

Children & Young People Missing from Local Authority Care Procedure



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Part 1 Principles

This procedure does not apply to children in Kinship Care.

1. DEFINITION

A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown and:

- Where the circumstances are out of character; or
- The context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or
- The person is at risk of harm to themselves or another

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Over 30,000 episodes of people going missing are reported to Police Scotland every year, Almost two thirds of people reported missing are children and young people, with many looked after in care or residential settings.
- 2.2 Children and young people are a particularly vulnerable group who are more likely to be subjected to exploitation while they are missing.
- 2.3 Going missing exposes children and young people to unnecessary risks; it impacts negatively on their health and wellbeing; and, in a small number of cases, it can lead to death.
- 2.4 Tackling this issue requires a multi-agency response and this procedure has four overarching themes; prevention, responding, support and protection.
- 2.5 Children go missing for a variety of complex and interconnected reasons. Some of which are 'Pull Factors' from where they are living, for example being homesick for family members or friends or being concerned for their well-being; alcohol, drugs or "excitement". For some there are 'Push Factors' such as the feeling that they are in the wrong placement, feeling unsafe there, lack of positive relationships with staff/carers or boredom.

3. LEGISLATION

In the majority of cases children in residential units and foster care are 'looked after and accommodated' under the terms of the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011, and may include those that are detained or remanded by court orders. In some cases their status may be 'voluntary', Section 25 Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

For the purposes of this procedure, no distinction should be made between individuals in the categories, other than each agency should be aware that the powers available to police officers to return individuals accommodated under Section 25 are less, i.e. there are no powers for the police to pick up those in care under Section 25 (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) and then subsequently return them to their placement.

4. SYSTEMATIC TARGETING OF CHILDREN INCLUDING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- 4.1 Research suggests that a number of children who find themselves in the care system will be targeted and exploited due to their vulnerability. Perpetrators will often form

relationships and network easily with these children. A child may find themselves isolated and entrenched in abusive situations and be unable to disclose the abuse either because they do not recognise the exploitive behaviour as 'abusive' or due to isolation, shame or fear of not being believed. All staff and carers should be alert to changes in a child in terms of their behaviour or presentation, particularly on their return after being missing. In these circumstances it is critical that the CSE procedure is used when there is a concern that a child is experiencing or may be at risk of sexual exploitation. During all 'safe and well' checks and return interviews, CSE should be borne in mind as this is a key time to identify children at risk of harm or grooming.

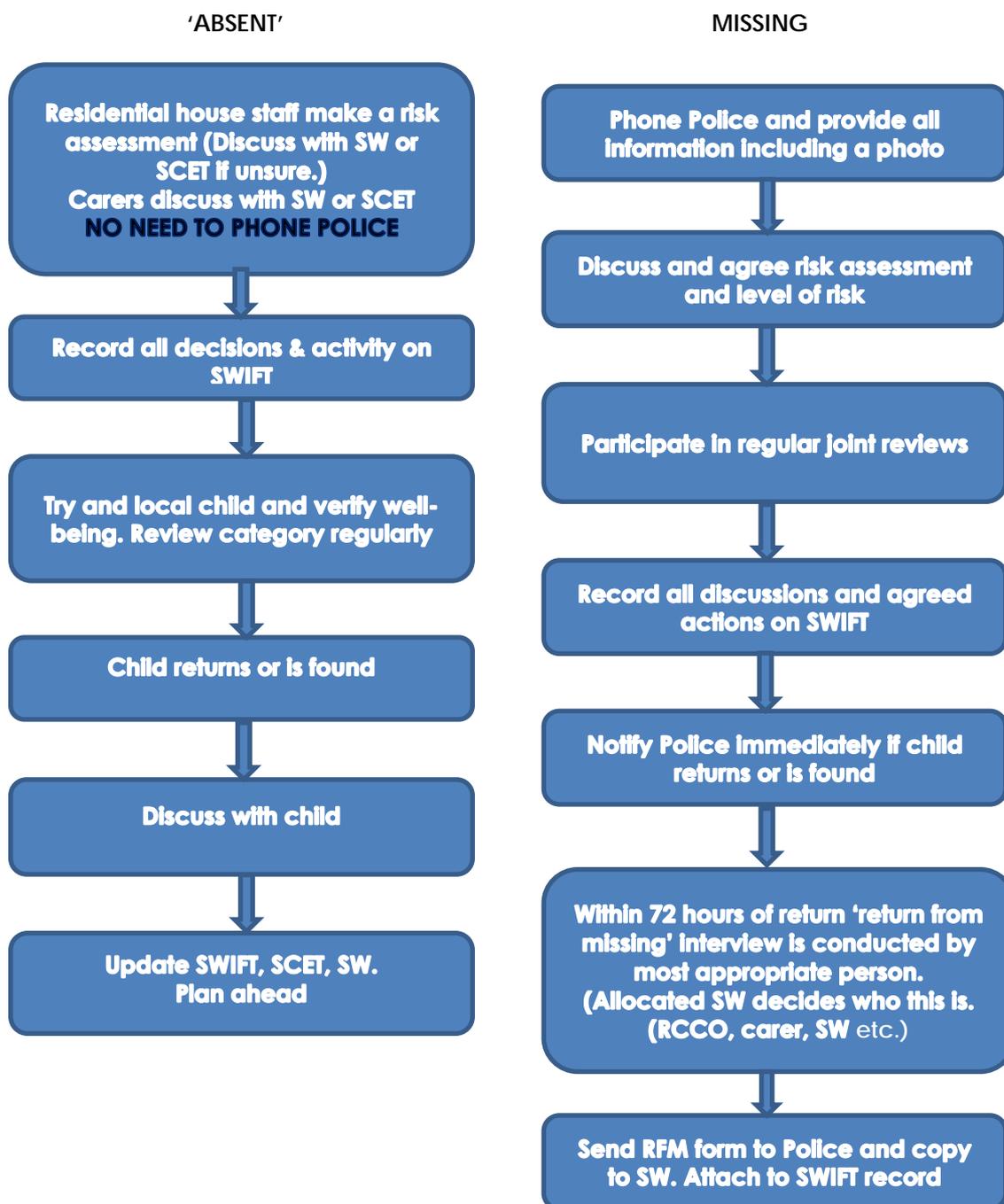
- 4.2 The Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF) should be used to identify indicators of potential sexual exploitation
- 4.3 No matter how insignificant a comment, all information obtained during a return interview should be recorded and, if appropriate, shared with partner agencies.

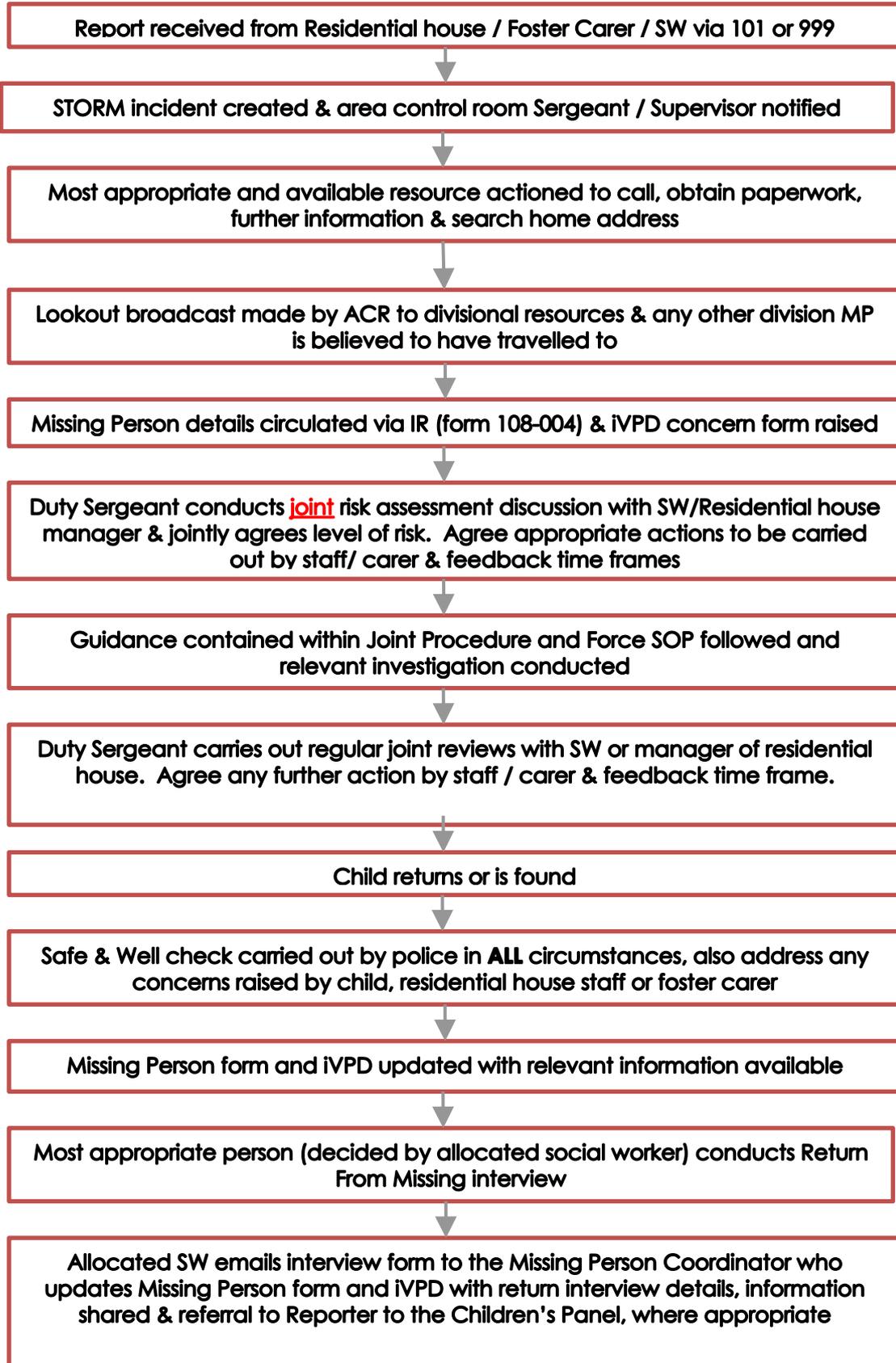
PART 2. FLOW CHARTS - CHILDREN MISSING FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE PROCEDURE

LOCAL AUTHORITY

5.

- Child is not at placement address - initial attempts to locate the child have failed. (Notify police immediately if there is a high level of risk)
- Do the circumstances fit the criteria for the child being 'absent' or 'missing'?





PART 3. PROCEDURE

6. 'Absent'

- 6.1 'Absent' is to be used by Local Authority staff in cases where there are grounds to believe that the absence involves no apparent risk, or the level of risk is a tolerable one not meeting the threshold for a police-led missing person investigation. Such situations may include failing to return from home leave and staff knowing the child is still in the family home and there is no concern about their well-being, or the child being or staying with others without consent but again there being no concerns about their safety. In these types of circumstances it is permissible to have a single-agency response and there is no need for the police to be contacted.
- 6.2 A child should usually only be placed in this category if this has previously been agreed and is noted in the Child's Plan (**Appendix C**) that this might be an appropriate response. If the child is "absent" then the residential staff will take whatever action has been previously agreed and **there is no requirement to contact the Police**. Carers should contact the allocated SW or SCET to discuss whether or not the child is 'absent'. Residential care staff may seek advice from the allocated SW or SCET if required. If there is uncertainty the discussion can also include the Duty Inspector. Decisions must be recorded.
- 6.3 All episodes of being 'absent' must be recorded and this information made available when the child's situation is being risk assessed. The category of 'absent' should be reviewed regularly and if there is any escalation of concern or new information coming to light then consideration must be given at this review stage to notifying the Police that the child is missing.
- 6.4 The child must be spoken to on their return and any concerns noted to aid continuing risk assessment.
- 6.5 The definition of 'absent' can only be applied where it is deemed appropriate by the Local Authority.
- 6.6 Guidance is provided in **APPENDIX A** about which risk factors should be considered when such circumstances are assessed.

7. MISSING PERSON

- 7.1 A missing person will be defined as anyone whose whereabouts is unknown and:
- where the circumstances are out of character; or
 - the context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or
 - the person is at risk of harm to themselves or another.
- 7.2 There are 3 categories of risk – low, medium, high - with clear action required depending on the category.

8. POLICE INITIAL MISSING PERSON INFORMATION

Prior to starting any missing person investigation, the initial attending officer will seek answers to set questions in order to complete a Missing Person Form to aid the investigation. Residential staff/SWs and carers should have an awareness of these questions so they are able to provide the Police with relevant information. The questions are detailed in **APPENDIX A**

9. RISK ASSESSMENT GENERAL GUIDANCE

- 9.1 Including all available information in the risk assessment process can increase the likelihood that a clear and agreed decision will be reached regarding the risk level and the action required.
- 9.2 As the children are accommodated a Child's Plan will be in place.
- 9.3 Risk factors should be considered: Firstly, stable factors are those that are not likely to change between episodes. Examples are the child's gender, previous behaviour and early life experiences. When undertaking risk assessments these factors will remain constant. Secondly, dynamic risk factors are those which might be different for each episode of being missing. Examples of these include the child's current emotional state, influence of others, vulnerabilities, mental well-being, use of alcohol/other substances, offending behaviour and prevailing weather conditions.
- 9.4 A range of 'push' and 'pull' factors may be a reason for being 'absent' /missing:
- **Push factors** may include conflict with carers, feeling powerless, bullying, unhappy in care, boredom and physical or sexual abuse.
 - **Pull factors** may include wanting to be with family or friends, peer pressure, attractions of street life or people who may present a risk and exploit the child.
- 9.5 It is critical that in every instance of a child going missing, risk is properly assessed and that staff in all agencies avoid dismissing the potential significance of repeat episodes. Often such children are immediately labelled as the problem. Consideration must be given to why they persistently go missing and their vulnerabilities. Patterns must be explored and should form a key component of Return Interviews.
- 9.6 When a child is reported missing, the RCCO/SW/SCET and police will undertake a joint risk assessment and agree a category of risk. When a child is missing from care (rather than being 'absent') the category will normally be either medium or high.

10 RISK CATEGORIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

RCCOs/SWs/SCET should contact 101 to report a child missing (unless there is believed to be an immediate risk to child when 999 should be used). Foster carers should contact the allocated SW or SCET to discuss unless there is an immediate risk when the Police should be contacted on 999. The Duty Inspector can be contacted on 01506 445364 (day or night) to discuss the level of risk. If there is no reply from this number, staff/carers should dial 101 and ask to speak to the Duty Inspector at Livingston. The risk assessment can be found in Appendix B

10.1 LOW RISK

Children missing from care will only be regarded as at low risk in exceptional circumstances.

10.2 MEDIUM RISK

The risk posed is likely to place the child in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

10.3 HIGH RISK

The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that:

- **The child is in danger through his/her own vulnerability; and/or**
- **The child may have been the victim of a serious crime; and/or**

- **The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.**

Once contacted the Police will attend and obtain details for a missing person report and ask for the relevant information from the Child's Plan. Following consultation with both parties, the level of risk should be agreed.

- 10.4 The Police will assume the lead role in the conduct of subsequent investigations. Care Providers must undertake all agreed tasks following discussion with the Duty Sergeant/Inspector to ensure a co-ordinated approach.
- 10.5 Agreement must be reached on timescales for reviewing a child's situation. These timescales will be based on the time necessary for tasks to be carried out but immediate reviews will be undertaken if any significant information is received by any party. It is expected that there will be a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period. All discussions and decisions must be recorded on SWIFT.
- 10.6 The Initial Attending Officer will
- Obtain relevant information from the Child's Plan and note full details required for the local Command and Control system, Missing Person and concern forms.
 - Conduct a thorough search of the Child's home address/normal place of residence.
 - Complete the Missing Person Form, brief the Duty Sergeant and submit a concern form via the IVPD to the Concern Hub. The concern form number must be entered onto the Missing Person Form.
 - Ensure that the missing child's particulars are entered on to the PNC and details of the child are circulated to local Police stations, including that which covers the area from which the child originates as per local guidelines.
- 10.7 The Duty Sergeant will:
- Gather all additional information available once the initial details have been obtained by the Service Centre and the initial attending officer to ensure proper assessment of the circumstances and co-ordination of the enquiry;
 - Conduct a joint discussion with the relevant social worker or Care Provider in respect of the situation and agree the appropriate level of risk as quickly as reasonably practicable;
 - Share all available information held by both agencies regarding the child and his/her circumstances. This process should include the checking of all relevant databases e.g. SID, Child Protection Register, iVPD etc;
 - Agree a timescale for review (a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period); reviews of high risk children will take place at least every 2 hours; and
 - Agree actions to be taken and who is to undertake them (including joint sharing of tasks where appropriate);
- 10.8 The Duty Inspector must be made aware of the incident. The Duty Inspector will ensure the initial level of risk is correct and will review the level as appropriate giving consideration to the length of time the child is missing as well as any other relevant information. As per the **Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation SOP** the Duty Inspector will have ownership and will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out.
- It is the responsibility of the Duty Inspector to ensure that adequate reviews and correct levels of risk are adhered to at all times. All reviews must be recorded and any changes to the risk level must be justified.

- 10.9 For high risk children, Care Providers should be aware that the officers will search the missing child's room and personal property in addition to the rest of the building and its grounds. This is essential in trying to identify places the child may be and/or people the child may have gone to including the missing child's intentions. This search may be repeated several times during the enquiry and may involve specialist trained officers including the use of dogs.
- 10.10 In any enquiry, but particularly in high risk investigations, it is helpful for the Police to speak to friends of the missing child, as well as other children who live in the foster placement or residential house. Care Providers are expected to keep an updated list with relevant names, addresses and contact details. The Police may request that other residents remain in the house until the police have concluded initial investigations.
- 10.11 For high risk children the Local Authority will identify a liaison person to have continuous communication with the Police. Reviews will take place at least every 2 hours. As the enquiry unfolds, the Police are likely to call a 'Gold Group' meeting which focuses on the Police investigation. The police may request the liaison person attends to assist with knowledge of the missing child, their family, known associates and any other relevant information. This category of risk will require the immediate deployment of Police resources and for a senior Police officer to be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and the approval of appropriate Police staffing levels in accordance with the Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation SOP. The resultant Police action is likely to involve a large number of officers physically searching for the child and may involve moving extra resources from other areas and the utilisation of specialist resources.
- 10.12. Such cases may lead to the appointment of a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or Officer In Charge (OIC) who would be involved in investigative and media strategies and who would have close contact with the relevant Local Authority staff and/or other agencies that may be able to assist, and ensure that appropriate support is available to the child's family.
- 10.13 The SIO/OIC with overall responsibility for the incident will review, whether or not it is necessary, on the basis of all current available information, to increase or decrease the level of risk allocated to the investigation.
- 10.1.4 If a child with a serious health issue begins to develop a pattern of going missing, even for short periods, initiate an IRD. This will allow the development of a plan of action for children where high risk of harm exists, including but not exclusive to:
- Any child with medical condition required to take daily oral medication or to inject daily medication. The exception would be those taking medication for ADHD or Melatonin;
 - children with epilepsy, diabetes, severe depression, brittle asthmatics or rheumatological conditions;
 - any child who has been admitted overnight to hospital as a result of their medical condition in the last 2 years (this should help identify brittle asthmatics who are on inhalers).

11. REVIEW OF THE RISK LEVEL

From the outset timescale for reviews should be agreed. During reviews of all categories of missing person, the Duty Sergeant and the relevant Care Provider or Social Worker, will:

- Consider the developing circumstances and whether or not, on the basis of all current available information, it is necessary to increase or to decrease the risk classification;
- Record outcomes and decisions of reviews, who participated and any timescales for further review. Specifically this should include the individual and organisation responsible for progressing identified actions.

12. STRATEGIC REVIEWS

12.1 In cases where a child is missing and all initial investigations to locate the child have been exhausted, or where the risk assessment is 'High', the Local Authority and the Police will jointly consider holding Multi Agency meetings to discuss the combined response to the incident and decide what further action may be required to locate the child, including the need and timing of any associated media release. The requirement to host such a meeting will be at the discretion of the Senior Police Officer in charge. The following people should be invited to attend such a meeting:

- Strategic lead for the Police
- Strategic lead for the Local Authority
- The registered manager, or in his/her absence, a manager of the residential house, or the manager of the fostering service looking after the child;
- Where the child is placed in one Local Authority by another Local Authority – a representative from the placing Local Authority; and
- Other relevant agencies (e.g. Health, Education etc.)
- Allocated social worker for child

12.2 The meeting will be chaired by the Strategic Police Commander with responsibility for the Police investigation (normally Chief Inspector or above) and will be recorded in minutes by a Police representative and copies provided to those attending. Minutes should include actions, identified owners and timescales for delivery.

12.3 Such review group meetings should be considered by all agencies to be critical to the safe recovery of the child and every effort should be made to ensure the attendance of staff of sufficient seniority that decisions regarding the commitment of physical and human resources and the ongoing assessment of risk, can be made. They will be expected in all cases where the level of risk has been identified as 'High' and where initial investigations to trace the missing person have failed. Owing to the potential urgency in 'High' risk cases these meetings are likely to take place repeatedly and may occur out with normal office hours.

12.4 These meetings can also be arranged in circumstances where other levels of risk apply.

12.5 The Police may also convene a strategic meeting (referred to as a Gold Group meeting) as part of their investigation process and may on occasion invite partners to attend these meetings.

13. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs can play a vital role in helping the safe recovery of a child. To assist in this, those caring for the child should ensure that there is a recent photograph that bears a good likeness available to the Police. In any investigation, the use of photographs can involve distribution via local or national media to help locate them.

14. INFORMING THE MEDIA

- 14.1 The use of social media and traditional media will be considered for all missing children who are classified as 'High Risk' or who have been missing for extended periods and if it is believed it would be beneficial to the investigation. The decision when to use media, the content and the timing of the media release will be the decision of the Police officer with overall responsibility for the investigation.
- 14.2 This will usually be done after consultation with the child's allocated social worker who will alert senior managers and the Local Authority's Corporate Communications.

PART 3 - RETURN FROM MISSING

15. WHEN A CHILD RETURNS

- 15.1 Professionals must ensure that all children who run away or go missing from care are given meaningful opportunities to be listened to and taken seriously. It is imperative that at all stages when a child returns from missing that every opportunity is taken to assess if the child has come to any harm.
- 15.2 When a child returns and discloses that they have been a victim of a crime or have witnessed a crime, Child Protection Procedures must be followed.

16. RESPONSIBILITIES & ACTIONS

- 16.1 On the return of the child or young person, the Care Provider should;
- Welcome the child back and ascertain that they are well.
 - If there are any concerns that the child was harmed when they were away, that they were the victim of an offence or witnessed an offence or that they committed an offence then contact should be made with the Police and allocated social worker/SCET.
 - Contact Police via 101 (if the child was reported as missing) and inform them that the child has returned and is awaiting a 'Safe and Well' check.
 - Contact the allocated social worker/SCET at the earliest opportunity.
 - Contact any other relevant agency/person that may have been spoken to during the course of the enquiry.
 - Allow the child to contact significant people that they might need to speak to so that they can let them know they are back, for example parents, if it is appropriate/safe to do so.
 - Update the Child's Plan with any additional information that would assist in any future missing episodes.
 - Offer the child the opportunity to discuss their situation with an independent person such as the Children's Rights Officer.
- 16.2 When told that a child has returned, the social worker/SCET should;
- Ensure that the Police have been informed (where notified originally)
 - Ensure that a Police 'Safe and Well' check has been carried out.
 - Discuss with the care provider who is the best person to meet with the child and discuss the episode of being missing. (Return Interview)
 - Determine what has occurred during the period of being missing (not only what the child has been doing, but also what may have happened to him/her).
 - Assess the reasons for the absence.

- Record any emerging pattern of going missing and address any issues at the earliest opportunity. Every effort should be made to identify measures that will be taken to prevent further periods of going missing.
- Ensure that the Child's Plan has been updated accordingly
- Identify what further action needs to be taken, by whom, when and ensure that these actions are implemented and record on SWIFT.
- Offer the child the opportunity to discuss his/her situation with a Children's Rights Officer.

16.3 When informed of a returned child or tracing of a child, the DUTY SERGEANT will;

- Ensure that a Safe and Well Check is carried out as soon as possible
- Ensure that PNC and local circulations are cancelled and finalise the Command and Control incident / Missing Person Form.
- Ensure that the concern form is updated via IVPD.
- Ensure that relevant discussions are undertaken and actioned, in respect of well-being, Child Protection Procedures and in relation to the commission of crime, when a vulnerability or concern has been identified.
- On completion of the above the Duty Sergeant will pass all files to the Missing Person Operational Coordinator, who will ensure that the return interview information is collated and disseminated appropriately.

17. SAFE AND WELL CHECK

17.1 A distinction should be drawn between a Police 'safe and well' check and the need for a more structured return interview.

17.2 The 'safe and well' check should be performed as soon as reasonably practicable and should be for the purposes of allowing an immediate assessment of the child's well-being.

17.3 The purpose of this check is to allow officers to ensure the child has returned safely and in order to allow cancellation of the missing person to be progressed.

17.4 The officer should consider if there are any issues within the relevant scope of the SHANARRI indicators namely whether the child is Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

17.5 If during the course of this check disclosures are made that raise child protection concerns the officers should follow Child Protection procedures and notify the divisional CID/Public Protection Unit.

18. RETURN INTERVIEW

18.1 The purpose of the interview is to hear from the young person why they ran away, understand the risks and issues they experienced while they were away and identify any future risks. Children should be made aware that the content of the interview will be shared with the Police. It may also be shared with other agencies (if appropriate)

The return interview should aim to establish whether the young person:

- Has been hurt or harmed while they were away
- Been at known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking
- Been at known or suspected risk of involvement in criminal activity or drugs
- Had contact with people who pose a risk to children
- Run away with anyone and where they ran to.

The conversation also helps the young person understand the risks of running away, how to seek help and where to get help next time. It should enable the care provider to:

- Better understand the reasons why the child went missing;
- Explore the circumstances which led to the missing episode(s);
- Inform future prevention strategies;
- Inform any future missing person investigation, should the child go missing again;
- Learn of the activities, associates, risks and victimisation involved in the missing episode, and where possible address those risks with appropriate and proactive strategies;
- Identify and address any harm the child has suffered – including harm that may not have already been disclosed as part of the ‘safe and well’ check.

18.3 The allocated social worker and care provider will agree who is the most appropriate person to speak to the child (usually a person the child has a trusting and positive relationship with.) This may be the allocated social worker, foster carer, residential worker or other professional such as the Children’s Rights Officer, teacher or support worker. In exceptional circumstances this may be a Police officer.

18.4 The Return Interview should normally be started within 72 hours of the child’s return unless the circumstances of the child dictate otherwise.

18.5 Staff conducting Return Interviews should ensure the child’s circumstances are fully understood and seek appropriate support for the child during the interview. These may include communication aids, for example, use of independent translators and assistance from specialist staff working with the child.

18.6 The interview will be recorded on the Missing Person Return Interview form (**APPENDIX D**) using the Return Interview Question Set (**APPENDIX D**.) All return interview forms should be sent to the allocated social worker who should file them on SWIFT and email a copy to

LothianScotBordersMissingPersonCoordinator@scotland.pnn.police.uk

The allocated social worker will attach the form to the child’s file on SWIFT and the Police will update the Missing Person Form and the concern form via the IVPD with information received during the interview. This will then be shared with the Local Authority, the Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration (if appropriate).

18.7 Where other professionals (e.g. CRO or Education) have been involved in the Return Interview, copies of the interview form will be sent to the allocated social worker and attached to the child’s file on SWIFT.

18.8 Where a return interview leads to a disclosure that requires specific action, for example to protect a child or investigate a crime, this matter should be progressed in line with existing procedures.

POLICE INITIAL MISSING PERSON INFORMATION

Personal Details

1. Full name, including middle names, nicknames, previous names and aliases
2. Age, date & place of birth
3. Occupation / school attended & addresses
4. Home address
5. Location missing from (if different)
6. Phone number (contracted or pay as you go & service provider)
7. Access to other phone or SIM cards
8. E-mail addresses (passwords)
9. Social networking sites used (obtain account names and passwords)

Personal Description

1. Photograph
2. Gender
3. Height, build, weight & complexion
4. Ethnicity and skin colour
5. Eye colour
6. Glasses / contact lenses worn
7. Habits & mannerisms
8. Accent
9. General health / Mental health (diagnosed or otherwise)
10. Hair cut & facial hair (colour & style)
11. Clothing
 - a. Head wear
 - b. Upper body clothing
 - c. Lower body clothing
 - d. Footwear
 - e. Underwear
 - f. Outer clothing
 - h. Jewellery
 - g. Other clothing, gloves / scarves / glasses etc
13. Visible marks, scars, tattoos, piercing or distinguishing features.
14. Jewellery (earrings, watches, bracelets, rings, necklace, other)
15. Languages spoken / read
16. Ability to understand / read English
17. Shoe size
18. Dentures
19. Medical implants

Other Information

1. Nationality
2. Religion or beliefs
3. Marital / civil partnership status
4. Sexuality
5. Previous addresses
6. Previous schools / occupations
7. Financial details (income source, bank, sort code, account no, cards)
8. Passport details (number & location)
9. Details of Doctor
10. Details of Dentist
11. Right / left handed
12. Are there any objections to a media release?
13. Does the family/informant need personal support?

14. Possessions e.g. cash, keys, computer, medication, bank cards, store cards, travel cards, passport, make / model of phone. Is it internet enabled or have phone locator apps installed
15. Preferred modes of transport, access to vehicles, ability & licence to drive, types of public transport used regularly

Information relating to previous movements

1. Date, time and place last seen.
2. Date, time and method of last contact, i.e. call / text
3. Details of person who last saw / spoke with missing person
4. Known demeanour of missing person at last sighting
5. Were they accompanied?
6. Any property missing from home?
7. Any preparations made to leave?

INFORMATION RELATING TO CONTACTS AND BEHAVIOUR

1. Next of kin (including relationship to missing person)
2. Friends, relatives, partners or associates
3. Intended destination when last seen
4. Daily routines, routes used
5. Work location / address
6. Locations frequented, favourite places, beauty spots, walking routes etc.

Information relating to personality, lifestyle and influences

1. Social interests
2. Personality (outgoing, insular, deep)
3. Recent demeanour
4. Details of any addictions
5. Involvement with crime, cults or gangs?
6. Recent life troubles - e.g. family, financial or work
7. Religious and cultural influences?

RISK ASSESSMENT

Vulnerability

1. Is there any identified risk of suicide?
2. Is criminality suspected to be a factor in the disappearance?
3. Is the person vulnerable due to age, infirmity or other similar factor?
4. What are the effects of failure to take medication that is not available to them?
5. Does the missing person have medical or mental health conditions, physical illnesses or disabilities?
6. Can the person interact safely with others when finding themselves in unfamiliar circumstances?
7. Is there a dependency on drugs, alcohol, medication or other substances?
8. Are they on the Child Protection Register?
9. Do the current/previous weather conditions present additional risk? Consider all circumstances including age & clothing.

Influences

10. Are there family/relationship problems or recent history of family conflict and/or abuse?
11. Are they the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence?
12. Is there an ongoing personal issue linked to racial, sexual, homophobic, local community or any cultural issues?
13. Were they involved in a violent and/or hate crime incident prior to disappearance?
14. Are there any school, college, university, employment or financial problems?
15. Is forced marriage or honour based violence an issue?
16. Are they the victim of sexual exploitation, human trafficking or prostitution? If so, is going missing likely to place them at risk of considerable harm.

PAST BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour that is out of character is often a strong indicator of risk

17. Are the circumstances of going missing different from normal behaviour patterns?
18. Is there a reason for the person to go missing?
19. Are there any indications that preparations have been made for absence?
20. What was the person intending to do when last seen? Did they fail to complete their intentions?
21. Has the person disappeared previously and were they exposed to harm on such occasions?
22. Is the missing person a risk to others? In what way?
23. Are there other unlisted factors which the officer or supervisor considers relevant in the assessment of risk.

LOOKED AFTER CHILD - Missing Plan			
<i>To be completed by Carer/Residential Worker/Social Worker/young person</i>			
First Name		Surname	
Known As		Care Address	
Date of Birth			
Home Address		Gender	
Ethnicity		Nationality	
School / Occupation		Network Provider	
Mobile Phone Number		Email Address	
Social Media Accounts			
Medical Conditions			
GP Practice			
Dentist			
Previously Self-harmed?	Yes/No	Previously Attempted Suicide?	Yes/No
Drug Use Details			
Alcohol Use Details			
Height		Build	
Hair Colour		Hair Style	
Glasses	Yes/No	Facial Hair	
Complexion		Sexual Orientation	
Marks / Scars		Tattoos / Piercings	
1. What happens if you don't take your medication?			
2. Do you know how to get help if you need it?			
3. Are you dependant on alcohol, drugs or legal highs?			
4. If you have gone missing/ run away in the past, what made you go?			
5. Did you make preparations to go? (if applicable)			
6. Did anything happen to you when you were missing?			
7. Where would you go if you went missing?			
8. What would help stop you going missing?			
9. Identified risks			

FRIENDS, RELATIVES AND ASSOCIATES			
Details of people the child may be with or be in contact with			
Full Name		Address	
Phone Number(s)			
Relationship to child		Email Address	
Car registration			
Full Name		Address	
Phone Number(s)			
Relationship to child		Email Address	
Car registration			

Full Name		Address	
Phone Number(s)			
Relationship to child		Email Address	
Car registration			
Full Name		Address	
Phone Number(s)			
Relationship to child		Email Address	
Car registration			

Residential Staff/Carer/SW plan to engage young person and prevent missing episodes. *Consider young person's interests/hobbies/sports activities, contact arrangements, pull/push factors, triggers for going missing etc.*

What should happen if child goes missing from school?

Circumstances in which the young person would be regarded as 'ABSENT' rather than MISSING (take into account if child goes missing from school)

Date of Plan	
Social Worker	
Key worker/Carer	
PLAN SHOULD BE SHARED WITH POLICE IF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON GOES MISSING. PLAN SHOULD BE REVIEWED AFTER EVERY MISSING EPISODE	

MISSING PERSON RETURN INTERVIEW FORM

Completed form should be emailed to allocated SW as soon as possible. SW should attach to child's file on SWIFT and email to: LothianScotBordersMissingPersonCoordinator@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Child's name		DOB	
Placement address		SEX	Male/Female
Date reported missing			
Date traced/returned			
Place found (if applicable)			
Length of time missing			

1. What happened to make you go missing? (Planned, bored, something happened, to get away, coerced, bullied)	
2. What happened whilst you were missing? (Where did you go, who were you with, any trouble, anybody else saw you/met you, how did you get back, how did you feel?)	
3. What can be done to help to stop you going missing?	
4. Any concerns/issue raised by the child?	
5. Intelligence (addresses, names, car number plates, locations etc.)	
Child Protection referral	YES / NO
Date of Interview	
Date Form sent to allocated SW	
Date form emailed to Police	

MISSING PERSON RETURN INTERVIEW – QUESTIONS

REASON FOR DISAPPEARANCE

1. Why did they leave?
 - a) Life pressures? (i.e. family, school, relationship, issues in placement)
 - b) To clear their head?
 - c) Boredom?
 - d) To get family contact?
 - e) Were they encouraged to stay out? If so, by whom?
2. Were they planning to go anywhere specific when they left?
3. Did they go anywhere that was unfamiliar to them? Why? What drew them there?
4. Did they make any preparations to leave? What were they?

5. Were they under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they left?

CIRCUMSTANCES WHILE AWAY

1. How did they travel? How far?
2. Who were they with?
3. What did they do?
4. Where did they stay, shower, change clothes?
6. Did they have access to money?
7. Did they have/use a mobile phone?
8. Did they access/use social media?
9. Did they make contact with anyone whilst away?
10. Were they involved in criminal activity?
11. Were they encouraged to take part in criminal activity? By whom? What type of activity?
12. Did they take alcohol or drugs whilst away? (What & how much?)
13. Did anything bad happen to them? (hurt, injured, drugged, abused?)
14. Were they held captive?
15. Did they actively avoid Police whilst away?
16. Did they want to return at any point? What stopped them from doing so?

CIRCUMSTANCES OF RETURN

SELF RETURN

1. Why did they return? Would anything have made them return sooner?

TRACED

1. Who traced them? (Police, friends, family, carers?)
2. Would they have returned of their own accord eventually? If so, how long would this have taken?
3. Is there anything that would have made them return of their own accord sooner?
4. Did they have any worries about coming back? If so, what were they?
5. Is there any help they would like but were unable to find?

HEALTH / VULNERABILITY / SUICIDE ISSUES

1. Any physical conditions, disability or impairment?
2. Any mental health conditions?
3. Any prescribed medication?
4. When away, did they feel vulnerable or in danger?
5. Any injuries? If so, what are they?
6. Did they try to get help whilst away?
7. Did they consider taking their own life? Did they make physical attempts to take their own life? If yes, how? Have they previously attempted to take their own life? If yes, how often and by what method?
8. Did they talk to anyone about their concerns prior to leaving?

HARBOURING

The offence of harbouring is defined at section 171(2) Children's Hearing Scotland Act 2011 as follows:

A person commits an offence if the person—

- (a) Knowingly assists or induces the child to abscond from the place or person,
- (b) Knowingly harbours or conceals a child who has absconded from the place or person, or
- (c) Knowingly prevents a child from returning to the place or person.

NOTES

This section applies where—

(a) A child requires to be kept in a particular place by virtue of—

- (i) a child assessment order,
- (ii) a child protection order,
- (iii) a compulsory supervision order,
- (iv) an interim compulsory supervision order,
- (v) a medical examination order, or
- (vi) a warrant to secure attendance, or

(b) A person has (or is authorised to have) control of a child by virtue of such an order or warrant.

INFORMATION

MISSING PEOPLE

The Missing People organisation is a registered charity, dedicated to helping missing persons, their families and those who care for them.

Missing People provides 24/7 support and advice to missing people and their families by phone, text and email through their free confidential helpline 116 000. In partnership with the police and local authorities, they create and disseminate publicity appeals for missing children and adults, and reach out to people who are missing through their unique TextSafe® messaging service. In 2013/14, Missing People's services were used by 44/45 UK police forces, including Police Scotland, which meant they were able to safeguard over 4,000 vulnerable missing children and adults and supported almost 2,000 families across the UK. More information on their free services available to you on any missing person case can be found at <http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/how-we-can-help/professionals.html>

Report from the joint inquiry into children who go missing from care 2011:
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/EarlyYearseducationandchildcare/Page1/APPG-INQUIRY>

Report from the joint inquiry into children who go missing from care, Ofsted 2012: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120364

The Runaways' Charter. The Children's Society 2012
Available from www.makerunawaysafe.org.uk

Running away: Young people's views on running away from care
Reported by the Children's Rights Director for England. 2012
Available from www.rights4me.org

Guidance on Referral to the Reporter - Information for partner agencies is available from: http://www.scra.gov.uk/children_s_hearings_system/information_for_professionals.cfm

Children who go missing from care: A participatory project with young people as peer interviewers <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/children-missing-from-care-report.pdf>