24 hours – if the child has not returned or his or her whereabouts identified and well-being confirmed, a missing person report should be made;
- When a child fails to return at the time requested or absences themselves without permission, the carer should decide, with reference to their own risk assessment , which category the absence falls into, e.g. unauthorised absence, missing person, or unlawfully at large (i.e. in breach of a court order)

Missing with Cause for Concern

Young people who are missing with cause for concern should be reported to the police.

There will be a wide range of circumstances when children and young people are missing with cause for concern. These will range from young people at risk of homicide; abduction or risk of exploitation to young people will go voluntarily into risky situations.

The police also carry out a risk assessment and identify three levels of risk. Young people up until their 17th birthday will always be categorised as being at high or medium risk.

HIGH RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
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.	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 approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an Investigatory Officer and possibly a Senior Investigating Officer (police). There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place. The NPIA Missing Persons Bureau should be notified of the case without undue

	delay.
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MEDIUM RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
The risk posed is likely to place the subject 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 RISK	
Degree of risk	Police response
There is no apparent threat of danger to either the subject or the public No young person who is under the age of 17 and who is missing is ever classed as 'low risk'.	In addition to recording the information the Police National Computer, the police will advise the person reporting the disappearance that following basic enquiries and unless circumstances change, police will not carry out further active enquiries. The missing person's details will be passed to National Missing Persons Helpline (NMPH) 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.

Young people who have repeated missing incidents

Young people who have repeated incidents should be the subject of multi-agency planning meetings. These should start at a local level but, if the incidents of running away continue, a formal multi-agency strategy meeting should be convened.

Absconded from Local Authority Care

Young people who are in the absconded category should be reported to the police.

This relates to a young person who is missing and is in breach of a legal requirement, such as a care order, which carries a power of arrest, including Section 46 Children Act (police protection) and Section 38(6) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. It also applies to young people in breach of court or police-imposed curfew orders.

3.2.5. The corporate carer should take all reasonable practical steps, as a caring parent would, to find out where the child is, where they are going or who they are with and, if necessary, arrange for those people and places to be checked out. They should do everything they can reasonably to get the child home safely, including going out to look for them and bringing them back if it is necessary and practical to do so.

- 'Reasonable' will need to have regard to the time of night/day when the need arises and other circumstances – for example, single foster carer with other children to care for will not be able to undertake a local search; similarly, a residential carer may not be able to leave the building late in the evening.

3.2.6. The responsible care provider and, where appropriate, the police should work together to ensure the child's safety.

3.2.7. In assessing the significance of a child's absence, all staff and carers must apply the above definitions and take into consideration guidance already agreed and incorporated into the child's care plan and a risk assessment should be undertaken to assess the current or perceived degree of risk:

In brief, the following points should be considered:

- The age of the young person.
- The vulnerability of the young person, e.g. special educational needs physical/learning disability.
- The young person's legal status, and who has parental responsibility.

- Previous patterns of behaviour e.g. the absence is “out of character” and is considered as being unusual. Also consider where they were found on any previous occasions
- The state of mind/perceived risk, e.g. the young person is considered to be at particular risk by virtue of self harm or being harmed by others.
- Exploitation, e.g. financial or sexual.
- Risk of trafficking.
- Whether the young person is perceived as running to someone or running from a situation.

A risk assessment concludes with the decision that a young person falls into one of the following three categories.

1. Unauthorised absence
2. Missing with cause for concern
3. Repeated missing or absconded from LA care

Young people can move from one category to another so risk assessments should be repeated at regular intervals.

3.2.8. Staff in all organisations concerned should avoid dismissing the potential significance of repeated running away. Often such children are immediately labelled as the problem and insufficient consideration is given to why they persistently abscond. Persistent running needs to be explored, particularly at the time of post return interviews.

3.3. PLANNING BEFORE THE EVENT

3.3.1 Where there is a likelihood or perceived risk that a child in care may go missing from their established placement:

- There should be a risk assessment of the likelihood that the child might go missing and the risk they may face as a consequence – *all children placed in Children’s Homes should have such an assessment; SEE APPENDIX D*
- This should be completed by the social worker with contributions from the carers as part of the placement plan;
- This information should be included in both the placement plan and in the care plan.

- The risks should be discussed with all young people perceived to be at risk of going missing and their views should be recorded by both the carer/residential worker and the child/young persons social worker
- Before placing a child into another local authority, the placing authority commissioning service and the receiving authority should make an assessment of the geographical area to determine whether or not it is safe for the child based on what is known about risks facing children.

3.3.2 This assessment should include information on the following:

- The likelihood of the child going missing;
- The child's view;
- The level of supervision /support that care staff propose to provide for the child;
- The views of parents/carers on their child needs and the action that needs to be taken if the child is absent;
- The risk of harm to the child and his/her vulnerability if he/she is absent;
- Consideration of any external influences which may result in a child's removal without consent;
- The likelihood of the child being harboured.
- Potential risks within the area the child is to be placed.

3.3.3. The child should have this protocol explained to him/her and the potential dangers that they may encounter so that he/she understands the implications of running. All children in care should have the right to independent advocacy as part of their care reviews and placement planning, this is following recommendation1

3.4. INCIDENTS OF SPECIFIC CONCERN

3.4.1 Patterns of running away/going missing from children's homes should be discussed regularly with the police missing persons unit and other agencies as part of the wider strategy for keeping children safe. If the running away/going missing of a child is causing specific concern, e.g., by its frequent repetition or indicators of particular risk such as contact with an adult or adults deemed to be a risk to children, and in any case where a child goes missing more than four times in a month there should be a multi-agency strategy meeting to discuss the combined response to such incident and concern. This meeting should be attended by:

- A representative of the police;

- A representative of the local authority responsible for the child's care of sufficient seniority to be able to take authoritative decisions about the steps needed to locate and protect the child and the child/young persons social worker.
- The registered manager of the children's home or the manager of the fostering service/ team
- The child; where possible
- The parents where appropriate
- Where the child is not placed within the boundary of their responsible authority – a representative from the authority in which the child is currently living – perhaps from the local team responsible for child protection;
- Other relevant agencies - e.g., representatives from the Youth Offending Team, MAT Teams, CAMHS, Connexions, EWS, Schools, school nurse, CiC Nurse
- The IRO should be informed of the meeting and will attend where there is any concern about the response to or resolution of the missing incidents.

These discussions should also take place when children are reported missing from homes outside of the authority. The named social worker for the child should co-ordinate these meetings to review the placement if missing episodes are persistent.

3.5. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

3.5.1 When a member of children's home staff or a foster carer realise that a child is missing from their care they should consider which definition the absence falls within using all the relevant information and current risk assessments that they have available.

3.5.2 Support and advice in making this decision will be available from the children's social care department responsible for the child and from the responsible out-of-hours service.

3.5.3 If the absence is considered to fall with the definition of missing, residential staff, foster carers and IFA placements must without delay inform:

- The police;
- The parents and those who have parental responsibility;
- The social worker or the accountable manager;
- Derby City Care Line if out of hours and the social worker and accountable manager the next working day.

3.5.4 If the absence is not considered to fall within the definition of missing, staff and carers should review the consideration regularly and in any case, if the period of absence continues for six hours, further consideration should be given as to whether the absence should fall within this protocol.

- Six hours should be regarded as the maximum period before reconsideration and in many cases, a shorter period would be more appropriate.

3.5.5. Any case of an absent child which causes significant concern, or where circumstances give rise to suspicion of harm, should be brought to the attention of the accountable manager from the authority responsible for the child's care and the duty inspector for the police area from which the child is missing as soon as possible.

3.5.6 Independent care providers must notify the local authority of all new cross boundary placements and also when placements end. This is to ensure that the local authority and other agencies are aware of all LAC children placed in Derby and can offer the appropriate support if there are risks of missing episodes.

Extended Absences

Any young person missing for 24 hours should be reported to the Service Director; Specialist Services Division for CYPD

If the young person is a Ward of Court, the court will be informed.

Any young person missing for five days (or fewer depending on the risk assessment) will be subject to a joint meeting that will include, as a minimum, representatives from children's services and the police, to discuss further actions that may be taken to recover the young person. The respective Local Policing Unit Commander or his or her nominee will represent the police at this meeting. The Service Director(specialist services) and Director of Children's Services will also be informed.

In all cases, the duty for ensuring that reports are prepared, meetings are held and notifications are completed rests with the allocated social worker.

The National Missing Persons Helpline (0500 700 700) has a specialist Missing From Care Service (020 8392 4527). They will provide help, support and publicity for children who are missing from care. They also provide a 'Message Home Helpline' to help a child missing from care to get back in touch (0800 700 740). Details of this service should be made available to young people in care. This phone number is in every telephone kiosk in the UK.

3.5.6 Episodes lasting longer than 28 days

Whenever a young person is missing for 28 days, or if considered necessary, before hand, a multi-agency Strategy Meeting should be held, attended by senior Children's Services' managers and senior police representatives, together with other appropriate staff from both agencies. At this meeting these senior officers should elicit a clear statement of the actions being taken in respect of the absence and should be satisfied that everything possible is being undertaken.

Whilst the young person remains missing, their case should remain open on the Children's Services database and should be reviewed at three-monthly intervals by an officer at Service Director level to ensure that actions are being taken to recover the young person. The Service Director will communicate the outcome of this review to the respective Area Chief Inspector (Operations). They will agree any future joint action.

All police missing person's files will remain live until the person is traced or until the Area Chief Inspector (Operations) in consultation with the respective Service Director, is satisfied that all lines of enquiry have been exhausted. They will then forward the file to their appropriate line managers who will make the final decision as to whether to file or otherwise.

Where the decision to file has been made, the Operations Intelligence Bureau (OIB) will be responsible for bringing forward the file on persons who remain missing for review by the appropriate senior managers, 12 months after the file date

3.6. INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

3.6.1. When reporting to the police, the person taking the report will need the following information:

- Child's details – age, gender, ethnicity, first language;
- Legal status and any court orders that apply; this should include if the child lives in residential homes or is in a foster /IFA placement. This should also include information regarding any court orders imposed as a criminal sanctions.
- A copy of the risk assessment if a child has had previous missing episodes or if there was potential for missing episodes to occur.
- A description of the child and their clothing;
- Any money that may have been taken;
- Details of when the child was last seen and with whom;

- A recent photograph
- Family addresses;
- School attended;
- Known associates and addresses frequented;
- Relevant health information i.e. details of any epilepsy, asthma, diabetes or other health matters.
- Any previous history of absconding / absenteeism and circumstances of where found;
- The names and addresses of the child's GP and dentist;
- The circumstances under which the child is absent;
- Any factors which increase the risk to the child;
- Name of staff member who has completed search of home for the child (NB: police reserve the right to conduct further searches.)
- The reporting carer(residential or foster carer, IFA) should also inform the Police who the placing authority is and furnish relevant telephone contact and names and e-mail addresses.
- The reporting carer/residential worker should also inform the relevant social worker from the placing authority as soon as possible and request acknowledgement that the message has been received.
- The reporting carer (residential/foster carer/IFA) should also inform the Police of the named social worker or manager with relevant telephone contact numbers and e-mail addresses

3.7. RESPONSE BY DERBYSHIRE POLICE

37.1 The Police will investigate all cases falling within this protocol and will respond in accordance with Derbyshire Constabulary's Missing Persons policy.

- Children's services staff will be expected to help the police in locating missing children and to work cooperatively during any enquiry

3.7.2 Even after reporting a child missing, staff and carers should recognise that the local authority is responsible for children in their care at all times and this responsibility is not relinquished when they have reported a child missing to the police.

Internal and External Placements of Young Persons.

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

Young People from Derby who are in placements outside the city boundaries

There is an expectation that the local police and the Derby allocated social worker will be informed. Part of the commissioning arrangements should include obtaining information about the independent children's home, foster carer or IFA's missing children's procedures. If it seems that the young person is running back to their home authority, close liaison will be needed between the two police forces.

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

Young people who are in independent sector placements in Derby placed by external authorities

This protocol applies to this group of young people. It is the responsibility of the placing local authority to ensure that the providers they commission implement this protocol. This protocol will be distributed to all independent children's homes within Derby City.

3.7.3 The police have responsibility for advising the media regarding children missing from local authority care; however decisions to publicise will always be made in consultation with children's social care who will consult the parents and/or carers.

3.8. RECORDING

3.8.1. Throughout the process in this protocol, carers and social workers must keep a full record of all actions taken and messages received and given. Police will likewise keep a record on the appropriate missing person report. All incidents reported to the Police as missing will be recorded on the CCM recording system.

3.8.2 Alongside the care plan, a Placement plan should be completed between the responsible local authority and the provider of the child's placement. The expectations as to how they will meet the child's needs should be set out in the plan, which must describe

how the provider will maintain the child's positive routines as part of their commitment to enable the child to experience a constructive placement, supporting them to achieve their potential. It should include details about:

- Any specific behaviour-management strategies that the provider is expected to follow;
- The provider's role in meeting the child's health needs;
- The provider's role in supporting the child's education; and
- The provider's role in supporting contact with the child's family, including information about any restrictions of contact.
- The actions that the provider will take to ensure that missing episodes are managed and also request their missing children protocols and procedures.

3.9. THE MISSING CHILDREN MARAC (MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE)

3.9.1 The Missing Children MARAC is a multi-agency forum that exists to monitor agencies responses to locate and also prevent children from going missing and take effective joint action where a child is missing and is at risk of significant harm or of committing serious offences or is otherwise at risk of physical harm, sexual or economic exploitation. The overriding outcome will be to secure the safety or reduce the risks to the young person by:

- Sharing intelligence;
- Agreeing joint action;
- Hold agencies to account
- Disrupting the exploitative activities of adults;

- Pursuing prosecutions as necessary.

CYPD will:

- Record decisions and actions agreed;
- Circulated brief notes and data.

Actions generated remain the responsibility of each agency

The group membership and the intelligence it builds up across the city and further afield means that it can effectively support and enhance actions agreed elsewhere.

The group also has links into the UK Human Trafficking Centre(UKHTC) and the UK border agency to ensure that swift communication can take place where circumstances require the interventions of either or both of these agencies.

The group meets on a monthly basis and reviews the Police compact missing children reports for the preceding month. The group will also analyse the runaways and safe and sound case loads as well as waiting lists. The group will also consider reports from other partners such as connexions and Derby Homes as well as Health services.

Where a child has been missing four times during a calendar month or in certain circumstances in a short period of time the group will call a missing child strategy meeting, in situations where a meeting has not been held the group will identify a lead professional and request that a CAF is completed and a review meeting will be held. Missing children strategy meetings and CAF reviews where missing is the common theme will include all current professionals involved with the child and also invite other professionals with certain levels of expertise in different fields to look at what support is required to prevent further missing episodes. Where CSE is suspected the CSE procedure should be applied instead and will encompass a “missing plan”.

3.9.2 The Vulnerable Young People Group

The Vulnerable Young People Group will meet on a quarterly basis to promote co-ordinated multi-agency developments in relation to vulnerable young people in Derby, encompassing;

- 1, Missing Children.
- 2, Child sexual exploitation
- 3, Gangs.
- 4 Children who self-harm
- 5 Preventing Violent Extremism.

- 3.9.3 The Vulnerable Young People's meetings will take place on a quarterly basis and will report directly to the DSCB. This group will be chaired by the Head of Quality Assurance and will include a senior representative's from the police, the chair of the missing children monitoring group, representatives from CYPD and the Neighbourhoods Partnership, Derby Homes, representatives from health, a representative from residential care and a representative from Safe and Sound.
- 3.9.4 This group will review the missing children data from the preceding quarter and provide statistics for the DSCB and any future government indicators. The strategy group will be responsible for managing inter agency concerns or disputes concerning responses to missing children. This group will also monitor the effectiveness of the protocol and also review any child who has been missing on repeated episodes or has been missing for a significant period.
- These actions supports but does not replace any need to convene a conference under child protection procedures. Where a child is subject to a plan, or in care, the missing meetings may be linked to existing core groups or network meetings and should be reported in to the relevant conference or LAC review.
 - The group membership and the intelligence it builds up across the city and beyond means that it can effectively support and enhance actions agreed elsewhere
 - The group also links into the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and the UK border agency to ensure that swift communication can take place where circumstances require the intervention of either or both of these agencies.

3.10. PLANNING FOR RETURN

3.10.1 The Return

On the young person's return, carers should make clear to the young person that they are relieved to see the young person is safe and well. Their general condition should be assessed immediately and, if appropriate, medical attention should be arranged. Food and drink may also be a priority. The safety and welfare of the young person also should be ensured especially if it appears that they have run away because of bullying or harassment. Information about the return should be recorded in full by the person undertaking the return procedure. If criminal offences have been committed then these should be brought to the attention of the police immediately in order for them to be investigated.

Parents, police, social workers and all others informed of the absence should be advised of the young person's return without delay.

Where it has been identified that the missing child is subject to a protection plan, is deemed to be a Child in Need or Looked After the relevant social worker must ensure that they see the child within 24 hours of their return. If the child is returned during a weekend period the social worker must endeavour to see the child during the first 24 hours of the working week.

Consideration should be given to whether a strategy meeting is required if, for example, a pattern of running away is developing. Any of the partner agencies of this protocol can request a strategy meeting following consultation with their first line manager, if it appears that there is significant risk to a young person or there are child protection concerns.

3.10.2 Voluntary Return

The police should be informed immediately following the return of a young person who has been reported missing. If all appears well and there is no evidence of harm the police will make a return phone call to a residential home to ensure that the notification of return is genuine. The police will not routinely visit children's homes to verify a young person's return although, depending upon the circumstances, may decide to do so. Confirmation of a return to a foster home can be provided by a social worker. If the child or young person returns at an unsociable hour the verification of the return can be delayed until a mutually agreed more sociable time.

3.10.3 Independent Interview

The young person should be told that they will be given the chance to talk to someone independent of the home or the foster home, about their absence. Or if they wish, it could be another person with whom they have a rapport. The independent person should have no formal line management links with the home. In some circumstances the independent person could be a police officer. In all cases a member of the targeted youth support teams from the relevant locality will conduct a return interview within 72 hours of the child/young person returning to their home. This is in response to recommendation 27.

The allocated social worker (or a member of their team) must visit and see the young person within 24 hours of his or her return.

If the young person persistently goes missing from care, the arrangements in relation to independent interviews should be made explicit in the on-going risk assessment document associated with that person. In such cases, more than one missing incident is likely to be discussed at each independent interview. Patterns of missing episodes should be discussed and any areas of concern should be identified and the concerns raised. IRO's should be informed following the return interview.

3.11. POLICE POWERS – SEE ALSO APPENDIX A

- 3.11.1. Police powers are limited and difficulties can arise when missing children are found but do not want to return to their placement.
- 3.11.2 Under the Children Act 1989, where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child could suffer significant harm the police can take the child into police protection under the Children Act 1989, and remove to suitable accommodation which could include the home from which the child originally went missing. The police are not given the power to use force to take children into police protection. This is, however, a difficult area, with conflicting advice as to what the police can do in terms of using reasonable force to prevent children suffering significant harm.
- 3.11.3. There will be occasions when a child is found in a location that may be considered unsuitable, but where there would not be legal grounds for taking them into police protection. In such cases, police and the accountable manager from the responsible social care authority will need to liaise with the police to discuss what steps may be necessary in order to safeguard the child's welfare.
- 3.11.4. Any child unlawfully at large from a secure unit or penal establishment may be liable to arrest and returned by police.

3.12. YOUNG PEOPLE ON REMAND

If the remand is without conditions the young person should be returned to the designated placement. If there are conditions attached, e.g., curfew they can be detained and brought before a court.

3.13. COMMUNICATION

Following a reported absence, residential staff may need to inform all other staff and children within the home. This stops distressing rumours and additional information regarding the child's whereabouts may be obtained. Staff should also notify the child's school in case they have any relevant information. Any information should be reported to the police without delay.

APPENDIX A

RELEVANT LEGISLATION & SUMMARY OF POLICE POWERS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GO MISSING

CHILDREN ACT 1989 SECTION 49

ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN IN CARE

This offence applies to **any child/young person subject to a care order, emergency protection order or in police protection** even if the child/young person is 16 or over providing the care order has not elapsed.

OFFENCE

A person is guilty of an offence if, knowingly and without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, he:

- Takes a child to whom this section applies away from the responsible person;
- Keeps such a child away from the responsible person; or
- Induces, assists, or incites such a child to run away or stay away from the responsible person.

POINTS TO PROVE

1 That the offender knew:

- That the child is subject to a care order, emergency protection order or in police protection;
- That the offender knew that the responsible person had not given their permission for the child to stay with the offender;

2 That the offender has either:

- Taken the child;

- Kept such a child away from the responsible person; or
- Induced/assisted/incited such a child to run/stay away from the responsible person.

CHILD ABDUCTION ACT 1984, SECTION 2

ABDUCTION OF CHILD

This offence applies to **any child under 16 even** if the child is not subject to a care order, emergency protection order or in police protection.

Offence

A person not connected with the child is guilty of an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, he takes or detains a child under the age of 16:

- So as to remove him from the lawful control of any person having lawful control of the child; or
- So as to keep him out of the lawful control of any person entitled to lawful control of the child.

GUIDANCE NOTES

1 A person is connected with a child if:

- He is a parent of the child; or
- In the case of a child whose parents were not married to each other at the time of his birth, there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is the father of the child; or
- He is the guardian of the child; or
- He is a person in whose favour a residence order is in force with respect to the child; or
- He has custody of the child.

2 Therefore, if the child is in the care of the Local Authority and is being kept away from the foster carer or residential home by a natural parent, the S49 Children Act offence should be used, not the S2 Child Abduction Act 1984.

POINTS TO PROVE

- That the child was under 16.
- That the offender acted without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.
- That the offender was not connected with the child.
- The offender took or detained the child.
- So as to remove/keep him/her from lawful control.

CHILDREN ACT 1989, SECTION 46

POWER TO REMOVE TO PLACE OF SAFETY OR PREVENT REMOVAL FROM

PLACE OF SAFETY

Where a Constable has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, he may:

- Remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep him there; or
- Take such steps as are reasonable to ensure that the child's removal from any hospital, or other place, in which he is then being accommodated is prevented.

This is the primary power for the police in emergency situations.

CHILDREN ACT 1989, SECTION 44

Where a person applies to the court for an order to be made under this section concerning a child, the

court may make the order if, but only if, it is satisfied that:

There is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm if;

- He is not removed to accommodation provided by or on behalf of the applicant; or
- He does not remain in the place where he is then being accommodated.

CHILDREN ACT 1989, SECTION 48

Where it appears to a court making an emergency protection order that adequate information as to the child's whereabouts:

- a) is not available to the applicant for the order; but
- b) is available to another person;

It may include in the order a provision requiring that other person to disclose, if asked to do so by the applicant, any information that he may have as to the child's whereabouts (S48(1)).

An emergency protection order may authorise the applicant to enter premises specified by the order and search for the child with respect to whom the order is made (S48(3)).

A person shall be guilty of an offence if he intentionally obstructs any person exercising the power of entry and search under subsection (3) or (4) (S48(7)).

Where, on an application made by any person for a warrant under this section, it appears to the court:

- a) That a person attempting to exercise powers under an emergency protection order has been prevented from doing so by being refused entry to the premises concerned; or
- b) That any such person is likely to be so prevented from exercising any such powers;

It may issue a warrant authorising any constable to assist the person mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) in the exercise of those powers, using reasonable force if necessary.

CHILDREN ACT 1989, SECTION 50 RECOVERY ORDER

ORDER TO PRODUCE CHILD ON REQUEST AND REMOVE CHILD

A Recovery Order allows a court to order the recovery of a child who has been prevented from returning to his/her lawful guardian or has run away. A Recovery Order can be made in respect of **any child/young person subject to a care order, emergency protection order or in police protection.**

APPLICATION

A court can make a Recovery Order where it appears to the court that there is a reason to believe that a child to whom this section applies:

- Has been lawfully taken away or is being unlawfully kept away from the responsible person;
- Has run away or is staying away from the responsible person; or
- Is missing.

EFFECT OF AN ORDER

A Recovery Order:

- Operates as a direction to a person able to do so to produce the child on request to an authorised person;
- Authorises the removal of the child by an authorised person;
- Requires a person who has information as to the child's whereabouts to disclose it, if so requested, to a constable or an officer of the court;
- Authorises a constable to enter any premises specified in the order and search for the child, using reasonable force if necessary.

OFFENCE

It is an offence to intentionally obstruct a person from removing a child under a Recovery Order.

SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003, S123 RISK OF SEXUAL HARM ORDERS

CERTAIN SPECIFIED ACTS

**ORDER TO PROTECT CHILD
BY PROHIBITING
DEFENDANT DOING**

This is a civil preventative order for which the police can apply to a Magistrates' Court. It can be granted on the balance of probabilities rather than beyond reasonable doubt.

- The child or children to be protected must be under 16.
- The offender must be over 18.

APPLICATION

An application can be made if:

- There is evidence that the person has on at least two occasions engaged in sexually explicit conduct or communication with a child or children.
- There is reasonable cause to believe that the order is necessary to protect a child or children from harm arising out of future such acts by him

GUIDANCE NOTES

The order does not rely on convictions for the sexually explicit conduct or communication in question. Sexually explicit conduct or communication includes:

- Engaging in sexual activity involving a child or in the presence of a child;
- Causing or inciting a child to watch a person engaging in sexual activity or to look a moving or still image that is sexual;
- Giving a child anything that relates to sexual activity or contains a reference to such activity;
- Communicating with a child, where any part of the communication is sexual.

EFFECT OF THE ORDER

The order:

- Prohibits the defendant from doing anything described in the order;
- Has effect for a fixed period (not less than two years) specified in the order or until a further order.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Before a court will make a “Risk of Sexual Harm Order”, there must be some objective indication of a sexual element to the relationship, for example:

- Child’s admission.
- The child seen to be watching porn in the presence of the defendant.
- Hearsay evidence.

PROCEDURE

Suitable cases should be referred to the Child and Public Protection Unit.

Application is by way of Complaint to the Magistrates Court and is made by the Force Solicitor on behalf of the Chief Constable.

There will always be a preference to pursue a criminal prosecution with the emphasis on taking the child to a place of safety, conducting a medical and arranging a video interview. However a Risk of Sexual Harm Order is an option where there is insufficient evidence to secure a criminal conviction beyond reasonable doubt, but there is a good chance of obtaining an order on the balance of probabilities.

OFFENCE

A person commits an offence if they do something, without reasonable excuse, that they are prohibited from doing by a “Risk of Sexual Harm Order”.

SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003, S104 SEXUAL OFFENCES PREVENTION ORDER

ORDER TO PROTECT PUBLIC FROM SERIOUS SEXUAL HARM BY PROHIBITING CONVICTED DEFENDANT FROM DOING CERTAIN SPECIFIED ACTS

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders are civil preventative orders.

APPLICATION

An application can be made if:

- The defendant has been convicted of an offence listed in Schedule 3 or Schedule 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and
- His subsequent behaviour gives rise to reasonable cause to believe that it is necessary for such an order to be made to protect the public from serious sexual harm.

EFFECT OF AN ORDER

An order:

- may prohibit the offender from doing anything specified in it;
- must last for a minimum period of five years. The period must be specified in the order but it may be an indefinite period.

PROCEDURE

Suitable cases should be referred to the Child and Public Protection Unit.

Application is by way of Complaint to the Magistrates Court and is made by the Force Solicitor on behalf of the Chief Constable.

OFFENCE

A person commits an offence if they do something, without reasonable excuse, that they are prohibited from doing by a "Sexual Offences Prevention Order".

POWER OF ARREST

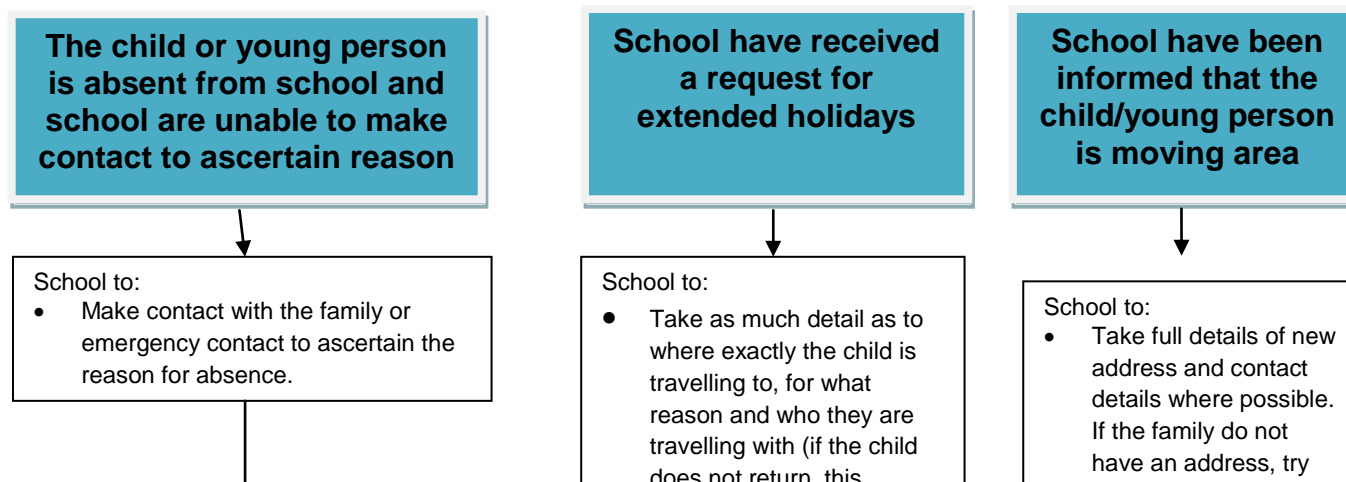
POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE ACT 1984, S24

A constable must have reasonable grounds for believing that the person's arrest is necessary to:

- Obtain/verify the name of the person;
- Obtain/verify the address of the person;
- Prevent physical injury to the suspect or any other person;
- Prevent loss or damage to property;
- Prevent an offence against public decency;
- Prevent unlawful obstruction of a highway;
- Protect child/vulnerable person;
- Allow prompt and effective investigation of the offence/conduct of the suspect;
- Prevent any prosecution being hindered by the disappearance of the suspect

Appendix B

Children Missing Education; Schools referral Process



Appendix C

Health Response to Missing children and Families.

EAST MIDLANDS

MISSING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ALERT SYSTEM

(This system does not include unborn babies – an alert system for this group already exists across East Midlands)

The Missing Children and Family Alert System has been developed by the East Midlands Safeguarding Children Network much of which has been taken from NHS Scotland Missing Family Alert Protocol (2006)

Date agreed: 19May 2011

Agreed by: East Midlands Safeguarding Children Network Board

Date of Review: 19 May 2012

Introduction

- 1.1 It is clearly identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2010) that all children should be safeguarded and have their welfare promoted.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Missing Children and Family Alert (MCFA) process is to locate children who have disappeared from view following an undisclosed change of address and for whom there may be concerns about child welfare in respect of unmet need, vulnerability or abuse.
- 1.3 An alert system already exists within East Midlands Strategic Health Authority (SHA) to circulate information about missing vulnerable unborn babies (unborn baby alerts) and their mothers. The aim of MCFA process is to supplement the existing SHA and national arrangements to provide a standardised system for raising a missing family alert (MCFA) and the subsequent distribution of that alert.
- 1.4 Designated Nurses for safeguarding children for each PCT area within East Midlands SHA region will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the MCFA system.
- 1.5 Each PCT will identify a responsible 'Keeper of the Register' (Administrative Officer) whose role it will be to run a check on the NHS tracing system on a regular basis (advice weekly) for three months following the circulation of the MCFA
- 1.^ If information about children subject to a MCFA raises significant concern about a child's welfare a referral to Children Social Care and/or Police will be made in line with LSCB Procedures.

2 Definition of Missing Children & Family

2.1 Child/children within a family who has disappeared from a known address with no forward address and for whom there are child welfare concerns in respect of unmet need, vulnerability or abuse. This includes risks to unborn children.

3 Concerns That a Child & Family May Be Missing

3.1 Health staff who have concerns that a family is missing should contact the Named Nurse or Professional for Safeguarding Children with responsibility for their organisation/area. All reasonable and practical efforts should be undertaken to locate the family. This should include discussion with other health professionals, family members, neighbours and the interrogation of any available IT systems.

3.2 Contacts in other statutory agencies may also be able to assist, e.g. housing, social work, police and education. All contacts and actions taken, and the reasons for doing this must be recorded promptly in the appropriate health records.

3.3 If a child and family remain missing the Named Nurse/Professional within the PCT district and or other Provider Healthcare Trust will agree the appropriateness of raising a Missing from Known Address (MKA) form with the staff member concerned and complete the MKA form (appendix 2)

4. Raising a Missing Children & Family Alert (MKA)

4.1 Once a professional decision has been taken to raise a MKA form a copy will be required in the appropriate health records and copied to the Child Health and GP record. A copy will be retained by the appropriate Named Nurse. The Named Nurse/Professional will then raise the MCFA (appendix 3) which will then be circulated through the 'Keeper of the Record' and Designated Nurse in each PCT area within the East Midlands including NHS Direct and EMAS Ambulance Service. Additional second circulation to other areas will be based on knowledge of the family.

4.2 The Named Nurse/Professional will discuss any appropriate serious concerns with their Designated Nurse at any stage of the process.

4.3 The following check list may be helpful:

- The Named Nurse/Professional raising the MCFA should ascertain the concerns and complete the Missing Children and Family Alert (MCFA) Form.

- The Designated Nurse (or deputy) will be identified as the contact on the MCFA form. The PCT area raising the alert should retain the detailed clinical and social information/records until the MCFA has expired (3 months) or the missing family have been found.
- A copy of the MCFA should be placed in the child's patient record and or child health records held by the caseload holder, e.g. Health Visitor/School Nurse and an entry made on the chronology sheet/record. The information should also be shared with the GP to whom the child is registered.
- The MCFA will be circulated to each PCT area in the East Midlands through the Designated Nurse via the 'Keeper of the Record' who will be responsible for ensuring appropriate circulation of the MCFA in their PCT area; this should include Acute Trusts, NHS Direct, EMAS and Primary Care Providers. **All health providers will be required to develop local arrangements for the "in house" circulation and monitoring of the process.**
- Based on information available, distribution may be necessary to other UK destinations. Contact details for Designated/Named for specific UK destinations can be located in the Directory of Community Nursing.

5 Family Located

It is the responsibility of the Designated Nurse through the 'Keeper of the Record' who raised the MCFA to advise all PCT areas, Acute Trusts, NHS direct, EMAS, Primary Care Providers and others on the original circulation list when the family have been located. This should be done by completing the appropriate section with the new details about the child's address on the original MCFA and re-circulating it.

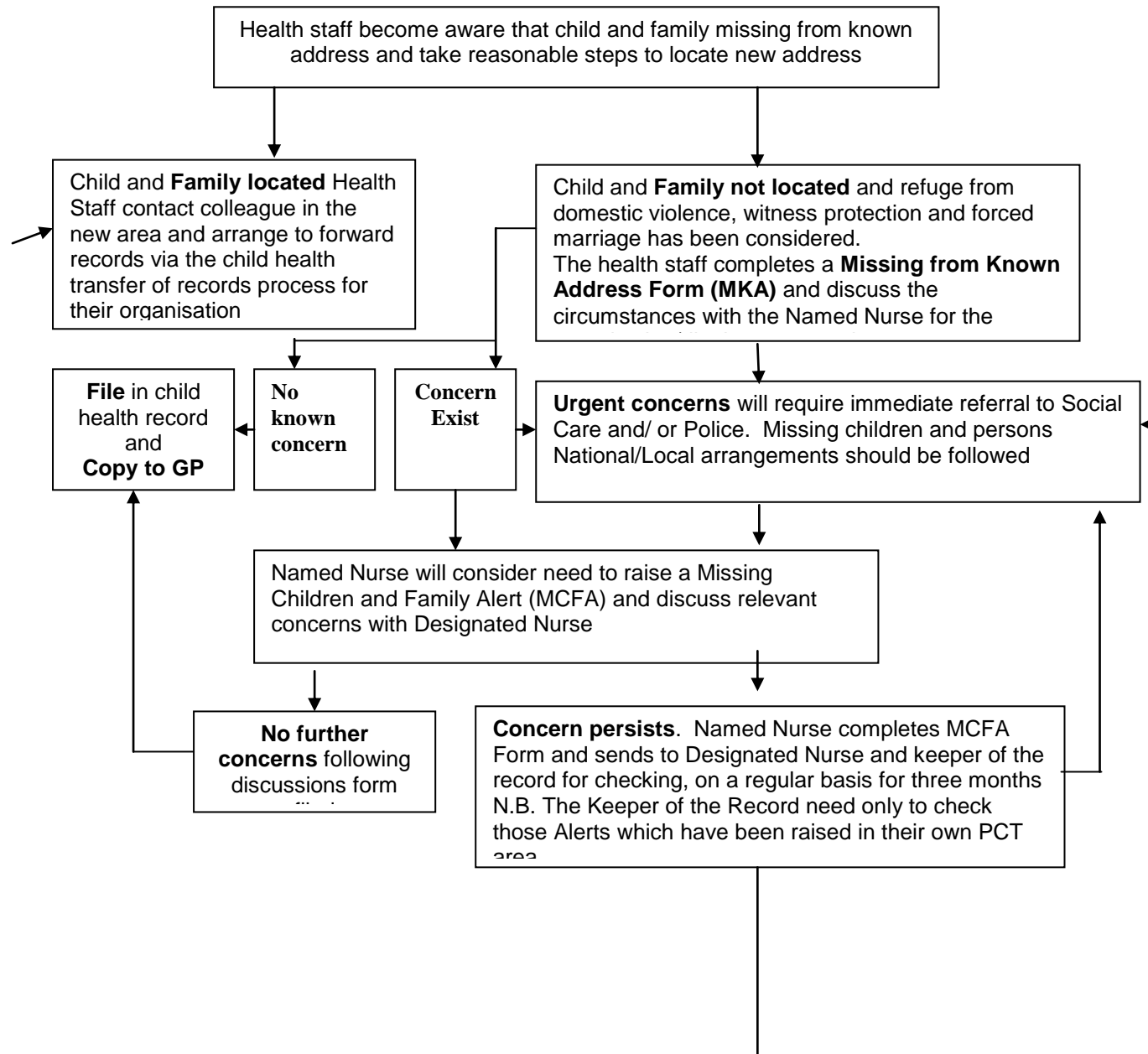
6 Family not Found

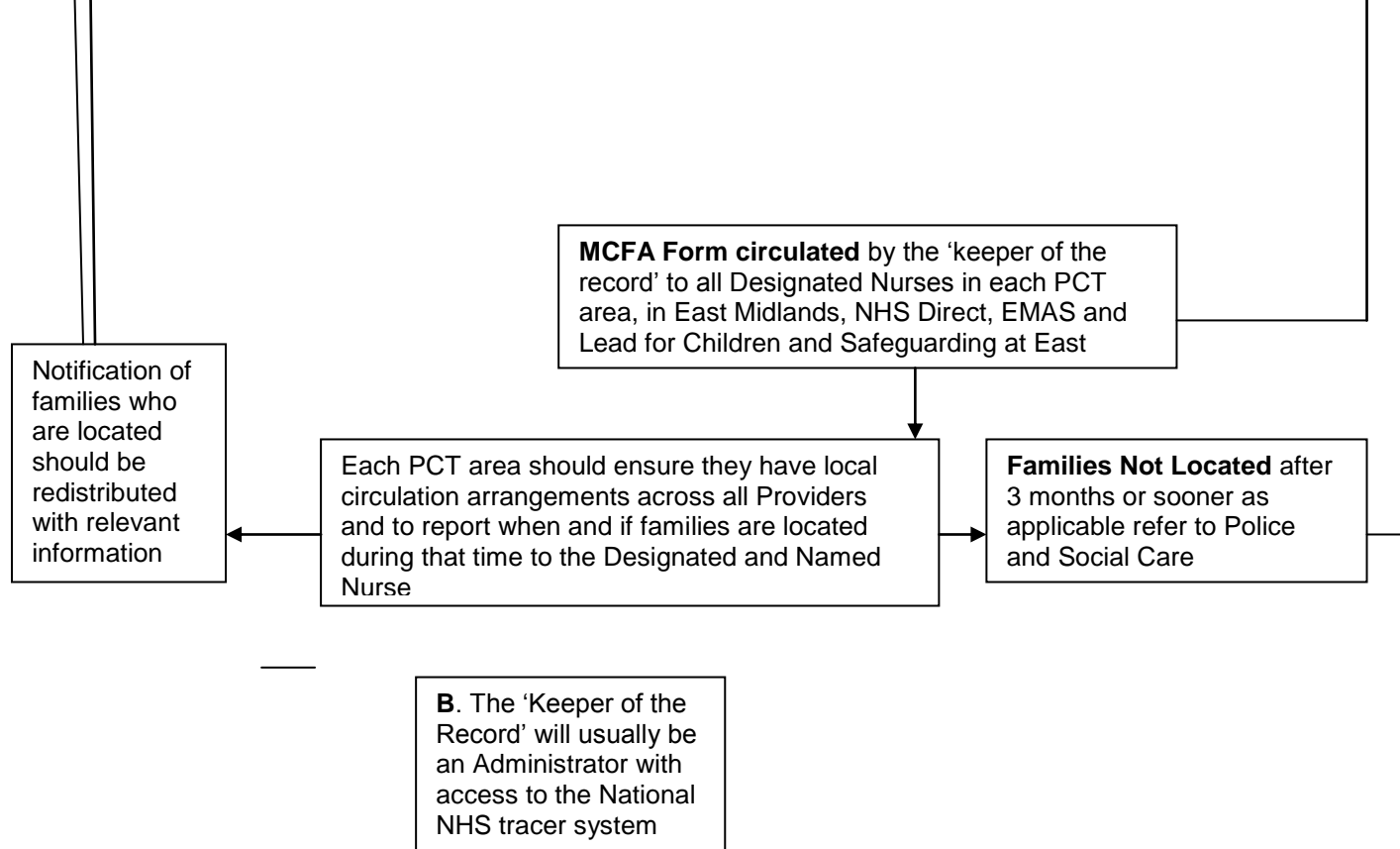
If the family have not been located at the end of the 3 month alert period, the Designated Nurse in the PCT area raising the MCFA should review all the circumstances relating to the child and family concerned. Professional judgement should be used to consider any additional actions that can reasonably be undertaken. Referral to the Police Missing Persons Register and Missing from Education Officer with the local Authority should be initiated if this has not already been done.

Other actions could also include re-issue of a MCFA. Local PCT board arrangements for continuing IT searches, and the processing and storing of unclaimed records should be instigated at the end of three months if the family have not been located as appropriate.

Appendix 1

MISSING CHILDREN AND FAMILY ALERT SYSTEM





Appendix 2

CHILDREN MISSING FROM KNOWN ADDRESS (MKA)

This form should be completed when a Health Visitor, Midwife, School Nurse or other caseload holder providing care to a child, becomes aware that a child/ren is missing from a known address and they have no forwarding information. All reasonable and practical effort should be undertaken to locate the family. If at the end of local checks you still have no forwarding information please discuss the situation with the Named Nurse within your organisation/district. Concerns regarding unmet need, vulnerability or protection may necessitate the raising of a Missing Children Family Alert Form (MCFA)

Childs Name.....AKA.....Mothers Name
 Child's DOB Fathers Name.....

Childs Name.....AKA.....
 Child's DOB

Childs Name.....AKA.....
 Child's DOB

Date Children Last Seen:.....

Child's Last Known Address.....

Child's NHS Numbers (if known).....

CHECKS WITHIN LOCALITY	YES	NO
• Contact local Child Health Department to check IT systems (PAS, CHI, SIRS)		
• Contact local Acute Trusts		
• Contact Nursery /School attended.		
• Check HV/SN/MW/GP Practice with whom registered		
• Check with Housing as appropriate		
• Check with Children Social Care as appropriate		
• Check with local Children Centre		
• Check with family members/neighbours as appropriate		

Ethnicity.....Language.....Disability.....

<u>Additional Information</u>

Date Discussed:.....Name of Named Nurse.....

<p><u>Action Plan</u></p>

SignedDate of Completion.....

If this child/family is found please contact

Name.....Contact Number.....

N.B. This form should be filed in the child health record and a copy sent to Named Nurse and GP

<p>Referred to Police as missing person Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Appendix 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONFIDENTIAL – MISSING CHILDREN/FAMILY ALERT FORM (MCFA)</p> <p>Date of Issue: Date of Re-Issue (if applicable)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Family Name:</th> <th>Family AKA:</th> <th colspan="2">NHS Number (if known)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mother</td> <td>DOB</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Father</td> <td>DOB</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Partner</td> <td>DOB</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1st Child</td> <td>DOB</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Child</td> <td>DOB</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Family Name:	Family AKA:	NHS Number (if known)		Mother	DOB			Father	DOB			Partner	DOB			1 st Child	DOB			2 nd Child	DOB			<p>Date Referred:</p>
Family Name:	Family AKA:	NHS Number (if known)																										
Mother	DOB																											
Father	DOB																											
Partner	DOB																											
1 st Child	DOB																											
2 nd Child	DOB																											

3 rd Child		DOB	
4 th Child		DOB	
Risk Factors - List all known risks)			
Risks to staff (detail any relevant factual information)			
1. Staff in receipt of this MCFA should make it available in a confidential area for colleagues to read.			
2. NHS staff, on receipt of the MCFA, should check the family details against case files held.			
3. If the family are located contact the keeper of the record and Designated Nurse for their area			
4. File the MCFA in the appropriate health record after 3 months or on receipt of 'Family Found information.'			
Family Found: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Date Found:			Found By (Please indicate) Police <input type="checkbox"/> Social Work <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> EMAS <input type="checkbox"/> NHS Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Practitioner Services <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
New Address			Professional to contact/details

At the end of 3 months the Designated Nurse through the Keeper of the Record for each PCT will send a copy of the MCFA detailing if family are not found/found and by whom in their area. A copy will be sent to the Named Nurse, Practitioner and GP

Appendix D

Risk assessment for children's homes and operating procedure for reporting missing children

MISSING PERSON RISK ANALYSIS

The information to be added to this document must identify risks that emerge **away** from the placement.

Name of Young Person:

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Placement:

Completed by:

Date Completed:

Hazards	HIGH	MED	LOW	Explanation of Concerns / Risks
---------	------	-----	-----	---------------------------------

LEGAL STATUS: Remand, Pace, EPO, Secure Order, Bail	High				
DISABILITY: Physical disability and / or learning difficulties	High /				
AGE	< 10 High / HIGH 10-13 High / Medium 14-15 Medium / Low : 16+ Low				
Reason for Accommodation	At risk of significant harm: High				
SUBJECT TO PROTECTION PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Previously • Never 				
Medical condition / Medication / Current general health					
Current State of Mind					

Hazards	HIGH	MED	LOW	Explanation of Concerns / Risks
Vulnerability to sexual exploitation and / or inappropriate sexual relationships				
Involved in offending whilst absent				

Limited or no concept of dangers whilst absent				
Suffering from bullying				
They have a history of running away to unsafe situations				
Relationship with current peer group				
Relationship with family				
Is the young person involved with drugs and / or alcohol				

Review Date:

MISSING PERSON REPORTING PROCEDURE

Summary of Risks

What currently are the main areas of concern when this Young Person is missing?
Is the Young Person listed with the Police as a Vulnerable Young Person?

Cross reference with section one of the placement plan.

--

Steps to be taken to locate / retrieve the Young Person

Action taken must be recorded in the Comms Log, CA9B and referred to in the Personal Log.

--

When is the Young Person considered to be a Missing Person?

Once we reach this point, notify the Police.

--

- **Situational Factors**

Review recent logs and patterns of behaviour and then reconsider if the above reporting strategy is still suitable. Seek advice from the Senior on duty.

- **Follow-up Action**

Once reported to the Police, we are still actively involved in trying to locate and retrieve the Young Person. Liaise with relevant agencies and record actions taken.

In order to protect Young People from coming to harm (and / or causing harm to others), staff may where appropriate and immediately necessary use the proactive practices of blocking exits, locking doors and physical intervention. Such interventions must be based on the evidence of prior harm, the young person's past behaviour, advised by their behaviour management plan and only applied for as reasonable and short a time as possible to dissuade the young person from leaving.

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Action agreed by Social Worker

Action agreed by Children's Home

Signature:

Signature:

--	--

Action agreed by Police Missing Persons Unit	Action agreed by YOS worker (if appropriate)
Signature:	Signature: