

PAN CHESHIRE RETURN HOME INTERVIEW - PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE 2020

What is a Return Interview?

The purpose of a Return Home Interview (RHI) is to give the child who has returned a chance to talk about their lives holistically, exploring why they ran away (push and/or pull factors), what happened whilst they were missing and how they are feeling now they are back.

The interview is an opportunity for children or young people to speak to a professional who can provide appropriate follow up with referrals or signposting for any of the risks identified. It is important to both gather and analyse information from the child such as associates and locations they frequent.

The professional should also reflect if there are links to child exploitation, trafficking, extremism and radicalisation. This information will help to inform planning and risk assessment and is important for informing future planning for reducing further harm/risk to the child/young person.

What happened to make you go away / go missing?

Running to someone or something? Running from someone or something? Something happened at home or school? Trouble with friends? Peer pressure? Just needed to clear head? Bored? Encouraged by others?

Potential Push factors	Potential Pull factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems at home – ranging from arguments with parents to long-term abuse or maltreatment.• Family break-up• Mental health problems• Bullying (children who are being severely bullied are more likely to run away from school and home or care)• Teenage pregnancy – some young women run away or are forced to leave home because they become pregnant (or fear that they may be pregnant).• Dissatisfaction with their care plan.• Struggling to cope with emotional health, i.e. sexuality confusion or self-esteem.• Issues at School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Running to be near friends or family – especially when a young person is in care and there are problems in contact arrangements with family and friends.• Grooming for potential sexual exploitation or child trafficking – young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them.• Criminal exploitation or activity• Substance use (drugs or alcohol)• Potential financial gain

What happened whilst you were away?

Did anything bad happen to you or someone you were with while you were away? Did you or anyone else come to any harm? Where did you go? Who were you with, what happened? Were you kept against your will, were you offered drink or drugs?

Did you feel safe while away?

What do you do to help keep yourself safe? Did anyone have your number or know where you were? Could you contact anyone for help if you felt unsafe at any time? Were you able to eat, wash, have a safe place to stay? Did you have unprotected sex and need to visit a sexual health clinic?

What happened when you returned? What can be done to stop you going away again?

Why did you decide to return? Were you scared to come back? Were you prevented from coming back when you wanted? How did you get back? What support do you need? What would stop you going away again? Do the things that led to you running away still exist?

From the all of the above, the interviewer should explain the main things they are concerned about from the information provided so far and highlight with the child any positive actions they took to protect themselves.

Any strategies discusses should then be reflected in the child's plan going forward

Reasons for Running

This can be used alongside the questions included to ascertain push/pull factors as well as and harm that may have come to the child whilst they were missing. All push/push & risk factors which apply to the incident can be selected.

Professional Risk Assessment based on interview with child

Once you have explored all of the above with the child/young person it is important to determine the level of risk that the child is in. A good way to do this is by considering three areas to ensure a balance of these three areas:

- Current Risks/ Dangers/ Unknowns/ What Are We Worried About?
- Strengths/ Protective Factors/ What's Working Well?
- YP's Perception of Current Circumstances /What Needs to Happen?

Actions:

Outline any actions that now need to take place following the information gathered during the return home interview.

This may include: follow-up visit with young person, plan to complete a Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool and submit to appropriate inbox if any signs of CSE/CCE of age or power imbalance in relationships, referral to other services, sexual health clinic, CAF, TAC, Child Protection referral, Care Plan Review, Strategy Discussion.

Immediate Safeguarding:

If the return interview has raised any immediate safeguarding concerns, ensure you clearly outline what action has been taken to address these concerns.

A return home interview is only effective if appropriate follow up support is offered to the young person to help them deal with the issues that caused them to run away or issues they experienced while away