



MANCHESTER SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN BOARD

# Protocol for Children & Young People Missing from Home and Care

This document is the property of  
Manchester Safeguarding Children Board  
March 2008

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## Foreword

This Protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families in Manchester , or those using services in the area. It should be read and implemented, where necessary, by all practitioners and managers working with children or young people who are missing from Home and Care.

It was drafted jointly by Safe in the City, GMP and Children Social Care on behalf of the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board, which agreed the Protocol on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

The most effective assessment and support comes through good information sharing, joint assessments of need, joint planning, professional trust within the interagency network and joint action in partnership with families.

Manchester Safeguarding Children Board expects all agencies working with children or young people who are missing from Home and Care, to implement this Protocol and ensure that all relevant staff are aware of it and how to use it. It should be used in all new contacts with children and young people.

If you believe that a child or young person is at immediate risk , this should be reported without delay to the police service as a 999 emergency and a contact be made to the Manchester Contact Centre. The telephone number is 0161-255-8250. The Fax number is 0161-255-8266. A telephone referral should be followed up with multi-agency referral form within 48 hours. The referral form is placed in the website under" Concerned about a child"

It is important to note that once CAF (Common Assessment Framework)is in place, the multi-agency referral form will be substituted by the CAF Assessment Form

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Going missing is a dangerous activity. A child or young person who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as faced by a child or young person who regularly goes missing. However, children who go missing when they are young (and/or more frequently) are more likely to face longer-term problems.

The following procedure has been created to provide a joined up multi agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home and care. This policy is a revised version of that launched by Manchester Area Child Protection Committee in 2002 and has taken into account lessons to be learnt from recent Serious Case Reviews.

Research has shown that every year approximately 77,000 under 16 year olds go missing overnight in England. Peak ages for going missing are between 13 and 16 year old and a quarter are under 11 years old (Children's Society, Still Running 1999/ Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 2002).

### **Why children go missing**

The Children's Society through its research has identified the following risk factors<sup>1</sup> that can precede a missing incident:

- Arguments and conflicts
- Poor family relationships
- Physical and emotional abuse – Domestic Violence / Abuse
- Step parent issues
- Boundaries and control

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is key to assisting agencies to identify and respond effectively to these risk factors and going missing should be seriously considered as a possible outcome, and appropriate support put in place to prevent any potential missing incidents.

Although in many cases young people who go missing from home are already known to agencies and in receipt of support before they run away, all agencies need to be able to recognise and respond to risk factors that could lead to missing incidents.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities
- Involvement in criminal activities
- Victim of Abuse
- Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Deterioration of physical and mental health
- Missing out on schooling and education.
- Increased vulnerability

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The Children's Society, 1999

Longer-term risks include:

- long-term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- crime
- homelessness.
- Disengagement from education
- Child sexual exploitation
- Poor physical and/or mental health

The introduction of parenting work has significantly improved the comprehensive intervention on offer and parents report this has reduced the number of runaway incidents.

### **Local context**

Over 5000 children and young people go missing each year in Greater Manchester<sup>2</sup>. More than 3,500 of the total incidents are first time runaways with over 800 of those children aged under 11. Research <sup>3</sup>suggests that looked after children are three times more likely to go missing than children living at home, and children living in 'other family forms' (living with relatives, grandparents, or other adults) are five times more likely to go missing than children living with birth parents.

### **Principles**

Any missing episode is potentially serious, one runaway is one too many. Therefore prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing requires an integrated multi agency approach to vulnerable children and young people. Existing prevention strategies will need to include the prevention of children going missing from home and care and will include:

- Awareness and training for all professionals
- Awareness and safety sessions for young people via curriculum opportunities
- Multi agency assessment procedures, including CAF, should include the risk indicators for running away.
- Consistent implementation of this protocol across all agencies.
- Monitoring and reporting of missing from home incidents.
- Support to parents via the Parenting Strategy for Manchester.

Every individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.

Partnership working, information sharing, problem solving and performance management best achieve effective interventions.

## **2 SCOPE**

The protocol is designed for:

- All children and young people under 18 who go missing from the parental home.
- Children and young people "Looked After" by Manchester City Council placed in Local Authority Children's Homes within the authority's boundaries.

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Wade & Biehal, 1998, The Children's Society, 1999, The Children's Society 2005

- Children and young people “Looked After” by Manchester City Council placed with foster carers within the authority’s boundaries.
- Children and young people “Looked After” by Manchester City Council placed in private establishments or with agency foster carers within the Local Authority boundaries and where compliance with the protocol is specified in the contract or placement agreement.

### 3 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this protocol and relate to children and young people under 18 years old who go or have gone missing. The definition of running away is taken from the SEU Young Runaways report (2002) and includes reference to young people who self-define running away as being forced to leave because, for example, they do not believe they have any alternative.

- **Missing Person – ACPO Definition:** “A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. He or she will be considered missing until located and his or her well being, or otherwise, established.”
- **Runaway;** A child or young person, who is absent from their home or placement without permission for any length of time where their age and experience, background and ability make this a concern or who has been forced to leave by their parents or carers.
- **Looked After:** A child is looked after by a local authority if s/he is “in care” by reason of a court order, or if s/he is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by agreement with her/his parents or with the child if s/he is aged 16 or more.
- **Accommodated:** A child is accommodated if the Local Authority looks him after with the voluntary agreement of his/her parents, or with the child if s/he is over 16 years old.
- **Child:** A child or young person under the age of eighteen years.
- **Police SPOC:** Single Point of Contact
- **Unauthorized absence;** Absent for a short period of time and after a careful and thorough risk assessment the absence does not raise concern for their immediate safety or that of the public. In accordance with the ACPO Manual of Guidance 2005 this period of absence should not exceed **6 hours**.
- **Absconded:** When a child or young person has gone missing who is subject to legal orders such as secure orders. Police **must** be made aware of the order under which the child has been placed in the residence and the expiry date of the order for the child to be classified as an absconder. If the expiry date of the order is not known, the child or young person will be classified as a “missing person” **NOT** an absconder.

#### **4 MISSING FROM HOME ADDRESS**

##### **Responsibility of the alerter: parents/carers agencies and voluntary sector**

Parents (and carers) are expected to undertake the following basic measures to try and locate their child if considered safe to do so;

- Search bedroom / house / Outbuildings / vehicles
- Contact known friends and relatives where child/ young person may be
- Visit locations that the child is known to frequent, if it is safe to do so.

NB

Children and young people, who go missing under the age of 16 are not legally considered as being able to live independently away from home. For Children and Young People over the age of 16, consideration should be given to their physical and emotional needs when making a judgment as to whether they can live independently away from home.

Anyone who 'takes or detains' a runaway under 16 without lawful authority may be prosecuted under Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984. An Abduction Warning Register is being created by the Manchester Police Divisions, and subjects of this register will have a warning signal placed on their Police National Computer (PNC) Record.

**QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING FROM HOME ADDRESS**

Parents identify time by which the child should be in the address.  
 Parents will be expected to make enquiries to locate the missing person with relatives / friends.  
 This should include searches of the residence and local area.



Parents should then telephone police with details of the missing person:  
 Details Required: Child's name / D.O.B. / Where, when and who missing with? / What child was last wearing / Description of young person / Recent photo / Medical History / Time & Location last seen  
 All efforts to locate the child / young person must be recorded and auditable.



**Greater Manchester Police**



<p>GMP Officers to conduct a Risk Assessment which will form the basis for resulting proportionate actions. Enquiries are then ongoing.....</p>	<p>Sharing of information between the Police, Parents and other agencies as appropriate</p>
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**MISSING PERSON is located or returns to Home Address**

When a missing child is located by family or friends etc, it is their responsibility to return the child to the home address. Where a risk is present, a police officer may accompany the family or the police may be requested to collect and return the child/young person to the place of residence. Parents must inform the police when a child returns of their own accord – see Para 4.1.3



The Police will conduct a return "1-10" interview to establish missing persons well being, and safety and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing.

**If it is warranted, the Police may refer the child or young person to Children Services Social Care using the Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF). In some cases it may also be appropriate for the Police to also refer the child or young person to the Independent Interviewing Agency (Safe In The City)**

Consideration should also be given, dependant upon intelligence gained from the return interview, for other children or young people in the same residence to be referred to Social Services.

## 5 MISSING FROM CARE

This protocol requires all care providers, both local authority and private sector, to inform the local police of any new children's homes being established within Divisional Boundaries prior to the placement therein of any children and young people. This will enable local policing procedures/policies to be prepared should children subsequently be reported missing from such an address.

### Responsibilities of the alerter

When a child or young person goes missing from care it is expected that their carer(s) will act in their capacity as a 'good parent'. This means that:

- When a child or young person is reported missing, the local authority and the police have a joint responsibility for protecting the well being of the individual. The act of reporting a child missing to the police does not absolve the carers from their duty of care to the individual, and carers must take proactive steps to trace the child's whereabouts.
- Children /young people must not be reported missing as a behaviour management tool.

Every reasonable effort will be made to locate the child/young person prior to them being reported to the police and throughout the length of the enquiry. This should include local searches, and making early contact with family and friends to establish his/her location.

### The Care Plan

Prior to each accommodation arrangement for a looked after child, the 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 her/his parent/carer (if appropriate) should be involved in the assessment and planning process. Missing episodes prior to the child becoming "looked after" need to be taken into account during the assessment and care planning.

All information should be included in the placement plan and in the child's care plan. Where there is a risk of a child going missing, the placement plan and care plan must include details of how and when physical restraint will be used by care staff. (Please see Restraint Policy for further information) As part of this assessment it may be appropriate for Manchester City Council to consult with the police to share information that may be of relevance.

### Risk Assessment

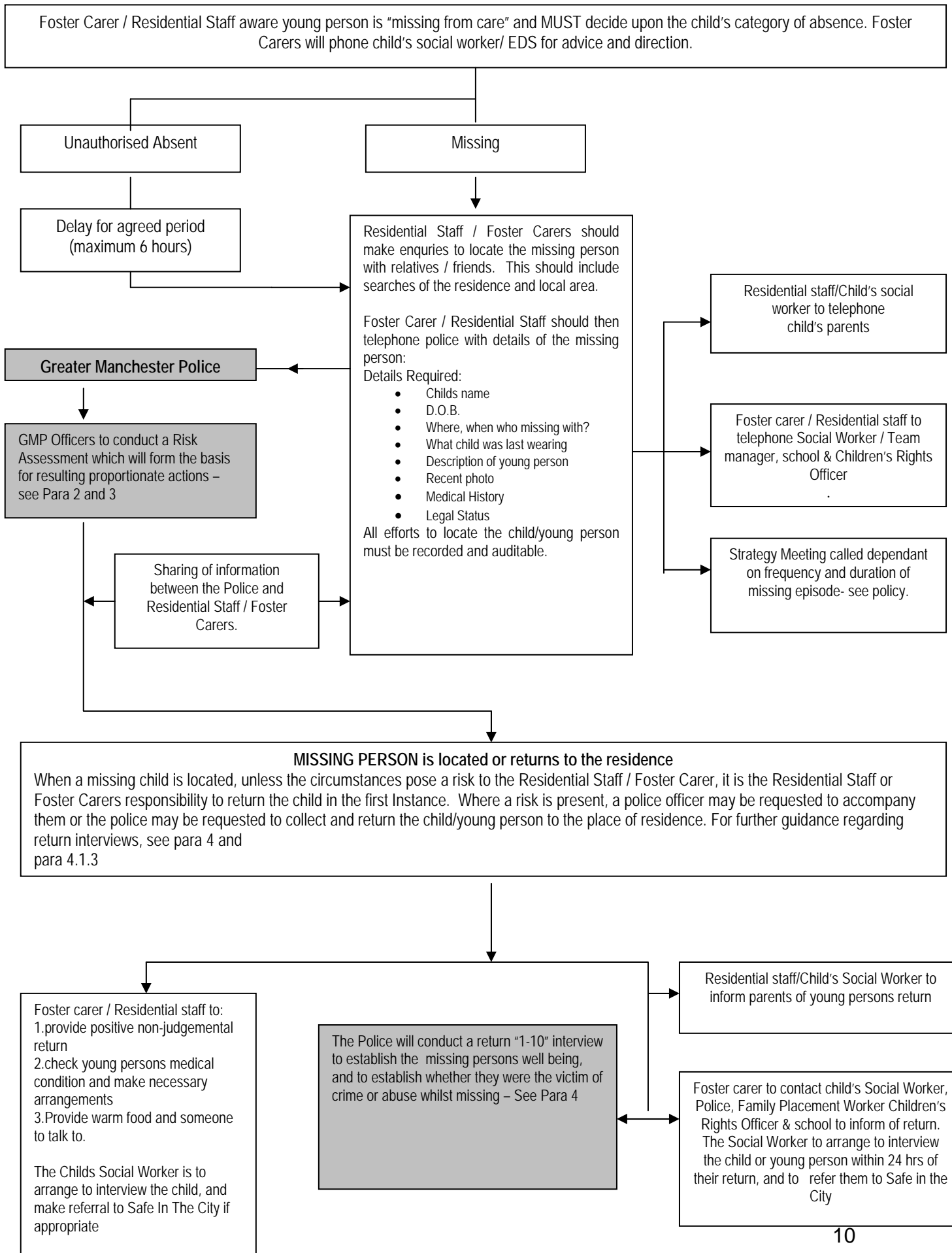
Individual risk assessments are an essential part of this protocol. They will enable staff/carers to be clear what the risks are for the particular child or young person and/or the risks they pose for the public.

When a child/ young person goes missing, the local authority will decide upon which category of absence applies to the child or young person Staff will use the Missing From Care Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1) to assist in making this decision.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) should always be informed by the Social Worker (or CCW / Foster Carer at weekends and Out Of Hours) of all those who are missing for a period of 24 hours.

If the child or young person has gone missing from foster care and a missing from home risk assessment has not been completed in advance, then the foster carer must contact the child's social worker/duty social worker or emergency duty team (if it is out of hours), who will assist completion of the risk assessment and advise on reporting the child/young person to the Police.

**QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING FROM CARE**



## **Photographs**

Should a child/ young person go missing it is vital to the safe recovery of the child that a recent photograph of the child is made available. The photograph must be a good likeness of the child/young person, and the date the photograph was taken should be endorsed on the back of it to identify its relevance to the enquiry. The photograph will be used by the police to help them identify the child or young person whilst conducting enquiries. In very serious cases, where the child is believed to be at severe risk, the police and local authority may decide to use the photograph more widely, including publishing the photograph to national or local media, and circulation on the Police / ICMEC [www.missingkids.co.uk](http://www.missingkids.co.uk) website.

On admission to care, the consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any subsequent missing person investigation. If possible the consent of the child/ young person should be gained.

The children's home manager/foster carer should consider the most appropriate ways to meet the above requirements and should ensure that the child/ young person is made aware of what will happen if they go missing, including their right to be interviewed by an independent person on or prior to their return, and be given a choice as to who that may be. They should be given information leaflets and contacted details of advocacy services / other services that they can access or that can be accessed on their behalf.

## **6 MISSING CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A PROTECTION PLAN**

### **Children at risk of significant harm**

Any person within the city who receives information about a child or unborn child at risk of significant harm who has gone missing, must pass the details immediately to the child's key worker and the Quality Assurance and performance Management Unit. The latter will assume full responsibility for alerting the appropriate agencies in Manchester and other Register Custodians.

Notifications of missing children must always be sent to the following:

- Senior Nurse for Child Protection
- Chief Education Welfare Officer (for school age children)
- Head of Early Years and Play(pre school age children)
- Housing Department
- Police HQ Family Support Unit

Other may be identified according to the circumstances.

The key worker will notify the QA and PM unit, to double check, as well as the Core Group members.

### **Registered Children whose whereabouts are unknown**

If a child subject to a protection plan goes missing, immediate steps must be taken to trace him or her, in consultation with other workers involved. The following urgent actions must be taken:

- i.- Immediately notify the key worker and the Register Custodian by telephone and confirm in writing as soon as possible.

ii-Within 48 hours, or earlier if there are suspicious circumstances, key Worker must initiate local enquires as follows:

- Urgent contact with the appropriate Manchester Police Family Support Unit
- All Core Group members
- Health staff (including GPs),
- Education staff

**If these enquires prove unsuccessful**

- i- the local DWP office should be asked to search local and national records for any information and
- ii- The Child Benefit Agency on **0845 302 1444**, for any information they can supply.
- iii- The key worker must ensure that all information resulting from these enquiries is collated.

If the child (ren) has not been located as a result of these enquiries within seven days of the family gone missing,

- i- the Key worker must request that an urgent Child Protection Review Conference be convened.
- ii- The Child Protection Review Conference should normally take place within two weeks of the family being observed to be missing unless key worker and register Custodian agree to an extension for specified reasons.
- iii- In any event, a **Child Protection Review must be held within four weeks of the family going missing.**
- iv- This Review Conference will determine what further action should be taken to ensure the safety of the child and family.

**7 REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO RISK**

When it is discovered that a child has absented him/herself without permission from a placement, staff will refer to the young person's individual risk assessment in considering whether the young person is " unauthorised absent" or "missing" as defined by these procedures. In cases of doubt the home manager or manager on call will be consulted.

The fact that the young person 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.

However, at some point, depending upon the child and the circumstances, the young person's absence will give rise to justifiable concern and require a formal missing person report to the police. Whilst there can be no substitute for a considered judgement, based on a sound assessment of the young person and the circumstances, it is the purpose of this framework to assist carers to structure their thinking with regard to the two categories of absence.

## Reporting

The decision to report a child as missing should not be taken in isolation, staff should consult with the senior staff member on duty and foster carers should liaise with the young person's social worker or Emergency Duty Service staff. Any decision should incorporate information from the child/ young persons' risk assessment. The situation should be kept under constant review and changes in circumstances taken into account. If the young person is receiving support from CAMHS professionals, Educational Psychologists and so on, it may be advisable to discuss the case with them. However, if they are not readily available a decision must be made on the basis of the best available information. In cases of doubt it may also be appropriate to discuss the case with a local police supervisor.

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. 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 young person's vulnerability.

If the absence is considered to fall within these procedures the relevant staff member, i.e. child's social worker, duty social worker, Emergency Duty Service social worker, residential child care worker, will as soon as practical inform:

- the child/young person's parents/and those with parental responsibility; and
- the Police.

## Responding

Where, initially, the decision was made that this absence **does not** fall within this procedure this decision will be reviewed **every hour** throughout the period of unauthorized absence (to a maximum of 6 hours) if the child does not return or his/her whereabouts are not known.

If such a period of absence continues for 6 hours it will automatically be considered to fall within these procedures. NB: This is the maximum period; and in most situations much shorter periods will be appropriate.

In every case where, following consultation with the Police, the level of risk to the child is deemed to be **HIGH**, the matter must be immediately brought to the attention of the appropriate District Manager, and the Service Lead for Safeguarding, Manchester City Council (If out of hours, the Senior Manager on call) and the Divisional Commander (Police) or their nominees. They will then decide upon further action and consider the need to inform the Assistant Director, Children Services, Manchester City Council.

If during a period of unauthorised absence, the informant becomes aware of the location of the missing person, he/she should make every effort to have the missing person return to the place of residence without police involvement, unless there are safety issues, in which case a "Concern For Welfare" report should be made to the Police.

If the child or young person is subject to a care order, and refuses to return voluntarily with the agent of the care provider, then Police assistance may be requested.

If the child or young person is "accommodated", then a risk assessment is to be undertaken in consultation with the Local Authority, and if police attendance is warranted, the use of a police

protection order is to be considered if there is an immediate risk present. The use of a police protection order should be jointly considered by police and children’s services. If the missing person is in no immediate risk, the police should liaise with the carers/children’s services regarding any further action.

Whilst notifying the police of the absence of a child or young person is an essential part of the overall process, having done so does not absolve carers of their corporate parenting responsibilities for the child, and such carers should take all necessary actions to attempt to locate the missing person, including where possible, searches of the missing person’s room within the residence, immediate searches of the local area, and making contact with the missing person’s family and friends to establish if the missing person is with them, or has been seen since by them since the time that the person was identified as being absent.

## **8 CONDUCTING THE MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION**

### **Greater Manchester Police (GMP)**

Upon receiving a report of a child or young person being absent from care or missing from home, GMP will carry out enquiries (which are proportionate to the perceived risk) aimed at locating the child/young person as soon as possible.

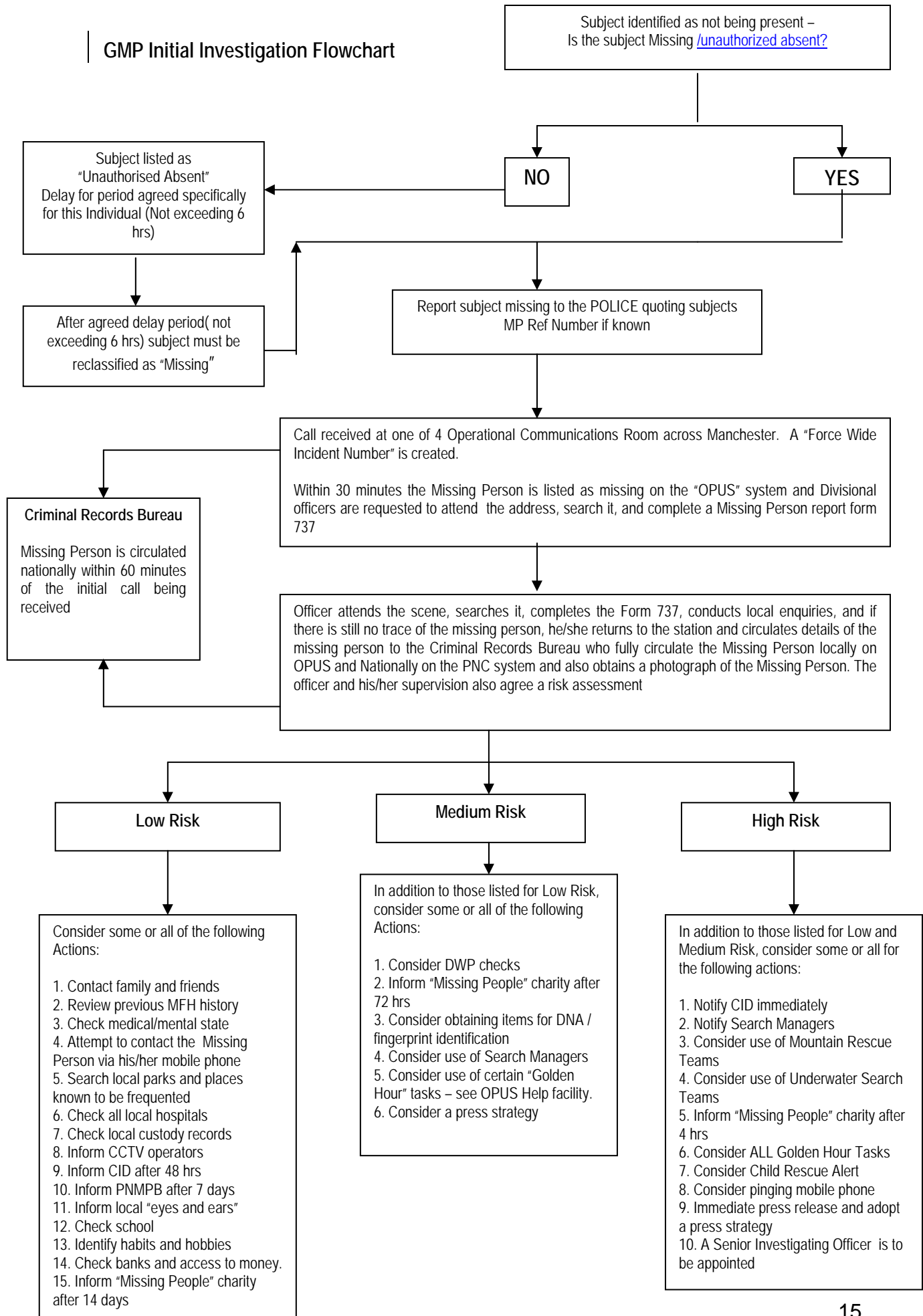
Whilst missing persons aged under 18 years are automatically classified as “Vulnerable Missing Persons”. However, this is NOT an indication of risk.

A risk assessment will be carried out for each individual on every separate occasion they are reported missing to the Police. This risk assessment, conducted by the Initial Investigating Officer, and subsequently confirmed or revised by his or her supervising officer will form the basis for the subsequent investigation into the person’s disappearance.

### **Police Risk Definitions**

<b>RISK</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>High</b>	The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability, or may have been the victim of a serious crime, or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.
<b>Medium</b>	The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger, or they are a threat to themselves or others.
<b>Low</b>	There is no apparent risk of danger to either the subject or the public.

**GMP Initial Investigation Flowchart**



## **9 PUBLICITY / MEDIA STRATEGY**

It is the responsibility of the Police to advise the media regarding any missing child or young person.

Whether the child or young person is missing from public sector or private care providers, the decision to publicise by press and/or television will always be made in consultation with the child's social worker and the Assistant Director, Children Services, however GMP reserve the right to publicise the child if there are serious concerns for the welfare of that child.

Such publicity will be arranged at local level, by direction of the Divisional Commander (or nominee). Prior to any publicity the child's social worker will be informed in order to allow the parents to be informed.

Additionally the police will automatically inform the "Missing People" charity of all high risk missing persons with 4 hrs of them being reported, Medium risk missing persons within 72 hrs of them being reported, and Low risk missing persons within 14 days of them being reported.

The police may also utilise the website facility of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children ([www.missingkids.co.uk](http://www.missingkids.co.uk)) to publicise the child or young person.

## **10 MISSING PERSON IS LOCATED OR RETURNS**

The Police will conduct a "Safe and Well" return interview for ALL children reported missing.

Parents and carers must be immediately informed that the child/ young person has been found. When the child is located by agencies other than the Police, or returns to their home address, the attending adult (parent / guardian / carer) is to notify the Police of the child's return (and location) **without delay**.

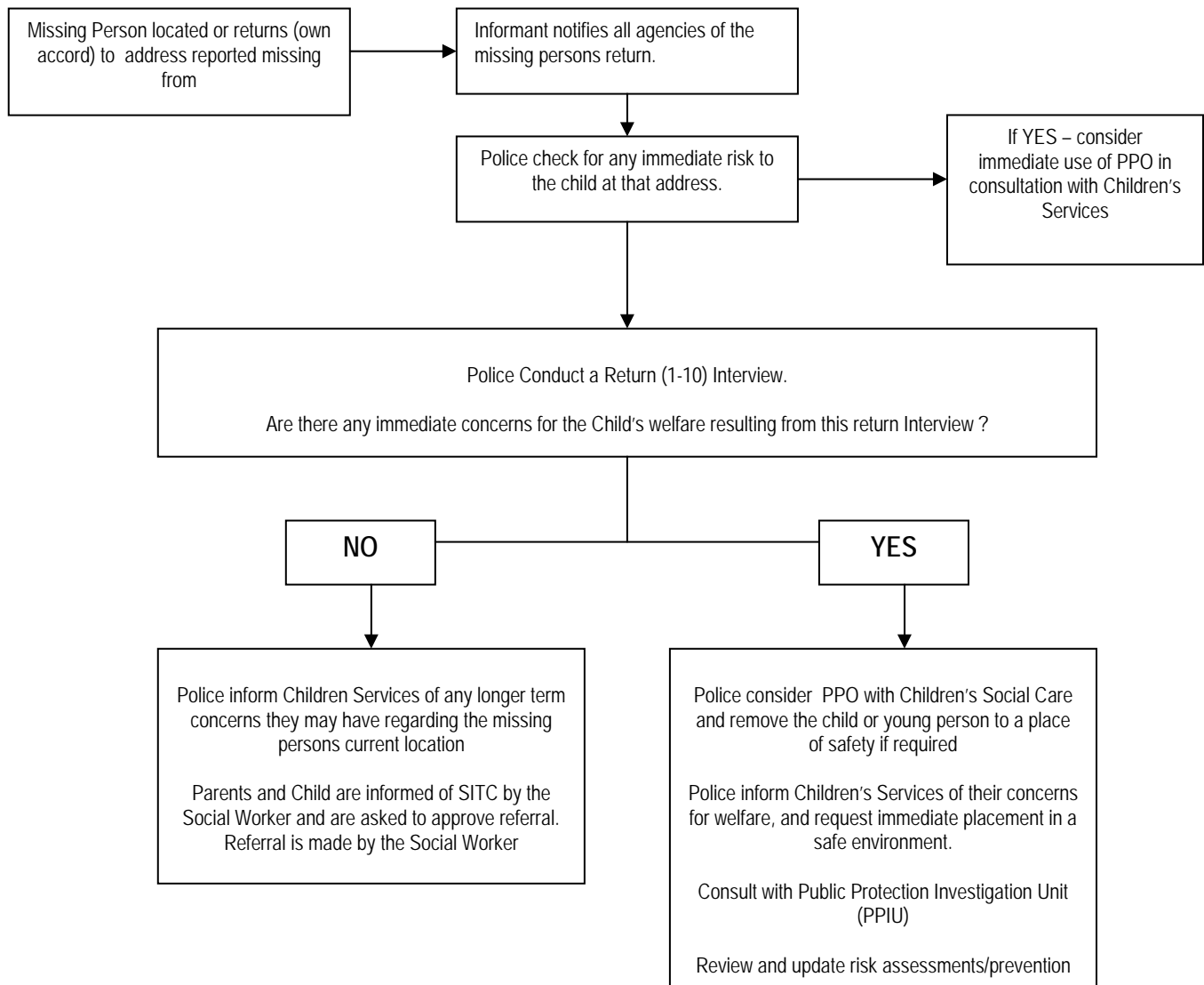
The locating agency will remind the child and the parent / carer that they will be spoken to by the police, the purpose of this interview being to confirm their well being, and to discover whether they have been the victim of any crimes whilst missing.

The locating agency should ensure that on the child's return, his/her medical condition is discussed with the child and his/her parents / carers immediately, and an offer made to arrange medical attention if necessary.

If any information is gathered during the course of enquiries which indicates a child / young person is at risk on their return home, the Police and Children's Social Care must be informed immediately, so that they may take appropriate action.

A risk assessment should be carried out by Police (and Social Worker) to ensure that it is safe for the child to return to their placement/ parental home.

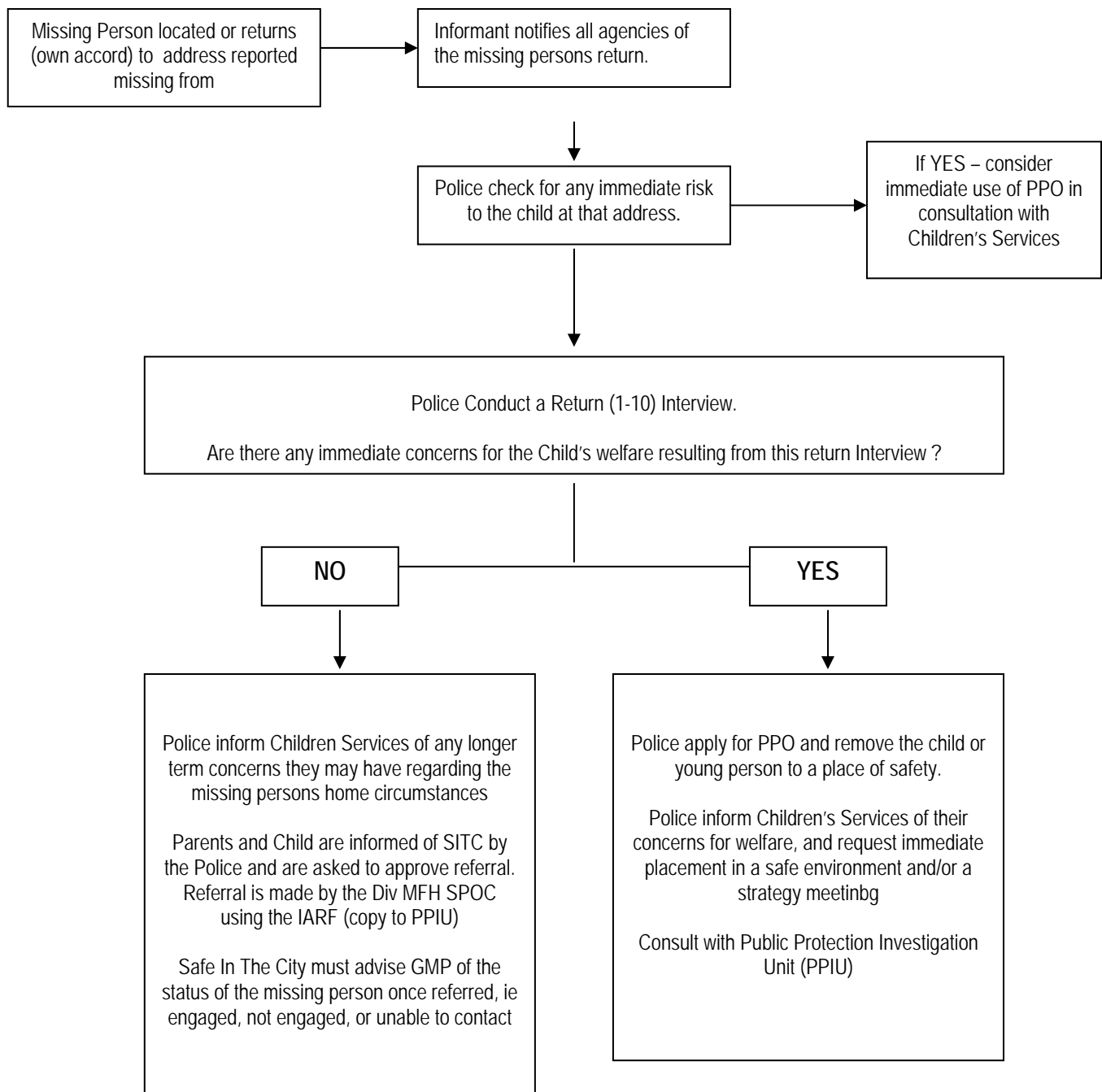
**11 RETURN PROCEDURES – MISSING FROM CARE**



**Children and young people in care**

In all cases the Social Worker must visit and meet with the young person alone within two working days of his/her return. Where this is not possible, e.g. the child is placed at a distance from Manchester or the social worker is not available, a team manager may agree that the child is interviewed at a later date, or by an alternative person. The arrangement, and reasons for this must be fully recorded. The Social Worker will ask the young person if they wish to speak to an independent person of their choice e.g. someone from the Children's Rights Service, independent visitor or Safe In The City (SITC) worker. If the Social worker is not available it is the responsibility of the team manager to arrange the visit. In all cases consideration will be given to the need to convene a strategy meeting.

## 12 RETURN PROCEDURES – MISSING FROM HOME



### **13 ADDITIONAL RETURN PROCEDURES COMMON TO MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE**

Once the child or young person has been located, the police will carry out a (Police) Return Interview. It will not be conducted over the telephone, and it must only be conducted by an appropriately trained Police Officer. Return interviews are not to be conducted by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

If there are immediate concerns please see both flowcharts for guidance and actions to be taken.

Where any child or young person has indicated a wish to speak to an independent professional, their Social Worker and the Police will ensure referral details are passed to the independent Missing From Home agency, Safe In The City, in accordance with existing internal procedures.

Where a child/young person has gone missing from their family home for 3 or more occasions the Police may make a referral to SAFE IN THE CITY for initial assessment and support. (See below)

If there are already concerns in existence relating to the care establishment that the child or young person has been absent from, or their home circumstances, the Manchester Divisional SPOCs must highlight such concerns to the Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU) who will submit the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) to the Children's Services Contact Centre via their electronic mailing system.

### **14 REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

The return interview may indicate that that child and family require additional support to meet the child's needs and prevent further episodes. The Common Assessment Framework will assist with identifying additional needs and ensuring a support package is in place to reduce the risk of future episodes.

NB – If the CAF indicates the child may be at risk of significant harm, MSCB Safeguarding procedures will apply.

### **15 SAFE IN THE CITY - MISSING FROM HOME SCHEME**

The scheme is designed to ensure that young people who run away are offered the chance to talk to someone independent on their return.

Upon receiving a referral for a young runaway, Safe in the City will make contact with the young person within 3 working days and will offer the child/young person an independent interview to assess their needs with regard to advice, information and support.

This assessment will be undertaken using the Common Assessment Framework and if appropriate the Safe in the City worker will act as the Lead Professional.

If the child is considered to fall within levels 2, 3 or above of the Children in Need Assessment Framework then consultation must take place with the appropriate agencies or A Child in Need referral form to be completed as appropriate.

Where there are urgent child protection concerns, these will be reported immediately to Manchester Children's Social Care via the Contact Centre and the Police.

Safe in the City referral procedure can be seen at Appendix 7 to this report.

## **16 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

All agencies 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 home and care. These meetings should have clearly identified purpose and attendance. The meeting should be held within a week of any the following trigger episodes. The meetings should be chaired and recorded and the increased levels of concern reflected in the seniority of those attending as follows:

- After **three MFH episodes within a 30 day period or one episode of three or more days**: Social Worker (chair), local police officer / Police Divisional MFH SPOC, residential worker or foster carer and family placement worker, **and** Safe In The City worker, if SITC are working with the young person.

This meeting should try to identify any 'push' or 'pull' factors as well as any other agencies that could provide support. 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 regards to crime, sex or drugs. The meeting should also establish which other agencies are already involved in working with the child/young person. A routine check will be made to ascertain if the young person is known to the Protect Team and joint working considered.

- After **seven MFH episodes within a 30 day period or one episode of 7 days or more**: Independent reviewing officer (chair), team manager from children's services, police divisional SPOC / Divisional SMT representative, Children's Home manager/family placement manager (as appropriate), representative from health and /or education and Safe In The City return agency worker.

Meetings at this level should only be required for a small number of children provided that the 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 child, this meeting should also quality assure compliance with the protocols and the efficiency of earlier intervention meetings and return interviews. It is recognised that there will be some children who go missing repeatedly within a short period of time where this level of intervention will immediately apply.

At this stage a report about the case should be forwarded to the Police Divisional Missing From Home Champion, as the case will feature in the quarterly report on missing children and young people.

If the child/young person continues to be reported missing beyond this level the senior management team for children's services and police should discuss the case and consider

whether it is appropriate for them to intervene further or for the Assistant Chief Constable (or their nominated representative) / Director of children's services to be asked to intervene.

**Other risk factors demanding escalated interventions include:**

- 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.

**17 MONITORING.**

The Service Lead Safeguarding in Manchester will ensure that Missing From Home remains a priority for Manchester by having an oversight of the following;

- Implementation of "missing from home and care" protocols and procedures
- Reporting information about patterns of absence among looked after children to the Director of Children's Services and to Councillors responsible for "corporate parenting"
- Receiving standardised monthly reports from GMP Missing from Home SPOCs, Children's Residential Services and Safe on our Streets project and ensure they are analysed at Vulnerable Young Person's Sub Group and Performance Management Subgroup
- Any issues/concerns will be raised to the MSCB via twice yearly reports, or more frequently if needed.

## 18 GLOSSARY

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
Absconder	- See Definitions (para 1.5)
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
Dfes	Department of Education & Skills
DCSF	Department of Children, Schools and Families
Div	Division (Police)
DoH	Department Of Health
EDS	Emergency Duty Services
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Childrens Board
Looked After	See Definitions (Para 1.5)
IARF	Inter Agency Referral Form (Appendix 5)
Missing	See Definitions (Para 1.5)
MFH	Missing From Home
MSCB	Manchester Safeguarding Children Board
PACE	Police And Criminal Evidence (Act 1984)
PNMPB	Police National Missing Person Bureau (New Scotland Yard) London
Protect	Multi Agency team regarding CSE issues
PPIU	Public Protection Investigation Unit (Police)
Runaway	See Definitions (Para 1.5)
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SITC	Safe In The City
SMT	Senior Management Team (Police)
SPOC	Single Point of Contact (Police)
WT	Working Together 2006

**APPENDIX 1  
LOCAL AUTHORITY MISSING FROM CARE RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Risk assessment: for children and young people who run away from home / care.**

(The risk indicators can also be used to inform assessments for children and young people who run away from home.)

Name of child or young person: ..... ID:.....

Date of Birth: ..... Age:..... Legal Status: .....

Any child or young person **12 y/o or under** whose whereabouts is unknown will automatically be considered as at **higher risk** and classed as **missing or absconded**. They must be reported to the police immediately. For children or young people 13 y/o and above, this risk assessment must be completed and be based on age, current circumstances, experiences, background and ability. This will help to establish an assessment of their vulnerability. The risk indicators should prompt the assessment and any relevant information, which should be included under the section "risk assessment information".

Risk indicators	Risk assessment information
What are the usual circumstances of the child/young person going missing ie is the young person running to someone or from a situation?	
When does the yp usually leave the home?	
Where do they usually go? Are with family or friends or with people who are unknown or undesirable?	
What is the Level of maturity has the young person shown in being able to make decisions about themselves or others?	
What are the agreed coming in times, if any?	
Do they have access to any money and how if necessary will they obtain this?	
Are there any known issues/events happening in the child's/young person's family or close friends?	
Past method of return ie via family or on their own	
What is the risk of suicide/self-harm? What are the indicators of this?	
Likely use of drugs/alcohol/solvents? If so, type and amount?	
Past involvement of offending and in what form?	
Is the child/young person a risk to the community and in what way?	

Is there risk of sexual exploitation? Have sexual exploitation protocols been activated (PROTECT TEAM / CSE strategy meetings)? Any previous harm suffered while absent?	
Any concerns about new friends/boyfriends/associates?	
Any concern of abduction or being prevented from returning? Is there a risk of forced marriage?	
Are they experiencing bullying/racial and/or homophobic abuse? Any signs or indicators that child is experiencing difficulties or abuse in the placement?	
Is the child/young person on medication or suffering from medical condition?	
Physical or learning disability/difficulties?	
What is the child/young person's legal status?	
Any further information and knowledge	

This risk assessment grid above should be used as a guide and involve discussion and pooling of information to agree an informed risk assessment. In cases of little knowledge or where there is disagreement, the child or young person should be considered as being at higher risk.

<b>Concluding risk assessment</b>
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<b>Action to be taken by whom and by when (in bullet points)</b>
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Young Person ..... Date.....

RCCW/Foster Carer..... Date.....

Home Manager/Family Placement Worker.....  
Date.....

Categories of absence: for children and young people who run away from care

Unauthorised absence	Usual action
<p>Absence for a short period of time</p> <p>Sometimes it may be known or suspected where the child/ young person might be</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out a MFH risk assessment or refer to MFH already in place</li> <li>2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises</li> <li>3. Do not inform police at this stage.</li> <li>4. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility.</li> <li>5. Where action not already agreed in MFH risk assessment is available Inform and discuss with on call manager and or social worker/EDS .</li> <li>6. Review decision not to call police at agreed intervals to reassess the category of absence.</li> <li>7. Once child/young person has been missing for longer than the agreed period follow-on action needs to be agreed.</li> </ol>
Missing	Usual action
<p>Concern includes where the child/young person's location is unknown and/or the reason for absence is unknown and there is cause for concern because of their vulnerability or there is a potential danger to the public</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out a risk assessment (see pages 26 – 27)</li> <li>2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person and search premises.</li> <li>3. Inform on-call manager/senior.</li> <li>4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details</li> <li>5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility</li> <li>6. Inform/discuss with social worker/EDS</li> </ol>
Absconded	Usual action
<p>For example where the child/young person is considered missing and is also looked after as a result of a court order</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out a risk assessment (see pages 26 – 27)</li> <li>2. Make enquiries to locate the child/young person search premises.</li> <li>3. Inform on-call manager/senior.</li> <li>4. Report child/young person missing to the police providing full details.</li> <li>5. Inform/contact family and those with parental responsibility.</li> <li>6. Inform and discuss with social worker/EDS.</li> <li>7. Inform YOT/probation/legal as appropriate.</li> </ol>

After assessing risk, you must now agree the category of absence. This decision should be taken in consultation with the on-call manager or accountable social worker or EDS worker, as it will determine what action will be taken.

Unauthorised absence– lower risk	Missing /absconded – higher risk

If a child or young person is in care and on unauthorised absence, the agreed interval of six hours before reporting to the police should be seen as a maximum. In many cases a shorter period would be appropriate.

First interval	Hours	Any additional information (ie the child/young person has telephoned)
Second interval	Hours	Action/additional information

If the child or young person does not return within the agreed interval and there is no additional information that reduces risk, or if there is information that increases risk, the child or young person needs to be reclassified as missing/absconded, and necessary action taken. This decision should be taken in consultation with the on-call manager or EDS social worker.

Signature of staff member PRINT NAME

.....

Date and time: .....

Signature of line manager: PRINT NAME

.....  
.....

**APPENDIX 5 TO THE MANCHESTER  
JOINT PROTOCOL DATED \_\_\_\_08**

Safe in the City, Manchester - Fax referral sheet

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>Age/ DOB</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
<b>Presenting issues</b> Please give details of running away episodes	<input type="checkbox"/> Run away
<b>Is education an issue?</b>	Education as an issue <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No School ..... Contact Teacher/mentor Are they attending?
<b>Run away from?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Family      Name of parent/carer: <input type="checkbox"/> Foster carer <input type="checkbox"/> Residential unit      Name of key worker: <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Any other relevant information</b> Other agencies involved For example: Type of care order Literacy or communication problems? Specific health needs?	
<b>Name and contact details of referrer</b> Telephone number Fax number	
<b>Date of referral</b>	
Please note: in order to work with yp consent, written or verbal must be gained before the referral is sent.	I give permission for my information to be shared with Safe in the City.  <b>Signed by Young Person</b> ..... <b>Print Name</b> .....

Please fax this referral form to Safe in the City: **0161 274 0181**  
For further information please contact us on 0161 274 0180

**Agency Referrals to Safe in the City**

