



CHILDREN WHO RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE STRATEGY

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SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Children's Society '*Still Running*' survey estimated that around 100,000 children under the age of 16 run away from home or care each year across the UK. We know that many of these children stay with friends or family members, but there are some who do not have or don't access these support systems, or who are forced to stay in environments that are harmful to their safety and well-being, and so end up engaging in activities that may put them at risk

There are strong links between children involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy and substance misuse. In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, forced marriage and those involved in gangs.

The majority of Children who go missing are not in care and go missing from their family home however, children who are looked after are much more likely to run away than those who live at home, and over 50% of young people in care have run away at some point. This is not to presume that the care system necessarily *causes* young people to run away. In many cases, a pattern of running away may have been established at an early age and may have been a factor in the young person's admission to care. It is also important to remember that the majority of looked-after children do not necessarily go missing.

Whilst each case needs to be considered on its merits, children who run away are at a heightened risk of being victims of crime, being sexually exploited, involved in substance misuse or of becoming involved in crime and disorder. Additionally, research shows that the level of risk to the individual child escalates with each episode they go missing and repeat episodes have been identified as a significant indicator of high risk to the child or young person.

Scope

These procedures relate to:

Children and young people “looked after” by Liverpool City Council, placed in either Local Authority or privately run Children’s Homes within the City of Liverpool.

Children and young people placed in foster care within Liverpool

Children and young people “looked after” by councils outside of Liverpool, placed with care providers within Liverpool.

Children and young people missing from their home address or other non-care related addresses, including schools or hospitals.

For the purposes of this protocol; a child is defined as anyone who is under 18 years of age. Care leavers can comprise young people from 16-24 years of age

A missing child will be defined as one where the missing episode has been reported to the Police and or recorded on the Police COMPACT database.

The Local Authority retains responsibility for children looked after and placed outside the Local Authority boundaries. In these cases the Local Authority will require the placement provider to comply with these protocols and protocols local to their area.

Other Local Authorities placing children within 'the Local Authority' boundary will be required to comply with these protocols.

Named Responsible Officers

The Assistant Chief Constable is the designated lead officer with primary strategic responsibility for children missing from care and home.

The Local Authority has designated the Assistant Director for Safeguarding as their lead officer with primary strategic responsibility for children missing from care and home.

The LSCB Business Manager will help to ensure that reporting arrangements are managed in accordance with this procedure.

Principles

The following principles should be adopted by all agencies involved with young people who may go missing:

Going missing is a dangerous activity and can have short and long term consequences. All individuals have a responsibility to report a child if they are missing. If a parent or carer does not report a child missing within a reasonable timescale when their whereabouts are unknown, this should be seen as displaying compromised parenting and should be considered as a potential safeguarding concern

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

The Children's Society through its research has identified the following risk factors that can precede a missing incident in a young person, otherwise known as 'push' factors:

Arguments and conflicts at home including being told/forced to leave
Poor family relationships including specific step-parent issues
Physical and emotional abuse including Domestic Abuse
Personal wellbeing – feeling depressed, needing someone to talk to
Problems with alcohol and/or drugs
Problems at school

'Push' factors also include placement instability for looked after children and children who are placed at some distance from their family and friends.

Significant 'Pull' factors are:

Children running to be with family particularly if contact arrangements are problematic.

Grooming for potential sexual exploitation – young people will run away or go missing following grooming by adults wishing to exploit them

Many children will exhibit normal adolescent behaviour in testing boundaries and it is not helpful to consider every incident of lateness or absence for all people as high risk. However, some will need to be treated as missing immediately due to their vulnerability. This protocol is based upon the principles of sound individual risk assessment, by carers and agency professionals and by Merseyside Police in classifying and responding to the incident.

Accurate and up-to-date information from the person's past and present is key to appropriate risk assessment and response to missing, and other, incidents. Information from previous assessments, immediate welfare checks or Full Return Interviews should be fed back to Police and carers so this picture of behaviour and experiences can be developed.

The Police will only become involved after the Reporting Individual has completed all reasonable checks to locate the individual. Missing children and young people remain the responsibility of the person / organisation which has legal Parental Responsibility (PR) for the child, even after they have been reported missing.

The primary function of the Police is to investigate the disappearance and attempt to locate the young person prior to any harm befalling them or the general public. Police response and associated actions will be based on a police risk assessment of the incident and knowledge of the individual(s) concerned, which will utilise information from partners' and those who know the person.

Children and Young People's views must continue to be taken into account when responding to incidents and any expectations put on young people through this policy should be discussed with them, as part of the care planning and review process and during other interventions for children not in care.

Definitions and Explanation of Terms

The current ACPO definition of missing is:

- **Missing** - “Anyone whose 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 another.”
- **Absent** – “A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.”

The ‘absent’ category should comprise cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk

Police classification of a child as missing or absent will be based on an on-going risk assessment. **All children under 13 years of age will automatically be classed as missing.** Note that ‘absent within this definition would not include those defined as ‘away from placement without authorisation’

A child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either ‘missing’ or ‘absent’ under police definitions; Guidance on how the police will apply these new definitions to children was issued by ACPO in April 2013

- **Away from Placement without Authorisation** – A looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been reported to the local authority or the police
- **Looked After** – A child is ‘looked after’ by a local authority if they are ‘in care’ by reason of a court order, or if they are provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by agreement with parents or with the child if they are aged over 16
- **Accommodated** – A child is accommodated if they are looked after by the Local Authority with the voluntary agreement of parents, or the child if they are over 16 years old
- **Responsible Local Authority** – The authority that is responsible for the young person’s care and care planning
- **Host Local Authority** – The authority in which the young person is placed when placed outside of the responsible authority’s area

- **Care Leaver** – an eligible, relevant or former relevant child as defined by the Children Act 1989
- **Young Runaway** – A child or young person under the age of 18 who has runaway from their home or from care, or feels they have been forced or enticed to leave, or whose whereabouts are unknown
- **Missing Person Coordinator** – Approval of the new ACPO definition is conditional on the role of missing person coordinator or someone performing this function in each police force. ACPO advise that ideally the role has close links with arrangements to deal with Child Sexual Exploitation
- **Absconded** – When a child or young person has gone missing who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, ASBOs) or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings
- **Child Abduction** - Where a child has been abducted or forcibly removed from their place of residence, this is a 'crime in action' and should be reported to the Police immediately.
- **Forced Marriage** - Some young people run away because they are at risk of abuse. Forced marriage in particular can lead to young women running away from home Further guidance on this can be found in the LSCB procedures manual:
http://liverpoolscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fem_gen_mut.html
 and also at <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>
- **Child Sexual Exploitation** - Boys and girls may run away or go missing from home or care following grooming by adults who are seeking to exploit them sexually. Children can also be exploited for the purposes of criminal activity Further guidance can be found at:
http://www.liverpoolscb.org/prof_cse.html
- **Child Trafficking** -. Some missing children subsequently become trafficked, often for the purposes of sexual exploitation. They may be trafficked across both small and large geographical areas. Further guidance can be found at:
http://liverpoolscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_trafficked.html

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children and young people miss education either because they do not have a school place, or they are having some other difficulties in attending school, this makes them vulnerable and more likely to be at risk of neglect or abuse.

Children who are missing from education are also at an increased risk of sexual exploitation and all agencies should be alert to the relevant risk factors and risk indicators. If a child is thought to be at risk of exploitation, the child sexual exploitation procedures must be followed.

http://www.liverpoolscb.org/prof_cse.html

Certain groups of children and young people are more likely to miss education, they include:

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- Young runaways
- Children with long-term medical or emotional problems
- Looked After children
- Children with a gypsy/traveller background
- Young carers
- Children with transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school
- Migrant children, whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants
- Trafficked children

For detailed guidance on Children Missing Education see "Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education (DCSF 2009).

The Local Authority must have a Children Missing Education (CME) Officer and a system for recording and monitoring those children who fall into this category. The CME Officer works with colleagues in order to secure and maintain educational provision.

For children and young people without a school place contact:

The school admissions team
Telephone: 0151 233 3006

Non-school Attendance:

There is a duty on the Local Authority to identify and support children and young people with attendance difficulties. Each school has the support of the Children Missing Education Team who should be contacted via the school for assistance on attendance issues.

SECTION 2 – CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME

Principles

A co-ordinated response is equally required for children who are missing from home. This may include sharing information about children missing from education, presenting at accident and emergency or are known to the Youth Service

Children who are going missing from home are at an increased risk of sexual exploitation and all agencies should be alert to the relevant risk factors and risk indicators. If a child is thought to be at risk of exploitation, child sexual exploitation procedures must be followed
http://www.liverpoolscb.org/prof_cse.html

Anyone who 'takes or detains' a child under 16 years of age without lawful authority may be prosecuted under section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984. Children under age 18 and on a Care Order are also covered by this Act.

Children and young people who go missing and are under the age of 16 are not considered as being able to live independently away from home. Young people over the age of 16 who are living away from home can be vulnerable and consideration should be given to a child's physical and emotional needs and the potential risk of harm in making a professional judgement about their individual circumstances.

There is an expectation that parents or guardians will report their child as missing. Failure to do so should be considered as a potential child protection issue and if appropriate the LSCB procedures followed

Reporting a Child as Missing

In the first instance parents/carers are expected to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing young person, providing that it is safe to do so, they should:

- Search their bedroom and house including any outbuildings and vehicles;
- Contact known friends and relatives where the child or young person might be;
- Visit locations where the child is known to frequent if it is safe to do so.

When all reasonable steps have been *exhausted*, parents and anyone who has care of a child or young person should inform the police and if appropriate, children's services through Careline 0151 233 3700

To inform the police about a young person missing from home **Dial 101**. In **exceptional circumstances if a very vulnerable child goes missing and an immediate, urgent response is needed dial 999**, explain the **circumstances of the child's disappearance and the reasons for your concern**. The police will need to know:

- The child's name
- The child's date of birth
- Where, when and with whom the child went missing
- What the child was wearing
- A description of the child
- Agree to provide a recent photograph
- Their medical history
- The time and location they were last seen
- Circumstances of going missing
- Details of any friends or associates

Officers will conduct a risk assessment forming the basis for resulting proportionate actions. They will make ongoing enquiries, sharing information with parents and other agencies as appropriate

The Police risk assessment will be informed by:

- Individual circumstances, including family circumstances in which the child has gone missing;
- Their motivation for running;
- Their possible destination; and
- Their recent patterns of absences (if any);
- If the parent/s appear unable, or unwilling, to work to support and meet the needs of children.

Upon receipt of information concerning a child missing or absent from home Careline staff will assess whether a referral as a child in need (section 17) or a child in need of protection (section 47) is required.

Referral to Children's Social Care

Where the Police or other agencies assess that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm an onward referral to Careline must be made immediately on 0151 233 3700

Return of the Child

Family or friends locating a child missing from home should return them to their home address unless they have concerns around the safety of the child in which case the Police should be informed.

Where a risk is present, a police officer may accompany the family or the police may be requested to return the child to the place of residence only if it is safe to do so.

Parents must inform the police when a child returns of their own accord.

The police will conduct an interview known as a 'safe and well check' to establish the young person's wellbeing and safety, and to establish whether they were the victim of abuse or a crime whilst missing. If information obtained during the safe and well check give cause for further concern, the police will complete a VPRF1 form and send the information to Careline.

Where a referral to Careline has resulted in a child's case being processed as requiring further investigation, the receiving Social Worker should conduct a return interview according to the format provided at **Appendix 4**

The return interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child being located or returning from the missing episode and this is particularly important if they have been missing before and/or there are risk indicators suggesting potential child sexual exploitation, involvement in crime or if they have been hurt or harmed.

The completed Return Interview Pro Forma should be saved to the child's record and a copy sent to (missingchildren@Liverpool.gov.uk)

An Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) may will be conducted at the same time as the return interview (if an EHAT does not already exist) with the correct family consents having been acquired,

A Lead Professional will be identified by the person completing the return interview if the EHAT identifies necessary further action. The young person should subsequently receive appropriate support as identified by the EHAT plan.

Should the EHAT identify any safeguarding issues the case will be referred to the Careline. who must follow LSCB inter-agency safeguarding children procedures should any safeguarding or child protection concerns become apparent.

SECTION 3 - CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE

Pre-Placement

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

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

Is the home able to meet the needs of the young person?
Is the placement a good match in terms of other young people in the placement?
Are there external factors in the area of the placement which need to be taken into account when considering the placement?

When placing outside the placing (home) Authority, it is even more critical to properly assess the above issues. If there is a need to discuss specific risks or issues, the placing Authority should speak to the Safeguarding Unit in the Authority in which the child will be living. When a placement is confirmed, the Placing Authority with Parental Responsibility **must always** follow the **Formal Notification Process** as detailed in 'Working Together' to inform the new Authority that a 'Looked After' Child is being placed in their area

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

- Trigger points for absence or missing episodes,

- Risks to themselves, the public and/or the carer before, during or after a missing episode including when being picked up.
- What steps can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the child going missing and coming to any harm or harming others.
- Friends and family details and contact numbers as well as addresses commonly found at

Expectations of the young person: for example, curfews and, when and how to make contact, and the consequences of lateness etc

Expectations of the care provider: for example at which point the Police will be notified, what processes will follow an incident, who will collect a child if they are missing, details of who conducts immediate assessments on their return and arrangements for full return interviews.

Agreements around rules for staying overnight at friend's houses or going on trips. This is frequently cited as a major issue by young people who wish to behave like their peers who are not looked after. Local Authority Circular (2004) 4, suggests that *"decisions on overnight stays should normally be delegated to foster carers and residential care staff. Arrangements for such decisions should be written into the Placement Plan or equivalent."* There is no statutory duty for DBS checks to be carried out on adults in a private household where a child/young person may stay overnight and so restrictions should only be placed on looked after Children if there are exceptional circumstances.

Care Providers together with Local Authorities and all other relevant agencies should operate a system of intervention strategies designed to reduce the possibility of a child or young person going missing again, as stated under Standard 5 of the Children's Homes: National Minimum Standards 2011. These must relate to the individual young person and take into account their experiences and needs.

A 'Missing from Care Risk Assessment and Action Plan' template can be found at **Appendix 1**

If there are specific concerns or risks to young people the consideration by placing social workers should be given to liaison with local community policing, to the extent of sharing potential addresses and locations where children might run to and possibly engaging the police in speaking to the young person about potential dangers in the local area.

Children who are going missing from care are at an increased risk of sexual exploitation and all agencies should be alert to the relevant risk factors and risk indicators. If a child is thought to be at risk of exploitation, child sexual exploitation procedures must be followed
http://www.liverpoolscb.org/prof_cse.html

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

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

A police officer will attend all reports of missing children or young people and will require the carer to provide information to assist the investigation of the missing child or young person, specifically:

- Known acquaintances and addresses frequented
- Any previous history of being missing and circumstances where found
- Name and addresses of the child or young person's GP and dentist
- details of when the child or young person was last seen and with whom.
- A recent photograph
- Mobile phone number of child or young person, email and bank account details (to help with tracking)

The act of reporting a child or young person missing by staff at the care establishment or foster home does not absolve the carers from their 'duty of care' to the individual and of a continued duty to do what a 'reasonable parent' would do in the circumstances.

Responsibilities of the Reporting Individual

Categories of 'absence' have been agreed between Merseyside Police and the Local Authority. If a child is missing / absent from care, the Local Authority or independent care provider will decide which of the two categories the absence fits based on their assessment after considering the risks below. This basic assessment should be carried out before contacting the Police and all information shared with them. Police will then confirm the category of the absence.

- Missing (Some risks identified)
- Absent (No risks identified)

It is not helpful to consider every momentary absence as warranting a formal report to the Police.

In deciding whether the person is missing or absent, all staff must consider the circumstances of the child and their absence. This will include consideration of:

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

Children who are absent from their placement are considerable concern to carers and there is a need to locate them and ensure that they are safe. These children can be thought of as being on a continuum, with there being little cause for concern at one end, and with significant cause for concern at the other.

Children who are a few minutes late home from school would not normally give rise to concerns; they may have missed the bus, or they may be exhibiting normal adolescent testing out, to establish the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, or to show their disagreement with aspects of their placement. **It is not helpful to consider every momentary absence as warranting a formal report to Police.**

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

The fact that the child may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk. In fact, children who repeatedly go

missing are often being enticed away from their placement by activities that they see as exciting or by predatory influences. Furthermore, short absences may be as risky as lengthy ones. The categories and consequent actions are outlined below:

Away from Placement without Authorisation

Clearly some children absent themselves for a short period and then return, with their whereabouts known to the carer. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose to test boundaries, or accidentally. Examples of situations where Away from Placement without Authorisation may apply are below;

- Failing to return on time
- Staying at a known location with a friend or family where there are no known risks

If the carer assesses that the child is at risk due to any factor/s known to them then the child should be reported missing without delay and the believed risk communicated to the Police.

If the assessment of the carer is that there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety but they are away from care without permission it is still important that staff/carers record these incidences in the child's record and report these absences to the Police. It is not helpful to consider every momentary absence as warranting a formal report to Police. In addition to this staff/carers should always start a dated/timed record of their contacts, risk assessment and decisions throughout the episode from the point that they are aware of the child's absence, in case the level of risk changes and decisions are auditable.

A period of six hours should normally be regarded as the absolute maximum for any child whose whereabouts are not known and who cannot be contacted, to remain categorised as absent, rather than being formally reported as missing; in many cases a shorter period will be appropriate. It will not be appropriate for any child whose whereabouts are not known and who cannot be contacted, to remain out overnight, without being formally reported as missing.

If the child's whereabouts are known or suspected, the Local Authority staff will decide whether to allow the child to remain at that location, albeit temporarily, or to arrange for their return. If the decision is to arrange their return and there is reason to believe that there may be public order difficulties, the Police will assist. Police assistance in these circumstances does not mean that the child is categorised as missing. Each such occurrence needs to be evaluated based upon the factors mentioned above and upon other information gleaned from the child, friends, family and associates.

A clear assessment needs to be made by the carer in each individual case as to the length of time that elapses and the risk factors involved before they consider if a child who is reported absent should be categorised as missing.

A reported absence must be kept under regular review by the appropriate carer.

It is important to consider whether the circumstances of the disappearance would now render the child at risk of harm, for example: The child requires medication at a set time or, weather conditions have severely deteriorated.

Any further information that comes to light as part of the carer's assessment and impacts on the level of risk to the young person, should be communicated to the Police immediately.

Before contacting Police

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

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

If the child is located through such enquiries, they should not be reported as missing to the police unless there are significant safety issues with the child being at the location. If safety issues are identified, information should be passed to Police along with an indication of risk factors that have been identified. A decision regarding the necessity for a safe and well check to the young person will be determined.

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

Carers must also inform without delay:

- The parents/those who have parental responsibility (unless indicated otherwise on the care plan).
- The key social worker or appropriate team manager.
- Careline if out of hours, and the social worker and appropriate team manager at the start of the next working day.

Going Missing on an External Activity

After careful consideration of the new ACPO definitions, if a child or young person goes 'missing' whilst on an external activity, the carer or responsible staff member will be required to:

- Arrange an initial search of the area the child or young person was last seen.
- Notify the local Police immediately. This should be the Police Force responsible for the area where the child or young person was last seen. This report should NOT be delayed until the carers have returned to their home area
- Notify the child or young person's social worker or team manager both locally and within the placing authority.
- Notify the senior manager at home (if applicable)
- Notify the emergency out of hours duty team (if applicable)

SECTION FOUR – POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Initial Report and Risk Assessment

An initial risk assessment is made by the call taker and used to determine *the classification of the incident and the appropriate level of response*.

At the point of initial report, it will be necessary for the call taker in Merseyside Police to determine whether the person is missing or absent and all reports of absent or missing will be subject to an initial and ongoing risk assessment.

A secondary risk assessment is conducted as a result of an officer being deployed to take a **missing** person report. Using all the information available,

the officer will determine the level of risk of danger to the missing person, which in turn informs the extent and urgency of the enquiries to be made.

Questions to assist in the assessment of risk are available as part of the 2010 Guidance and on the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA).

The following set of questions, informed by the National Decision Making Model (NDMM) should be used to define the status of the missing episode.

- What is the specific concern in this instance?
- What has been done so far to trace this individual?
- Is this significantly out of character?
- Are there any specific medical needs?
- Are they likely to be subjected to crime?
- Are they likely to be the victim of abuse?
- Are they currently at risk of Sexual Exploitation?
- Are they likely to attempt suicide?
- Do they pose a danger to other people?
- Is there any other information relevant to their absence?

All reports of 'absence; in relation to children or young people will be subject to a risk assessment by the Police. This is a subjective assessment and determines the appropriate level of investigation. It is an ongoing process and will be reviewed throughout.

Where a report is categorised as **Absent**, a record will be created and the case will be continually reviewed every 2-6 hours by the Police Critical Incident Manager (CIM) and escalated to **Missing** if necessary.

In relation to **Missing** reports, Police will decide the risk level to be assigned to the case, this will either be high or medium:

High Risk

The risk posed is immediate and there are grounds for believing that the child or young person 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 the public is in danger.

Medium Risk

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

In the event of any dispute arising over the level or risk posed to any individual child, the matter should be referred expeditiously to the Critical

Incident Manager via the Operational Communication Department by dialling 101.

In accordance with National Protocol the police will inform The National Missing Person Bureau of any High Risk cases immediately but in any case within 24 hours.

The Compact system will send an automatic notification after 72 hours has elapsed for all Medium Risk Cases.

Children who have gone missing may come to the attention of the Police in a variety of circumstances. Where the Police locate a child who they believe may be missing, although not officially reported, assessment and enquiries based on the child's account of the circumstances will be made. These should include checks of Police systems i.e. PNC/COMPACT/Storm as well as enquiries at the home address.

In the event that a missing child has not been reported by parents/carers this should trigger further enquiries and assessment by the Police and other relevant agencies in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Planning for Return

When a child's absence is reported as 'missing' the child's social worker, residential unit or foster carer placing authority and placement provider (and if possible and where appropriate in consultation with the parents and police) should commence planning for when the child is located. Such plans should include:

- Whether the child will return to the same placement
- How and by whom they will be conveyed there
- Do the police wish to interview the child before they return to their placement? This would only occur if the young person was an offender or a victim of crime
- Create a sensitive environment for the child's return;
- Identify and arrange for an appropriate professional person, independent of the child's placement, to talk to them prior to their return to the placement;

Police will visit the child to conduct a 'Safe and Well check'. This should not be confused with the role of the Independent Return interview. This is especially relevant to cases concerned with Child Abduction and Child Trafficking.

Whoever finds a young person has a responsibility to try and find out why the young person ran away. This may be the only opportunity a young person has to

report abuse, bullying or mistreatment in a care setting. In the event of significant concern the young person should be reported under Section 47 Child protection procedures to Careline on 0151 233 3700.

Longer Absences

When a child has been absent for a period of 48 hours the child's social worker should inform the relevant strategic lead for their service via the usual line management route. If there is significant concern the strategic lead should be alerted immediately.

Throughout the enquiry, carers and the police will continually review the case. After the young person has been missing for 3 days, **or earlier, if deemed appropriate**, the police and child's social worker will hold an urgent case review meeting. It will involve police officers, carers, the child's social worker, and any other care professional involved in the care of the child.

The meeting will review: What action has been taken so far by the police and care professionals;

What action needs to be taken by the police and care professionals;

Whether the young person should return to that placement when located;

Any other relevant information;

Date of further meeting to be agreed by all parties should the missing episode continue;

Decide if procedures should be invoked under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Minutes of the case review should be provided to the the child's Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who chairs their 'looked after' reviews and the Assistant Director Safeguarding upon request but specifically in respect of high risk cases.

All police missing person's files will remain live until the person is traced or until a senior police officer, in consultation with the respective Liverpool City Council Children's operational lead, is satisfied that all lines of enquiry have been exhausted. They will then forward the file to their appropriate line managers who will take the final decision to file or otherwise. The Assistant Director Safeguarding must be informed of all such cases.

Where the decision to file has been made, Merseyside Police 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. Further such reviews will take place at least every 5 days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate.

SECTION 5 – RETURN OF THE YOUNG PERSON

If the whereabouts are known or suspected, it is the responsibility of the local authority or independent provider to arrange for a young persons return.

However, there will be exceptional circumstances when, in the interests of the safe return of the young person, the police may agree to requests from the local authority or independent provider to assist in recovering the young person. The police will provide assistance in cases where they may be a perceived risk. However, the police will not agree to requests purely to provide escorts for young runaways, which would involve officers leaving their normal areas of patrol.

It is the responsibility of the carer to contact the police by telephone and to confirm that the missing child has returned to the home. The police will accept confirmation from care professionals; however, they may still conduct a safe and well check. This will lead to the police closing the missing person investigation and the case being cancelled on the police national computer.

Child Protection Concerns

If it is apparent, upon the return of a young person, that they have been the victim of a crime whilst absent, or that they may be in danger or at risk from any person arising out of circumstances that have occurred whilst they were absent, then the police must be called and asked to attend without delay. This is vital for the protection of the child and for the speedy recovery of evidence. A parallel referral is also required under LSCB section 47 procedures.
http://liverpoolscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sec_47_core.html

Where runaways from one local authority present themselves in another local authority it is important that the host Authority works with the responsible Local Authority to ensure they get access to the help and support services they need.

Responsibility for making child protection enquiries rests with the Host Authority, it may negotiate with the Responsible Local Authority to continue with these enquiries (section 47, Children Act 1989).

In such circumstances, the missing persons clothing, mobile phone and trace evidence from their body, fingernails or hair may be crucial. In cases of sexual abuse the child should be discouraged from washing and immediate advice sought from the police. If carers become aware of the location of the scene of

any crime committed against the young person, or of the location of any crucial evidence (i.e. a used condom) they must notify the police without delay. This will enable the police to take steps to secure and preserve evidence.

In cases where there is suspicion of sexual abuse the police have access to specially trained officers, doctors and facilities designed to care for the victim and obtain evidence.

Additionally, in matters of child sexual exploitation, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, a referral must be made to Careline in accordance with Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board's Inter-agency Policies and Procedures.

http://liverpoolscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_referrals.html

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 should also be a priority. The safety and welfare of the young person should also be ensured especially if it seems that they have run away because of bullying or harassment.

Parents, police, social workers and all others informed of the absence should be advised of the young person's return without delay. They should be informed of any information gathered on their return.

Consideration should be given to whether a strategy meeting (Children Act 1989) 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. A strategy discussion will enable formal consideration to be given to the need to invoke child protection enquiries.

Voluntary Return

The police should be informed immediately following the return of a young person who has been reported missing or absent. The police will make a return phone call to a residential home/foster home to ensure that the notification of return is genuine. The police may choose to visit the children's home to verify a young person's return; this will be dependant on individual circumstances. If verification of a return to a foster home can be provided by a

social worker, verification by the police can be delayed until a mutually agreed time.

Independent Return Interview

This is a more in-depth interview and is best carried out by an appropriately trained practitioner independent of providing care to the young person. In Liverpool this would usually be the case holding social worker who is then able to follow-up any actions that emerge and will inform future care planning and development of an individual risk management plan. In the cases of young people who are not in the care of the Local Authority, the Family Support Service will be asked to complete the return interview.

Many young people need to build up trust with somebody before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they decided to run away so it is good practice to identify with the young person if they wish for someone else to conduct the return interview, preferably before any incident occurs. This could be a teacher, family member or other agency professional. Every effort should be made to have that person conduct the interview, even if it has to wait longer than usual and if this is agreed by the young person.

The purpose of the return interview is to:

- Identify factors which led to the missing episode.
- Prevent further missing episodes.
- Inform any subsequent missing person investigation
- Share intelligence and information

Particular attention should be paid if a child is suspected of being involved in or at risk of trafficking or exploitation as they may be fearful of giving information.

Consent

Prior to any interview conducted with a young person the interviewer should inform the young person who this information will be shared with, when and why and gain consent before sharing. If they are unwilling to speak to anyone at all for fear of confidentiality issues arrangement should be made for the child to speak to an independent advocate or suitable voluntary agency.

It is crucial that any information gained through this interview, whether conducted by a local authority worker, Independent Service, teacher or wider family member, is fed back to Police and to any intervention meetings so that a picture is built up and any issues can be dealt with. This should only be done if consent is given or if the information is critical to safeguard the person from harm. For this purpose, the return interview record has been developed and can be found in the Appendices.

Scaled Intervention

The role of care planning

Every looked-after child must have a care plan based on a comprehensive assessment of their needs that takes into account their wishes, feelings and aspirations for the future. All care plans must be kept under review. The review meeting must be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The statutory review should consider the adequacy of the Care Plan in addressing why a child has gone missing and in ensuring adequate strategies are in place to address future missing episodes. The review should consider all push/pull factors in relation to missing episodes (eg sexual exploitation, running to spend contact time with family).

Alongside the care plan, a Placement Information Record should be completed between the responsible LA and the provider of the child's placement. The expectations as to how they will meet the child's needs should be sent out in the PIR.

Merseyside Police, Liverpool Children's Services, Health partners, and other relevant partners will operate an escalating system of interventions to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing

Intervention meetings should take place in the event of repeat episodes of children going MISSING from care. For these meetings to work, and thereby improve our collective responses, appropriate attendance and clarity of purpose are essential. The intervention meetings should be held within five working days. The meetings should be chaired by a social worker and recorded and the increased levels of concern reflected in the seniority of those attending as detailed in paragraphs 91, 94 and 95 of this document. For children and young people who are placed in Liverpool by other local authorities, these meetings should be convened and attended by the placing social worker.

After three episodes within a 90-day period: This has been labelled as 'three strikes and you are in.' The young person and advocate (except in exceptional circumstances), their parent or those with parental responsibility, the child's social worker (chair), residential worker/foster carer/fostering social worker (as appropriate), person who conducted return interview if different to above, should all meet and agree a plan of action.

In the event that at the Independent Return Interview certain issues become evident; it would be appropriate to invite relevant professionals to this meeting to benefit from their specialist knowledge. **It should be noted that it is not necessary to wait for 90 days to elapse; this meeting should be initiated as soon as three missing episodes have been reported.**

This meeting should try to identify any 'push' or 'pull' factor in the case and any other voluntary or statutory agency, which has an interest, or may take an interest, in the missing person's welfare and circumstances. In the case of 'pull' factors it may be necessary to target those in the community who harbour the missing person or exploit them with regard to crime, sex or drugs.

It is appropriate at this point to assess the risk should the young person go missing again within a 90 day period. It may be appropriate to keep a photograph of the young person to be used to help locate them should any further instances occur. The photograph should be stored in a secure location.

After five episodes within a 90-day period a meeting should be convened to include: The relevant Team Leader(chair), Young person and advocate (except in exceptional circumstances), parent or those with parental responsibility, team manager from children's services, relevant police officer, residential unit manager/assistant or fostering team manager (as appropriate), social worker, representatives from health and/or education (as appropriate) person who conducted return interview if different to above. This level of intervention meeting is the crucial stage in avoiding serious escalation and must, therefore, be given high priority by all concerned.

After nine episodes within a 90-day period: A Chair from the Safeguarding Unit, Young person and advocate (except in exceptional circumstances), parent or those with parental responsibility, Children's team manager or service manager, fostering team manager, police missing person coordinator, residential manager (as appropriate), social worker, representatives from health and/or education (as appropriate) person who conducted return interview if different to above. The Independent Reviewing Officer should be invited, although capacity may prevent this. They should in all circumstances be provided with minutes of the meeting.

It should be noted, however, that the **number of incidents** is not the only reason to launch an intervention or to escalate the level of intervention. The following are both examples of other reasons to launch or escalate interventions:

Any case where the risks involved in even a single future-missing episode is very high.

Cases where it has been identified that immediate action is necessary to ensure the well being of the person.

A quick succession of missing episodes eradicating the need for 90 days to elapse.

Meetings at this level should be rare provided that this protocol has been followed with regard to earlier intervention meetings and return interviews. In addition to seeking to reduce future missing episodes and reduce any

apparent risks to the young person/child, this meeting should also quality assures compliance with the protocols and the efficacy of earlier intervention meetings and return interviews.

Out of City Placements

Children 'looked after' by Liverpool but placed out of the local area should be subject to equal rigour of care planning as those placed within Liverpool City Councils borders. They should be subject to escalation meetings, reporting requirements and return interviews as specified in these procedures.

The Placement Information Record (PIR) and Care Plan should clearly detail a young person's needs in relation to missing episodes. Critically, the PIR should detail the expectation that all missing episodes are reported by the placement provider to the case-holding social worker.

Standards for return interviews and escalation meetings should be maintained for children placed outside the local authority's borders.

In order to maintain a full overview of children missing from care, the allocated IRO is required to report the number of missing episodes and the adequacy of responses to these episodes following each statutory review of a looked after child placed outside of Liverpool. This will inform strategic planning and reporting. The IRO should inform the relevant team leader of any escalation meetings/return interviews for children placed out of county have not been managed in accordance with these procedures.

Other Local Authority Placement

All Independent Providers operating residential provision within the local authority area will be provided with a copy of these procedures. They will further be informed of the training which supports these procedures, as provided by the LSCB. Such providers have a responsibility to comply with these procedures and also to comply with any other processes specified in the placing authorities missing from home and care procedures.

Other Local Authorities placing children within Liverpool are required to inform Liverpool LA of their placement. Upon receipt of this notification, a record of the child and their placement will be recorded within the Electronic Children's Social Care Record.

All missing episodes reported to the police are recorded and shared with Liverpool Children's Services for strategic monitoring and planning purposes.

Upon receipt of a missing notification regarding a child placed in Liverpool by another LA, a letter will be sent to the placing local authority advising them of the missing episode.

Where a child placed in Liverpool by another LA is identified to be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, child protection procedures will be enacted.

Where a child placed in Liverpool by another LA has gone missing 9 times in a 90 day period the Assistant Director Safeguarding in the placing LA will be informed in writing and asked to ensure that all appropriate measures are in place for the future care and safety of that child. Formal written details will be required so that the child's electronic social care record can be updated. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the police missing person coordinator. Where missing episodes continue to escalate despite the above noted intervention, the AD, Specialist Safeguarding will consider the necessary further actions.

SECTION 5 – STRATEGIC ARRANGEMENTS

Governance Arrangements

This procedure would need to be approved by the LSCB Policy and Procedure Sub Group

The LSCB Performance Management Sub Group will need to receive quarterly reports regarding compliance with this procedure, including statistical analysis of local needs arising and any identified gaps in service delivery.

Exception reports, including any issues pertaining to joint commissioning, will be reported to the LSCB.

The Chair of the LSCB will include details regarding the quarterly analysis of this procedure in reports to the

Strategic Review

The Performance Management Sub Group will consider the quarterly reports received and provide bi-annual reports to the LSCB and Corporate Parenting Panel.

Training and Induction

The contents of this strategy should be shared with all key members of staff within each agency. The protocol should be part of the induction of residential staff, foster carers, field social workers, Careline and foster carer support staff. It should be part of the induction of the following staff within the police force; supervisors within force control and Local Policing Units commanders.

Inter-Agency Training to support effective implementation of this procedure will be provided by LSCB.

Legislation and Context

In July 2009 the DCSF published Section 7 guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care to assist local authorities in meeting the requirements of National Indicator 71.

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (March 2011) strengthens the role of the Independent Reviewing officer (IRO) and extends the role of the Independent Visitor. Both have key roles in relation to children who go missing from care.

In December 2011 the Home office produced 'Missing Children and Adults – A Cross Government Strategy' with the aim of reducing the number of people who go missing, reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing and providing missing people and their families with support and guidance

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) is working to integrate new services for missing children in its operating model and, through a partnership with the charity 'Missing People', provides 24 hour, free and confidential, support and advice to missing children and adults and their families. The helpline also enables those who are missing to re-connect with their families or to gain the assistance of the police.

On 18 June 2012 the All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers published their 'Report from the Joint Inquiry into Children who Go Missing from Care'. The report emphasises the vulnerability of children who go missing from care to sexual exploitation.

The Ofsted report 'Missing Children' produced in February 2013 suggested that some local authorities were inconsistent in applying and meeting the requirements of the existing statutory guidance

The ACPO Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013 introduced the updated definition of 'missing' and 'absent'

Between June and September of 2013 the DfE carried out a consultation on updated Section 7 guidance: 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care'

86. Statutory guidance issued by the DfE January 2014 Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care'

APPENDICES

Information for Merseyside Police	Appendix 1
CSE Gathering Intelligence Form CSE1	Appendix 2
Return Interview Form	Appendix 3
Missing Strategy Meeting Proforma	Appendix 4

APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION FOR MERSEYSIDE POLICE

- 1) Full name
- 2) Full description of individual
- 3) Who are the individual's known associates?
- 4) Has the individual been reported missing/ absent before?
- 5) Has the person made any preparations for being missing/absent?
- 6) Is their behaviour out of character?
- 7) Do they have access to a mobile?
- 8) Do they use social network sites?
- 9) Do they have access to a vehicle?
- 10) Do they have cash/access to cash?

APPENDIX 2 – CSE INFORMATION GATHERING FORM

CSE 1

REFERRERS DETAILS			
Name		Date of referral.....	
Agency.....		Job Title.....	
Email address.....		Telephone No.....	
YOUNG PERSONS DETAILS			
Forename(s).....		(M/F)	
Surname / family name(s).....		D.O.B.....	
Ethnicity.....		Religion.....	
		Nationality.....	
Home address.....		Postcode.....	
Home tel no.		Mob / other contact no.....	
GP name.....		Surgery.....	
School / nursery.....			
Relationship to suspect.....			
Medical examination		Y/N	
LOOKED AFTER HISTORY			
<input type="checkbox"/> Lives with family, no experience of care		<input type="checkbox"/> Lives with extended family, previous experience of care	
<input type="checkbox"/> Care Leaver	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster family	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Secure Accommodation
<input type="checkbox"/> Section 20 - Voluntary	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 31 - Care Order	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 38 -Interim Care Order	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN'S DETAILS			Parental Responsibility? Yes / No
Forename(s).....		(M/F)	
Surname / family name(s).....		D.O.B.....	
Ethnicity.....		Religion.....	
		Nationality.....	
Home address.....		Postcode.....	
Home tel no.		Mob / other contact no.....	
Occupation.....			

PARENT/CARER/GUARDIAN'S DETAILS	Parental Responsibility? Yes / No
Forename(s)..... (M/F)	
Surname / family name(s)..... D.O.B.....	
Ethnicity..... Religion..... Nationality.....	
Home address.....Postcode.....	
Home tel no. Mob / other contact no.....	
Occupation.....	
SIBLINGS / ADDITIONAL VICTIMS / OTHER PERSONS WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY	
Relationship to young person	
Forename(s)..... (M/F)	
Surname / family name(s)..... D.O.B.....	
Home address.....Postcode.....	
Home tel no. Mob / other contact no.....	
Relationship to young person	
Forename(s)..... (M/F)	
Surname / family name(s)..... D.O.B.....	
Home address.....Postcode.....	
Home tel no. Mob / other contact no.....	
SUSPECTED PERPETRATOR DETAILS	
Forename(s)..... (M/F)	
Surname / family name(s)..... D.O.B.....	
Home address.....Postcode.....	
Home tel no. Mob / other contact no.....	
Has suspect previously breached a court order or police bail? Y / N If Y provide details below	

Child suspects only (under 18 years)

School / occupation.....

Surname / family name(s).....Forename.....

Details of person holding parental responsibility: -

Home address.....Postcode.....

Home tel no. Mob / other contact no.....

CIRCUMSTANCES OF INCIDENT / ANY OTHER INFO

ASSOCIATES OF CHILD / RELEVANT PARTIES
ASSOCIATES OF SUSPECTED PERPETRATOR / RELEVANT PARTIES
IF MISSING WHO WERE THEY FOUND WITH AND WHERE?
LOCATIONS OF CONCERN WHERE YOU BELIEVE CSE IS AN ISSUE
VEHICLES THAT COULD BE LINKED TO CSE AND TO THE CHILD /YOUNG PERSON
TELEPHONE NUMBERS LINKED TO THE CHILD / YOUNG PERSON / SUSPECTED PERPETRATOR

**PLEASE SEND THIS FORM VIA SOCIAL CARE FRONT DOOR TO THE
MACSE (Multi Agency CSE) MEETING**

It is the responsibility of the referring agency to determine whether the referred child's parents are informed that their child will be discussed at the MACSE meeting. Clearly best practise would always be to inform / consult with parents regarding their children, but this may be detrimental in some cases. It may not always be in the child's best interests to inform parents and each case should be considered on it's own merits.

APPENDIX 3 – RETURN INTERVIEW FORM AND GUIDANCE



Independent Return Interview Form

Guidance for staff completing the interview

It is a statutory requirement that all young people who have an episode where they are reported as missing should have an independent interview before or on their return to their placement. The interview should be conducted by someone who isn't their carer or parent. If the young person is in residential care, it should also be conducted by someone who is independent of the home.

The following are some guidelines to adhere to when conducting the interview:

- The young person should be informed that they will be expected to talk to someone about their absence and who this person will be
- The interview should be conducted within **72 hours of their return.**
- Identify and deal with any harm the young person may have come to.
- Issues relating to health should be attended to immediately.
- Encourage the young person to talk about the reasons **why** they ran away.
- Discuss ways to help it not happening again.
- For Looked After Children, it is the responsibility of the social worker to ensure the interview has taken place.
- For young people in the community it is the responsibility of the Liverpool Family Support Service / Young Runaways to ensure the interview has taken place

The interview should provide information to the child to prevent further period of going missing. There should be questions that pertain to the personal situation of the child/young person.

Name of YP	
D.O.B	
Home address:	
Ethnicity:	
Location at which Interview took place:	
Name of person completing interview:	
Job Role:	
Relating to missing incident date:	

For use with young person:

Why did you go missing? Did anything happen that made you want to leave?

Did anyone hurt or threaten to harm you whilst you were missing? Are you afraid of anyone?

What happened while you were gone? Where did you go? Who did you meet? Who brought you home?

What might have made you safer while you were gone?

What can be done to support you now? Do you need to talk or see someone?

What are the chances you'll go missing again? Is there anything we can do to prevent you from going missing again?

Any other comments?

For use with Parent / Carer:

Parents / Carers views:

Support / advice given:

Actions agreed with Parents:

For use by worker completing interview:

Summary of incident including assessment of risks involved:

Actions required:

APPENDIX 4



MISSING STRATEGY MEETING

THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE INFORMATION IS STRESSED AND COPIES SHOULD NOT BE MADE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE SAFEGUARDING UNIT (CPRU). SIMILARLY BEFORE NOTES ARE TRANSFERRED TO ANYONE ELSE PERMISSION SHOULD BE SOUGHT UNLESS A GENERAL PERMISSION HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN GIVEN

In respect of:

Date of Birth:

Date missing:

Last seen by whom / when:

Last contact:

Return date:

Any other young people thought to be missing / linked to missing:

Present:

Apologies:

Reason for Meeting:

This is strategy meeting convened under Liverpool City Council's safeguarding protocols and in line with **Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – January 2014**

Background Information - Social Worker to provide in advance of the meeting:

- Chronology of missing
- Missing/CSE Risk Assessment
- What has been done to establish the whereabouts of the young person
- Latest information

Notes of meeting:

Strategy Meeting Actions/Recommendations

	Action(s) to be taken	Person / Agency responsible	Date for completion
1	Missing exemplar updated and signed off on ICS	Social Worker	Day of return
2	Return Interview to be undertaken	Social Worker	Within 72 hours of return
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

Considerations for the meeting	
Have all possible steps been taken to locate and recover the child /young person including undertaking corporate parenting duties such as visiting addresses where children are suspected to be?	YES / NO
Have the child /young person's details been circulated via the Service Manager to other local authorities in areas where they may be?	YES / NO
Specific Risks	
Is the child / young person at risk of sexual exploitation?	YES / NO
If Yes, has a CSE1 form been completed and sent to MACSE?	YES / NO
Is the child / young person at risk of being trafficked?	YES / NO
If Yes has contact been made with the trafficking team at Merseyside Police?	YES / NO
Are there other specific risks to the child / young person while they are missing?	YES / NO
Should a pre- secure planning meeting be requested?	YES / NO
Considerations when the child / young person is located:	
Will a disruption meeting be held?	YES / NO
Is it safe for the child / young person to return to the placement / home?	YES / NO
Should a medical be undertaken?	YES / NO
Do police wish to make further enquiries before the child / young person returns to placement / home?	YES /NO
What steps will be taken to prevent the child / young person going missing in the future?	
Who will be the appropriate 'independent person' to talk to the child / young person when they return?	

High Risk / Long Term Missing	
Have national authorities been notified? Ie: National Missing Persons Unit, Social Security, Child Benefit Agency?	YES / NO
Have legal services been contacted if there is any suspicion that the child / young person may be removed from UK jurisdiction?	YES / NO
Has a press strategy been considered including the involvement of parents / carers?	YES / NO
Recovery Order S50 Children Act 1989: Order to Produce Child on Request and Remove Child	YES / NO
Child Abduction Warning Notices (Harbourers Warnings);	YES / NO

Recording:	
Has a missing exemplar been completed on ICS	YES / NO
Has a new PIR been opened (after 24 hours of missing) ICS	YES / NO
Has a missing flag been put on ICS	YES / NO
Has a CSE exemplar been completed on ICS in the cases where CSE is identified?	YES / NO

Date, time and venue of next meeting:

(Review Missing from Care Meetings should be convened fortnightly until the child returns unless different frequency agreed with Service Manager and should cover the areas detailed above)