

# TELFORD & WREKIN

## RUNAWAY AND MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE PROTOCOL.

The Role and responsibility of Private  
placement providers.

***“To consider someone who goes “Missing” to be at risk of harm underplays the situation and it is more correct to consider them to be actually suffering harm and therefore in need of safeguarding.”***

***“Missing children reports must be seen as a Multi-agency investigation to identify the reasons for the young person going missing, find them, and take action to prevent them going missing again”***

(Interim guidance on the management recording and investigation of missing persons 2013, Association of Chief Police Officers).

# Introduction

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## Purpose of the document

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The purpose of this document is to describe the processes and procedures involved in working with Children and Young People in Telford & Wrekin (T&W) who have gone “MISSING”.

This document only seeks to outline the responsibility for placement providers and units caring for young people in T&W. It should be read alongside the full Runaway and Missing From Home and Care Protocol for T&W which explains the procedures for all parties involved in the Missing Children process.

Following new statutory guidance in January 2014, and a change in definition, this Protocol will set out the expectations upon all Providers of private accommodation for children young people in Telford and Wrekin when young people in their care go “Missing”.

This document sets out the information and child details that should be available prior to the young person arriving in the area or if placed in an Emergency, within 3 days.

Also within this document is a clear expectation upon the unit to do everything they can to locate the young person prior to contacting the police as well as the responsibilities upon the return of the young person.

## Background

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The production of a Runaway and Missing From Home and care Protocol (RMFHC Protocol) is a statutory requirement for Telford & Wrekin and as such will be monitored by the Child Exploitation sub group of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The content of this document will be reviewed, along with any further practice guidance offered via the Department for Education, by the Child Exploitation Sub Group.

The procedures identified in this document are integral as part of the full Telford and Wrekin (RMFHC) Protocol. This document runs alongside all of the other processes and procedures identified in the full (RMFHC) Protocol.

The chief officers in attendance at the LSCB will be accountable for ensuring that the procedures are agreed and undertaken as identified. This document is local guidance based upon the West Mercia Joint Protocol for Missing Children 2015, as well as detailing the statutory guidance elements as required from the government paper “Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care” January 2014. The T&W (RMFHC) Protocol also takes into account, amongst others, information taken from West Mercia police, Missing People charity, OFSTED, Telford and Wrekin practitioners as well as the previous stand alone Missing Children Sub group of the Local safeguarding Board.

## Objectives

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This document aims to set out clear guidance for all Children’s unit staff and their provider managers in order to be clear about their own responsibilities regarding missing children.

Moreover this document is part of the wider Telford and Wrekin (RMFHC) Protocol that is in place in order to:

- enable a process of intervention, recording and monitoring.
- enable reporting, to ensure that we meet the statutory requirement of holding a Return Interview within 72 hours of the missing episode.
- identify, as early as possible, those young people and families who are in need of services following a Return Home Interview.
- identify a Pathway into Telford and Wrekin Children Services for all Families identified as being “in need” following a return home Interview.
- hold agencies, teams and staff to account when working in partnership within this process.
- ensure that a clear data set is available that can be analyzed with a view to improve services to young people who go missing.

# Definitions

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In January 201 the department for Education produced “Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care” which included the following definitions.

## MISSING:

“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.”

## Who decides Missing or Absent?

In order for a decision to be made about what category the young person should be identified as, “Missing” the person taking the call within the police reception will ask a set series of 19 questions in order to assist in this decision making.

These can be found in Appendix 1

# Relevant young people

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- Young people placed within Telford and Wrekin by Telford and Wrekin authority or by any other local authority in your residential home/unit.

# Missing Children and Young People Procedures in Telford and Wrekin.

## Private Provider's role and responsibility.

The role of Private providers of children's placements commences as soon as they are contacted by a relevant authority wishing to place a child or young person within their establishment.

From this first contact the provider needs to consider their requirements carefully in order to ensure that all the details and information required is in place prior to the arrival of the young person at the placement.

There is a statutory responsibility upon local authorities to notify the host authority that a young person is being placed in their area as well as an expectation that other checks are made concerning suitability and safety for the young person to be placed in that placement, in that unit, in that area, at that time.

It is also now also expected that the receiving placement notifies Telford and Wrekin local authority that the young person is being placed with them as well as providing relevant information, in advance of, or as close to, the young person's arrival as possible, to save delay should the young person go missing within a short time of arriving at their placement.

Ideally the provider should request all the usual information as well as a photograph if available to aid identification should the young person go missing.

Within the required documentation there should also be an initial discussion with the referring authority concerning the risk of the young person going missing. This discussion is very important and should cover:

- The likelihood of the young person going missing
- The risk to the young person should they go missing
- The risk to others should the young person go missing
- Potential addresses to which the young person may head
- Potential individuals to whom the young person is likely to meet
- General issues of vulnerability including potential of being exploited
- Any individuals the young person should not associate with

- Other information considered useful should the young person go missing
- An indication whether the young person should always be considered “Missing” and never “Absent” due to the risks identified.

This information should be documented on the PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION/ TERMINATION FORM AND MISSING RISK ASSESSMENT pro forma identified in Appendix 2.

This form needs to be completed with all the demographic information and underlying risk factors but also upon each Missing episode the details about that specific episode needs to be added. This should save time due to the general information already being on the form. The person reporting will just need to add any new information and check the form is up to date.

It is important to specify any concerns about exploitation and to be aware of potential risks or indicators in this area which need to be clear in the information gathering form.

A useful guide to the indicators and warning signs is available in Appendix 3.

Once this form has been completed it needs to be forwarded to the identified email address for the local authority:

[familyconnect@telford.gov.uk](mailto:familyconnect@telford.gov.uk)

who will also send securely to the Harm assessment Unit (HAU)

This will allow the police to record initial information and to input onto Compact (the police recording system for Missing Children) any risks identified. This will also ensure that, should the vulnerability and Risk be considered HIGH that the system will always indicate that the young person should be considered Missing and not Absent. (If agreed).

Ideally this information will be completed at the earliest opportunity and it should be requested prior to the young person’s arrival especially if this is a planned placement.

If not, and this is an emergency placement, this information needs to be gathered as soon as possible, at least within 3 days, and forwarded accordingly.

Once in placement the young person will be managed in accordance with the unit’s policies and procedures as well as those laid down under Safeguarding protocols.

Should the young person go Missing then the following process needs to be followed in accordance with the Telford and Wrekin Runaway and Missing from Home or Care Protocol (RMFHC).

Remember that this document is specific to you as a placement provider the full protocol outlines other parties' responsibilities.

## **MISSING PROCEDURES**

If any young person goes missing from the unit the staff on duty should be completely aware of the risks that they pose being out in the community. If following the information gathering process the young person is deemed to be at High risk either to themselves or the wider community, then a call to the police to report them as "Missing" should be considered as soon as the unit and relevant immediate areas are searched and the template (PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION/ TERMINATION FORM AND MISSING RISK ASSESSMENT) as described above completed/updated.

Upon contacting the police a series of questions will be asked to gather information and to confirm whether the young person should be considered "Missing" or "Absent". The final category, unless already agreed on compact following earlier information exchange, is decided by the Duty police Sergeant.

If the young person is not considered to be a risk, or at risk, then in any event after 6 hours have passed then the young person should be reported as Missing to the police. If information is received to increase the level of risk the a call to the police should be expedited.

### **IF "MISSING" CATEGORY.**

If the young person is identified as being suitable to be classed as "Missing" the police will carry out investigations immediately to try and locate the young person as soon as possible. The police will forward an initial "Missing" notification to the local authority and then subsequently a "Found" notification once located and returned to the unit.

Once the young person is back at the unit the police are required to complete a "Safe and Well" check. See Appendix 4



Because the young person has been identified as “Missing” they are also entitled to a Return Home Interview (RHI). This should be carried out within 72 hours of the young persons return. See Appendix 5

The Return Home Interview should be carried out by an independent person and not the staff operating within the unit, although the unit staff should show concern and discuss if any harm has come to them in case early investigation or treatment is required.

It is the responsibility of the young persons “Home” area to complete the return home interview.

It should be noted that it is the placements responsibility to notify the relevant Social worker and other agreed individuals. Telford and Wrekin Cohesion services administration team will also be sending a pro forma letter informing of the young persons missing episode and their responsibility to complete the return home interview.

As stated above Return Home Interviews should be held on each occasion that a young person goes missing, however if the missing episodes become daily it will not always be possible to complete an interview on each occasion. In cases such as this the person undertaking the interview will be aware of the persistent nature of the missing episodes and undertake the interview accordingly.

Good practice would dictate that episodes of missing should be an integral part of all placement meetings and care planning processes. This is with a view to completing a robust plan together which will address running away and agree actions to reduce and prevent further episodes. Missing episodes should be discussed as part of independent visitor Roles and also within inspections carried out by OFSTED. These episodes of missing should not be taken lightly and the unit and providers should be proactive in taking relevant actions to cease the persistence of missing episodes from their units.

If “Missing” episodes continue there will be cause for concern and expectations that Missing Intervention meetings are held to specifically identify plans to prevent further “Missing” occurrences. These should be led initially by the primary worker and include. This Intervention meeting should lead to an plan of action to address missing episodes.

The placement may themselves have identified the need for an Missing Intervention Meeting but the Police Missing persons coordinator will also be aware of this and be chasing the Social worker/placement manager to hold a meeting within a week of the return from missing.

The Intervention meeting should be called at the point the young person has gone missing 3 times in 90 days. A continuation of missing episodes, of 3 episodes onwards should lead to further Intervention meetings chaired by and attended by increasingly senior staff so that every avenue is explored and significant decisions made in order to safeguard the young person and the community from harm.

See Missing Intervention Meeting pro forma Appendix 6.

### **IF “ABSENT” CATEGORY**

If the young person is categorized as “Absent” the police will delay action until such time as the young person has been missing for 6 hours or further information suggests an increase in risk. The Duty sergeant will regularly review each case of “Absent” and will record all decisions made in relation to this. If new information suggests further cause for concern the escalation to “Missing” category will take place without delay. This change to “Missing” will then necessitate the process as indicated above.

It is desirable for placement staff to inform the police regularly of new information received whilst also making every effort to contact and locate the young person.

If the young person is located the unit staff must inform the police as soon as they return so the police do not need to continue there reviewing processes.

The unit staff should keep in regular contact with the relevant S/W and other agreed parties to inform them of developments.

# APPENDICES

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1. Missing Children police questions when reported as Missing
2. Placement Notification/termination form and Missing Risk Assessment
3. Recognising the Warning signs for exploitation
4. Police Safe and well
5. Missing Intervention meeting processes
6. Useful Information concerning Missing Children:
  - Certain groups of C&YP are more likely to go missing
  - Pull factors
  - Push factors
  - What works in reducing repeated missing episodes
  - What can help to reduce running away
  - Why does running away matter
  - Who is at risk
7. General warning signs and vulnerabilities checklist.
8. Missing from Care placement flowchart
9. Young person returning to placement flowchart

## Appendix 1

### **MISSING CHILDREN POLICE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS CATEGORY OF MISSING OR ABSENT.**

1. What actions have you taken to locate and (if appropriate)
2. Where are they likely to go and who with?
3. Is this behaviour out of character for the person?
4. Do you believe this person to be vulnerable in any way?
5. Is there any indication that the person is likely to commit?
6. Suicide or self harm, and do they have access to weapons?
7. Have they previously gone missing and if so, were they exposed to harm?
8. Has the person been abducted or been the victim of crime?
9. Do they have any physical illness, disability or mental health problems
10. Do they need essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?
11. What are the effects if this is not taken?
12. Has the person been the subject of bullying or harassment e.g. racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns prior to disappearance?
13. Have they prepared to go missing?
14. What was the person intending to do when they were last seen/spoken to? (i.e. go to the shops, catch a bus etc.)
15. Do they have a mobile phone? What's the number and have you tried ringing it?
16. Do they have any access to transport e.g. car, bus pass, money etc?
17. Are there any family/relationship problems i.e. victim/offender of domestic violence?
18. Do you believe they have the ability to interact safely with others, particularly in an unknown environment?
19. Do you have a recent digital photograph of the person which you can email to: [contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk) : no

## APPENDIX 2

# PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION/ TERMINATION FORM AND MISSING RISK ASSESSMENT

**Section A** – This constitutes a notification form to satisfy regulation 12B of the Children’s Home Regulation 2011 (as amended by the Children’s Home and looked After Children’s (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulation 2013,) as well as a missing from care risk assessment utilised by the Police and our Cohesion Teams. To be completed by the Provider for each Child/ Young Person (CYP) placed in Telford and Wrekin by another local authority and emailed to [familyconnect@telford.gov.uk](mailto:familyconnect@telford.gov.uk). The form should ideally be completed at the point of placement or in advance for planned placement because CYP can go missing on their first day in placement; however we require this information no later than 72 hours after the placement has commenced.

**Section B** – To be completed by the Provider for each missing episode and sent to [familyconnect@telford.gov.uk](mailto:familyconnect@telford.gov.uk) as soon as possible, we recommend completing the form whilst reporting the CYP missing to the Police. Section B should be attached to Section A – please ensure that information contained within Section A is still correct; update the information with Section A if required. We suggest completing the form electronically so it can easily be kept up to date.

**Section C** – To be completed by the Provider as soon as a CYP, placed by another local authority within Telford and Wrekin, is terminated/ comes to an end. Please send the form to [familyconnect@telford.gov.uk](mailto:familyconnect@telford.gov.uk)

Family connect will forward a copy of this form securely to the Harm assessment Unit within the police.

<b>SECTION A</b>			
<b>Basic Information</b>			
<b>Name of CYP:</b>		<b>Aliases/ Otherwise Known as:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Gender:</b>	
<b>Ethnicity:</b>		<b>Date of Admission:</b>	
<b>Placing Local Authority:</b>		<b>Care Status:</b>	
<b>Is there a current child protection plan:</b>		<b>Registered disability – please provide details (<i>if applicable</i>):</b>	
<b>GP Name and Address:</b>		<b>Dentist name and Address:</b>	
<b>CYPs Mobile Number:</b>			

<b>Name of Social Worker allocated by Placing Authority:</b>		<b>Name of Social Worker's Team Manager/ Duty Team:</b>	
<b>Phone number:</b>		<b>Phone number:</b>	
<b>Email Address:</b>		<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Name of IRO and Contact Details:</b>		<b>Is a Photograph Available:</b>	

**Education Details:**

<b>Details of SEN (if applicable):</b>		<b>Which LA maintains the SEN (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Current PEP:</b>		<b>Education Provision Name:</b>	
<b>Education Provision Address:</b>		<b>Is the current Education Provision to continue:</b>	
<b>If the Education Provision is not to continue, please provide details of alternative education arrangements. What date were the School Admissions and SEN department (if applicable) of the host authority contacted.</b>			

**Complete the relevant section below based on the relevant placement type**

<b>Name of Fostering Agency</b>		<b>Name of Residential Provider:</b>	
<b>Name of Foster Carers</b>		<b>Name of Service/ Home:</b>	
<b>URN Number:</b>		<b>URN Number:</b>	
<b>Foster Carers Address:</b>		<b>Service/ Home Address:</b>	

Missing from Care Risk Assessment			
<b>CYPs Vulnerability Rating:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MED	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
<b>Explanation for Vulnerability Rating:</b>			
<b>Should the CYP be considered MISSING and never ABSENT:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>Explanation for MISSING/ ABSENT Classification:</b>			
<b>Does the CYP have a history of going missing:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>Likelihood of the CYP going missing:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MED	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
<b>Has the CYP been exposed to harm during previous missing episodes:</b> <i>Have they been a victim of crime</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>Please provide a brief explanation of the above:</b>			
<b>The risk to the CYP should they go missing:</b> <i>Consider self harm</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MED	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
<b>Please provide a brief explanation of the above:</b>			
<b>Risk to others should the CYP go missing:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MED	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
<b>Please provide a brief explanation of the above:</b> <i>explain the nature of the risk including any criminality, is the CYP a sex offender or perpetrator of sexual exploitation.</i>			
<b>The risk to the CYP of sexual exploitation:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LOW	<input type="checkbox"/> MED	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH
<b>Please provide a brief explanation of the above:</b>			
<b>General issues of vulnerability including potential of being harmed:</b> <i>Are they subject to bullying or harassment, racial abuse, homophobia</i>			

<b>Potential addresses to which the CYP may gravitate towards</b> <i>(parents, friends, previous carers):</i>					
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Relationship:</b>		<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Relationship:</b>		<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Relationship:</b>		<b>Address:</b>	

<b>Individuals with whom the CYP may meet:</b>			
<b>Name 1:</b>		<b>Adult/ Child:</b>	
<b>Name 2:</b>		<b>Adult/ Child:</b>	
<b>Name 3:</b>		<b>Adult/ Child:</b>	

<b>Any individual that CYP should not associate with:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Relationship:</b>	
<b>Address (if known):</b>		<b>Reason:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Relationship:</b>	
<b>Address (if known):</b>		<b>Reason:</b>	

<b>SECTION B</b>			
<b>Complete the information below giving regard the current missing episode</b>			
<b>Date of Missing Episode:</b>		<b>Time Last Seen:</b>	
<b>Number of Previous Episodes:</b>			



<b>Details of clothing the CYP was last observed to be wearing:</b>	
<b>How would you describe the CYPs frame of mind when you last saw them/ had contact:</b>	
<b>Did the CYP leave with anyone else:</b>	
<b>What actions have been taken to locate the CYP:</b>	
<b>Have you had any contact with the CYP since they have been missing, if so what information have you obtained:</b> <i>Consider background noise - have you heard other voices, male/ female, do you recognise any voices, traffic, announcements at train stations etc.</i>	
<b>Do you believe the CYP has access to weapons:</b>	
<b>Does the CYP have a physical illness or other health issue:</b>	
<b>Does the CYP need essential medication:</b> <i>Please provide the name of the medication and when their next dose is due</i>	
<b>What are the effects if medication is not taken:</b>	
<b>Have the CYP prepared to go missing, if so, how:</b>	
<b>Are you aware if the CYP has money on their person or access to money, if so how much:</b>	
<b>Are there any family issues to be aware of:</b>	
<b>Date returned to placement:</b>	
<b>Details gathered from initial return home discussion:</b>	

## SECTION C

### Placement termination

<b>Date of Placement Termination</b>		<b>Reason for Placement Termination</b>		
<b>New Placement Type:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fostering	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Supported accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>please specify</i>
<b>New Placement Address:</b>		<b>New Host Authority:</b>		
<b>Education Provision Name and Address:</b>		<b>Is the current Education Provision to continue:</b>		

### Form Completed by:

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Designation:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## APPENDIX 3

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### **RECOGNISING THE WARNING SIGNS OF EXPLOITATION.**

Going missing can often be a sign of exploitation so it is important that staff are able to identify some of the warning signs when young people go missing as well as being conscious of this when completing the Return Home Interview process.

Some warning signs to be aware of:

- Repeatedly going missing – particularly overnight.
- Coming home with unaccounted gifts, i.e. clothes, money, food, mobile, jewellery, drugs and a common one being a mobile phone.
- Having a relationship with an older partner, with whom there are concerns.
- Mood swings and changes in behaviour.
- Excessive and secret use of the internet and/or mobile phone. (Potential for grooming!).
- Having several SIM cards, frequent mobile phone top ups.
- Being unusually secretive. I.e. Where they have been? Who they have been with? Who their friends are?
- Losing contact with family and friends their own age and associating with an older peer group.
- Unrecognised cars arriving at the home, especially at strange times.
- Alcohol/Substance misuse.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Lacking self-esteem, leading to a change in personal appearance.
- Excessive washing or bathing particularly when returning from missing episodes.

It is very important to remember that ALL children are vulnerable and a 17year old is still a child.

It is also very important to acknowledge that boys and young men are equally vulnerable and the same considerations should be afforded to males as well as females in this arena.

It should be noted that there could be other innocent explanations for these behaviors and further exploration with family, carers, friends and other information gathering systems could prove useful to clarify this.

If a child confides in you or another member of staff it is important that you believe them and make it clear that confiding in you was the right thing to do.

## APPENDIX 4

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### **POLICE SAFE AND WELL CHECKS**

Statutory guidance states that these checks should be carried out by the police whenever a child is found.

“A Police Safe and Well Check’ is carried out as soon as possible after the young person has returned “home”. Its purpose is to check for any indications that the young person has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them.

Where a person goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable to see them every time they return. In these cases a reasonable decision should be taken with regard to the frequency of such checks. This will mainly apply to young people missing from care who are likely to have other key people responsible for their welfare to check this. Every effort should be made to visit those young people missing from home on every occasion.

Young people are not always comfortable talking to police officers so it is important that there is the opportunity for young people to talk to someone as well as the option of the Safe and Well visit. The local authority are informed of every missing episode and will also be expected to make contact and visit in order to complete a Return Home Interview with the young person and Parent/Carer.

Once completed the Safe and Well check is recorded on compact and the local authority is made aware that this has taken place via the police Found Notification email. If anything of concern is raised during this check the police will contact Family Connect to share this.

If the young person continues to go “Missing” there are more stringent procedures to follow by all concerned. These concern Return Interviews and other strategic meetings in order to progress the case and to identify appropriate action plans to try and address the level of missing episodes.

Residential unit managers will be invited to attend these meetings as well as the lead provider and home authority Social Worker. This will be to look at the appropriateness of the placement and whether everything is being done to prevent recurring episodes of missing.

It is important to consider that the young person may not always be acting as a result of their own choice but may be in an exploitative relationship from which they need protecting and understanding.

### **MISSING INTERVENTION MEETING PROCEDURES**

#### **PERSISTENT MISSING EPISODES.**

If the young person for whom you are responsible continues to go missing there are further steps that are expected to be made in order to try and prevent further episodes.

If the young person goes missing on 3 or more occasions it is likely that you will be expected to attend a series of meetings to try and prevent the repeated episodes of Missing continuing.

If the young person has gone missing 3 times within 90 days a meeting should be held to discuss this.

The meeting will be an Inter agency meeting and chaired by the young persons S/W.

#### **Attendees could include:**

- ✓ S/W or member of T&W Cohesion services as Chair
- ✓ Any other Key worker
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Residential worker/foster carer as appropriate
- ✓ Person who conducted return interview if not yourself.
- ✓

#### **The Purpose of the meeting is to:**

- ✓ Review the placement/home situation
- ✓ Identify Push factors
- ✓ identify Pull factors
- ✓ Community issues to consider
- ✓ Individual community targets
- ✓ Identify missing episode patterns
- ✓ Agree strategies to prevent further missing episodes

If the young person continues to go missing, further meetings will need to be called in accordance with the West Mercia Joint Runaway and Missing From Home or Care Protocol.

## APPENDIX 6

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### **Certain groups of children are more likely to go missing.**

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

For detailed guidance, see '[Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to identify children not receiving education](#)', published by the DfE in February 2007.

### **PULL FACTORS**

- Children and young people who run away to see family because they are in care.
- Young people who are unhappy about their situation so go to friends.
- Young people who go missing to see boyfriends/girlfriends
- Young people who are being exploited so feel they have no choice.

## **PUSH FACTORS**

- Young people who keep falling out with their parents, brothers and sisters.
- Young people who suffer physical abuse.
- Young people who feel unloved
- Young people who suffer sexual abuse.
- Young people who have some form of Mental Health.
- Young people whose family member has Mental Health.
- Young people in families who take drugs and/or drink too much.
- Young people who are bullied.

## **WHAT WORKS IN REDUCING REPEATED EPISODES OF MISSING?**

- Ensure return interviews are carried out promptly allowing young person to have the opportunity to talk about the reasons why they ran away.
- Acting on the outcomes of return home interviews.
- Listening to young people.
- All agencies working together.

## **WHAT CAN HELP TO REDUCE RUNNING AWAY?**

- Joined up working between all agencies.
- Good use of assessment tools.
- Early Intervention and Prevention.
- Support for Young Person and families that need it.

## **WHY DOES RUNNING AWAY MATTER:**

- It impacts greatly on vulnerable young people.
- It increases the prospect of criminality.
- Puts young people at enormous risk of significant harm.
- Limits educational attainment and achievement opportunities.
- Contributes to unemployment and poverty.
- Carries avoidable costs to Police, local authority and other agencies.

## **WHO IS AT RISK?**

- Young People in Care.
- Young People who have or are being sexually exploited.
- Young People in breakdowns of relationships with parents.
- Conflicts with Step Parent.
- Young People with mental health problems.
- Young People bullied at school.
- Young women from some ethnic minority groups.



## APPENDIX 7

### **WARNING SIGNS AND VULNERABILITIES CHECKLIST**

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse:

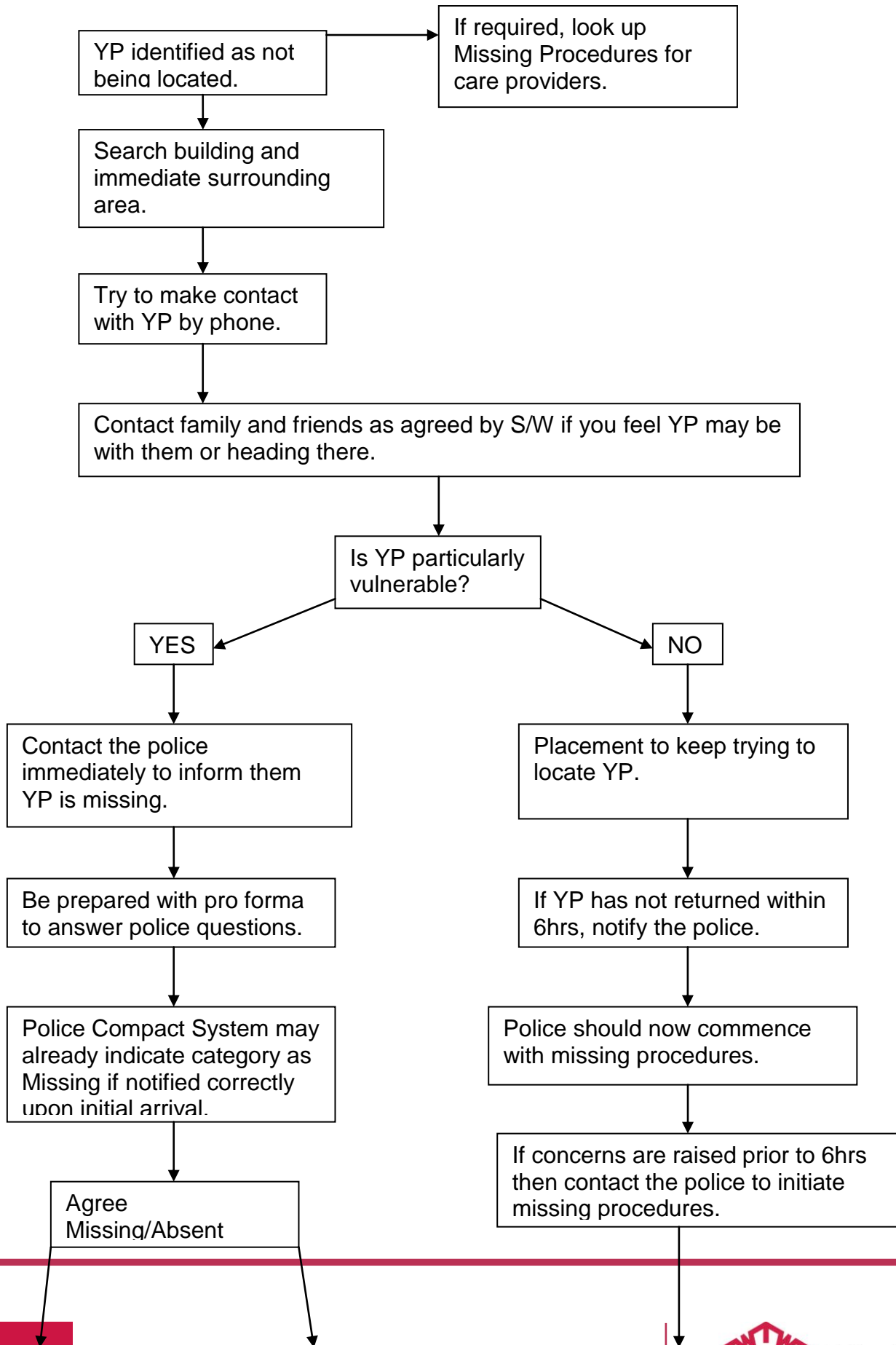
- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality).
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated CSE only).
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Learning disabilities.
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families.
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Homeless.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carer.

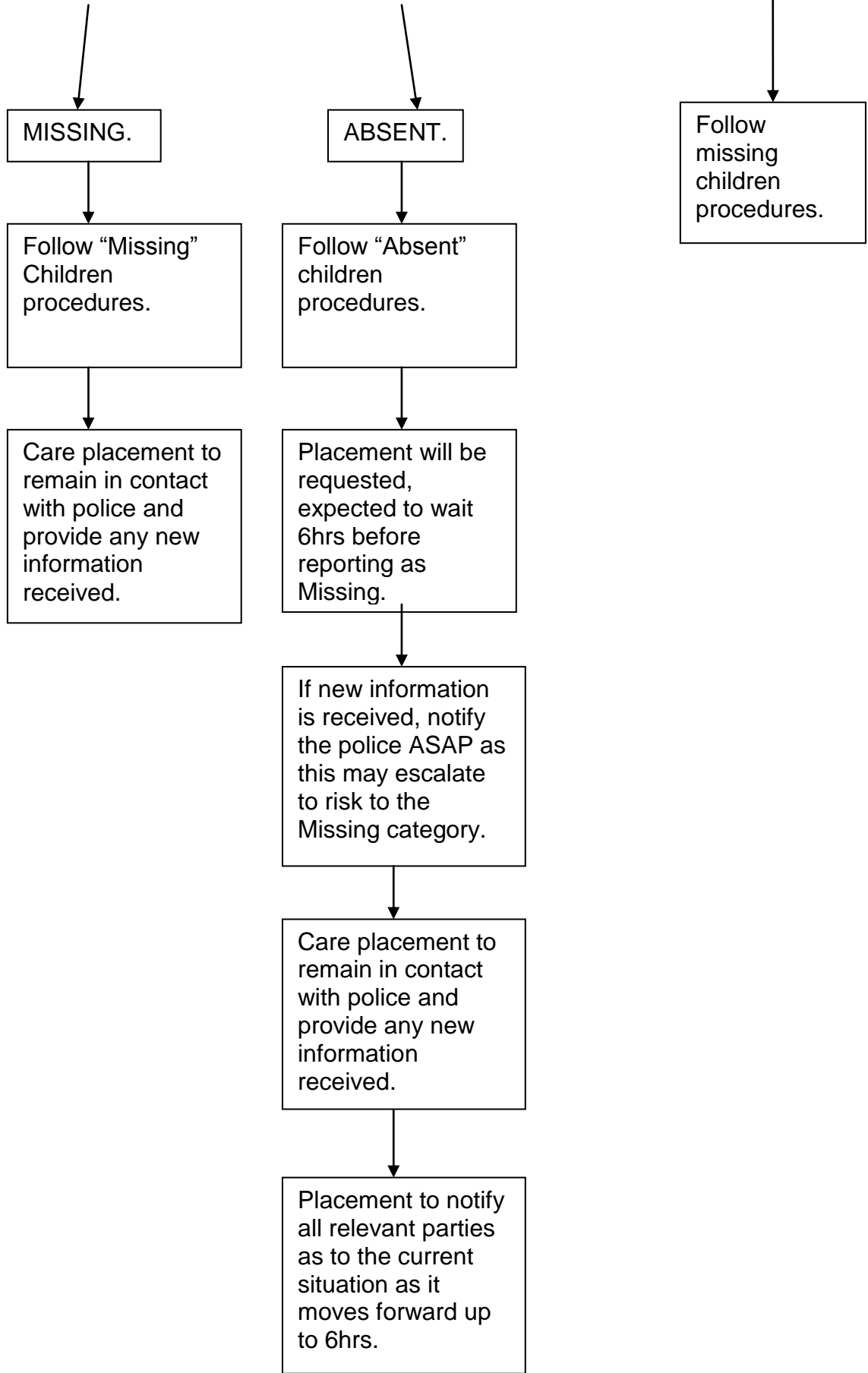
The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited.

- Missing from home or care.
- Physical injuries.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.

- Involvement in offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absent from school.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites.
- Estranged from their family.
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations.
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm.
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

# Flowchart: Missing from Care Placement (Appendix 8)





# YP Returns to Placement (Appendix 9)

