



Inter-agency Guideline

Responding to Young People Reported Missing to the Police



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Background

Following the Care Inspectorate Audit that was published in February 2020 a number of actions were identified that required improvement.

This report relates to Improvement Action 9 “**Improvement in process for 'Responding to young people reported missing to the Police'.**”

The action requested that the following was carried out:

- Review process and procedures for reporting and responding to children/young people who go missing.
- Develop and implement a multi-agency approach when responding to children/young people who go missing.
- Design and implement robust risk management tools.
- Provide multi agency training.

The report highlighted the following as to why this was required in Orkney:

- There is an agreed multi-agency approach and response to children/young people who go missing.
- Incidence of children/young people going missing are reduced.
- All children/young people who are at risk of going missing have up to date proactive plans.
- What children/young people say - I feel safer and less inclined to run away.

The Care Inspectorate also highlighted the following:

Not consistent in approach with the following:

- Partnership approach had not been developed
- Return home interviews, risk assessment and prevention of repeat incidents
- Relationship-based practice monitored by the Public Protection Committee

They also stated that this related to out of hours contact.



1 Current Process

If a child/young person is reported missing the following procedure is adopted by Police Scotland:

- Call received by Police Scotland and Incident is created on STORM with unit identified to attend – this would be an ‘immediate’ response.
- Duty supervisor also notified who can task additional units if required. This would normally be the case to search known locations if this was a repeat missing person.
- Officers attend and note details as per Missing Person’s aide memoire detailing information detailed in sections a-c of the guide.
- Incident created on the missing persons database (NMPA) with information from sections a-c.
- Search conducted as per tasking's on NMPA which include search of home, outbuildings, surrounding area, frequented areas, friends and relatives’ houses, taxi companies, bus depot, PNC, etc
- If frequent misper/CSE concern, then we will have a trigger plan which we will also follow.
- Subject found, returned to care home potentially using S56 Children/young people's Hearings Act 2011 (Constable's power to remove child to place of safety)
- Return interview conducted as per missing persons aide memoire and detailed on NMPA.
- iVPD submitted details full circumstances including return interview.

2 Objectives

As per the Scottish Government’s objectives our objectives will be as follows:

- Prevent people going missing in the first instance.
- Where they go missing to limit the harm that they could come to.

3 New Practice

Our new practice will be as per Police Scotland’s **Looked After & Accommodated Children who Go Missing from Residential & Foster Care in Scotland**, the main details of which will be highlighted in this document. The full document will be circulated to all staff.

The following documents will also be circulated to staff:

- Police Scotland – Children & Young People – Our Approach
- Missing People – Return Discussions – children/young people



As per established practices, in all cases where a child/young person has required police intervention, the Care Inspectorate must be informed with 24 hours by the Registered Manager by means of e form notification.

The following is how we will respond to our Missing Children/Young People:



3.1 Definitions

A **Missing Person** is defined as anyone whose whereabouts' are unknown and:

1. where the circumstances are out of character; or
2. the context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or
3. the person is at risk of harm to themselves or another.

Police are to be notified and enquiries to trace the child/young person commence.

Absent would refer to any situation where the child/young person's whereabouts' are unknown and:

1. It would not (initially) fit the criteria for a Missing Person
2. There is contact with the child/young person
3. A risk assessment has been completed and no additional risks are identified

For Absent Persons, the Registered Manager/foster carer completes initial searching activity to trace the child/young person. If this is not concluded within the timeframe agreed during the risk assessment, Police are to be notified and enquiries to trace the child/young person commence.

3.2 Low Risk

The apparent threat of danger to either the child/young person or the public is low.

Care Providers will contact the Police via 101, Police will attend and obtain details for a missing person report and request the relevant information from the Child's Plan. Following consultation with both parties, the risk grading should be agreed. The **Care Providers** will contact the Named Person/ Lead Professional or Out of Hours Social Worker (as applicable).

The Police will assume the lead role in the conduct of subsequent investigations. **Care Providers** must undertake all agreed tasks following discussion with the **Duty Sergeant** to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Agreement must be reached with the Police on timescales for reviewing a child's situation. These timescales will be based on the time necessary for tasks to be carried out, but immediate reviews will be undertaken if any significant information is received by any party. It is expected that there will be a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period.

The following measures should be undertaken by the **Care Provider**

- Inform the Named Person/Lead Professional or Out of Hours Social Worker (as applicable)
- Conduct a thorough search of the Residential Service/home and its surrounding area.



- Contact other young people in the home/ friends to obtain further information and to ensure that they are aware that the missing person has been reported missing.
- Contact persons who might assist in locating the child/young person. For example, people who know the child/young person on a professional basis such as Social Worker, teacher, youth worker or any of the other community-based workers.
- Contact foster carers or any other person where links with other young people have been established by the missing person.
- Try to locate the child/young people in places that they may have gone to such as their home, relatives, friends, significant others or places frequented or of interest to the child/young person.

If staffing resources allow, then residential carers, along with anyone else above who could be of assistance, will go to likely places the child/young person may be to look for them. It may be that the people mentioned above are better placed to look in these locations. This should only take place where there are no known risks in visiting these areas and following discussion with line management. This list is not exhaustive, and all avenues considered to be appropriate should be investigated and means of contact and outcomes recorded.

Should the need for police support be identified to ensure the safety of staff, this should be requested by contacting the Police via 101. If a child/young person is reported as missing this will not preclude Local Authority staff from conducting such investigations but this should be done in consultation with the Police to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Notwithstanding the above, Child Protection procedures should be followed if a risk to any child/young person is identified through such investigations, for instance their presence at an inappropriate address.

It is recognised that, at times, the demand on staff can create difficulties in carrying out such searches and so to overcome this, all agencies should look at how resources can be best utilised. For example, a service admitting a child/young person who is likely to go missing and be in a high or medium risk category should consider increasing staffing levels to both engage with the child/young person but also to be able to respond if they go missing.

Named Person / Lead Professional / Out of Hours Local Authority Staff- Once notified of a missing person, they will confirm that the Police have been contacted and in consultation with the Police, agree the risk grading. If they have any additional concerns, not initially reported to the Police, they must communicate this in order that the correct grading is achieved. Consideration must be given to contacting other interested parties such as the named person or lead professional.

Police - The ACR staff, will confirm the correct response grading, notify the local **Duty Supervisor** and task the most appropriate resource to the carer/residential unit.



The **Initial Attending Officer** will

- Obtain relevant information from the Child's Plan and note full details required for the local Command and Control system, Missing Person and concern forms.
- Conduct a thorough search of the child/ young person's home address/normal place of residence.
- Note a statement from the person reporting the person missing and obtain relevant details for the Missing Person database and brief the Duty Sergeant.
- Create an entry on the Missing person database with all relevant details completed.
- Ensure that the missing child/young person's particulars are entered on to the PNC and details of the child/young person are circulated to local officers.

The **Duty Sergeant** will:

- Gather all additional information available once the initial details have been obtained by the Service Centre and the initial attending officer to ensure proper assessment of the circumstances and co-ordination of the enquiry;
- Conduct a joint discussion with the relevant Named Person/ Lead Professional or Care Provider in respect of the situation and specify the appropriate level of risk as quickly as reasonably practicable;
- Share all available information held by both agencies regarding the child/young person and his/her circumstances. This process should include the checking of all relevant databases e.g. SID, Child Protection Register, iVPD etc;
- Agree a timescale for review (a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period); and
- Agree actions to be taken and who is to undertake them (including joint sharing of tasks where appropriate);
- As recorded by Local Authority staff, record the outcomes and decisions of joint discussions, with details of who participated, and agreed timescales for review.
- Update the Duty Inspector.

The relevant **Duty Inspector** must be made aware of the incident. The **Duty Inspector** will ensure the initial grading is correct and will review the grading as appropriate giving consideration to the length of time the person is missing as well as any other relevant information. As per the Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation Standard Operating Procedure the Duty Inspector will have ownership and will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out.

It is the responsibility of the **Duty Inspector** to ensure that adequate reviews and correct grading are adhered to at all times. All reviews must be recorded and any changes to the risk level must be justified.



3.3 Medium Risk

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

Care Providers will contact the Police via 101 and Police will attend and obtain details for a missing person report and request the relevant information from the Child's Plan.

Following consultation with both parties, the risk grading should be agreed. The **Care Providers** will contact the Named Person/Lead Professional or Out of Hours Social Worker (as applicable).

The Police will assume the lead role in the conduct of subsequent investigations. **Care Providers** must undertake all agreed tasks following discussion with the **Duty Sergeant** to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Agreement must be reached with the Police on timescales for reviewing a child/young person's situation. These timescales will be based on the time necessary for tasks to be carried out but immediate reviews will be undertaken if any significant information is received by any party. It is expected that there will be a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period.

Named Person/ Lead Professional/Out of Hours Local Authority Staff- Once notified of a missing person, they will confirm that the Police have been contacted and in consultation with Police, agree the risk grading. If they have any additional concerns, not initially reported to the Police, they must communicate this in order that the correct grading is adhered to. Local Authority staff must record, the outcomes and decisions of joint discussions, with details of who participated, and agreed timescales for review.

Police - The ACR staff, will confirm the correct response grading, notify the local Duty Supervisor and dispatch the most appropriate resource to the carer/residential unit.

The **Initial Attending Officer** will

- Obtain relevant information from the Child's Plan and note full details required for the local Command and Control system, Missing Person and concern forms.
- Conduct a thorough search of the child/young person's home address/normal place of residence.
- Note a statement from the person reporting the person missing and obtain relevant details for the Missing Person database and brief the Duty Sergeant.
- Create an entry on the Missing person database with all relevant details completed.
- Ensure that the missing child/young person's particulars are entered on to the PNC and details of the child/young person are circulated to local officers.



The **Duty Sergeant** will:

- Gather all additional information available once the initial details have been obtained by the Service Centre and the initial attending officer to ensure proper assessment of the circumstances and co-ordination of the enquiry;
- Conduct a joint discussion with the relevant Named Person/Lead Professional or Care Provider in respect of the situation and specify the appropriate level of risk as quickly as reasonably practicable;
- Share all available information held by both agencies regarding the child and his/her circumstances. This process should include the checking of all relevant databases e.g. SID, Child Protection Register, iVPD etc;
- Agree a timescale for review (a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period); and
- Agree actions to be taken and who is to undertake them (including joint sharing of tasks where appropriate);
- As recorded by Local Authority staff, record the outcomes and decisions of joint discussions, with details of who participated, and agreed timescales for review.
- Update the Duty Inspector.

The relevant **Duty Inspector** must be made aware of the incident. The **Duty Inspector** will ensure the initial grading is correct and will review grading's as appropriate giving consideration to the length of time the person is missing as well as any other relevant information. As per the Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation Standard Operating Procedure the Duty Inspector will have ownership and will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out.

It is the responsibility of the **Duty Inspector** to ensure that adequate reviews and correct gradings are adhered to at all times. All reviews must be recorded and any changes to the risk level must be justified.

3.4 High Risk

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

- **The child/young person is in danger through his/her own vulnerability; and/or**
- **The child may have been the victim of a serious crime; and/or**
- **The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.**

Care Providers will contact the Police via 101, unless the circumstances or risk merit contact via the 999 system. On Police attendance they will obtain details for a missing person report and request relevant information from the Child's Plan. Following consultation between both parties the initial risk grading should be agreed. The care providers will contact the Named Person/ Lead Professional or Out of Hours Social Work (as applicable).

The Police will assume the lead role in the conduct of subsequent investigations. **Care Providers** must undertake all agreed tasks following discussion with the **Duty Sergeant** to



ensure a co-ordinated approach. Given the extreme level of risk, they must do so within the agreed timeframes. In these circumstances immediate responses and actions are required and staff will prioritise supporting the police to locate the child/young person.

Agreement must be reached with the Police on timescales for reviewing a child/young person's level of risk. These timescales will be based on the time necessary for tasks to be carried out. Notwithstanding this, reviews will take place at least every 2 hours. Immediate reviews will be undertaken if any party receives any significant information.

Care Providers should be aware that the officers will commence a search of the missing child/young person's room and personal property in addition to the rest of the building and its grounds from where the child/young person is reported missing.

This is essential in trying to identify places the child/young person may be and/or people the child/young person may have gone to including the missing child/young person's intentions. The search of the buildings and grounds will eliminate any possibility that they are hiding out elsewhere. This search may be repeated several times during the enquiry and may involve specialist trained officers including the use of dogs.

Care Providers will share all relevant technological information and devices with the police. This will include providing up-to-date details of the child/young person's mobile telephone numbers as well as the child/young person's usage of Internet and social media sites. This can often offer critical information that could expedite locating the child/young person. Details of this should be within information held by their **Care Providers**.

In any enquiry, but particularly so in high risk investigations, it is helpful if Police can speak with the friends of the missing child/young person, as well as other children/young people who live in the foster placement or residential service. **Care Providers** are expected to keep an updated list with relevant names, addresses and contact details. Given the seriousness of the situation, where a child/young person is missing from a residential service, then consideration should be given to other young people remaining within the residential service until the police have concluded initial investigations.

Named Person/ Lead Professional/Out of Hours Local Authority Staff will require to have continuous communication with the Police and an identified liaison person from the Local Authority will be nominated for this role. Notwithstanding this, reviews will take place at least every 2 hours. As the enquiry unfolds, the Police are likely to call a 'Gold Group' meeting which focuses on the Police investigation. Notwithstanding this, police may request the liaison person to attend at the police station where the investigation is being coordinated to assist with knowledge of the missing child/young person, their family, known associates and any other relevant information.

Police - The **ACR staff**, will confirm the correct response grading, notify the local Duty Supervisor and dispatch the most appropriate Police resource to the carer/residential service.



The **Initial Attending Officer** will

- Obtain relevant information from the Child's Plan and note full details required for the local Command and Control system, Missing Person and concern forms.
- Conduct a thorough search of the child/young person's home address/normal place of residence.
- Note a statement from the person reporting the person missing and obtain relevant details for the Missing Person database and brief the Duty Sergeant.
- Create an entry on the Missing person database with all relevant details completed.
- Ensure that the missing child/young person's particulars are entered on to the PNC and details of the child/young person are circulated to local officers.
- Obtain full statements from relevant key witnesses

The **Duty Sergeant** will:

- Gather all additional information available once the initial details have been obtained by the Service Centre and the initial attending officer to ensure proper assessment of the circumstances and co-ordination of the enquiry;
- Conduct a joint discussion with the relevant Named Person/Lead Professional or Care Provider in respect of the situation and specify the appropriate level of risk as quickly as reasonably practicable;
- Share all available information held by both agencies regarding the child/young person and his/her circumstances. This process should include the checking of all relevant databases e.g. SID, Child Protection Register, iVPD etc;
- Agree a timescale for review (a minimum of 2 reviews in any 24 hour period); and
- Agree actions to be taken and who is to undertake them (including joint sharing of tasks where appropriate);
- As recorded by Local Authority staff, record the outcomes and decisions of joint discussions, with details of who participated, and agreed timescales for review.
- Update the Duty Inspector.
- Consider the Police Scotland Additional Investigative Consideration guidance.

The relevant **Duty Inspector** must be made aware of the incident. The **Duty Inspector** will ensure the initial grading is correct and will review gradings as appropriate giving consideration to the length of time the person is missing as well as any other relevant information. As per the Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation Standard Operating Procedure the Duty Inspector will have ownership and will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out.

It is the responsibility of the **Duty Inspector** to ensure that adequate reviews and correct gradings are adhered to at all times. This category will require the immediate deployment of Police resources and for a senior Police Officer to be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and the approval of appropriate Police staffing levels in accordance with the Police Scotland Missing Person Investigation SOP. The resultant Police action is likely to involve a large number of Officers physically searching for the child/young person and may involve moving extra resources from other areas and the utilisation of specialist resources.



Such cases may lead to the appointment of a **Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)** or **Officer In Charge (OIC)** who would be involved in investigative and media strategies and who would have close contact with the relevant Local Authority staff and/or other agencies that may be able to assist, and to ensure that appropriate support is available to the child/young person's family.

The **SIO/OIC** with overall responsibility for the incident will review, whether or not it is necessary, on the basis of all current available information, to increase or decrease the level of risk allocated to the investigation.

3.5 Review of the Risk Classification

From the outset timescale for reviews should be agreed. During reviews of all categories of missing person, the **Duty Sergeant** and the relevant **Care Provider or Named Person/Lead Professional**, will:

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

3.6 Strategic Reviews

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

- Strategic lead for the Police
- Strategic lead for the Local Authority
- The Registered Manager, or in his/her absence, a Operational Manager of the Fostering Service looking after the child/young person;
- Where the child/young person is placed in one Local Authority by another Local Authority – a representative from the placing Local Authority; and
- Other relevant agencies (e.g. Health, Education, Care Inspectorate, etc.)
- Named person for child/young person or Lead Professional

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



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

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

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

3.7 Photographs

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

3.8 Informing the Media

The use of the social media and traditional media will be considered for all missing children/young people who are classified as 'High Risk' or who have been missing for extended periods and if it is believed it would be beneficial to the investigation. The decision when to use media, the content and the timing of the media release will be the decision of the Police Officer with overall responsibility for the investigation.

This will usually be done after consultation with the Named Person/ Lead Professional of the child who will alert senior managers and the Communications section within the Local Authority.



4 Return from Absence or Missing

4.1 When a Child/Young Person Returns

We know that when a child/young person has been missing from care, even for short periods, there can be a whole range of emotions that need to be dealt with. These can include anger, euphoria, embarrassment, anxiety/fear and relief. Some children/young people will be affected by mental health issues depression and/or self-harm. The adults caring for the child/young person can also experience a wide variety of similar emotions.

Professionals must ensure that all children/young people who run away or go missing from care are given meaningful opportunities to be listened to and taken seriously, in order to ensure that a wide range of safeguarding concerns can be addressed. It is imperative that at all stages when a child/young person returns from missing that every opportunity is taken to assess if the child/young person has come to any harm especially sexual exploitation.

When a child/young person returns and discloses that they have been a victim of a crime or have witnessed a crime, Child Protection Guidelines must be followed.

4.2 Responsibilities & Actions

On the return of the child or young person, the **CARE PROVIDER** should;

- Welcome the child/young person back and ascertain that they are well.
- If there are any concerns that the child/young person was harmed when they were away, that they were the victim of an offence or witnessed an offence or that they committed an offence then contact should be made with the Police and the Named Person/ Lead Professional immediately.
- Contact Police via 101 (if the child/young person was reported as missing) and inform them that the child/young person has returned and is awaiting a 'Safe and Well' check.
- Contact the Named Person/ Lead Professional at the earliest opportunity.
- Contact any other relevant agency/person that may have been spoken to during the course of the enquiry.
- Allow the child/young person to contact significant people that they might need to speak to so that they can let them know they are back, for example parents, if it is appropriate/safe to do so.
- Update the Child's Plan with any additional information that would assist in any future missing episodes.
- All missing children/young people must be reported to the Care Inspectorate as soon as reasonably practicable via the 'e' Notification Form.
- Offer the child/young people the opportunity to discuss their situation with an independent person such as the Advocacy and Participation Worker, Who Cares? Scotland - Orkney.



On being informed that a child/young person has returned, the Named Person/Lead Professional should;

- Ensure that the Police have been informed (where notified originally)
- Ensure that a Police Safe and Well Check has been carried out.
- Meet with the child/young person at the earliest possibility and discuss the episode of being missing.
- Determine what has occurred during the period of being missing (not only what the child/young person has been doing, but also what may have happened to him/her).
- Assess the reasons for the absence.
- Ensure that a full return interview is scheduled and carried out.
- In conjunction with the Care Provider an overview of any emerging pattern of periods missing should be maintained and address any issues at the earliest opportunity. Every effort should be made to identify measures that will seek to prevent further periods of missing and which centre both on the protection of the child themselves and on the wider community.
- Ensure that the Child's Plan has been updated accordingly.
- Identify what further action needs to be taken, by whom, when and ensure that these actions are implemented
- Record all further actions that require to be taken and the plan for implementing this.
- Offer the child/young person the opportunity to discuss his/her situation with an independent person such as the Advocacy and Participation Worker, Who Cares? Scotland - Orkney.

On being informed of a returned child/young person or tracing a child/young person, the **DUTY SERGEANT** will;

- Ensure that a Safe and Well Check is carried out as soon as possible
- Ensure that PNC and local circulations are cancelled and finalise the Command and Control incident / Missing Person Form.
- Ensure that the IVPD concern form is submitted.
- Ensure that relevant discussions are undertaken and actioned, both in respect of GIRFEC, Child Protection Guidelines and in relation to the commission of crime, when a vulnerability or concern has been identified.

4.3 Safe and Well Check

A distinction should be drawn between a Police safe and well check and the need for a more structured return interview dependent on risk factors, intelligence and circumstances surrounding the missing child/young person.

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

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



With regard to well-being, the Officer should consider if there are any issues within the relevant scope of the SHANARRI indicators namely whether the child is Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

If during the course of this check disclosures are made that raise Child Protection concerns then Officers should follow Child Protection procedures in terms of notifying the divisional CID/Public Protection Unit.

4.4 Return Interview

Return Interview is the process to ensure the issues around the safety, needs and risk of children/young people who have been missing are met. It should include an exploration of the reason they left their home or placement as well as what risks they were exposed to whilst missing. The Return Interview is important in safeguarding the child/young person now as well as in the future. It must not be viewed as a routine or administrative task.

The purpose of the interview is:

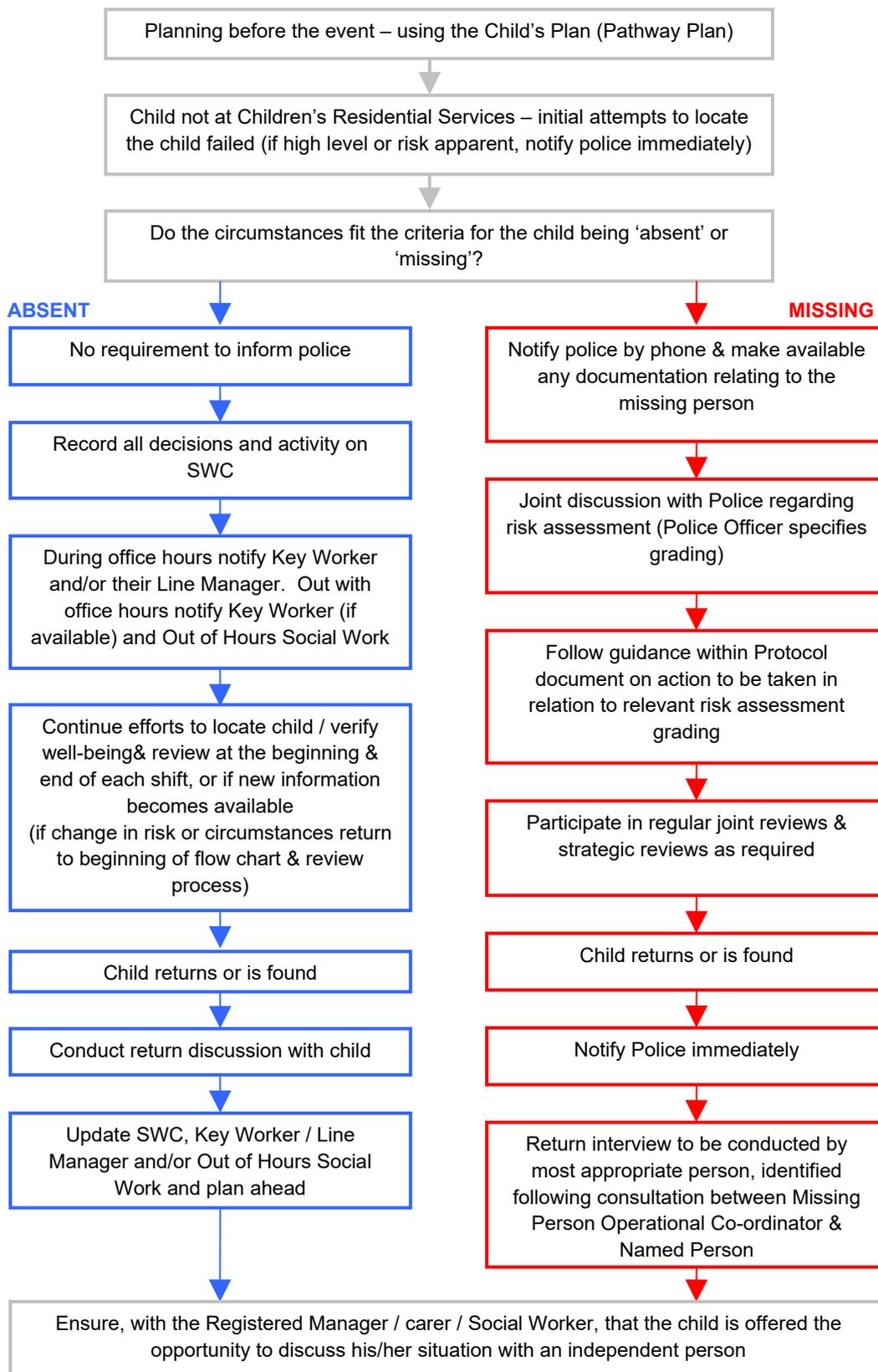
- To better understand the reasons why the child/young person went missing;
- To explore the circumstances which led to the missing episode(s);
- To inform future prevention strategies;
- To inform any future missing person investigation, should that child/young person go missing again;
- To learn of the activities, associates, risks and victimisation involved in the missing episode, and where possible to address those risks with appropriate and proactive strategies;
- To identify and address any harm the child/young person has suffered – including harm that may not have already been disclosed as part of the safe and well check.
- The **Duty Sergeant** will consult with the Named Person/ Lead Professional to establish who is best placed to conduct the interview and when. This may be Police or Local Authority staff, but where deemed beneficial, consideration should be given to this being conducted by a third party, either within the Local Authority or independent of it.
- The child/young person must be provided with contact information for the person conducting the Return Interview to facilitate future contact if sought. The child/young person may wish to be supported at this interview. At times a follow up meeting may be required.
- The Return Interview should normally be started in all instances within 72 hours of the child/young person's return unless the circumstances of the child/young person dictate otherwise.
- For child/young person interviews, further information can be obtained at [Scottish Government Guidance on Interviewing Child Witnesses](#). Further consideration should also be given to having interviews audio/video recorded where appropriate.
- Staff conducting Return Interviews should ensure the child/ young person's circumstances are fully understood and seek appropriate support for the child/young person during the interview. These may include communication aids, for example, use of independent translators and assistance from specialist staff working with the child/young person.



- The interview will be recorded on the Missing Person Return Interview form which is reproduced in **APPENDIX 'G'** and a copy of the Return Interview Question Set is reproduced in **APPENDIX 'H'**. All return interviews must be signed off by the Police who will update the Missing Person Form and the concern form via the IVPD with information received during the interview. This will then be shared with the Local Authority, the Scottish Children/young people's Reporters Administration (if appropriate), and the Named Person/ Lead Professional who will ensure the Child's Plan is updated.
- Where professionals from other agencies (e.g. Social Work, Health or Education) have been involved in the Return Interview, copies of the interview form will be retained by that agency, however a copy will be sent to the Duty Sergeant.
- Where a return interview leads to a disclosure that requires specific action, for example to safeguard a child/young person or investigate a crime, this matter should be progressed in line with existing agency procedures.
- Sergeant Hugh Moonie will review all Missing Person reports for children/young people on a fortnightly basis and ensure that a Return Interview has been completed.

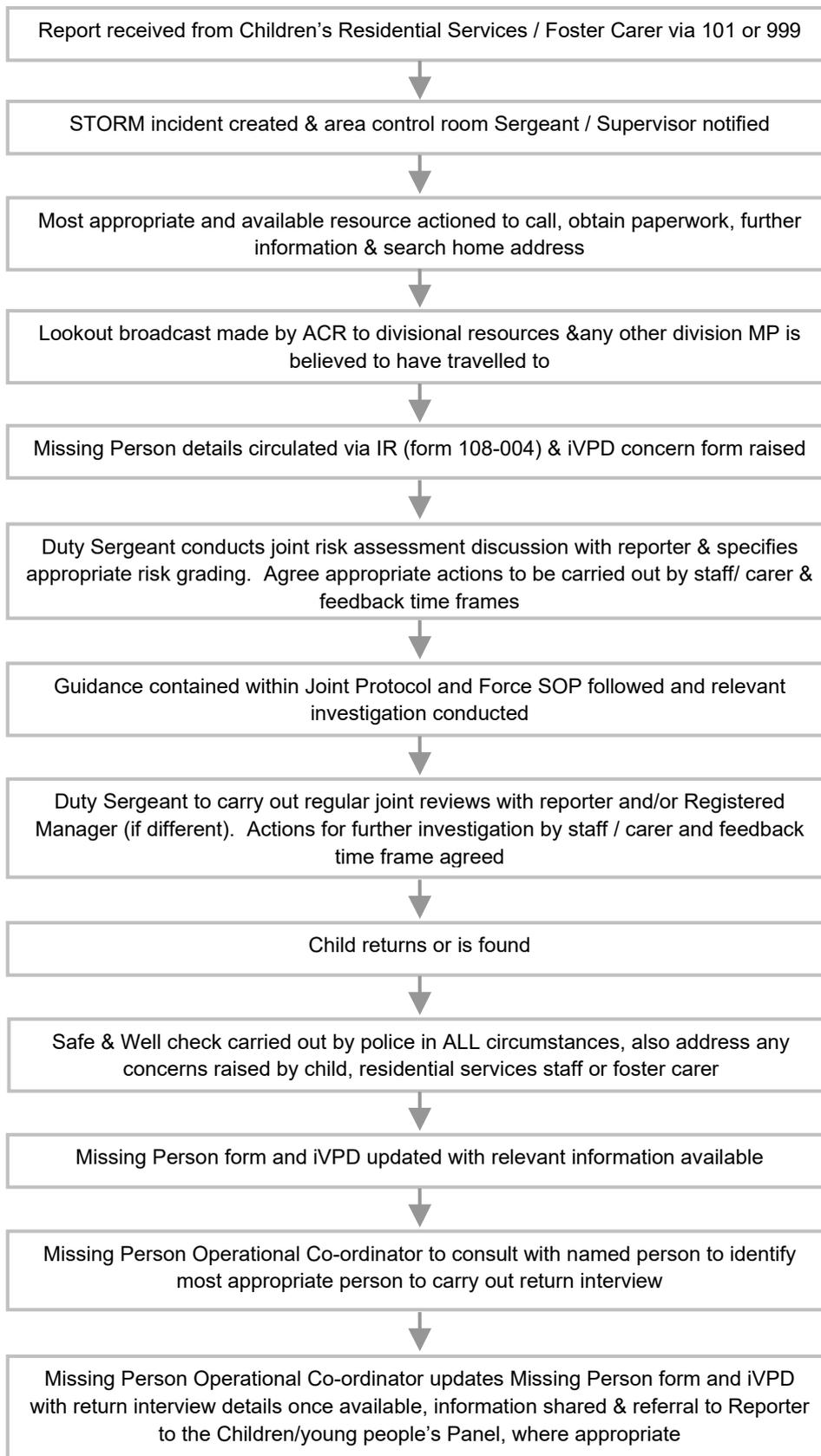


Appendix A | Flow Chart for Local Authority Staff





Appendix B | Flow Chart for Police





Appendix C | Useful Sources

Missing People

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

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

<http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/how-we-can-help/professionals>

Other Sources

Report from the joint inquiry into children/young people who go missing from care, Ofsted 2012: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children>



Appendix D | Harboursing

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

A person commits an offence if the person—

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

NOTES

This section applies where—

- (a) A child requires to be kept in a particular place by virtue of—
 - (i) a child assessment order,
 - (ii) a child protection order,
 - (iii) a compulsory supervision order,
 - (iv) an interim compulsory supervision order,
 - (v) a medical examination order, or
 - (vi) a warrant to secure attendance, or
- (b) A person has (or is authorised to have) control of a child by virtue of such an order or warrant.



Appendix E | Risk Assessment

Vulnerability

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

Influences

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

Past Behaviour

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

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



Appendix F | Police Initial Missing Person Information

Personal Details

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

Personal Description

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

Other Information

1. Nationality
2. Religion or beliefs
3. Marital / civil partnership status



4. Sexuality
5. Previous addresses
6. Previous schools / occupations
7. Financial details (income source, bank, sort code, account no, cards)
8. Passport details (number & location)
9. Details of Doctor
10. Details of Dentist
11. Right / left handed
12. Are there any objections to a media release?
13. Does the family/informant need personal support?
14. Possessions e.g. cash, keys, computer, medication, bank cards, store cards, travel cards, passport, make / model of phone. Is it internet enabled or have phone locator apps installed
15. Preferred modes of transport, access to vehicles, ability & licence to drive, types of public transport used regularly

Information relating to previous movements

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

Information relating to contacts and behaviour

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

Information relating to personality, lifestyle and influences

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



Appendix G | Missing Person Return Interview Form

Child's Name		Date of Birth	
Child's Address		Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

Date Reported Missing		Time	hrs
Date Traced		Time	hrs
Length of Time Missing		MP Report No	MP

<p>1. What happened to make you go missing? (Planned, bored, something happened, to get away ...)</p>
<p>2. What happened whilst you were missing? (Where did you go, who were you with, any trouble, anybody else saw you/met you, how did you get back, how did you feel?)</p>
<p>3. What can be done to help to stop you going missing?</p>
<p>4. Any concerns/issue raised by the child?</p>



Is there any further information, including intelligence, that is not subject to this report?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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If Yes, how/where is this reported or if passed verbally details of who to and when.

Child Protection Referral	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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DETAILS OF RETURN INTERVIEW

Date of Interview		Time	hrs
Location of Interview		Length of Interview	
Person Co-ordinating Return Interview			
Any Other Person Present			
Date Form Completed/Forwarded to your Police Representative			

CONSENT

I consent to this information being shared with

Signed by Child		Date	
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Appendix H | Missing Person Return Interview - Questions

1. Reason for Disappearance

1. Why did they leave?
 - a. Life pressures? (i.e. work, family, financial, relationship)
 - b. To clear their head?
 - c. Boredom?
 - d. To get family contact?
 - e. Were they encouraged to stay out? If so, by whom?
2. Were they intent on going anywhere when they left?
3. Did they go anywhere that was unfamiliar to them? Why? What drew them there?
4. Were any preparations made to leave? What were they?
5. Were they under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they left?

2. Circumstances While Away

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

3. Circumstances of Return

Self Return

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

Traced

1. Who traced them? (Police, friends, family, carers?)
2. Would they have returned of their own accord eventually? If so, how long would this have taken?



3. Is there anything that would have made them return of their own accord sooner?
4. Did they have any worries about coming back? If so, what were they?
5. Is there any help they would like but were unable to find?

4. Health / Vulnerability / Suicide Issues

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

5. Other Relevant Information

1. Have they been missing / gone away before?
2. How many times and when did they last go away?
3. Was this reported to Police?
4. Did they do the same on this occasion as they did previously?
5. What did they do differently?
6. Any strong religious / cult beliefs or practices?
7. Is there anything else they need?



5 Version history

Document status				
Version	Status	Date	Amended by	Reason / overview
1.0	Live	17 May 2021	DH	Transferred to Partnership template. Approved for Use