

# LSCP Joint Protocol for Missing Children

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## Introduction

Both the Police and Local Authority are responsible for protecting children who go missing from home or Local Authority care in Lincolnshire. Effective joint working between agencies is essential and the aim of the protocol is to assist professionals across all agencies to develop robust responses to children who go missing.

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) expects all agencies working with children who are missing from home or care to implement this protocol and ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with it.

Lincolnshire Local Authority also adheres to the East Midlands Protocol for Missing Children ([East Midlands Protocol for Missing Children](#)). The protocol sets out how Local Authorities in the East Midlands region will work together to ensure that children who go missing from care receive the support that they are entitled to, and that information is shared appropriately between authorities.

## Scope and definitions

The protocol applies to all children (anyone under the age of 18) living or visiting within the boundaries of the Lincolnshire local authority and who go missing in Lincolnshire.

Local Authorities placing children within the Lincolnshire Local Authority boundary will be required to comply with this protocol.

When a Lincolnshire Child in Care\* (CIC) is placed outside of Lincolnshire and goes missing from the host Local Authority, Lincolnshire (responsible) Local Authority are required to comply with the relevant protocols and procedures of the host Local Authority (host) area and vice versa.

The College of Policing: 'Authorised and Professional Practice' guidance, definition of "Missing" is applied within this protocol and by Lincolnshire Police and the Local Authority, Lincolnshire County Council.

**Missing** - *Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.*

If the location of a child is known or can be readily ascertained they are not missing and no attempt should be made to report them missing to police, however if there is a risk to the child at that location then police assistance may be requested to support their safe return – reporting persons should be able to explain what this risk is and what assistance they are requesting when they contact Lincolnshire Police.

If a child's location is known but there is no identified risk or the risk is low then the parent, carer (relevant social care team when the child is a CIC) should be contacted and a plan put in place to return them – this could be to allow them to return under their own steam if this is deemed an appropriate response to the risk.<sup>1</sup>

### Initial response when a child is missing from home.

If a child is identified as not being at a location that they are expected to be at and is believed to be at immediate risk of harm this should be reported without delay to the Police by telephoning 999. If the child is not believed to be at risk of immediate harm the reporting individual (parent/ care provider / foster carer/ social worker etc) should take proactive steps to trace the child's whereabouts prior to contacting the police. Steps should include:

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<sup>1</sup> Within this context, "Children in Care" refers to children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, children subject to Care Orders including Interim Care Orders, Sect 31 and 38 Children Act 1989, and children who are otherwise provided with accommodation by sect 21 Children Act 1989.

- Physical checks of the residence, including the child's bedroom and any other location the child may be hiding within the house / building including the attic/loft, garden, garage, sheds, grounds and surrounding area(s),
- Attempting to contact the missing child directly, via mobile phone, text, or social networking sites,
- Contacting the missing person's family and friends to ascertain if the child is there or has contacted them or if they have any suggestions where they might be,
- Contacting or visiting places of work/education or other locations the missing child frequents,
- Contacting/visiting the place where the child was known to be attending,
- Checking to see if any items are missing from the home,
- Reference any safety plans related to the risk that the child may go missing,
- Consider checking with the local Accident and Emergency department and the local police station as in some circumstances the child or may have been arrested and refused to give their name or address to the police.

Additionally, where a child is a CIC of the local authority, the reporting individual should also:

- Refer to any risk assessments, care plans, placement plans or other documents that refer to the needs of the child in particular the management of the risk that the child may go missing.

If the child is located through such initial enquiries they should not be reported as missing to the police.

When the child is a CIC, the details of the incident should be recorded in full according to the appropriate Children's Services protocols and dealt with as part of the existing care plan.

If on location of any child it is believed they have suffered or may be likely to suffer significant harm, safeguarding procedures must be followed. [Safeguarding Referrals Procedure \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

## Reporting a child who has run away or is missing from home.

Where enquiries do not establish the whereabouts of the child the reporting individual should report the incident to the Police.

For children who are living in or visiting Lincolnshire and were last seen in Lincolnshire, including children placed by another Local Authority within Lincolnshire, this should be reported to Lincolnshire Police by calling 101 or online [Report a missing person | Lincolnshire Police \(lincs.police.uk\)](https://lincs.police.uk). **Unless there is deemed a serious concern or risk of immediate harm which would require a 999 response.**

If the child is normally resident in Lincolnshire but has gone missing whilst in another county, this should be reported to the Police force the child has gone missing in so that initial enquiries can be made in the immediate area. The case may, at a later time, be transferred to Lincolnshire but that will be a decision for the relevant force to make. It is national Police guidance that any force receiving

a missing person report should record an incident and, if the person is missing in their area, conduct the initial enquiries. Reporting persons should not be asked to call Lincolnshire Police because the child is normally resident in Lincolnshire, if this does occur Lincolnshire Force Control should escalate this to a supervisor.

The nature and extent of the police response to a report of a missing child will be based on an assessment of the information available, the reasons why the child may be missing, and the possibility of the person being at risk of harm. It is therefore important that the reporting person is in possession of the history and risk factors surrounding the child such as:

- The presentation of the child prior to the missing / incident,
- The circumstances surrounding the incident,
- Time that the child was last seen and by whom,
- Any medical issues which would increase the risk to the child,
- Physical, mental or other issues which affect the child's ability to stay safe in unknown or strange environments,
- Whether the child poses a risk of harming themselves or anyone else,
- ○ Drug or alcohol use,
- Previous and recent behaviour and whether the missing incident is out of character – i.e. does the child often return home late or are they usually home at an agreed time; are they usually compliant or do they often push boundaries etc.
- Whether there are indications that the child is not expected to return within reasonable time limits; is not staying at homes of others known to them and will not be easily located,
- The age and functioning of the child,
- Other risk factors such as a concern that the child has been identified as being potentially vulnerable to child criminal or sexual exploitation,
- If the child is known to the Local Authority where possible the reporting person should have access to any relevant documents, including safety plans, relating to the risk of the child going missing and Care and Placement Plans if a child is a CIC.

When a child is reported missing the professional making the report should share the incident number and an overview of the incident with any other professionals/agencies who may hold relevant information which they can share with police.

When a child is a CIC the reporting individual should ensure that the following are also contacted as soon as is practicable after the child is missing:

- The Local Authority responsible for the child's placement.
- If appropriate, e.g. delegated responsibility, adults with parental responsibility for the child.

After reporting a CIC missing, Children's Services remain responsible for the child in their care. This responsibility is not absolved when the child has been reported missing to the Police. Carers and the child's Social Worker will be responsible for liaising with the Police, taking an active interest in the investigation and passing on all information, which may help to inform the investigation and assist in protecting the child whilst missing.

Carers and the child's Social Worker should continue to make appropriate enquiries with other residents or by telephone with all persons who may be able to assist with the investigation unless they are requested not to do so by the Police. All information gleaned from these enquiries should be passed to the Police via the Force Control Room by emailing [force.control@lincs.police.uk](mailto:force.control@lincs.police.uk) or telephoning 101. All emergencies should continue to be reported by telephoning 999.

Once a child is reported missing to the Police, the Police will have primacy in respect of the investigation to trace the child.

## Response from Lincolnshire Police

The priorities of Lincolnshire police in responding to reports of missing persons are:<sup>2</sup>

- 
- Determining if the child is missing in accordance with the College of Policing definition,
  - Ensure that every report of a missing child is risk assessed so that those who may be vulnerable or represent high risk are immediately identified,
  - To investigate reports of a missing child,
  - To adopt a pro-active multi-agency approach in dealing with missing children in order to safeguard them and to reduce the number of future reports,
  - To support the needs of the family, those close to the missing child, and the community.

All reports of missing persons are assessed within the Force Control Room by an Inspector. If the circumstances meet the definition of a missing person then a Compact report is created with an initial risk assessment.

**Risk Assessment** - The Force Control Room Inspector will make an initial decision to if the child is medium or high risk (a child cannot be considered low risk) in accordance with College of Policing, Authorised and Professional Practice guidance [Missing persons risk assessment | College of Policing](#). The outcomes of the Police risk assessment will be the guide for the police response and the level of enquiries undertaken. It is important to note the police approach to risk assessing missing persons is different to that of Children's Services. Police will determine risk based mainly on the circumstances of a disappearance and do not use the CS concept of people being 'high risk' in themselves.

**Investigation**- Local officers are assigned to conduct the initial investigative actions which include searching the last place the person was seen or is missing from, obtaining full details from the informant, searching (wherever possible) their personal spaces to try and obtain lifestyle information or details of intent.

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<sup>2</sup> Where a report is made to another Police force, reference should be made to their missing from home or care protocol (it is likely that this is to be found on the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's website).

All investigations are subject to periodic reviews by an Inspector at intervals dictated by the current risk level. Risk levels are also subject to regular review.

## Notifying others

All incidents of children reported as missing to Lincolnshire Police will be reported to Lincolnshire County council. All Police COMPACT reports regarding a missing child are automatically sent by email to Lincolnshire Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support Team who will notify the relevant individual Children Services individual/ teams and relevant authority if the child has been placed from outside Lincolnshire. Every Local Authority has different notification pathways based on local arrangements.

Circumstances	Response
A child living within Lincolnshire and is not a Child in Care to Lincolnshire or another Local Authority. <b>OR</b> A child living within Lincolnshire and is a Child in Care to Lincolnshire. <b>OR</b> A child living in another Local Authority area and is a Child in Care to Lincolnshire.	Alert via Mosaic (LCC Children Services recording system) to the Children Services Lead Professional <b>if the child is open to Lincolnshire Children Services</b> and relevant Team Manager <b>if they are a Lincolnshire Child in Care.</b>
A child living within Lincolnshire and is a Child in Care to another Local Authority.	Email to placing local authority children services point of contact. Alert via Mosaic to the LCC Social Care locality Team Manager of the area in Lincolnshire that the child is placed.
For a child living in another Local Authority area and is not a Child in Care to Lincolnshire or another Local Authority.	Email to relevant local authority children services point of contact.

**Media Alerts** - Lincolnshire Police will advise the media and request their assistance in certain circumstances, after a thorough risk assessment has been conducted. All appropriate media should be considered to assist in the swift and safe return of the child.

In the case of ALL missing children, Parents and Carers and the Local Authority Children's Services **MUST** be notified prior to any media release, but permission to proceed with an appeal is not required.

In the case of a Child in Care (including those to whom Interim Care Orders under s38 Childrens Act 1989 or Full Care Orders under s.31 Childrens Act 1989 apply) Children's Services and or parents/ carers **must be consulted** prior to any media release.

- Mon-Fri (office hours) via Customer Service Centre - 01522 782111

- Mon- Fri (5pm - 8:45am) Weekends and Bank Holidays via EDT - 01522 782333

When Police contact Lincolnshire Children Services to inform them that they are doing a media alert, the team who Police informed must notify Children Services Assistant Directors via an email with some brief context of concerns, confirmation if Lincolnshire Children Services are involved or not and any plan once found. The Children Services team should also alert the locality Team Manager and Head of Service if they are not already aware.

## Continued Missing

When a CIC is missing Lincolnshire Police and Lincolnshire Children Services will work together in efforts to locate the child. If a CIC has been missing for more than 24 hours the CIC Head of Service must be made aware by the relevant CIC team manager.

If any child is still missing after 48 hours the Police investigation is subject to an additional review by a Detective Inspector to primarily examine whether the risk level is appropriate and if the circumstances may fall into the category of a crime in action.

At the 72-hour point if any child is still missing the Police Compact automatically notifies the UK Missing Persons Unit within the National Crime Agency. They create their own record and reference. They are able to offer additional guidance and support to Police particularly in cases where a person may have gone abroad or has been lost at sea.

The 72 hour point also triggers the appointment of a dedicated Police Officer in the Case who will be the supervising officer best placed to co-ordinate the investigation from that point.

For all children in **residential care** who remain missing for 72 hours or more Ofsted must be notified by the Residential care provider.

A Lincolnshire Children Services Assistant Directors (AD) Notification must be completed when a child is missing for more than 72 hours. If the child is open to Children Services the relevant Lead Children Services team are responsible for this. When the child is not open to Children Services, Future 4 Me (F4Me) team are responsible for this and will also share with the locality social care Team Manager. All Children Services teams should also share the AD notification with Emergency Duty Team (EDT) to ensure they are aware and can share with the relevant Children Services Duty Head of Service. LCC's Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support Team will include an update from Lincolnshire Police on the email they send to Team Managers when they are notifying them of a child that has been missing for 72 hours and an Assistant Director Notification is required.

**Lincolnshire Police should be contacted via the Force Control Room [force.control@lincs.police.uk](mailto:force.control@lincs.police.uk) or by telephoning 101 to share information which is relevant to the missing person investigation. This could include information that will impact on the risk assessment and response and/ or may support locating the child. All emergencies should continue to be reported by telephoning 999.**

**Children Services teams (only) can contact [missingpersons@lincs.police.uk](mailto:missingpersons@lincs.police.uk) during working hours regarding a child who is currently missing to request an update on the investigation.**

A Strategy Meeting must be held within the first 5 (actual not working days) of any child open to Lincolnshire Children Services being reported missing if they have not been located. The meeting should involve Police, carers, relevant health practitioner, the child's social worker if they have one and any other professional involved in the care of the child. The decision as to when the Strategy meeting should be held should take into consideration the risks and circumstances of the missing incident, if the fifth day of the child continuing to be missing is a weekend the meeting will need to be completed prior to this to enable relevant attendance. If a Family Help worker is involved and not Social Care, the Family Help manager should have an escalation discussion with Social Care to Request the Strategy meeting.

If a child is not open to Lincolnshire Children Services but is an Other Local Authority CIC, Lincolnshire Police should request a Strategy Meeting at any time during the missing person investigation, if they identify threshold is met.

The Strategy Meeting should consider:

- What action has been taken so far by the Police and professionals,
- What action needs to be taken by Police and professionals,
- Decide whether the child should return to that placement when located,
- Consider any vulnerability. This will be particularly important if the child has identified health needs such as mental health, substance misuse or underlying health conditions,
- Consider any other relevant information,
- Agree how professionals will share updates relevant to the missing person investigation.

Whilst the child continues to be missing, further review meetings should take place at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate.

Longer term cases of children being missing are subject to additional Police Senior Officer oversight and additional actions.

## When children are found

Where a Police Officer locates a missing child and has reasonable cause to believe that the child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, the Officer may take the child into Police Protection (Sect. 46 Children Act 1989) and return them to a place of safety.

Where a missing child is located by an agency or individual other than the police, the following action should be taken:

- If the person who has found the child is not the parent or carer - Immediately notify the parent or carer of where the child has been located and details of any concerns and agree an immediate action plan to safeguard the child until such time as the parent or carer can arrange for the child to be collected.
- Notify the police that the child has been located and make them aware of any concerns that the child has been the victim of an offence and/ or has suffered significant harm during, or as a result of, the missing incident.

The Police are not responsible for collecting and returning the child to their home upon location of the child by the police or others. Lincolnshire Police will not provide transport unless the officers involved deem that there is a safeguarding need for police to transport rather than another agency. There may be occasions when police deem that the speediest way to resolve Police involvement in an incident will be for Police to provide transport, however no agency or person should make assumptions that Lincolnshire Police will provide transport.

If the missing child is a CIC it is the responsibility of the residential staff or foster carers to collect and return the child to a place of safety unless the circumstances pose a risk to them or to the child. Where there is no risk to a parent or carer collecting a child, but the logistics make it difficult or impossible for the parent or carer to do so, the responsible Local Authority for the child must be contacted to assist.

If it is deemed that the child's current place of residence is unsafe for the child to return to for any reason then steps should be taken by parents/ carers and involved agencies to reduce this risk where possible or identify an alternative in preparation for when they are located.

**Police Prevention Interviews-** When a missing child has been located statutory guidance requires that police will conduct a Prevention Interview.

A Prevention Interview requires a Police Officer to physically see and speak to the missing child as soon as practicable. Consideration will be given by Police to the time of day this will take place and impact a Police presence can have at locations such as Children's Care Homes. The Police should also speak to the child's parents or carers to satisfy themselves that the child is safe.

The details will be recorded on the Police Missing Person Report and passed on to the relevant Local Authority. The purpose of the Lincolnshire Police Prevention Interview is:

- To determine the reasons why the child went missing and in particular, if they have been subject to violence, exploitation, abuse or bullying,
- To establish if they have been the victim of, or committed, any crime whilst missing,
- To discover where and by whom they have been harboured and if any steps can be taken to prevent this in the future such as issuing a Child Abduction Warning Notice,
- To obtain information which may lead to their early location should they disappear again,
- To put in place any support and preventative measures to avoid such a recurrence,
- To establish which school or education setting they attend,
- To inform the child and their parents and carers, if appropriate, that:
  - The relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care has been notified of the missing episode,
  - They will be contacted by the Local Authority and offered a Return Home Interview.

**Return Home Interviews (RHIs)** - When a missing child is found they should be given the chance to talk about why they went missing what happened whilst they were missing and how they are feeling now they are back. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to offer them a RHI. The interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning home or to their care setting.

The purpose of the RHI is:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered either before or whilst they were missing, including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the Police Prevention Interview,
- Understand and try to address any 'push factors' which drove a child/young person to go missing e.g. disputes with parent(s) or carer(s) and/or 'pull factors' which are those factors outside the home or care setting that drew a child/young person to go missing e.g. the influences of a negative peer group,
- Help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them going missing.,
- Agree Safety Plans with the child and their parents and carers regarding how to reduce the likelihood of future missing and how they can stay safe if they go missing again,
- Identify any additional support the child and / or family may require and agree how this will be provided.

If the child is not open to Children Services at the time of the missing incident Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support Team will notify Early Help Front Door (EHFD) who will identify who is most appropriate and best placed to complete the RHI. If the EHFD identify immediate safeguarding concerns and/or there is a current social care screening for the child they will contact the locality social care team and allocate the RHI if appropriate. If the child meets the F4Me Profile of Need the RHI will be allocated to the F4Me team, if the child's education provision is known the EHFD will contact them to discuss the RHI request and allocate to them if appropriate. The RHI will be allocated to the locality Early Help (EH) teams if none of these options are applicable/ appropriate.

Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support Team collate information from Police and Children Services records regarding a child's current and previous (where applicable) missing incidents and share these with the organisation completing the return interview to enable case workers and managers to have an understanding and awareness and to inform response to current missing. This will include:

- Police risk level of current missing incident,
- Total number of missing incidents including current incident,
- Date of first missing incident,
- Date of most recent missing incident,
- Number of days since previous missing incident,
- Total number of Return Home Interview offered previously,
- Total number of RHI completed,
- Total number of RHI not offered due to further missing,
- Total numbers of RHI not completed due to young person declining,
- If the child has been missing on three or more occasions in a 90-day period.

Parents and carers should be spoke to as part of the RHI. This is especially important if a child refuses to discuss the missing incident with professionals as they may be able to provide relevant information and agree safety plans to reduce the likelihood of future missing episodes.

There is an animation video which explains what to expect from a Return Home Interview. There are six different language versions of the video. The webpage that host the videos also contains signposting for young people, parents, carers and professionals, for further information, advice and guidance in regard to missing and related concerns.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/keeping><https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/keeping-children-safe/return-home-interviews&data=05|01|Michelle.Westby@lincolnshire.gov.uk|3c78a1bfc77743e4144108dbafb7c40f|b4e05b92f8ce46b59b2499ba5c11e5e9|0|0|638296976052162823|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6I1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0=|3000||&sdata=xEzFRoSkwMUzB9MJR9Xc6yat3art1wE2aRZT3jg6Aic=&reserved=0>[children-safe/return-home-interviews](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/keeping-children-safe/return-home-interviews)

If a child is reported missing and is under 10 years old it is not appropriate to offer them an RHI, the details of the missing incident will be shared by Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support Team with the relevant Children Services safeguarding team to review and respond to accordingly.

If the child lives in another Local Authority, the details of the missing incident will be shared by Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support with the relevant Local Authority Children Services team who will be responsible for ensuring that the RHI is completed.

If the child is a CIC placed in Lincolnshire by another Local Authority, the details of the missing incident will be shared by Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support with the relevant Local Authority Children Services team who will be responsible for completing a RHI and will request a copy of the completed RHI to be shared with Lincolnshire

Children Services and Lincolnshire Police so this can be referred to if the child goes missing again.

## Responding to escalating or on-going missing concerns

When any child goes missing they are at risk. These risks can increase when they have gone missing for an extended period, they have gone missing on a number of occasions or there are particular risks associated with their periods missing from home (e.g. criminal or sexual exploitation, substance use; self-harm, etc.).

If there are immediate safeguarding concerns regarding a child who has been missing, practitioners should follow their organisation Safeguarding Policies and Procedures to respond to and report these concerns.

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Strategy Discussion will be arranged by Children's Social Care Services with Police and Children's Health to decide whether a Section 47 Enquiry under the Children Act 1989 is required and if so, to develop a plan of action for the enquiry.

Children Social Care should complete a Social Care Assessment to assess under Section 17 if there are concerns that a child is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision of services from the Local Authority.

If the threshold for the Children Social Care involvement is not met and the child is not already subject to a Team around the Family, Child in Need, Child Protection Plan or Care Plan the practitioner completing the Return Home Interview should also complete a Child and Family Assessment if there are concerns and/ or unmet needs, in regard to a child who has been missing.

The views of the child gained in the Return Home Interview (RHI) should be included and taken into consideration in practitioner's assessments and decision making.

When the child already subject to a Team around the Family, Child in Need, Child Protection Plan or CIC Care Plan, concerns in relation to the child going missing must inform the multi-agency discussions and subsequent plans. This should be achieved through ensuring the following:

- Through the sharing of information, including that gained from Return Home Interviews, all agencies aware of when, where and why the child goes missing and any patterns/ triggers/ concerns,
- Update any assessments as relevant.
- The child's plan addresses or is working to address, the reasons why the child is going missing (their push/ pull factors) with clear actions for the child/ support network/ professionals to reduce the risk of further missing episodes,
- All involved agencies are aware of any safety plans that are in place with the child and their family to reduce the risk of the child going missing again, reduce the risk to the child whilst missing and improve the speed in which they are found,
- Multi-Agency meetings are brought forward where necessary, to enable prompt responses regarding a child's missing episodes,
- Police are part of multi-agency discussions/ decision making. Lincolnshire police can be contacted via the Police Safeguarding Hub, who can then direct to most relevant person - [pvp-psh@lincs.police.uk](mailto:pvp-psh@lincs.police.uk).

**Missing Episode Meeting (MEM)** - Repeatedly going missing should not be viewed as a normal pattern of behaviour and actions following earlier incidents should be reviewed and alternative strategies considered.

MEMs are required when a child has had three or more missing incidents in a 90-day period. Lincolnshire Children Services Child Exploitation and Missing Business Support will identify when a child has met this trigger and will assign the Missing Episodes Meeting workflow on Mosaic to the Children Services professionals that is responsible for ensuring the RHI's are completed.

Lincolnshire Police must be invited to the meeting by emailing the Police Safeguarding Hub, who can then direct to the most relevant person - [pvp-psh@lincs.police.uk](mailto:pvp-psh@lincs.police.uk).

When a child is placed outside of Lincolnshire and/ or is going missing in other force areas, representatives from the other area Police forces should be invited. Details of Local Police can be found on Out of Area Children in Care Notifications England | ADCS. The ACDS system can also be used to obtain details of the appropriate Local Authority.

The child's parents/ carers should be invited to attend the meeting and encouraged and supported to attend where possible. Meetings can and should still take place without the child and parents/ carers, if necessary. The child and their parents/ carers must always be informed of the meetings taking place, the reasons for their non-attendance recorded and actions agreed to ensure they updated following the meeting. It is recognised that in some circumstances the presence of parents and/ or the child in a MEM may cause difficulties for Police representatives to disclose information they may hold, particularly if it relates to criminal intelligence and to disclose it may put policing operations or other individuals at risk. In these circumstances the Police representative should contact the CS Lead Professional to notify them in advance of the meeting and discuss and agree if it is appropriate to hold a brief pre-meet between the CS Lead Professional and Police to discuss any issues that fall into this area

Involved Children Services workers, placement providers/carers and education should be invited to the meeting, as well as any other relevant professionals.

A Multi Agency Meeting to explore the frequent missing concerns, must take place within ten working days which starts from the end of the 72hour timescale for completing the Return Home Interview (RHI).

The meeting should be chaired by the Children's Services Lead Professional.

If the child is open to TAF/ CIN/ CP/CIC)and a TAF/CIN/CP/CIC meeting is already planned to take place within the ten working days timeframe or can be practicable can be arranged within this timescale. This can be completed as the MEM. If the TAF/CIN/CP/CIC meeting is not going to take place within the ten-working day timeframe and is not practicable to rearrange this meeting to take place within this timeframe, a Missing Episode Meeting must be arranged within the ten working days timeframe.

If the CYP is not open to CS, a Missing Episode Meeting must be arranged within the ten working days timeframe. The Missing Episodes Meeting and should be chaired by F4Me Senior Family Help Worker (SFHW) or above. (All young people who meet the 3 in 90 trigger and are not open to CS are allocated to F4Me to complete the RHI and arrange the Missing Episodes Meeting).