

Dudley MBC Guidance

Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership Board (DSPPB)

Children Missing from Home or Care

This guidance outlines the steps to be taken when children are missing.

Version 6

Review Date July 2022

Contents

1. Introduction	Pg. 3
2. Scope	Pg. 4
3. Conducting the missing investigation West Midlands Police	Pg. 5
4. Missing person is located or returns Police process	Pg. 7
5. What to do if a child is missing from their home address	Pg. 8
6. What to do if a child is missing from care	Pg. 8
7. What to do if a child being hosted in Dudley goes missing.	Pg. 9
8. What to do if a child is missing from an out of borough placement	Pg. 9
9. Care planning	Pg. 10
10. Threshold for strategy meeting	Pg. 11
11. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	Pg. 12
12. Children who may have been Trafficked from Abroad	Pg. 12
13. Monitoring and Review of Children Who Remain Missing	Pg. 12
14. Publicity/media strategy	Pg. 13
15. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	Pg. 13
16. Dudley Missing Service	Pg. 14
17. Definitions	Pg. 14
Appendix 1	Pg. 16
Appendix 2	Pg. 18
Appendix 3	Pg. 20
Appendix 4	Pg. 22
Appendix 5	Pg. 27
Appendix 6	Pg. 31
Appendix 7	Pg. 30

1. Introduction

These procedures are important for the safeguarding of Dudley's children and/or those accommodated in the Dudley borough by other local authorities. The procedures should be read and implemented by all practitioners and managers working with children who are missing from home or care. It should be read in conjunction with 'Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care 2014, Working Together 2018 and Dudley Threshold documents.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

[Dudley Threshold Guidance and Framework](#)

[Children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)

The most effective way to support these children is through good information sharing, joint assessments of need, joint planning, professional trust within the interagency network and joint action in partnership with families.

DSPPB expects all partners working with children who are missing from home or care to implement this procedure, ensure all relevant staff are aware of it and know how to use it. It should be used as a guidance for all missing episodes.

Going missing places children at risk. A child who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as a child 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 fact that the child may have gone missing on several previous occasions does not reduce the risk to the child. In fact, children who go missing repeatedly are often being enticed away from their home by activities they see as exciting but could have predatory influences. Also, the length of time a child is missing does not alter the risk for them.

The following procedure has been created to provide a joined up multi-agency response to children who are missing or have gone missing from home or care.

"Children are often running away from problems at home or at school. Some are dealing with very serious issues at home, such as:

- **neglect,**
- **drug and alcohol addiction** (their own or their parents'),
- **mental health problems, violence, and abuse.** A few children are even forced to leave home by their parents or carers.

Others are trying to escape common problems such as:

- **bullying,**
- **relationship difficulties,**
- **loneliness through family breakdown.**

Many children run away on the spur of the moment, without any forward planning - meaning that they probably have not thought about where they will go, where they will sleep, or how they will manage to support themselves".

Why do children run away?

An early help assessment is key to assisting agencies to identify and respond effectively to these risk factors. Going missing should be seriously considered as a possible outcome and appropriate support put in place to prevent any potential missing incidents.

Dudley Early Help

In many cases children who go missing from home are already known to agencies and receiving support before they run away so 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.
- Family conflict.

Longer-term risks include:

- Long-term drug / alcohol dependency.
- Crime.
- Homelessness.
- Disengagement from education.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Poor physical and/or mental health.

2. Scope

This procedure relates to:

- a) All children under 18 years of age living within Dudley MBC's boundaries who go missing from their parental or carer(s) home.
- b) Dudley children who are in care living within Dudley MBC boundaries.
- c) Dudley's children who are in care living outside of Dudley MBC boundaries.
- d) Children who are placed in Dudley by other Local Authorities.

3. Conducting the missing person investigation (Home or Care) West Midlands Police

Missing: The College of Policing APP defines missing as:

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

All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from ‘no apparent risk’ through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action”.

When reporting a missing child, Police Call Handlers in the first instance will want the following information:

- The missing person’s full name, date of birth, and physical description (including the clothes/jewellery they were last wearing, if known, and any tattoos, scars, etc).
- The missing person’s address and email address, and home, work, and mobile phone numbers.
- Details of the clothing, money or other personal belongings which have been taken.
- Details of the missing person’s school/employment.
- What might have caused the missing person to disappear, for example: family or relationship problems, employment or money issues, school, or college problems, bullying or harassment, and misuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Any physical or mental health conditions.
- Factors which might put the missing person at risk, for example, previous threats of suicide or an attempted suicide, previous self-harming, medical needs, or a previous history of going missing.
- Any unusual behaviour.
- Suspected abduction or intended harm.

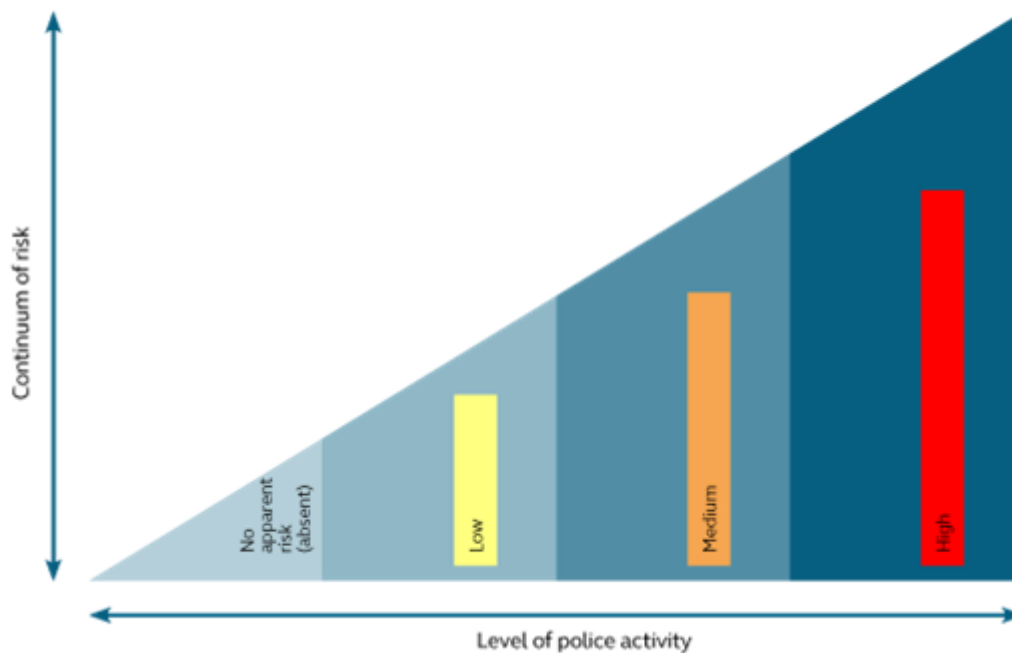
The Police may also ask for further details and/or items belonging to the missing person such as:

- A recent photo. When a child in care gives consent for their photograph to be kept on their file as part of their placement arrangement, they will be notified that this photograph could be used by the Police should they be reported missing.
- Any diary, laptop computer, or mobile phone.
- Any bank or credit card details.
- Other bank account details.
- The registration details/make of any car, motorbike, or other vehicle the missing person owns.
- Places the missing person went to regularly or lived in previously.
- Email accounts, social networking sites, blogging sites, online document storage sites.
- The missing person’s doctor and dentist.
- Close friends or family members who might have relevant information.
- Information about the person reporting the missing person, their family, and/or the person being reported.

Upon receiving a report of a child being missing West Midlands Police will carry out enquiries (which are proportionate to the perceived risk) aimed at locating the child as soon as possible.

The Police Risk Assessment Table

Missing definition



The table above is used as a guide by the Police to an appropriate level of response based on initial and on-going risk assessments in each case. Risk assessment is guided by the College of Policing.

Risk Level	Risk Assessment	Required Response
High	The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.	Almost always requires the immediate deployment of Police resources. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an Investigating Officer (IO) and possibly a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), and a Police search adviser (PoSA). Children's Services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.
Medium	The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.	Requires an active and measured response by the Police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.
Low	The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.	Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.
No apparent risk (absent)	There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public.	Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.

Risk of serious harm has been defined as (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006):

‘A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.’

Where the risk cannot be accurately assessed without active investigation, appropriate lines of enquiry are set to gather the required information to inform the risk assessment.

4. Missing person is located or returns (Home or Care) West Midlands Police process

Police will notify the local authority when the child returns, and a Police safe and well check will be undertaken.

It will be necessary to consider when the child is located:

- Will the child return to the previous placement/home address? Police to undertake checks with the Multi- agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- How will she/he be conveyed there?
- Do the Police wish to interview the child before she/he is returned to the placement?

If there are concerns of safety or public order difficulties the Police will assist in the recovery and return of a child. Otherwise, the child’s parent/carer should make arrangements for his/her return.

Detention in a Police station overnight shall not be regarded as a satisfactory arrangement.

Parents and carers must be informed immediately that the child has been found. When the child is located by agencies other than the Police or returns to their home address the attending adult (parent/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 the child may 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. A medical examination would be particularly beneficial for very young children and those with communication difficulties.

If any information is gathered during the course of enquiries which indicates a child 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.

West Midlands Police will forward a missing and subsequently a found compact to Dudley MASH who will request Dudley missing service to undertake a Return Home Interview (RHI) within 72 hours. The referral process for a RHI will be via a daily triage meeting chaired by MASH with representatives from CART, Contextual Safeguarding hub (CSH) and Locate. The process flow chart can be seen as Appendix 1.

5. What to do if a child is missing from their family home address

Responsibility of the alerter: parent/carer, agencies and voluntary sector.

Parents/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 the child by mobile phone.
- Contact child's school/college/employment.
- Make early contact with family and friends to establish his/her location where possible but without placing themselves or others at risk.
- Make professionals aware if they are working with the family.

All children who go missing from home should be reported to the Police by calling 101. However, if there is an immediate risk to life call 999.

6. What to do if a Dudley child is missing from care lives within the West Midlands Police Area

Every reasonable effort will be made to locate the child prior to being reported to the Police and throughout the length of the enquiry. This should include:

- Telephone the child.
- Search the premises.
- Local searches.
- Make early contact with family and friends to establish his/her location where possible but without placing themselves or others at risk.
- Contact child's school/college/employment.

When a child goes missing from care it is expected that their carer(s) will act in their capacity as a "responsible parent". This means that:

- When a child is reported missing, the Local Authority and the Police have a joint responsibility for protecting the well-being of the child. 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 continue to trace the child's whereabouts and share the relevant information.

If a child is missing from care but their whereabouts are known and the missing episode is not reported to the police the event will be recorded on Liquidlogic by EDT or the allocated Social Worker as 'Away from placement without authorisation.' The Social Worker will close the episode as soon as the child returns to the placement. This will not be counted in the data as a missing episode, a return home interview will not be offered to these children and the social worker will not be required to complete a missing/found notification form.

If the circumstances of the 'Away from placement without authorisation' episode changes and needs to be reported to the police the allocated social worker will amend Liquidlogic so that the episode is recorded as missing and a return home interview will be required.

On receipt of a missing and subsequently a found compact for a child in care MASH will follow the process outlined in appendix 1. In addition, the allocated Social Worker will complete a Child Missing/Found Notification Form (appendix 4) and send it to the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Head of Service for Social Care, MASH and IRO. The Head of Service will notify

the Assistant Directors who will ensure that the Director of Childrens Services is made aware of children in care who have been missing for more than 72 hours or where there are high levels of concern. The Child Missing/Found Notification Form will provide narrative about the child, the missing episode and next steps.

Missing found notifications CIC OOA placements, missing compact to be sent to Dudley MASH which will be discussed at the daily missing triage meeting. Any recommended actions will be progressed by the allocated Social Worker.

If the child is living in Dudley but open to another local authority – it will be agreed between Dudley MASH who are the Host Local Authority and the Responsible Local Authority who will lead on facilitating a Strategy Meeting if there is an immediate risk to the child's safety.

Social Worker (EDT if out of hours) to complete the Child Missing/Found Notification Form (Appendix 4) to be sent to the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Head of Service for Social Care, MASH and IRO. The Social Worker should also notify the IRO. Update to be sent as soon as the child is found.

If a child in care is placed within the West Midlands Police Area by an authority outside of the West Midlands area MASH will contact the home authorities MASH or safeguarding team to ensure that a RHI is completed. Information from the RHI should be requested by Dudley MASH and discussed at the daily missing triage meeting when the sharing of intelligence is required to safeguard Dudley children.

7. What to do if a child being hosted in Dudley goes missing.

On receipt of police missing compact MASH will create the child and missing episode on Liquidlogic. The episode will be triaged, and Locate will transfer the episode to the appropriate authority to offer a RHI. CART will add any information that is shared by the home authority as a case note and ensure any safeguarding concerns are shared with MASH.

8. What to do if a child in care goes missing from outside of West Midlands Police area

West Midlands Police area includes Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall, Solihull and Dudley.

Out of borough providers and independent fostering agencies will be made aware of Dudley Local Authority missing procedures which will be included in commissioning arrangements.

In cases where children are placed outside of the West Midlands Police area, the placement provider at the same time as notifying their local Police will, during office hours, inform Dudley MASH. If the missing episode occurs outside of working hours, then EDT will need to complete the case note and will complete a Child Missing/Found Notification Form (appendix 4) to be sent to the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Head of Service for Social Care, MASH and IRO During working hours, the expectation is that the allocated Social Worker will complete this paperwork and will send it immediately to MASH and Head of Service for Safeguarding.

The Head of Service will forward the Child Missing/Found Notification form to the Assistant Directors who will notify the Director of Children's Services if a child in care has been missing for more than 72 hours or where there are high levels of concern. The Child Missing/Found Notification form will provide narrative about the child, the missing episode and next steps.

It is the responsibility of the placement provider to ensure that a RHI is completed within 72 hours of the child being found as this will have been discussed at the point of placement. The Social Worker must ensure that the information from the RHI is inputted onto Dudley's Social Care case management systems electronic RHI form.

The Social Worker must undertake a follow up visit and meet the child alone within 7 working days of their return. Where this is not possible, e.g. the child is placed at a distance from Dudley or the Social Worker is not available, a Team Manager may agree that the child is visited by an alternative person or at a later date. The arrangement and reasons for this must be fully recorded onto the Social Care Case Management System. The Social Worker and the Team Manager are responsible for keeping the Head of Safeguarding and the Director of Children's Services informed.

9. Care Planning

Prior to each accommodation arrangement for a child in care the Social Worker must consider, within the care planning process, all potential risks to the child of them going missing. If there is an assessed risk that a child may go missing a safety plan should be completed within 72 hours of the child arriving at the placement and reviewed at every CIC review (appendix 5).

Where appropriate, the child and her/his parent/carer should be involved in the assessment and planning process.

The plans should include the following information:

- Previous missing episodes;
- The degree and level of risk for the child should they go missing;
- The level of supervision/support offered to the child and the actions to be taken by the Foster Carer or Residential Staff to reduce the risk of the child going missing;
- The parent, guardian or Social Worker's advice (where appropriate) in relation to what action they feel should be taken if the child goes missing.
- Any known addresses that the child may frequent;
- Any adults known or involved where the child may be at risk;
- Any peer networks/behaviours where the child may be at risk;
- Who undertakes the RHI (if out of area the provider should ensure measures are in place to ensure that means this service is provided).

This information should be reviewed and revised at Child in Care Reviews. As part of this assessment it may be appropriate for Dudley Council to consult with the Police to share information that may be of relevance.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have the responsibility to track the care plan, ensuring that the plan is reviewed, and actions have been carried out.

IROs can call an early review as a result of a missing episode or episodes and there continues to be a risk to the child. Notification to the IRO will be via an episode alert.

The Social Worker must inform the IRO of each occasion the child has been absent or reported missing. The Team Manager must be informed (alerted through a case note) which child have been reported as absent or missing and ensure regular management oversight is in place to address the issues.

In relation to children in care and are missing, it is the responsibility of the care provider to inform the Social Worker and when appropriate the child's birth family of the child being reported missing. The care provider should also record all incidents of missing order to build a picture of behaviour which should be reviewed by the Social Worker.

In line with local procedures, individual risk assessments are an essential part of this procedure. They will enable staff/carers to be clear what the risks are for the particular child and/or the risks they pose for the public.

Should a child 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 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 Police to help them identify the child whilst conducting enquiries. In very serious cases, where the child is believed to be at severe risk, the Police and Local Authority in collaboration 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 website.

The Children's Home Manager/Foster Carer should consider the most appropriate ways to meet the above requirements and should ensure that the child 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 contact details of advocacy services/other services that they can access or that can be accessed on their behalf. This should be discussed and recorded within the Placement Meeting within 72 hours so everyone is clear on what happens, what the risks are and what steps will be taken if the child goes missing.

10. Threshold for Strategy Meeting

In all cases where children are missing, consideration will be given to the need to convene a [Strategy Meeting](#). Strategy meetings will be chaired by a Social Care Team Manager.

There are circumstances where the threshold for this action is met; they are detailed below:

Threshold for Strategy Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any child who is missing and is aged 11 or under.• Any child in care who is missing for a 24-hour period should receive a strategy meeting as soon as practical and within 72 hours of them being reported missing.• Any child who is missing for three or more days.• Any child who has three missing episodes within a period of one week.• Any child who has three missing episodes within a 30-day period.

The strategy meeting should produce a safety plan or review the current one and determine actions to be taken to prevent repeat episodes (appendix 5). The safety plan should identify any push or pull factors, as well as any other agencies that could provide support. All agencies will operate an escalating system of interventions to reduce the likelihood of a child going missing. In the case of pull factors, it may be necessary to disrupt those in the community who harbour

the missing child or exploit them. The meeting should establish which other agencies are already involved in working with the child and what can be done to prevent further missing episodes from occurring.

11. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who go Missing from Care

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who go missing from care, particularly soon after arrival, should be considered especially vulnerable to trafficking. Social Workers must consider the vulnerabilities of those suspected of being trafficked including their need for safe accommodation, specialist support and protection.

Notification through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Digital Referral System: Report Modern Slavery must be considered for children where there are concerns of trafficking and referral must be made where assessment of risk indicates the child meets referral criteria. Where a decision is reached not to refer a child, the rationale must be clearly recorded on the child's file.

12. Children who may have been Trafficked from Abroad

Some looked after children who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or other migrant children, may have been trafficked into the UK and may remain under the influence of their traffickers even while they are in care. These children are at high risk of going missing, sometimes within a few hours of arrival. Unaccompanied migrant or asylum-seeking children who go missing immediately after becoming looked after should be treated as potential victims of trafficking and NRM notification should be made. Social Workers must use information and intelligence gained about the child's passage to the UK, the child's story on arrival and any information about their behaviour and demeanour, to assess the likelihood of a child going missing and to immediately put support in place to minimise such risk. These children may have been trafficked into Modern Slavery.

In conducting assessment, it will be necessary for the Local Authority to work in close co-operation with Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) and immigration staff familiar with patterns of trafficking into the UK.

13. Monitoring and Review of Children Who Remain Missing for longer than 28 Days

When a child has been missing for 28 days, a Risk Management Meeting must be held and attended by appropriate senior staff from the CS Hub, Social Care and the Police. This meeting should elicit a clear statement of the actions being taken in respect of the missing child and managers should satisfy themselves that all that should be done to try and locate the child is being done. These children will be reviewed monthly at the Risk Management Meeting rather than the daily triage meeting.

14. Publicity/Media strategy (Home and Care)

Although the Police have the ultimate responsibility to advise the media regarding any missing child if the child is missing from a public sector or private care provider and are therefore a child in care the decision to publicise by press and/or television will always be made in consultation with the Director of Children's Services or their deputy.

Such publicity will be arranged at a local level by direction of the Divisional Commander (or nominee). Prior to any publicity the child's Social Worker will be alerted 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 within 4 hours of them being reported, medium risk missing persons within 72 hours and low risk missing persons within 14 days.

The Police may also utilise the website facility of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (www.missingkids.co.uk) to publicise the child.

15. Dudley MASH

On receipt of a missing compact for a Dudley child who is not open to Social Care MASH admin will create a contact and a missing episode. MASH checks will be completed with consent and a threshold decision made.

If the child is already open to Social Care MASH admin will create a missing episode and this will be sent to the CART in-tray and a missing alert sent to the relevant Social Care team tray and IRO on Liquidlogic.

For Dudley children in care the allocated Social Worker will be required to complete a Child Missing/Found Notification form and send the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Head of Service for Social Care, MASH and IRO (appendix 4). The Head of Service will escalate to the Director of Children's Services, so they are made aware of children who have been missing for more than 72 hours or where there are high levels of concern. The missing from home form will provide narrative about the child, the missing episode and next steps.

The status of the missing child will be kept under constant review by the Social Worker as any child who is missing for three or more days, or any child in care who is missing for a 24-hour period requires a Strategy Meeting.

When the child is located the found compact or found notification will be sent to MASH. The child will be offered a RHI within 72 hours. The RHI will be completed by CART if the child is residing within the West Midlands Police area. For children outside of this area the placement provider will be responsible for ensuring that a RHI is completed, the Social Worker will record the information on the Liquidlogic RHI form. The Social Care Team Manager will be responsible for finalising the missing episode on Liquidlogic. In rare instances where there is no local provider for this service CART can be approached to offer a telephone RHI.

All missing and found notifications will be discussed at the daily missing triage meeting with a representative from MASH, CART, CSHub and Locate.

16. Dudley Missing Service

RHIs take place shortly after a child returns from missing and offers the opportunity to assess risk based on the child's own account of what caused them to run away, what happened while they were missing and their current situation. The RHI electronic form is completed on Dudley Social Care's case management system. A paper version can be found at appendix 6.

All relevant referrals will be completed depending on the needs of the child. All documentation is recorded on Social Care's case management system.

A minimum of three attempts will be made to visit the child, these will be recorded on the social care case management system and if the child is not available for any of these visits then a Missing Visit Letter (appendix 7) will be sent to the home address of the child.

Outcomes of the RHI:

To help prevent further missing episodes careful consideration of Dudley's threshold document is required to identify the level of service, if any, is required to safeguard the child.

If there are no concerns information, advice and guidance is provided to prevent further missing episodes.

As a result of a RHI if the risk assessment evidences that low level intervention is required the return interviewer will refer to universal or targeted services.

Where a child is suspected of being at risk of significant harm a referral will be made to Dudley MASH. Where a child is suspected of being at risk of exploitation this referral should be accompanied by contextual safeguarding screening tool

Management Oversight

- All missing and found episodes are triaged by Dudley MASH and reviewed daily at the daily missing meeting by a representative from MASH, CART, CS Hub (Thursdays and Fridays) and Locate.
- Children who have been identified as high risk are reviewed by the monthly Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Missing Operational Group (CSE/CMOG) which is chaired by the Police.
- The management and oversight of children who go missing from home and care, is scrutinised through the Ofsted Inspection Framework, it is therefore imperative that professionals capture and record data accurately in relation to these episodes.
- Data relating to missing episodes will form part of the balance score card arrangements which will be discussed at Children's Services DLT.
- The Lead for CART attends bi-monthly West Midlands regional meetings chaired by the Police to explore regional practice and concerns.

17. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this procedure and relate to children and young people under 18 years old who go or have gone missing.

Based on the statutory guidance on [Children who run away or go missing from home or care \(2014\)](#), the definitions which should be used when working with children, young people and their families are set out as follows:

Child: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' and 'young people' are used throughout this guidance to refer to anyone under the age of 18.

Missing child: a child reported as missing to the Police by their family or carers.

Child in care: a child who is accommodated by a local authority by reason of a care order or being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Responsible local authority: the local authority that is responsible for a child in care and care planning. If a child is placed in care outside of a child's local authority, the responsible local authority remains the child's home local authority or the placing authority, not the local authority where the child is placed in care.

Host local authority: the local authority in which a child in care is placed when placed out of the responsible local authority's area.

Care leaver: an eligible, relevant or former relevant child as defined by the Children Act 1989.

Parent: The parents, friends, relatives, or those providing private fostering arrangements who look after the child at their current place of residence.

Carer: The care provider who has been tasked by the local authority and those with parental responsibility for the child to act in 'loco parentis'.

APPENDIX 1

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING FROM HOME/CARE ADDRESS WITHIN THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AREA

Police and Parent Responsibility

Parents make enquiries to locate child.



Parents should then telephone Police (101) with details of the missing child.
Details required: Child's name/DOB/Where, when and who missing with/what child was last seen wearing/description of the young person/ recent photo/medical history/ time and location last seen.
All efforts to locate the child/young person must be recorded and auditable



**West Midlands Police Assess the Risk level and
Police notify Dudley MASH- via their compact system**



Police Officers to conduct a risk assessment which will form the basis for resulting proportionate actions. Enquiries are then ongoing. Any new concerns must be reported via a MARF to MASH.		
--	--	--

MASH Missing Triage.

Daily at 10.00 a.m. MASH/Locate Police/CART will screen all Compacts for children who do not have an allocated Social Worker. MASH will chair and record this part of the meeting. Locate Police and CART will remain to also discuss children who are open to social care. A representative from CART will chair the second part of the meeting Monday – Wednesday and a representative from the CS Hub will chair this part of the meeting Thursday and Friday's. CART will initiate the RHI on the receipt of a Found compact. CART will alert the allocated team/exploitation Hub. The case discussions for children open to social care will be recorded by the chair as a case note under the heading 'meeting'.

MASH Manager records information gathered on Contact and recommended actions and will alert the Contextual Safeguarding Hub of exploitation risks.



MASH will then review risk in accordance to frequency of Missing episode and any other risk factors to determine threshold for a Strategy Meeting; Child Young Person Assessment/Early Help or Universal Services. The Contextual Safeguarding Hub must be alerted of any exploitation risks.

Child open to Dudley Early Help – MASH will review risk and determine threshold.



Child open to Open to Dudley Social Worker - MASH admin will create a missing episode and this will be sent to the CART in-tray and a missing alert sent to the relevant Social Care team tray and IRO on Liquidlogic. Social Worker to arrange Strategy Meeting dependant on frequency and duration of missing episode in accordance with safeguarding procedures. If the child is a CIC the Social Worker should complete the child missing/found notification form and send it to the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Head of Service for Social Care, MASH and IRO. This form must be updated and resent when the child is found.



MISSING PERSON is located or returns to Home Address

When a missing child is located by family/friends/carers 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/carer, or the Police may be requested to collect and return the child to the place of residence. Parents/carers must inform the Police when a child returns of their own accord.



The Police may conduct a 'Safe and Well' check to establish missing person's well-being and safety, and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing. Any new safeguarding information will be passed to Dudley MASH. When a found compact is discussed at the daily triage meeting Dudley MBC's Missing Service will offer and undertake a Return Home Interview (RHI).

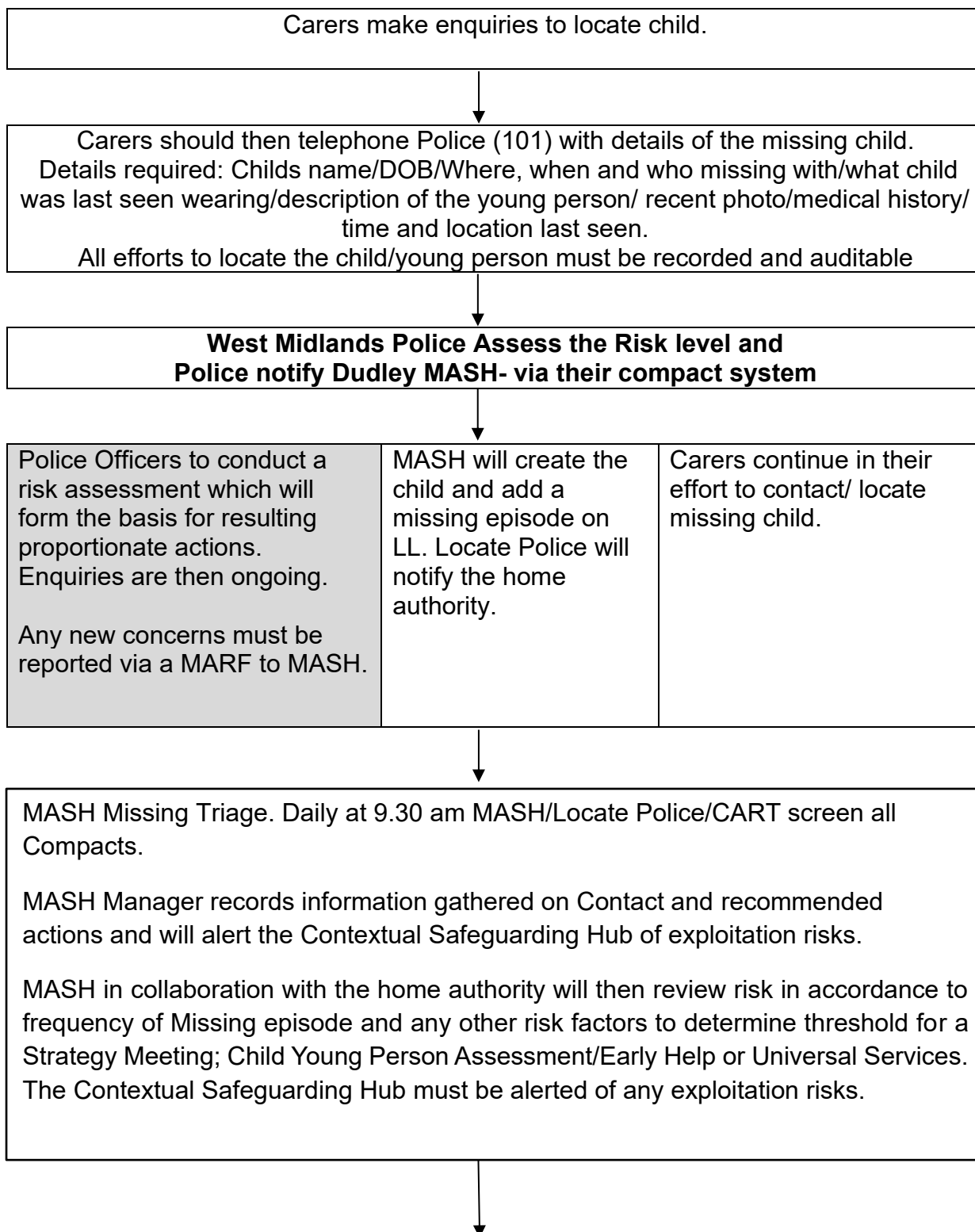


Following RHI if safeguarding concerns are identified then CART must alert:

- MASH (on unallocated or open to Early Help) submit a MARF
- Allocated Social Worker/EDT
- Police if there is an immediate threat to child's safety
- Complete a FIB Form

APPENDIX 2

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – MISSING OUT OF AREA CHILDREN WHO ARE LIVING IN THE DUDLEY BOROUGH



MISSING PERSON is located or returns to Home Address

When a missing child is located by Carer it is their responsibility to return the child to the home address. Where a risk is present a Police officer may accompany the carer, or the Police may be requested to collect and return the child to the place of residence. Carer must inform the Police when a child returns of their own accord



Police may conduct a 'Safe and Well' check to establish missing person's well-being and safety, and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing. Any new safeguarding information will be passed to Dudley MASH. When a found compact is discussed at the daily triage meeting Dudley MASH will notify the home authority and a decision will be made as to who will complete Return Home interview.



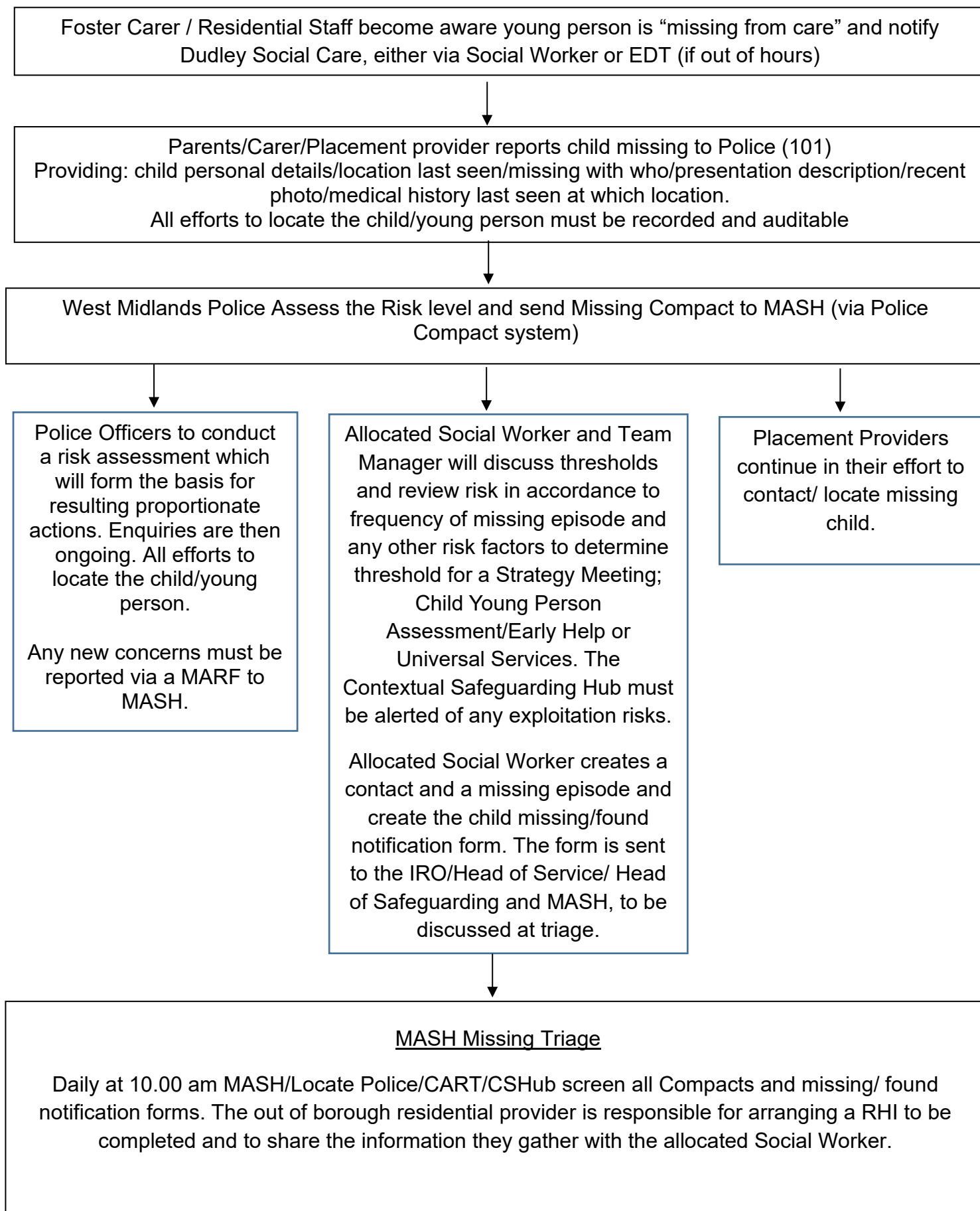
On receipt of police missing/found compact MASH will create the child and missing episode on Liquidlogic. The episode will be triaged, and Locate will transfer the episode to the appropriate authority to offer a RHI. CART will add any information that is shared by the home authority as a case note and ensure any safeguarding concerns are shared with MASH.

If the Return Home Interview form is completed by home authority, CART will endeavour to ascertain details prior to finalising the missing episode in Liquidlogic.

As previous

APPENDIX 3

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – DUDLEY CHILDREN IN CARE MISSING FROM OUTSIDE THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE FORCE AREA.



MISSING PERSON is located or returns to Placement

When a missing child is located by Police/Carers it is their responsibility to collect 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 to the place of residence. Carers must inform the Police when a child returns of their own accord.



The Police may conduct a 'Safe and Well' check to establish missing person's well-being and safety, and to establish whether they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing. Any new safeguarding information will be passed to Dudley MASH. It is the placement provider and Social Workers responsibility to organise a Return Home Interview within 72 hours of the child being found. The Social Worker must update the Child Missing/Found Notification Form and send it to IRO/Head of Service/ Head of Safeguarding and MASH



Any Return Home Interview feedback or information should be recorded on the Return Home Interview form in Liquidlogic by the allocated Social Worker. On completion of this the Social Care Team Manager will finalise the missing episode on Liquidlogic.

APPENDIX 4

Child Missing/Found notification form			
Name of child / young person	Enter child's name	Legal Status	Select legal status
Date of Birth	Enter child's DOB	Current Address / Placement Type	Enter address
Last CLA Review	Enter date	PIN Number	Enter number
School Year	Other	Does the child / young person have an EHCP?	No
First missing episode? YES / NO	No	If not first missing episode date of last	Enter date
Date form completed: Officer completing form:	Select date		
Background of young person:			
Please provide information on missing episodes:			
Strategy Discussion			
Team Manager / Service Manager Comment:			

APPENDIX 5

MISSING SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

Part A:

(To be formulated from supervision discussions, recent assessments or following a significant incident with a child or young person).

What is our concern?		
<p><i>Section to outline the concerns and reason a safety plan is currently being considered. E.g. number of missing episodes, carrying weapons, offending, concerns around exploitation or in response to a specific incident.</i></p> <p><i>In the section below, consideration can be given to each of the specific risks and any ways in which this can be managed or reduced through the implementation of a safety plan.</i></p> <p><i>Example completed below in response to the scenario detailed above.</i></p>		
<p>What are the risk factors? <i>E.g. to the yp; to staff; in the community; offending; CCE/CSE, mental health; substance misuse; disengaged from services.</i></p>	<p>What are the protective factors? <i>E.g. aware of consequences; have named contact when in trouble; engagement with key worker/mentor;</i></p>	<p>How can we reduce the risks to the YP? <i>E.g. engage in workshop/education; regular room search; text a reminder before curfew; account for clothing; staff have details of family/associates; specialist services; safety plan.</i></p>

Once completed, the information above can be used to create an agreement with the young person and their carers/parents to help manage the risks identified. See Part B below.

PART B:

To be formulated in conjunction with the young person and their carers/parents. The safety plan below should incorporate the risk management measures outlined in Part A above.

My Missing Safety Plan

Dates covered by this agreement:	
---	--

This is a plan to outline my free time with my friends. The plan is to help me to be safe when I am out with my friends and to help my Social Worker and carers to understand how they too can help me to be safe. My plan will be reviewed regularly and when I have stuck to the plan, I know that I will be able to increase the amount of free time that I have and work on building up my independence.

What I will do:

Eg: Keep contact; not carry weapons; stay away from trouble; stick to agreed times; not bring weapons back; agree to turn my pockets when return, etc.

What my carers will do:

Eg: make safety calls; check no weapons, substances returned; feedback to ASW; drop off/pick off as agreed, etc

What my Social Worker will do:

Eg: review free time/ curfew; share information with YOS, etc

Chilids' Missing Safety Plan

This plan is for Child, Placement Staff and Social Care to understand how to support Child's independence, to reduce the need to report him missing to the police and to help try and keep Child safe.

YP' Name Job	Placement Staff	YPA/Social Worker/Other professionals
<i>E.G. Notify placement if not returning; specify where will be stopping (names agreed in advance); contact names given to Staff;</i>	<i>Check in with child, specify time; call if past curfew time; staff will give an hour before reporting missing; during which, check with shared contacts; if no response from child/contacts to confirm whereabouts, report missing, police and EDT;</i>	<i>Agree the curfew time; independence skills; YPA responsibility; schedule of contact; RHI if missing; notify family of safety issues.</i>

SIGNED	NAME	DATE

CONFIDENTIAL

This section is to record information required by professionals involved in supporting the young person. This may include names, addresses and contact numbers of people to contact when the young person is absent or known friends/ associates that carers and other professionals may need to be aware of when implementing the safety plan.

Child's known associates and known locations to frequent:

Other associates/possible locations:

APPENDIX 6

RETURN HOME INTERVIEW FORM

Name of Child:	
Pin Number:	
Date of birth:	
Education/training/employment:	

CONTACT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Question	YES	NO	Comments
CHILD AND ADOLESCENT RESPONSE TEAM			
CAMHS			
CSE TEAM			
INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT			
PHASE TRUST			
SWITCH			
HEALTH			

FOLLOW UP DETAILS

Question	YES	NO	Comments
Return home interview offered?			
Date of Return Home Interview Completed			

REASONS IDENTIFIED BY THE CHILD

<p>Was this the first time YP has gone missing or has it happened before? Did the YP run away alone or with others? What caused them to run away? Did they try to resolve any problem before it caused them to run away and if so, why didn't this work? Was the trigger for them to run away something they were running from or running to? Does this trigger still exist?</p>
<p>Push Factors</p>
<p>Pull Factors</p>

	YES	NO	Comments
Engaged child			
Engaged parent/carer			

EVENTS DURING THE EPISODE

<p>Circumstances: Where did they stay? How did they get food, washed, clothing etc.? Did they get help from anyone whilst they were missing? How long did they stay away for? What led them to return or be found?</p>

Whilst the YP was away:	Yes	No	Comments
Did they eat a meal?			
Did they smoke?			
Did they drink alcohol?			
Did they take drugs?			
Did they have sex?			
How did they feel? (i.e. Stress, depression, self-harm)			
Did anyone frighten them?			
Did they commit an offence?			
Did anyone hurt them or take anything from them? Do they want to access help?			
Have they missed any medication or health appointments?			

Any Other relevant information

INTERVIEWER’S ANALYSIS OF RISK TO CHILD

Question	Yes	No	Date answer	Comments
At risk of being exploited for work/slavery				
At risk of child sexual exploitation				
At risk of exploitation for drug running				
At risk of Female Genital Mutilation				
At risk of forced marriage				
At risk of gang affiliation				
At risk of honour-based violence				
At risk of offending				
At risk of radicalisation				
At risk of substance abuse				
At risk of being trafficked				
At risk of domestic abuse				

SOCIAL MEDIA

Question	Yes	No	Comments
Was social media involved in why they went missing?			
They used social media to stay in touch whilst missing			
Was social media used to find them?			

RISK AND VULNERABILITY

Question	High (Red)	Medium (Amber)	Low (Green)	Comments
Estimate risk of going missing again				
Overall level of vulnerability				

Interviewer's summary

REFERRALS AND INFORMATION SHARING

Question	Yes	No	Comments
Child domestic abuse worker			
Early Help			
Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB)			
Case worker/Social Worker			
Independent reviewing officer (IRO)			
Multi agency referral form (MARF)			
Police			
Prevent			
School nurse/child in care nurse			
Sexual Health Service			
Switch			
Youth Offending Service			
Return Interviewer Follow Up Session			

SIGNATURE

Worker's Signature		Date	
--------------------	--	------	--

Appendix 7

People Directorate

Adolescent Response Team, c/o The Council House, Priory Road, Dudley, DY1 1HF
Tel: 01384 815676

Hi,

My name is

I have attempted a visit today to talk toabout being missing. I will be trying to make contact again however you can call me to arrange an appointment or a chat on

I look forward to meeting with you to talk through any concerns you may have. If in the meantime you need help there is a link to further support from the 'Runaway Helpline' service below.



*If you are still confused, still want to run away or are already away from home, you can call or text for **free** on 116 000 or email us 116000@runawayhelpline.org.uk... **24 hours a day, 365 days of the year and we are confidential.***

When you call our helpline on 116 000, the team will answer the phone saying, "Hello Services Team".

They are a team of staff and volunteers who are experts at listening and supporting young people and adults who are worried about leaving or who are away from home already.

Kind Regards,

.....